

**CONFLICTING GOVERNANCE TRADITIONS AND STREET-LEVEL
BUREAUCRAT'S PRACTICES: POLICY DILEMMAS AND BLAME
GAMES IN INDONESIA'S CCT PROGRAMME**

by

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Abstract

Street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) are recognised as pivotal actors in policy implementation, particularly within the context of social welfare programmes. While SLBs play a crucial role in the success of policy implementation, they are also acknowledged for facing complex working situations and encountering dilemmas. Especially with the evolution and shifting of governance arrangements and reforms, SLBs operate in a day-to-day practice within a context where different governance paradigms and their logics clash, making the work of SLBs more challenging. This shift in governance structures is not confined to Western contexts; it also extends to non-Western settings where countries often uncritically introduce Western governance ideas into their bureaucracy. In Global South contexts, SLBs may experience an even more intricate working environment, where they have to negotiate cultural expectations ingrained in society with demands from diverse governance paradigms rooted in Western ideas. Such challenging situations create the possibility for SLBs to be blamed by different actors when they fail to meet diverse expectations. It is also argued that the public administration theory espouses a false universalism that often fails to elucidate the significance of context, the specificities of which in a Global South context are limitedly understood.

This study focuses on analysing street-level dilemmas in the face of conflicting governance paradigms, and of street-level discretion and relationality in response to these dilemmas in Indonesia's context. The topic of this study will be investigated through a case study of street-level practices in Indonesia's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme and the data was collected through unstructured interview with 45 participants, shadowing 5 participants, and 54 documents analysis. This study identifies four governance traditions; bureaucratic, performance-target, collaborative and Indonesia's cultural traditions and finds that the conflicting governance traditions shape street-level practices by creating dilemmas for SLBs. Six distinct dilemmas emerged between the four traditions. In response to these dilemmas, the study identifies three original narratives of front-line work: 'stamp and sign,' 'changing mindsets,' and 'asset mapping.' This study also finds that clashing governance traditions not only give rise to dilemmas but also lead to blame games during CCT implementation. Therefore, in the face of conflicting governance traditions where blame games emerge, SLBs strategically use their discretion and relationality to mitigate the risk of blame. Importantly, the study uncovers implications related to how SLBs employ discretion and relationality when confronting dilemmas within the context of conflicting governance traditions during policy implementation. These implications extend to aspects concerning recipients, the policy implementation process, and the ultimate policy outcomes.

This study contributes to the existing literature on street-level bureaucracy in three significant ways. Firstly, it addresses a crucial gap by providing insights into the practices of SLBs within contexts where different governance paradigms clash. Secondly, it presents a broader and distinct perspective by exploring street-level bureaucracy concepts and practices in a Global South context. Lastly, it establishes a connection between the street-level bureaucracy theory and the blame games theory, thereby reframing our understanding of analysing SLBs' discretionary practices and relational dynamics.

Keywords: street-level bureaucracy, governance paradigms, interpretivist study, street-level dilemmas, discretion, relationality, blame games, Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, Global South.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BLT: *Bantuan Langsung Tunai*

CCT: Conditional Cash Transfer Programme

DoSA: Department of Social Affairs

MoSA: Ministry of Social Affairs

PKH: *Program Keluarga Harapan*

SIKS-NG: *Sistem Informasi Kesejahteraan Sosial*

UCT: Unconditional Cash Transfer Programme

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background/Motivation

Our everyday tasks often feel like a battlefield. Sometimes, it makes me wonder if I should split myself into several people. Because at one point, we are pushed to work as ideal as possible in the sense that we do what the SOP (standard operation procedure) wants us to do. Then with all those performance indicators and evaluations, we are also expected to achieve different types of targets... As regulations evolve, we are now also required to build networks and collaborate with numerous individuals ... And let's not forget, we also work directly with people in the community, where, of course, I have an informal obligation to uphold cultural practices when implementing this programme. Nobody truly understands the complexity of it all. They only see us as programme implementers, like we determine eligibility and provide financial support or the cash. But in reality, our everyday roles are much more complicated than that. (F13).

I feel like the CCT programme is always stuck in a loop of problems. The obvious ones like the mistargeting and inaccurate data. Because we're the ones working on the ground, directly in the community with the recipients, everyone's quick to point fingers at us. It's like they think we're the only ones to blame for these never-ending problems. It's frustrating... Also, some local government people are saying the programme isn't being implemented successfully because the number of recipients keeps going up, but the ones actually graduating [from the programme]? Not so much. They also blame us for failing to meet [target] graduation. They think it's our fault for having not so good performance, for not motivating and assisting recipients to exit the programme. We've kinda gotten tired of people always blaming us for every issue in this programme. It's like a broken record (F24)

The first story comes from one of the facilitators of the Indonesia's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme, also known as *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH). These street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) have direct interactions with the community and recipients and have a key role in implementing the programme. As illustrated in the first story, facilitators encounter a high-level of challenges, as they are expected to meet various expectations from both the programme and society. While the general public, and even policymakers, often view SLBs as mere implementers of the programme, primarily dealing with programme eligibility and cash transfer processes, from the facilitators' perspective, their work is far more intricate than it appears. This challenges is sometimes not fully understood or is underestimated by other

policy actors. In the second story, while street-level actors have to contend with clashing expectations (as mentioned in the first story), the facilitators also brought attention to various issues that arise during the CCT implementation. Also, the story illustrates a situation of blame games, particularly showing how policy actors tend to blame facilitators for issues that occur during policy implementation.

Importantly, the first story also highlights the central issue experienced by street-level actor in operating their day-to-day practice during the policy implementation within contemporary governance context where different governance paradigms overlap and clash with one another. Governance paradigms is understood as comprehensive norms and ideas about how to govern, organise and lead the public administration; the logics and ideas that govern the particular manner in which the government programmes and public sector is structured, functioning and operating (Torfinn et al., 2020, p.2). The story illuminates how in implementing the programme, the SLBs are encountered with conflicting governance paradigms where they are expected to adhere to stated regulations, achieve different types of targets, and build networks and collaborate with different stakeholders at the same time, simultaneously. Especially in the context of the CCT being implemented in Indonesia as one of the Global South countries, these SLBs are also expected to uphold or adhere to non-Western cultural dimensions ingrained in Indonesia's societies (Tjokrowinoto, 1996; Rizal, 2020), which can potentially conflict with the governance paradigms' ideas and logics introduced by Western Public Administration (WPA) in the CCT programme (Haque, 1996, 2019).

When discussing street-level actors in the context of social welfare, indeed, the appreciation of their roles is highlighted (Hasenfeld, 1985; Ellis, 2007; Keiser, 2010). Front-line workers are the ones who have firsthand encounters with clients to deliver public services, and they become the face of the government. Citizens can assess the quality of government services through these face-to-face interactions (Yanow, 2004). Street-level workers, often referred to as 'gatekeepers' in social welfare services, possess the authority to determine the

categories of eligibility for citizens, make judgments about the 'level of benefits' citizens can receive, and decide which citizens deserve particular services from government programmes (Brodkin, 2011; Lipsky, 2010, p.4; Meyers et al., 1998). In the implementation of social welfare programmes, where the activities of social welfare policy primarily focus on the distribution of benefits and service delivery from the state to citizens in need, research on the role of street-level bureaucrats remains fascinating and holds real-world applications (Ellis, 2007).

There has been a growing interest in the topic of street-level bureaucracy, particularly the roles of street-level bureaucrats, in the context of social welfare programmes, such as those for the unemployed (McDonald, Catherine & Marston, 2005; Caswell and Høybye-Mortensen, 2015), low-income mothers (Hand, 2018), homeless people (Alden, 2015), child welfare (Keiser and Soss, 1998; LeRoux *et al.*, 2019) and many others. Scholars primarily analyse and examine the role of front-line actors in the social welfare context through various lenses, including their discretionary activities (Keiser, 1999; McDonald and Marston, 2006), their decisions regarding eligibility determination (Ricucci, 2002; Brodkin, 2011), caseworkers' interactions with clients (Ellis, 2007; Bruhn and Ekström, 2017), and the dimensions that influence street-level behaviour toward beneficiaries (Keiser, 2010).

However, discussions on the topic where SLBs in social welfare context have to deal with conflicting expectations arising from competing multiple governance paradigms are rare (Klenk and Cohen, 2019; van Gestel, Kuiper and Hendriks, 2019). Many social welfare programmes, including the CCT programme, are implemented in the context of contemporary government, characterised by evolving and changing governance arrangements. SLBs, who are responsible for implementing these programmes, often find themselves navigating between various modes of governance (van Gestel, Kuiper and Hendriks, 2019). This complexity arises from shifts in hierarchical structures, performance-based approaches, and collaborative settings, often occurring simultaneously (Hendriks and van Gestel, 2017; Klenk and Cohen, 2019). The shifting macro systems of governance have a substantial impact on the day-to-day routines and behaviors of street-level bureaucrats (Aschhoff and Vogel, 2019). As Brandsen and Honingh (2013, p.880) argues, the shifting of governance affects not only

inter-organisational relationships within the public sector but also influence the organisations and the professionals working within them. As a result, the transformation or reformation in governance settings effectively reshapes the nature of the substantive work that street-level bureaucrats carry out in their daily routines (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013, p.882).

Different governance paradigms, such as Traditional Public Administration, New Public Management, and New Public Governance, set distinct expectations for SLBs (Torfing *et al.*, 2020). These expectations encompass, for instance, how they exercise discretionary practices and how they establish relationships with various stakeholders (Klenk & Cohen, 2019). Consequently, the shifting governance modes present a range of challenges for them, as they need to adapt to the reforms in the governance context. These changes have a direct impact on the nature of the work street-level bureaucrats (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013, p.882).

The day-to-day practices of street-level bureaucrats become increasingly complex and intricate due to the non-linear nature of shifting governance arrangements. It is important to note that these changes do not follow a straightforward, one-for-one replacement of old governance models with new ones (Osborne, 2006; Iacovino, Barsanti and Cinquini, 2017; Torfing *et al.*, 2020). Various demands and expectations stemming from different governance arrangements emerge simultaneously, creating a situation in which street-level bureaucrats are compelled to respond and cope with these often conflicting expectations and logics (Hendriks and van Gestel, 2017; van Gestel, Kuiper and Hendriks, 2019). Previous studies on street-level bureaucrats have already discussed how public sector reforms and shifts in governance arrangements significantly impact the roles of these front-line workers (van Berkel and Knies, 2016; Jagannath, 2020). However, prior research was more focused on *how each different mode of governance* affects practices of professionals (e.g. Brandsen and Honingh, 2013). For example, how the New Public Management, in which organisations adopt market-based logic to enhance effectiveness by emphasising results-based and performance-targeted approaches, affects the routines of street-level workers (Brodin, 2011).

Yet, how these conflicting logics from multiple governance paradigms can give rise to potential dilemmas and significantly impact SLBs daily practices is the topic that has received

limited attention in the existing research (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013; Agger and Sørensen, 2018; van Gestel, Kuiper and Hendriks, 2019). Brandsen and Honingh (2013, p.882) state that 'theoretically it is possible to identify the effects of distinctive types of governance' but then 'how do professionals respond to a context in which different elements mix?' (Ibid, p.882) remains understudied. Thus, although there are acknowledgements that 'different types of governance are not clear-cut' (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013, p.882) within which each elements of those types of governance are layering (Christensen, 2012, p.2), studies and discussion on how SLBs navigate their practices in the face of conflicting multiple governance paradigms and how they address these dilemmas are surprisingly, neglected in street-level bureaucracy research (Klenk & Cohen, 2019, p.151).

Coming back to the quotes from the first story, particularly in non-Western contexts, actors at the local or street level are confronted not only with expectations stemming from Western governance paradigms but also with those rooted in their local culture (Haque, 1996). Consequently, when carrying out their duties, street-level actors may encounter a unique set of dilemmas. These dilemmas arise from the need to reconcile competing logics inherent in the expectations imposed by Western governance paradigms and the socio-historical-cultural aspects embedded in the local society (Cohen, 2018). The importance of contextual features is indeed acknowledged in street-level bureaucracy literature, as scholars posit that political and national culture can influence individual street-level routines, practices, and practical discretion (Hill and Møller, 2019; van Berkel, 2020). In reality, what is anticipated and what occurs at the street-level can vary significantly from one context to another due to variations in national regulations, administrative cultures, forms of governance, and intergovernmental relations systems (Hupe & Buffat, 2014). Countries develop different responses to 'managerial trends as well as the legitimacy regarding who is to blame for the clients' situations' and national culture that is present at street-level such as social norms, rules, and symbolic solidarity (e.g., when do clients deserve to be met with dignity?) potentially impact street-level decision-making (Møller, 2019, p.112).

However, in general, there is criticism of street-level bureaucracy theory for its limited application and discussion of street-level bureaucrats' practices, discretion, and dilemmas in the context of non-Western settings (Chang and Brewer, 2022). Research primarily focuses on the practices of street-level actors in Western contexts where political, institutional, and democratic systems are robust and well-established (Durose *et al.*, 2016; van Berkel, 2020). For instance, in existing literature, studies on street-level practices in implementing social welfare programmes are primarily based on findings from the Global North context (Fletcher, 2011; Hansen, Lundberg and Syltevik, 2018; Trappenburg, Kampen and Tonkens, 2019; van Berkel, 2020). There is limited research on street-level bureaucracy where front-line actors have to operate their practices within the Global South context, characterised by 'state capacity shortages, institutional weaknesses, as well as distinct political traditions and cultures' (Lotta *et al.*, 2022, p.3). For example, in the setting where clientelism, corruption, and nepotism are widespread (Gofen, Meza and Chiqués, 2022). Particularly, research in the street-level bureaucracy that explores into the understanding of street-level dilemmas stemming from conflicting non-Western and WPA governance paradigms and investigates how SLBs address such dilemmas within the context of non-Western societies has been underrepresented and overlooked (Lotta *et al.*, 2022).

Along with the explanations above and referring back to the second story presented earlier, when delving into street-level practices, SLBs not only grapple with competing and clashing expectations stemming from WPA and non-Western governance paradigms but also potentially have to navigate blame issues. This becomes particularly apparent when various policy problems arise during the implementation process. As actors occupying a crucial position and perceived as responsible for ensuring the success or failure of implementation, 'blaming the street level in the case of a perceived implementation failure is a standard reaction' (Hupe & Hill, 2019, p.27). This highlights that the issue of blame is intricately linked to SLBs' daily practices. While blame issues are relevant for street-level practices and have the potential to shape their day-to-day work, the discussion within the street-level bureaucracy

literature that analyses street-level practices through the lens of blame theory is relatively understudied (Klijn *et al.*, 2020).

This study aims to address limitation of the existing literature by exploring the topic on how different governance paradigms shape street-level practice in a non-Western context. Particularly, this study tends to focus on the topic that in the course of their practice, facilitators potentially encounter dilemmas stemming from conflicting demands arising from different governance paradigms stemming from non-WPA and WPA ideas. What kind of dilemmas are they faced with? And how do these conflicting demands from various governance paradigms shape the practices of street-level actors? How do they respond to these dilemmas?

The topic of this study is explored through the analysis of the practices of street-level actors in the implementation of a social welfare programme in Indonesia, called the Indonesian Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (CCT) or *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) as this programme is considered as interesting and relevant case for this research. Due to Indonesia's financial crisis in 1998, poverty reduction became one of the national priorities within the government's development agenda (Suryahadi and Sumarto, 2010). For instance, poverty reduction is the primary focus of the first chapter in the Mid-Term Development Plan (RPJM 2004 - 2009)¹. To address the issue of poverty and mitigate the damaging impacts caused by the crisis, a Cash Transfer programme was introduced as one of Indonesia's poverty reduction initiatives. Before the implementation of the CCT, Indonesia, for the first time, adopted and enacted a cash transfer programme for the poor and near-poor in 2005, known as the *Bantuan Langsung Tunai* (BLT) or unconditional cash transfer (UCT) programme (Rosfadhila *et al.*, 2013). The UCT was designed as a temporary programme implemented for one year (from October 2005 to September 2006) as an alternative policy tool to counteract the poverty trend and provide immediate income relief for the poor. The UCT targeted more than 19.1 million families, with recipients receiving 100,000 IDR each month, distributed every three months. Executing the UCT involved the allocation of approximately 23 trillion IDR from

¹ Hutagalung, Arif and Suharyo (2009) argue that prior to the crisis, specific anti-poverty programmes had no part in the Government's national development policies.

the national budget (Sugandi, 2017). However, the UCT received negative criticism because there were no conditions regulating how beneficiaries could utilise the cash transfer. Instead of being utilised for necessary items such as food, education, or healthcare, the funds were occasionally spent on buying cigarettes (Selviana, Akib and Risfaisal, 2016). As a result, in 2007, the government terminated the UCT programme and introduced the CCT programme as a substitute for the UCT (Hutagalung, Arif and Suharyo, 2009).

The CCT programme is designed to combat poverty by providing financial assistance at specific times, allowing access to essential healthcare and educational services (Adato, 2008). It is worth noting that CCT programmes are not limited to Indonesia; it is an international poverty alleviation initiative introduced by the World Bank and implemented in various countries, including Latin America and other Asian nations (Attanasio *et al.*, 2005; Fiszbein *et al.*, 2009; Barbosa and Corseuil, 2014). Thus, the *Program Keluarga Harapan* can be seen as the case that can show the implementation of the CCT as international programme in the Global South context. In Indonesia, as the CCT programme is proposed by the international agency where the design and the way the programme is administered based on ideas brought by the international agency (Kwon and Kim, 2015), this programme potentially conflicts with cultural aspect embedded in Indonesia's governance system and beliefs of policy actors (Lobo *et al.*, 2018). The CCT programme is implemented in Indonesia during a period when the government attempts to swiftly shifting its governance system and uncritically adopting paradigms rooted in WPA ideas through the reform policy.

The CCT programme's primary target is impoverished families or those vulnerable to poverty, identified through registration in the Integrated Social Welfare Data (poverty data), adhering to specific criteria outlined in the CCT programme. Eligible families receiving the programme benefits must also adhere to various health and education requirements to continue receiving support (Nazara and Rahayu, 2013). Regarding poverty reduction, the CCT programme aims to achieve both short-term and long-term goals. In the short term, it addresses poverty by offering financial aid to extremely poor families, enabling them to meet their basic needs, such as purchasing food. In the long term, the programme seeks to reduce

poverty by fostering the development of human capital in the younger generation, breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty, and encouraging educational attainment and improved health (Rawlings and Rubio, 2005; Handa and Davis, 2006).

As the CCT is a national policy programme, various actors and institutions are involved in its implementation, operating at different levels, including the central, provincial, and local government tiers. While the UCT programme did not have facilitators to support and oversee recipients at the street-level, the CCT programme, on the other hand, has CCT facilitators at the local government level. These facilitators operate at the lowest administrative units, including sub-district areas, and have a multifaceted role (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2018). They not only ensure the effective implementation of the programme but also directly engage with and assist the programme's beneficiaries. CCT facilitators are social workers recruited and employed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, distributed across various districts in Indonesia. They play a crucial role in the programme and are often referred to as the programme's 'eyes and ears' because they are responsible for overseeing and intimately understanding the circumstances of CCT recipients in the field (Hasan *et al.*, 2019).

During its execution, the CCT in Indonesia encounters various challenges and issues. For instance, problems arise with the accuracy and targeting of poor families because, instead of maintaining impartiality in recipient selection, local actors often base eligibility on family relations (Iskandar and Jabbar, 2021). Moreover, the CCT programme's intricate design emphasises the importance of coordination across different actor levels but still leans toward a centralistic and top-down approach (Kartowinomo, 2021). This results in decisions made by the central government regarding the list of poor families not accurately reflecting the actual conditions at the local level (Sofianto, 2020). These implementation issues set the stage for potential blame games. For example, the community places blame on facilitators for the programme's failure to reach the intended recipients among the actual poor, or village officers point fingers at facilitators, attributing perceived coordination shortcomings (Nisa, 2019; Handayaningsih, 2021).

Within the Indonesian research context, many researchers have shown significant interest in studying the CCT programme. However, most of these studies have primarily concentrated on evaluating the programme's effectiveness and assessing its alignment with its intended goals. For example, they examine how CCT impacts immunisation rates (Kusuma *et al.*, 2016; Kusuma, McConnell, *et al.*, 2017; Kusuma, Thabrany, *et al.*, 2017) or school enrollment figures (Hadna and Kartika, 2017). While the role of CCT facilitators is undoubtedly crucial, there is a notable gap in research regarding the analysis of facilitator practices through the lens of street-level bureaucracy theory. Although the actions of street-level actors hold significant importance in the CCT programme, particularly concerning issues like eligibility, sanctions, and service delivery (Ramírez, 2021), research specifically dedicated to analysing facilitators' practices from the perspective of street-level bureaucracy theory remains scarce.

1.2 Research questions and research design

Based on the motivations discussed above, this study aims to improve our understanding of street-level practices in a non-Western context; more specifically, our understanding of street-level dilemmas in the face of conflicting governance paradigms, and of street-level discretion and relationality in response to these dilemmas in Indonesia's context. To achieve the aim of this study, one overarching research question and three sub-research questions have been formulated.

'How do different governance paradigms shape street-level practice in a non-Western context?

1. How do street-level bureaucrats negotiate conflicting governance paradigms?
2. How do street-level bureaucrats use discretion and relationality in the face of conflicting governance paradigms?
3. How do street-level bureaucrats' responses to dilemmas through their discretionary and relational practices impact policy implementation and outcomes?

To answer the research questions, this study uses Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism and practice theory as the analytical framework to analyse conflicting governance paradigms, street-level dilemmas and street-level practices and narratives. This study also adopts interpretivist study and case study research design. Interpretivist approach allows this study to uncover the underlying meanings, values, and viewpoints that shape the practice and narratives of SLBs especially as they navigate dilemmas arising from clashing governance paradigms in a non-Western context (Yanow, 2006; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). Employing this approach facilitates the study to delve into the social world of SLBs, exploring the diversity of perspectives, subjective meanings, and interpretations, as well as the dynamic nature of social interactions that shape SLBs' experiences and decision-making processes (Wagenaar, 2011). It acknowledges front-line actors within their settings bring unique interpretations and values to their roles. This approach facilitates the exploration of the intricate web of meanings, beliefs, and social constructions that underlie the actions and decisions of SLBs (Bevir and Blakely, 2018). It also allows for the examination of SLBs' lived experiences within the cultural and social contexts in which they operate (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012), thereby offering a more profound understanding of the traditions, dilemmas, narratives, and practices of street-level actors.

The data for this study was collected through unstructured interviews with a total of 45 participants and shadowing a CCT coordinator and four facilitators. Additionally, a document analysis was conducted on 54 policy documents related to the research focus. To analyse the collected data, a combination of grounded theory analysis and narrative analysis was employed. This approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of the data. The data analysis followed an iterative and abductive process involving coding, memo writing, and theoretical sampling.

1.3 Contributions

This study makes contributions to the existing street-level bureaucracy theory in several ways. This thesis provides a significant contribution by addressing the urgent need for

increased focus on understanding street-level practices within a setting where the principles and ideas of diverse governance paradigms not only exist together but also overlap and clash (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013; Klenk and Cohen, 2019). This research is crucial in presenting new theoretical perspectives and novel empirical findings that enhance our comprehension of street-level practices and dilemmas. It highlights that in particular situations, for instance the execution of Indonesia's CCT programme, SLBs encounter increased difficulties as they must deal with diverse logics and expectations arising from multiple governance paradigms. These challenges involve adhering to regulations and hierarchical structures, meeting target objectives, collaborating with other stakeholders, and concurrently upholding cultural dimensions. This research not only strengthens previous discussions urging a reevaluation of Lipsky's notion of street-level bureaucracy, especially when scrutinising street-level practices and challenges in current governance environments (Durose, 2007, 2011; Klenk and Cohen, 2019), but also encourages profound reflection and reassessment of the aspects influencing street-level practices and the implementation of public services and policies at the street level. This is particularly evident in the context of the clash between multiple governance paradigms in this instance.

My research also enhances the street-level bureaucracy theory by providing new empirical findings that in Indonesia, where SLBs operate within a context deeply rooted in local culture and socio-cultural history, non-Western cultural dimensions significantly shape how SLBs exercise their discretionary power and establish relationships with policy actors and citizens. This research also reinforces earlier assertions within the field of comparative public administration that, within the context of the Global South, policy actors may find themselves grappling not just with conflicting logics stemming from Western governance paradigms but also dealing with the discord between the administrative principles mandated by the WPA and the practical administrative practices influenced by local traditions and knowledge (Haque, 1996, 2019). This research also extends its contribution beyond street-level bureaucracy theory to the broader study of public administration by advocating for a more inclusive perspective, acknowledging the diverse traditions and histories that have shaped the field

beyond Anglo-American influence. Additionally, my study emphasises the significance of local knowledge and cultural dimensions, challenging Western dominance and the notion of a universally applicable public-service perspective or ethos (McDonald et al., 2022, p.63).

Finally, by using Indonesia as the context for this study, it contributes to the existing body of literature on street-level bureaucracy by incorporating a blame perspective into the understanding of street-level practices (Catney and Henneberry, 2012; Klijn *et al.*, 2020), particularly focusing on street-level discretionary practices and relational dynamics. This study fundamentally reframes our understanding of street-level discretion. In specific scenarios, SLBs' perceptions of the risk of being blamed influence their strategic utilisation of discretion to avoid blame. Furthermore, this study also contributes by offering a different perspective on the relationships of front-line actors with other stakeholders, introducing the element of blame into the analysis of these relational dynamics. While the literature has explored SLBs-citizens, SLBs-peers, and SLBs-supervisor relationships, it has yet to delve into how the motivation of SLBs to mitigate blame can profoundly shape their strategies for building and leveraging relationships with those actors.

1.4 The structure of the thesis

Following this introduction chapter, Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature and current debates on street-level bureaucracy theory. This chapter underscores the scholarly significance of the research problem by highlighting what has already been discussed and known in this field and by showcasing the previous research conducted in this area. The chapter begins by highlighting the limitations of the concept of street-level bureaucracy. Firstly, within the contemporary governance context, where governance arrangements shift and evolve, there is a limited understanding of how Lipsky's theory is applied to analyse the practices of SLBs and the manner in which SLBs interpret and navigate their challenges within various governance paradigms. Secondly, there is limited knowledge of how the street-level bureaucracy theory is applied in non-Western contexts, as most current street-level bureaucracy research is primarily conducted within the Global North context. Consequently,

there is little discussion regarding how local knowledge and cultural traditions rooted in non-Western societies shape the practices of SLBs, as well as how WPA and non-WPA ideas can lead to conflicts and create different dilemmas for SLBs. Lastly, the discussion of blame games; where policy actors attempt to shift responsibility to one another when something goes wrong, acting as blamers to avoid being blamees (Hood, 2011, p.7) and how they influence SLBs' discretionary practices and relationships remains limited. This chapter then continues with a further exploration of street-level dilemmas and discretions, the evolving practices of SLBs within different governance arrangements, critiques directed at the application of Western governance paradigms in non-Western contexts, and the significance of blame games in the context of street-level practices.

In Chapter 3, the study explains the analytical framework, utilising Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism and practice theory. It elucidates how this analytical framework can provide a more profound understanding of the chosen topic. Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism provides a conceptual framework (tradition, dilemma, practice, and narrative) for analysing the beliefs associated with the diverse governance paradigms that underpin the CCT programme (Bevir & Rhodes, 2006, 2001). It also enables us to explore how diverse expectations originating from various governance paradigms generate tensions and dilemmas for SLBs, and how these actors navigate their dilemmas by conducting specific practices and narratives. Nevertheless, a drawback of Bevir and Rhodes' framework is its tendency to oversimplify the intricate nature of practice, neglecting to grasp its performative, relational, and evolving dynamics (Wagenaar, 2012). Consequently, this research integrates practice theory into the analytical framework to enhance the exploration of the underlying meaning behind SLBs' practices, emphasising the performative and relational aspects (Wagenaar, 2016).

Chapter 4 outlines the study's research design, research ethics, methods, and reflexivity. It clarifies why and how interpretivist approach is adopted in this study to examine SLBs' practices and narratives in responding to dilemmas arising from conflicting governance paradigms in non-Western context. This chapter also clarifies why a single-case study design

is suitable and beneficial to explore the topic of this study. This chapter further discusses how data was collected through qualitative methods and analysed through grounded theory and narrative analysis.

Chapter 5, through the analysis of policy documents and research by Indonesian scholars, examines the various governance traditions embedded in Indonesia's governance system, which are also reflected in the CCT programme. These governance traditions includes Indonesia's cultural tradition, bureaucratic tradition, performance-target tradition, and collaborative tradition. This chapter underscores that the key challenges encountered in the CCT programme are a result of underlying tensions stemming from these governance traditions in the programme's complex design. Given that the programme operates within Indonesia's governance system, these tensions among different traditions within the programme are indicative of the broader historical, socio-cultural, and governance context of Indonesia.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 present the empirical findings of this study. Chapter 6 discusses the findings related to the various street-level dilemmas encountered by SLBs, which are generated from conflicts among governance traditions during the CCT implementation. This chapter also illustrates three narratives and patterns of SLBs' practices in response to these dilemmas; the 'stamp and sign,' 'changing mindset,' and 'asset mapping'.

Chapter 7 highlights that, in the face of conflicting governance traditions, SLBs not only encounter street-level dilemmas but also engage in blame games. This chapter focuses on how SLBs become targets for blame and how they construct counter-narratives by strategically utilising their discretion and relational dynamics to mitigate the risk of being blamed. This chapter discusses different street-level blame avoidance practices, such as using protocolisation, gaming and questioning the feasibility of the target, sharing the risk of blame through coordination arrangements, blaming the recipients, and shifting blame to other actors.

Chapter 8 discusses different positive and negative implications on how SLBs use their discretion and relationality within the context of conflicting governance traditions. The favorable consequence when SLBs rigorously adhere to regulations (protocolisation) as a strategy to manage blame is that it can result in minimising mistargeting issue. Nevertheless, SLBs' utilisation of their discretion and relationality to manage blame within the setting of conflicting governance traditions can impede the creativity and responsiveness of SLBs to the needs of recipients and obstruct the reciprocal interaction between street-level actors and recipients. The utilisation of gaming practices can hinder the programme to attain its intended goals and the reception of entitlements or rights by recipients could be thwarted. Additionally, avoiding blame may cause SLBs to emphasise collaboration as a strategy to sidestep blame rather than improving the excellence of programme execution. Lastly, the widespread occurrence of blame games has the capability to intensify public disillusionment and undermine public trust in the government.

Finally, Chapter 9 integrates the preceding findings from the previous chapters into conclusions and recommendations. This chapter considers the broader theoretical, analytical, and practical implications generated by this study. It also offers policy recommendations for the Indonesian government based on the findings from this study. Additionally, this chapter outlines the limitations of this study and suggests potential areas for future research agendas.

Chapter 2: Street-level bureaucracy, co-existence governance paradigms, and blame avoidance: street-level practices are challenged

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, using the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme in Indonesia as a research context, this study aims to understand the puzzling phenomenon of street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) operating under hierarchical policy instructions, performance-measurement systems, and a collaborative approach, all simultaneously. How, then, do they deal with the potentially conflicting demands from such different governance paradigms in their everyday practices?

The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate potential conceptual contributions of this study by addressing the limitations of existing literature on street-level bureaucracy and show the relevance of this study's objectives to key debates. The literature has recognised that in the contemporary governance context, street-level practices are shaped by the governance paradigms within which they work within (Brodikin, 2011; Torfing *et al.*, 2020). However, in practice, especially within non-Western contexts, SLBs not only operate in settings where different Western governance arrangements conflict with one another, but also in situations where the cultural dimensions embedded in the governance system clash with Western governance logics (Cohen, 2018). Such a topic has been understudied in the literature on street-level bureaucracy.

This chapter's key argument is that SLBs face a high level of ambiguity and complexity in implementing policies where different governance paradigms co-exist and conflict with one another. In a non-Western context, where governance reforms are uncritically adopted, SLBs have to negotiate the clashing expectations from Western governance paradigms and the country's own cultural traditions. One of the most important themes in my grounded theory analysis is that SLBs engage in blame games to navigate the relational dynamics of how to exercise discretion in interaction with their supervisors, peers, and citizens.

The chapter opens by discussing: the limitations of existing street-level bureaucracy literature for understanding SLBs' challenges in the context of coexisting governance paradigms; an attempt to recontextualise the concept of street-level bureaucracy in settings other than where the theory was developed; and blame theory in analysing street-level discretion. The next section analyses the street-level bureaucracy theory, focusing on the common challenges faced by street-level bureaucrats, the factors that influence their discretion, and the ongoing debate around discretion. It highlights how continuous governance reforms have shaped SLBs' practices and how their use of discretion may differ from what Lipsky's theory (1980, 2010) discusses. The chapter then delves into how governance reforms have shaped street-level practices and how the layering process of shifting governance paradigms opens the possibility for SLBs to work within coexisting governance arrangements and manage inconsistent and conflicting expectations. It also examines the uncritical adoption of Western public administration (WPA) reforms' framework in non-Western countries, generating problems for policy actors in such contexts. Before concluding, the chapter analyses blame avoidance behaviour and its relationship with street-level discretion. By doing so, it emphasises the importance of understanding the interplay between street-level practices, governance paradigms, and blame games.

2.2 Limitations of street-level bureaucracy literature

The preceding chapter clarified that my study stems from my interest in analysing a real-world problem (Bartels and Wagenaar, 2018) concerning the implementation of an intricate poverty alleviation programme: the Conditional Cash Transfer programme (CCT) wherein facilitators play a significant role. Given the complex design of the programme, facilitators must operate within a hierarchical, target-oriented, and collaborative setting that is further compounded by Indonesia's cultural governance context, where they may encounter conflicting expectations from different governance paradigms. To comprehend the complexity of facilitators' working conditions, discretion, and relationships with other stakeholders, the street-level bureaucracy theory is highly pertinent to this study. In light of the real-world

problem of this study and the emergent key findings of my grounded theory analysis, and in conjunction with existing knowledge of street-level bureaucracy, I have identified three conceptual limitations in the literature.

First, there is a limited understanding on how Lipsky's theory is applied to analyses of SLBs' practice and the way SLBs interpret and negotiate their challenges under coexisting different governance paradigms (Klenk and Cohen, 2019). As a process of shifting governance paradigms does not occur linearly (Osborne, 2006; Christensen, 2012), governance paradigms coexist where multiple demands from different governance arrangements contradict one another, generating more challenges for SLBs. With a continuous wave of governance reforms and the coexistence of governance paradigms, the relevance of Lipsky's theory is challenged:

...the question is to what extent, under what conditions and in which ways are Lipsky's observations still relevant in a world that is characterised by the increasing growth of hybrids and hybridity in public service. (Klenk and Cohen, 2019, p.153)

Prior studies limitedly focus on analysing how each different governance tradition affects SLBs' practice. For instance, a majority of previous studies have discussed how New Public Management (NPM) — where SLBs operationalise their work based on effective output-driven and performances-centred target-setting — shape SLBs' interaction with citizens and discretionary practice (Brodin, 2007; Evans, 2013; van Berkel, 2020). Other studies have examined how New Public Governance (NPG) — where SLBs engage in collaborative dynamics, networking and co-production — affect street-level daily encounters with citizens and other policy actors (Bartels, 2018; Gassner and Gofen, 2019; Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021; Mortensen and Needham, 2023). Studies that explore how clashing demands from different, coexisting governance paradigms shape SLBs' challenges and practices are scarce (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013; Klenk and Cohen, 2019). While recent studies have started to recognise that the coexistence of different governance arrangements creates street-level role conflict and mixed professional identities (Hendrikx and van Gestel, 2017; van Gestel, Kuiper

and Hendrikx, 2019), those studies only highlight coexistence between NPM and NPG approaches.

Building on the aforementioned point, it is also worth noting that the uncritical application of governance reform frameworks in the context of the Global South may result in increased complexity for public officials in delivering public services. This is due to the layering and potential contradictions arising from their local culture and Western Public Administration (WPA) expectations (Haque, 1996, 2019). However, the analysis of how cultural traditions create distinct challenges for SLBs, and how they navigate clashing demands between WPA and non-WPA governance systems, remains a relatively understudied area.

The above arguments highlight the second limitation in the current literature on street-level bureaucracy theory. Specifically, there remains a lack of understanding of SLBs' practice in different contexts, such as those found in Global South areas that may differ significantly from the setting in which SLB theory originated (Mohammed, 2021). It is important to recognise that street-level bureaucracy studies often presume that the theory can be universally applied in cross-country research, with a globally uniform theoretical understanding (Lotta *et al.*, 2022). However, such assumptions neglect the contextual factors that shape SLBs' work, as their routines are grounded in socio-cultural contexts that may differ from the context in which the theory was developed. It is problematic to assume that 'specific forms of coping, legitimation, and justification identified in advanced liberal democracies — are general enough to fit every street-level agency beyond the original context of the theory' (Lotta *et al.*, 2022, p.3).

Moreover, this also undermines the positions of SLBs in other settings — for instance Global South nations — where their work is intricately linked to local cultural dimensions embedded in society (Cohen, 2018). SLBs from such contexts may have different perceptions about their roles, dilemmas, discretionary judgments, and relationship with others. This highlights the need for a more nuanced and context-specific approach to studying SLB theory, one that takes into account the unique social, cultural, and political factors that shape SLBs' practice in different contexts (Cohen, 2018; Møller, 2019; Lotta *et al.*, 2022). By doing so, we

can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and dilemmas faced by SLBs. It is further argued that:

...taking SLB theory to the developing world requires an additional effort of recontextualisation. It demands interpreting observed SLB action as embedded into institutional environments that may radically differ from those seen in North America or Europe' (Lotta *et al.*, 2022, p.5)

The third limitation of street-level bureaucracy theory pertains to the almost complete absence of discussion about the role of blame games at street-level and their impact on shaping SLBs' practice and discretion. In contrast to the two points above, where limitations were identified at the initial stage of research based on articulating real-world problems and studying literature to justify the importance of this study, the third limitation came from the abductive process of data analysis. Through grounded theory analysis, 'blame games' emerged as one of the most significant themes, showing that blame avoidance played a pivotal part at street-level day-to-day practice in framing discretion and relational dynamics. However, despite its importance, the literature on this issue remains scarce (Catney and Henneberry, 2012; Klijn *et al.*, 2020). This limitation highlights the need to further explore the impact of blame games on street-level bureaucracy in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of SLBs' decision-making processes and their interactions with other actors in the policy process.

Within the complex environment in which governance paradigms and cultural traditions coexist, it remains unclear how these contexts shape the relational dynamics between SLBs and their peers, supervisors, and citizens, and the discretion needed to negotiate their challenges. Despite the acknowledgment of an antagonistic relationship between SLBs and managers, where managers exert control over SLBs' discretion or SLBs neglect clients' needs due to pressures from certain governance paradigms (Lipsky, 2010; Brodtkin, 2011; Gundhus, 2017), there is a lack of discussion on how SLBs frame their relational dynamics with other actors and citizens through blame games. Furthermore, while scholars have studied various ways in which SLBs engage with discretion and factors that determine their discretion in

managing complexity (Tummers et al., 2015; Gofen, Sella & Gassner, 2019), there is limited research on how SLBs' perspective on blame potentially shapes their discretion in dealing with different challenges.

Again, one significant limitation in the existing literature on street-level bureaucracy is the lack of attention given to the role of blame games in shaping SLBs' practice and discretion. Despite their importance in SLBs' day-to-day practice, blame games have received little discussion in the literature. Policymakers' tendency to blame street-level actors for perceived implementation failures is recognised (Brodkin, 2012; Hupe and Hill, 2015, p.16) and the possibility of SLBs playing blame games by shifting responsibility onto citizens has been mentioned briefly by Lipsky (2010). A previous study has mentioned how blame risk shapes street-level decision-making (Catney and Henneberry, 2012). Nevertheless, especially from a social welfare policy context, there is a lack of knowledge about how SLBs intentionally frame their practice to avoid blame, how a fear of blame potentially shapes street-level practices, relational dimensions, and discretion, and how street-level blame avoidance practice impacts policy implementation and its outcomes.

This study intends to overcome the aforementioned limitations by examining the practices of SLBs in a non-Western context. It seeks to analyse the challenges faced by SLBs and how they navigate conflicting expectations arising from different governance paradigms. After identifying significant weaknesses in the existing literature, the subsequent sections of this chapter will delve deeper into these issues by exploring three key areas: i) street-level bureaucracy; ii) governance paradigms; and iii) blame avoidance concepts.

2.3 Street-level bureaucracy and policy implementation: Understanding street-level bureaucrats and their characteristics

The term street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980, 2010) was first coined amidst a major debate between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to policy implementation (Hill and Hupe, 2009). In an early study of implementation, Pressman and Wildavsky (1984, p.xxiii) started to challenge the dominant view of implementation as a top-down and rational model

process in which implementation was viewed as ‘the ability to forge subsequent links in the causal chain so as to obtain the desired results’. There was a hierarchical predisposition embedded in the top-down approach, presuming that ‘policy formation is more important than policy implementation’ and implementers have no power to influence policy-making process as their role is merely to follow and execute prescribed policy aims (Hupe and Hill, 2015, p.2; Hupe, 2019). In contrast, Pressman and Wildavsky demonstrated that what happens in the implementation process significantly alters policy aims.

Bottom-up scholars successfully challenged the top-down approach. For instance, Elmore (1979) proposed the idea of ‘backward policy mapping’, arguing that analysing lower-level staffs’ perspective and practice offered a better way to understand policy implementation problems than policymakers’ perspectives, policy directives, or policy documents. Barret and Fudge (1981) argued that the execution of policy is mediated by interpretations and modifications of implementers, who might have different viewpoints from policy formulators. Hence, policy is neither a static process nor a simple separation between formulation and implementation (Ibid., p.251). Lipsky (1971, 1980, 2010) made a seminal contribution by introducing the concept of ‘street-level bureaucracy’ to foreground the idea that to completely understand policy processes and outcomes, we must start focusing on the ‘daily encounters of street-level workers’ (Lipsky, 2010, p.xiii).

Street-level bureaucrats are defined as ‘public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work’ (Lipsky, 2010, p.3). Typical examples of street-level occupations are police officers, teachers, social workers (Lipsky, 2010), or other professionals who work in private sectors, as long as they control the delivery of public services or enforce public regulations (Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011; Hupe, Hill and Buffat, 2015). Scholars explain that interacting directly with citizens, having a high-degree of discretion, and working under complex circumstances can be counted as SLBs’ characteristics (Hupe and Hill, 2007; Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011).

The primary characteristic of SLBs is that they have a direct encounter with citizens in delivering public services (Lipsky, 2010; Bartels, 2013). SLBs' decision-making process and resulting decisions mostly rely on the ongoing and dynamic process during SLB-citizen interactions (Bartels, 2014, p.670). This inherent characteristic is important because it means that SLBs connect state and society (Hupe, 2019, p.5). Citizens' impression of policies also depends on how SLBs interact with them at a point of service delivery (Meyers, Glaser and Mac Donald, 1998; Belabas and Gerrits, 2017).

Particularly in the context of social welfare, SLB-citizen interaction becomes pivotal as SLBs act as gatekeepers (Keiser, 1999) who determine citizens' eligibility for a programme, public service, benefits or sanctions (Ellis, 2007; Caswell and Høybye-Mortensen, 2015; Ramírez, 2021). SLBs do 'people processing', transforming individuals with different backgrounds, personalities, and situations into clients that should 'fit standardised definitions of units consigned to specific bureaucratic slots' (Lipsky, 1980,p.59). Thus, SLBs become 'first and foremost individuals, who are responsible both for the good and the bad in clients' lives' (Møller and Stensöta, 2019, p.1426). SLBs can enhance citizens' wellbeing by responding to their needs appropriately or, instead, creating more problems for citizens by disregarding their situation (Meyers, Glaser and Mac Donald, 1998; Lavee and Cohen, 2019).

The second distinguishing characteristic of SLBs is their discretionary power, which enables them to exercise freedom in making choices and judgments while interpreting and adjusting policies during implementation (Meyers and Vorsanger, 2007; Zacka, 2017). Through their exercise of discretion, SLBs may modify the substance of established policies and alter their effects on citizens (Durose, 2011; Gofen *et al.*, 2019). As a result, SLBs are often regarded as *de facto* policymakers who wield significant influence over policy outcomes (Lipsky, 2010; Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011). SLBs' discretionary practices are closely linked to their encounter and relational dynamics, not only with citizens and other policy actors (Bartels, 2013; Döring and Jilke, 2022) but also with their context. Indeed, 'webs of interaction and relational dynamics give shape to individuals'(Bartels and Turnbull, 2020, p.1331), including the way front-line actors make judgments and decisions about rules and situations

at hand (Wagenaar, 2020). Thus, scholars further argue that street-level discretion can be understood based on practice theory² and a relational approach (Wagenaar, 2004, 2020; Bartels, 2018c; Bartels and Turnbull, 2020; Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021). A rule can be prescribed but it certainly cannot dictate street-level practice. To know ‘what is going on and what to do’, SLBs’ work is an emergent process of interacting with the context, knowledge, and materials at hand (Bartels, 2018b, p.72-73). Discretion is a ‘practice’ (Wagenaar, 2020a); SLBs engage in ‘a more interactive, improvisational, and pragmatic work practice: one through which frontline workers give meaning to and form judgments regarding situations they encounter’ (Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021, p.279).

Given that the practice of SLBs centres on how they exercise their discretionary power, the next section will focus on street-level dilemmas and discretion.

2.3.1 Understanding common dilemmas at the street-level

In performing their work, SLBs are frequently confronted by a challenging environment characterised by scarce resources, time, and information (Walker and Gilson, 2004; Hupe and Hill, 2007). They are also often troubled by ambiguous and conflicting policies (Røhnebæk and Breit, 2022; Loyens and Paraciani, 2023) and expected to respond to circumstances that are often not written into the regulation (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003a; Cohen, 2018). For instance, in processing the eligibility of citizens to access certain government programmes (see, Perelmiter, 2022), the circumstances of citizens ‘rarely fit neatly into rule-based categories’ (Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011, p.8).

Such conditions create four types of challenges for SLBs (Hjörne, Juhila and van Nijnatten, 2010). First, SLBs face a significant dilemma of having to meet high service demands while working in less-than-ideal conditions and with limited resources (Riccucci, 2007; Lipsky, 2010). This imbalance between expectations and resources hinders SLBs from providing satisfactory services (Walker and Gilson, 2004), and when they do deliver high-

² Practice theory will be further explored in Chapter 3.

quality services, it often comes at the cost of their personal time and energy (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000).

Another significant challenge facing SLBs is the tension between treating all citizens fairly and being responsive to individual cases (Lipsky, 2010, xii). SLBs are state agents who are accountable to the government, leading to a tendency to comply with standardisation regulations to provide public services to all clients impartially. However, as citizens' agents, they are also accountable to individuals and must be responsive to their preferences, often leading them to bend the rules (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000). This dilemma is particularly evident in employment programmes, where SLBs struggle to adhere to central regulations while simultaneously providing customised solutions to address jobseekers' individual preferences (Senghaas, Freier and Kupka, 2019; Freier and Senghaas, 2021). This tension between standardisation and customisation exposes the inherent conflict within the SLB role.

Third, SLBs experience a conflict between adhering to governance arrangements and following their professional intuition (Evans, 2010; Hendriks and van Gestel, 2017). SLBs often perceive that practice and behaviour expected by organisations in implementing a policy contradict their professional norms (Tummers *et al.*, 2012). Specifically, the introduction of managerialism has heightened this challenge, as SLBs are now expected to prioritise standardised performance targets over their clients' needs, which typically do not fit with SLBs' professional values on how they should treat or assist their clients (Ricucci, 2007; Brodtkin, 2011; Freier and Senghaas, 2021). For example, teachers are increasingly pressured to focus on benchmarking school performance instead of addressing students' individual needs, which runs counter to their professional norms (van Gestel, Kuiper and Hendriks, 2019).

Lastly, SLBs face a moral conflict where they have to choose to comply with standard regulations or follow their moral values (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000; Loyens and Maesschalck, 2010). Often SLBs are in a position where they have to adhere to organisational goals that go against their moral beliefs. One empirical study showed that, in deciding eligibility for a food programme, SLBs were challenged by a moral dilemma (Perelmiter, 2022). If SLBs

comply with regulations, meaning that they 'deny food for the poor', this decision is considered as a lack of empathy in conflict with their moral values. However, if they give food to non-eligible people, it is in conflict with 'fairness' values (Ibid).

2.3.2 Understanding discretion at street-level

In negotiating these challenges and dilemmas, SLBs utilise discretion to handle the physical and emotional pressures that they face in their day-to-day work (Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011). It is argued that discretion is impossible to avoid (Hupe and Hill, 2020). Discretion is defined as 'the legitimate space for the officials to make their own decisions and exercise their own judgement about how public services are delivered and the degree of freedom from external control they have in doing this' (Evans and Hupe, 2020, p.4). Street-level discretion can be discerned in two different ways: 'discretion-as-granted' and 'discretion-as-used' (Hupe, 2013; Hupe, Hill and Buffat, 2015). Discretion-as-granted refers to a degree of freedom that is allocated to SLBs by the rule-maker, and discretion-as-used refers to the way freedom is actually being used (Hupe, 2013, p.453).

To handle their work complexities, SLBs commonly establish three patterns of practice: they manage their work by minimising demand; maximising the use of resources; and modifying the concept of their job and their clients (Lipsky, 2010, p.83). These practices create discretionary routines or 'coping mechanisms'. Lipsky (2010, p.86) identified four common coping mechanisms: rationing services, controlling clients, husbanding resources, and managing the consequences of routine practices. Tummers and his colleagues (2015, p.2) define coping as 'behavioural efforts frontline workers employ when interacting with clients, in order to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts they face on an everyday basis'. They identify three families of coping strategies that SLBs commonly exercise: moving toward clients, moving away from clients, and moving against clients. While there is an inclination to portray street-level discretion negatively, this typology also recognises some positive discretionary judgments as they further argue that, in practice, SLBs 'seem to

want to perform meaningful public service, even in stressful situations' (Tummers et al., 2015, p.11).

As having discretion is acknowledged as an inherent trait of SLBs, literature on street-level bureaucracy has heavily focused on identifying various aspects that shape street-level decision and discretion is employed (Meyers and Vorsanger, 2007; Winter, 2007; Gofen, Sella and Gassner, 2019; Cohen and Golan-Nadir, 2020). I will focus on four factors that can potentially shape street-level discretionary practice: clients' attributes; SLBs' characteristics; social interaction between SLBs and peers or supervisors; and governance arrangements.

SLBs' direct encounters with clients are crucial in enacting policies (Bartels, 2013, 2014), and citizens' attributes are a major factor in shaping street-level discretion, influenced by two elements. First, SLBs' interpretation of clients' deservingness or worthiness plays a crucial role in their discretionary decision-making (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000; Lipsky, 2010), where SLBs tend to bend rules and be more lenient towards citizens who are disadvantaged by public service systems. For instance, SLBs at a Social Security Agency gave more time to assisting the elderly than other citizens (Pivoras and Kaselis, 2019). Second, clients' social backgrounds, knowledge, economic status, and even attitudes can influence SLBs' discretionary judgments (Nielsen, 2015; Einstein and Glick, 2017; Döring and Jilke, 2022) leading to the stereotyping of citizens and labelling them as 'good' or 'bad' clients (Fletcher, 2011; Harrits and Møller, 2014). Clients' trustworthiness also plays a part in shaping street-level discretion (Raaphorst and Van de Walle, 2018; Davidovitz and Cohen, 2020), where SLBs also tend to provide more services and assistance to clients they distrust, while rationing services for those they trust, to avoid conflict and complaints (Davidovitz and Cohen, 2020).

SLBs' assessment of citizens' attributes is influenced not only by clients' characteristics but also by SLBs' own beliefs, values, and professional backgrounds (van Gestel, Kuiper and Hendriks, 2019; Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003;). SLBs' perception of policy objectives can shape their discretionary practices and their willingness to implement policies (May and Winter, 2009; Tummers, Steijn and Bekkers, 2012). Additionally, SLBs' professions also shape

how they engage in discretion. For instance, teachers and healthcare workers tend to bend rules to address citizens' preferences, while police officers tend to rigidly follow rules during direct interaction with citizens (Tummers *et al.*, 2015). SLBs' level of emotional intelligence and empathy is also seen as an influential aspect that forms street-level discretion (Jensen and Pedersen, 2017; Levitats, 2023). Officers with a higher level of empathy tend to bend rules and give more attention to meeting the client's needs than those who have low-level empathy³.

In performing their work, SLBs build a relationship with vertical (e.g., managers, supervisors, policymakers, citizens) and horizontal (e.g., peers or other SLBs from different organisation) actors (Hupe and Hill, 2007). These relational dynamics can also shape SLBs' discretionary decision-making (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000; Evans, 2011; Hupe and Keiser, 2019). Often, when SLBs doubt their discretionary decision, they rely on peers' opinions to make sure their judgment is acceptable (Raaphorst and Loyens, 2018). While Lipsky (2010) argues that SLBs have the autonomy to exercise discretion, since their micro-level decision cannot be supervised by their supervisor, that has the potential to undermine the relational dynamics between SLBs and supervisors — namely, that 'discretion is a relational construct that is negotiated between SLBs and their supervisors' (Keulemans and Groeneveld, 2020, p.308). The SLBs-supervisors relationship shapes SLBs' discretion as SLBs frequently consult and seek feedback from supervisors on how they engage with discretion (Hassan *et al.*, 2021). Also, front-line supervisors 'potentially set the marks for which values and perceptions can legitimately protrude street-level bureaucrats' work', including their discretion (Keulemans and Groeneveld, 2020, p.308; see also Evans 2011, 2015).

Another influence on SLBs' discretion is the governance arrangements under which policy is implemented (Brodkin, 2008; Aschhoff and Vogel, 2019; Jacobsson, Wallinder and Seing, 2020; Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021). Within a governance culture focused on formal

³ Other scholars link SLBs' level of empathy and their gender characteristics and how those traits affect SLBs' practical judgment. For instance, female SLBs tend to actively make use of their discretion (e.g., providing additional services) more than male SLBs because the former show a higher level of empathy with their citizens (Nielsen, 2015; Hadna, 2022).

hierarchy, rationality, and rule-following action, SLBs tend to share the perception that 'the clearer the specialists' instructions were, the better'; hence they tend to shun discretion (Jacobsson, Wallinder and Seing, 2020, p.14). Existing studies also examine how new managerialism shapes SLBs' judgment and practice (Taylor and Kelly, 2006; Brodtkin, 2011; Kaufman, 2020), where SLBs are confronted by an expectation to treat clients responsively while also being pressured to meet organisation's targets. As a consequence, SLBs use their discretion in a way that potentially neglects the citizens' needs (Brodtkin, 2011). Additionally, within a collaborative context, studies show that SLBs tend to actively improvise and creatively use their discretion by engaging with context and local knowledge, citizens, and other stakeholders (Durose, 2009; Bartels, 2018a; Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021; Mortensen and Needham, 2023).

As previously discussed, SLBs engage with discretion in diverse ways, for different purposes, and shaped by various factors. However, discretion can generate conflicting policy outcomes, both positive and negative. Therefore, this section will examine the ongoing debate about SLBs' discretion, particularly regarding scholars' divergent viewpoints on whether discretion is a favourable or harmful practice, and whether it should be restricted or promoted.

2.3.3 Debate about discretion and the importance of understanding a shifting of governance paradigms

While discretion is considered as a prominent aspect of SLBs, it generates much debate amongst street-level bureaucracy scholars because discretion may impact policy and the lives of the people they serve in either positive or negative ways (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003). From one perspective, discretion is viewed as problematic action that creates disadvantages for policy implementation as it allows SLBs to 'sabotage' the policy and diminish the policy's goal (Brehm and Gates, 1997, p.21). For others, the SLBs' discretion may be perceived as an excellent practice, as it permits SLBs to tailor their interventions to the unique needs of each individual and build more positive, respectful, and empathetic interactions with citizens (Gofen *et al.*, 2019), leading to better policy outcomes and greater

legitimacy of public services (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000). This debate also leads on to thoughts about how discretion should be granted to street-level actors — in the sense of whether policymakers need to limit or extend SLBs' discretionary powers (see Evans, 2011).

In the early establishment of street-level bureaucracy theory, while Lipsky (1971, 1980, [2010]) highlights the importance of discretionary practice for SLBs, he tends to emphasise his analysis on the negative use of discretion, where SLBs are more focused on meeting their self-interest or organisations' objectives rather than being responsive to citizens' needs. SLBs tend to make discretionary decisions based on their personal beliefs and values, which can perpetuate existing inequalities in society; for instance, SLBs tend to give less assistance and attention to problematic citizens who are in difficult situations (Lipsky, 1971, p.395). Also, due to the high demands of cases and workloads, SLBs use discretion to prioritise easier cases and abandon other 'difficult to help' clients (Lipsky, 2010; Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011). SLBs also typically utilise their discretionary power to make their work psychologically manageable (Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011). Lipsky also hints that SLBs may use discretion to play blame games by blaming the citizens for any undesirable occurrences during service delivery, so they 'are shielded from having to confront their own failures or the failures of the agencies for which they work' (Lipsky, 2010, p.153).

Street-level discretion, then, is perceived as a deficit and negative practice that can sabotage policy to meet its purposes. So, there is a tendency to control and limit SLBs' discretion by formulating procedures and performance measurements as tightly as possible to ensure SLBs act accordingly with organisations' aims and avoid the pursuit of self-interest (Brehm and Gates, 1997; Gundhus, 2017; Evans and Hupe, 2020). Maynard-Moody and Musheno further posit that:

when a (discretionary) decision leads to a negative result, especially a visible negative result, then the street-level worker is seen as acting without authority, to be rogue or a 'bad apple', In such circumstances, workers are admonished or punished for going beyond the rules and prescribed practices. So, while street-level worker judgment is necessary and ever present, it is fundamentally illegitimate unless operating within specific juridical bounds (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2012, p.3).

However, recently scholars have shown a more optimistic perspective on discretion as they assert that SLBs' practical judgment can indeed generate positive outcomes for both policy and citizens (Durose, 2007, 2011; van Hulst, de Graaf and van den Brink, 2012; de Graaf, van Hulst and Michels, 2015; Virtanen, Laitinen and Stenvall, 2018). Durose (2009, 2011) posits that SLBs who work in a contemporary governance context are perceived as civic entrepreneurs. Rather than seeing discretion merely as a tool to achieve policy objectives, SLBs creatively engage with discretionary practice to be more attentive to a local context to provide more suitable solutions for citizens. Similarly, van Hulst, de Graaf and van den Brink's (2012, p.446) research shows that, by using discretion, SLBs act as 'exemplary practitioners' who modify their practice in assisting disadvantaged neighbourhoods by innovatively using their local understanding, strategic networking and empathic engagement. Other scholars view discretion as 'a performative and creative mechanism' in responding to policy gaps so SLBs can engage in 'policy improvisation' (Campos and Peeters, 2022, p.29).

As previously mentioned, a key debate about street-level discretion is also related to governance reform. Hence, there is the need to understand street-level discretion in relation to governance reform and governance paradigms — importantly, how SLBs now understand and carry out their work and cope with situations may be different from when SLB theory was first developed. Durose (2007, 2009, 2011) argues that Lipsky's rational explanations regarding street-level bureaucrats might be unable to capture complicated circumstances that SLBs face within contemporary situations characterised by multiple, conflicting governance arrangements — see also Klenk and Cohen (2019). Durose further asserts that:

Governance structures have changed significantly since the 'street level bureaucrat' analysis. So, whilst Lipsky undoubtedly added to the understanding of policy implementation...the 'street level bureaucrat' analysis is limited in its ability to capture the move from government to governance and to acknowledge the complexity and differentiated experiences of front-line workers in the contemporary public sector (Durose, 2007, p.220) .

In line with Durose's thinking, this study posits that it is pertinent to examine SLBs' practice under complex governance settings where they experience different challenges and expectations. It is salient to analyse how the development of public administration and shifting

governance paradigms potentially shape SLBs' understanding of their roles, practice and challenges. Also, evolving governance paradigms through governance reform programmes is a world-wide trend, with a majority of Global South countries uncritically applying such reforms (Haque, 1996). It is then salient to explore the potential contradiction and implications of uncritical adoption of governance reforms in non-Western contexts and discuss SLBs' practice from the perspective of those other contexts that are different from the contexts in which SLB theory and governance paradigms were introduced. Hence, the following section will discuss how shifting governance paradigms and western governance reforms that are adopted in non-western settings shape SLBs' practice.

2.4 Understanding SLBs' practice in relation to different governance paradigms

This section argues that the shifting of governance paradigms is a layering process where each paradigm will co-exist, and that the coexistence of governance paradigms potentially shapes practice and escalates the complexity of SLBs' work. This section firstly discusses a brief history and characteristics of three governance paradigms, then discussion will be focused on the way in which governance paradigms evolve frames SLBs' practice and role expectations, particularly in relation to their discretion, relational dynamics, and identities.

The way the public sector and governance are structured and managed has continuously developed (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). Scholars of public administration (Weber, 1958; Hood, 1991; Rhodes, 1996; Osborne, 2010) highlight three governance paradigms introduced as consequences of public sector reforms — Traditional Public Administration (TPA); New Public Management (NPM); and New Public Governance (NPG) — with each paradigm having its normative logic in the ways public policies are implemented.

In the early 20th century, Weber (Weber, 1958; cited in Langer (2022)) identified the rise of bureaucracy as a challenge to informal (e.g. patrimonial) practices in public organisations. According to Weber, in a modern society, neutrality and impersonality values were becoming important tools for governments to achieve their functional purposes (Weber,

1958). Bureaucracy proposed the idea that public officials should no longer work based on personal ties but regulations, procedures, and hierarchical structures of accountability (Tijsterman and Overeem, 2014, p.74). Hence, sets of formal regulations were used as ultimate guides for a government and its officials to behave and function when executing policy, while public organisations were designed as hierarchical systems (Considine and Lewis, 1999; Torfing *et al.*, 2020). Weber's work on bureaucracy has later formed the basis of what was termed Traditional Public Administration (for further discussion, see, Lynn, 2001).

NPM became an international reform trend in the early 1980s and its emergence was linked to a global economic crisis (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017). Operating government by imitating private sector management strategies (particularly in the UK, New Zealand, and USA) was widely introduced as a promising reform programme that could help government 'to save money and increase efficiency' (Hood, 1991; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p.6). Explicit standards and performance-measurements —where public sectors create indicators of success, goals and targets — were suggested (Hood, 1991, p.4). Audit mechanisms and input-output control were highlighted to ensure efficiency and, importantly, to keep public officers accountable for their actions (Torfing *et al.*, 2020). To ensure that administrators could be held accountable, there was a need to control their autonomy and discretionary power (Evans, 2010). Although citizens gained some freedom to select services from service providers that could supply the best quality for them, they still did not have significant authority and power to determine the substance of service received and were mainly seen as 'customers' (Pestoff, 2018, p.31).

Around 1995, Rhodes coined the term 'hollowing-out' of the state (1996, 1997), arguing that government had increasingly lost its core functions and that the conventional theory of public administration was no longer sufficient. The term New Public Governance (NPG) was introduced in the early 2000s as 'a conceptual tool' to understand the complexity of governance (Osborne, 2006), asserting that in addressing complex issues within public arenas, various stakeholders, including citizens, jointly take part in providing public services,

meaning that power does not belong only to the government (Stoker, 1998; Runya, Qigui and Wei, 2015). Concepts such as meta-governance (Sørensen, 2006; Sørensen and Torfing, 2009), collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Stout, Bartels and Love, 2018), networking (Agranoff, 2006, 2007), and co-production (Needham, 2008; Bovaird and Loeffler, 2012; Durose *et al.*, 2017) were introduced to accentuate the importance of horizontal relationship amongst organisations, policy actors, and citizens.

An evolution of governance paradigms within public sectors also significantly transforms how governance operates at the street-level (Considine and Lewis, 1999; Klenk and Cohen, 2019). Importantly, from a street-level viewpoint, SLBs' practice becomes significantly more challenging due to the shifting governance paradigms, as this process is not linear and clear-cut; instead, it involves layering, meaning that new governance traditions are added to existing ones without completely eliminating the old ones (Osborne, 2010; Torfing *et al.*, 2020). It also suggests that SLBs are likely to face conflicting demands from various coexisting governance paradigms, as argued below:

It is the consequence of subsequent waves of reform – from the Weberian bureaucracy to New Public Management to New Public Governance and post-NPM – that give rise to the *co-existence (and not replacement!) of different administrative paradigms...* Street-level bureaucrats working inside these organisations face numerous competing external demands and expectations...(the demands) are not only competing but very often conflicting. (Klenk and Cohen, 2019, p.152, *emphasis added*)

In a contemporary governance context, ambiguity, tension, and complexity may intensify for SLBs since they often operate within a policy setting where the logics of hierarchies, performance-centred approaches, and collaborative dynamics coexist. They are likely to face pressure to meet demands from various existing governance paradigms which may potentially clash with one another (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013; Torfing *et al.*, 2020).

While this issue is critical, there is a lack of discussion regarding how SLBs negotiate their roles and practices in such complex contexts (Klenk and Cohen, 2019).⁴

So far, we understand that each governance paradigm creates a different framing of what SLBs' roles should be. SLBs are challenged by conflicting expectations about how they ideally perform their work, at least in relation to three aspects: their relational dynamics with citizens and other actors; their discretionary power; and their identity (Considine and Lewis, 1999; Bartels, 2013; Aschhoff and Vogel, 2019; Klenk and Cohen, 2019; Bartels and Turnbull, 2020).

SLBs face conflicting demands from different governance paradigms in their interactions with citizens. Under TPA, SLBs must be impartial to ensure equal service provision and avoid biases (Bartels, 2013; Torfing *et al.*, 2020). However, this creates a power imbalance between SLBs and citizens, who are often viewed as passive recipients of government services (Pestoff, 2018). In contrast, the NPM regime pressures SLBs to meet targets, resulting in target-centred and instrumental relationships with citizens (Fletcher, 2011; van Berkel, 2020). This approach prioritises measured outcomes over building meaningful relationships and discussing citizens' actual needs (see Brodtkin, 2008, 2011). Under the NPG perspective, SLBs are expected to collaborate horizontally with citizens and other actors, creating symmetric power relations and meaningful relationships (Bovaird, 2007; Ryan, 2012; Gassner and Gofen, 2019), for instance, through co-production (Needham, 2008; Vanleene, Voets and Verschuere, 2019). This requires SLBs to provide space for negotiation, coordination, and dialogue with citizens, as well as networking and collaboration with other actors (Tuurnas, Stenvall and Rannisto, 2016; Loyens, 2019).

In terms of discretion, under the TPA paradigms, bureaucratic administrators are expected to uphold the value of neutrality where they have to comply to political control,

⁴ A review of the literature emphasises that more empirical studies are needed to analyse the way SLBs interpret competing demands and how they negotiate their dilemma under co-existence and hybrid governance contexts (Klenk and Cohen, 2019).

procedures and rules (formal rationality) (Langer, 2022). But they also have to sustain and pursue their ideas and values (substantive rationality) through their practice (Bartels, 2009). Bureaucratic structure seems to offer little room for SLBs' freedom and discretion as they are trapped in the 'iron cage'; 'being rule-bound and characterised by purpose-rationality' that potentially threatens their freedom (Tijsterman and Overeem, 2014). Also, 'formal rationality has a paralysing effect on substantive rationality' (Langer, 2022, p.126). However, with the substantive rationality in bureaucracy, discretion is acknowledged as an integral part of bureaucrat's ethos (Du Gay, 2000; du Gay and Pedersen, 2020).

In contrast, the NPM paradigm actively seeks to control SLBs' discretion to ensure that agents can work and make choices in the most effective ways (Brodikin, 2008; see, Hood, 1991). Under a principal-agent relationship, principals tend to distrust SLBs, assuming that they will utilise their freedom to advance their own interests, rather than making sound judgments (Evans and Hupe, 2020, p.5). Therefore, discretion is viewed more as an obstacle to controlling agents and holding them accountable (Gundhus, 2017). Conversely, the NPG logic expands the room for SLBs to use discretion meaningfully and innovatively, placing them in more central governing positions to address citizens' needs through dialogue and collaboration (Torfing *et al.*, 2020). Discretion is not limited but rather expected to be used in a trustworthy and reciprocal manner, emphasising a relationship of mutual trust between SLBs and citizens (Bovaird, 2007; Ryan, 2012).

Also, the shift in governance paradigms has a significant impact on the identity of street-level actors. Klenk and Cohen (2019, p.146; see also Aschhoff and Vogel, 2019) suggest that SLBs' understanding of their role in the public service delivery system and the ideas, beliefs, and dispositions they hold about their role form a part of their street-level identity. Different governance paradigms can create different SLB identities — such as the 'guardian' or 'classic professional' who view their legitimacy based on adhering to administrative guidelines and rigid formal processes; the 'managerial' identity who emphasises achieving maximum outputs and results through standardised management practices; and the

'collaborative' identity who prioritises creating a mutual and equal relationship with actors and citizens (Hendrikx and van Gestel, 2017, p.1110; Aschhoff and Vogel, 2019, p.710). SLBs may also develop a hybrid identity, combining different elements of these identities (Aschhoff and Vogel, 2019). Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2000, 2003) also identified two more SLB identities — namely, the state agent and the citizen agent. The former makes judgments based on government rules, laws, and regulations, while the latter prioritises moral judgment, trust-based relationships with citizens, and their needs and values. SLBs' professional background, personal characteristics, and the situation they encounter can influence their perception of their identity, and this can change over time.

Over the past decades, these paradigms have been introduced to the countries of the Global South (Rubakula, 2014; van der Wal, van den Berg and Haque, 2021). This means that governance paradigms may not only co-exist with other paradigms of WPA but will co-exist and conflict with non-WPA cultural traditions, which arguably makes SLBs' work even more challenging. Thus, it is important to discuss how Western governance reform is applied in the non-Western context. Is there any debate about the adaptation of the WPA framework in the non-western context? How does such reform adaptation shape SLBs' practice? The following section discusses critiques on forced adoption of the WPA governance arrangements in the Global South world.

2.5 Adoption of the Western governance paradigms in non-western context: critiques of Western public administration (WPA)

Before discussing the adoption of WPA in non-Western contexts, it is important to briefly highlight the meaning of WPA. The term 'Western Public Administration' denotes a global approach to public administration and development originating from countries like Britain, the United States, Europe, France, Australia, and New Zealand (Drechsler, 2015). It encompasses three primary paradigms: the Weberian bureaucratic model, New Public Management, and New Public Governance (Drechsler, 2015; Haque, 2019). On the other

hand, 'non-Western Public Administration' refers to public administration and governance practices in non-Western regions. In these contexts, public administration practices are significantly influenced by factors such as religion, local culture, and ethnicity (Drechsler, 2015, 2020; Haque, 2019; van der Wal, van den Berg and Haque, 2021). For example, Drechsler (2015, p.112-122) provides instances of non-Western Public Administration, such as Confucian PA (rooted in the Confucian legacy of the Chinese Empire) or Islamic PA. Indeed, the adoption of WPA values is widespread in the Global South (Haque, 1996; van der Wal, van den Berg and Haque, 2021), including Indonesia, and is largely driven by pressure from international donor agencies (Rubakula, 2014; Drechsler, 2015; Prasojo, 2020). However, scholars argue that the WPA governance paradigm cannot be applied universally because of its context-less nature; that is, its incapability of being responsive to and compatible with the local cultures/local wisdom embedded in the community (Haque, 1996; van der Wal, van den Berg and Haque, 2021).

Arguably, governance paradigms imported from the West may not be entirely applicable in the Global South world (Saputra, Suropto and Chrisdiana, 2018). In Indonesia, for example, WPA alone cannot serve as the sole solution to improve and transform public administration or address issues within its bureaucracy (Tjokrowinoto, 1996). Furthermore, critics argue that WPA frameworks discourage non-Western countries from 'developing their own strengths based on their own traditions', and instead prescribe context-neutral propositions and fashionable concepts that disregard local knowledge and experiences (Haque, 2019; Drechsler, 2020, p.299).

The forced and uncritical adoption of the WPA model has had significant negative impacts on Global South countries. Firstly, it creates a challenging environment for bureaucrats who must navigate tensions between administrative practices informed by local traditions and those expected by the WPA (Haque, 1996). This dilemma is evident in Israel,

where SLBs struggle to reconcile cultural practices⁵ embedded in the community with policies that demand equal treatment of all clients. This conflict is particularly evident when deciding whether to accept informal payments such as ‘thank you’ money or ‘favouring’ friends and family, which are culturally rooted but contradict the WPA’s professional standards (Cohen, 2018).

Secondly, the WPA model does not necessarily lead to significant improvements in government systems in Global South countries. The model may be ill-suited to non-Western administrative cultures, resulting in weak and ineffective public institutions. Administrative reforms may be treated as symbolic or formalistic processes, with little regard for their substantive elements (Haque, 1996; Rubakula, 2014). Thirdly, governments may design unrealistic and overly ambitious administration reform strategies that are beyond the capacity of inexperienced and inadequate bureaucracies to implement (Haque, 1996; Mollah, 2016). Lastly, the uncritical adoption of WPA curbs the government’s capacity to reflect on and understand its own local issues. This undermines the development of contextually appropriate administrative practices and policies, further perpetuating the reliance on external models that may not be relevant or effective in the local context (Haque, 1996; Drechsler, 2020).

The clash between the WPA framework and traditional cultural bureaucracy in developing countries is an ongoing challenge (Haque, 1996). Research on Indonesia highlights that traditional bureaucracy⁶, deeply rooted in socio-cultural-historical aspects, will always coexist with the Western bureaucratic system (Tjokrowinoto, 1996; Turner, Prasajo and Sumarwono, 2019). For instance, the Javanese culture, including the paternalistic and deferential norm of ‘*ewuh pakewuh*’, is internalised in Indonesia’s bureaucracy and creates challenges for SLBs. While the WPA framework expects SLBs to exercise discretion and creativity in decision-making, the ‘*ewuh pakewuh*’ culture requires them to wait for instructions

⁵ *Proteksia* (receiving preferential treatment from a friend or a family member) (Cohen, 2018, p.180). Bringing this cultural aspect to the health service context can lead to favouritism and bribery.

⁶ Traditional (*tradisional*) bureaucracy here does not refer to ‘traditional/classic/old’ public administration. Rather, it refers to ethnic values or traditions of Indonesian society or groups (e.g. Javanese tradition or Sundanese tradition) that influence bureaucratic features in Indonesia.

and fear being blamed for making innovative decisions without consulting their superiors (Dwiyanto, 2002; Rizal, 2020). This cultural conflict illustrates the difficulties that arise when trying to impose a Western administrative model on a traditional cultural bureaucracy.

In sum, the uncritical adoption of WPA poses a significant challenge for SLBs as they navigate conflicting demands from policy and local cultural expectations. To gain a deeper understanding of SLBs' practices, it is crucial to examine their work in different contexts. My study highlights that exploring the practice of SLBs in non-western contexts provides a unique opportunity to uncover a crucial aspect of their practice that is often overlooked in Western contexts, namely the issue of blame. Therefore, a critical examination of the concept of blame avoidance and its relationship to street-level practice and discretion is necessary, as discussed in the following section.

2.6 Blame avoidance behaviours: strategies to avoid blame

The concept of 'blame avoidance' was introduced to political science by Weaver (1986), who identified that voters in the political arena have a 'negativity bias'; that is, 'their tendency to be more sensitive to real or potential losses than they are to gains' (Weaver, 1986, p.371). This indicates that, to maximise their prospects for (re)elections, politicians concentrate more on managing losses and to avoid/minimise blame (for causing any failures/creating a negative image) rather than claim/maximise credits. Weaver (1986) analysed different blame avoidance tactics used by elite actors and suggested that this micro-behavioural phenomenon could influence macro policy-making processes. Blame avoidance has been adopted in the public policy and administration domain and further developed by Hood (Hood, 2002, 2007, 2011) and other scholars, expanding the understanding of blame. For instance, they argue that blame games; where policy actors attempt to shift responsibility to one another when something goes wrong, acting as blamers to avoid being blamees (Hood, 2011, p.7), can be played by policy actors from different levels (not solely by elite actors) (Hood, 2011; Hansson, 2017), blame avoidance focuses on interactions between various policy actors (Ran, 2017; Mdee and Mushi, 2020; Hinterleitner, Honegger and Sager, 2022),

and there is an interrelation between governance arrangements and actors' blame avoidance practice (Moynihan, 2012; Rajala, 2020). Thus, blame is recognised as fundamental to our understanding of how political and policy actors and systems work (Hinterleitner and Sager, 2017).

While discussions of blame within street-level bureaucracy literature are scarce, scholars suggest that the issue of blame is indeed pertinent to street-level practice, as SLBs may encounter various risks associated with blame. For instance, 'policymakers conveniently blame street-level bureaucrats for policies that do not deliver' effectively (Brodkin, 2012, p.8; Klijn et al., 2020). Hood also recognised 'four blame worlds of blame avoidance', which do not only consist of elite actors but also the general public, managers, and street-level bureaucrats (2011, p.24). Blame avoidance behaviour is understood as 'any type of integrity-protecting activity by politicians and bureaucrats in the face of future (perceived or real) accusations' (Ran, 2017, p.638) or 'potentially blame-attracting events' (Hinterleitner and Sager, 2017, p.587). Blame avoidance behaviour can be seen as anticipatory practices — where actors attempt to 'stop blame before it starts' (Hood, 2011, p.6) — or reactive practices — how policy actors confront the blame once it happens (Hinterleitner and Sager, 2017).

Hood identifies three strategies to avoid blame: presentational, agency, and policy strategies (Hood, 2011, p.16-21). Presentational strategies refer to a public official's approach in framing and manipulating others' opinions regarding 'the loss and harm perception' (e.g. policy failure) by utilising language game or linguistic aspects — for instance, offering justifications and excuses, using a rhetorical dimension, spinning the arguments, and re-framing other actors (Hood, 2011, p.17; Hansson, 2015). Hood (2011) also argues that the presentational strategy is the common approach street-level bureaucrats use.

Agency strategies focus on the efforts of officeholders to re-arrange government structure and arrangement, so they can shift the blameworthy position and responsibilities to others. The agency strategy includes delegation of tasks, buck-passing, or blame-diffusing (Hood, 2011; Hinterleitner, 2017). Lastly, policy strategies are approaches by the policy actors

to avoid blame by 'choosing policies of procedures that expose themselves to the least possible risk of blame'. For instance, how front-line workers try to limit their discretion by 'playing it by the book' or, in Hood's term, 'protocolisation' or 'individualisation', by assigning blame to the citizens (blaming the victim) (Hood, 2011, pp.20, 93, 100). Other scholars establish three discursive strategies of local actors in avoiding blame: questioning the achievability of target and standard performance; re-attributing blame; and transferring blame to the vertical and horizontal actors (Li, Ni and Wang, 2021).

When considering how policy or street-level actors respond to their actions when something goes wrong, both the notions of blame games and accountability offer valuable perspectives (Bovens, 1998; Ran and Jian, 2021; Tu, 2022). Although both concepts—blame games and accountability— are associated with assigning responsibility for actions or outcomes (Hood, 2011), they vary in their suggested meanings and implications. Accountability is a widely recognised concept in public administration (Bovens, 1998; Murphy *et al.*, 2018). It refers to process of being called 'to account' to some authority for one's actions' (Mulgan, 2000, p.555). 'Accountability' also now typically denotes the expectation of individual responsibility and 'concern for the public interest expected from public servants' (Mulgan, 2000, p.556). Additionally, accountability can be linked to the 'institutional checks and balances' through which democracies aim to regulate government actions (Mulgan, 2000; Hupe and Hill, 2007). Here, in describing the practice of shifting responsibility, the concept of accountability primarily emphasises the positive aspect of individuals accepting responsibility and being accountable for their actions (Overman and Schillemans, 2022).

Although recent studies acknowledge that in contexts where public sectors prioritise punishing public actors, for instance in China where the system of civil servant emphasised sanction-based scheme, the expectation of accountability can lead to negative practices among policy actors, such as simply complying with regulations to avoid sanctions instead of taking initiative to accommodate public or citizens' needs (Tu, 2022; Tu and Gong, 2022). Additionally, the issue of 'many hands'; 'where different officials contribute in many different

ways to decisions and policies', as a form of collective responsibility can serve as a means to distribute accountability and consequently diffuse blame (Thompson, 1980, p.905, 2014). As such, the concept of accountability might be less capable of capturing the complex dynamics of relationships between policy actors as they attempt to shift blame onto each other when negative consequences occur (Hood, 2011).

In contrast, although the concept of 'blame games' may reveal a tendency toward negative practices among policy actors in the policy process (Hood, 2011; Hinterleitner and Sager, 2017), in elucidating phenomena associated with assigning responsibility, the 'blame games' notion able to capture the dynamics of situations where there is an inclination to avoid accountability or engage in behaviors such as scapegoating or deflecting blame (Weaver, 1986; Sulitzeanu-Kenan and Hood, 2005; Hinterleitner, 2017; Hansson, 2018). Thus, the notion of blame games allow us to better explore and explain power dynamics, psychological aspects and the complex relationship between policy actors, street-level actors, and citizens, which shape the shifting and allocation of responsibility in certain contexts. The 'blame games' concept also signifies how those actors engage in a pattern of attributing blame to one another.

The findings of this study (see chapter 7) underscore the way both SLBs and policy actors try to avoid blame rather than accept responsibility, the tendency of policy actors to scapegoat and deflect blame onto SLBs, and the prevalence of attributing blame rather than finding concrete solutions. Thus, the notion of 'blame games' is considered more apt for comprehending and analysing the complex dynamics and interaction between SLBs, other policy actors, and citizens, instead of the concept of accountability.

Whilst the concept of accountability also highlights the ethical duty or 'moral obligation' of policy actors to be 'responsible' for both their actions and the ensuing consequences (Mulgan, 2000; Overman and Schillemans, 2022), by applying and embracing concept of 'blame games' as a theoretical lens, this thesis attempts to present alternative or different vantage point regarding the responsibility of policy actors. This study argues that in the policy process, blame games possess potential capacity to undermine or circumvent the

responsibility of front-line actors in specific, and other policy actors in general (Mdee and Mushi, 2020).

2.6.1 Blame avoidance behaviour and governance context

The ability of policy actors to utilise particular strategies to avoid blame and be involved in blame games is interrelated with the governance context where policy actors work, such as hierarchical, new managerial and collaborative settings (Hood, 2007; Moynihan, 2012; Hinterleitner and Sager, 2015).

Under a hierarchical setting, higher-ranking officers tend to avoid blame by delegating responsibility so they can push blame down to front-line actors (Hood, 2011). In a hierarchical context, actors can also protect themselves from blame by rigidly following regulations to justify that 'whatever is done follows the appropriate rules or good practice certified by recognised experts' (Hood, 2011, p.143-144). NPM governance structures also shape actors' blame avoidance practices (Bevan and Hood, 2006; Charbonneau and Bellavance, 2012; Rajala, 2020). Driven by fear of failure and fear of blame for their incapability to meet targets and performance standards, actors avoid blame by manipulating or 'gaming' their public report and performance indicators to offer justification for their poor performance (Charbonneau and Bellavance, 2012; Li, Ni and Wang, 2021). Furthermore, collaboration arrangements can be used to 'spread the blame when things go wrong' (Hood, 2011, p.12). A complex collaborative structure consists of various actors from across levels of organisations where lines of responsibility are often fuzzy. So, it will be difficult for involved actors and the general public to identify responsible actors and attribute blame to one single actor once policy failure happens (Hood, 2011; Bach and Wegrich, 2019). Actors can blame one another, share responsibility, and diffuse the blame; 'if all are to blame, no one is to blame' (Moynihan, 2012).

The level of centralisation of the governance system will also be important for blame games (Weaver, 1986; Ran, 2017). Under a decentralised government, there is more chance for central actors to 'pass the buck' or delegate the responsibility to the local actors, so the responsibility and possibility of being blamed are stopped at the local level (Mortensen, 2013;

Ran, 2017). Central actors use discretion as a tool to avoid blame. For instance, in his study, Meers (2019) argues that the central government delegates discretionary powers to the local authorities to deflect blame. For street-level context, giving individual discretion to SLBs may also be related to blame designation from policymakers to SLBs (Catney and Henneberry, 2012).

Building upon the preceding discussion, discretion can serve as a way for central actors to shift blame onto SLBs or vice versa, enabling SLBs to deflect blame. It is then important to further discuss the interaction between discretion and blame avoidance and its potential impacts on how SLBs engage with discretion during blame games.

2.6.2 Street-level discretion and blame avoidance

In terms of the relationship between discretion and blame, while Hood (2020) aimed to correlate blame and the discretion of policy actors, it is important to note that he did not specifically study blame avoidance in street-level practice and discretion. Instead, he analysed the potential interplay between blame and discretion in a more general manner. Given its relevance, this study explicitly links blame games to street-level practice to explore blame avoidance and its connection to discretionary decisions at street-level. Within the context of the street-level bureaucracy concept, discretion stands as one of the foundational attributes of SLBs (Lipsky, 2010; Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011). However, when viewed through the lens of blame theory, the exercise of discretion at the operational level can potentially expose SLBs to blame (Hood, 2007). The exercise of discretion by SLBs can create an opportunity for top officials or their supervisors to deflect blame onto the SLBs, asserting that they were unaware and not responsible for any 'ill-judged discretionary decision' (Hood, 2011, p.33). So how do SLBs balance their need for discretion with the risk of blame?

As discussed previously, one way to avoid blame is protocolisation. Here, SLBs engage with their individual discretion by strictly following prescribed rules, so there is no room for policymakers or higher rank officers to blame them for any potential blame risks or failure during service delivery (Hood, 2011). However, in his recent work, Hood (2020, p.30) proposes

an alternative idea to consolidate street-level discretion and blame avoidance as he argues that 'robotic behaviour that aims to avoid conscious exercise of discretion is not always a successful way of avoiding blame'. It is asserted that the actors can avoid blame and, at the same time, use their discretionary power by using the strategy of 'pooled discretion' by exercising discretion together with other various actors or organisations (Hood, 2020). Rather than entirely avoiding blame, the adoption of pooled discretion emerges as a strategic approach for distributing and collectively sharing blame. Employing the pooled discretion strategy can diminish the perception of individual responsibility among actors and mitigate potential blame risks associated with discretionary decisions (Hood, 2011).

Hood's idea of pooled discretion is similar to the 'herding' (as one of the forms of policy strategy) explained in his previous work where the actors make a collective decision as 'the blame-spreading' strategy to other actors (Hood, 2011, p.97). In street-level bureaucracy theory, it is well acknowledged that SLBs often seek peers' and supervisors' opinions before making any discretionary decision (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000; Keiser, 2010). But in terms of blame theory, such an action can be seen as a blame avoidance strategy. For instance, to limit blame risk, SLBs use a 'locking-in' tactic where they involve their supervisors in the process of any decision-making so the superiors 'cannot later claim that they didn't know or didn't agree with what was being done' (Hood, 2011, p.33). He further argues that 'by having more than one individual in decision-making authority readily enabled the actors to shift blame to others' (Hood, 2011, p.97). And by conducting discretion with others, the actors 'hang together', and if there is any adverse event or harm occurs as an outcome of their discretionary action, the burden of actors' responsibility is decreased since they 'collectivise responsibility and share blame for the exercise of discretion' (Hood, 2020, p.31).

In sum, blame avoidance is common practice during the policy process and, importantly, it is highly pertinent to street-level practice as SLBs' discretion can potentially be shaped by their perception of blame. After discussing conceptual aspects around street-level

bureaucracy, governance arrangements, and blame games, the next section is a conclusion of this chapter.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter argues that in a context where governance arrangements shift and evolve and different governance paradigms and cultural aspects coexist, the complexity of SLBs' work is heightened. SLBs must negotiate tensions between complying with hierarchical instructions from the central government, meeting performance targets, and collaborating with various actors. As government reforms are uncritically applied in a Global South setting, SLBs must manage clashing expectations from Western governance paradigms and local cultural traditions. Engaging in blame games is an important, yet underexplored, way in which SLBs manage these complexities and dilemmas.

After reviewing relevant literature and linking it back to the real-world problem and an emergent key finding of grounded theory analysis, this chapter identifies three limitations of the current literature: 1) understanding how SLBs manage their practice and reconcile their challenges in a policy context where different governance paradigms co-exist is still difficult; 2) there is a lack of knowledge about SLBs' practices in contexts different from the setting in which SLB theory was first constructed; 3) there is limited discussion about how SLBs' perspectives on blame potentially shape their discretion when responding to different challenges. This chapter further delves into the primary points of street-level bureaucracy concepts surrounding SLBs' challenges, discretion, and the factors influencing them, as well as debates on discretion. Such discussions lead to the acknowledgment that, with continuous governance reform processes, governance paradigms frame SLBs' discretion, relational dynamics, and identities.

The goal of this thesis is to address such limitations and make an original contribution by analysing street-level practice within a context of continuous governance reforms in which different governance paradigms co-exist and offer seemingly contradictory rationales. Therefore, the key research question of this thesis is: *How do different governance paradigms*

shape street-level practice in a non-Western context? The main research question will be followed by three sub-questions:

1. How do street-level bureaucrats negotiate conflicting governance paradigms?
2. How do street-level bureaucrats use discretion and relationality in the face of conflicting governance paradigms?
3. How do street-level bureaucrats' responses to dilemmas through their discretionary and relational practices impact policy implementation and outcomes?

In this chapter, I have discussed the complex aspects that shape street-level dilemmas, discretion and practices, including their self-identities, core values, relationships with citizens and different policy actors, as well as the governance paradigms as the social backdrop within which SLBs conduct their day-to-day work. To further comprehend and analyse the interplay between these aspects, I apply Bevir and Rhodes' interpretive approach and practice theory as an analytical framework for this study. Therefore, the next chapter will further discuss how Bevir and Rhodes' interpretive approach and practice theory offers a valuable perspective for interrogating the different governance paradigms shaping the work of SLBs, especially within the context of the CCT programme. Their notion of tradition, dilemmas, and narrative enables an understanding of the conflicts and tensions that emerge between different governance paradigms and the consequent dilemmas encountered by SLBs. Meanwhile, practice theory allows for the revelation of the underlying patterns and performative elements of street-level relational dynamics and practice that underpin their decision-making and responses, particularly when confronted with dilemmas and the imperative to avoid blame.

Chapter 3: Analytical framework: Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism and practice theory

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I discussed how different governance paradigms potentially create ambiguity and challenges for SLBs in performing their work as they have to deal with conflicting expectations. This is especially pertinent in non-Western contexts, where governance reforms are adopted uncritically, and SLBs are confronted with divergent demands from Western and non-Western paradigms, exacerbating the complexities of their work. The purpose of this research is to examine the practices of SLBs and the potential dilemmas arising from competing expectations of different governance paradigms, whilst exploring how they negotiate such dilemmas, and how their responses impact the policy implementation process and outcomes.

In this chapter, I intend to discuss the analytical framework of this study. This chapter posits that Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism, with its emphasis on traditions, dilemmas, and narratives, complemented by practice theory, presents a cogent analytical framework for comprehending the complex practices of SLBs within a context where multiple governance paradigms coexist. The notion of tradition enables us to scrutinise the various governance paradigms that underpin the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) policy. The concept of dilemmas is germane to examining how divergent expectations stemming from multiple governance paradigms create tensions and difficulties for SLBs, and how such challenges shape their everyday practice. Lastly, the concept of narrative is pivotal in exploring how SLBs respond to their dilemmas through particular practices and stories.

While Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism offers valuable insights for decentring our analysis of individual SLBs, this chapter contends that their approach has limitations in explicating the performative and relational dynamics of practice. Therefore, this research incorporates practice theory in the analytical framework to offer a critical perspective on how SLBs enact their practices in relation to other actors and conflicting expectations stemming from various governance paradigms within their specific local context. A practice-based

approach is also pertinent to go beyond understanding SLB practice as mere routines, by uncovering the contextual meanings of different practices .

Following this introductory section, this chapter commences with an overview of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism, followed by a discussion on the concepts of traditions, dilemmas, and narratives. Subsequently, I identify their unclear conceptualisation of practice as an important limitation of their approach and highlight how this study addresses this limitation based on practice theory and its relational and performative dimensions. Prior to the conclusion, I present a figure to elucidate the analytical framework of this study, including the interrelatedness of the concepts of tradition, dilemma, narrative, and practice. The chapter's conclusion provides a recap of the key elements of the analytical framework and practice theory, and briefly explicates how this framework will influence the selection of the research methodology, which will be explored further in Chapter 4.

3.2 Bevir and Rhodes' Interpretivism

Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism emphasises the importance of understanding the role of individual interpretation and meaning-making in shaping governance (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006). According to Bevir and Rhodes (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010, 2015a), governance processes are shaped by individual actors' actions, which are informed by their historical contexts, social and cultural backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs. Thus, it is critical to analyse governance practices by examining the subjective experiences and interpretations of the actors involved in the process, rather than merely analysing objective data or policies.

Bevir and Rhodes (2001, 2003, 2006) have primarily employed their interpretive approach to explicate the dynamics of British political and governance settings and their evolution over time. Nonetheless, this approach is also relevant in diverse contexts, such as comprehending community leadership (Sullivan, 2007, 2016), the role of street-level actors in community development (Durose, 2007, 2011), local government elites' narratives (Gains, 2009), and co-production from stories and practices of elite and local actors (Bevir, Needham and Waring, 2019).

The interpretive approach, as espoused by Bevir and Rhodes (2003, 2005, 2015b), places great emphasis on the analysis of the meanings that underpin an individual's actions and practices. From an ontological standpoint, interpretivism maintains that an individual's beliefs, understanding, and meanings serve as the foundation for their actions and practices (Hay, 2011, p.168). In studying social science, governance, and public administration, scholars are urged to shift their focus from how institutions frame the actions of individuals to the ideas or beliefs held by individuals themselves. By doing so, scholars can explore how an individual's beliefs can influence their actions, alter their day-to-day conduct, and impact institutions at large (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; Hay, 2011; Geddes, 2019).

The philosophical position of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism (2010) is primarily based on anti-foundationalism. This approach rejects the idea that knowledge can be based on a fundamental ground or foundation, whether through pure experience or pure reason (Ibid., p.43). Instead, individuals construct their reality through their engagement with the world and their beliefs about it. This implies that policy actors do not possess pure, unmediated, or objective access to the world (Geddes, 2019, p.241-2). Within the interpretivist approach, meanings and beliefs are holistic, and we can understand the perspective and beliefs of individuals by situating them 'in the wider web of other beliefs that provide the reasons for their holding them' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, p.171, 2015a). Bevir and Rhodes (2015a, p.8) argue that 'to explain an action, we cannot merely correlate it with a single isolated attitude; we have to interpret it as part of a whole web of beliefs and desires'. This means that beliefs and practices are interrelated, and we cannot understand one practice without unfolding beliefs or vice versa. Bevir and Rhodes (2006, p. 2) argue that 'practices could not exist if people did not have apt beliefs. Beliefs or meanings would not make sense without the practices to which they refer'. Therefore, the interpretivist approach emphasises the importance of examining the web of beliefs and practices that underlie policy actors' actions to understand their meaning.

Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, 2022) introduces a decentred approach in understanding how individual actors potentially impact how institutions function by modifying meanings and actions. Decentred theory in interpretivism explains

'changing patterns of public administration by focusing on the actors' own interpretations of their actions and by locating these interpretations in historical contexts' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2022, p.153). In this approach, there is a shift in focus from institutions to meaningful practices through decentred analysis. Local actors play a significant role as they interpret policies, respond to them, resist the intentions of the elites, and establish their practices of governance (Bevir, 2020, p.9). Decentred analysis in interpretivism does not only focus on actors' practices based on their beliefs but also considers the narratives and traditions that provide the social context and historical background to actors' beliefs (Bevir and Rhodes, 2022). The decentred approach in interpretivism is also pertinent to 'decentring' existing theories or conceptualisations, often developed and applied within a Western context, to non-Western contexts. For example, Ogembo (2021) employs interpretivism to decentre her analysis of public deliberations, originally constructed from a Western perspective, in a non-Western setting.

A crucial consideration is that critics of the interpretivist approach often dichotomise beliefs and actions, seeking to identify causal laws or a 'deductive link' between them (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, p.171). However, interpretivism rejects the notion of determinism (Wagenaar, 2012), as it holds that individuals' beliefs cannot be reduced to intervening variables (Bevir, 2004, p.609). An individual's choice of action cannot be predetermined, as actions are 'not the determined outcomes of laws or given processes' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2015a, p.5). Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism rejects prediction in favour of agency - the notion that individuals can choose their beliefs and actions (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003b, 2003a). They argue that agency is crucial as it allows individuals to sustain or introduce new beliefs and actions based on their own reasoning (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003b; Bevir and Rhodes, 2010). Interpretivism values agency because it recognises the ability of individuals to modify traditions in response to novel events or situations, without being constrained by the dictates of tradition (Bevir and Rhodes, 2001). Therefore, interpretivism acknowledges the importance of agency in allowing individuals to choose their own beliefs and actions and adapt to new circumstances. Bevir and Rhodes (2005, p.172; 2010, p.74) argue that agency is

always situated in a particular context and is not autonomous. Actors are situated within larger webs of beliefs that shape their actions and beliefs. As situated agents, policy actors also possess a competence for agency, allowing them to react to traditions in novel ways (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005; Geddes, 2019, p.242).

However, Bevir and Rhodes clarify that actions are still interrelated with those of other actors. The responses of individuals to new circumstances and their efforts to transform existing beliefs will only be realised when others habituate their beliefs.

the situated agency does not imply that all people are heroic individuals who have a great impact on the historical direction of a practice. It implies only that they have the capacity to modify their inheritance and so act in novel ways. When they do, they are unlikely significantly to alter a practice unless others also adjust. (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, p.175, 2006, p.18)

Bevir and Rhodes offer an illustrative example of how the actions of individuals are interlinked with those of other actors. For instance, when elite actors in a central government introduce New Public Management to bring about reforms within government systems, the success of their action is not guaranteed unless it is also supported by the actions of civil servants or ground-level officers as the ones who 'transformed the operation of the reforms by reinterpreting them within a tradition that is rooted in pragmatism and flexibility' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, p.175-176).

As Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, 2022) offers a perspective that suggests a need to decentre the focus from the institutions and examine how individual actors create and modify meanings and actions that can potentially impact how institutions function, in regard to the focus of this study, the notion of 'situated agency' is pertinent to the practices of street-level actors (Durose, 2009). The practices of street-level actors are complex and multifaceted, as they navigate having to follow policy regulations and be responsive to their context (Lipsky, 2010; Sørensen and Bentzen, 2020). While SLBs are expected to adhere to policy regulations, this sometimes leads to rigid and inflexible practices that do not always take into account the needs and experiences of citizens (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000). SLBs are also sensitive to normativity and maintain 'a logic of appropriateness' in their actions (Arts *et al.*, 2014; Gherardi, 2019). Yet, as situated actors,

SLBs are not mere rule-followers, but rather have the ability to engage in a constant dialogue with their context and develop local knowledge based on their experiences (Wagenaar, 2004; Durose, 2009). This enables them to improvise and creatively respond to complex situations, thus generating new meanings in their practices (Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021). By exercising their agency in this way, SLBs co-produce relational dynamics with actors, context, experiences, and ideas, which allows them to serve the public in novel and effective ways (Bartels, 2018c). Therefore, the concept of 'situated agency' in interpretivism is highly relevant to understanding the practices of SLBs and the ways in which they carry out their responsibilities in serving the public.

3.3. Concepts within Interpretivism: Traditions, Dilemmas, and Narratives

Interpretivism directs our attention towards the actions and practices of actors in governance, as they are informed by their beliefs and influenced by their social and historical context (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010, p.73). Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism (2006, 2022) highlights the significance of traditions, dilemmas, and narratives in comprehending the historical and social context, beliefs and values embedded in institutions, contradicting beliefs and problems in governance, policy actors' practices and stories to address challenges, and how individual practices can contribute to reforming governance. The following sub-sections will further explain the concepts of traditions, dilemmas, and narratives, and how these concepts are useful for analysing the focus of this study.

3.3.1 Traditions

In the interpretivist approach, the concept of tradition plays a crucial role in uncovering the beliefs and actions of policy actors (Bevir and Rhodes 2005, p.174). Tradition refers to the ideas and beliefs that individuals receive through socialisation (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, p.7) and serves as 'the ideational background against which they adopt their initial set of beliefs' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010, p.78). Actors rely on their prior theories, which are made available to them by a discourse or tradition, to understand and interpret the social world (Bevir and

Rhodes, 2005, p.172; 2010, p.43). Understanding the role of tradition helps to provide insight into how actors develop their beliefs and make sense of the world around them.

Beliefs and traditions have to be associated with each other and, in understanding actors' beliefs and actions, 'tradition is unavoidable, all beliefs and practices must have their roots in tradition' (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003b, p.9). The concept of tradition allows us to make sense of 'why people hold the beliefs they do; and because beliefs are constitutive of actions, they also help to explain actions' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010, p.78). Traditions are starting points — a first influence on people's practice (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003b, p.7), from which 'individuals draw to shape organising perspectives, to make cognitive shortcuts or as guides for interpreting subsequent events and phenomena' (Meakin and Geddes, 2022, p.219). Hence, traditions play an explanatory role and they often manifest in everyday life through actors' practices and behaviours. Some traditions 'become regular and may exhibit a pattern; they are rituals or routines' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2001; Meakin and Geddes, 2022, p.220).

Tradition serves as the social context for individuals, which includes beliefs, values, norms, ideas, or practices that have been passed down from generation to generation (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, p.180). However, this does not mean that individuals are unable to change traditions. As situated agents, individuals strive to comprehend the tradition and they can then reconsider the values within the traditions and decide whether they wish to embrace, modify, or reject their heritage (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003, p.32).

In their analysis of governance, Bevir and Rhodes emphasise the importance of governmental tradition, which they define as 'a set of inherited beliefs about the institutions and history of government' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2001, p.111). Others understand "governance traditions" as 'sets of institutional and cultural practices that constitute a set of expectations about behaviour' of policy actors (Voorberg et al., 2017, p.336). This concept is essential for exploring the values and the cultural and historical aspects of institutions that may shape actors' beliefs (Bevir and Rhodes, 2001; 2006), including their perception of their roles in the policy process (Sørensen and Bentzen, 2020). In this study, the governance tradition concept

is exceptionally pertinent for understanding governance paradigms embedded within the CCT programme. Here, governance tradition refers to the ideational background of norms, values, beliefs and history that inform SLBs' practice in implementing the programme. By analysing governance traditions within the CCT programme, we are able to make sense of values and cultural practices that shape SLBs' practice, including their discretionary practice.

Based on the definition of tradition in this study, the key values of governance paradigms can significantly shape SLBs' behaviour and practice. This indicates that, when they perform their work, SLBs might draw on and justify their practice by referring to specific core beliefs of certain governance values and cultural dimensions (Torfing *et al.*, 2020). However, as situated agents, SLBs are capable of reflecting on their knowledge and situations, which may lead them to act in ways that diverge from the core beliefs of certain governance paradigms (Wagenaar, 2012).

The concept of governance traditions can shed light on the beliefs of institutions, bureaucracy, and the state-civil society relationship, as well as on how government reforms the public sectors and how governance paradigms evolve (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003, p.100). New Public Management (NPM) is a paradigm that helps reform public sectors with a market-based approach (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003a). NPM can shape local policy actors' practice, however its value may contradict SLBs' beliefs and perception about their role and practices (Aschhoff and Vogel, 2018; Sørensen and Bentzen, 2020).

To examine traditions in the context of this study, a detailed analysis of specific beliefs, values, norms and history from each governance paradigm is important. Chapter 2 has highlighted that this research will explore various dimensions to understand the governance traditions within which SLBs currently work, including the SLB-citizen relationship, the collaborative process, discretion, and SLBs' interpretation of identities and roles. In the literature of governance paradigms, scholars recognise that those elements have been viewed as important factors (Hupe and Hill, 2007; Brandsen and Honingh, 2013; Torfing *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, in exploring and analysing governance paradigms within the CCT programme, this

study will focus on how SLBs interpret and reflect on these primary governance paradigm dimensions.

In conclusion, to make sense of and analyse cultural-historical aspects and values of the programme and governance institution, as well as the underlying values that they embody, the notion of tradition serves as a valuable framework for this study. It also aids in analysing how the expectations placed on SLBs in their everyday practice are shaped by the governance traditions. Through the exploration and analysis of the core beliefs and expectations faced by SLBs, we can gain a profound understanding of the values embedded in policies and institutions that greatly shape street-level practice and the specific governance paradigms within which they operate.

3.3.2 Dilemma

Bevir and Rhodes also highlight 'dilemmas' as a crucial notion in comprehending the way policy actors experience clashing values and beliefs, leading to potential alternations in existing established traditions and practices (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003; 2006). They posit that dilemmas arise when new ideas challenge established beliefs or practices, encouraging individuals to reconsider their existing beliefs and associated traditions (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, p.9). Others argue that 'dilemmas come about through tensions between two or more beliefs that individuals may have or the practices to which they lead' (Meakin and Geddes, 2022, p.220).

The study of dilemmas is critical for understanding how policy actors navigate complex policy environments, and for identifying the conditions that enable policy change to occur. The concept of dilemmas also encourages policy actors to challenge and reassess the existing beliefs and practices, and therefore lead to policy change (Rhodes, 2007; Geddes, 2019). Regarding dilemmas, Bevir and Rhodes explain that:

We use the concept of dilemma to think about the role of individual agency in changing traditions. When an idea contradicts other beliefs, it poses a problem. How do people adjust their existing beliefs and practices to make way for the newcomer? There is no inevitability about adjusting to new beliefs. People choose. We explain change in

traditions, therefore, by referring to the relevant dilemmas and people's choices in response to those dilemmas (Bevir and Rhodes, 2022, p.154).

The concept of dilemma highlights the agency of policy actors and emphasises the capability they have of reacting and making decisions that can ultimately result in changes to their beliefs and practices (Bevir and Needham, 2017). As situated agents, individuals have unique ways of reacting and reconciling their dilemmas and traditions cannot prescribe how they establish their beliefs when confronted with new situations (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003a; Meakin and Geddes, 2022). Although the reactions of individuals in resolving their dilemmas cannot be predicted, it is argued that there are three potential responses that individuals might have when they encounter new beliefs. These are: rejecting new beliefs as unconvincing; accommodating new beliefs within their existing web of beliefs; or accepting new beliefs and replacing their old beliefs (Geddes, 2019, p.243). When faced with a dilemma, actors will reflect on their current beliefs and may find that their existing web of beliefs can provide some clues regarding how to resolve the dilemma (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003a, p.199). However, individuals still have the ability to push aside those clues, which renders the way in which individuals react and the consequences or outcomes of those reactions unpredictable (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003b).

The concept of dilemma, which emphasises the agency of individuals, is closely related to the recognition of lower-level actors within public policy who have the capacity to resist elite programmes (Bevir and Needham, 2017). It is crucial to avoid overlooking the concept of agency, as doing so can lead to the perception that policies are solely driven by the agendas of elite actors (Bevir and Rhodes, 2015b). Despite the fact that the interests and policies are mainly defined by elite actors, there is room for street-level actors — or what Bevir (2020, p.15) refers to as subordinate actors — to challenge, modify, or resist the elite's agenda and policies by drawing on their local reasoning (Bevir, Needham and Waring, 2019). It is important to analyse resistance in order to capture the dynamics of public policy, as Bevir contends that 'resistance is always present between and within policy actors, and if we fail to allow for it, we will fail to grasp the way a policy works and also the ubiquity of policy failure' (Bevir, 2020,

p.15). In this sense, acknowledging the agency of lower-level actors and their potential for resistance is essential to developing a more comprehensive understanding of public policy and its outcomes.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, the emergence of multi-paradigms of governance has led to 'ambiguous and multifaceted roles' for local actors and street-level bureaucrats in implementing policies (Sørensen and Bentzen, 2020, p.142). The ideas, values, and demands from multiple government arrangements can often contradict each other, leading to contesting and clashing expectations and demands about tasks, roles, and responsibilities that SLBs must carry out (Agger and Sørensen, 2018; Torfing *et al.*, 2020). Such circumstances often result in dilemmas for SLBs. The way policy actors navigate clashing expectations from different governance paradigms depends on how they interpret their beliefs, roles, and positions within policy processes. By emphasising agency in the concept of dilemmas, it is suggested that SLBs have the capability to engage in constant conversation and negotiation with their settings, leading to alternation and improvisation in conducting their day-to-day routines (Wagenaar, 2004; Durose, 2009; de Graaf, van Hulst and Michels, 2015). Improvisation is a common practice for SLBs in responding to uncertain situations, and it should not be viewed as a manifestation of unpurposive or random practice (Wagenaar and Cook, 2003). Experienced SLBs often improvise while performing their work by relying on their previous experiences. This enables them to understand the situation at hand since they already possess a familiar meaning (Ibid.).

In the context of this study, where SLBs operate within various co-existing governance traditions — including bureaucratic, performance-target, collaborative, and Indonesian cultural traditions — the concept of dilemma is highly relevant to analyse how divergent beliefs and expectations interact and conflict with each other. Significantly, it can also shed light on how SLBs use their agency to react and resolve such conflicting expectations by developing their own patterns of practice.

3.3.3 Narratives

In the interpretivist approach of Bevir and Rhodes, the concept of narrative plays a crucial role in analysing the beliefs and practices of street-level actors. Contrary to the common misunderstanding that interpretivism only aims to understand actors' practices without explanation, narrative serves as a 'distinctive form of explanation' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, p.177). Narrative is significant within interpretivism because it represents the stories that actors use to interpret and understand their world. Bevir and Rhodes (2015a, p.17) argue that narratives function by connecting actions to the beliefs and desires that generate them and 'by situating these beliefs and desires in specific historical contexts'. Therefore, relevant stories from policy actors are important in explaining and exploring their beliefs and practices, as well as in analysing how institutions change (Bevir and Rhodes, 2008). Narrative analysis also offers 'an insightful way of examining the everyday actions of political actors' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2012, p.205). For instance, through narrative, they study:

how ministers, civil servants, police officers, and citizens use stories to make sense of their world, to gain and pass on information, to inspire involvement, to persuade others to act in certain ways, and as the repository of the organisation's institutional memory. (Bevir and Rhodes, 2012, p.205)

The use of narrative offers social scientists an opportunity to gain insight into governance from diverse viewpoints. The interpretive approach to governance and institutions focuses on the micro-level perspective, whereby the beliefs, actions, and practices of individuals contribute to the construction and reform of governance and institutions (Rhodes, 2007; Bevir, 2011). These ideational elements can undergo continuous change over time, which implies that relying on fixed administrative practices or a prescribed set of tools is insufficient to learn about governance. Bevir and Rhodes further argue that:

an interpretive approach undercuts this idea of a set of tools we can use to manage governance. If governance is constructed differently, contingently, and continuously, we cannot have a toolkit for managing it. So, an interpretive approach encourages us to replace such tools with learning by telling stories and listening to them... No matter what rigour or expertise we bring to bear, all we can do is tell a story and judge what the future might bring (Bevir and Rhodes, 2015a, p.22)

Importantly, linking back to the focus of this study, narratives and stories from street-level actors enable us to acquire deep understanding of their values, beliefs and dilemmas in

their daily practices. Through narrative, we can grasp how certain phenomena occurred in the past and how certain circumstances are emerging in the present day (Bevir and Rhodes, 2015a, p.17). Also, narrative allows us to understand SLBs' ideas, justifications and reasons behind practices and actions that they perform. Narratives and stories can describe the 'why' factors that explain how certain individuals behave and act in a particular way at specific times and places (Feldman *et al.*, 2004).

Narratives in policy analysis are also significant for unfolding policy dilemmas (Kaplan, 1986). Kaplan (1986, p.770) argues that stories and narratives allow us to explicate how particular dilemmas emerge and what we should do to resolve such dilemmas. The use of narratives can be seen as a sensemaking process for policy actors to help them confront the ambiguity and conflicting situations that they are challenged with (van Hulst and Yanow, 2016; van Hulst and Tsoukas, 2021). By framing their narratives, policy actors initially try to make sense of the meaning of the situations at hand, which then helps them to decide how they could or should handle the dilemmatic situation (van Hulst and Yanow, 2016). Narrative analysis also enables us to comprehend the identity of policy actors (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003b; van Hulst and Tsoukas, 2021).

Narrative as a sensemaking process is closely linked to identity-shaping, and 'with the performative lens, the emphasis is placed on narrative identity work: how the interpretation of events becomes part of the storyteller's identity' (van Hulst and Tsoukas, 2021, p.6). In their study of police officers' narratives, van Hulst and Tsoukas (2021) reveal how an officer's life story, daily experiences, and reactions to unexpected events illustrate professional identities, including personal style in policing. The importance of understanding actors' identities through narratives extends beyond individual perspectives, as it also reflects the broader beliefs and values of institutions and governance systems (Ibid., p.11).

All in all, narrative serves as a crucial tool for analysing the local reasoning, beliefs and practices of SLBs as they respond to conflicting expectations and ambiguity. By analysing the narratives expressed by SLBs, we obtain a better understanding of their practices and the diverse motivations behind them. This includes their interpretations of their roles, values, and

experiences in resolving dilemmas. Narratives complement the concepts of tradition (which delve into the setting in which SLBs work) and dilemma (which explores the clashing expectations that SLBs experience). With the concept of narrative, we can further analyse the relational dynamics, practices and SLBs' identities, including their beliefs, and comprehend why they interpret their roles in specific ways, prioritise certain aspects of their work, establish particular relationships, and respond to clashing expectations in distinct manners. By utilising narrative analysis, we can generate new insights into the complex realities of street-level bureaucracy and contribute to advancing our understanding of public policy implementation.

3.4 Limitation of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism: lack of clarity on practice

Practice theory and Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism approach are closely linked, as they both emphasise the importance of understanding governance by decentring attention from structures to individual practices and actions (Turnbull, 2011). Their approach underscores the social construction of practice through individual agency in creating and acting on meanings and 'to unpack a practice in terms of the disparate and contingent beliefs and actions of individuals' (Bevir and Richards, 2009, p.3). Again, practice is a crucial dimension for exploring individual agency (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, 2015) because practices embody beliefs and cannot be properly discussed without reference to them (Bevir and Rhodes, 2012, p.201). Moreover, the interpretivist concept of tradition, which highlights the importance of history and social context, aligns with practice theory regarding the teleoaffective aspect (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Teleoaffective aspects are part of the elements that explicate the idea that what individuals actually perform 'has a history and a setting' (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012, p.25).

Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism emphasises the importance of practice in understanding governance. However, the lack of clarity within which Bevir and Rhodes conceptualise practice has been a subject of criticism (Wagenaar, 2012, 2016). While Bevir and Rhodes (2015a, p.15, 2022, p.154) define practice as 'a set of actions that often exhibits a stable pattern across time' or 'a set of actions, perhaps a set of actions that exhibit a pattern,

even a pattern that remains relatively stable across time', this definition ignores the dynamic and performative aspects of practice, and has not captured the 'inner complexity' of practice itself (Wagenaar, 2012, 2016, p.145). Indeed, the concept of practice is far more complex than a simple set of stable and habitual actions. In reality, practice is a dynamic and performative action that involves recursive activities and relational interactions (Bartels, 2018c). As Nicolini posits, practice *will never be stable* because practice is 'always necessarily open to contestation and this keeps them continuously in a state of tension and change' (2012, p.6). The concept of practice has an element of temporal emergence in which 'in a performative account, people live under the imperative to look forward, to act on the situation at hand' (Wagenaar, 2016, p.143). Assemblage of different activities within complex situations which appear at the same time often requires individuals to think, learn, and negotiate their practice in situ rather than act in accordance with a preestablished process (Schatzki, 2001; Reich and Hager, 2014). While practice is a central aspect of Bevir and Rhodes' approach, their approach falls short in capturing the complexity of practice. By reducing practice to stable actions, it overlooks its complexity and misses its performative, relational dynamics and emergent nature.

As Geddes (2019) points out, the lack of clarity on practice in the concept of dilemmas undermines the potential of the approach to account for the process of change. Without including the notion of practice, dilemmas become reduced to a mere summary of actors' beliefs at different times, without an understanding of how they are 'framed or adjudicated' (ibid., p.244). It is crucial to recognise that dilemmas 'are mediated through practices where beliefs and traditions play out and intersect and where situated actors use their resources to push for, or resist, change' (Meakin and Geddes, 2022, p.220). The lack of clarity on practice in analysing dilemmas means that the explanatory account or process of change remains unexplained, and a notion of dilemmas has 'ambiguity surrounding the process of change (i.e. actions and practices conducive to change)' (Hay, 2011; Geddes, 2019, p.244). Also, the lack of a detailed explanation of dilemmas related to practice limits the dynamism of the interpretive

approach and misses the opportunity to shed light on the complex interactions between beliefs, traditions, and practices (Geddes, 2019, p.240).

The centrality of practice in the study of dilemmas cannot be understated. Geddes (2019) argues that a greater degree of understanding of dilemmas can be achieved by strengthening the concept of practice. This is because the emergence of dilemmas, and the ways in which they unfold, are intricately linked to the practices of actors (Geddes, 2019; Meakin and Geddes, 2022). By examining dilemmas through the lens of practice, we can explore the complex ways in which beliefs, traditions, and practices intersect and interact, and how they shape and transform one another (Geddes, 2019). Indeed, in order to delve into 'how beliefs and traditions interact, play out and unfold through actions and practices... we *must focus attention on everyday practices*...the clash or contest of ideas, beliefs, traditions and narratives that those practices represent' (Geddes, 2019, p.248, emphasis added).

In summary, this study addresses a key limitation of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretive approach in providing a robust conceptualisation of practice. Incorporating practice theory into the interpretive approach enables a more comprehensive analysis of the practice of SLBs, including a critical lens through which to examine how SLBs navigate conflicting expectations from various governance paradigms in their local contexts. By incorporating more performative, relational, emergent, and dynamic aspects of practice into Bevir and Rhodes' approach, this study intends to develop a more nuanced definition of practice. This definition recognises that practices are not static patterns of actions but, rather, an ongoing and evolving nexus of activities carried out by SLBs in their work, which are embedded within a social and historical context. Thus, this study aims to illuminate the complex interrelation between SLBs' everyday practices, social context, and historical and cultural dimensions, which influences their activities. To achieve this, I will adopt the perspective of scholars who have accentuated emergent nature, performative aspects, and relational dynamics of practice (Wagenaar and Cook, 2003; Schatzki, 2012; Bartels, 2018c; Bartels and Turnbull, 2020). The following section will provide an overview and discussion of practice theory.

3.5 Practice Theory: Understanding practice and its elements

Practice theory has been widely acknowledged as a fundamental framework for interpreting and comprehending human behaviour and social activities (Nicolini, 2012; Reckwitz, 2016). This concept presents a critique of the application of rational models in understanding of social activities (Gherardi, 2019, p.30). Given its multidimensional nature and drawing from a range of concepts, the definition of practice does not have a singular or universally agreed-upon definition (Schatzki, 2001; Nicolini, 2012). In elucidating what practice is, Reckwitz offers a useful definition of practice as:

a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge (Reckwitz, 2002, p.249).

Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012, p.6) caution against understanding practice solely as 'routine behavior', which risks overlooking its recursive nature. In contrast, Schatzki (2012, p.13) presents an alternative perspective, regarding practice as an interconnected and open-ended nexus of actions and communications guided by practical rules, practical understandings, teleoaffective structures, and general understandings. Practical rules provide explicit instructions; practical understandings enable know-how; teleoaffective structures recognise history and future orientation; and general understandings guide appropriate behaviour (Schatzki, 2005, p.471-2, 2006, p.1864; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2018, p.372).

Drawing from Schatzki's practice theory, Sandberg and Tsoukas (2018) provide insightful elaboration of the concept. They describe practice as 'open-ended' and 'spatially-temporally dispersed', highlighting that practices are *not static but rather ongoing and continuous activities*. Nicolini (2009, p.1393) adds that practices are subject to multiple interpretations and can be rife with contradictions and tensions, rendering them 'tentative and ever-changing'. Additionally, Schatzki (2012, p.15) posits that practices are a 'nexus of doings and sayings', suggesting that individual actions that sustain practices are intertwined with

other material arrangements, including people, artifacts, and organisms (Schatzki, 2006, p.1864; 2012; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2018).

Practice theory emphasises the roles of material objects in facilitating the performance of practices. Although individuals are regarded as the 'carriers' of practices and the ones who manifest them through action and performance (Nicolini, 2012; Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012, p.7), it is important to understand relationality between individuals and their environment. Individuals are bound by socio-material conditions, rules, situations, contexts, and knowledge that enable them to enact and reenact practices (Cook and Wagenaar, 2012; Gherardi, 2016, 2019). This perspective underscores the complex and dynamic nature of practices, calling for a nuanced and situated understanding of human behaviour in social contexts.

Hence, the centrality of relationality in understanding practice theory cannot be overstated. Practice theory puts great emphasis on the relational aspect of human activity and acknowledges that practices are not isolated phenomena, but rather entwined with other activities and material arrangements (Reich and Hager, 2014; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2018). In this regard, relationality is a critical component of practice theory, as it allows us to move beyond traditional dualisms between actor/system, social/material, body/mind, and theory/action (Nicolini, 2012, p.2). Accordingly, Feldman and Worline (2016, p.308) suggest that relationality refers to 'the mutual constitution of phenomena', highlighting the idea that things and people only have meaning in relation to one another. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011, p.343) describe 'entwinement as the logic of practice', which emphasises that individuals cannot be detached from others' actions and objects. As Bartels argues, practice is 'a relational process in which actor, environment and others bring each other into being through dialogical experience' (2018, p.76). Thus, it is necessary to study practices as meaningful relational wholes that recognise the relationship and interconnection between people and objects that emerge in everyday activities (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011, p.341; Nicolini, 2012; Gherardi, 2019). Consequently, researchers must be sensitive to these relational dimensions and recognise that individuals are bounded by socio-material rules, situations, contexts, and

knowledge that help them enact and reenact practices (Cook and Wagenaar, 2012; Gherardi, 2016, 2019).

Bartels and Turnbull (2020) further elucidate why relationality is central to practice theory. They analyse various relational aspects in public administration and argue that embedding relationality in practice theory reveals that 'policy', 'state', and 'service users' are not fixed elements that form a context for human agency, but rather emerge through the everyday interactions of policy actors engaged in action (Bartels and Turnbull, 2020, p.1328). By considering relational dimension in analysing practice, they argue that:

practices are not understood in terms of the (substantive) goals, characteristics or objects of relationships but by unpacking how a multiplicity of these are (performatively) experienced, assembled, and contested through diverse and unequal relations. (Ibid., p.1328)

The webs of relationality among individuals, sociomaterials, and social and historical backgrounds make practice a complex and emergent phenomenon that cannot be fully specified in advance (Reich and Hager, 2014, p.426). Policy actors' activities are also interrelated with other actors' forms of practice, meaning that practices are constantly evolving and negotiated (Wagenaar and Cook, 2003; Bartels, 2018; Gherardi, 2019). By examining the elements of practice theory, it becomes apparent that practices are continuous activities that involve both doing and saying, and are not fixed but, instead, are emergent and contextualised.

Practice theory is highly relevant to the study of street-level bureaucracy as it seeks to understand the pattern of practices enacted by front-line actors (Bartels, 2018c; Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021; Durose et al., 2016; Wagenaar, 2020). Although it may be tempting to see the SLBs' routines as merely automatic or thoughtless, the concept of practice theory presents a more nuanced view by emphasising the effortful and dynamic nature of these practices (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Feldman *et al.*, 2016). The idea that SLBs simply engage in habitual behaviour is challenged by practice theory. Instead, it acknowledges the meaningful and complex work involved in carrying out seemingly routine tasks (Bartels, 2018, p.68). Practice theory indeed emphasises the significance of acknowledging the worth and value of

SLBs' work in their everyday interactions with the citizens or general public, thereby questioning the traditional perspective that these practices are inconsequential and merely routine.

Moreover, the 'dialogical and interactive' nature of SLBs' activities, which should not be seen as 'stand-alone' work are highlighted by the practice approach (Wagenaar, 2004, p.651; van Hulst, de Graaf and van den Brink, 2012, p.477). SLBs are constantly engaged in ongoing interactions and communication with citizens, community members and leaders, colleagues, supervisors, and their social context (Wagenaar, 2004; Durose, 2009; Agger and Sørensen, 2018). Through these dialogues, SLBs are able to develop the know-how necessary to act upon certain circumstances (Wagenaar, 2004; Bartels, 2018).

Furthermore, the connection and relationship between SLBs and governance paradigms is not unidirectional but rather a two-way exchange. Institutions have the potential to shape SLBs' practices but, at the same time, SLBs' practices can certainly also exert an influence on institutions (Nicolini, 2012, p.42). With the agency that SLBs have, they might respond to expectation from policy and institutions, and alter or abandon certain values according to their local reasoning, which can also influence the institutions' goals, for instance reform agendas (see section 3.3). It is important to acknowledge that there may well be hegemonized and reified aspects within a practice but, at the same time, 'practical on-the-spot judgment' remains essential for individuals engaged in a practice (Wagenaar and Cook, 2003, p.416; Cook and Wagenaar, 2012). Through an understanding of the dialogical and interactive nature of SLBs' practices and their relationship with governance paradigms, practice theory provides valuable insights into the complexities of the policy implementation process. It also enables us to appreciate SLBs' efforts and agency in executing policy into practice and highlights the significance of context-specific knowledge and relational dimensions in shaping that practice (Bartels, 2018; Bartels and Turnbull, 2020).

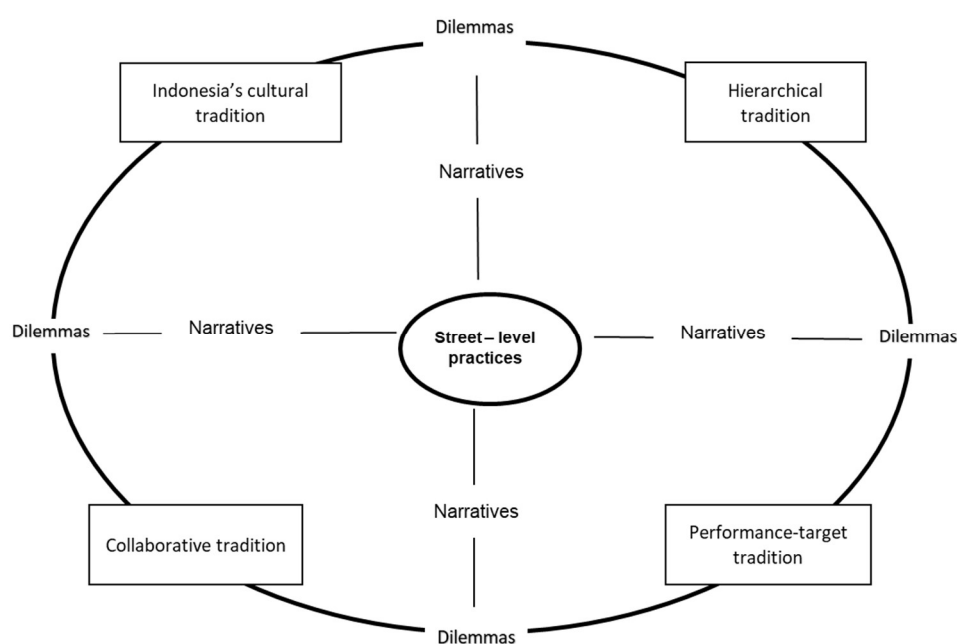
In conclusion, practice theory facilitates a more comprehensive analysis of SLBs' complex practice by appreciating and recognising performative and relational elements of practice. This is particularly important as SLBs need to deal with and navigate conflicting

expectations arising from different governance traditions within their specific context. Moreover, practice theory enables a deeper understanding of the underlying meanings and rationales that drive the practices of SLBs when dealing with complex and challenging situations. Incorporating practice theory in Bevir & Rhodes' interpretivism enriches this study's ability to offer a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of SLBs' practices, their underlying motives, and the complex interactions between various actors and structures in the field.

3.6 Analytical framework of this study

This section establishes the analytical framework that will be employed in this research to analyse SLBs' practices within a context in which different governance paradigms conflict. This framework builds upon Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism approach, encompassing the concepts of traditions, dilemmas, and narratives, as well as practice theory. By integrating these concepts, this framework offers a holistic understanding of the complex relationships between street-level actors' practices and the wider governance context. The figure below visually represents the interconnectedness of these concepts within the framework.

Figure 3.1
Relationship between governmental tradition, dilemmas, and practice of street-level bureaucrats



As the CCT programme is implemented within Indonesia's governance system, identifying governance traditions is essential to understand the ideational context in which street-level actors in this study situate their beliefs and practices. The concept of governance traditions is a valuable analytical tool to explore the values, cultural, and historical aspects of institutions that shape the beliefs and practices of street-level actors (Bevir and Rhodes, 2001, 2006), including how they make sense of their role during the policy process (Sørensen and Bentzen, 2020). In this study, governance traditions are constituted by Western governance traditions (bureaucratic, performance-target, and collaborative traditions) and non-Western governance tradition (Indonesia's cultural tradition), including cultural dimensions that are embedded in Indonesia's governance system. Each tradition holds different beliefs and expectations regarding how street-level actors should build relationships with citizens and other actors, engage with discretion, and perceive their identity. Cultural and historical Indonesian governance traditions and newly introduced Western governance traditions will be identified through studying the literature of Indonesian scholars' research regarding Indonesia's governance system, government data and regulations, and also interviews with and shadowing of participants in this study.

The concept of dilemmas is critical to an understanding of SLBs' practice in implementing the CCT programme in Indonesia's governance system. The uncritical adoption of Western governance paradigms within Indonesia's governance system, as reflected in the CCT programme, creates dilemmas when these new beliefs clash with existing cultural traditions embedded in Indonesian governance. Moreover, dilemmas can arise when conflicting beliefs amongst Western governance paradigms clash with one another. At the individual level, street-level actors face dilemmas when implementing the CCT programme due to the divergent expectations generated by different governance traditions, or when their own beliefs about their roles clash with the new beliefs imposed by certain governance traditions. These dilemmas highlight the complexities and challenges inherent in implementing policy in contexts where multiple governance traditions coexist. The identification and analysis

of such dilemmas can provide valuable insights into how SLBs navigate these tensions and conflicts in their everyday practices. Street-level dilemmas arising from clashing governance traditions will be identified through unstructured interviews with different groups of participants — such as facilitators (as key street-level actors), policymakers, or local government actors — and by shadowing the participants in this study.

The concept of narrative is useful for depicting how institutional beliefs and traditions are explained in SLBs' daily practice and used to articulate their beliefs, ideas, expectations, perceptions or motivations. When SLBs share stories about the way they understand and interpret perception about their roles, values about their tasks, their experience in facing clashing and contesting expectations, and responses that they take to navigate dilemmas, these narratives help us to understand street-level bureaucrats' ideas and their justifications for acting in the way that they do. While traditions help us to explore in what modes of governance SLBs carry out their daily tasks and dilemmas assist us in analysing the contradicting expectations that SLBs might encounter, narratives then aid us to provide explanations about the actions and practices that street-level bureaucrats perform, including the beliefs that they hold, particularly in response to different dilemmas arising from conflicting governance traditions. In the context of this study, narratives can help us to reveal, for instance, why SLBs perceive their roles in a particular way; why, in performing their works, they choose to focus on and prioritise certain aspects; why they have certain types of relationships with other actors and citizens; or why they have specific responses when handling clashing demands and expectations. I will examine SLBs' and other policy actors' narratives through the stories and language they use to frame their identities, values, and responses to dilemmas and policy issues during the implementation of the CCT programme, which will be obtained through unstructured interview, shadowing, and policy documents.

Lastly, practice portrays how institutional beliefs and traditions are embodied and enacted in the day-to-day actions of SLBs. SLBs not only confront and negotiate dilemmas but also actively participate in the creation and re-creation of practices through their agency

and reflection on their situations, contexts, and beliefs. Practice provides insight into how SLBs confront and negotiate dilemmas, and whether traditions are transformed or reproduced in the process. Practice also facilitates this study in examining the dynamic, emergent, and ongoing practice of SLBs in interpreting traditions, navigating dilemmas, and using narratives during the CCT implementation. This study will analyse the practices of SLBs in relation to discretion, the citizen-SLB relationship, and collaboration with policy actors, as well as examine their narratives through the stories and language they use regarding their responses to dilemmas and policy issues during the implementation of the CCT programme. Through this analysis, the study aims to reveal how SLBs navigate and negotiate between competing governance traditions and their own beliefs; how they transform or reproduce traditions through their practices; and, importantly, how SLBs' practices give shape on how governance traditions are manifested in reality. Street-level practices will be identified through unstructured interviews and the shadowing of participants in this study.

3.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the analytical framework that will be used to address the key objectives of this study: to analyse SLBs' practices within the context where different governance paradigms coexist; identify emerging dilemmas; and explore the ways SLBs negotiate these dilemmas. I argue that Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism and practice theory are both helpful in framing the analysis of the daily practices of SLBs in implementing the CCT programme.

The concept of tradition is relevant in exploring the governance paradigms embedded within Indonesia's governance system, as reflected in the CCT programme. The concept of dilemma helps to analyse the tensions and conflicting beliefs and expectations that arise between different governance paradigms. The concept of narrative enables investigation into how SLBs react to those dilemmas and how their responses impact the policy implementation process and its outcomes.

However, even though Bevir & Rhodes' interpretivism offers a clear framework for addressing the main objectives of this research, this chapter has underlined its limitations. Particularly, their concept of practice passes over the performative complexity and relationality of practice. By integrating practice theory with Bevir & Rhodes' interpretivism, this limitation can be addressed and a more comprehensive framework can be developed in analysing SLBs' daily practice. Practice theory enables an understanding of the dynamic, relational, and performative elements of practice, providing a critical perspective to explore how SLBs negotiate conflicting expectations from different governance paradigms in their local context. Also, practice theory highlights the relationality between SLBs and their context, acknowledging that SLBs are bound by socio-material rules, situations, contexts, and knowledge in performing and reproducing their daily practices.

This study aims to address limitations in street-level bureaucracy theory related to the underexplored discussion of street-level practice within conflicting governance traditions in a non-Western context. It also seeks to fill the gap in the understudied theme on how this context, where different governance traditions clash, shape the relational dynamics between SLBs and their peers, supervisors, and citizens, as well as their discretion in negotiating dilemmas. Thus, the study focuses on exploring street-level practices in responding to dilemmas arising from conflicting governance traditions. With the aim and focus of this study, overall, this chapter has laid the basis for exploring SLBs' practice within the context of different conflicting governance paradigms through the integration of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism and practice theory. This framework will provide a more comprehensive analysis of the performative and relational dynamic of SLBs' practice and aid in gaining valuable insights into the policy implementation process.

This chapter has also highlighted the philosophical position of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism that is primarily based on anti-foundationalism. This approach rejects the idea that knowledge can be based on pure experience or pure reason. To understand the perspective of individuals, we have to refer back to their beliefs, ideational backgrounds, experience, and interpretation. Thus, the selection of this study's analytical framework also

influences the choice of an appropriate research methodology and design, including data collection methods. The next chapter will provide a detailed explanation of the research methodology adopted in this thesis.

Chapter 4: Research Design, Methodology, and Ethics

4.1 Introduction

Having presented the analytical framework in Chapter 3, in this chapter I will explicate the research methodology employed in this study. The key objective of this study is to analyse the day-to-day practice and lived experience of street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) who work within a context in which different governance paradigms clash, and analyse how their response to dilemmas is reached. This chapter argues that an interpretivist philosophical position is the most suitable approach to take. It is a philosophical position in accordance with the epistemology stance of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism which is used as this study's analytical framework. This chapter also provides justification for how this philosophical stance shapes decisions about research design, data collection methods, and data analysis.

The chapter's initial section will discuss the research philosophy of this study and explain the reasons for adopting interpretivism and constructivism as the suitable epistemological and ontological philosophical positions for this thesis. The following section will explicate a single case study including aspects such as the case selection and access to the case.

This will be followed by discussion of research ethics and the methods employed for data collection. This study used unstructured qualitative interviews with participants, including programme facilitators, programme beneficiaries, community members, front-line supervisors, local government actors and policymakers. Additionally, the study employed shadowing of a front-line supervisor and four facilitators, as well as document analysis.

Afterwards, there will be discussion about the data analysis, and this study's use of grounded theory and narrative analysis. This will be followed by an explanation regarding reflexivity and positionality and reflections on conducting fieldwork in the middle of a pandemic. Finally, this study concludes by recapping the research design and study methods.

4.2 Research Philosophy: Epistemological and Ontological Stance

The section will explicate and justify the philosophical position adopted in this research, as philosophical assumptions form the basis for conducting the study. By outlining my philosophical perspective, I clarify how I investigated street-level practice in a context where different governance paradigms conflict, which methods and types of inquiries I used, and what kind of data and evidence I needed to collect (Gray, 2004; Denscombe, 2010). This research specifically examines how SLBs deal with different governance paradigms when implementing the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme. It analyses the dilemmas that arise from conflicting logics within these paradigms and how SLBs, through their practices and narratives, navigate these dilemmas. This research also employs the interpretivist analytical framework of Bevir and Rhodes to make sense of how individual SLBs deal with these conflicting paradigms and dilemmas. Thus, this study argues that an interpretivist philosophy is the most appropriate approach for this research because it enables the generation of knowledge necessary to address the focus of this study. This approach helps in making sense of and interpreting the process of social construction and the social world of SLBs. It aids in making sense of SLBs' daily practices and their interactions with clashing traditions, as well as interpreting their narratives, practices, and experiences in dealing with different dilemmas (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012; Needham, 2015) .

This study is based on an interpretivist philosophy that presumes the ultimate purpose of social research is to seek understanding regarding intersubjective matters such as 'motives, meanings, reasons, and other subjective experiences that are time and context-bound' (Hudson and Ozane, 1988, p.551). In this approach, both the researcher and the participants are engaged in a mutual process of interpreting the meaning of social entities and 'understandings can only be accessed, or co-generated, through interactions between researcher and researched as they seek to interpret those events and make those interpretations legible to each other' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, p.4). Also, referring to the interpretivist analytical framework of this study, Bevir and Rhodes' philosophical approach is rooted in anti-foundationalism, which 'rejects appeals to a basic ground or foundation of

knowledge in either pure experience or pure reason' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010, p.43). Street-level actors construct their identities, interests, and beliefs through their involvement with their social world (Bevir and Rhodes, 2015, p.3). Hence, the philosophical stance of this study also aligns with the broader philosophical position of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism.

This study seeks to understand the beliefs and values inherent in governance traditions, uncover the meaning of SLBs' practices, explore the dilemmas they face due to conflicting governance modes, and make sense of their feelings, views, and experiences in negotiating with those dilemmas. I assume that SLBs' beliefs, practices, and responses are socially constructed in terms of their context (social and political) and situations (Wagenaar, 2004; Needham, 2015). Therefore, this study takes a constructivist, ontological position and an interpretivist epistemological position, in line with its analytical framework and my understanding of the social world. Clarifying these positions is important, as they inform the methodology and research design of this study (Yanow, 2006). Also, flexibility is crucial within interpretive studies, and appropriate research design and methods for interpretive research should 'reflect and make space for its iterative, recursive, and adaptive character' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, p.55).

While interpretive researchers are not bound to specific methods, they tend to focus on 'methods of understanding' from the participants' perspectives in a particular context (Yanow, 2006, p.13). Hence, qualitative single case study and qualitative methods are deemed appropriate for this study because they facilitate the generation of the knowledge needed to address this study's research questions. A qualitative single case study enables the researcher to understand street-level actors' perspectives, experiences, and histories within their context, and qualitative methods provide an in-depth understanding of social phenomena by studying 'people's social and material circumstances' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p.22). Qualitative methods are also flexible and 'responsive to changing conditions of the study in progress' (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.18). The following section will detail the research design adopted for this study.

4.3 Research design: A single case study

This research adopts case study methodology as it is argued that the case study methodology is consistent with the interpretivist approach (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). Case study design allows the researcher to connect 'micro-level actions of individuals with macro-level structures and processes' (Neuman, 2014, p.42) and understand the 'rich, complex sets of interrelationships between different social interests' (May, 2011, p.211). The case study methodology particularly enables us to explore the personal experiences of individuals and appreciate contextual elements (Stake, 1995; May, 2011). Thus, the case study approach helps me step into the experience and 'the real world' of SLBs as they perform their practices in Indonesia with its own contextual dimensions, navigate conflicting demands from different governance paradigms, and interact with their cultural, social, historical and political context, beneficiaries, and other street-level actors.

The research design selected for this study is a single case study, focusing on street-level practices within Indonesia's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme. This design involves an 'in-depth exploration' of a particular policy, institution, programme, or system from multiple perspectives in 'a real-life context' (Simons, 2009, p.21). Some scholars argue that a single case study can provide a more detailed understanding of a specific social phenomenon, allowing researchers to obtain richness in data and insights (Denscombe, 2010; Gustafsson, 2017). Flyvbjerg (2006, p.228) argues that the in-depth nature of a single case study allows researchers to identify 'black swans' or particularities within the phenomena of interest that offer different explanations from existing theories and understand uniqueness and particularisation, which involves presenting 'a rich portrayal of a single setting to inform practice, establish the value of the case, and/or contribute to knowledge of a specific topic' (Donmoyer, 2000; Simons, 2009, p.24). Thus, a single case study can be valuable in developing theory and contributing to the development of social science by disproving or contesting existing theories and paradigms, as well as by expanding them. This suggests that the single case study, as a form of small-N research, is no less valuable and certainly not 'inferior to multiple-case studies' (May, 2011, p.235).

Although single case studies have been criticised for lack of generisable results, proponents have refuted this critique by arguing that a single case study can indeed lead to generalisation (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Stake, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, what is meant by generalisation here does not refer to rational or law-like generalisation, as usually associated with scientific terms, or generalisation to the population (Donmoyer, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Instead, a case study can produce naturalistic generalisations according to 'the perspective of the user of the generalisation' (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Stake, 2000, p.26) or contextuality (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). Naturalistic generalisation is related to readers' experiences in acknowledging 'the similarities of objects and issues in and out of context and by sensing the natural covariations of happenings' (Stake, 2000, p.22). This study will provide sufficient information for readers about street-level bureaucrats' practices, dilemmas, and their narratives in the context of the CCT programme in Indonesia, in order to 'build a sense of shared familiarity in readers' (Neuman, 2014). Therefore, readers who are interested in studying street-level bureaucracy, particularly related to governance paradigms, street-level dilemmas and practices, can assess the range of transferability, applicability and relevance of the findings of this study from the Indonesian context to their context (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p.40; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012).

4.3.1 Rationales in selecting the case: Intrinsic and instrumental motivations

The rationale for case selection can be driven either by intrinsic motivations (to learn and gain better understanding of the particular case of interest) or instrumental motivations (to explore and analyse specific theoretical issues) (Stake, 1995; Simons, 2009, p.30; May, 2011). In this study, the case is bounded within a specific programme, named the local implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme in Indonesia (Simons, 2009; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) and both intrinsic and instrumental rationales influenced my decision to select the CCT programme as the single case.

For *the intrinsic reasons*, at the beginning stage of this study, I had a clear interest in understanding the role of street-level actors in policy implementation, specifically in the CCT

programme. I had prior knowledge of the programme and the existence of CCT facilitators as important street-level actors. What sets the CCT programme apart from other poverty reduction programmes in Indonesia is that it is a national programme implemented at the district and sub-district levels, and this programme has facilitators who have direct interaction with recipients and responsibility for ensuring the programme is well-implemented in the field. Therefore, initially the programme was selected as the case for this study due to an intrinsic rationale: because of my great interest in learning particular issues related to the roles of CCT facilitators as SLBs in this particular programme. The CCT programme provided an opportunity to intensively learn about the roles and practice of SLBs, making it an ideal case for this study (Stake, 1995, p.3-5).

As this study progressed, the focus shifted, research questions were revised, and an analytical framework was developed. This led to the emergence of *the instrumental reasons* for selecting the CCT programme as the case study. The programme was perceived as a case that could facilitate the exploration and analysis of specific theoretical issues (Stake, 1995; Baxter and Jack, 2008; Simons, 2009). As the study evolved, my research interests shifted to a greater focus on understanding SLBs' practices, particularly how they conduct their practices and negotiate their dilemmas within a context where different governance traditions clash.

The CCT programme has the potential 'to maximise what we can learn' (Stake, 1995, p.4) about the research question and is a relevant setting for studying the practices of SLBs. As an internationally proposed programme, the CCT programme has a complex programme design and is implemented using paradigms rooted in Western Public Administration (WPA), which may not adequately consider cultural factors (Rosfadhila *et al.*, 2013; Sahem and Bachri, 2020). The programme provides an opportunity to analyse the conflict between different governance paradigms, given its hierarchical organisation structure, performance and target-based orientation, and need for collaboration with different actors from different levels of government. Also, the CCT programme has facilitators who directly communicate and interact with the programme's beneficiaries at the street-level. For the cash transfer programme, the SLBs' roles and discretion are particularly important, as SLBs act as

gatekeepers with the ability to determine recipients' eligibility, services, and punishments in the programme (Habibullah and Noviana, 2013; Ramírez, 2021).

Additionally, the programme is embedded within Indonesia's governance system. Indonesia provides an opportunity to maximise what we can learn because, like most other Asian countries, along with cultural aspects embedded within its bureaucracy, Indonesia also adopts the WPA concepts which were imposed during the centuries of colonial rule, prescribed during the postcolonial period, and imitated in recent years' (Haque, 2019, p.111).

It is important to highlight the relationship between Indonesia and the non-Western world. Scholars argue that 'non-Western' often refers to Asian, African, and Latin American countries, which have similar economic, political, administrative, and cultural aspects (Haque, 1996). Economically, non-Western nations are often categorised as low or middle-income countries, marked by significant wealth concentration among elites and widespread poverty (Haque, 1996; Lotta et al., 2022, p.5). Politically and administratively, they exhibit 'a collectivist approach, top-down power structure, loyalty, subordination, and patronage' (van der Wal, van den Berg and Haque, 2021, p.295). These countries share a common historical development, having undergone colonialism (Haque, 2019; Cherniak, 2021). Culturally, non-Western nations possess diverse ethnicities and cultural values rooted in 'family, kinship, caste, religion, ethnicity, and tribal affiliation' (Haque, 1996, p.332). Hence, Indonesia, with its historical, socio-cultural, economic, political, and administrative aspects, is considered part of the non-Western world due to these similarities (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Haque, 2019). In line with the focus of this study, which aims to explore SLBs' practices within conflicting governance paradigms in a non-Western context, Indonesia, as the case site, offers a significant opportunity to delve into how cultural dimensions such as deference norms, paternalism, and patrimonialism ingrained in the bureaucracy and the CCT programme clash with the introduced WPA logics and how SLBs navigate such conflicting paradigms.

Regarding the CCT programme in Indonesia's context, in 2007, a conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme called the *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) was introduced by

the Indonesian government. The adoption of the CCT scheme in Indonesia is connected to the widespread trend observed in Latin America, other Global South countries, and the influence of the World Bank (Hasan *et al.*, 2019). The World Bank has actively promoted the CCT programme as an innovative policy for combating poverty in over 60 countries (Olken, 2019; Berten, 2020). As a significant donor to the country, the World Bank plays a key role in facilitating the implementation of CCT in Indonesia through technical and financial support (Hatta and Sarkawi, 2011; Nurfaizah, 2021). Like other CCT schemes, the *Program Keluarga Harapan* in Indonesia has both short and long-term goals. In the short term, the programme aims to have an income effect and alleviate the burden of family expenditures. In the long term, it is an investment in the human capital of the younger generation, aiming to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by improving the health and education of poor families (Rawlings and Rubio, 2005; Hadna and Kartika, 2017).

The programme's primary objective is to alleviate poverty by providing a cash allowance (Appendix 1) to individuals or households experiencing poverty during a specific period. This allowance enables those in receipt of the allowance to access designated health services, education, and social welfare facilities (Nazara and Rahayu, 2013). The programme targets poor households registered in the DTKS social registry (Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial) and has specific components and criteria (Appendix 2). Between 2007 and 2015, the programme primarily focused on two components: health and education. However, in 2016, a social welfare component was introduced to include the elderly and severely disabled as eligible recipients (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2019). The programme also aims to reduce income inequality among low-income families and promote the use of formal financial services by the recipients. The implementation of the programme involves several main activities (see Appendix 3). These activities include conducting an initial meeting and validating potential recipients, delivering the cash transfer, providing assistance to the recipients, organising family development sessions, verifying recipient commitment, updating data, and eventually graduating the recipients from the programme (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2020).

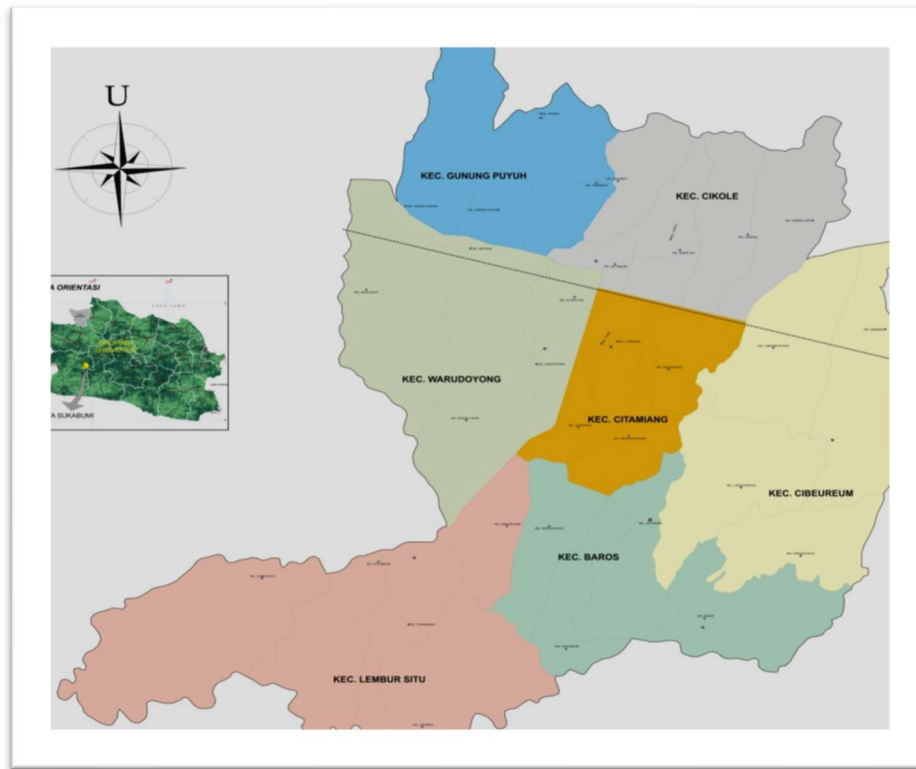
The CCT incorporates the role of programme facilitators who directly interact with and assist the recipients, ensuring effective implementation of the programme at the local level. These facilitators are social workers employed and recruited by the Ministry of Social Affairs, deployed in districts across Indonesia (Hasan *et al.*, 2019). The facilitators have the responsibility of ensuring that all eligible recipients fulfil the specified conditionalities (see Appendix 4) of the programme. This includes activities such as regular visits to health facilities or maintaining a minimum attendance of 85% at school. Compliance with these conditionalities becomes a significant factor in determining the recipients' continued participation in the programme. If recipients fail to meet their conditionalities, sanctions can be applied, such as withholding benefits or excluding them from the programme (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2019).

Therefore, as a programme that is introduced by an international agency and implemented in a non-Western context, the CCT programme has the potential 'to maximise what we can learn' (Stake, 1995, p.4). It was identified as a suitable case study that allows me to address this study's research questions due to its potential to generate insights into street-level actors' dilemmas, practices and narratives within the context where Western and non-Western governance paradigms conflict.

Furthermore, another instrumental motivation for selecting the CCT programme as the case study is also related to its geographic location and accessibility. As Stake (1995, p.4) suggests, it is preferable to choose a case that is easy to access and 'hospitable to our inquiry'. As Indonesia consists of 5 tiers of government — central, province, regency/municipality, district, subdistrict/village (see, Figure 4.2) — this study will be focused on city level, named Sukabumi City. Sukabumi City is located in West Java, Indonesia (Figure 4.1). With a geographical area of 48.02 km², as of 2022, the population of Sukabumi Municipality is 356,410 people, resulting in a population density of 7,375 people/km². Notably, 39% of the area is developed, while the remaining portion is agricultural land. Of the developed land, 86.4% constitutes residential areas, with the remainder categorised as non-residential developed areas. Economically, Sukabumi faced challenges during the 1997 economic crisis,

with a significant drop in economic growth to minus 17.15% in 1998. Despite some recovery, the region continues to grapple with economic issues (the Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Figure. 4.1
Map of Sukabumi City

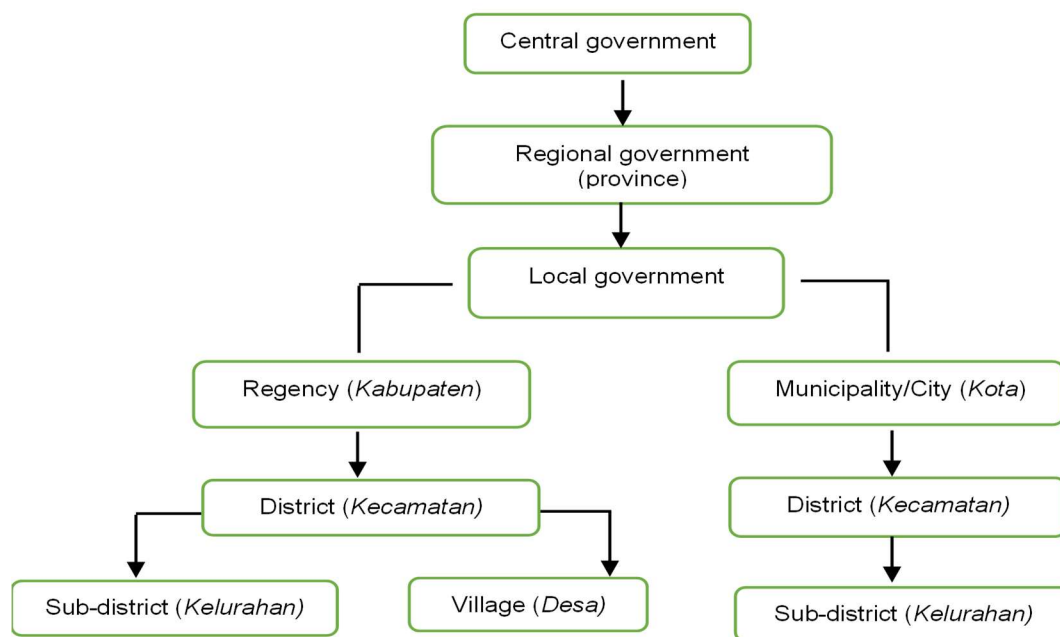


In terms of poverty, the depth of poverty in Sukabumi City has shown an increasing trend from 1.17% in 2013 to 1.75% in 2017, with an average increase of 0.12% during this period. Poverty remains a serious problem in Sukabumi, with the total number of people in poverty reaching 26,590 in 2022 (Agency for Regional Development, 2021). Regional Office of Manpower and Transmigration Department of Sukabumi City reports a persistently high open unemployment rate, reaching 8.53% in 2022, equating to approximately 27,000 unemployed individuals. In terms of education, despite adequate facilities and school enrollment, the city grapples with a dropout issue, with 46 students leaving school (Agency for Regional Development, 2021). The increasing poverty rate, coupled with high unemployment and educational challenges, highlights the need for targeted interventions and policies to address these socio-economic issues. Sukabumi City also embraces diverse local cultures,

predominantly influenced by Sundanese and Javanese traditions. These local cultures are deeply ingrained in the people, society, and governmental system of Sukabumi City (Agency for Regional Development, 2021).

With the focus of this study on analysing street-level practice in implementing poverty policy within the context of conflicting governance paradigms, Sukabumi City, with its poverty issues and the richness of cultural aspects embedded in its governance, provides an excellent opportunity to maximize what we can learn and gain knowledge and information to explore the focus of this research. Furthermore, confining the case to one local government makes the study feasible, or ‘remains reasonable in scope’ to be conducted (Baxter and Jack, 2008, p.547), as the number of participants and timeframe for observation can be manageable.

Figure 4.2
Level of Indonesia's governance



Source: Law no. 32/2004 on Regional Government and Regulation of Ministry of Home Affairs No.18/2018

Additionally, the CCT programme in Sukabumi City was selected as the site for conducting fieldwork due to its potential to provide access to the case and the availability of

data. By choosing Sukabumi City as the location of the study, I was able to engage with participants and institutions that were familiar with the CCT programme and had a willingness to be involved in the study (Simons, 2009; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). Sukabumi City's location in Indonesia provided a non-Western context for exploring the practices and dilemmas of street-level bureaucrats within different governance paradigms, aligning with the study's research interests and objectives.

4.3.2 Access to the case and participants

Gaining access to research participants is a critical aspect of any research project (May, 2011; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). In this study, the Department of Social Affairs (DoSA) of Sukabumi City is the leading sector at the local government level, responsible for the implementation of the CCT programme. As such, establishing initial contact with officers at DoSA is vital for accessing the case.

It is worth noting that Indonesia has been criticised for its complicated bureaucratic procedures for research access (Abdulsalam, 2018). To overcome these challenges, I used both informal and formal techniques to gain access to the case and participants. This approach is supported by other Indonesian PhD researchers who recommend combining both communication methods for a more efficient process (Burhanudin, 2009).

As a local government officer who worked in the Sukabumi City, I have developed connections with staff within the relevant departments and possess a knowledge of the protocols involved in gaining access to the case. In the period of May to June 2019, I engaged in informal discussions with the officers at DoSA to convey my intention of enrolling in a PhD programme in September 2019, with a research interest in studying the SLBs within the CCT programme in Sukabumi City. During these conversations, I expressed a keen interest in the possibility of conducting the study within their organisation, which was met with a positive reception. In January 2021, I initiated further preliminary informal contact with the Head of Department of Social Affairs in Sukabumi City, seeking permission to conduct the research. Approaching the highest level of position within an organisation is imperative, as their decision

can significantly impact the organisation's participation in the research. As part of the formal approach, I sent a Letter of Permission to the DoSA in Sukabumi City, requesting official authorisation to conduct the study within their institution.

To gain access to the facilitators, I first requested a list of all CCT facilitators and their contact information from the DoSA officers. I then reached out to them through WhatsApp to inquire about their willingness to participate in the study. This same approach was used to contact other SLBs, programme recipients, and community members. When reaching out to gatekeepers and participants, using WhatsApp was found to be more effective than email, with a response rate of 100%.

Gaining access was also needed at the national level, specifically at the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of National Development and Planning. To arrange interviews with policymakers, personal contact details (WhatsApp numbers) of the gatekeepers were obtained and used to contact them. A letter of permission was sent to both the Ministers in April 2021 and was granted in May 2021.

4.4 Research Ethics

Ethical considerations are critical in qualitative and case study research involving human subjects. Prioritising participants' safety and avoiding harm, whether physical, emotional, or legal, is essential (Anastas, 1999; Bryman, 2016). In this study, ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity during interviews, and protecting the collected data (Banks, 2012; Durham, 2014). This study gained ethical approval from the University of Birmingham ethics committee prior to conducting fieldwork. As the research involved public officials at government agencies in Indonesia, I also followed national regulations regarding research within the institutions. A formal request letter was sent for approval to conduct the research, and access to the site was granted.

Obtaining informed consent is fundamental in ensuring that participants make informed decisions about their involvement in the study (Ryen, 2004). I provided detailed information

about the research topic, objectives, and procedures, along with potential risks and benefits, before conducting interviews or shadowing. Participants were also explicitly informed of their rights and the fact that their participation was voluntary was stressed. Before interview, I asked for participants' consent to record and transcribe their responses and informed them of their right to withdraw from this study at any time. Any data or information derived from their interview and shadowing would be removed if they chose to withdraw.

Considering that different cultural contexts may require distinct approaches to gaining consent, I obtained both verbal and written consent from participants (Ryen, 2004; Durham, 2014). Requesting written consent before an interview could create 'suspicion' in the researcher-participant relationship and be perceived as a sign of 'cultural distance' instead of respect (see Marzano, 2012, p.445). It is important to acknowledge some participants in this study were illiterate, and some were not accustomed to participating in research projects. For these respondents, signing a formal consent form was intimidating or uncomfortable. For instance, eight participants politely declined to sign the form⁷. By obtaining verbal consent, I maintained ethical standards and promoted inclusivity and cultural sensitivity (Ryen, 2004). Nonetheless, written consent was useful in gaining trust from another group of participants, particularly government officials, who felt more secure in disclosing information after signing a written consent form. For some participants, written consent served as an indication that this research was legitimate, conducted by a reputable university researcher, and that their information would not be inappropriately used.⁸

In this study, all data collected from participants was kept confidential and anonymised. Only my doctoral supervisors and I had access to the interviews, recordings, transcripts, and field notes. Participants were given fictitious names or pseudonyms, and any information that could reveal their identity was omitted. For example, there were only 4 CCT facilitators who

⁷ Some participants declined to sign the consent form while expressing their trust in the researcher by saying, 'I trust you, so there's no need to be this formal'. I obtained verbal consent by audio recording their statement that they agree to participate in this research.

⁸ One of the officers I interviewed shared her previous negative experience with an individual who used information obtained during an interview to create a false story about the programme.

worked in a particular district, which would have made it easy to identify their identities if I stated the name of the district. To ensure the privacy of participants, the locations in which CCT facilitators worked were not mentioned in this study.

It is essential to reflect on the ethical dilemmas I faced in balancing the need to gain participants' trust while ensuring their confidentiality. Some of the recipients and facilitators expressed concern regarding their selection as participants and posed questions such as 'Is it only me?' or 'Are there any other recipients or facilitators who participated? Who are they?'. In order to secure their trust, may have required revealing the names of other participants. However, by doing so, I would have violated the principle of maintaining their confidentiality. To resolve this, I explained to potential participants that multiple recipients had been interviewed in the area without revealing personal information or names, ensuring ethical considerations were met while maintaining their trust and confidentiality in the study.

4.5 Methods of data collection

Although this study adopts an interpretivist approach, there is no 'prescribed methodological toolkit' for producing data within this approach (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, p.178). While the interpretivism approach is not limited to qualitative methods (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012), given the focus of this study on understanding governance traditions, exploring street-level dilemmas, and comprehending the meanings behind street-level practice and narratives, qualitative methods were employed to collect data.

In analysing street-level practice, understanding local action, specific knowledge about a particular context, and 'lived experience from their perspective and in action' are all important (Feldman and Worline, 2016; Bartels, 2018, p.81). While quantitative methods may be useful in researching practice, it is argued that understanding and grasping the full meaning related to 'practical knowledge, discourse, emotions, artefacts, sociality, bodily dispositions, and normativity' is impractical without using 'ethnographic methods, in-depth case studies, and linguistic analysis' (Bartels, 2018, p.81). Therefore, for this study, I argue that qualitative methods such as unstructured interviews, shadowing, and documentary analysis were the

most suitable techniques for gathering data. Each data collection method will be discussed in the following subsections.

4.5.1 In-depth unstructured Interview

This study utilised in-depth unstructured interviews to gather data from participants. Unstructured interviews are the most suitable method for this study. The unstructured interview refers to the interview process that allows participants to discuss topics within 'their own frame of reference', as opposed to being constrained by preconceived notions imposed by the researcher (Rubin and Rubin, 1995; May, 2011, p.136). This method also enables the researcher to unfold and understand particular phenomena based on the participants' understanding and narratives (May, 2011, p.136). While the term 'unstructured' may suggest a lack of direction, it does not mean the interview is unsystematic. Researchers do have a list of topics to explore during the interview (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 2003, p.141; Wagenaar, 2011, p.253) and must also scrutinise the quality of the interview material and ensure that the data or information provided by the participants is relevant and useful to the study (Wagenaar, 2011, p.253).

I conducted interviews between March and September 2021 with 45 participants. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 2 hours. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted both in-person and online (using WhatsApp (video)/call, Facebook messenger, or Zoom). For instance, due to social distancing regulations that resulted in the closure of most central government offices, all central government officers were interviewed via Zoom, as per their request. To maximise research-relevance (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012), participants were selected from different background based on their key roles to ensure relevant and sufficient data, including CCT facilitators from seven districts (the street-level actors responsible for programme implementation), current and former CCT supervisors, national officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Department of Social Affairs (responsible for CCT policy formulation, monitoring, and evaluation), CCT recipients, community leaders, and members from seven districts with experience in how the CCT

programme operates in their areas, sub-district officers and other local department officers involved in the CCT technical coordination team, teachers, social workers, and village healthcare officers involved in the CCT verification process (Appendix 5).

My interview questions (Appendix 6) were organised into three types: initial, intermediate, and closing questions (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012, p.351-2). An example of an initial question was 'Could you describe the circumstances in which you first started as a CCT facilitator?'. In some cases, participants lacked confidence in answering questions during the interviews. To overcome this, I also began the interviews by focusing on their personal experience. For example, at the start of the interview, I acknowledged the participant's experience as a facilitator and highlighted their knowledge, saying, 'I know you've been a facilitator for 7 years'. This reassured the participants that they were competent and knowledgeable, and that I was interested in their perspective (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p.130-1).

During the intermediate questions, I gradually focused on the study's main topic — for instance, exploring dilemmas and challenges in implementing the CCT programme. Questions were aimed at their personal experiences of their responsibilities, different expectations, and challenging situations (e.g. 'Could you give me details of a situation when you experienced difficulties in meeting targets?'). To build a working relationship or interactive collaboration with participants (Wagenaar, 2011; Foley, 2012), I invited them to reflect on our interview by asking closing questions such as, 'Now that you know what my research is about, is there anything that I should have asked but didn't?' (see, Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p.137). This approach led to productive discussions, such as when one participant pointed out a missed topic around the CCT team coordination that led to further exploration with other participants.

During the interview process, I recorded and took notes to ensure accuracy and precision in capturing the participants' responses and transcribed the material afterwards. I asked and obtained permission from participants to record our conversation. Only three participants requested to be 'off the record' on certain topics. To respect their wishes, I paused the recording and clarified whether it was okay to resume recording. To ensure participants'

comfort and safety in sharing their experiences, I emphasised confidentiality and anonymity of the data. Interviews were also conducted in comfortable locations according to their preferences, such as their offices, cafes, mosques, or homes.

During interviews, I used two languages — Bahasa Indonesia and Sundanese⁹ — which was important because many CCT recipients preferred to communicate in their local language. This helped them feel more comfortable sharing their narratives, experiences and building trust. To prevent any confusion and ensure participants could express themselves freely, I avoided using academic jargon during the interviews. However, I clarified theoretical terms used by participants, such as 'collaboration' or 'partner'. Some participants used the term loosely, describing activities like submitting reports to local district, asking for stamp and sign from officers and maintaining communication as collaboration. It was crucial to ask for clarification and specific examples of their collaborative activities.

All interviews were transcribed in Bahasa Indonesia and Sundanese. I included such words like 'um', 'uh', and 'you know' to capture participants' real experiences and emotions (their anger, confusion, happiness, etc). For instance, I did not omit 'haha haha' (laugh sounds) from participants because those laughs could have different meanings; sarcastic/scepticism, or real joyful. Some participants even used sceptical laughter and jokes to express their disappointment with the central government.

4.5.2 Shadowing

Another method employed for data collection is shadowing. Unlike interviews or observations that typically take place in one location, shadowing is characterised by 'its nomadic nature' and mobility (Meunier and Vasquez, 2008; Ferguson, 2016, p.16). The researcher commonly follows the participant from one location to another and observes them

⁹ Sundanese is the native language of the Sundanese ethnic group in Indonesia, mainly found in West Java, including Sukabumi City. In remote areas, locals usually communicate using Sundanese instead of the national language, Bahasa Indonesia. Having lived in Sukabumi City for nearly 28 years, I am fluent in the Sundanese language and do not require the services of a professional language translator.

carrying out their everyday work, attending meetings or interacting with multiple actors (Gilliat-Ray, 2011; Gill, Barbour and Dean, 2014).

From March to June 2021, I shadowed four experienced CCT facilitators and one front-line supervisor for a total of 36.5 hours over multiple activities (see Appendix 7). I selected the facilitators based on their length of working experience and their working area. Two facilitators and the front-line supervisor agreed to participate when I contacted them in May 2020, and I reached out to two more facilitators in January 2021. I shadowed CCT facilitators during their daily activities, including meetings, CCT sessions (e.g., Family Development Sessions and e-Waroeng activities), graduating the recipients, and on community visits. This provided firsthand insights into their interactions with beneficiaries, supervisors, and colleagues at both inter- and intra-organisational levels. Shadowing also revealed their dilemmas, tensions, role conflicts, frustrations, and problem-solving strategies in challenging situations. Importantly, it provided understanding of governance paradigms embedded in CCT programme such as building citizen-SLB relationships, coordinating processes, managing target pressures, and making discretionary decisions.

One of the most valuable shadowing experiences I had was when observing a facilitator at his home after previously shadowing him at other events. I witnessed the facilitator's frustration with the unexpected targets set by the central government, as well as the complex and detailed recipient data that needed to be synchronised within unrealistic timeframes, technical difficulties with applications, lack of internet connectivity, unclear instructions from the central government, and even complaints from recipients about delayed CCT payments. These mundane activities demonstrated the unrealistic targets set by the central government and the overlooked complexities of their everyday work. This shadowing experience provided detailed data of both the trivial and difficult to articulate phenomena that cannot be captured by interviews alone (McDonald, 2005).

While a positivist approach to shadowing requires the researcher to maintain objectivity and invisibility in the field, an interpretive approach allows for more engagement with the shadowee (Gill, 2011). In my experience, my shadowing was not entirely invisible, as

participants often introduced me to others during their activities.¹⁰ However, I made it clear that my presence was merely to shadow and not to evaluate, in order to make others feel comfortable and encourage them to act naturally. Also, shadowing involves a 'nomadic' nature where it is difficult to predict with whom CCT facilitators might interact, potentially raising ethical issues (Quinlan, 2008; Ferguson, 2016, p.23). To address this, I discussed with CCT facilitators before starting the shadowing to identify potential third parties and obtain approval from everyone involved to record or take notes about their activities.

Shadowing complements other research methods by addressing their limitations. For example, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note that, during data collection such as interviews participants may be unable or unwilling to discuss certain topics under study. In this regard, shadowing serves as an alternative technique for overcoming this issue, as it provides the opportunity to gather first-hand, detailed data. This allows researchers to directly observe phenomena, including the trivial, the mundane, and the challenging to articulate, which may be missed in interviews (McDonald, 2005, p.457).

4.5.3 Secondary data: policy documents

In addition to interviews and shadowing, this study also utilised secondary data to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the research focus. Due to the limitations imposed by Covid-19, only three policy makers from the central government were interviewed. Thus, the use of documents as an additional source of data allowed for a broader perspective on the CCT programme. By examining these documents, I was able to gain a better understanding of the programme's structure, actors involved, and their responsibilities. Furthermore, analysing the documents allowed me to identify conflicting expectations for the facilitators that were outlined in the policy documents.

The selection of documents was based on their relevance and ability to provide pertinent information about the CCT programme and poverty programmes in general, serving

¹⁰ Some facilitators found my shadowing method unique and interesting, and even jokingly referred to me as '*bayangan saya*' (which means 'my shadow' in Indonesian).

to complement and confirm the findings obtained through other research methods (Mackieson, Shlonsky and Connolly, 2019, p.968). In total, 54 government documents/policy papers were analysed, ranging from national to local levels based on both my judgment and participant input (see Appendix 8). For instance, a Ministry of Social Affairs official letter related to the CCT implementation was included, as it was frequently referenced by participants when discussing the theme of 'unexpected targets' (Bowen, 2009). When using documents as a source of data, it is important to consider their authenticity and credibility (May, 2011). In this study, the selected policy documents are considered credible sources of information since they were formulated by government to explicate certain policies (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Also, policy documents are viewed as valuable sources of written data in qualitative research due to 'their official provenance, meaning they have high validity and trustworthiness' (Mackieson, Shlonsky and Connolly, 2019, p.970).

The documents gathered in this study were valuable for triangulating the data collected from interviews and shadowing. By comparing and contrasting the information obtained from documents with the data disclosed by participants during interviews and shadowing, I was able to examine whether the ideas, values, and beliefs about the CCT programme and expectations about SLBs' day-to-day practices written in policy documents aligned with the perspectives of SLBs themselves. In this way, documents were useful in analysing how formal regulations may differ from the SLBs' perspective particularly in relation to governance traditions and dilemmas.

4.6 Data Analysis: Grounded theory analysis and Narrative analysis

In my analysis of the collected data, I employed a combination of grounded theory and narrative analysis. It is not uncommon to integrate these techniques within qualitative studies (see, Floersch et al., 2010; Bartels, 2014). The mix of grounded theory and narrative analysis contributed substantial depth and richness to my analysis, as they complement each other. Grounded theory analysis helped me stay closely connected to the data, allowing me to uncover emerging themes through an abductive and iterative approach. Meanwhile, narrative

analysis facilitated a more profound exploration of the raw narratives or stories, enabling me to capture both prevailing and opposing narratives through storylines, characters, and metaphors. Also, narrative analysis enables me to strengthen the explanatory power of my grounded theory analysis and give a more comprehensive explanation of the data. The process for data analysis will be discussed in the next two sub-sections.

4.6.1 Grounded theory analysis: coding and memo-writing

In analysing the data, I started with the initial or open coding (Charmaz, 2015). Coding refers to a process of 'naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorises, summarises, and accounts for each piece of data' (Charmaz, 2006, p.43, cited in Thornberg and Charmaz, 2014). I coded my data as a meaning unit; in the form of words, sentences, or occasionally paragraphs (Wagenaar, 2011). During the initial coding stage, I remained close to the data, asking questions like 'What does the data suggest?' (Bryant et al., 2019, p.176). To organise my interview and field notes, I used Nvivo software for coding.

As a novice researcher, I initially struggled with creating my codes, feeling that all data was important. During the initial coding, I attempted to remain 'as open as possible to what may emerge from data and do not precluding (or predetermining) what may eventually prove to be relevant to the emerging theory' (Holton, 2007, p.276-7). Hence, this resulted in 277 descriptive and repetitive initial nodes generated through open coding from March 2021 to July 2021. Conducting interviews in Bahasa Indonesia presented challenges when creating codes in English. Some words were difficult to translate without losing meaning (Tarozzi, 2019). As a result, some initial codes were created in Bahasa, such as '*target dadakan*' and '*tahu bulat*¹¹', which referred to how facilitators are expected to quickly meet sudden targets with short notice. I conducted the initial coding while collecting data to help sharpen my

¹¹ "*Tahu bulat*" or round tofu is a popular street food in Indonesia that is best enjoyed when fried and consumed immediately. However, the term "*tahu bulat*" has been used by participants to describe the pressure faced by facilitators who are often given sudden requests by the central government to meet targets. This has caused confusion among the facilitators and has forced them to always be prepared for unexpected orders. The Central Government treats these pressure-filled targets as trivial matters and treats them much like a "*tahu bulat*" seller who can easily serve up their product.

discussions with participants and probe unclear or under-discussed topics for more explanation.

As coding is a creative and iterative process, I engaged in constant comparative analysis by comparing codes to data and other codes (Charmaz, 2008). I then progressed to focused coding and began to recognise the most frequent and significant codes (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012, p.356). Thus, this stage involved merging different initial codes into categories. For example, I merged different related initial codes such as 'experiencing complexity in the field', 'facing complexity of procedure', 'having too heavy a workload' and 'feeling the system application is complex' into a category or new code called 'complexity of working condition'. After merging the codes, the codes shortened from 277 codes to 34 (parents) codes (the codebook is presented in Appendix 9).

In addition to collecting and coding data, I engaged in memo-writing — 'analytical narratives covering all the researchers' ideas and questions about the codes that occurred at the moment' (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007, p.3) which is a crucial step between coding and drafting my thesis chapter (Thornberg and Charmaz, 2014a). The memo-writing is mainly informed by the codes or categories that I have conducted as I commonly wrote a memo to analyse certain codes. For example, when I wrote a 'the routine vs unexpected target' memo, the ideas of the memo consisted of different codes such as 'having target routine', 'unexpected target', 'problems with the unexpected target' and 'questioning the achievability of targets'. Also, importantly, memo-writing also helps me to develop and crystallise certain codes (for example, 'blame games' codes).

Over the course of eight months, from March to November 2021, I produced nine memos and discussed them with my supervisors (see Appendix 10). Memo-writing served as 'an audit trail' for my research as it helped me record my conversations, analytical progress, and thoughts and feelings about the data. It then enhanced trustworthiness and confidence in the results of the research (Birks and Francis, 2008; Birks and Mills, 2011). Also, by reflecting on my memos, I was able to identify areas that required further exploration in data collection. My initial memos were overly descriptive and lacked structure but, as my analysis progressed

and my engagement with the literature deepened, my memos evolved and became more complex. In my more advanced memos, I was able to discern the interconnections between governance traditions, dilemmas, and SLBs' blame avoidance practices. Writing varying numbers of memos, reading literatures, and engaging in continuous discussions with my supervisors have assisted me in learning to develop my memo-writing.

During data analysis, memo-writing facilitated my engagement with the abductive process (Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021). Abduction involves an iterative, dynamic and creative process of crafting initial analysis to explain observed phenomena. The abductive process allowed me to become familiar and make sense of complex data, identify initial patterns, codes or themes, and draw meaningful interpretation and analysis (Lempert, 2007; Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). This iterative process included moving back and forth, creating a dialogue between the data, the emerging themes, and existing literature (Thornberg, 2012).

During the abductive process, I encountered moments of surprise and doubt in analysing the data. First, I stumbled upon unexpected patterns, themes, or findings in the data that seemed to challenge the existing theories of street-level bureaucracy. 'Blame games' emerged as an important and recurring pattern or theme, which was repeatedly brought up by various participants during interviews and shadowing. As discussed, the key focus of this study was to uncover the street-level dilemmas within a context where different governance paradigms compete and conflict with one another and reveal SLBs' practices in dealing with such dilemmas. However, what caught me off guard was the emergence of an unexpected finding: the prevalence of 'blame games'. This phenomenon revealed itself during the data collection process, taking me by surprise as it was not something I had anticipated encountering (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012; Thornberg and Charmaz, 2014b). For instance, in my data, facilitators repeatedly discussed how they felt they became '*kambing hitam*' (scapegoats) when different problems occurred during the CCT implementation, or how they consistently mentioned trying to avoid being blamed for various issues. However, my limited

awareness of the existing literature on blame had initially led me to overlook it in my data (Memos 3, 4, and 5).

Furthermore, the abductive process of data analysis did not just bring about moments of surprise; it also evokes feelings of doubt and wonder as I interpreted the data (Bartels and Wagenaar, 2018). The doubt feeling arose when I felt uncertainty or scepticism about the quality and coherence of the data and the observed patterns or codes. For example, as I attempted to make sense of my data, I initially perceived 'blame' as merely social interaction—a focus when participants engaged in gossip, criticism, or finger-pointing when discussing the reasons behind certain dilemmas or policy issues in the CCT implementation. However, this assumption left me feeling uncertain about whether I had accurately captured the essence of the data (Lempert, 2007). I found myself grappling with doubt regarding my own data, leading me to pose questions in one of my memos writing: 'Is my data significant enough to bring additional explanation regarding SLBs' practices?' 'How can these unexpected patterns or phenomena that continually emerge from the data be scientifically analysed?' 'Can they even be scientifically analysed?'

From this sense of doubt, I also discussed with my supervisors how this 'blaming one another' phenomenon repeatedly manifested in the data and I initiated a dialogue with the literature to increase my sensitivity in analysing the data (Lempert, 2007; Thornberg, 2012). This process of back and forth between data and existing literature facilitated me in exploring the underlying meanings or broader implications of the observed 'blame games' phenomenon at the street-level. By reading about the blame avoidance concept in public administration and in the literature on street-level bureaucracy, I gained valuable insights that helped me make sense of my data. This prompted me to experience the 'a ha' moment as I realised I could make a significant connection, identify a meaningful pattern, or uncover a key insight in the data (Thornberg, 2012).

I came to realise that the recurring phenomenon of endless finger-pointing reflects a broader concept: the dynamics of blame games, where actors deflect responsibility by scapegoating SLBs or where SLBs themselves engaged in blame avoidance practices.

Subsequently, I also recognised that these dynamics of blame are closely linked to street-level discretionary practices and relational dynamics. My reading of the blame games and street-level bureaucracy literature was not to force-fit my data into existing concepts (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012; Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021) but to gain an initial understanding of blame games. This understanding could help me refine my analysis and, later on, draw connections between the identified patterns and broader theoretical lenses or concepts.

In the later stages of my data analysis, I also explored the relationship between the concepts of blame games, accountability, and responsibility to consider alternative explanations for this phenomenon. However, upon reflecting on the emerging data and themes, blame games were deemed a more suitable theoretical lens than accountability or responsibility. The 'blame games' theory allows us to capture the dynamics of situations where there is a tendency of policy actors to shift responsibility, avoid accountability or engage in behaviors such as scapegoating or deflecting blame. The concept of blame games also allowed for a critical analysis of the complexities of the phenomena, provided a distinct perspective to understand SLBs' practices, and facilitated the generation of novel insights and knowledge related to street-level bureaucracy theory.

In the final stage of my analysis, I conducted theoretical sampling to establish possible relationships between the categories developed in my focused coding, enabling me to create a coherent analysis (Thornberg and Charmaz, 2014,p.8). I strategically selected relevant data and rearranged it to create a clear order (Birks and Mills, 2011; Bartels, 2015). I select several key categories — such as SLBs' dilemmas, SLBs' discretion, governance paradigms, identities of SLBs, and blame games — and wrote a reflective memo to develop an initial analysis on the interrelationships between these categories. I compared my findings with existing literature and refined my categories; for instance, by returning to earlier participants to explore key ideas like blame games. Ultimately, I identified that the analytical story of my findings is about the competing demands from different governance paradigms that generate various challenges

for SLBs, affecting their discretion and relational dynamics while also creating blame avoidance practices.

4.6.2 Analysing narratives

In this study, narrative analysis was employed to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences and stories of SLBs in the context of conflicting governance paradigms. Through narratives and stories, policy actors express their values and beliefs within the policy process and shape the perception of the policy problem and its solution in accordance with their beliefs and values (Stone, 2002; Beck, 2018, p.930). Scholars have proposed various approaches for analysing policy actors' narratives (Kaplan, 1993; Roe, 1994; Stone, 2002; Shanahan, Jones and McBeth, 2011). In this study, the narratives of facilitators and other actors involved in the CCT programme were analysed using stories (plotlines), characters, and metaphors.

I utilised several types of stories, including *causal stories*, *stories of complexity*, *stories of lack of control and helplessness*, *blame-the-victim stories*, *change-is-only-illusion*, (Stone, 1989, 2002, 2012), and *diagnostic-prescriptive stories* (Schön and Rein, 1994) to analyse the participants' narratives. For instance, the stories of helplessness and the story of complexity were dominant narratives shared by facilitators to illustrate the challenges they face in dealing with complex systems, ideas, beliefs, and work circumstances in their daily activities. This includes unexpected targets, confusion, and unsettled information, as well as complexities in collaboration arrangements and deference beliefs.

Causal stories were used to analyse how SLBs and other actors portray an interrelation between a policy issue and its claimed causes (Stone, 1989, 2012; Roe, 1994). In this study, causal stories were particularly helpful in analysing blame games (Shanahan *et al.*, 2014) as they allowed for the examination of problem definitions; a 'process of image-making' that involves 'attributing cause, blame, and responsibility' (Stone, 1989, p.282). Also, through causal stories, I could analyse how policy actors 'deliberately portray' themselves in strategic ways to gain support (Stone, 1989, p.282). The *blaming the victim story* (Stone, 2002) was a

critical storyline used to analyse how SLBs shift blame onto recipients for creating policy problems by highlighting their negative characteristics. The change is illusion story refers to a story where 'you always thought things were getting better. But you were wrong...improvement was an illusion' (Stone, 2002, p.42). In addition to storylines, characters such as heroes, villains, and victims were employed to analyse participants' narratives. Heroes are typically portrayed as problem solvers (Stone, 1989, p.282).

In sum, in analysing my data, grounded theory analysis helped me identify emerging themes from the data through an iterative process, while narrative analysis enabled me to capture and comprehend the predominant storyline of SLBs, added significant depth to my analysis, and enhanced the explanatory power of my data.

4.7 Reflexivity and Positionality

As an interpretivist researcher, ensuring reflexivity in the research process is crucial. Reflexivity entails 'the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation' to acknowledge how my positionality may influence the research process and its results (Berger, 2015, p.220). Reflecting on my personal identity as a Muslim woman who was born and raised in Sukabumi City and works as a local government official in the city, I recognised that my positionality as an insider researcher (Merriam *et al.*, 2010) who shared the same cultural norms, religion, ethnicity, local language, and occupational background as the participants, offered several privileges.

Firstly, my familiarity with the local context and occupational background increased the chances of being granted access to the case (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). As a local government official, I have established relationships with officers who work in the relevant departments and understand the procedures for accessing the case. Second, my familiarity with the cultural norms and traditions of the participants enabled me to understand their local language and gestures, thus making data collection more comfortable and fruitful (Ali, 2015).

Lastly, my positionality helped me build trust with the participants, making it easier for them to share their concrete experiences regarding the CCT programme implementation.¹²

However, through ongoing self-reflection and dialogue about my positionality, I became aware of the dilemmas that arose during the research process. My positionality could be a double-edged sword (Berger, 2015, p.230). As a government official, I shared similar experiences and working culture with the participants in handling bureaucratic tasks such as implementing national policies at the local government level. While my positionality helped me gain a better understanding of the participants' perspectives and beliefs about their work, I had to be careful not to impose my own experiences on theirs and had to avoid interpreting their experiences solely through my lens (Berger, 2015). For example, when discussing the common challenges encountered by local government officials in implementing central government policies, I refrained from assuming that we faced the same issues as local government actors. Instead, I encouraged them to explain these issues based on their firsthand experiences.

Another key reflection on my positionality was the tension between gaining trust and creating distrust. While my occupation enabled me to build trust with local government, it also caused trust issues for some facilitators and recipients. Initially, some had been hesitant and awkward during the interviews, perceiving me more as a government official than a researcher. This suspicion caused them to be cautious in their responses, fearing that the interview was more of an interrogation or survey, and that the results would be reported back to the government. This sense of distrust impacted the participants' communication with me, resulting in brief normative answers, reluctance to share concrete experiences, and avoidance of criticism towards the programme. To resolve this dilemma, I assured them that their personal identities would remain anonymous and interview results would be confidential (see section 4.4). This allowed participants to freely express their opinions and stories without fear of being identified.

¹² One participant expressed their joy to be involved in the study as they felt that they were contributing to the work of "one of their own".

Lastly, my positionality created another tension between closing distance and widening distance with participants. As a woman from a small city pursuing a PhD in the UK, my personal background intrigued the participants, and I spent time discussing my 'PhD and living in the UK' story, which helped build a rapport. However, my position as a PhD student created power imbalances as participants perceived me as more educated and more highly positioned than them (similar to Lian, 2019). Some participants even expressed concern that I might have selected the wrong participants as they did not feel capable of providing satisfactory answers. To address this issue, I highlighted that the participants were the experts and had more knowledge and experience of the programme than I did (see, Bartels, 2015). I also clarified that my objective was to learn from them, rather than evaluate them. By positioning myself as a learner and the participants as the experts, I also hoped that this would be an empowering experience, particularly for marginalised groups (Berger, 2015, p.277).

To ensure the highest quality and trustworthiness of this research, I employed various strategies such as using multiple sources of data, utilising diverse data collection methods, keeping a research diary and writing memos as an audit trail, and member-checking (Birks and Francis, 2008; May, 2011). For instance, as 'blame' theme unexpectedly emerged, I became concerned about my data interpretation and analysis in portraying the recipients. After drafting the memo, I conducted a member-checking with participants (see Appendix 11). I read the quotes and explained my interpretation of the quotes. I also asked if I had quoted the participants accurately and whether they felt I had portrayed them correctly. For instance, all participants agreed with my interpretation, and none felt uncomfortable or offended about being portrayed as actors who play blame games.

4.8 Reflection on fieldwork experience during the Covid-19 pandemic

My fieldwork took place from March to September 2021, coinciding with the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. Conducting qualitative research and fieldwork amidst a global pandemic posed significant challenges. The pandemic led to the cancellation of several crucial CCT implementation activities, such as the validation and verification process. As a result, I

missed the opportunity to shadow some critical activities and had to rely solely on interviews and documents to gather data. Due to the pandemic, my interaction with recipients was limited, as I could only interview six of them. Additionally, during data collection, I had direct contact with a COVID-19 positive case and had to cut my fieldwork in Indonesia short due to the second wave of the pandemic and the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the country.

Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of developing 'research resilience', which entails the ability to adapt, be flexible, and innovate during field research (Rahman et al., 2021, p.3). For example, I employed a hybrid approach that combined in-person and online methods (such as WhatsApp (video)/call, Facebook messenger, or Zoom) to conduct interviews with participants. While some scholars suggest that online interviews may lead to a lack of intimacy, difficulties in conveying empathy, and technical problems (Campbell, 2021; Meskell, Houghton and Biesty, 2021), in my experience online interviews had positive impacts. They fostered a more relaxed and less stressful conversation with officials. Moreover, online methods also saved time and resources, as I did not need to travel from Sukabumi City to Jakarta. Importantly, online methods actually facilitated a more symmetrical relationship between me and the participants,¹³ as it balanced power dynamics and made us both feel equally comfortable (see, Howlett, 2022; Surmiak, Bielska and Kalinowska, 2022).

However, I could not ask all of my participants to use the online interview method. Digital disparities and inequalities in the Global South must be considered, particularly for marginalised populations (Foley, 2021; Rahman *et al.*, 2021). This is particularly significant as some of my participants are from disadvantaged families and reside in rural areas where ICT infrastructure is either lacking or even absent, and they are not familiar with digital technology. It would be unethical to impose online methods on them.

¹³ My positionality (working as lower level staff in local government agency) makes power dynamics between researcher and participants asymmetric, in which the participants (as elite actors) hold more power than me.

4.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a clear explanation of the methodology used to address the research questions of this study. As the main objective of this research is to uncover meanings behind SLBs' practice, make sense of different governance traditions, and explore street-level dilemmas and how they are negotiated, I argue that interpretivism is the most appropriate philosophical stance for this study. This study adoption of an interpretivist approach is not only based on my understanding of social phenomena, but also by the analytical framework of this study, Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism. Their approach is rooted in anti-foundationalism and social constructivism, which then further justifies interpretivism as the appropriate foundational philosophy for this thesis.

In addition, this chapter explains the research design employed in this study, which is a single case study. I provide a justification for the use of a case study and also discuss its advantages and limitations. The study focused on exploring street-level practices and dilemmas within the CCT programme in Sukabumi City, Indonesia. To collect relevant data, I used multiple qualitative methods, including unstructured interviews and shadowing as primary sources of data, as well as documents as secondary data. For data analysis, this study employed a combination of grounded theory and narrative analysis. The analysis process involved initial and focused coding, memo writing and theoretical sampling. Additionally, I analysed different plotlines, characters, and metaphors to identify dominant and counter narratives from participants' stories.

After discussing the research methodology used in this study, the next chapter will provide an overview of the context of this study. One of the main objectives of this research is to understand the governance traditions embedded in a certain policy context within which the SLBs operate. Therefore, in addition to an overview of the CCT programme, I will also analyse different governance traditions within Indonesia's governance context and the CCT programmes.

Chapter 5: Indonesia's Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (*Program Keluarga Harapan*) and Indonesia's governance traditions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as a starting point to address the overarching research question of this study: *How do different governance paradigms shape street-level practice in a non-Western context?* The previous chapters have highlighted the significance of tradition for understanding street-level practices in contexts embodying multiple governance paradigms. Compared to the notion of paradigm, tradition offers a conceptually more precise and rich way of analysing the first influences that shape the lived experiences, local reasoning, and situated actions of policy actors. In this study, as discussed in Chapter 3, tradition refers to the set of beliefs and form of the ideational background of the institutions and history of government in which policy actors find themselves (Bevir and Rhodes, 2001, 2010; Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003a). The analytical framework set out in Chapter 3 explained that we can understand actors' beliefs and practices by situating them 'in the wider web of other beliefs that provide the reasons for their holding them' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2005, 2015b).

This chapter examines how emerging dilemmas within the programme implementation can be situated within different governance traditions and the tensions between them. The goals of this chapter are to discuss the *Program Keluarga Harapan's* (PKH) design and its key issues, to situate these within Indonesia's governance system, and then to further analyse different governance traditions embedded in Indonesia's governance system: Indonesia's cultural tradition, bureaucratic tradition, performance-target tradition, and collaborative tradition. Analysing different governance traditions of Indonesia's governance system with its cultural and historical dimensions represents the initial step towards explicating SLBs' practices in navigating dilemmas and blame games, as well as the implications for policy outcomes and the programme, which will be discussed in the next three chapters.

Historical analysis is necessary to explore and identify embedded traditions in government and its institutions (Bevir and Rhodes, 2001). While forms of tradition may

change, since generations may adapt or alter such traditions, the continuous manifestation of traditions should be trackable through a 'historical line from the start of a tradition to its current form' (Bevir, Rhodes and Weller, 2003b). Therefore, this chapter draws upon analytical study of secondary data, such as existing research on Indonesia and policy documents regarding Indonesia's governance and political system that help to trace historical and socio-cultural aspects of the governance context in Indonesia.

The key argument in this chapter is that issues which have occurred in Indonesia's CCT programme are generated due to the underlying tensions between governance traditions in the complex design of the programme. For instance, the conflicting values of bureaucratic and collaborative traditions may cause problems such as mistargeting (when the programme selects unsuitable recipients); inaccuracy of data (when the information about poor families is mainly incorrect); and nepotism (when facilitators choose eligible recipients based on family relationships). The dilemmas resulting from the conflict between governance traditions lead to blame games, where policy actors attempt to shift responsibility to one another when something goes wrong, acting as blamers to avoid being blamees (Hood, 2011, p.7). Furthermore, the tensions within the programme reflect broader tensions in Indonesia's governance due to the incompatibility between traditions — such as bureaucratic, performance-target, and collaborative — stemming from the uncritical adaptation of Western public administration (WPA) ideas, and the cultural tradition embedded in Indonesia's governance context. This creates dilemmas for policy actors.

This chapter begins by addressing the CCT programme's design and implementation challenges. It then explores Indonesia's cultural tradition within the governance system and its impact on SLB practices. The subsequent three sections discuss bureaucratic, performance-target, and collaborative traditions influenced by the uncritical adoption of WPA concepts in Indonesia. Finally, the last section concludes that the presence of various governance traditions in Indonesia's context are reflected in the CCT programme design which can lead to conflicting beliefs and dilemmas for the SLBs. Notably, certain socio-cultural

aspects internalised within Indonesia's governance system contribute to the SLBs' fear of blame and their tendency to avoid it.

5.2 *The Program Keluarga Harapan: An overview of the programme and its key issues*

In this section, the discussion will centre around the critical problems that have emerged during the programme's implementation (for a detailed explanation of the programme, see Chapter 4, section 4.3.1). It will demonstrate that the programme's design gives rise to tensions between different governance traditions. The main argument put forth is that these problems are direct manifestations of the underlying tensions between governance traditions. These tensions create an environment conducive to blame games, where different actors within the governance system may try to shift responsibility or attribute blame to others.

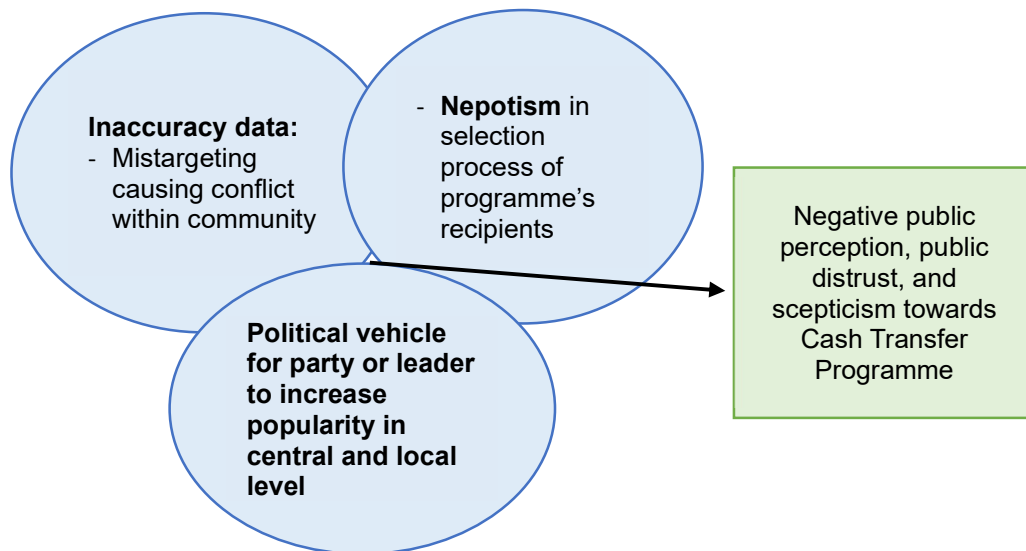
As mentioned in a previous chapter, the adoption of the CCT scheme in Indonesia is connected to the widespread trend observed in Latin America, as well as in other Global South countries, and the influence of the World Bank (Hasan *et al.*, 2019). In Indonesia, the CCT programme is proposed by the international agency where the design and the way the programme is administered are based on ideas brought in by the international agency (Kwon and Kim, 2015), which potentially conflicts with cultural aspects embedded in Indonesia's governance system and the beliefs of policy actors (Lobo *et al.*, 2018).

While the CCT programme is seen as an innovative policy for reducing poverty (Son, 2008), the conditionality aspect of the CCT has faced criticism for its paternalistic nature (Freeland, 2007) and coercive state-citizen interaction, as it limits people's options and forces specific actions (Scheel, Scheel and Fretheim, 2020). The conditionality presumes that the state has a better understanding than the recipients of how to use their benefits (Standing, 2011, 2014). The policymakers dictate that the poor use the cash for education or health, which implicitly 'undermines people's dignity, autonomy and freedom to make their own decisions about what is best for them' (Ladhani and Sitter, 2020, p.34). The required

compliance and conditionality also create an imbalanced relationship between the programme provider and the recipients, potentially hindering values of inclusion and partnership between the government and recipients (Freeland, 2007; Scheel, Scheel and Fretheim, 2020). These contradictory ideas within the CCT programme present dilemmas for facilitators. They are expected to empower recipients to participate and share their opinions, but also to adopt a dominant and coercive stance, amplifying unequal power dynamics. As the next section will show, these dilemmas reflect broader tensions between governance traditions and highlight the inherent paternalistic tendencies influenced by Indonesia's cultural tradition within its governance context.

The cash transfer programme in Indonesia has faced negative perceptions during its implementation due to several issues (see Figure 5.1). Inaccuracy of data and nepotism have been observed, where the selection of poor households does not adhere to government-established criteria, leading to favouritism based on ethnic groups or specific families while neglecting others (Sugandi, 2017, p.36). Additionally, the programme is viewed as a political tool, with politicians exploiting poverty as a commodity to gain popularity and sympathy from the public (Sumarto, Suryahadi and Widyanti, 2010; Jati, 2019). Many argue that cash transfer programmes are formulated based on political considerations (Jati, 2019; Pradhanawati, Tawakkal and Garner, 2019), aiming to buy citizens' support, promote a particular party's popularity, mobilise political backing, and maintain government power (Kwon and Kim, 2015; Yusuf and Sumner, 2015).

Figure 5.1
Key problems generating a negative public perception of Indonesia's cash transfer programme



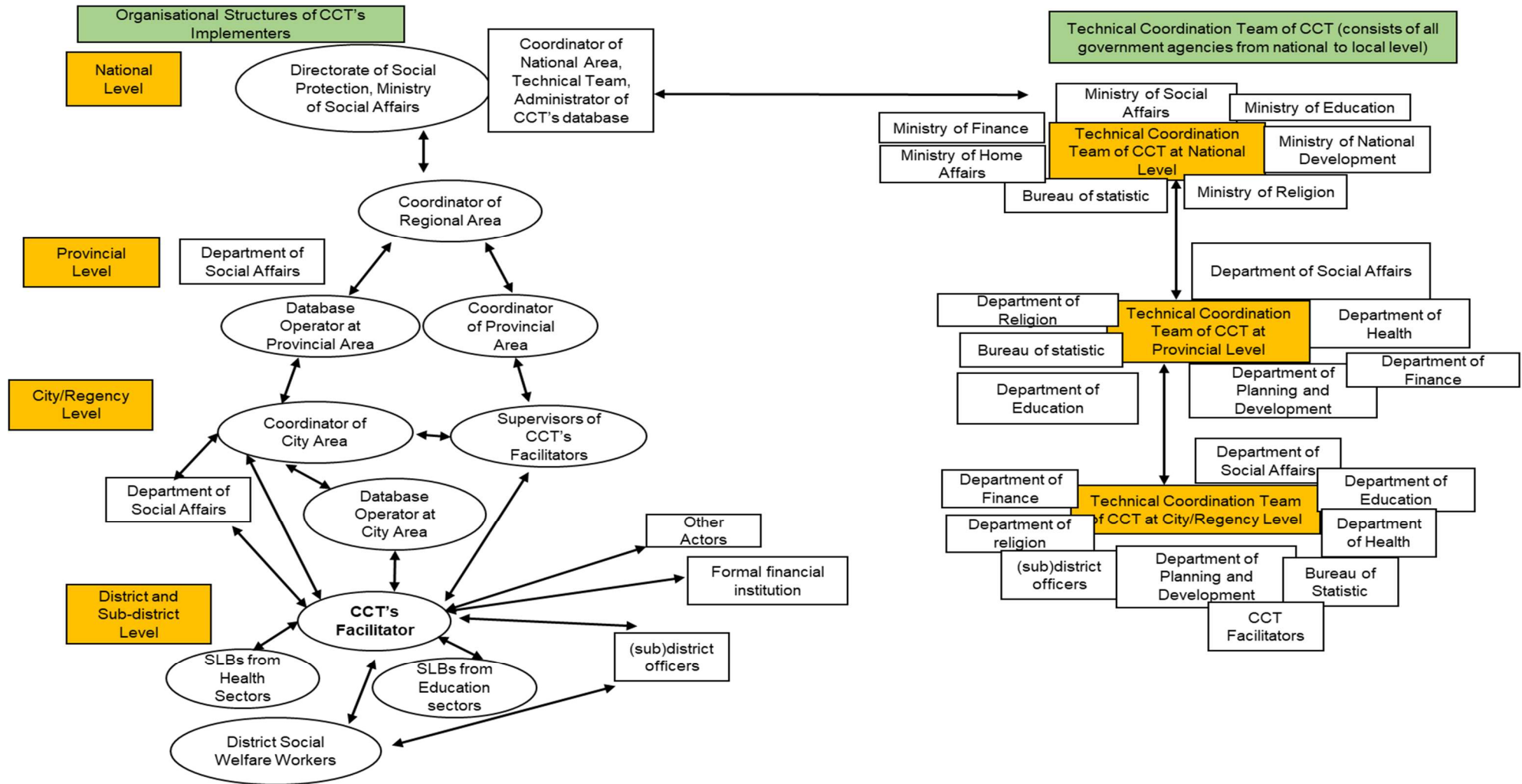
Source: (Rosfadhila *et al.*, 2013; Kwon and Kim, 2015; Halim, 2018)

Particularly regarding the CCT programme, the application of the concepts of traditions and dilemmas as an analytical framework provides a deeper understanding of the challenges encountered within this programme. Significant issues, such as mistargeting recipients and inaccurate data during the CCT implementation, have arisen due to the tensions between governance traditions inherent in the programme's complex design. In its implementation, the programme requires the involvement of cross-sectoral actors and institutions from the national to the local level (Kharisma, 2008). At the street-level, facilitators are required to collaborate with health and education staff to verify beneficiaries' commitment. At the city level, coordination with the education and health departments is necessary to ensure the availability of relevant facilities.¹⁴ Figure 5.2 illustrates the complexity of the structures and stakeholders involved, showcasing a hierarchical implementation approach from the central level down to the sub-district level, with policy instructions and direction originating from the top-level. Additionally, the programme establishes coordination structures known as technical

¹⁴ It is stated at the guideline and handbook for the PKH facilitators 2013.

coordination teams, operating at different government levels and involving various government agencies.

Figure 5.2
The web of networking and structure of the
Program Keluarga Harapan



Adapted from: the Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs No.1/2018.

This complex programme's design reflects both hierarchical and collaborative elements. While the local government plays a role in implementation, the programme itself follows a top-down approach and hierarchical structure, aligning with bureaucratic tradition (Edu and Rohman, 2019). However, there is also a collaborative tradition evident in the programme, demanding joint actions among various actors (Fiszbein *et al.*, 2009). This inherent tension between the two traditions becomes apparent in practice. Coordination is established but follows a centralised structure. For instance, local-level team coordination is mandated by and accountable to the central level (Kartowinomo, 2021). The tension here is manifested through a conflicting value relates to power relations. Although coordination structures are intended to promote equal relationships among actors (Ansell and Gash, 2008), centralised coordination within poverty programmes creates asymmetric power relations between local and central actors (Kartowinomo, 2021). Consequently, local actors may prioritise meeting the perceived expectations of the central government rather than addressing the community's needs. Public hearings, for example, may be conducted merely to fulfil administrative requirements and avoid sanctions from higher levels, rather than generating accurate and reliable poverty data (Ibid.). This tension can lead to mistargeting of recipients, as the programme fails to reach the intended targets due to inaccurate poverty data (Sofianto, 2020; Rahayu and Harahap, 2022). Similarly, the centralised design and top-down processes for determining poverty data and targeting programme recipients can result in problematic data that does not accurately reflect the situation on the ground (Sofianto, 2020).

Furthermore, cases of nepotism within the programme persist as a manifestation of the tension between the bureaucratic tradition and the embedded patrimonialism in the cultural tradition. While facilitators are expected to act impersonally and rationally, this may conflict with their personal beliefs regarding the importance of honouring family-based relationships within the cultural tradition. Consequently, nepotism occurs in the targeting and provision of programme benefits, with officers prioritising themselves or their families as recipients over the 'real' poor (Jauna, 2021; Rahayu and Harahap, 2022).

The presence of these key issues within the programme, stemming from tensions between different governance traditions, creates an environment conducive to blame games. Various actors within the governance system may attempt to shift responsibility or attribute blame to others in response to these problems. Government agencies, for example, often shift blame to one another, claiming a lack of knowledge in the decision-making process (Tyagi and Webber, 2021). The community blames the facilitators for the programme's failure to reach the actual poor as intended recipients (Nisa, 2019). Similarly, village officers blame the facilitators for their perceived lack of coordination efforts (Hanif, 2016; Handayaningsih, 2021).

In summary, the interplay between different governance traditions as manifested in the CCT programme design inherently gives rise to dilemmas and tensions. This section argues that key issues such as nepotism, mistargeting, and the inaccuracy of poverty data, which also contribute to the blame game among policy actors, stem from the tensions between these governance traditions. Since the programme is implemented within Indonesia's governance system, the tensions among different traditions within the programme reflect the broader historical, socio-cultural, and governance context of Indonesia. Therefore, it is important to analyse the various traditions embedded in Indonesia's governance context in order to gain a better understanding of the dilemmas and practices of SLBs and why the blame games occur during the programme's implementation.

5.3 Traditions embedded within Indonesia's governance context

This section explores different traditions in Indonesia's governance context and their relevance to the CCT programme. It is important to reiterate that traditions are the foremost of the influences that shape SLBs' local reasoning, actions and live experience. Analysing different governance traditions becomes an initial point to further understand how the dilemmas and practices of implementing the CCT programme are informed by Indonesia's governance traditions and context, and how blame games are generated by tensions between these traditions, which will be discussed in the following chapters. This section aims to discuss

four identified traditions within the Indonesian governance context: Indonesia's cultural tradition, bureaucratic tradition, performance-target tradition, and collaborative tradition.

Before discussing each tradition, it is important to state that, along with Indonesia's cultural tradition, other traditions in Indonesia's governance context are informed by WPA ideas. In most Asian countries, WPA concepts have been introduced through three prime phases (Haque, 1996, 2019). First, during the colonial era, Western ideas were coercively imposed in the form of the colonial bureaucratic system. Second, during the early post-independence era, 'foreign experts' and international donors prescribed how developing countries should develop their public administration models. And third, in the current state, the adoption of new managerialism and collaborative traditions was influenced by global pressure and persuasion (Haque, 2019, p.113). These phases also apply to the WPA ideas espoused within Indonesia's bureaucracy (Yudiatmaja, 2015; Rizal, 2019).

Scholars in Indonesia posit that the WPA tradition was first introduced into the country's bureaucracy during the pre-independence era, notably under Dutch colonial rule (Tjokrowinoto, 1996; Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Wahyudi, 2020). During Dutch colonial rule, WPA principles, notably Traditional Public Administration, were introduced within Indonesia's bureaucratic systems and organisations. These principles encompassed centralised governance frameworks, legal structures, and methods of taxation (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017; Rizal, 2019; Wibawa, Prasetyo and Nur'aini, 2020). They established hierarchical bureaucracies where Dutch officials held the highest positions, while indigenous Indonesians were frequently assigned subordinate roles (Rizal, 2019). The influence of the imposed WPA tradition from the Dutch colonial era persists in Indonesia's public administration system. While this was particularly the case in the early years following independence (Dwiyanto, 2002), several elements such as centralised decision-making structures, formalised procedures, and a dependence on written rules and regulations, endure within contemporary Indonesian governance (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Rizal, 2019; Wahyudi, 2020).

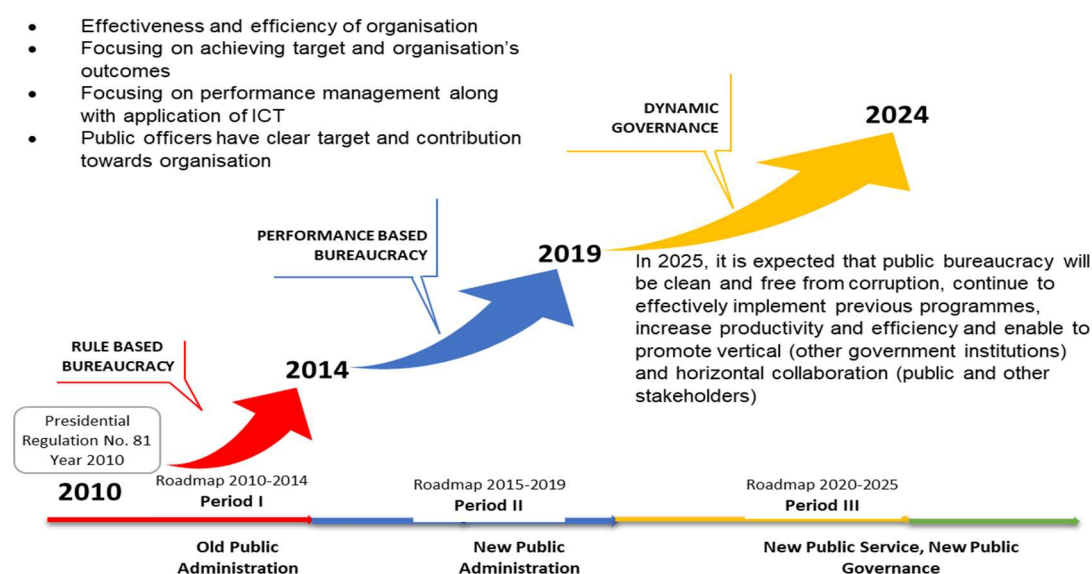
Some argue that the impacts of WPA concepts extended beyond the post-independence era, with the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) principles into Indonesia's governance framework (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017; Prasajo, 2020). This impact is evident in the various mechanisms and policies implemented by the government (Akbar, 2015; Winengan, 2018; Hartati, 2020). The imposition of NPM concepts into Indonesia's governance system also reflects broader trends of international influence, domestic policy priorities, and efforts to modernise and improve the efficiency of public administration (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017). For instance, international organisation such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have wielded considerable influence, particularly in shaping the introduction of NPM principles (Prasajo, Kurniawan and Holidin, 2007). The conditions tied to foreign aid and loans frequently mandate recipient nations to undertake NPM reforms as integral components of their economic restructuring initiatives (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Turner, Prasajo and Sumarwono, 2019).

Furthermore, over the past years, the Indonesian government has endeavoured to implement New Public Governance (NPG) principles through policies and directives spanning diverse sectors of public administration and again, this initiative has been influenced by international organisations (Prasajo, 2020). This effort encompasses legislative modifications aimed at embedding NPG principles; such collaboration efforts between central and local governments, as well as among local governments within Indonesia's governance framework (Turner, Prasajo and Sumarwono, 2019). The next subsection will delve deeper into how WPA ideas manifest in different governance traditions within Indonesia's administrative framework.

Before further analysing the WPA logics present in various traditions within Indonesia's governance system, I will now begin to discuss and illustrate how the WPA traditions have impacted the country, for instance how these traditions shape the way Indonesia's government crafts its national policies. Particularly, I will focus on discussing how Indonesia's government has made ambitious efforts to weave these traditions into its bureaucratic setup through a national policy such as the Grand Design of Bureaucracy Reform.

As mentioned, the adoption of the WPA logics is also manifested in the governance practices in Indonesia's context through the promulgation of the Grand Design of Bureaucracy Reform 2010-2025. The policy is operationalised through the road map for three periods: first (2010-2014); second (2015-2019); and third (2020-2025) — with each period having a specific set of aims to be attained (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3
Road Map of the Grand Design Bureaucracy Reform in Indonesia, 2010-2025



Adapted from: Presidential Instruction No. 81/2010, Regulation of Minister of administrative and bureaucratic reform No. 11/2015 and No.25/2020

In 2010-2014 (ruled-based bureaucracy period), the first five-year period of the programme, the central attention of the reform was on enhancing the quality of the public bureaucracy to establish a clean government by eliminating corrupt practice, increasing the quality of public service delivered to citizens, and developing the capability and accountability of civil servants (Akbar, 2015; Turner, Prasjo and Sumarwono, 2019). In the second period (2014-2019), performance-based bureaucracy was introduced and developed as a framework within government institutions to measure results, outcomes, and effect by shifting paradigms and selectively adopting some characteristics and values from New Public Management (NPM). Government institutions are required to adjust and harmonise their activities with

performance measurements and national priority outcomes as arranged in the 2015-2019 national mid-term development plan. For instance, to encourage 'a strategic orientation' in the management of public bureaucracy, every civil servant was required to achieve specific performance targets each year as a contract, and the performance was evaluated and assessed through a rigid and clear procedure. Each institution was expected to establish explicit objectives with clear performance measurements, be results-oriented, and connect its activities to achieve the aims of the organisation (Robinson, 2015; Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017; Turner, Prasajo and Sumarwono, 2019, p.10).

In the 2020-2025 period, public bureaucracy in Indonesia is encouraged to move toward dynamic governance and new public service with new public governance paradigms as vertical and horizontal collaborations between government and other actors becoming the forefront agenda. Public officers are expected to provide a chance for all stakeholders, including citizens, to be involved in the policy process, including during public service delivery (Cahyasari, 2017). Efforts to adopt and internalise values of collaboration and participation between government officers and its citizens within public bureaucracy have been made in numerous policies and programmes (Hutagalung, Arif and Suharyo, 2009; Pramusinto, 2016; Sutiyono, Pramusinto and Prasajo, 2018).

The Grand Design of Bureaucracy Reform policy portrays the way in which Indonesia's governance attempted to adapt WPA ideas to improve its quality of governance. As discussed, the existence of several traditions in Indonesia's governance context cannot be separated from the global fashion, as stated in the reform's regulation:

...the logic of periodisation of the road map is not free from the influence of the development of public administration paradigms and good governance at the global level... In general, Indonesia is directed to adopt practices from New Public Management paradigms which are focused on creating effectivity and efficiency and oriented to the results, and New Public Service (Governance) that is concentrated on the involvement of different forms of actors (outside government actors) such as citizens, private sectors and media. Nevertheless, Indonesia still practises some of aspects of Weberian's bureaucracy for certain circumstances, particularly in managing strategic public service related to state sovereignty. Hence, it can be concluded that in the current state of Indonesia, the three paradigms coexist. (Ministry of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform, 2020, p.6)

The manifestation of this tradition, alongside other existing traditions, can be observed in the implementation of the grand design bureaucratic reform policy, which is nationally executed across government institutions and programmes at various levels (macro, meso, micro). However, the statement 'it can be concluded that in the current state of Indonesia, the three paradigms coexist', as written in the regulation, makes two assumptions. First, it assumes that the three paradigms can coexist alongside one another without generating conflicting beliefs and challenging logics. Second, it suggests that Indonesia's government overlooks the existence of cultural aspects embedded in its governance system, which may potentially contradict these three paradigms. In practice, the presence of multiple traditions within Indonesia's governance context, influenced by the WPA ideas, leads to conflicting beliefs and expectations within the policy (Haque, 1996). Furthermore, the uncritical adoption of WPA ideas in establishing different traditions in Indonesia's governance context has resulted in the government designing overly ambitious and unrealistic reform policies. This assumes that the transition in governance paradigms can occur swiftly and linearly. Specifically, in relation to this study, as the CCT programme is implemented within the reform policy period, there is a significant connection between the rapid shift in public administration reform proposed by the Indonesian government and the focus of this study. The next section will discuss each governance tradition in Indonesia's governance system — the cultural tradition, bureaucratic tradition, performance-target tradition, and collaborative tradition.

5.3.1 Indonesia's cultural tradition

Indonesia is a diverse country, encompassing various traditional customs, cultural practices, and ethnic groups. Its rich cultural aspects hold significant importance in Indonesia's governance context (Tjokrowinoto, 1996). Indonesia's cultural tradition consists of a set of ingrained beliefs that are informed by non-Western socio-historical-cultural aspects deeply rooted in Indonesian society (Tjokrowinoto, 1996). Others argue that colonial legacy is still firmly rooted and has shaped Indonesia's governance system and tradition (Dwiyanto, 2002;

Prasojo, 2020) (a discussion of colonial legacy will be explained in 5.3.2). This cultural tradition informs beliefs of government actors and is (un)intentionally passed down and internalised in SLBs' practice and behaviour in terms of discretion and blame avoidance, power dynamics within the bureaucracy, and the process of public service delivery (Irawanto and Ramsey, 2011; Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Fatmawati, 2016). Indonesian scholars frequently posit in their studies that the distinctive features of Indonesia's cultural tradition are evident in the strong emphasis on deference and the importance of following the instructions of superiors, as well as in the upholding of authoritarian leadership (Soeharjono, 2011; Saputra, Suropto and Chrisdiana, 2018; Rizal, 2020). Deference (*ewuh pakewuh*), patrimonialism, and paternalism have especially been highlighted (in the past and currently) as key elements of Indonesia's cultural tradition.

Although Indonesia has numerous local cultures, Javanese culture has had the most influence and dominates in Indonesia's governance and bureaucracy (Robertson-Snape, 1999; Irawanto, Ramsey and Ryan, 2011). These ethnic-cultural values emerged in the pre-colonial era¹⁵ and were predominantly imparted in the post-independence era by Indonesia's leader, Soeharto, whose 'New Order'¹⁶ regime views the world through a traditional Javanese cultural lens' (Mietzner, 2014; Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017, p.660). For instance, in Indonesia's bureaucracy, deference and compliance to higher-level bureaucrats are strongly influenced by Javanese norms, such as *ewuh pakewuh* (Liddle, 1983; Indiahono, Purwanto and Pramusinto, 2018). *Ewuh pakewuh* reflects a polite attitude of lower-status individuals towards those of higher status, with a concern for not hurting others' feelings (Soeharjono, 2011; Setyorini, 2017). Similarly, *ewuh pakewuh* represents a respectful gesture where younger individuals seek permission or approval from older people before taking action or

¹⁵ 'During precolonial times, there had already been native ethnic groups and traditional kingdoms, such as Sudanese, Batakese, Javanese, Buginese, Balinese, Makassarese, and Minagkabau, inhabiting and spreading across the archipelago...These ethnic groups were ruled within their empires, largely based on the primordial system' (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017, p.659)

¹⁶ After Indonesia proclaimed its independence from Dutch colonisation, there were three key regimes: The Old Order (*orde lama*); The New Order (*orde baru*); and the Reform Order (*orde reformasi*). The New Order regime refers to the leadership in the Soeharto (the second president of Indonesia) era.

expressing thoughts (Istianda and Darmanto, 2009). The cultural practice of *ewuh pakewuh* aims to uphold principles of harmony (*kerukunan*), community respect, and conflict avoidance (Fatmawati, 2014).

In the governance context, lower-level staff in government institutions often display excessive respect and appreciation towards their supervisors, going beyond what is necessary (Soeharjono, 2011; Setyorini, 2017). This practice, driven by the desire and belief to maintain a positive perception or 'good image' of their superiors, frequently leads to hesitancy in expressing ideas and opinions — especially if they differ from those of their superiors — to avoid conflict (Soeharjono, 2011; Fatmawati, 2016). The *ewuh-pakewuh* belief reinforces hierarchical relationships within government institutions (Frinaldi and Embi, 2014), weakens accountability among members, and encourages the abuse of power by high-ranking officials (Fatmawati, 2016). Moreover, this polite and deferential attitude may impede the accurate appraisal of others' work during performance evaluations (Prasojo, Kurniawan and Holidin, 2007).

At the micro-level, deference and compliance values hamper the flexibility and authority of SLBs to exercise discretionary power, requiring them to consult higher-level officers for every decision (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Kurniawan, 2013). Failure to seek permission before making decisions is perceived as disloyalty, which leads to hesitant behaviour among public officers and a reluctance to take risks (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, SLBs have developed a mindset of constantly 'seeking guidance from superiors' which limits the intellectual autonomy of SLBs and impedes their ability to adapt quickly to unpredictable circumstances, develop critical thinking, and engage in self-reflection (Istianda and Darmanto, 2009; Setyorini, 2017).

Moreover, the elements of deference and compliance have become part of a culture where officers strongly avoid taking actions that might attract blame later on (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012) and fear being perceived as 'wrong' or negatively by their supervisors (Revida *et al.*, 2021). Some SLBs are hesitant to exercise discretion due to the fear of being blamed by

higher-level officers if their implementation deviates from regulations or the top-officers' intentions (Darmaningtyas, 2004). Reflecting on Indonesia's context, deference and compliance aspects of Indonesia's cultural tradition may trigger the fear of blame for the SLBs and strengthen their motivation to avoid the blame (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012, p.151). Accordingly, SLBs might view blame avoidance as a prominent practice in performing their work.

Deference and compliance beliefs also give rise to the '*Asal Bapak Senang*' (keep the boss happy) phenomenon among public officers (McLeod, 2010; Indiahono, Purwanto and Pramusinto, 2018). This phenomenon implies that staff prioritise fulfilling goals and targets set by their superiors in their work (Winengan, 2018). It encourages public officers to manipulate reports or data (Khairunnisa *et al.*, 2018). Often, officers present 'perfect-fake' reports to top-level officers, aiming to demonstrate that policies have been implemented flawlessly and to conceal any mistakes or problems that occurred during implementation (Istianda and Darmanto, 2009, p123).

In Indonesia's cultural tradition, alongside *ewuh pakewuh*, patrimonialism is deeply ingrained in the bureaucracy. Patrimonialism, which lacks a clear separation between the private and official spheres, is not uncommon in administrative and bureaucratic systems in Global South countries (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017, p.659). These societies are primarily shaped by ingrained beliefs based on kinship, ethnic affiliation, and religion (Haque, 1996). In Indonesia, traditional-cultural patterns such as family principles, friendship, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), patrimonialism, and collectivism serve as the foundations for how Indonesians govern their lives (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017, p.659). Patrimonialism is part of the local norms and culture, where loyalty to family surpasses loyalty to the state. Public officials prioritise their family or community over their office duties (Robertson-Snape, 1999, p.597). Working based on family relations, for example, prioritising certain public services for their family and showing bias towards others, may be seen as contrary to bureaucratic tradition but is considered legitimate from a cultural perspective.

Patrimonial practices have persisted in Indonesian bureaucracy from pre-colonial to post-colonial eras. For instance, before the colonial era, traditional kingdoms across the country (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012) fostered personal and mutual relationships between leaders and ruling elites, ensuring their dominance and authority (Mustafa, 2012; Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017, p.659). This patrimonialism continued in the governance system even after independence, as ruling elites sustained it in government administration (Berger, 2001). Bringing patrimonialism into a professional context exacerbates the crisis of public trust in the government. It can lead to corruption, nepotism, inadequate public services, government inefficiency, and unprofessional conduct (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Wahyudi, 2020). For public officers may prioritise serving their close connections, such as family or friends, over providing fair treatment to all users, leading to discrimination in public service delivery (Mustafa, 2012).

Lastly, a paternalist belief is also part of Indonesia's cultural tradition. The paternalistic is one of the manifestations of Javanese culture, particularly related to social strata and authoritarian leadership style (Irawanto and Ramsey, 2011). Generally, there were two social classes according to Javanese culture: *Priyayi* (the aristocrats of Java/elite group); and *wong cilik* (lower level citizens) (Yudiatmaja, 2015). In the colonial era, *Priyayi* occupied the majority of the administrative jobs as local bureaucrats (Berger, 2001, p.194). With the paternalistic value firmly attached to the bureaucracy, there was asymmetric power between the *Priyayi* as bureaucrats and their citizens. Usually, the citizens need to obey and respect the *Priyayi* (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012). The value of father-ism (*bapakism*) is also 'expressed in the hierarchical system in the traditional Javanese society and organisations' (Irawanto, Ramsey and Ryan, 2011, p.357), demonstrating an authoritarian leadership style. It is expected that the *bapak* (father) can exercise a high level of authority and legitimacy and the children are required to adhere to and comply with his authority (Irawanto and Ramsey, 2011, p.189-191).

Paternalism is deeply ingrained in Indonesia's bureaucracy and has various impacts. For instance, despite the authority and responsibility held by higher-level bureaucrats, the paternalistic belief system prevalent in the bureaucracy often contradicts this formal logic

(Robertson-Snape, 1999; Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012). Instead of taking responsibility, higher-level officers commonly shift blame onto lower-level officers, putting them in a position of blame (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012). The combination of sets of beliefs in paternalism and a hierarchical bureaucracy also shapes the relationship between the state, citizens, and civil society. An inferiority-superiority dynamic emerges in the work of public officers, where they feel inferior to higher-level officers but adopt a superior behaviour in front of local people (the poor), often exhibiting a 'little king' phenomenon (Rizal, 2019). The mix of paternalism and deference creates an asymmetric power dynamic, with citizens having low bargaining power and limited control over the state. The public tends to show respect to public officers, which can discourage complaints or criticism of the government and result in their exclusion from participating in decision-making processes (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017). Importantly, paternalism also leads to a situation in which bureaucrats blame citizens for shortcomings in public service provision. When officers fail to be responsive, they often attribute the failure to citizens' alleged inability to understand the rules and meet the requirements (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Ardianto, 2015).

As discussed, Indonesia's cultural tradition consists of a set of ingrained beliefs that are informed by non-Western socio-historical-cultural aspects deeply rooted in Indonesian society (Tjokrowinoto, 1996). In general, there exist traditional cultural practices in Indonesia, such as the principles of family, friendship, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), patrimonialism, and collectivism, which serve as foundational elements in the lives of Indonesians (Gaus *et al.*, 2017, p.659). These cultural practices stem from positive values and intentions aimed at governing society in Indonesia. For example, *gotong royong* is deeply ingrained in Indonesian social and cultural practices, embodying the 'spirit of togetherness (*gotong royong*), and spirit of familial harmony (*semangat kekeluargaan*)' (Suwignyo, 2019, p.389). Within these cultural values, there exists a sense of patrimonialism that places emphasis on kinship to nurture familial harmony and maintain unity within the community, thereby preventing conflicts.

Nonetheless, Indonesian scholars propose that the adoption of these positive beliefs and traditional customs by policy actors within the bureaucratic sphere, and their integration into the governance system, can give rise to detrimental practices (Mustafa, 2012; Frinaldi and Embi, 2014; Fatmawati, 2016). These practices may result in discrimination and disadvantages for both the governance structure and its citizens (Pratama, 2017). For instance, when these values permeate professional contexts, they might engender inefficiencies in public sector management and foster corruption. A case in point is the prevalent nepotism in public service provision, where officials prioritise individuals with whom they share personal connections (family or friends) over others, resulting in unfair treatment (Mustafa, 2012).

In this thesis, I have examined Indonesia's governance context, identifying three key cultural beliefs that are deeply embedded within it. Although these beliefs entail distinct meanings and aspects, it is contended that they collectively exert a similar influence on governance practices and policy actors (Tjokrowinoto, 1996; Indiahono, Purwanto and Pramusinto, 2018). For example, both the deference norms (*ewuh pakewuh*) and paternalistic beliefs exhibit similar values and dimensions. They engender a sense of obligation among subordinates to follow the instructions of superiors or adhere to their directives in a manner akin to paternalism (as *bapakism*) (Irawanto and Ramsey, 2011; Frinaldi and Embi, 2014). Therefore, instead of viewing these beliefs as separate entities, I posit that a more coherent and focused approach is to analyse them as interconnected elements of Indonesia's cultural tradition within governance. This viewpoint prevents possible redundancies in analysis and facilitates a more profound comprehension of how cultural values influence governance practices in Indonesia.

In summary, this sub-section highlights the fact that Indonesia's cultural tradition, influenced by non-Western socio-cultural aspects, remains deeply ingrained in the governance system. This tradition encompasses several key aspects such as deference (*ewuh pakewuh*), patrimonialism, and paternalism. Reflecting on the case, as discussed, the programme is proposed by the international agency, and is then administered using traditions

informed by WPA ideas which may overlook cultural aspects (Haque, 2019). Thus, in practice, there is a potential conflict between traditions stemming from WPA and the tradition informed by the cultural elements. These traditions may either conflict with or reinforce each other. For example, the paternalistic belief in Indonesia's cultural tradition may reinforce bureaucratic tradition but clash with other traditions. The section also underscores the degree to which cultural factors contribute to the fear of blame and the practice of blame avoidance.

5.3.2 Bureaucratic tradition

The bureaucratic tradition within Indonesia's governance system originated during the colonial period and continued into the early post-colonial era. This tradition is characterised by the establishment of rules and procedures, a strict vertical hierarchical structure, and a strong centralistic and authoritarian government system (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Prasajo, 2020) which informed the beliefs and practice of public officials. During more than three decades of Dutch colonisation, Western bureaucratic ideas began to be introduced to Indonesia's government. This resulted in the establishment of modern government institutions, such as the creation of bureaus staffed by salaried officers (bureaucrats). A hierarchical system with specific rules and procedures was adopted, and local bureaucrats were trained to operate within the modern administrative system (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017).

On August 17, 1945, Indonesia declared its independence, marking the beginning of the post-colonial era. During the initial regime known as the Old Order (1945-1966),¹⁷ significant political and governmental transformations took place, including the amendment of Indonesia's constitution and government system multiple times. However, Indonesian bureaucracy continued to grapple with shedding its colonial legacy and sought to establish its own identity (Rizal, 2019). The legacy of the colonial era also contributed to a tendency of excessive centralisation and authoritarian governance arrangements in developing countries,

¹⁷ The Old Order regime was led by Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia.

including Indonesia (Luke, 1986; Werlin, 1992). During the early years of Indonesia's independence, under the leadership of the first and second presidents (until 1998), a centralistic and authoritarian style of governance prevailed, with the central government holding absolute authority (Kartasasmita and Stern, 2016). As a result, local governments were weakened and disempowered, relying heavily on the central government for decision-making and resources in managing public affairs (Werlin, 1992; Haque, 1996). Local actors lacked the necessary skills to develop programmes that were responsive and tailored to local needs, leading to a gap between local needs and implemented policies (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Indiahono, Purwanto and Pramusinto, 2018).

In the early post-independence period, the central government (re)-established modern bureaucracy and adapted Western concepts, particularly the Old Public Administration, into the government system (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Rizal, 2019; Wahyudi, 2020). This bureaucratic tradition, especially during the New Order era, is often associated with the Weberian model of bureaucracy, characterised by a hierarchical structure and procedural bureaucracy (Turner, Prasajo and Sumarwono, 2019). Government institutions were designed with a rigid hierarchical system, extending from the central level down to sub-districts, with central actors exercising command and control (Indiahono, 2009; Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012).

However, conflicts between Indonesia's cultural traditions and the bureaucratic tradition persisted in practice, such as the politicisation of the bureaucracy and loyalty to higher-level officers. Instead of maintaining impersonality, government staff members' performance is evaluated based on their loyalty to the top-officers and their ability to adhere to compliance norms (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012). In the colonial era, loyalty to the Dutch government was a significant factor in assessing officers' performance, highlighting the influence of loyalty on the perception of being a 'good officer' (Rizal, 2019). During the transition from the colonial era to the post-colonial era, the dominant characteristics of

administrative and governance arrangements were a strong central government system and a politicised bureaucracy (Yudiatmaja, 2015).

Despite Indonesia's efforts to adopt a modern ideal type of bureaucracy — particularly during the New Order regime — the issue of politicised bureaucracy persisted, and 'a strong sense of neutrality and professionalism' among public officers was lacking (Pramusinto, 2016, p.113). The government utilised the bureaucracy, the dominant political party *Golongan Karya/Golkar*, and the military to consolidate its centralistic power. The military played a significant role within the bureaucracy and held key governmental positions at both the national and local levels. In 1970, 20 out of 26 governors (province heads) and 60% of all *Bupati* (regency heads) and *Walikota* (mayors) were military personnel, directly appointed by the central government (Nordholt and Klinken, 2007, p.11; Kartasasmita and Stern, 2016, p.17). The 'mono-loyalty' doctrine compelled local government officers to demonstrate loyalty solely to the central government through the political party (Aspinall and Fealy, 2010, p.5). Consequently, the accountability of local government heads and public officers was not primarily dedicated to their local constituents but to the central government (Indiahono, 2009).

As Bevir and Rhodes (2005, p.180) argue, tradition encompasses the beliefs, norms, and ideas passed down through generations, providing the social context for individual action. Despite attempts at reform and challenging this tradition, the bureaucratic tradition in Indonesia continues to persist, rooted in its governance and institutions from the (post) colonial era up to the present day (Djafar, 2011; Yudiatmaja, 2015; Rizal, 2020). In Indonesia's governance context, the establishment of the bureaucratic tradition can potentially lead to clashes with existing traditions or complement them. For example, rather than conflicting, Indonesia's cultural tradition, particularly its paternalistic and deferential elements, can reinforce certain aspects of the bureaucratic tradition, especially in strengthening hierarchical structures and compliance with rules (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Rizal, 2020). The influence of the colonial bureaucratic framework, cultural dimensions, and an overly centralised government system has led officers to prioritise adherence to rules and procedures over performance, with

compliance and loyalty to superiors taking precedence over performance (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Turner, Prasajo and Sumarwono, 2019). The presence of patrimonialism within the bureaucracy and a closed centralised government system has also fostered corruption, collusion, and nepotism within the central government, contradicting the norm of rule compliance. This further erodes public trust in the government (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012).

In terms of the CCT programme, the programme is designed based on the international donor organisations' advice (Hatta and Sarkawi, 2011; Nurfaizah, 2021) and its arrangements and activities may not be fully congruent with Indonesia's cultural tradition. A tension between patrimonialism, as one of elements of Indonesia's cultural tradition, and impersonality to the rules, as part of bureaucratic tradition, is then plausible — as reflected, for example, by the issues of nepotism in the targeting of the CCT's recipients (Rahayu and Harahap, 2022). While a written rule regulated the procedures to select suitable low-income families as potential recipients, in practice local actors may prioritise their own family in selecting the recipients due to the local knowledge embedded in the society.

In summary, in the context of Indonesia's governance, the establishment of bureaucratic tradition was influenced by the introduction of Western ideas, particularly Weberian concepts, during the colonial and early post-independence eras. With reference to the CCT programme, it is evident that the long-standing hierarchical structure in government administration continues to influence the programme. The establishment and development of traditions in Indonesia's governance system cannot be fully comprehended without exploring bureaucratic tradition and considering the significant influence of colonial and early post-colonial regimes on Indonesia's governance system, both historically and in the present day (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012). This aligns with the arguments presented by Bevir and Rhodes in Chapter 3, where they assert that traditions consist of beliefs and ideational backgrounds that enable actors to understand the context and position themselves within it. By understanding the embedded tradition, we can begin to grasp the conflicting beliefs that arise. Analysing the bureaucratic tradition serves as an initial point for comprehending the evolution of other

traditions within Indonesia's governance context. In the next sub-section, I will delve into the discussion of the performance-target tradition.

5.3.3 Performance-target tradition

The term 'performance-target' in the context of Indonesia refers to the government's intention to govern through a target-goal oriented, performance-based approach, with accountability mechanisms (Usman, 2011; Hartati, 2020). This performance-target tradition was introduced and is traceable as a new set of beliefs and ideas in Indonesia's government institutions, particularly since the 'reform era' of Indonesia (Prasojo, Kurniawan and Holidin, 2007). In May 1998, Soeharto announced his resignation as second president and this became a mark for Indonesia to take its first step from authoritarianism to democratisation, reform its political and governmental system, and shift from an overly centralised to a decentralised system.

During the early stages of the reform era, a set of ideas was introduced aimed at increasing the performance, efficiency, and accountability of Indonesia's governance system (Thoha, 2000; Putri, Aswar and Ermawati, 2020). These beliefs became internalised and were significantly influenced by the global trend of reforms regarding the adoption of New Public Management logic and pressure from international donor organisations (Prasojo, Kurniawan and Holidin, 2007). In 1998-1999, Indonesia implemented what is known as 'big bang decentralisation'.¹⁸ One of the rationales behind the decentralisation efforts in Indonesia included the aim to delegate power and resources to local level and to enhance the performance of public services (Erawan, 2007; Krishnamohan, 2016). To delegate power and resources to local government level, the government formulated two key policies. The first policy was Law No.22/1999¹⁹ on Regional Government, which regulated the devolution of

¹⁸ It was called a 'big bang' approach because Indonesia took a one major decision about decentralisation in 'holistic (comprehensive) way' and the policy was implemented at 'lightning speed' (Shah and Thompson, 2004; Booth, 2014).

¹⁹ Law No.22/1999 on Regional Government and Law No.25/1999 on Revenue Sharing both were revised into Law 32/2004 and Law 33/2004 under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's government (the 6th President of Indonesia).

power from the central government to local government entities. The second policy was Law No.25/1999 on Revenue Sharing, which governed fiscal arrangements, including granting local governments the authority to manage their fiscal finances (Alm, Aten and Bahl, 2001; Buehler, 2010, p.267).

To manage local government performance, increase accountability, and improve the effectiveness of public service delivery, various sets of public service indicators and performance measurement systems have been introduced. Examples of these systems include the Minimum Service Standard (MSS) and Performance Accountability Report of Government Institutions. MSS is the minimum threshold for service quality that should be delivered by the government. Local governments across Indonesia are targeted to meet the indicators that demonstrate their ability to provide public services based on these minimum standards (Roudo, 2018). Through the performance accountability report of government institutions, government institutions are required to establish strategic planning, performance planning, and performance measurement processes to achieve delivery of their organisational objectives (Putriana, 2014; Akbar, Pilcher and Perrin, 2015). This has been formalised through decrees such as No. 589/IX/6/Y/99, and refined by No. 239/IX/6/8/2003, which focuses on establishing a performance accountability system (Jurnali and Siti-Nabiha, 2015, p.354; Aswar, Lovina and Ermawati, 2020). Each department provides annual performance reports, which are subject to evaluation. Thus, the performance-target tradition as an ideational background of Indonesia's governance and institutions is manifested in all departments' practices (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017).

Furthermore, local government institutions also issue performance statements, allowing the central government to control, monitor, and assess their performance. Local government heads enter into performance agreements to meet target performance and to be 'responsible on the success and failure in achieving the target in the performance agreement' (Jurnali and Siti-Nabiha, 2015, p.355). The performance measurement is focused not only on the organisational level but also the individual level. For instance, a performance

measurement system for individual civil servants, known as *Sasaran Kinerja Pegawai* (civil servant performance goals), has been introduced (Hapsari, Nurhaeni and Sudarmo, 2018).

While the performance-target tradition (as a new form of belief and ideas) embedded in Indonesia's governance context represents a challenge to existing traditional and bureaucratic beliefs (Gaus, Sultan and Basri, 2017), there are some issues in how policy actors manifest these ideas in their everyday practices. In the context of decentralisation in Indonesia, local governments are delegated the responsibility of managing and providing high-quality services based on the Minimum Service Standard for various public affairs, such as education and culture, health, social welfare, environment, housing, family planning and others (Alm, Aten and Bahl, 2001; Roudo, 2018). Prior to the Reform era, public services were provided and managed through deconcentrated bodies representing sector ministries of the central government, located in provincial areas (*kantor wilayah/kanwil*) and municipality/regency areas (*kantor departemen/kandep*) (Nordholt and Klinken, 2007; Holtzappel, 2009). In the reform era, the central government delegated authority and responsibility to local governments to manage most public services and fiscal matters (Nasution, 2016).

However, local governments lacked the capacity and resources to effectively perform their delegated tasks (Sumarto, Vothknecht and Laura, 2014; Nasution, 2016), resulting in the failure to provide better-quality public services. The lack of capacity primarily encompassed two aspects: fiscal capacity, which relates to their ability to increase revenue; and technical capacity, which involves their competence in executing responsibilities, controlling and distributing resources, and managing local funds (Hofman, Kaiser and Schulze, 2009; Sumarto, Vothknecht and Laura, 2014, p.292). Moreover, the implementation of decentralisation in Indonesia primarily focused on altering the centralistic structure of government, without being accompanied by comprehensive public administration reform (Purwanto, 2005; Prasajo and Holidin, 2018). Decentralisation has also created a condition that fosters blame games among policy actors, as responsibilities are shifted between them

(Mortensen, 2013; Ran, 2017). In Indonesia, for example, the central government often avoids taking responsibility for certain programmes and instead shifts it to local actors, or vice versa (Arifin, 2004)

Reflecting on Indonesia's governance context, the establishment of the performance-target tradition as a new set of beliefs and ideas that inform governance practices can potentially lead to clashes or reinforce existing traditions. For instance, the deference element of Indonesia's cultural tradition — where SLBs do not want to be blamed and viewed as officers who cannot follow the instructions from the upper-level, including achieving determined targets — may reinforce performance-target tradition, which then encourages the gaming behaviour. Also, conflicting beliefs may arise between the performance-target tradition and the bureaucratic tradition, and shape street-level actors' practices. The strict systems of performance measurement reporting or performance-based processes advocated in Indonesia's governance institutions often make the bureaucracy more formalistic (Hapsari, Nurhaeni and Sudarmo, 2018, p.380). Due to the hierarchical structure within the bureaucracy, micro-level actors tend to view the performance measurement system as a mere formalistic practice, rather than a process that enhances their performance. Consequently, they 'end up just trying to meet monthly report targets requested by its top agencies' which, again, puts the process at risk of data manipulation (Hapsari, Nurhaeni and Sudarmo, 2018, p.279-80).

As discussed, the embedding of the performance-target tradition in Indonesia's governance context is also influenced by the uncritical adaptation of ideas from the WPA and the reform trend at the international level. The concept of new managerialism is often portrayed as a universally applicable and desirable approach, with a positive connotation that can be marketed globally (Pollitt and Hupe, 2011). However, it is important to recognise that new managerialism is not a one-size-fits-all solution for managing public services and its applicability may vary across different contexts (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017), especially for Global South countries where the context may be incompatible with the setting of the Global North (Haque, 2019). In the case of Indonesia, under pressure from international donor

organisations (Prasojo, Kurniawan, and Holidin, 2007), the government tended to forcefully embrace new managerialism ideas (for instance by implementing decentralisation policies) without sufficient time for critical reflection and understanding of their desired outcomes (Alm, Aten, and Bahl, 2001, p.87). This suggests that Global South nations are often hindered from developing their own strengths based on their own traditions and are coerced into imitating WPA ideas in order to receive donor funding (Drechsler, 2020, p.299). The imposed adoption of WPA ideas and beliefs further compels the government to design unrealistic and overly ambitious reform strategies that cannot be fully implemented (Haque, 1996; Mollah, 2016).

In summary, the performance-target tradition is recognised as a significant set of beliefs in Indonesia's governance context. This embedded tradition can be traced back to the reform era and continues to be manifested in the current governance practices in Indonesia. Therefore, any analysis of traditions in Indonesia's governance context would be incomplete without considering the performance-target tradition. In the case of the CCT programme, which was implemented during the reform era, analysing this tradition helps explain why a target-performance orientation has become an important aspect of the programme's implementation. It is important to note that the establishment of certain traditions in Indonesia's governance context has been influenced by uncritical adaptation of the WPA ideas, which often clashes with the local cultural context deeply rooted in the bureaucracy. This creates a potential tension between Indonesia's cultural traditions and the performance-target tradition (or other traditions), leading to dilemmas for policy actors.

5.3.4 Collaborative tradition

The collaborative tradition was established as a new set of beliefs within Indonesia's government institutions during the reform era. Similar to the bureaucratic and performance-target traditions, this tradition is also influenced by ideas from the WPA and shapes the behaviour of government institutions and actors (Sutiyono, Pramusinto and Prasojo, 2018; Turner, Prasojo and Sumarwono, 2019). The key characteristic of this tradition is the emphasis on joint actions and collaboration among various government and non-government

stakeholders in governance practices. After 20 years of decentralisation, the Indonesian government introduced the idea of collaboration as a new set of beliefs in public institutions, aiming to accelerate the bureaucratic reform agenda and improve the quality of public services (Prasojo, 2020).

Despite years of decentralisation in Indonesia, the initial objectives of the reform era, such as improving the quality of public services and reducing corruption in public institutions, have not been fully achieved (Purwanto, 2005). It is argued that the poor quality of public services and public officials during decentralisation has been due to institutional and bureaucratic weaknesses (Darmawan and Cristiani, 2021) as the implementation of decentralisation has not been accompanied by reforms in bureaucracy and the public sector (Purwanto, 2005). The focus of decentralisation has primarily been on political aspects, with limited attention given to administrative reform (Thoha, 2000; Prasojo and Holidin, 2018), due to a lack of political will to address core administrative challenges (Rohdewohld, 2003). Many individuals from the New Order era still hold influential political and administrative positions in the Reform Era, meaning that administrative reform might challenge their vested interest (Rohdewohld, 2003; Afala, 2017).

Discerning such problems, therefore, Indonesia's government made efforts to reform its bureaucracy, improve the performance of civil servants, combat corruption, collusion, and nepotism and transform the characteristics and culture of the bureaucracy by formulating policy on the Grand Design of Bureaucracy Reform 2010-2025 (*Grand design reformasi birokrasi*) through Presidential Regulation No.81/year 2010. As discussed, the bureaucratic reform became the highest policy priority, and it was integrated into the long-term national development plan (RPJPN) 2010-2025 (Prasojo and Holidin, 2018; Prasojo, 2020). Within this policy, the government proposed eight targeted areas to be reformed: the structure of organisations; mindset and culture; accountability; regulation; procedures; public service; quality of public officers; and monitoring process.

The introduction of the 'collaborative' tradition in Indonesia's governance practices is evident in reform policies that emphasise vertical collaboration among government institutions at all levels and horizontal collaboration between the government and various actors, such as citizens, academia, business entities, and international organisations (Regulation of Minister of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform No.25/2020). This tradition aims to alter the beliefs, culture, and mindset of government institutions and actors, including civil servants, from rigid and fragmented to more innovative and collaborative in their practices. The goal is to make government programmes and actions more meaningful and responsive to citizens' needs. Also, the collaborative tradition is embedded in the current Indonesian governance system to create 'agile government organisations' that are more flexible, adaptive, and dynamic (Prasojo, 2020; Minister of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform, 2023). The collaborative tradition is also adapted and manifested within Indonesia's governance system as Indonesia's government introduced Government Regulation No. 28/2018 concerning Regional Collaboration, which was ratified by the President. 'Regional Collaboration' is a collaborative effort between regions and other regions, between regions and third parties, and/or between regions and foreign institutions or local governments, based on considerations of efficiency, effectiveness of public services, and mutual benefits. It is a joint effort undertaken by one region with other regions or other stakeholders in order to carry out governance matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the region for the welfare of the community and the acceleration of public service fulfilment (Ministry of State Secretariat, 2018).

As mentioned, the influence of collaborative tradition is manifested in the governance practices in Indonesia's context through the promulgation of the Grand Design of Bureaucracy Reform 2010-2025. However, changing traditions is a complex and non-linear process that cannot be achieved by simply assuming that a new set of beliefs can replace existing ones. In practice, tensions and conflicting beliefs arise between Indonesia's cultural tradition and other traditions stemming from WPA ideas, as well as among traditions shaped through the adaptation of WPA ideas, which inform the practices of policy actors.

For instance, the clash between the bureaucratic tradition, characterised by a strong adherence to written rules, and the collaborative tradition is evident in government institutions. The prescribed tasks and functions assigned to government agencies and units by regulations can lead to problems when bureaucrats engage in collaborative arrangements as 'different organisations strive to maintain their functional fiefdoms and duel when overlapping mandates arise' (Turner, Prasajo and Sumarwono, 2019, p.4). This can result in public officers or agencies denying responsibility and insisting on working only within the scope delegated to them or related to their organisation's task and function, thereby hindering coordination efforts (Revida et al., 2021, p.30).

Moreover, there is a conflict between Indonesia's cultural tradition, specifically the element of deference, and the collaborative tradition concerning street-level discretion. The collaborative tradition emphasises the need for SLBs to be agile, adaptive, and flexible in decision-making and coordination with other actors. However, the deference tradition inhibits SLBs' ability to exercise their own judgment and be creative in response to unpredictable field situations (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; Fatmawati, 2014). In the Indonesian context, this tension can shape SLBs' attitudes and dilemmas. They may be discouraged from using discretion and become unresponsive to the complexity of their work, or they may choose to exercise discretion by relying on consultative approaches to avoid blame (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012).

In summary, the collaborative tradition in Indonesia's governance institutions emerged during the reform era, following the implementation of decentralisation policies. Since collaboration is introduced as a new form of ideas and beliefs in Indonesia's governance institutions, I argue that this is considered as part of an embedded tradition in Indonesia's governance context.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter explores multiple embedded traditions in Indonesia's governance system: Indonesia's cultural tradition influenced by non-Western socio-cultural aspects; the bureaucratic tradition; performance-target tradition; and collaborative tradition influenced by

uncritical adaptation of WPA ideas. This chapter argues that these traditions, rooted in Indonesia's governance context, create dilemmas due to their incompatible beliefs. The chapter also explores how these tensions manifest in the implementation of the CCT programme, leading to issues such as mistargeting and inaccuracies in poverty data, as well as the emergence of blame games. These key problems are a result of conflicting beliefs between different governance traditions inherent in the complex design of the programme. The tensions within the programme reflect broader tensions arising from the incompatibility of governance traditions in Indonesia's context. Since traditions shape the local reasoning, actions, and lived experiences of policy actors, analysing the different governance traditions rooted in Indonesia's governance context is the first step towards understanding the dilemmas, practices, and blame games that emerge in implementing the CCT programme.

The chapter highlights the fact that the uncritical adoption of WPA ideas in establishing traditions in Indonesia's governance motivates the government to pursue ambitious and unrealistic bureaucratic reform programmes. The government assumes that altering traditions is a straightforward and linear process, expecting new beliefs to easily replace existing ones or even co-exist with one another without creating any tensions and clashing beliefs. However, in practice, different traditions conflict with rather than replace one another. This leads to tensions and conflicting beliefs, both between Indonesia's cultural tradition and traditions influenced by WPA ideas and among traditions shaped through the adaptation of WPA ideas, which inform the practices of policy actors.

Interestingly, while different sets of beliefs in Indonesia's cultural tradition clash with other traditions influenced by WPA ideas, certain elements of Indonesia's cultural tradition can reinforce other traditions, such as the bureaucratic tradition. For example, the paternalistic aspect of Indonesia's cultural tradition reinforces the hierarchical aspect of the bureaucratic tradition, further perpetuating asymmetric power dynamics between street-level actors and citizens. However, this mixing of traditions also creates conflicting beliefs with other traditions such as the performance-target and collaborative traditions.

I conclude that the design of the CCT programme generates inherent dilemmas for SLBs and other policy actors, reflecting the wider tensions within Indonesia's governance context. These tensions result in implementation problems and subsequent blame games that inhibit policy actors from effectively addressing the design and implementation problems. The Indonesian cultural tradition is deeply ingrained in Indonesia's bureaucracy, which creates tensions with other traditions shaped through uncritical adaptation of the WPA ideas and resultant dilemmas for SLBs. Moreover, it shapes their fear of blame, tendency to avoid blame, and the perception that playing blame games is a common response to problems in bureaucracy or policy implementation.

The following chapters will continue to critically analyse different governance traditions and the key problems within the programme that have been identified through this chapter. The next chapter will examine the tensions between different governance traditions within the programme and the dilemmas encountered by the SLBs, along with their varied responses to those dilemmas.

Chapter 6: Conflicting governance traditions: Street-level dilemmas, narratives and practice

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed how challenges within the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme reflect a broader tension between different traditions embedded in Indonesia's governance system. The goal of this chapter is to present the empirical findings of this study in response to the first research question: *How do street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) negotiate conflicting governance paradigms?* To address the research question, this chapter will provide concrete examples of conflicting traditions within the CCT programme and the dilemmas that SLBs encounter, and then analyse SLBs' narratives and practices to explain how they respond to the dilemmas during the programme implementation.

This chapter argues that conflicting different governance traditions create significant challenges for SLBs, resulting in different dilemmas. This chapter also posits that the SLBs have different narratives to respond to the dilemmas and offers an original typology of the ways in which SLBs respond to such dilemmas. SLBs adopt different patterns of practices and narratives in negotiating these challenges based on their view of the core value of their work, their interaction with policy actors, the recipients, and discretion. I identify three original narratives of front-line work: 'stamp and sign'; 'changing mindsets'; and 'asset mapping'. I analyse how SLBs use metaphors, storylines and characters to understand their perceptions on conflicting expectations generated from different traditions, how the dilemmas emerge in SLBs' daily practice, and how they negotiate those dilemmas.

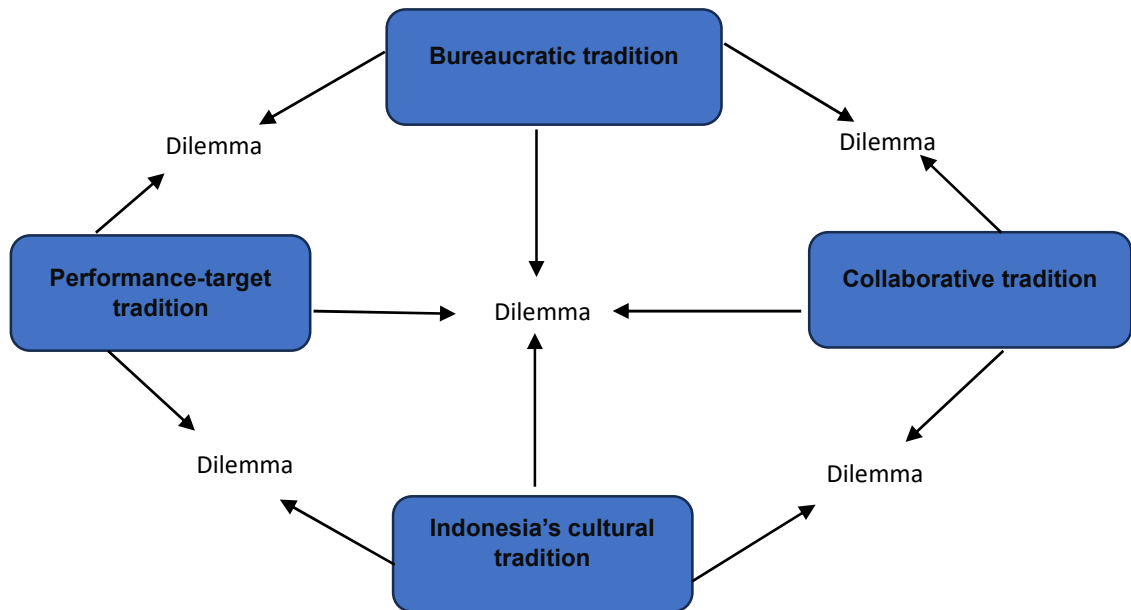
In the next section, the SLB dilemmas generated by tensions between different governance traditions will be discussed. The following section will analyse three different SLB narratives: 'stamp and sign'; 'changing mindsets'; and 'asset mapping'. The last section concludes that in responding to these dilemmas, although SLBs exhibit their own patterns of practices and narratives that reflect and align with beliefs from specific governance traditions, during policy implementation their responses to dilemmas are not curbed, limited to, or always

in line with the traditions they seem to lean towards. The way SLBs enact certain narratives and how beliefs manifest in practice in response to dilemmas is related to the blame games, which will be further explored in the next chapter. By analysing different dilemmas and offering an original typology of the ways in which SLBs respond, this chapter lays the foundation for Chapter 7 which will discuss the way these dilemmas lead to blame games, how SLBs strategically exercise their relationality and discretion to avoid blame, and how the blame games and the identified typology of SLBs are interconnected.

6.2 Tensions between governance traditions and dilemmas of street-level bureaucrats

Chapter 3 explained that dilemmas arise when new ideas challenge established beliefs or practices (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, p.9) and emerge from tensions between two or more conflicting beliefs or practices (Meakin and Geddes, 2022, p.220). This section analyses various dilemmas faced by SLBs during the implementation of the CCT programme. These dilemmas stem from conflicting demands originating from different governance traditions. Figure 6.1 illustrates conflicting beliefs and expectations between the cultural tradition influenced by Indonesian-society-and-culture aspects, and the bureaucratic, performance-target, and collaborative traditions influenced by uncritical adaptation of Western Public Administration (WPA) ideas.

Figure 6.1
Conflicting governance traditions and street-level dilemmas



Source: Author's analysis

6.2.1 A dilemma between bureaucratic and performance-target traditions

This section explores the dilemmas faced by SLBs arising from conflicting beliefs between the bureaucratic tradition characterised by regulation and procedures and the target-performance tradition characterised by a set of standardised indicators of targets. During the CCT implementation, SLBs are required to adhere to the regulations set by the CCT programme while simultaneously meeting specified targets. The facilitators' code of conduct and the Ministry of Social Affairs' letter of work order emphasise adherence to the Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) in implementing the programme (refer to Appendix 12). In practice, facilitators are also expected to meet specified targets, which can be categorised as 'routine' targets and 'unexpected' targets. Routine targets are regular activities outlined in the CCT business process, which serve as standard performance indicators for facilitators and are evaluated. For instance, facilitators' performance is evaluated according to two aspects; indicators of performance measurement based on the CCT business process (70%) and indicators of performance measurement based on the ethical code of CCT (30%). Unexpected targets refer to sudden instructions from provincial or central government authorities, often

related to updating or synchronising poverty data. Facilitators express confusion, disappointment, or cynicism regarding these unexpected targets because they are frequently expected to 'quickly meet the target' with 'unclear information provided at short notice' (F021, along with respondents FC011, F024, F013, F019, and F022).

Street-level actors shared similar stories; the *stories of helplessness and lack of control* featured clashing beliefs between bureaucratic and performance-target traditions creating a dilemma for them. Following Stone (2002), the story indicates when policy actors do not possess any control over (bad) situations, where they simply 'had to accept and could not influence' (Stone, 2002,p.149). Two participants explain their stories:

The central government only provides us with around two weeks to validate hundreds of potential recipients. It's important to note that the validation process is not simply a matter of determining eligibility with a checkmark. There are many other arrangements that need to be made... What I want to emphasise is that, firstly, we cannot work ideally as we should, as explicitly stated in the regulations, and secondly, we are constantly pressured by the final closing time... Our focus is no longer on whether the data is valid or not, but rather on inputting the data for reporting to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) before the deadline... We have to quickly interview individuals to meet the daily target and validate a specific number of potential recipients... the accuracy of the validation process itself is low. (FC012)²⁰

The Family Development Session (FDS) is an essential activity... but... just as I was about to go to the field for the FDS, I received a sudden instruction to input data to meet the target... Whether I like it or not, I had to cancel the FDS. In the previous month, I had to cancel almost all FDS activities due to the validation and data input targets. This is beyond my control. How can I go to the field to meet with the recipients intensively if we're burdened with updating data, data and data? (F020)

The first story shows that the facilitators are expected to adhere to written procedures and play a significant role in the validation process to minimise the risks of inclusion and exclusion errors, or mistargeting recipients. For example, they are responsible for conducting home visits to assess the social-economic conditions of potential recipients, as specified in the Decree of Minister of Social Affairs No: 146/HUK/2013, which outlines 11 criteria for determining poverty. However, the facilitators often feel helpless due to the pressure exerted by central actors to meet specific targets and complete the validation process within a

²⁰ Similar experience is also discussed by the nine other facilitators.

designated time limit. It clearly shows how dilemmas that SLBs encountered during the CCT implementation are generated due to conflicting beliefs and expectations between bureaucratic and performance-target traditions. It also demonstrates that the dilemma of 'speed vs need' commonly confronts SLBs (see, Brodtkin, 2011). Facilitators are required to follow the validation procedure to ensure fair treatment of potential recipients (e.g., excluding non-poor citizens from the programme). However, they must do so within a limited time window, which can hinder their ability to treat citizens equally (Tummers *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, facilitators find it challenging to conduct the validation process meaningfully, leading to potential inaccuracies in selecting target recipients and an increased risk of inclusion errors.

Similarly, the second narrative portrays *a story of helplessness and lack of control*. It shows how tension arises between being expected to adhere to the SOP, reflecting the bureaucratic tradition, and the need to meet the target, representing the performance-target tradition. This tension becomes evident in the context of the FDS. The FDS, a monthly meeting for facilitators and recipients, serves as an empowerment activity. It aims to enhance recipients' knowledge, life skills, and awareness, especially concerning the importance of children's education, health, and social welfare services for the elderly and disabled. From the story, the facilitator acknowledges the conflicting demands within their working conditions and the inability to perform their job ideally. They perceive these demands as being beyond their control, framing their narrative to make sense of the ambiguity and conflicting situations they face (van Hulst and Yanow, 2016) and posing a problem during the policy process (that is the dilemmatic situation).

The dilemma at hand is that, in order to meet 'the sudden target', the facilitators feel compelled to disregard the SOP.²¹ By not conducting the FDS, the facilitators are unable to

²¹ As per the programme guidelines, facilitators are required to conduct FDS on a monthly basis. Recipients have the right to receive education through FDS and are obligated to attend. The number of FDS sessions varies depending on the number of recipients the facilitators need to assist, typically ranging from 250-350 recipients or more. Each facilitator is responsible for assisting 10-12 groups of recipients, with each group consisting of 30-40 recipients. As a result, facilitators need to conduct the FDS at least 10-12 times a month to meet all the groups they are responsible for.

educate and empower the recipients, indirectly hindering the independent graduation process.²² However, if the facilitators follow the procedures and conduct the FDS, they do not have sufficient time to input the data. Consequently, this situation presents two significant issues: first, the facilitators are unable to meet the performance target²³, and second, the delivery of cash transfers to the recipients is disrupted.

6.2.2 *A dilemma between bureaucratic and collaborative traditions*

This section examines the dilemma faced by SLBs due to conflicting demands between bureaucratic and collaborative traditions during programme implementation. This section argues that the dilemma experienced by the facilitators arises from the expectation that they must adhere to hierarchical structures while also engaging in coordination with other levels of government (see Chapter 5).

In team coordination, top-ranking officers from each department, occupying the highest positions in the organisational hierarchy, are mainly involved. Facilitators, although included, are often not invited or engaged in team activities, and some may not even be aware of their inclusion. This situation calls for facilitators to collaborate but leaves them excluded from the coordination team. A former CCT supervisor shares her experience regarding team coordination:

According to the Letter of Decree on team coordination, we are included as members. However,... I have never been invited to a coordination meeting... Staff from the Health Department questioned why the CCT facilitators never coordinate with them or other departments since we are included in the team coordination. I felt embarrassed and replied, 'The ones who always attend the meetings are people from the department level, right?'... I asked them, during the coordination meetings, who always attends? Not us, right? (SPV040)

²² Independent graduation refers to a state in which recipients are empowered and self-sufficient, no longer relying on cash transfers or CCT benefits, and can be excluded from the programme. Recently, independent graduation has become a key indicator of the program's success, signifying improvements in recipients' quality of life, both socially and economically. Achieving independent graduation is also a performance standard for facilitators as CCT implementers.

²³ The target to update the recipient's data also becomes one of the indicators to evaluate facilitators' performance as it is mentioned in the letter of information from the Ministry of Social Affairs No: 1407/3.4/DI.01/7/2021

The story conveys the victim story, showcasing the clash between bureaucratic tradition, which highlights a hierarchical order, and collaborative tradition, which emphasises equal power and engagement of policy actors. In this case, the coordination team or meetings are exclusively for top-tier officers (FC012). Despite being aware of the expectation to coordinate and participate, they have no control over the hierarchical structure within the programme. As street-level actors, they face exclusion from coordination arrangements, limiting their opportunities to contribute to the team despite their significance in collaborative processes. Significantly, they become the victims of the conflicting beliefs between bureaucratic and collaborative traditions, experiencing a profound sense of embarrassment. This situation makes them feel cornered, as if they are not making an effort to coordinate with the team, when, in reality, they are being deliberately excluded. Furthermore, structural tensions and hierarchical tendencies often challenge and impede collaborative dynamics at the street-level (Bartels, 2018a). While team coordination aims to foster equal power and shared knowledge among actors (Stout, Bartels and Love, 2018), in practice it appears to create distance between facilitators and higher-ranking officers. This dilemma then undermines the facilitators' ability to actively contribute to the team's objectives, perpetuating a disheartening cycle of exclusion and diminishing their impact on decision-making processes within the programme.

This paradoxical arrangement also disrupts the flow of information and socialisation regarding the CCT team coordination and the programme itself, as 'it remains concentrated among top-tier officers' (F14). This indirectly complicates the work of street-level actors and hampers collaboration at that level. The hope is that collaboration at the street-level can foster collective effort in implementing the CCT. However, despite the existence of the team coordination, other SLBs have limited understanding of their roles in the programme. The lack of understanding, stemming from the discontinued flow of information, 'leads other actors to continue thinking that all CCT-related tasks are solely the responsibility of the facilitators' (F13). As a result, facilitators become the key actors responsible for reaching out and disseminating information about the CCT to other street-level actors, bearing the burden and

facing challenges during implementation. Consequently, the tension between coordination and hierarchy directly impacts the complexity of the facilitators' work, hindering collaborative efforts at the street-level.

6.2.3 A dilemma between performance-target and collaborative traditions

This section explores the conflict between the performance-target tradition, which expects SLBs to achieve set targets, and the collaborative tradition, which expects SLBs to collaborate with relevant actors. According to Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs No. 1/year 2008, *'facilitators are mandated to build networks and coordinate with stakeholders'*, including local governments, to link the CCT programme with other relevant programmes at the local level for recipient empowerment. However, in practice the facilitators also face the pressure of meeting unexpected targets, as discussed in section 6.2.1.

On 26 February 2021, the Minister of Social Affairs issued a letter instructing local government heads to correct the data of social assistance recipients and synchronise it with the population administration database. Updating recipient data has become an indicator to evaluate the facilitators' performance. This creates a dilemma, as facilitators are expected to collaborate while also being compelled to meet unexpected targets. One facilitator describes their situation:

In these few months, we have a target, dealing with data and data. If we don't do it correctly, it will backfire on us. We face protests from recipients who don't receive their cash and criticism from the DoSA or MoSA if we can't meet the target. But you know, my work is not just about data. They talk about graduation and want us to coordinate with others. It's a complex process... I want to collaborate and help my recipients, but most of my time is spent on data. It's like, I know data is important because it will affect (the recipients') benefits, but I cannot focus to do my other equally important tasks. This target is filled with never-ending problems. It feels like I am wasting my time and energy. (F016)

The facilitator uses the 'complexity narrative'. Stone (1989) explains complex stories where the complexity of the institution — historical, structure, or system — may be used as narratives that portray a cause of the problems. Through this complexity story, the SLBs

illustrate the dilemma between meeting the target of data synchronisation and empowering recipients or collaborating with stakeholders. They argue that top-level officers do not understand the complexity of their work in the field and criticise them unfairly. From the facilitator's perspective, the complexity arises not only from negotiating demands from higher levels but also because it affects the recipients. Failing to complete the data target may harm the recipients as it may affect the recipients' benefits, while dropping collaboration activities can have long-term consequences for them, such as losing opportunities for skill improvement or accessing other programmes. This complexity also generates problems related to cash transfer delivery and target graduation.

Furthermore, the facilitators faced dilemmas between empowerment and target-based orientation during the target graduation process in programme implementation. One facilitator shares her story:

They talk about linking (the CCT) to other programmes, but they do not give us enough assistance to reach out to other programmes. What kind of programmes? Which ones should we approach? They leave it to us...the process (to empower the recipients) does not happen just like that (snapping fingers). The outcomes may not be seen within one or two years. With a target graduation of 10% within a year, I am unsure if I can attain that. Like, I don't want to force or persuade them to exit the programme just because of the target... (F015)

The facilitator shared this victim story to highlight a dilemma in the target graduation process. SLBs are expected to empower recipients, foster collaborations, and establish networks with other departments or actors, all with the aim of improving recipients' skills and economic conditions to enable them to graduate from the programme. However, this process requires time. The government places pressure on facilitators to achieve specific graduation targets within a set timeframe, treating graduation as a measurable and predictable goal. Also, from the facilitator's story, it can be interpreted that achieving the target graduation is not as simple as snapping fingers like magic. The conflicting expectations between achieving the target, particularly related to data, and the opportunity to empower recipients or collaborate with other actors have an impact on the facilitators' motivation and sense of role displacement.

This goal displacement issue is highlighted by Lipsky (2010). Facilitators, who believe their role is to empower recipients and add value to programme activities through collaboration, become the victims of the situation, as they feel pressured to prioritise working with data rather than focusing on the recipients. They perceive that 'they are not fulfilling their role as facilitators and, at times, working against their own beliefs and expectations about their role' (F014, also F015).

6.2.4 A dilemma between Indonesia's cultural tradition and bureaucratic tradition

This section explores clashing beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition, where SLBs are expected to uphold deference and patrimonialism norms embedded in society, and the bureaucratic tradition, which expects SLBs to maintain impersonality and adhere to stated regulations during programme implementation. Based on interviews with facilitators, recipients, and local government officers, the eligibility process in the early stages of CCT implementation highlights how facilitators, as front-line actors, experience this particular dilemma.

The central government, specifically the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), develops the Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) or technical guidelines for each CCT activity. The SOP for PKH acts as the 'rules of the game' (F27), providing guidance on various activities, including determining eligibility. To be considered as potential recipients, disadvantaged households must be included in the official list of poor families known as the integrated social welfare data. The MoSA compiles a list of potential CCT recipients based on the Integrated Social Welfare Data. However, as 'the data provided by MoSA may not always be accurate, facilitators play a crucial role in the pre-meeting process to validate the information on the list' (DSA08). This validation ensures that the data accurately reflects the current conditions of potential recipients. Facilitators have the authority, based on the MoSA list, to decide whether potential recipients meet the eligibility criteria. The role of CCT facilitators is significant in the

validation process, as they help minimise the risks of inclusion and exclusion errors or mistargeting recipients.

However, while deciding eligibility, facilitators often face dilemmas between adhering strictly to the rules and considering cultural aspects to select a recipient based on family relationships. Here's one of their stories:

The initial validation process for determining eligibility can be really tricky, you know? Sometimes, it's obvious that someone doesn't meet the poor criteria because they're wearing gold and driving [good] cars. But then there are those situations where you know, "Oh, this lady's brother is the neighbourhood head or the village head in my area. If I don't include her in the recipient list, it can cause troubles later on" Or sometimes, [the officials] just go, "Hey, could you include my relative as a CCT recipient?" It gets tough sometimes. These cultural norms are a part of my life here, and I can't always just ignore them, you know? But as facilitators, we also have our code of conduct [to follow] in order to maintain our integrity. And these two [logics] are always not inline. (F17)

The facilitators shared a casual story to portray an interrelation between a policy issue during the eligibility process and its claimed causes (Stone, 1989, 2012; Roe, 1994). In the story, the facilitator emphasises that the eligibility process becomes challenging and dilemmatic due to the conflicting expectations they must navigate. Here, cultural aspects, such as patrimonialism (providing public services based on family relationships) and deference norms (being polite and avoiding conflict by favouring officers' family relatives), influence SLBs' decision-making processes. This influence could potentially hinder SLBs from adhering to written regulations. Inaccuracy in data often arises in cash transfer programmes due to the patrimonialism norm (Rosfadhila *et al.*, 2013). The selection of poor households is frequently not based on government-established criteria; instead, they choose the poor by prioritising their ethnic group or families and neglecting others (Sugandi, 2017, p.36).

6.2.5 A dilemma between Indonesia's cultural tradition and performance-target tradition

This section explores the conflict between Indonesia's cultural tradition — in which SLBs are expected to maintain the deference norms embedded in the society — and the performance-target tradition — which expects SLBs to meet the target graduation. As discussed earlier, facilitators are expected to meet various targets, one of which is achieving the target graduation. They are required to graduate (remove recipients) 10% of the total recipients from the programme within a year. However, in the process of meeting the graduation target, facilitators often encounter conflicting beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition and performance-target tradition.

In terms of the independent graduation targets, removing recipients from the programme is seen as a sensitive issue with a high risk of blame for facilitators (F015). The termination is related to the household's income, and facilitators often face accusations of cutting off the recipients' '*rizq*',²⁴ resulting in negative portrayals by recipients. A facilitator explains that their professional relationships and practices are heavily influenced by cultural norms (F016). Given their close interactions with recipients and the community, 'There is a sense of informal responsibility for facilitators (as part of the culture) to maintain a good relationship with the recipients' (F020). Some facilitators choose to avoid actions that may create conflicts, including graduating recipients.

Furthermore, as in the previous section, since CCT facilitators work directly at the neighbourhood level, maintaining a good relationship and avoiding conflicts with the community leaders becomes crucial. A facilitator shares her dilemma in upholding her beliefs to maintain polite gestures and a sense of responsibility for community cohesion while conducting the graduation process:

When I worked in the unit of the neighbourhood 1, a recipient who happened to be a family member of the community leader owned a car, although an old one. I informed the community leader that she is no longer categorised as poor and planned to graduate her. However, he refused and claimed responsibility to prove her poverty... I didn't know what to do. Since I work closely within the community and directly interact

²⁴ *Rizq* means blessing or can be understood as anything that brings benefits or goodness, including wealth. The recipients often refer to the cash transfer from the PKH as their *rizq* and it comes from God. Therefore, the facilitators do not have a right to cut their blessing.

with him, I chose to turn a blind eye to that recipient. I didn't want to jeopardise my relationship with him and feel uncomfortable during my fieldwork. (F020)

The facilitator's story highlights the dilemma faced during the graduation process. She uses the metaphor 'turn a blind eye' to explain how she chooses to ignore the problem due to the conflicting situation. Facilitators are expected to adhere to cultural norms and avoid conflicts with community leaders and recipients in their work area. Consequently, the facilitator acts as if nothing happened and does not follow through with the goal of graduating the recipient. This trade-off between meeting graduation targets and upholding polite gestures and avoiding conflict is apparent. One of the local government officers also explains how dimensions of Indonesia's cultural tradition clash with the performance-target target which often hinders SLBs in meeting their graduation target: 'a cultural aspect can sometimes serve as a barrier for facilitators in implementing the programme. We have this *'ewuh pakewuh'*, right. Like, facilitators often feel hesitant to tell recipients that they no longer qualify for benefits, to say that 'you don't deserve the benefit' (DSA09).

However, the dilemmatic position faced by facilitators, stemming from the tension between Indonesia's cultural tradition and target-performance tradition, can potentially lead to mistargeting. As a result, the programme's benefits continue to be delivered to the 'wrong' recipients.

6.2.6 A dilemma between Indonesia's cultural tradition and collaborative tradition

This sub-section explores the dilemma faced by SLBs due to conflicting expectations between Indonesia's cultural tradition (the sense of deference and also paternalistic norm) and the collaborative tradition. In terms of CCT team coordination, the respondents noted that 'the team's existence is only on paper, lacking shared motivation and goals for the programme's success' (DSA06). To address this gap, the CCT coordinator hopes that the Department of Social Affairs (DoSA) will reach out and collaborate with other relevant teams or actors. During the fieldwork, I discussed with the participants why they do not attempt to coordinate with others. Participants shared similar *causal stories* (Stone, 1989) to illustrate the

conflicting feelings that they experience about taking the initiative to collaborate and the existing belief to wait for direction. One of the DoSA officers elaborated:

I have not further reached out to the poverty team coordination... but I think I just need to work based on my (written) tasks and functions... however, to collaborate like.. (to make) such a decision, I need to ask permission or direction (from the head of the department)...It's not good for me. It seems that I am over-stepping his authority. So, we here just work according to our task and function, and the direction and instruction from him. (DSA06)

A similar situation occurs at the street-level where SLBs are expected to collaborate and solve problems, but they also hold deference beliefs rooted in Indonesia's cultural tradition embedded in the bureaucracy (based on stories from the respondents F018, F023, F027). A facilitator shares a story:

I want to initiate collaboration with other actors. But I feel it's not right if I start collaborating directly and contacting other departments by myself... I don't want the DoSA officers to think that I am 'the-know-it-all.' From us as facilitators, there is an uneasy feeling if I start to collaborate without approval from the DoSA... We had an experience trying to synchronise recipient data with the population administration database, and it was a complicated process. So, we took the initiative to coordinate with the administrative and population agency for a solution. The DoSA was angry at us, asking why we did that without coordinating with them first, why we overstepped them. We were at a loss. The DoSA didn't provide guidance or direction on how to solve it, leaving us to find the solution ourselves. But when we took the initiative, it seemed like we did something wrong... So, it's better for me to wait for the DoSA's command to collaborate or solve data-related problems... (F027)

Both stories illustrate how the deference belief is reflected in the practices of lower-tier actors within the organisation. The narratives highlight a clear tension between the expectation to take initiative and the belief to not 'over-step' the authority of higher levels without consultation. These stories reflect a *causal story* where the facilitators' and DoSA officer's ability to collaborate and exercise discretion is undermined by the existence of the 'wait for command' belief. The structure and system with a deference belief rooted in the organisation hinder the facilitators' ability to use their discretion and make decisions.

Furthermore, as discussed in section 5.3.3, the combination of deference and paternalism in Indonesia's cultural tradition, along with the hierarchical structure of the

bureaucratic tradition, creates an inferiority-superiority dynamic and an unbalanced power relationship between facilitators and DoSA officers. In practice, facilitators face a dilemma when they recognise the importance of initiating coordination to solve problems or improve programme effectiveness but feel the need to seek approval before making decisions, which hinders their coordination efforts. The conflicting beliefs between deference as a manifestation of Indonesia's cultural tradition and the demand for collaboration as part of the collaborative tradition limit some facilitators' willingness and ability to collaborate and exercise their discretion.

To summarise this section, in implementing the programme, facilitators encounter dilemmas arising from conflicting expectations from different traditions. The facilitators, as street-level actors (with limited authority), make sense of the complexity and underlying tensions between the traditions by telling stories of helplessness and portraying themselves as victim. They experience profound complexities in their work which are also not fully grasped or understood by their top officers or the central government. They struggle to negotiate the different expectations, which, for some facilitators, leads to their inability to carry out their work in the manner that they and others would ideally like, potentially causing problems in implementation for instance, the mistargeting of recipients, inaccurate data, lack of coordination, and unachievable performance targets. After analysing different dilemmas encountered by the SLBs, the subsequent section explores different narratives from SLBs in response to these dilemmas.

6.3 A typology of street-level bureaucrats: 'stamp and sign', 'changing mindset' and 'asset mapping'

This section demonstrates that SLBs have different narratives in addressing their dilemmas and performing their tasks. I identify three facilitator narratives (see Table 7.1). The typology of the facilitators is differentiated by the facilitators' beliefs about the core value of their work (Considine and Lewis, 1999), their approach to collaboration (Sørensen and

Bentzen, 2020), their interaction with the recipients (Pestoff, 2018), and how they use their discretion (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2000; Tummers et al., 2015).

The development of this typology is grounded in the data, drawing from stories, experiences, and observed practices of street-level actors during the CCT implementation. The dimensions used to further analyse each typology are derived abductively from empirical data and supplemented by a literature review. While some literature has introduced various typologies of SLBs in addressing dilemmas (see, for instance, Sørensen & Bentzen, 2020), this particular street-level typology is constructed based on empirical findings — capturing street-level narratives that navigate conflicting beliefs between Western and non-Western logics. This typology becomes essential not only in comprehending how SLBs respond to dilemmas but also in understanding how they deal with blame games, a topic to be discussed in the next chapter. Revisiting the analytical framework of this study, while the previous section analysed using the concept of dilemmas, this SLB typology is examined using the concepts of narrative and practice to explore and comprehend the underlying beliefs of these street-level actors and how they respond to dilemmas during the CCT implementation (see Table 6.1).

The SLB typology presented in Table 6.1 also illustrates the relationship between practices and narratives. In interpreting the SLBs typology, street-level narratives and practices in implementing the CCT programme and responding to various dilemmas co-constitute each other. The narratives of 'Stamp and Sign', 'Changing Mindset', and 'Asset Mapping' among SLBs originate from diverse stories of their daily experiences in confronting and negotiating dilemmas. These narratives manifest through practices: patterns of activities, such as limiting interaction with recipients, establishing instrumental relationships, or fostering trust and reciprocal relationships with recipients. In essence, practices represent patterns of behaviour through which SLBs enact narratives (Gherardi, 2001). Narratives, in turn, provide meaning to these practices, enabling us to comprehend the ideas, justifications, and motivations behind the actions and behaviours performed by SLBs (Feldman *et al.*, 2004; Bevir and Rhodes, 2008).

Narratives and practices can influence each other in a reciprocal manner. For example, street-level narratives about the significance of certain traditions can shape how SLBs perform associated practices; those telling the 'Stamp and Sign' narrative tend to adhere strictly to operational procedures and engage with discretion by strictly following established rules. However, through the relational dynamics of practice, SLBs engage in meaning-making within their context in which practices can also contribute to the construction of their narratives based on their context and situation (van Hulst and Yanow, 2016; van Hulst and Tsoukas, 2021). For instance, 'Asset Mapping' SLBs, whose dominant narratives emphasise collaboration and flexibility, may alter their practices in specific situations, such as when blame games are occurring, by adopting different narratives to avoid blame. The relationship between practice and narrative will be further explored in the next section (see Table 6.2) and the following chapter.

Table 6.1
Typology of street-level bureaucrats

Narrative of street-level bureaucrats	Perception of core value of their work	Interaction with other policy actors	Interaction with recipients	Discretion	Focus on achieving programme goals
Stamp and Sign	Following the procedures and delivering the cash transfer	Viewing interaction as a formality	Formal and limited interaction	Engaging with discretion by following the rules and instruction of senior policy actors	Short-term
Changing mindset	Following the procedures and ensuring the recipient's conditionality	Using interaction to share information with related stakeholders	Creating instrumental-partners relationship	Engaging discretion by offering leniency to the recipients to meet policy goals	Short-term
Asset mapping	Using networks and initiating collaboration	Using interaction to adjust to recipients' or	Building relationships and trust, using a	Engaging with discretion by	Long-term

		community's need	personal approach	improvising their practice, being creative, and remaining flexible to adapt to recipients' or community's conditions	

6.3.1 The 'stamp and sign' facilitators

...I visit health facilities to meet the workers and, as usual, I ask for their signature and stamp as evidence that I have already visited them this month... It's just a formality ... it is 'the main obligation'. Other activities such as empowerment or collaboration are only *sunnah* [optional or recommended].²⁵ I believe I need to prioritise and focus on completing the necessary business processes first. (F022)

This section focuses on the first narrative of SLBs, namely the 'stamp and sign' facilitators, and explores its key characteristics. The practices of 'stamp and sign' SLBs reflect beliefs from the bureaucratic tradition and Indonesia's cultural tradition. These facilitators have a strong inclination to adhere to rules and follow hierarchical instructions from their superiors when carrying out their tasks. Other notable features of their practice include limited use of discretion, maintaining a formal relationship with recipients, and perceiving recipients as passive service users. The term 'stamp and sign' emerged during one of the interviews and became evident through subsequent shadowing and interviews, with a total of 11 interviews (F13, F18, F19, F22, F24, F25, F26, FC011, DSA06, DSA08, and DSA09) highlighting this pattern. The above quote sheds light on the underlying beliefs of a facilitator regarding the importance of adhering to procedures in their daily practice. The metaphor of 'sunnah' is used

²⁵ According to Islamic law, the term "sunnah" typically refers to the actions, behaviours, or teachings of the Prophet Muhammad that serve as examples for Muslims to follow. Sunnah is considered recommended or encouraged, but if someone chooses not to engage in these practices, there is no sin or wrongdoing attributed to that person.

to illustrate how collaborative activities are viewed as secondary or not the facilitator's primary obligation, emphasising the greater significance placed on compliance with procedures rather than collaboration with others.

In the field, the DoSA requires facilitators to document and report their daily activities using 'the facilitator's activity checklist.' If facilitators mention that they have coordinated with village officers, they are required to obtain a *signature and official stamp* from the village office as proof (observed during shadowing on 15 March 2021). Therefore, the term 'stamp and sign' narrative also reflects how the facilitators' coordination process is treated as a procedural checklist to provide evidence for verification and reporting purposes.

These facilitators recognise that their primary task is to achieve the short-term goals of the CCT programme by ensuring the smooth delivery of cash transfers. While some degree of improvisation is necessary in programme implementation (Wagenaar, 2020; Campos and Peeters, 2022), the 'stamp and sign' facilitators believe that their practices are more effective and feasible when aligned with written guidelines and hierarchical instructions. Instead of exercising discretion by, for instance, bending the rules, they prefer to be guided by supervisors and receive clear instructions for their work (as stated by F022, similar stories are shared by F027 and F018). One facilitator shares her stories:

we have a booklet, like a guideline, on how to conduct the Family Development Session (FDS). I provide materials following the modules on health, economics, and other topics because it is already regulated and instructed, right? I feel more comfortable following the guidelines... sticking to the basics. Others (facilitators) may try to do things differently, like coordinating with people from different departments... But for me, if there are no instructions to deviate from the modules, I prefer to just go with the rules. What if something goes wrong later on? It's better to wait and comply with instructions from DoSA or higher authorities (the central government). (F018)

Another example of how the facilitators exercise discretion by choosing to stick to the written rules is when they conduct the validation process to determine the recipients' eligibility. A facilitator shares her story:

I heard that [about the facilitators who bend the rule for eligibility]. But I am extremely strict. I use the criteria for eligibility exactly how what the (guideline) tells me to... Even my own aunt, she was invited to the validation but she did not meet the elderly criteria. I did not make her eligible. I am

just afraid like it can be a boomerang [that can come back on me] and make even more social jealousy [in the community]. (F027)

Both stories demonstrate that facilitators' main priority in doing their task is to implement and follow the plan of activity created by the policy makers by adhering to the regulation (and the guideline). In the first story, the facilitator perceives that improvising her practice during the FDS is not necessarily needed because for her 'sticking to the basic' (what is written in the regulations) is sufficient. The sense of deference in preferring to wait for instruction rather than improvising their practice is also reflected in her story. Similarly, the second story illustrates that the facilitator chooses to use their discretionary action by strictly following the rules. She uses the metaphor of a 'boomerang' to portray that exercising discretion in determining the recipients' eligibility may generate potential adverse effects such as social jealousy in the community or put the facilitators' work at risk²⁶. They tend to avoid divergence to uphold fairness by giving universal treatment to all potential recipients so they can prevent conflict in the community.

In terms of the relationship with the recipients, the 'stamp and sign' facilitators perceive the recipients as not playing pivotal roles during the implementation process, as their primary concern is merely 'to obtain the money or benefits from the CCT' (F022). Consequently, the facilitators treat the recipients as passive users, with limited communication, thereby reflecting the entrenched beliefs of bureaucratic tradition. The 'stamp and sign' facilitators approach the FDS as a mere checklist procedure rather than as an opportunity to foster a reciprocal relationship with the recipients. This lack of engagement becomes evident as the facilitators rarely go to into the community to interact with the recipients, resulting in some cases of recipients being unaware of who their facilitators actually are. Consequently, this disconnect implies that facilitators remain unaware of the problems faced by recipients (DSA08). The limited engagement and communication between the facilitators and recipients not only hinder

²⁶ In the 'CCT Code of Ethics' No: 02/3/KP.05.03/10/2020, formulated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, it is explicitly stated that facilitators are prohibited from including poor households that do not meet the criteria and are not categorised as eligible for CCT programme. Violating this rule will result in written sanctions being issued to the facilitators.

the recipients' understanding of the programme but also 'impede their ability to address any challenges they may encounter throughout the CCT implementation process' (R035).

6.3.1.1 'stamp and sign' SLBs' responses to dilemmas

In relation to the dilemmas set out in the previous section, in response to conflicting expectations between bureaucratic tradition and performance-target tradition, surprisingly, some 'stamp and sign' facilitators tend to focus on meeting the unexpected rather than on following the rules. One facilitator shares: 'I often need to chase this target (to synchronise) data first and abandon my actual tasks that is written in the SOP like (conducting) the FDS because it (meeting target to synchronise data) is related to recipients' cash transfer' (F27).

In dealing with the conflicting expectations of the bureaucratic and collaborative traditions, the 'stamp and sign' SLBs navigate this dilemma by adapting to the bureaucratic tradition and prioritising following the instructions from top-officers and 'playing safe' (F023) rather than meeting the demands of collaboration. For the clashing beliefs between the performance-target tradition, which emphasises meeting the programme's (unexpected) targets through activities such as reporting and ensuring recipients' compliance, and the collaborative tradition, which involves engaging in networking and collaboration with various actors and recipients, these 'stamp and sign' facilitators prioritise achieving the programme's goals. Interestingly, 'stamp and sign' facilitators perceive 'reports as more of a procedural activity rather than a target that needs to be accomplished' (F018).

When facing a dilemma arising from conflicting beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition and the bureaucratic tradition, the 'stamp and sign' facilitators choose to adapt to the bureaucratic tradition by strictly following the rules 'to avoid any complaints from members of community' (F23). In responding to clashing beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition and the performance target tradition, 'stamp and sign' facilitators opt to hold existing beliefs by adhering to cultural values, emphasising the importance of maintaining polite gestures and a sense of responsibility for community cohesion. Lastly, when the facilitators face a dilemma stemming from conflicting beliefs between the deference value part of Indonesia's cultural

tradition and the collaborative tradition, 'stamp and sign' facilitators choose to adapt to the cultural aspects and limit their initiative in coordinating with others.

In sum, the 'stamp and sign' narrative illustrates that the SLBs' pattern of practice is a manifestation of Indonesia's cultural tradition and bureaucratic tradition. They conduct their practice by focusing on complying with the guidelines and direction from higher-level officers and moving away from discretion becomes their priority in conducting their daily work. Also, coordination with other policy actors and interaction with the recipients are perceived as formalistic tasks.

6.3.2 The 'changing mindset' facilitators

My critical role here is to change the mindset of recipients...So, if recipients, before (participating) in the CCT, do not send their kids to the school or go to the *Posyandu* (village health care), after (participating) in the CCT, they can change how they view their health and education ... The CCT is not only giving money. I also need to ensure they change their behaviour too. (F026)

This section explores the narrative of the 'changing mindset' facilitators. The narrative of these facilitators is a diagnostic-prescriptive one; a story where policy actors diagnose problematic situations and make a 'normative leap' to remedy the problems (Schön & Rein, 1994, p.26). In this context, the facilitators identify a problem: recipients lack awareness of health and education facilities and rarely visit them. The solution proposed to address this issue involves the facilitator playing a crucial role. Their prescription includes 'changing the recipients' mindset' on this matter and encouraging them to alter their behaviour by visiting health and education facilities. The aim is for recipients to enhance their quality of life through increased awareness and engagement with these essential services.

The term 'changing mindset' indicates that their primary focus is to meet the programme's target by ensuring the recipients' compliance with the conditionalities of the programme, aiming to bring about a shift in their behaviour (F013). This term emerged from nine interviews conducted with the facilitators, coordinator, and former supervisor, as well as two shadowing activities. The practices of these facilitators reflect the beliefs rooted in the

performance target tradition, where their focus lies in prioritising the attainment of the programme's intended targets and desired outcomes, such as ensuring compliance with the conditionalities (Hood, 1991; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017).

While these facilitators also give importance to following procedures and attempting to coordinate with other actors, such practices primarily serve to help them meet the target or goal of the programme from an instrumental perspective. Thus, these facilitators primarily focus on achieving the short-term goals of the programme. However, it is important to note that these short-term goals are not solely related to reducing the economic burden. The 'changing mindset' facilitators take pride in ensuring that the recipients alter their habits by regularly attending health and education facilities and utilising their cash for appropriate purposes (F014). They believe that, through these actions, they 'can bring the recipients closer to a better life' (F019) and 'help the programme achieve its overarching goals' (F020).

The 'changing mindset' SLBs also perceive the recipients as their 'partners' in achieving the goals of the programme. Among the five facilitators who discussed their perspective on the recipients, one shared the following story:

It is not only about me, but the recipients also need to comply with their conditionalities. So, they are here not just to get the money. I see them as my partner, like, I cannot do this alone. The programme's goal can be met if the recipients also meet their conditionalities... (they need to) go to school, go to health facilities... I only facilitate them. (F024)

The facilitator uses the metaphor of 'partner' to describe the recipients in the programme. They acknowledge that they require the recipients to be their 'partners' and actively co-produce with them to determine the success of the programme. Without the recipients' involvement in the implementation process and their compliance with the conditionalities (modifying their behaviour), the programme's objectives cannot be achieved (Whitaker, 1980; Alford, 1998).

However, importantly, the meaning of 'partner' as used by the facilitators may differ from the ideal notion of partnership, where each actor is on equal footing (Agranoff, 2006). In practice, the metaphor of 'partner' refers to an instrumental relationship with an inherent power

imbalance between SLBs and recipients. SLBs have the authority to determine recipients' eligibility to access the programme's benefits, while recipients are dependent on the decisions made by SLBs (Ellis, 2007; Lipsky, 2010; Gofen, Sella and Gassner, 2019). For example, the facilitators can exert coercion by utilising conditionalities to 'threaten' the recipients (Standing, 2014). If recipients fail to adhere to the programme's rules, they will not receive the cash transfer. By viewing recipients as 'partners', facilitators can allocate blame to recipients when they are unable to meet the programme's targets (discussed in the next chapter).

Similar to the 'stamp and sign' facilitators, these facilitators also consider following the CCT's business process as a crucial aspect of their work. However, these facilitators approach coordination with other stakeholders from a different perspective and with distinct purposes. The 'changing mindset' facilitators do not view coordination as a mere procedural administrative process. Instead, they see it as an opportunity to provide updated information about the CCT programme to all relevant actors involved (F019). For the 'changing mindset' facilitators, coordination serves as an instrumental approach to achieve the programme's goals, specifically ensuring that the recipients fulfil the conditionalities set by the programme. For instance, these facilitators invest more time in informal discussions with teachers or health workers to share the latest regulations and current issues related to the CCT. They also discuss the recipients' compliance with the programme's conditionalities, whether or not they attend the required facilities. This type of coordination serves as a way for the facilitators to keep the stakeholders informed and engaged in the programme.

In terms of discretion, the 'changing mindset' facilitators often bend the rules. A facilitator shares her story:

...often *Kader* in *Posyandu* (integrated health post) informed me (name of a recipient) does not visit (*posyandu*) in these two months... If I follow the guideline, I must give her sanctions. But I didn't... I think some of us trying to have 'a heart-to-heart' conversation with them first... Ask them why? Have a friendly talk...sometimes I coordinate with *kaders* (*community volunteers*) and ask them to collaborate with me in the FDS. The *kaders* can also motivate recipients and share information on how important attending health facilities for them. (F021)

In this story, the facilitator uses the metaphor of a 'heart-to-heart' conversation to illustrate her personal approach towards the recipients. She aims to create a fruitful conversation by having 'friendly' discussions and understanding the recipients' circumstances before resorting to sanctions. Another facilitator shared a similar experience, where instead of immediately reporting a recipient's breach of commitment to the system, he made an effort to approach the recipient and hear about their actual situation by conducting an additional session after the FDS (F014). This story further highlights that facilitators use discretion by bending the rules when it comes to applying sanctions.

It is important to note that these facilitators view the heart-to-heart talk as a 'soft' strategy aimed at helping the recipients change their behaviour and comply with the programme's conditionalities (F019). Their personal approach is not intended to oppose the programme's objectives but rather to advocate for them. Based on the facilitators' beliefs, compliance with the conditionalities is seen as crucial in helping recipients overcome poverty. Again, however, it is worth considering that such approaches may oversimplify the issue of poverty and potentially stigmatise the recipients (Standing, 2014).

6.3.2.1 'Changing mindset' SLBs' responses to different dilemmas

In response to various dilemmas they face, such as the need to follow standard procedures while also meeting unclear and complex unexpected targets, these 'changing-mindset' facilitators tend to adapt by prioritising the achievement of targets, aligning with beliefs from the target-performance tradition. The facilitators also face dilemmas generated by conflicting expectations of the bureaucratic and collaborative traditions; working within a hierarchical structure that demands adherence to instructions from higher-level authority, they are also required to build networking with others and be involved in the coordination arrangements that contradict the hierarchical framework. In navigating this dilemma, some 'changing mindset' facilitators start embracing ideas from the collaborative tradition by actively collaborating with other stakeholders. Yet, the 'changing mindset' facilitators' primary purpose on coordination at the street-level is 'aiming to achieve programme targets, for instance;

ensuring recipients comply with their conditionalities' (F13). As discussed above, these facilitators invest more time in informal coordination with teachers or health workers to discuss the recipients' compliance with the programme's conditionalities, whether or not they attend the required facilities. Moreover, the facilitators face conflicting expectations stemming from the performance-target tradition, which emphasises meeting the programme's (unexpected) targets, and the collaborative tradition, which involves engaging in networking and collaboration with various actors and recipients. When confronted with these dilemmas, 'changing mindset' facilitators prioritise achieving the programme's goals.

SLBs also faced a clash of beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition and bureaucratic tradition. In response to this dilemma, these facilitators typically choose to adapt their practices based on beliefs from Indonesia's cultural tradition. They opt to uphold the deference norm to 'prevent disharmony in the community' (F20). Also, SLBs confront dilemmas arising from conflicting beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition and the performance target tradition. On one hand, facilitators are expected to uphold polite gestures and avoid conflicts within the community. On the other hand, they also feel the pressure to achieve target graduation, which can be perceived as a conflict-generating activity. Interestingly, while 'changing mindset' facilitators manifest a pattern of practice that reflects beliefs from the performance-target tradition, in response to this dilemma some 'changing-mindset' facilitators opt to prioritise adhering to cultural values, emphasising the importance of maintaining polite gestures and a sense of responsibility for community cohesion. A facilitator explains that they 'let the recipients be (in the programme) instead of meeting target graduation' if the graduation process is deemed too complex (F027).

Finally, SLBs face a dilemma stemming from conflicting beliefs between the deference value aspect of Indonesia's cultural tradition and the collaborative tradition. While facilitators are expected to take the initiative to collaborate with other actors, there is also a cultural aspect that encourages them to seek approval before making any decisions, including initiating collaboration (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012; discussed further in Chapter 5). In response to these dilemmas, 'changing mindset' facilitators choose to accept the collaborative tradition by

actively collaborating with others. The 'changing mindset' facilitators begin to build networks and coordinate with other actors, primarily engaging in small-scale collaborations (five facilitators use the term 'small-scale' or "*kecil-kecilan*" to describe this type of coordination that occurs solely between street-level actors, such as between village health workers and facilitators).

In sum, practices and narratives of 'changing mindset' SLBs reflect the performance target tradition as they tend to focus on achieving the short-term aims of the programme and the target by ensuring recipients' compliance. Coordination is used to instrumentally share information about the programme with other related actors. They also use discretion and a personal approach to the recipients so they can be more effective to encourage recipients in meeting the programme's target.

6.3.3 *The 'asset mapping' facilitators*

As a facilitator, I have a plan to help the recipients to move forward... for a year and a half, I tried to get to know my recipients and build their trust. So, at least they can share what they need and what they want from the programme... In 2015, I started mapping my recipients and their potencies. I had 10 groups of recipients (more or less 350 recipients) in 3 sub-districts ...and I also mapped actors that I can ask to collaborate with... I know it is exhausting [to work as facilitators], but somehow, it is rewarding. (F017)

This section discusses the narrative of the third group of facilitators — the 'asset mapping' facilitators. The 'mapping' code emerges from interviews with 10 participants. It illustrates facilitators' practices that focus on meaningful collaboration with different actors during programme implementation, which reflect the collaborative tradition.

The narrative above shows a struggling hero story. Amidst the challenges faced by facilitators and within the complex web of his responsibilities, this particular facilitator went above and beyond to aid recipients, undertaking tasks that required him to go the extra mile. He put effort into coordinating with various actors from different programmes, bridging gaps and ensuring comprehensive support for those recipients in need. The process was far from easy [exhausting], with 'the demands of the role often pushing him to his limits' (F15) . Yet, he found a sense of fulfilment. The 'mapping' facilitators recognise the potential of the recipients to progress and work towards achieving the long-term goals of the programme. They aim to

develop recipients' skills by providing additional activities, with the expectation that recipients will ultimately improve their socioeconomic conditions and become independent from the CCT.

One facilitator shares the importance of building networks with relevant actors in their daily practice:

...they are poor, yes, but that doesn't mean they cannot improve their life... They want to move forward but they just don't know how... So, that's why we are here to open more access and opportunity for them...I coordinate with sub-district offices or with the Department of Small and Medium Enterprises to access grants... I map my recipients... I encouraged them to apply for that grant...Just try to reach people, create networking... (F016)

This story implies a subtle criticism from the facilitators towards the government. The 'asset mapping' facilitators do not attribute the recipients' poverty solely to their personal characteristics but believe that it arises from barriers such as limited access and opportunities. The facilitators' narratives reveal a diagnostic-prescriptive narrative; a story where policy actors diagnose problematic situations and make a 'normative leap' to remedy the problems (Schön & Rein, 1994, p.26). In this context, the facilitators diagnose the problem: poor economic and social conditions result from a lack of additional support from the government. And the prescription following on from addressing this issue is as follows: if facilitators aim to provide additional support for the recipients, they must engage in the 'mapping' process and collaborate with other actors. Hence, the facilitator aims to assist the recipients by motivating them to progress and by creating pathways to increase access and opportunities for other forms of assistance.

My analysis identified three key roles undertaken by 'mapping facilitators'. Firstly, they act as 'triggers' by continuously motivating and building recipients' confidence, encouraging them to seize opportunities as they arise. Secondly, they function as 'detectors', recognising the skills and abilities of recipients and identifying suitable activities that can be provided for them (F017). Lastly, they serve as 'connectors' or bridges, linking a recipient's potential or needs with other relevant government programmes (F015). Moreover, the 'mapping' facilitators view discretion as a salient aspect. They tend to improvise and be flexible with the rules, particularly related to the FDS activity. One facilitator shared the following story:

(I) have to be sensitive...Our eyes and ears have to be opened all the time... Screening and understanding what actually happens in the community and what its actual need is important. I mean, be flexible (toward regulation)... I often discuss with the recipients about activities that they want and usually I change the FDS activity for them. I change that based on what they actually want. (F015).

Although the operational guideline for the FDS states that facilitators must follow each step as outlined in the module, these facilitators believe that merely 'delivering lectures' on specific modules is ineffective (F017). They believe that empowering recipients effectively requires going beyond regular tasks and guidelines. They strive to work harder and be more innovative, going the extra mile in their role (see, Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003). The facilitator's use of the metaphor 'eyes and ears' illustrates the need for direct engagement and understanding of the community and recipients' needs. These facilitators tend to 'allow for new views and actions to emerge through a responsive process' rather than blindly relying on regulations that are 'hierarchically imposed' (Bartels, 2018b, p.182). 'Asset mapping' facilitators emphasise the importance of social sensitivity, being attuned to social issues in their area, including the challenges faced by recipients (F016). Consequently, these facilitators often deviate from strict adherence to regulations, building networks, and customising their practices during the FDS to better serve the recipients.

The improvisation in the 'asset mapping' facilitators' practice is driven by the recipients' needs and the community issues that require their attention (Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021). For example, during a shadowing session on the FDS activity (Data shadowing 5 March 2021), the facilitator was initially supposed to deliver material on parenting and education for children. However, after discussion with the recipients, she modified the activity by inviting volunteers from the Red Cross to provide education on minimising Covid-19 risks. Recognising that poor households, including her recipients, have limited access to Covid-19 information, she adjusted the activity because she believed that addressing the current condition and providing

relevant Covid-19 information was more beneficial and more needed than 'strictly adhering to the FDS materials' (F015).²⁷

The 'mapping' narrative shows that there are relational dynamics between the facilitators' practices, the situation at hand, the recipients, and multiple stakeholders (Bartels and Turnbull, 2020; Wagenaar, 2022). These facilitators improvise and use their local knowledge about the current issues and needs in the local area to adjust their programme's activity (Wagenaar and Cook, 2003; Durose, 2009). They start an informal collaboration at the street level (Cohen and Cohen, 2021), negotiate with, involve, and hear the recipients' opinions in their decision-making process, so the adjusted activities are drawn upon the recipients' interests (Gassner and Gofen, 2019). Unlike the 'changing mindset' facilitators, the 'asset mapping' facilitators exercise discretion and flexibility with regulations, not solely to achieve organisational targets/goals but, rather, to emphasise the relational value emerging from their interaction with recipients (Bartels & Turnbull, 2020, p.1333; Vanleene et al., 2018). When there is a distance between the recipients and the facilitators, 'the recipients will be passive and hesitant to express their thoughts and opinions' (F016); hence, listening to recipients' wishes and connecting with them at a personal level helps the facilitators to gain trust from them (Blijleven and Van Hulst, 2021).

In terms of SLBs' typology, managers hold a normative stance. Managers perceive 'stamp and sign' SLBs as 'less-active' (DSA06), as they are seen merely fulfilling regulatory requirements without showing innovation or making extra efforts for recipients (DSA07). This perspective stems from the understanding that the CCT programme, unlike unconditional cash transfer programmes, requires facilitators to actively assist recipients, ensure compliance, and

²⁷In two instances, facilitators used discretion by adjusting the rules during the Family Development Session (FDS). Firstly, in the 7th month's group meeting, where the assigned topic was health and the environment, a facilitator chose to modify the activity. Instead of delivering the material personally, the facilitator collaborated with staff from the local environmental department or a waste bank to provide training for the recipients. Secondly, due to the community health centre's current focus on promoting health and sanitation awareness in the area, the facilitator adapted the FDS activity accordingly. Despite the scheduled discussion on social welfare services for that month, the facilitator adjusted the session based on the demands and needs of the community and stakeholders. In this case, the facilitator invited a staff member from the community health centre to educate the recipients about sanitation.

provide additional education to foster mindset changes. The normative perspective, according to managers, aligns with mapping facilitators, considering them the ideal model for the programme. Their active assistance and innovative practices contribute significantly to achieving the programme's long-term goals.

6.3.3.1 'Asset mapping' SLBs' responses to different dilemmas

In navigating different dilemmas — for instance, a dilemma stemming from conflicting expectations between bureaucratic tradition and performance-target tradition — the 'asset mapping' facilitators' priority is to achieve the unexpected target; particularly with the unexpected target — in this case, the synchronised data — as it is closely linked to the timely delivery of cash transfers to the recipients. The facilitators perceive that they need 'to work quickly and achieve the target before the system closes' (F018, supported by insights from F020, F013, F016) to ensure that CCT recipients can continue receiving benefits in the subsequent period. In responding to a dilemma generated by conflicting expectations of the bureaucratic and collaborative traditions, the 'asset mapping' facilitators start accepting ideas from the collaborative tradition by actively collaborating with other stakeholders. For instance, the 'asset mapping' facilitators tend to establish informal collaborations with actors at different levels, driven by their desire to address the needs of recipients and the broader community.

Additionally, when the facilitators face conflicting expectations stemming from the performance-target tradition and the collaborative tradition, 'asset mapping' facilitators attempt to balance both demands. However, when faced with extremely demanding targets, some prioritise meeting the targets first, resulting in a loss of motivation due to goal displacement (F017). Goal displacement is a concept highlighted by Lipsky (2010), referring to situations in which the primary goal is overshadowed by other demands. In this case, 'mapping' facilitators value collaboration as their main objective but they are often expected to fulfil various targets, which contributes to goal displacement.

In responding to a dilemma stemming from conflicting beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition and bureaucratic tradition, 'the mapping' facilitators tend to align their

practices more with the deference norm than adhering strictly to regulations. They argue that 'it is crucial to maintain the cultural values embedded in the community to avoid conflicts with its members' (F15). When faced with clashing beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition and the performance target tradition, the 'mapping' facilitators fully recognise that cultural aspects can hinder the graduation of recipients. Nevertheless, they make efforts to graduate recipients by collaborating with respected individuals in the area. They conduct joint home visits and engage in informal conversations to help non-poor recipients understand that the programme is specifically designed for the poor (data shadowing, June 2, 2021). Despite the challenges posed by cultural barriers, the 'mapping' facilitators stay focused on working towards creating understanding among the recipients through using collaborative activities.

Furthermore, the facilitators face a dilemma stemming from conflicting beliefs between the deference value part of Indonesia's cultural tradition and the collaborative tradition. In response to this dilemma, 'asset mapping' facilitators, although aware of the deference beliefs and not wanting to overstep higher-level officers, choose to embrace the collaborative tradition by actively collaborating with others. They navigate the tension between deference and collaboration by finding a middle ground, fostering cooperation within a limited scope.

Based on how the three SLB narratives navigate through different dilemmas, Table 6.2 below summarises the way each responds to various dilemmas:

Table 6.2
SLBs' responses to the dilemmas during the CCT implementation

Conflicting beliefs faced by the SLBs	Typology of SLBs		
	Stamp and sign	Changing mindset	Asset mapping
Bureaucratic tradition and performance-target tradition	Prioritising meeting target	Prioritising meeting target	Prioritising meeting target
Bureaucratic tradition and collaborative	Adhering to the hierarchy	Starting to use informal collaboration	Taking initiative, choosing to build informal collaboration and networking

Performance-target tradition and collaborative tradition	Prioritising meeting target	Prioritising meeting target	Prioritising meeting target
Indonesia's cultural tradition and bureaucratic tradition	Adhering to the regulation	Upholding Indonesia's cultural tradition	Upholding Indonesia's cultural tradition
Indonesia's cultural tradition and performance-target tradition	Accepting and following the cultural tradition	Accepting and following the cultural tradition	Acknowledging cultural tradition but still trying to attain target
Indonesia's cultural traditions and collaborative tradition	Accepting and following the cultural tradition	Acknowledging the cultural tradition but it does not stop facilitators coordinating (mostly with health facilities for the FDS)	Acknowledging the cultural tradition but reaching out and collaborating with other actors (reaching wider actors to link recipients to other programmes).

Table 6.2 shows the pattern of SLBs' practices in responding to the identified dilemmas and demonstrates the interrelation between SLBs as actors and their practices. According to the findings, SLBs are perceived as individuals that shape the policy implementation process by making choices and engaging in certain actions in response to dilemmas. Through their practices, their making pattern of actions (such as 'stamp and sign'; 'changing mindset' and 'asset mapping') that are recurrent, situated and bounded by socio-material rules, situations, contexts, and knowledge that help them enact and reenact given practices (Cook and Wagenaar, 2012; Gherardi, 2016, 2019). Through their performativity and the relationality of their practices, SLBs have the capacity to maintain existing routines or introduce new ways in doing things in dealing with dilemmas. They can adopt alternative behaviours to challenge and reshape existing beliefs based on their particular context and situation at hands.

For example, based on the findings, SLBs demonstrated a pattern of practices described as 'stamp and sign', where they tend to adhere to existing beliefs rooted in Indonesia's cultural and bureaucratic traditions. Their practices are influenced by beliefs from these traditions, such as following guidelines and directions from higher-level officers and

minimising discretion in their daily work. However, when faced with dilemmas stemming from conflicting expectations between the bureaucratic tradition and the performance-target tradition, where they are required to follow standard procedures but also meet unexpected targets, they prioritise meeting the unexpected targets. This illustrates through everyday interaction and dialogue within their context, SLBs make sense of their situation at hand, leading to the emergence of new practices or the modification of existing ones.

Furthermore, chapter 3 also showed that as situated agents, SLBs have three possible approaches in navigating dilemmas. They can either reject new beliefs, accommodate them within their existing set of beliefs, or accept and replace their old beliefs (Bevir and Rhodes, Geddes, 2019, p.243). However, the findings of this study of SLB narratives and practices reveal that SLBs' responses to dilemmas are not a straightforward process with clear and predictable lines of rejection, accommodation, or embrace. Although SLBs exhibit their own patterns of practices and narratives that reflect and align with beliefs from specific governance traditions, during policy implementation their responses to dilemmas are not defined, limited to, or always in line with the traditions they seem to lean towards.

For example, 'asset mapping' facilitators, despite strongly reflecting the collaborative tradition in their practices, sometimes prioritise meeting targets over collaboration when confronted with a dilemma. This may deviate from the beliefs associated with the collaborative tradition. Therefore, even though 'stamp and sign' SLBs appear to hold to existing traditions and 'asset mapping' SLBs seem to embrace new beliefs, in practice it does not mean that these SLBs completely reject new beliefs (e.g., target-performance or collaborative traditions) or replace old beliefs (e.g., Indonesia's cultural tradition or bureaucratic tradition).

With their relational dynamics; relational with its situations, recipients, programmes, or other aspects, SLBs have their reasons on how they deal with dilemmas. It indicates that SLBs are being flexible about what governance traditions they may adapt with depending on the dilemmas that they encounter and reasoning that they have. Again, it also demonstrates that the alignment between beliefs and traditions is not a straightforward and linear process. Street-level actors may exhibit patterns of practices and beliefs that align with a particular tradition,

such as the performance-target tradition. However, when they encounter and respond to dilemmas, they might demonstrate practices that reflect different beliefs that they hold. This study will elaborate on the non-linear response of SLBs to dilemmas, which will be further explored in the next chapter, particularly in relation to blame games.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter explores how the clash of different governance traditions presents different dilemmas for SLBs when implementing the CCT programme. In addressing the first research question — *How do street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) negotiate conflicting different governance paradigms?* — the chapter argues that SLBs adopt different narratives to address the dilemmas arising from conflicting beliefs from different traditions. The chapter introduces a novel typology of SLBs, consisting of three types: the ‘stamp and sign’ SLBs, the ‘changing mindset’ SLBs, and the ‘asset mapping’ SLBs. Each type of SLB exhibits beliefs that align with specific governance traditions regarding their core values of work, interaction with recipients, discretion, and collaboration. For example, the ‘stamp and sign’ SLBs demonstrate practices influenced by Indonesia’s cultural and bureaucratic traditions. The ‘changing mindset’ SLBs exhibit practices that align with the target-performance tradition, while the ‘asset mapping’ SLBs portray practices reflecting beliefs from the collaborative tradition.

However, the process of how SLBs respond to dilemmas through their narratives and practices is not straightforward and cannot be neatly categorised as rejecting, accommodating, or embracing conflicting governance traditions. While SLBs may have identifiable patterns of practices and narratives that align with specific governance traditions when implementing the programme, their responses to dilemmas are not rigidly confined to the traditions that they incline to. With their relational dynamics; relational with its situations, recipients, programmes, or other aspects, SLBs have their reasons on how they deal with dilemmas. This indicates that SLBs exhibit a degree of flexibility in adapting to different

governance traditions depending on the specific dilemmas they encounter and the reasoning they employ.

As we have now analysed conflicting traditions, it becomes evident that SLBs face various dilemmas that give rise to specific challenges during the implementation of the programme. These challenges include unattainable targets, intricate collaborations at the street level, and the mistargeting of a programme's recipients. The next chapter will delve into how these dilemmas and challenges contribute to the occurrence of blame games. Furthermore, it will explore how SLBs' engagement in blame games and their efforts to avoid blame can shape their socialisation with specific traditions, thereby linking back to the typology of SLBs.

Chapter 7: Street-level discretion, relationality and blame avoidance practices

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on how street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) encounter conflicting governance traditions, resulting in various street-level dilemmas. Narratives of SLBs were identified as responses to these dilemmas. In this chapter, I aim to highlight that these conflicting governance traditions not only create dilemmas but also give rise to 'blame games' in which policy actors attempt to shift responsibility to one another when something goes wrong, acting as blamers to avoid being blamees (Hood, 2011, p.7) during programme implementation.

This chapter aims to address the second research question: *How do SLBs use discretion and relationality in the face of conflicting governance paradigms?* Building on the insight from the previous chapter that the conflicting governance traditions generate street-level dilemmas, this chapter argues that blame games emerge as a result, to which SLBs respond by strategically employing their discretion and relationality to avoid blame. Furthermore, the chapter suggests that SLBs' perception of the risk of blame and their belief in the most effective blame avoidance tactics shape their discretionary practices and relational dynamics with recipients and other actors. For instance, some SLBs view strict rule adherence as the best way to minimise blame, while others consider rule deviation as more effective for reducing blame risks. Therefore, a connection is present between the blame games and the recognised SLB typology. It is not the case that SLBs respond to dilemmas because they have one of the three identities or narratives; rather, they do so because they view these narratives as useful in evading blame. For instance, when facilitators consider adherence to rules as the most effective way to avoid blame, their incorporation of protocolisation as a strategy to mitigate blame steers them towards aligning with the bureaucratic tradition. This, in turn, situates facilitators within a particular narrative, such as 'stamp and sign'.

In this chapter, I analyse how SLB narratives and practices utilise storylines, characters, and metaphors to avoid blame. Firstly, I delve into SLBs' 'scapegoats' narrative, in which they perceive themselves as consistent targets of blame by various actors for policy problems arising during programme implementation. Narrative analysis enables me to pinpoint dominant narrative themes shared by SLBs and other policy actors on how these actors blame one another when policy problems occur during the CCT implementation. After analysing how SLBs are being scapegoated by other actors, I then explore various street-level blame avoidance practices as their counter-narrative, including intentionally adhering strictly to rules through protocolisation, deviating from rules by manipulating or gaming their practices, and using collaborative arrangements to diffuse blame amongst partner organisations, shift blame to the victims, and transfer blame to the central government. This chapter concludes that when confronted with conflicting governance traditions that generate dilemmas and blame risks, SLBs strategically use their discretion and relationality to avoid blame.

Importantly, this chapter offers a broader argument: how SLBs engage in blame games shapes the way they associate themselves with certain governance traditions, meaning that SLBs practices give shape to how governance traditions become manifest in practice. By analysing how SLBs tactically use their discretion and relationality in the face of conflicting governance paradigms, this chapter lays the foundation for Chapter 8, which will discuss the consequences of SLBs' discretionary and relational practices for policy implementation and outcomes.

7.2 Blame games in the implementation of the CCT programme: Street-level bureaucrats as 'scapegoats'

This section argues that conflicts between governance traditions generate blame games and frame SLBs' perception on blame. I will analyse how SLBs perceive themselves as being 'scapegoated' when failures occur during CCT implementation and how other policy actors blame facilitators over key issues of programme implementation.

The metaphor of 'scapegoat' emerged from the facilitators' narratives. During the interviews, eleven participants²⁸ used the term '*kambing hitam*', which translates from Bahasa Indonesian to 'scapegoats'. As explained by one facilitator:

...I know and fully understand that our position puts us in difficult situations and to be scapegoated by anyone. But we are so tired of being blamed. Just because we are CCT facilitators and work in the field (street-level), it doesn't mean everything becomes our responsibility. We get all blamed... cash transfer process, verification, or graduation, we always become the target for blame if there are problems during those CCT activities... Seriously, (the blame) it's all on us.. (F013)

The facilitator's story helps to understand her narrative of the blame dynamics in programme implementation. As individuals who are directly engaged with community members in the (sub) district areas, facilitators feel that they are perceived as the public face of the programme. This leads to the general public and other relevant actors (such as sub-district officers, teachers, or village health workers) often assuming that all CCT activities are the exclusive responsibility of the facilitators. Consequently, when problems arise, facilitators are blamed for implementation issues that are not entirely their responsibility or wholly caused by others. From their perspective, facilitators use the metaphor of being 'scapegoated' to make sense of their position during the blame games where they are constantly and unfairly blamed by different actors. The term 'scapegoat' fits here as it refers to an individual who bears blame or punishment for others' misdeeds.

The blame literature has identified 'scapegoating' as a blame-shifting tactic employed by elite actors to redirect responsibility for policy failures or risky responsibilities (Weaver, 1986; Bovens *et al.*, 1999). SLBs become easy scapegoats due to their limited power and vulnerable position in the bureaucratic structure (Li, Ni and Wang, 2021; Ran and Jian, 2021). In this study, the 'scapegoat' narrative arose from facilitators' stories about operating in complex situations and facing dilemmas, and frequently being blamed by other actors who do not acknowledge their working conditions. From the facilitators' viewpoint, the scapegoat

²⁸ F013, F015, F018, F019, F020, F022, F023, F025, F026, F027, FC011.

narrative shifts the focus — it is no longer about identifying responsibility for implementation failures; instead, it is about finding someone to shoulder blame when things go wrong.

Indeed, from the facilitators' perspective, they feel widely blamed by other actors for the programme's ineffectiveness in relation to three key issues: mistargeting recipients due to inaccurate data and recipient selection; poor performance in achieving desired independent graduation targets; and ineffective coordination with other stakeholders. I identified scapegoating to be a dominant narrative amongst other policy actors, who consistently used a similar causal story²⁹ to pinpoint a relation between CCT implementation problems and facilitators as the causes (Stone, 1989, 2012; Roe, 1994; Shanahan *et al.*, 2014) and, consequently, those to blame (Shanahan *et al.*, 2014). I now demonstrate how different actors told the same causal story about the three aforementioned issues.

Central government actors use causal stories to blame facilitators for causing mistargeting, as illustrated below:

When we talk about mistargeting CCT recipients, it's closely tied to the social welfare data... As for the accuracy of the social welfare data, the concern over its validity doesn't primarily pertain to the social welfare data and information centre (at the Ministry of Social Affairs), but rather the local government... In relation to the mistargeting issue, two questions come up. First, when recipients are registered in the CCT programme, is the validation process carried out properly by the facilitators? Second, are those facilitators validating the correct target recipients? (CA02)

Similarly, local government actors also use similar causal stories to blame facilitators for failing to achieve target graduations:

Graduating the recipients is still a major problem in the CCT implementation, and we are still far from achieving the intended target... So, why are we struggling to achieve the graduation target? It's largely because some facilitators aren't giving their best performance. I mean, some of them rarely go to the field and meet or educate the recipients. (About) independent graduation, I think we face 'a real problem'. Our task in the Department of Social Affairs is mainly to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the programme. People who know the technical problem in the field are the facilitators... So, facilitators should be the ones that know how to graduate the

²⁹ Causal story refers to a narrative where policy actors create 'causal ideas' to explain issues or difficulties. Through causal story, actors also make a 'problem definition', which is 'a process of image making, where the images have to do fundamentally with attributing cause, blame, and responsibility' (Stone, 1989, p.282).

recipients. If the facilitators rarely conduct the FDS or meet the recipients, how can we possibly achieve target graduation? (DSA07)

The issue of mistargeting is perceived as a blame-attracting event (Hood, 2011), drawing various actors into the 'blame game' due to citizens' complaints about the programme's failure to reach or target the real poor households and the unreliability of data on poor families in the city.³⁰ The first causal story, by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) officer, highlights how facilitators are accused of their inability to perform validation tasks which impacts the effectiveness of targeting the correct recipients. The central-level actor constructs a narrative shifting responsibility away from their own domain and suggesting that blame should instead be directed at local actors who struggle to manage and update data on poor families. From the facilitators' perspective, 'they felt being scapegoated as the single actor responsible for this issue'. This problem was directly ascribed to facilitators, rather than considering factors like inadequate resources and support systems (F27). The central government actor places blame on facilitators by questioning their ability to validate data, claiming that their inadequate validation and incorrect recipient selection are the sources of the mistargeting problem within the CCT programme.

Likewise, in the second story, the Department of Social Affairs (DoSA) officer employs a causal story to pin the blame on facilitators. They outline the chain of responsibility within the programme to emphasise that the burden of blame does not fall on them. Instead, the actors fully responsible for executing and initiating the graduation process are the facilitators. Therefore, if any negative outcome arises during the graduation process (in this case, unachieved targets), the ones who bear the blame are the facilitators. The local actor argues that facilitators perform poorly and frames them negatively (portrayed as villains) by highlighting how they neglect and fail to execute their primary tasks, causing the graduation target to be unmet and resulting in the programme's implementation failure.

In another interview, the DoSA officer highlights achieving a target of 10% independent

³⁰ Based on interview with the facilitators (F014,F019,F022,F023,F027), the DoSA officers (DSA07, DSA08, DSA09), and sub-district officers (SD039).

graduation each year and the facilitators' role in motivating, educating, and empowering recipients serve as indicators to evaluate programme effectiveness and outcomes (DSA06). Local government officials contend that programme success has been elusive because facilitators have only managed to meet around 0.5% to 2% of the total required independent graduations (59 out of 1,408 recipients for graduation) each year. Independent graduation performance is also seen as the standard for facilitators. When facilitators fall short of the graduation target, it reflects poorly on their performance. Consequently, higher-ranking officials attribute the programme's failure to facilitators, either as a reason for unmet objectives or as indicative of implementation ineffectiveness.

Another causal story presented by the local government actor blames facilitators for their insufficient efforts in coordinating with other actors, resulting in inadequate programme socialisation; how the programme is thoroughly informed and communicated among various stakeholders:

...the issue in CCT implementation arises from insufficient socialisation. If facilitators took a more proactive approach to engaging relevant stakeholders and establishing effective coordination, I believe the implementation could achieve greater success. It also can be a reason why the (number of) independent graduations in our city is low. Some facilitators are inactive and slacking in doing their work... With current performance, we cannot expect that the CCT can reach its goal. (DSA10)

The story illustrates how local actors attribute blame to facilitators through a causal story for their limited coordination with relevant actors. An officer of DoSA portrayed facilitators as villains, causing incomplete information dissemination to related actors due to their coordination flaws; just one example of a policy actor's perceptions of facilitators' inactivity and poor performance, resulting in both 'socialisation gaps' (DSA08) and failure to achieve programme objectives. In other interviews, different actors such as subdistrict officers, teachers, and the head of the community were not well-informed about the programme (e.g., how it works and what their actual role is). A local officer expressed her lack of awareness about programme activities, such as the Family Development Session (FDS) and verification process. She accounted for this by blaming facilitators who 'hardly coordinate' with her,

hindering joint programme implementation (SD028). The implication is that some local officers struggled to support programme implementation due to inadequate facilitator coordination, leading to their uninformed involvement and ultimately contributing to ineffective implementation.

Perceiving themselves to be scapegoated and consistently blamed for implementation issues triggered a defensive response in facilitators, aimed at safeguarding their image from blame (FC011, F21). Facilitators perceive blame as a threat to their professional integrity (F015), potentially leading to consequences detrimental to their jobs (FC011). For instance, adhering to the CCT's code of conduct and performance evaluation standards is crucial for facilitators to maintain professionalism and integrity while achieving successful programme implementation. Failure to meet those aspects can result in penalties like delayed honorarium payments or non-renewal of facilitator contracts. Some facilitators express the sentiment that 'other people need to know that issues in CCT programme is not our fault' (F023). As the next section will show in further detail, facilitators' defensive strategies manifest through a 'strategic or cautious' approach to task execution, decision-making, and interactions with other actors and recipients, all aimed at deflecting blame (F013, F024, F027).

In conclusion, this section interrogates the emergence of blame games within programme implementation. In practice, SLBs perceived themselves cast as scapegoats who are unfairly blamed whenever specific issues arise during programme implementation. The perception that facilitators were the cause of the lack of programme success was upheld by the dominant narrative of other actors, who used causal stories to depict facilitators as the actors responsible for mistargeting recipients, failing to meet targets, and exhibiting poor coordination.

In response to the blame games resulting from this dominant narrative, facilitators created counter-narratives using various blame avoidance practices to defend themselves, which will be explored in the next section. Their involvement in blame games shapes how SLBs strategically use discretion, manage relationships, and conduct their practices.

7.3 Street-level blame avoidance practices

This section demonstrates that in facing the risk of blame during the CCT implementation, SLBs establish different blame avoidance practices, in which they tactically decide the way they use discretion and establish relationships with other actors to minimise the risk of blame. SLBs challenge the dominant narrative of other policy actors through a counter-narrative supported by causal stories, diagnostic-prescriptive stories, blaming the victim stories, and villain/hero/victim characters to reposition themselves from blame-takers to blame-makers (Stone, 1989; Hansson, 2018). Table 7.1 presents two points. It re-highlights the issues SLBs feel they are blamed and scapegoated for during CCT implementation, and it shows SLBs' counter-narrative, where SLBs create various blame avoidance strategies. The next subsections will further discuss SLBs' different blame avoidance tactics.

Table 7.1
Blame dynamics and street-level blame avoidance practices

SLBs perceive themselves to be scapegoated (SLBs as blame-takers)			SLBs as blame-makers
No	What SLBs are blamed for	perceived blame from	Street-level blame avoidance practices
1	Mistargeting recipients due to inaccurate data and recipient selection	- Central government actors - Local government actors - Community members (public) - Recipients	- Protocolisation - Sharing blame through 'lock-in' and herding' - Shifting blame back to central government actors
2	Poor performance: - Incapability to achieve specific targets - Causing ineffective the CCT implementation - Criticism from community members and recipients regarding graduation process	- Local government actors	- Gaming and questioning feasibility of targets - Blaming the victims - Making use of existing coordination arrangements
3	Ineffective coordination with other stakeholders	- Local government actors - Sub-district actors	- Shifting blame to central and local government actors through complexity story

7.3.1 Protocolisation, 'locking-in' and herding: SLBs strategically use discretion and relationality to avoid and share blame

As discussed, mistargeting recipients stands out as a key challenge in programme implementation. The CCT programme and its facilitators constantly face criticism and blame for targeting beneficiaries who do not seem suitable. Facilitators are well aware of the risk of being blamed for mistargeting recipients and this issue is seen as a blame-attracting event. To mitigate this risk of blame, facilitators strategically decide how to utilise their discretion. In terms of the risk of blame associated with discretionary decision-making, within the bureaucratic and Indonesia's cultural traditions, facilitators are expected to follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and adhere to the CCT guidelines and instructions from higher-ranking officers (as discussed in Chapter 6). Some facilitators perceive that deviating from these regulations is a risky decision that could result in punishments from local or central government authorities. Data indicates that facilitators' awareness of the risk of blame shapes their decision-making in utilising discretionary power. Interestingly, depending on their approach, SLBs employ their judgment to either strictly adhere to the rules or creatively adapt their practices by deviating from the rules, both for the same reason: to avoid blame. The facilitators' narratives reveal a diagnostic-prescriptive story; where policy actors diagnose problematic situations and make a 'normative leap' to remedy the problems (Schön & Rein, 1994, p.26). In this context, the narrative is used where facilitators diagnose problematic situations and make a 'normative leap' to determine how discretionary practices effectively mitigate blame.

Five facilitators shared their experience in avoiding blame for the mistargeting issue (F013, F018, F019, F022, F023) by choosing to adhere to written regulations. One of the stories is shown below:

I get it, out in the field things can be unpredictable. It's like, even if they're struggling financially, but when I check the 'poor' criteria, they just don't quite fit that...But it's actually kind a risky for me to just go ahead and change up the eligibility rules. I get criticism from the community for creating social jealousy or even get blamed and sanctions for picking households who aren't technically in the 'right' category. So,

when it comes to who's eligible, I'm not trying to be careless or anything. It just makes more sense to play it safe and stick to what the rules say, right? (F023).

The story demonstrates a facilitator choosing to employ 'protocolisation' where he tends to 'play it by the book' and strictly 'follow the rules' to limit or reduce the risk of blame for any 'ill-judged discretionary decision' (Hood, 2007, 2011, p.33,93). This is a common strategy among SLBs, as their use of discretion can sometimes make them vulnerable targets for blame (Hood, 2020). Additionally, the story reveals that the facilitator acknowledges a discrepancy between eligibility rules and citizens' actual circumstances, recognising that the criteria often do not align in practice. However, he diagnoses a problem: he could be blamed by citizens for causing social jealousy or face punishment from local or central authorities for mistargeting and disregarding the written regulations if he deviates from the rules. Hence, to avoid blame, SLBs make a normative leap by strictly adhering to established rules and procedures. In other interviews, facilitators also utilise protocolisation to avoid blame during the FDS. Some facilitators rigidly stick to the prescribed FDS modules and materials, even when they are no longer suitable for the recipients' needs (F022, R32). A facilitator reveals that a fear of potential future blame drives her to strictly adhere to the rules because she believes that 'it is better to wait and comply with regulations and instructions from higher authorities' (F018).

For other facilitators, in implementing the CCT, they often 'empathise with the situations of poor families' (F014), leading them to be more flexible in determining eligibility. One facilitator expresses that they find blindly abiding to the rules and 'acting like a robot' conflicts with their moral values (F020). Yet, SLBs are also conscious that bending the rules in these cases might lead to potential blame. Being lenient in eligibility decisions indicates that the SLBs are non-compliant with regulations which can lead to sanctions and also 'raise issues about mistargeting' (F016). Thus, some facilitators attempt to strike a balance between flexible assistance for recipients and mitigating blame risks by consulting with their superiors or peers before taking action as a way to share the blame with others. The following are two example

stories³¹ of how they use 'locking-in' and 'herding' to minimise blame before making a discretionary decision:

... he has a chronic illness and is not categorised as severely disabled. But he cannot do anything with his body... So, I decided to make him eligible for this programme... I know it may be *picariouseun*³²...I may risk my job here because I disobey the actual rule... but just to be safe... like, before (making the decision), I consulted this with my coordinator, I say 'I will do this, what do you think? Will you allow me?' I need to ask this since I am not supposed to [make the mentioned potential recipients eligible]. (F014)

It is a bit risky, you know, to play with the regulations for eligibility. I am a bit scared if I have to do this alone...But, I asked others, 'hey, do you do this too?' 'Have you found a case like this?' They said, 'She's only two months away from turning 60 years old (the limit age for elderly criteria)? Just let her into the programme, help her'. So, ok then. At least I discussed this first with others and they also do the same. (F024)

The first story shows that SLBs seek ways to use their discretion while still minimising blame risk by employing the 'locking-in' strategy, which involves supervisors in their discretionary decision-making (Hood, 2011, p.33). The facilitator tells a diagnostic-prescriptive story (Rein and Schön, 1994, p.26). Here, he diagnoses a problem situation: bending the rules without consulting the coordinator could lead to future issues and disapproval from other people in the future (*picariouseun*), potentially inviting blame and harming his career. Such actions could lead to a negative portrayal by both the central government and community members. If he were to bend the rules and this was discovered by those higher up, he could face written sanctions³³ as it violates facilitators' code of conduct. Furthermore, if community members find out that ineligible individuals were allowed into the programme, it might spark conflicts within the community. The facilitator prescribes what he 'ought' to do: if he intends to exercise discretion by bending the rule, he should adopt a 'locking-in' practice, involving his

³¹ From data interviews, seven facilitators (F014,F015,F017,F020,F024,F025,F026) provided similar stories of how they use 'locking-in' and 'herding' to reduce risk of being blamed before making any discretionary decision.

³² This is Sundanese phrase. *Picarioseun* means something that can cause criticism, fault-finding, or disapproval from other people in the future.

³³ In 'CCT code of ethics' No: 02/3/KP.05.03/10/2020, established by Ministry of Social Affairs, it is stated that the facilitators are prohibited to include poor households who are not categorised and not fit with CCT's eligible criteria. The written sanction will be given to the facilitators who are violated the rule.

supervisor in the decision-making process. Facilitators deliberately foster relationships with supervisors to include them in discretionary choices, thereby reducing the risk of blame. This way, if blame arises from their decisions, facilitators can partly share blame with their superiors.

Likewise, in the second story, the facilitator employs a 'herding' strategy with their colleagues (Hood, 2011, 2020) before opting to deviate from the eligibility regulations. SLBs attempt to mitigate the blame with them by making a normative leap to actively involve their peers in their discretionary decisions to share responsibility. Thus, when adverse events occur and people blame them for the results of their discretion, the facilitators will 'hang together' and the burden of actors' responsibility will be decreased since they 'collectivise responsibility and share blame for the exercise of discretion' (Hood, 2020, p.31).

The findings in this section reveal that, when confronted with dilemmas and potential risk of blame, SLBs deliberately build relationships with their peers and supervisors, not solely to seek opinions before exercising discretion, but as a practice to protect themselves from potential blame. They risk potential blame if they do not strictly adhere to rules or top officers' directives. When facilitators deem rule-following as the optimal approach to mitigate blame, their adoption of protocolisation as a blame avoidance practice nudges them to align with the bureaucratic tradition and exercise discretion through rule-adherence. This then positions facilitators within a specific narrative (e.g., 'stamp and sign'). These findings endorse the wider argument of this chapter about the connection between blame games and the identified SLB typology or narratives. SLBs respond to dilemmas not because they possess one of three fixed identities or narratives, but because they view these narratives as advantageous in avoiding blame.

7.3.2 Gaming and questioning the feasibility of the target

This section demonstrates that, to deflect blame from accusations of unsatisfactory performance attributed to their inability to meet specific targets, SLBs engage in gaming — a

practice by which policy actors intentionally manipulate the standard of their activity to give an impression they have a better performance than they actually do (Hood, 2006), supported by the narrative that certain targets within the CCT programme are unrealistic. The data from interviews indicates that, rather than following the CCT activities as outlined in the regulations, SLBs intentionally disregard the rules. Instead, they concentrate on achieving target performance by manipulating their practices, aiming to portray their performance in a more positive light.

For instance, according to the interviews, some facilitators game the graduation report as a means to mitigate blame. As explained, the CCT regulation specifies that one of the criteria for evaluating programme effectiveness and the performance standard of facilitators is the attainment of the independent graduation target.³⁴ Not achieving the target graduation signifies that facilitators have poor performance and become subjects of blame from other policy actors for causing the ineffectiveness of the CCT programme's implementation (see section 7.2). Therefore, facilitators tend to game the graduation reports to avoid blame. One facilitator shared his story:

Well, you know, things are like this now. Every month, we have all sorts of targets. You know yourself how many targets we have. And it's quite clear that these targets influence our performance evaluations. Like, if we don't succeed in achieving graduation targets, naturally our performance will be seen negatively... As always, we will be the ones blamed if the programme fails to meet its success indicators... It's like, for all facilitators, I think we all agree that the graduation process is extremely challenging. We can't really aim for a 10% target per year... To be honest, I sometimes end up manipulating reports... Like, months ago, I wrote in my report, stating that I was in the process of graduating 11 recipients. But well, honestly, I didn't actually (conduct the graduations)... The most important thing is to submit the reports first, just for the monthly assessment. And it's just to show to them that I've been making an effort to meet the targets. (F025).

The facilitators use a complexity story (Stone, 2002) to illustrate the challenging and intricate nature of their work. The facilitator explains that in addition to the target graduation, they face the pressure of meeting various monthly targets, emphasising the complexity and

³⁴ It is also stated at 'PKH assistance 2021', PowerPoint presentation document downloaded from the official website of the MoSA.

challenges of their work. The facilitator acknowledges that due to the pressure of these various targets, achieving the target graduation is difficult. Also, the graduation process is complex, time-consuming, and often viewed as an unpopular activity. However, if facilitators submit a report indicating that they do not graduate recipients in a month, it suggests that facilitators themselves are 'having poor performance for not meeting target graduation' (F17). Consequently, to avoid blame for not meeting performance standards, facilitators deliberately engage in gaming the graduation report by falsely claiming that they are in the process of graduating 11 number of recipients even though, in reality, they admit to not having completed that number of graduations. This action is driven by the same motive: aiming to mitigate blame by making their performance appear better (see also, Charbonneau & Bellavance, 2012; Chen, 2023).

Facilitators take steps to mitigate the risk of blame for failing to achieve the graduation target by constructing a counter-narrative that questions the programme's feasibility. The facilitators assert that achieving the graduation target is challenging, and they raise doubts about its attainability due to the inherent contradictions in the concept of independent graduation. Seven facilitators echoed these sentiments, sharing similar accounts of the unfeasibility of the graduation target. For example, a facilitator provides a story to exemplify this perspective:

They (the policymakers) make a target for us to graduate 10%, and others even say that the target is 30%. I told you such a target is nonsense...When we talk about graduation, we talk about empowerment...it cannot be forced to be done at speed... But you know, our *pejabat*³⁵ need achievements and tend to show to the public that they can achieve so many targets to show that they are successful. And they do that, without knowing in detail what actual problems there are in the field. (F016)

The facilitator employs a causal story to deflect blame for their subpar performance in achieving the target graduation rate. The facilitator constructs a problem definition (Stone, 1989) that deems the target graduation rate unattainable ('nonsense' target). This assertion is based on two points: firstly, the graduation process is tied to empowerment, which is inherently

³⁵ 'the top-tier officers'.

time-consuming; and, secondly, the target is established without due consideration of the actual challenges encountered by facilitators at the street-level. Facilitators perceive the target as contradicting the overall policy aims and challenging to achieve. They are expected to empower CCT recipients, where the results cannot be reliably predicted within a specific timeframe. Simultaneously, they are required to attain rapid graduation targets within a specific timeline (e.g., 10% of total recipients within a year). This situation creates a dilemma for facilitators (see section 6.2.3). This finding aligns with Li, Ni, and Wang's research (2021, p.11), which asserts that, in order to counter blame, local actors frequently construct counter-narratives that challenge the legitimacy of performance targets, framing them as unachievable, and underscoring that these targets, as formulated by policymakers, are unrealistic. This is done to highlight the fact that the cause of their inability to meet the target is the policymakers' lack of understanding of their daily practice.

In other interviews, facilitators discussed how they game the verification process. To confirm whether recipients regularly visit and utilise health and education facilities (as part of their conditionalities), in the written SOP facilitators are required to make monthly visits to these facilities and document recipients' visits in a verification form. However, due to time constraints and various workloads, facilitators often do not visit health and education facilities to verify the recipients' conditionalities and they resort to gaming or manipulating the validation process by 'ticking all 'yes' under recipient's names in the system as if all of them have met their conditions' (F015). One of the programme's effectiveness indicators is based on the total number of recipients accessing health and education facilities. If the verification results indicate a lower number than expected, it suggests that facilitators 'have failed to ensure their recipients' compliance with these services' (F23). Facilitators might view this as a potential focal point for blame and, therefore, engage in gaming to avoid it.

The findings in this section show that blame games and SLBs' perception of blame risks associated with failing to meet specific targets in the CCT programme shape their practices and beliefs. Their counter-narratives drive them to concentrate on achieving performance targets to avoid blame or allocate blame to others. SLBs intentionally deviate

from the CCT regulations through gaming practices in order to portray a seemingly good performance, thereby mitigating the risk of blame. In the context of Indonesian governance, this inclination to avoid blame by bending the rules through gaming can be linked to a deferential norm. In Indonesia's cultural tradition, officers focus on adhering to and achieving goals and targets set by their superiors. They are highly motivated to avoid any actions that could result in negative evaluations or perceptions from their superiors. The use of gaming by SLBs serves as a way to alleviate blame and uphold a positive reputation, ensuring their alignment with directives from higher levels, which includes achieving a standard level of performance. Consequently, blame games and SLBs' narratives of blame shape their practices in accordance with the performance target tradition and the Indonesian cultural tradition.

7.3.3 Sharing the risk of blame through coordination arrangements

This section illustrates that some SLBs deliberately resist adhering to the (new) regulation by utilising existing coordination structures in the CCT implementation, aiming to share and minimise blame risk. As previously outlined, at the sub-district level, the coordination team comprises facilitators, district and sub-district officers, and community leaders. Some of the coordination activities between facilitators and the sub-district coordination team revolve around raising awareness, persuading, and motivating better-off recipients to graduate from the programme.

Facilitators indicated that the process of graduation is challenging and complex; they view the graduation process as an activity that fosters blame or carries significant blame-related risks. The CCT aims to provide social assistance in the form of cash transfers to poor households and, as mentioned earlier, facilitators consider the graduation process an 'unpopular activity', particularly when they have to terminate or remove individuals from the programme (F024). The independent graduation process is seen as 'a sensitive matter' due to its impact on recipients' household income. Ending a recipient's participation effectively means cutting off an additional source of income and facilitators often face negative portrayals

and accusations from recipients as the graduation process is interpreted by recipients as 'cutting their *rizq*' (F013,F018).³⁶ Furthermore, given the nature of facilitators' work, which involves extensive interaction with recipients and community members, there exists an informal expectation (as part of the culture) that they maintain positive relationships. Graduating recipients from the programme is perceived as a step that could damage these relationships and potentially lead to conflict. Facilitators openly acknowledge the substantial risk associated with the graduation process, understanding that it raises the probability of them being blamed or facing complaints from recipients.

Under the previous regulation, CCT facilitators lacked the authority to remove or graduate recipients from the programme based on their own decision. They needed official documentation, typically a signed letter from the head of the neighbourhood or sub-district officials, confirming that the recipients were no longer eligible due to their improved financial status. Thus, the graduation process involved other actors. However, within the current regulation, it states that, 'facilitators are enabled to terminate (change the recipients' status from eligible into non-eligible) as long as the facilitators have the valid evidence' (the CCT graduation guidelines, 2020). This implies that independent graduations can be carried out without necessarily obtaining a supporting statement or involving other stakeholders. From the facilitators' standpoint, this change implies 'that they potentially bear sole responsibility for initiating the graduation process' (F014) and could be solely blamed if there are any mistakes or any complaints from the recipients or other stakeholders.

Therefore, certain facilitators display resistance towards adhering to the new graduation rules. They intentionally opt to depend on the existing coordination structure to conduct recipient graduations, allowing them to distribute the blame across other actors. A facilitator shared this story:

... It is dilemmatic, right? If I (follow) that rule, I know by heart that I'll be the one that gets the protest and blame. And you know, if it is about graduation, it is always tricky and risky. So, I prefer to use my old, usual trick... I am kind of not really following

³⁶ Rizq means blessing or can be understood as anything that brings benefits or goodness, including wealth. The recipients often refer the cash transfer from the CCT as their rizq and it comes from God. Therefore, the facilitators do not have a right to cut their blessing.

this (new) graduation rule. I still involve other actors in this area before graduating the recipients...Like if there is any complaint, I am not facing that alone. (F021)

The facilitator employs a diagnostic-prescriptive narrative in which he identifies a problem: following the new graduation protocol, where he alone decides on graduation recipients, could potentially expose him to the risk of being blamed. To mitigate blame, the facilitator takes a normative leap by resisting strict adherence to the new regulation and instead opting for using a coordination arrangement that involves various stakeholders in the graduation process. The data gathered from the interviews is further supported by data from shadowing a facilitator conducting a graduation process. The facilitator collaborated with sub-district officers and community leaders, visiting the recipient's home to explain and provide an understanding of independent graduation. They collectively proceeded with the graduation process, involving tasks such as form filling and reporting. When I inquired why the facilitator did not carry out this process alone, given that the regulation allows for direct recipient graduation without engaging those actors, the facilitator provided an explanation: 'I cannot imagine the complaint that I would get when I cut their benefits forever. I don't feel at ease following this rule so it is better to graduate recipients together with (other actors) here like we usually do. I'll be not the only target (of blamed) then' (F016).

In sum, the section has shown how facilitators strategize their actions when using their discretionary power and interpret regulations in light of potential blame risks that they may face. Facilitators resist fully adopting the new rule by upholding previous practices. They intentionally utilise coordination arrangements and engage in coordination activities in carrying out the graduation process, thereby distributing the blame risk among other stakeholders. By relying on the coordination process as 'the blame-spreading' vehicle to make a collective decision making, facilitators can minimise the risk of blame (Hood, 2011, p.97, 2020). These findings also demonstrate a link between blame games and the collaborative tradition. In the context of implementing the CCT programme, facilitators are expected to collaborate with other actors to enhance implementation quality. However, when these facilitators identify

potential situations where they might be blamed, they purposefully establish coordination and utilise existing coordination structures at the sub-district level. As a result, blame games and SLBs' fear of blame shape their practices and serve as a driving force for them to adapt their actions in line with the collaborative tradition. This finding supports one of the wider arguments of this chapter — namely, that blame games and SLB narratives are interrelated.

7.3.4 *'Blaming the victim': shifting blame to the recipients*

The main idea in this section is that, to avoid taking all the blame for not being able to reach specific targets or the programme's goals, SLBs tend to shift the blame to the recipients. The data actually reveals that when the facilitators are asked, "Why do you find achieving the target graduation challenging?" some of them redirect the blame towards the recipients. There were nine facilitators who shared stories about how they point a finger at the recipients for making it difficult to achieve the target graduation, or for the programme's outcomes not being effective. For example:

For me, the recipients' character that makes the independent graduation becomes really hard to proceed... The recipients really depend themselves on the programme, and they have no motivation whatsoever to be out from the programme... When I approach them and pursue them to graduate from the programme, they clearly show their resistance. (F022)

Certain facilitators believe that the recipients' reluctance to graduate from the programme is rooted in the inadequacy of the CCT programme itself, which lacks necessary empowerment activities to enhance recipients' self-reliance and diminish their reliance on the programme. Consequently, 'it is unfair to blame recipients for their ongoing need for programme assistance' (F016, F017). However, contrary to this perspective, some facilitators, as illustrated in the aforementioned story, resort to employing a 'blame the victim' narrative (Stone, 2002) as a strategy to deflect blame for their inability to achieve the target graduation. In this scenario, the facilitator transfers blame onto recipients by accentuating their perceived negative traits that impede the target and the programme's goal attainment. For example, they assert that recipients lack motivation and display resistance to leaving the programme due to

their existing reliance on the cash transfer. Blaming clients is a common SLB practice, where they often transfer responsibility for programme effectiveness to recipients. Increased frustration in achieving programme goals can lead SLBs to shift blame onto citizens (Seale et al., 2012, p.552). Lipsky also suggests that blaming clients might be a way for SLBs to shield themselves from 'their own failures or the failures of their agencies' (2010, p.153). Following the blame avoidance concept, policy actors frequently shift blame to others using the 'individualisation' tactic, a strategy to attribute blame to users, operators, or victims (Hood, 2011, p.92-93).

Despite its seemingly collaborative nature, seeing the recipients as their 'partners' (as discussed in section 6.2.2) also opens an opportunity to create a 'blame-the-victim' story, casting recipients as uncooperative villains. A facilitator shares her story:

I deal with different cases and recipients... They can be very helpful; for example, they willingly follow the CCT's rule of game...But, you know, other recipients just want to test my patience... (they) usually do not carry out their commitment, probably because they just don't care enough to bother... For this case, I usually said to them '...be cooperative with me. Attend the school or the health facilities, or else I have no other choice but to stop your benefits'...I've tried my best to make the programme can meet its goal. It would be useless if the recipients don't want to cooperate with me in implementing the programme. (F013)

The story demonstrates the facilitator's attribution of blame towards the recipients by using a 'blaming the victim' story (Stone, 2002). The recipients are portrayed as a source of difficulty in achieving the programme's goals, particularly regarding their compliance with visiting health and education facilities. The facilitator justifies her efforts and performance, asserting that she has performed her part to ensure recipients' commitment. However, she implies that any accusation of poor performance should not be directed at her actions but should be attributed to the recipients' failure to uphold their commitments and lack of concern for following the conditionalities. Also, the recipients' characters are utilised by the facilitators to maintain their image as SLBs (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003). They portray their behaviour as positive and accommodating when dealing with cooperative recipients but shift to strict and authoritative behaviour when interacting with uncooperative recipients. Implicitly, due to their fear of being blamed for not meeting the programme's goals, facilitators shift blame

onto recipients, resulting in strict and punitive behaviours towards them, as seen in statements like 'be cooperative with me... or else..' This dynamic also highlights the power imbalance between facilitators and recipients.

Based on the analysis of facilitators' blame avoidance strategies, how facilitators interpret the blame issue and their perspective on the most effective avoidance strategy emerges as a pivotal influence shaping their narratives in their interactions with and perceptions of recipients, as well as their beliefs about certain governance practices. By opting to attribute blame to recipients, facilitators shape their perceptions of their roles and how 'they craft representations and expectations of clients' (Seale, Buck and Parrotta, 2012, p.505). Importantly, their beliefs and interactions with recipients are moulded accordingly, ultimately defining the nature of their relationship. They become associated with certain narratives of SLBs. For instance, a strong tendency to blame recipients correlates with the 'stamp and sign' or 'changing mindset' narratives.

7.3.5 Shifting blame to other actors

This section highlights how facilitators deflect blame for perceived policy issues during CCT implementation by shifting blame back onto other actors, particularly central and local government, using narratives such as the 'villain and victims' story and the complexity narrative. For the perceived key issue in the CCT programme, particularly concerning mistargeting, central actors tend to scapegoat facilitators, blaming them for causing the mistargeting or inclusion errors in the programme. To avoid taking on this blame, facilitators shift the blame back onto the central government actors. They do this by highlighting the 'validation by system' problem as a central government decision that indirectly leads to mistargeting. This narrative frames the MoSA's decision as a 'blunder', placing the blame for mistargeting on the MoSA rather than the facilitators. Experiences from six facilitators and a coordinator (F06,F10,F11,F18,F23,FC11) offer insight into this dynamic. Here is one such example:

In 2020, there was validation by the system where the cash was suddenly sent to new recipients without us verifying them back then. The MoSA left us in the dark too, like they didn't give any warning or information to us at all (about the validation by system). They informed us right after the recipients get their money... Later, we figured out that some of them didn't fit the CCT category, so they weren't actually eligible... The public pointed out the inclusion error and blamed us, although it wasn't our fault. So, I said to them, 'We don't know anything about this because it's a central (government) decision'... And you know, in practice it will be too hard to exit a recipient that is already included in the programme. So, for this case, I just reported the problem to my supervisors and didn't take much action. I sort of let it slide. I just let them stay in the programme. (F026)

In this narrative, the facilitator employs the 'villains and victims' story (Stone, 2002) to shift blame onto central actors, particularly portraying the central government (MoSA) as the villain due to their decision to implement validation by the system. In practice, the initial list of data from MoSA regarding poor households often does not accurately represent the current conditions of these families. To minimise inclusion errors, facilitators re-evaluate this data through regular validation. However, with the validation system in place, facilitators cannot re-assess the data or filter recipients based on CCT criteria, leading to a high level of inclusion errors. The facilitator plays the victimhood card blaming the practical repercussions of the blunder decision. This adversely affects facilitators and the programme as a whole, expanding the possibility of mistargeting and increasing facilitators' vulnerability to public criticism. Consequently, central actors harm programme implementation by not only causing mistargeting but also increasing complexity due to abrupt, unannounced decisions. In the blame literature, this narrative strategy can be employed by policy actors to avoid blame (Hansson, 2015), by portraying themselves as heroes or victims to prevent being labelled as villains in the narrative of potentially blameworthy events or outcomes (Hansson, 2018, p.351). Additionally, Hood (2011, p. 30) argues that 'claiming victimhood' is a common behaviour among front-line officers to deflect blame.

The story also implies the facilitator used his discretionary decision on recipients' eligibility by bending the rules. The facilitator deviates from regulations by opting not to remove presently ineligible recipients from the programme. By bringing up the issue of system

validation, the facilitators attempt to defend themselves and strategically justify their discretionary decision to allow non-eligible recipients to remain in the programme. They do so because they perceive it as too challenging to remove recipients once they are already enrolled, especially when faced with significant protests.

In addition to being blamed for mistargeting, some facilitators also feel that they are blamed for displaying poor performance — such as being unable to meet the programme's targets or causing issues in the cash transfer delivery process. To avoid this blame, street-level actors play 'language games' (Hansson, 2018, p.548) such as offering justifications and excuses, spinning the arguments and re-framing other actors (Hinterleitner, 2017). They offer an excuse and justify their incapability to meet the target or ideally perform their tasks by highlighting the complexity of their working situations that prevent them to do their work better, and by doing so indirectly transfer blame to central actors for creating such complex working conditions and central government's lack of understanding of their situation. The majority of facilitators use this story. Here is one example:

We appreciate that the MoSA has the intention to improve the data... But they cannot just 'BAMMM' [making a sound like dropping a bomb] the target [to synchronise data] to us. We are as always chased by the time, by this sudden target...no clear guidance, information and instructions change from time to time without warning. They inform us only by WA [WhatsApp]...They also have to think, at our level, in the field, people in here, are we prepared enough?... And they now dare to evaluate the performance of the facilitators based on the quality of the data that they send to the central government through the system (SIKS-NG). It is unfair. Do they realise that the system itself still has so many problems? (FC011)³⁷

During the implementation of the CCT programme, facilitators are often blamed for their perceived inability to meet unexpected targets, specifically regarding data synchronisation. To counter this blame, they tell a complexity story, underscoring the complexities of the system and the circumstances as the root causes of policy issues. The front-line actor also constructs reasonable justification by arguing that, in practice, complex working conditions are imposed by central actors. These conditions include sudden and unforeseen targets, an unprepared

³⁷ Similar complexity stories also shared by F1, F7, F8, F10, F12, F15.

SIKS-NG system, inadequate higher-level support, and unclear information and instructions. The fairness of evaluating facilitators based on the quality of data sent to MoSA is questioned. This evaluation criterion seems unreasonable and unjust, given that they are expected to excel in attaining targets when the system, policymakers, and supporting officers are themselves unprepared and unhelpful. Central actors are framed negatively as powerful decision-makers who assign complex tasks without acknowledging the challenges faced by facilitators at the street-level. The facilitators' reaction to accusations of incapability and poor performance is to redirect blame towards higher-level actors. To deflect these accusations, they shape the narrative using complexity stories, arguing that the issues originate from central actors. These issues encompass the ill-preparedness of the SIKS-NG system and unclear information and instructions.

In summary, this section posits that when facing blame during CCT implementation, SLBs strategically utilise their discretion and manage relationships with different actors through various blame avoidance practices. The section demonstrates that, in their efforts to mitigate blame risk, SLBs deliberately adhere strictly to rules through protocolisation, deviate from rules by manipulating/gaming their practices, and opt for collaborative arrangements to diffuse blame. They construct a counter-narrative and provide reasonable justifications to show that the perceived policy problems are not entirely their fault. They do this by strategically managing their relationships with other actors to limit blame. For example, they intentionally establish relationships with these actors to reduce blame risks associated with their exercise of discretion when they choose to bend the rules, shift blame to the victims, or redirect blame to central government actors for creating complexity in their working conditions, which hinders their ability to perform effectively.

The choice of specific blame avoidance practices by certain SLBs depends on their interpretation of the risk associated with blame, their apprehension towards it, or the importance attributed to blame within their specific context. This highlights the presence of relational dynamics and the performative nature of SLBs' practices. In carrying out their

actions, SLBs engage in interpretation and dialogue with their context, the situation at hand, and their know-how.

As previously mentioned, SLBs' perception of the risk of blame played a significant role in their daily work, as being consistently blamed for policy issues in CCT implementation can have serious consequences. Facilitators were concerned about the potential damage to their professional integrity if they were to be blamed, which could ultimately result in sanctions. For instance, adherence to the CCT code of conduct and performance appraisal regulations mandates that facilitators maintain professionalism, integrity, and ensure effective CCT implementation. Falling short of these standards may lead to consequences such as delayed honorarium payments or the non-renewal of facilitator contracts.

Hence, SLBs' assessment and interpretation of their circumstances, especially their perceived exposure to blame risk and the most efficient strategies to mitigate it, shapes their choices regarding blame avoidance tactics. Consequently, individual SLBs may weigh various factors differently while navigating through blame dynamics. For instance, certain facilitators may view the prospect of being blamed for poor performance as a substantial threat to their professional career. Driven by this apprehension, SLBs may choose specific narratives, such as manipulating their practices and straying from standard operating procedures (SOP), as the most efficient means to evade blame. Conversely, some SLBs, in their attempt to avoid blame for inadequate performance, may opt to attribute responsibility to the recipients of the programme. They may perceive that shifting blame onto the recipients is the most effective strategy for deflecting blame.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter responds to the second research question: *How do SLBs use discretion and relationality in the face of conflicting governance paradigms?* This chapter presents two arguments. Firstly, due to conflicting governance traditions, which not only pose dilemmas but also lead to blame games, SLBs strategically use their discretion and relationality to mitigate

the risk of blame. Secondly, SLBs' assessment of the potential for blame and their perception of the most useful ways to avoid blame shape their discretionary actions and the dynamics of their relationships with recipients and other actors.

SLBs find themselves being scapegoated by other actors for policy failures such as mistargeting recipients, inaccurate data, coordination problems, and an inability to attain specific goals. In response to a dominant narrative that portrays them as scapegoats and targets of blame for implementation issues, SLBs construct a counter-narrative that supports diverse blame avoidance practices to defend themselves. This counter-narrative serves to justify how SLBs make deliberate decisions about how to exercise their discretion. For instance, they rigidly adhere to established regulations through a process known as 'protocolisation', deviate from the rules by strategically manipulating or gaming their practices, or choose to bend the rules by utilising the coordination structure to spread blame. Additionally, SLBs strategically manage relationships with various stakeholders to mitigate blame risks linked to their discretionary actions, especially when they decide to bend the rules. SLBs also shift blame onto the beneficiaries, or redirect blame toward central government actors.

Conceptually, the explication of blame avoidance practices highlights the connection and interplay between blame games, SLBs' practices, and governance traditions. The argument here is that SLBs' narratives of blame — including their fear of blame or risk of blame, and their assessment of the most effective practices to reduce or limit risk of blame — shape their beliefs about governance traditions. For example, when facilitators consider rule-following as the most effective approach to mitigate blame, their utilisation of protocolisation as a blame avoidance practice steers them toward alignment with the bureaucratic tradition and guides their exercise of discretion towards rule-following. Hence, a connection exists between blame games and the identified typology of SLBs. SLBs respond to dilemmas not simply because they have one of the three fixed identities, but rather because they perceive these narratives as useful in avoiding blame.

This chapter also underscores the relational dynamics and performativity that was overlooked in Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism. The findings in Chapter 6 revealed that the

process by which SLBs respond to dilemmas through their narratives and practices is not straightforward and cannot be neatly categorised as rejecting, accommodating, or embracing conflicting governance traditions. While SLBs may exhibit identifiable patterns of practices and narratives that align with specific governance traditions when implementing the programme, their responses to dilemmas are not rigid or always in line with the traditions they lean toward. SLBs demonstrate a level of adaptability in adopting different governance traditions based on the specific dilemmas they confront and the ways in which they interpret these. This chapter clarifies that, in the context of CCT implementation in Indonesia, SLBs' relationships to certain governance traditions are shaped by blame dynamics and SLBs' fear of blame. My analysis of how SLBs mitigate blame highlights the presence of relational dynamics (Bartels and Turnbull, 2020) and the performativity of SLBs (Wagenaar, 2004, 2016). The ways in which SLBs mobilise their discretionary power as a blame avoidance strategy (Hood, 2020) is shaped by their interpretation of their work's value, the recipients, the prevailing working conditions and dilemmas and, crucially, their fear of blame as instilled by their relationships with other actors and the meaning of blame in their context.

The previous and present chapter illuminate how conflicting governance traditions give rise to dilemmas for SLBs, resulting in the emergence of blame dynamics during the implementation of the CCT programme. I have demonstrated that SLBs use narratives and strategically utilise discretion when dealing with these dilemmas and blame dynamics. The next chapter will explore the implications of SLBs' discretion and relationality as responses to dilemmas and blame dynamics, particularly with regard to the programme recipients, the implementation process, and the programme's outcomes.

Chapter 8: Reflecting on the implications of conflicting governance traditions, dilemmas and blame avoidance practices

8.1 Introduction

Building upon the analysis of empirical findings in previous chapters, this chapter aims to address the last research question of this study: *How do street-level bureaucrats' responses to dilemmas through their discretionary and relational practices impact policy implementation and outcomes?* The findings and analysis in Chapter 6 highlight that, when faced with conflicting governance traditions, facilitators encounter various street-level dilemmas as they attempt to address clashing beliefs and expectations associated with each tradition during the implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme in Indonesia. While navigating these dilemmas, it has been explained that although street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) exhibit their own patterns of practices and narratives that align with specific governance traditions their responses to dilemmas during the CCT implementation are not always strictly limited to or consistently in line with the traditions they appear to favour. The analysis in Chapter 7 demonstrates that, within the context of CCT implementation in Indonesia, street-level bureaucrats' relationships with certain beliefs and governance traditions are shaped by blame dynamics and their fear of being blamed. It has been shown how conflicting governance traditions not only generate dilemmas but also give rise to blame games. In response to these blame games, street-level bureaucrats strategically utilise their discretion and relationality to manage and mitigate blame by employing a range of blame avoidance practices.

Bevir and Rhodes explain that responding to dilemmas does not entail the existence of a prescribed or unequivocally correct solution (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; Bevir and Needham, 2017). However, it is important to emphasise that the narrative and practice in which street-level actors decide to act upon or address specific dilemmas carries significant implications. This chapter argues that key consequences of SLBs using their discretion and building relationships with others to avoid blame is that the perception of the risk of being

blamed can act as a demotivator for street-level actors, hindering their effective and meaningful use of discretion with the result that recipients do not fully receive their rights and the programme implementation departs from its initial goals. It also has the potential to engender distrust among policy actors and members of coordination teams and, ultimately, it can culminate in public disaffection and a loss of trust in the programme and policy actors. The next section will first discuss the positive and negative impacts of protocolisation. This will be followed by a discussion of the implications of gaming practices for the CCT recipients and the programme. The following section will explain the implications of using a coordination scheme to avoid blame. Lastly, the section will discuss how these blame avoidance practices can create public distrust.

8.2 Consequences of the utilisation of street-level discretion and relationality

In this section, I will explore the multifaceted implications of the way SLBs use their discretion and relationality, particularly in response to blame games, both positive and negative in nature, and how this effects street-level actors, individual programme beneficiaries, the implementation process, and the outcomes of the programme.

8.2.1 A positive and negative impacts of protocolisation

This section highlights that employing blame-avoidance strategies at the street level, particularly through 'protocolisation', can have a positive implication for programme outcomes, specifically in increasing the accuracy of targeting the intended recipients. Yet, protocolisation practices contribute to a condition where SLBs exhibit reduced responsiveness towards the needs of recipients. Additionally, it renders them less adaptable, flexible and perceptive when confronted with challenges in the field, ultimately curbing their capacity to address complex issues creatively.

A positive impact of the decision of SLBs to strictly adhere to established rules (protocolisation) is that it potentially reduces errors in beneficiary selection. As a result, the accuracy of the programme's targeting process is significantly enhanced. As previously

discussed, in some cases, facilitators argue that proceeding with recipient graduation is daunting, primarily due to 'scrutiny, interventions, or warnings from community leaders or high-ranking political figures' (F13). This dynamic adds caution to the facilitators' decision-making process. Often, they find that some recipients no longer meet the criteria for inclusion among impoverished families. However, when the time comes for facilitators to encourage or request these recipients to exit the programme, they hesitate, especially when they discover that these recipients are relatives of the heads of neighbourhood units (as detailed in Chapter 6). In certain situations, facilitators tend to avoid graduating recipients, even when they recognise that these recipients no longer meet the programme's eligibility criteria due to improved financial status. They make this choice in order to maintain positive relationships within the community (section 6.2.4). However, this decision inadvertently worsens the persistent issue of mistargeting and inclusion errors.

To protect themselves from potential blame or criticism during the graduation process, facilitators often rely on the coordination structure (see section 7.3.2). For instance, they may collectively oversee the graduation process or request endorsement letters from higher-ranking local authorities, such as neighbourhood heads or (sub) district officers, to confirm recipients' eligibility for graduation. However, in some cases, heads of neighbourhood units (known as *Rukun Warga*) or village leaders also 'hesitate to participate in the graduation process or provide the necessary documentation' (F022). Their reluctance stems from their proximity to the recipients, as they seek to avoid disrupting community harmony, conflicts, or strained relationships. Consequently, facilitators often find themselves in solitary roles, bearing the responsibility and becoming the sole targets for blame and citizen protests. In response, some facilitators rigidly adhere to the programme rules as a form of self-protection against potential blame. One facilitator shared his experience:

When we initiated the action of requesting recipients who were already well-off to exit the programme, a majority of them protested, expressing sentiments like, 'Why are you insisting that I leave the programme? I still require the benefits it offers.' I put in considerable effort, genuinely striving to make them understand that, given their current financial status, they were no longer deserving or eligible for the programme. However, they just simply won't hear my explanation...and in situations where the

recipient maintains family connections with important people, I encountered pressure from influential stakeholders, ones with the power. So, in dealing with recipients, particularly those we intended to independently graduate from the CCT programme, sometimes like I had to be careful... if the recipient had ties or proximity to the head of the village or government institution officers, we would occasionally face questions like, 'Why did you terminate A, B, or C from the CCT?' or something along those lines...As for the new regulations, I'm somewhat unsure if I should feel happy or not. But, if it is clearly stated in the regulation, I'll stick to that. I can graduate the recipients who are in better condition and use that as my shield. When the recipients are displeased with my decision or any other intervention from the people with power, I can say to them, 'Sorry, there is nothing I can do, I just follow this rule.' I can show them the new regulation. If they want to point their finger, they can point that to the rules. I am not the one who makes that. (F22)

The story illustrates the intricate challenges encountered at the street-level during the graduation of recipients from the programme. This narrative underscores the facilitator's awareness of the potential risk of being blamed that accompanies efforts to facilitate the graduation process. The facilitator candidly recognises the undue backlash and blame that can ensue from community leaders or people with power if they choose to graduate recipients who, objectively, no longer qualify for the cash transfer benefits. To avoid such blame, facilitators use the metaphor 'shield', wherein written regulations assume the role of a protective barrier that guards them against unwarranted accusations. In their particular circumstances, these regulations act as a form of insulation. By invoking the regulation as a shield, they can aptly deflect blame with the assertion, 'do not blame me, blame the regulation' (F14).

Hence, it is important to underscore that 'protocolisation' can be perceived as a positive practice. Particularly within the case of the graduation process, facilitators adhere to established regulations to 'shield' themselves from what might be deemed as 'unreasonable' blame originating from influential figures and recipients who no longer meet the eligibility criteria. By adhering rigorously to these rules, facilitators gain a heightened sense of assurance and motivation to confidently graduate recipients who are no longer eligible for the programme, particularly those individuals who have significantly improved their financial circumstances. Such a practice also has the potential to mitigate inclusion errors and curtail

instances of mistargeting. By 'playing by the book' and following a written regulation, facilitators play a role in minimising inaccuracies in beneficiary selection and, consequently, contribute to refining the precision of the programme's targeting process.

However, on the negative side, the impacts of protocolisation can hinder two-way communication between SLBs and citizens, and make SLBs appear to be less sympathetic and inflexible. For instance, through the adoption of protocolisation via rigid adherence to established rules, facilitators inadvertently render themselves less responsive to the needs of the CCT recipients, specifically in relation to the FDS activities. Consequently, their capacity to effectively engage with recipients is compromised. Participants shared similar narratives in change-is-only-illusion stories (Stone, 2012, p.142), illustrating how protocolisation diminishes facilitators' innovation and creativity in enhancing the value of CCT activities. Despite practical implementation highlighting incongruence with recipients' needs and limited utility for skill improvement, these stories emphasise the negative impact of rigid protocolisation:

In my experience, I think the problem with this Family Development Session (FDS) seems that it's only about giving the materials [from the FDS modules], that it's sometimes not quite relevant for us. I wonder why they don't offer more activities that could be beneficial for us in enhancing our soft skills, which could in turn assist us in developing our small businesses. Like, providing us with training to effectively promote our products or similar initiatives. I've heard that recipients in other districts have a variety of activities that are really tailored to their needs and are beneficial for them as recipients. Here in our district, it's all about parenting, parenting (giving modules on 'parenting' theme)... When I asked if the activities can be changed and adapted, they say 'it's not specified in the regulations. The guidelines said that this module must be provided'. They [facilitators] said that they were afraid the authorities got upset if what they actually do here is different from the rules. Even though we've tried to discuss it, they just don't listen. So, there's nothing else we can do except wait for their initiative. But, well, we also try understand their position...But sometimes, I can't help but feel a bit envious of the recipients in other districts. (R35)

Another story shared by a community member, expressing a feeling that facilitators are less sympathetic to the citizens' conditions in his community due to their rigid adherence to rules:

Sometimes I find it strange with the CCT people. The rules should be reconsidered to see if they are in line with the poverty conditions in our village. I often

say, 'Hey, can you reevaluate family A's situation?' Even though their house isn't a *gubuk* (house that is made of palm fibre), they are economically struggling, and there's also an elderly person there. I want to help the residents here who need cash transfers to be able to join the CCT programme, but I don't have the capacity for it. And, you know, it's sometimes difficult to communicate this to them. The facilitators usually respond with, 'Sorry, we just follow the regulations from the central office; it's been like this from the start.' So, you see, I think the rules can't always be so rigid. The facilitators should also discuss this with the Department [of Social Affairs] if there are different circumstances like this. But sometimes when I encounter facilitators who are understanding, they might say, 'Sure, let's examine it again later' but more often than not they just reject it outright, saying, 'Sorry, it's already regulated this way.' It's like as if they read the regulations without any sense of emotion or empathy [with the poor family's condition]. It's quite baffling to me. (MC45)

In the first story, the recipient employs the change-is-only-illusion story (Stone, 2012, p.142) as a way to elucidate her encounter with facilitators who tend to rely on the practice of protocolisation. The recipient acknowledges the sense of futility and disillusionment in the situation, wherein the FDS activities fail to offer true value and alignment with her actual needs and aspirations, a sentiment shared by another recipient as well (R33). Despite the recipient's earnest attempts to voice her concerns to the facilitators — to change the FDS activities to be more in line with recipients' needs — she is also acutely aware of her lack of ability to exert influence over the FDS activities. She finds that change (to have better and more suitable FDS activities) is an illusion as the facilitators decide to rigidly follow the rules to avoid being blamed by the authorities and choose to 'not listen' to her voice. She finds herself compelled to accept these activities even when such activities (e.g., receiving the parenting modules) do not resonate with recipients' actual needs. Recipients find themselves in a position where they cannot change and induce facilitators to offer creative and innovative activities, unless facilitators proactively take initiative by making decisions about the FDS, rather than unquestioningly adhering to rules.

With similar storyline, a community member illustrates his experience with facilitators who tend to rely on protocolisation. The participant acknowledges that there is a mistargeting issue in his area where there are economically struggling citizens in his village who should be eligible for the programme based on CCT criteria (e.g., having an elderly family member), but

they are excluded from the programme. The participant attempts to change this condition by trying to communicate this issue to the facilitators to assist those who should qualify. But the change cannot be made because, from his perspective, it is challenging to engage with facilitators who rigidly apply rules without considering real field conditions. Recipients also perceive facilitators negatively when they lack emotional empathy and sympathy towards struggling families due to inflexible interpretation of regulations.

Drawing insights from the recipients' stories, one consequence of SLBs' resorting to protocolisation to mitigate blame is that it can curtail the ability of facilitators to flexibly engage in creative and meaningful adjustments and improvisations of their practices by making subtle alterations to regulations that are in line with the specific needs of recipients. It requires flexibility for SLBs to be able to accommodate and customise service delivery in accordance with citizens' preferences (Lipsky, 2010; Gofen, 2014) and tailor rules to render public services more appropriate and meaningful for citizens, given that 'procedures can never universally fit each individual and every circumstance, so judgments must be made' (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2000, p.338). Nonetheless, motivated by the fear of potential blame should they deviate from regulations, SLBs opt for a rule-bound approach, overlooking preferences voiced by recipients. This blame avoidance practice leads to a situation where SLBs prioritise regulatory adherence over the nuanced adaptation of services to accommodate to the diverse needs of recipients.

Another implication of strategically using discretion by strictly following the rules is that it inadvertently degrades the quality of relationships and obstructs the potential for collaborative or co-production efforts between front-line actors and recipients. Facilitators tend to perceive recipients as passive beneficiaries rather than fostering a dynamic two-way communication or cultivating a reciprocal relationship with them (Gassner and Gofen, 2019). Active engagement between recipients and facilitators can also be interpreted as a means by which facilitators demonstrate respect for the opinions of recipients (Needham, 2008; Ryan, 2012). Nevertheless, as elucidated in the presented narrative, SLBs fail to provide an environment for recipients to engage in interactions that foster an active experiential

involvement with the services and the opportunity to participate in services that genuinely align with their preferences, which creates a sense of disillusionment. Facilitators' lack of responsiveness makes recipients feel a sense of unfairness or inequality between districts regarding the FDS activities. Also, the recipient perceived a lack of receptivity from the facilitators, perceiving them negatively as individuals who simply 'don't listen' to their inputs. The use of protocolisation also tends to magnify existing power imbalances, wherein facilitators emerge as the exclusive actors capable of dictating the services and activities that recipients can access or receive within the CCT programme. The strategic use of discretion by rigidly following the rules adopted by facilitators not only obstructs the autonomy of recipients but also impedes the potential for both recipients and facilitators to nurture mutual relationships.

Importantly for the CCT programme, flexibility of facilitators is needed because rules related to eligibility and the criteria for defining 'poor' often fail to capture real-life situations, particularly the variations in socio-economic conditions between rural and urban areas. For example, when assessing poverty conditions, it is common to find criteria like 'a house with a roof made of palm fibre/roof tile' or 'no access to electricity' in Eastern Indonesia (FC011).³⁸ However, in Sukabumi City such characteristics are rare. If facilitators strictly apply all these criteria, almost all households may become ineligible, even if their income is insufficient to cover basic daily needs.

Thus, this finding also aligns with the argument in existing literature that regulations alone may not suffice to address complex field situations, necessitating street-level professional judgment based on local knowledge (Durose, 2009). However, the prevalence of blame games and the reliance on protocolisation promote SLBs' 'ill-considered and inflexible responses to complex problems' (Hood, 2002, p.34). The broader implication of the use of protocolisation is that facilitators may mechanically adhere to unsuitable procedures, even if such practices are 'patently contrary to what common sense or professional judgment would

³⁸ Also, data interview with F011, DSA06, F013, F015, F016.

suggest' (Hood, 2011, p.171). Again, considering Indonesia's governance context, where SLBs operate within the 'deference' (*ewuh-pakewuh*) norm, facilitators often fear being blamed for taking the initiative to creatively solve problems without first consulting their higher-level officers (F027). Consequently, at the micro-level of practice, blame games restrict SLBs' intellectual autonomy.

In summary, this section shows that while practicing protocolisation can minimise the mistargeting practice, it can also discourage SLBs from using discretion in creative and meaningful ways, leading to adverse consequences at both individual and programme levels. On an individual level, due to the fear of blame, the way SLBs intentionally use their discretion to strictly follow the regulations discourages them from being creative in their ability to improvise, negotiate, and innovate in response to various situations. At the programme level, blame games can lead to an increase in exclusion errors, hinder co-production activities, and potentially result in the delivery of activities or services that are irrelevant to recipients.

8.2.2 Gaming practices: recipients do not fully receive their rights and programme is implemented departed from its initial goals

Chapter 7 details how CCT facilitators are consistently blamed by various actors for the programme's ineffective implementation, mainly due to their failure to meet performance standards and targets. To mitigate this blame, facilitators intentionally divert the rules by enacting gaming practices that maintain a positive reputation and present themselves as capable of achieving a satisfactory performance level (see section 7.3.3). One significant implication of gaming practices is that recipients do not receive their rights, particularly regarding FDS activities.

According to regulations, CCT recipients have the right to receive materials on five essential topics: health; education; economy; child protection; and welfare services for the elderly and disabled (CCT General Guideline, 2021). By comprehensively understanding these aspects, recipients are expected to raise awareness about the benefits of health and education for their families, acquire life skills, and ultimately enhance their future quality of life.

The CCT Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) mandates facilitators to deliver various materials and modules to recipients (FDS Operational Guideline, 2018). However, in practice, due to the pressure to meet various targets, some facilitators lack the time to conduct FDS comprehensively. As FDS activities are a standard performance measurement for facilitators, some fear being blamed for their inability to conduct FDS and resort to gaming the process. They visit recipients solely to 'take pictures', which means they do not provide FDS materials but only meet with recipients to gather evidence for their reports (F13). A recipient shared their experiences:

... Even some recipient groups in this sub-district don't know what the FDS is because they've never received it. Sometimes, the facilitators visit, and sometimes they don't. Even when they do visit, it's usually just for taking photos. They said it was for their report... Sometimes it's confusing because based on what we've heard from recipients in other sub-districts, they often have FDS activities like entrepreneurship training, workshops, sharing issues related to CCT with their facilitators, and so on. But we don't have that here. We also don't really understand what the activities of CCT are supposed to be. (R37)³⁹

Drawing insights from the story provided by this recipient illustrates how some facilitators manipulate or gaming their practices, particularly concerning the FDS activity. In this case, a recipient becomes a helpless victim of the facilitators' gaming actions. In the story, the recipient shows a sense of cluelessness and confusion about their rights as a beneficiary of the programme. In practice, recipients have the right to receive information about the CCT, various modules covering health, economics, and education topics, as well as regular communication with the facilitators through the FDS activities. With the gaming practice that some facilitators conducted, facilitators are seen as the villains — unreliable actors who create the pretence of regular visits but in reality only focus on taking photos. The consequence of this gaming behaviour is that recipients have a limited understanding of the CCT activities. They become unaware of what is happening and what they are entitled to from the programme. They also feel powerless to take action to receive their right as programme recipients.

³⁹ This story is also supported by data interview from R35, F13, F16, and F27.

Furthermore, some facilitators also game to avoid blame in the process of verification. The CCT programme is different from the UCT (Unconditional Cash Transfer) programme in that, in the latter, there are no facilitators, and recipients only receive money (the cash). However, with CCT, one of its purposes is that facilitators are present to provide support. This support extends beyond the financial aspect (receiving the cash transfer) and includes guidance in using the funds for their intended purposes, such as health and education. One of the CCT programme's objectives is to improve the recipients' quality of health, with a related condition that the cash transfer must not be used for purchasing cigarettes. The Minister of Social Affairs has also mandated that households should not receive CCT benefits if any member of the family is a smoker. If a recipient is found misusing the CCT benefit, their eligibility is subject to re-evaluation for potential discontinuation of the benefit (Prasetya, 2021; Pamungkas, 2020).

In practice, when facilitators have to verify and provide reports indicating that recipients have not met their conditions, they fear being blamed by local and central authorities for their inability to motivate recipients to fulfil their conditionalities. They are also concerned about criticism from recipients due to the delay in their cash transfers. To avoid being blamed in this way, some facilitators engage in gaming practices by manipulating the reports in the e-CCT system. One facilitator mentioned:

I just close my eyes, pretend I didn't see or know that her husband is a smoker. So, look [showing the system to me], and I just mark this ['no', indicating that there are no smokers in the recipient's family]. (F27).

The facilitator employs the phrase 'I just close my eyes' as a synecdoche to convey that they are intentionally avoiding or ignoring the problem and deliberately choosing to overlook the fact that some recipients are ineligible for the programme. He games his actions by manipulating the report concerning these ineligible recipients to evade potential protests and blame from the recipients, as acknowledging their ineligibility might lead to the termination of the cash transfer.

Based on the stories above, gaming practices in which SLBs intentionally break or bend the rules to manipulate their practices in delivering services to recipients or providing

reports have wider consequences. Gaming practices, particularly related to the FDS, further limit facilitators' responsiveness and relationships with recipients. FDS is one of the critical activities that serve as a connection between facilitators and recipients. During FDS sessions, some facilitators typically provide education and also inquire about recipients' issues, whether related to cash transfers or the process of accessing health and education facilities. For instance, during health verification, facilitators receive feedback from the *Posyandu* (Village health facility) indicating irregular attendance for health check-ups by mothers and children. In such cases, some facilitators use the FDS as an arena to engage in discussions and communication with recipients. It becomes a tool for building emotional proximity to recipients and a strategy for understanding the actual conditions they are facing (see section 6.3.3). Therefore, by manipulating their practices, wherein some facilitators do not actually conduct the FDS, not only do recipients miss out on their entitlements, but facilitators also miss the opportunity to build rapport with them.

A wider consequence of gaming practices is that they potentially make the CCT programme deviate from attaining its key objectives. As discussed, the primary objective of the programme is to enhance the quality of health for the recipients through cash transfers. The benefits are meant to be utilised by recipients to acquire resources that can improve their health and well-being. Consequently, the broader implication of these gaming practices is that they have the potential to obstruct the programme from achieving its aims. This is because recipients engage in counterproductive activities that conflict with the programme's objectives.

However, while gaming practices generate some negative impacts, we can also consider the positive consequences of gaming. Gaming can be viewed as a means for SLBs to make their job more manageable. Gaming is not always envisaged as 'an act of deception' since it might be perceived as 'a response for unreasonable goals designed by political principals who are often removed from the realities of implementation' (Terman and Yang, 2016). Indeed, as elaborated in preceding chapters, facilitators have to confront a wide range of complexities in their working environments. This includes scenarios where policymakers

offer limited support and guidance while imposing unrealistic targets without taking into account the implementation challenges and gaps that SLBs encounter in the field (see Chapter 6). Additionally, another unintended positive implication of gaming for recipients is that facilitators can continue to support citizens who may not technically qualify as eligible recipients but still require assistance. For example, when facilitators consider families with one smoker as eligible recipients, even though it contradicts the programme's objectives, it can be interpreted as a way for facilitators to improvise their practice in the response to the rules so they can aid other family members who still genuinely need the benefits of the CCT programme.

8.2.3 Diminishing quality of coordination process

This section contends that another consequence of the way SLBs exercise their discretion and relationality in response to blame games is a potential reduction in the quality of the coordination process during programme implementation. This decline occurs as trust among actors diminishes and responsibilities become unclear and ambiguous. In the following discussion, I will draw upon the findings from previous chapters and engage more with the existing literature to provide an example of how blame games negatively impact the coordination process. The reason new data related to this issue is not presented in this section is that this study was not originally designed to explore and interrogate the dynamics of blame games, the practice of blame avoidance practices among SLBs, and the resultant consequences. Therefore, my primary focus is on the interpretation of the data that has already been collected.⁴⁰

The findings in section 7.3.3 reveal that, to minimise the risk of blame, SLBs utilise coordination arrangements to share blame with their team members. Similarly, the findings in Section 7.2.1 demonstrate that facilitators deliberately employ informal coordination by involving their peers and supervisors in their discretionary decision-making to distribute the

⁴⁰ Given that the data collection occurred during the global pandemic, it was quite challenging in practice to arrange follow-up online interviews with participants, especially with the programme's recipients. This was primarily due to technical limitations in the research site, as further explained in Chapter 4.

risk of being blamed. Here, another implication of how SLBs exercise discretion, such as resisting new regulations and strategically building their relationships with other actors to collaborate with them, is that policy actors may no longer collaborate to enhance the quality of programme implementation. Instead, they may collaborate as a defensive logic to avoid blame (Hood, 2011, p.12).

With the presence of blame games, where members of a collaborative team actively shift blame among themselves, actors begin to rationalise their actions to avoid blame. They argue that 'we were not responsible for this function; here are the actors who were responsible; other actors failed to coordinate properly with us, and other actors performed poorly' (Moynihan, 2012, p.576-77). These blame avoidance behaviours are also observed in CCT implementation (as discussed in Chapter 7), where actors deny or shift responsibilities and point fingers at others for their failure to coordinate and perform effectively. Blame games within coordination arrangements can erode trust among actors and jeopardise future collaboration efforts (Wang and Tsai, 2021). Furthermore, blame games can lead to 'antagonistic coordination' styles among actors, highlighting that 'interactions between stakeholders are driven by a lack of trust, conflicts of interest, and differences in beliefs' regarding their roles and responsibilities in policy regulation (Kania, 2021, p.240).

Furthermore, blame games can lead to distrust and antagonism between central and local actors. Decentralisation, which allows a variety of actors to be involved in a single programme, increases the opportunities for actors to deflect, share, or assign blame to each other (Weaver, 1986; Hinterleitner and Sager, 2017). As discussed in Chapter 5, the hierarchical relationship between the central and local levels has shifted with Indonesia's implementation of 'big-bang' decentralisation reform and in terms of the CCT programme this has resulted in a tension in the coordination process. While local governments can establish their coordination teams at the local level, coordination is also structured within a centralised framework, with local-level coordination being coordinated by and accountable to the central level. The analysis in Chapter 7 demonstrates how local and central actors often blame each other in response to mistargeting and data inaccuracies, which are among the policy failures

in CCT implementation. Consequently, blame games may erode trust and potentially disrupt the relationship between local and central actors.

The emergence of blame games and the responses of SLBs and other actors to them can undermine the quality of the coordination process and lead to dysfunctional coordination arrangements. The actors involved may maintain the status quo, such as keeping the lines of responsibility vague and ambiguous, within the collaboration arrangement. When actors exploit coordination structures to evade blame, they may end up expending their energy on addressing ‘ambiguities of who is responsible for what’ (Hood, 2011, p.170), rather than focusing on resolving significant issues in CCT implementation. This diversion of attention threatens effective programme implementation and disadvantages the programme’s recipients. This also shows that the narrative and practice of SLBs to avoid blame shapes how traditions, in particular the collaborative traditions are embedded and manifested in daily practice.

8.2.4 Generating public disappointment: showing policy actors are not accountable and incompetent

This section illustrates how the emergence of blame games and the interactions among policy actors (including central, local, and street-level actors) engaging in such blame games contribute to public dissatisfaction. In these situations, the public finds it challenging to hold these actors accountable and perceives the government as incompetent in addressing public issues. It is argued that if these blame games persist during the implementation of the CCT programme, it could potentially lead to long-term consequences in the form of increased public distrust towards the government and its public officials.

Regarding the mistargeting issue, findings in Chapter 7 indicate that central actors blame local and street-level actors for their failure to update and validate poverty data accurately and for selecting inappropriate recipients. Meanwhile, facilitators shift the blame back to central government by arguing that central government ‘blundered’ the validation-by-system activity, which prevents them from re-assessing data or filtering recipients based on

CCT criteria, resulting in a high level of inclusion errors. The significant impact of these blame games is that — instead of addressing the problems and seeking solutions to enhance the effectiveness of CCT implementation — facilitators, local, and central government actors prioritise avoiding blame and assigning responsibility for policy failures (Hinterleitner and Sager, 2015). In the worst-case scenario, this blame-shifting can lead to a situation where no one takes responsibility and no one is willing to solve the problems (Wang and Tsai, 2021).

Regarding the issues of mistargeting, community members express their confusion as they cannot identify which actors should take responsibility for the problem. One community member cynically described this policy problem in the CCT programme as ‘really hilarious’ (MC044). During interviews with different members of the community, issues of mistargeting and inaccurate poverty data consistently came up. Some of them referred to these problems as ‘*makanan sehari-hari*’ or ‘daily consumption’ (MC45, HC28, HC29). The participants use metaphor ‘daily consumption’ to express the idea of frustration or weariness and to suggest that these members of community have encountered and experienced these mistargeting and inaccuracy data problems on a daily basis, to the point where it has become a routine or an expected part of their life. This also conveys their cynicism towards the ongoing nature of the mistargeting problems in the CCT programme, where these issues repeatedly occur without any concrete solutions. They are no longer surprised by these problems and even make jokes about them, expressing scepticism about how the government is handling the situation.

When they approach facilitators and sub-district officers for answers to mistargeting issues, instead of receiving clear explanations and solutions they get vague responses. The responsibility for this issue is often passed on. One of the community leaders (*Ketua Rukun Warga*) shared a detailed experience:

Honestly, I'm happy that we have the CCT programme in our village. Because no matter what, some of the residents here are helped by this financial assistance. But I also get a bit frustrated with this programme sometimes, as it often triggers conflicts here... So, this programme has been implemented in our village since early 2015, which means it's been almost 7 years. But I keep receiving complaints from residents who say that this CCT programme is unfair and doesn't reach the right people. Many poor families aren't included in the programme, while those households who are middle-income or economically capable are. This is a real problem, you know. As the

head of the community, I always make an effort to follow up and try to ease the conflict. I communicate this to the facilitators, the Department of Social Affairs officers, or the district officers. But it seems like I'm being passed around...[they said] 'If it's about poverty data, we just follow the data from the central office,' said facilitators. 'Because there are facilitators there [in the village], you should try [talking] to them. Field responsibilities aren't with the department,' said the DoSA officer. 'Oh, try the department; poverty data has already been reported from the (sub) district office to the department [of Social Affairs], so it's the department's responsibility now,' said sub-district officers. Hahahaha [with a cynical laugh] So, what should I do then?... It's been 7 years, and this issue of mistargeting keeps happening with no solution in sight. Can they even do their job? (HC29)

The participant uses a 'change-is-only-illusion' story (Stone, 2012, p.142) to describe his experiences. 'Change-is-only-illusion' stories refer to scenarios like this: 'you always thought things were getting better. But you were wrong... things are in fact going in the opposite direction. Improvement was illusion' (Ibid). In the story, the community leader expresses gratitude for the CCT programme's assistance to some poor families in his community. However, in practice, due to the mistargeting issue, the CCT programme not only fails to bring about improvements but also has the potential to lead to tragedies, such as community conflicts. When policy failures occur, the public relies on the government to address these problems and expects a proper explanation, along with clear accountability for such failures (Ran and Jian, 2021; Wang and Tsai, 2021). The participant also uses 'I'm being passed around' as synecdoche to express frustrating and disheartening feelings of being shuffled from person to person or department to department without receiving concrete solutions or assistance for their concern and to portray a larger problem (ineffective or unhelpful facilitators and other policy actors or lack of resolution). The participant may feel like he is just a piece in a larger bureaucratic or unhelpful system. Through that synecdoche, the participant attempts to describe situations where he is seeking help, support, or resolution to a mistargeting issue but, instead of getting clear answers or solutions, he finds himself continually redirected or transferred to different individuals or departments. No one is taking full responsibility for addressing this problem. The story demonstrates that, because of blame avoidance practices, the community leader struggles to hold public officers accountable, as

policy actors continuously shift responsibilities (Hood, 2011; Brokensha, Conradie and Greyling, 2022).

The story above also importantly highlights the government's incompetence in addressing policy issues. Even after years of the programme's operation, the recurring tragedy of mistargeting persists without any improvement. This suggests that policy actors fail to provide concrete solutions to address such problems and the respondent questions whether street-level actors can do their job properly. It also raises public doubts about policy actors' competence and 'whether any lessons have been learned and whether similar tragedies will be avoided in future' (Brokensha et al., 2022, p.15; Porumbescu et al., 2022). When policy failure occurs, the public expect the government to 'engage in policy learning - to draw lessons from the failure to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence' (Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2010, p.15). When the government fails to do so, it potentially creates public disappointment and distrust (Hood, 2011; Brokensha, Conradie and Greyling, 2022).

As discussed in Chapter 5, there exists a broader crisis of public trust in both the CCT programme and the government and democracy of Indonesia. In comparison to other poverty reduction initiatives, the implementation of cash transfer programmes, whether unconditional or conditional, in Indonesia has sparked controversy and public scrutiny. The key issues surrounding the CCT, such as mistargeting recipients, inaccuracies in poverty data (as discussed in previous chapters), and its use as a political tool, have contributed to public distrust and scepticism toward the programme and those responsible for its implementation (Halim, 2018; Sofianto, 2020; Juhad, 2021). Indonesia's government had already lost public trust due to corruption, nepotism, inadequate public services, a lack of government capacity, and unprofessional public officials (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012). When actors fail to learn from previous failures, seldom offer concrete solutions, or cannot be held accountable, blame games can further erode public trust in both the programme and the government. Consequently, blame games may contribute to the erosion of democratic governance (Brokensha, Conradie and Greyling, 2022; Hinterleitner, Honegger and Sager, 2022) in Indonesia.

8.3 Conclusion:

Reflecting upon the analysis of empirical findings from previous chapters, the key objective of this chapter is to delve into the broader implications stemming from the strategic utilisation of discretion and relationality by street-level actors in response to dilemmas and blame games that arise in the context of conflicting governance traditions. This chapter seeks to address the third question: *How do street-level bureaucrats' responses to dilemmas through their discretionary and relational practices impact policy implementation and outcomes?*

This chapter highlights that the emergence of blame games within the context of conflicting governance traditions and how SLBs respond to blame through various blame avoidance practices carry significant implications for SLBs' daily practice, programme implementation and the programme's recipients. While the way SLBs adhere strictly to rules (protocolisation) to mitigate blame can be seen in a positive light, particularly in terms of accurately targeting intended recipients, it also hinders their creativity and responsiveness to recipients' needs due to the fear of blame. This, in turn, hinders co-production and mutual interaction between street-level actors and recipients. SLBs deviating from the rules through gaming practices have the potential to obstruct the programme's goal achievement and impede recipients from receiving their entitlements or rights. Furthermore, how SLBs strategically establish relationships with other actors through coordination arrangements to mitigate blame can lead them to prioritise collaborative practices as a means of avoiding blame rather than enhancing the quality of programme implementation. Lastly, the prevalence of blame games has the potential to fuel public disaffection and erode public trust in government.

The importance of recognising blame avoidance practices as an integral component of SLBs' response to dilemmas cannot be overstated, as such practices pose a 'significant threat to the implementation of public policy' (Moynihan, 2012, p. 586). These practices have the potential to exacerbate policy issues and lead to adverse consequences for policy actors, recipients, the public, and the programme. This study adds insight to the literature on SLBs by

showing that, in the context of CCT implementation in Indonesia, SLBs not only grapple with clashing beliefs and expectations stemming from different governance traditions and various street-level dilemmas but also find themselves compelled to negotiate their practices to manage blame. Again, this study shows that blame games can significantly shape SLBs' discretionary practice and relationship with other actors which can also have several implications for SLBs-citizens relationships. Additionally, this study emphasises the need for policymakers to acknowledge the pervasive nature of blame games in CCT implementation and the prominence of blame avoidance for SLBs and other policy actors.

Having presented the empirical analysis in current and previous chapters, the subsequent chapter serves as the conclusion to this thesis. Building on this chapter, the next chapter will provide key practical or policy recommendations to address the consequences identified here, such as encouraging shared learning and adaptation amongst SLBs and other policy actors and importantly supporting SLBs to engage in joint problem-solving to minimise blame-shifting practices. The next chapter will also reiterate the study's primary focus and objectives, revisit the conceptual framework and research approach, re-highlight this study's key findings, reflect on its original contributions to existing literature, and outline future research agendas.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have demonstrated that this research has yielded conceptual and empirical findings concerning different dilemmas faced by street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) during Indonesia's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme implementation. The preceding chapters have illuminated how SLBs experience and respond to various dilemmas in a context where they must navigate conflicting expectations stemming from cultural dimensions shaped by non-Western historical socio-cultural factors and governance paradigms informed by Western Public Administration (WPA) concepts. Previous chapters have also shown that these conflicting governance paradigms not only generate dilemmas for SLBs but also contribute to blame games during policy implementation. To manage these blame games, SLBs strategically exercise their discretion and establish relationships with other actors to avoid blame. Such actions can lead to unintended consequences for programme implementation and outcomes.

This concluding chapter will highlight key findings, present the original contributions, offer policy recommendations, discuss the limitations of this thesis, and propose further research agendas. This research contributes to the street-level bureaucracy literature in three significant ways. Firstly, it advances our comprehension of street-level practices and dilemmas in the context where different governance paradigms clash. Secondly, it broadens the discourse on how the forced adaptation of Western governance paradigms to a non-Western context can engender diverse dilemmas and complexities for SLBs, shaping their practices to responding these dilemmas. Lastly, the study's contextual setting provides a unique perspective for analysing how SLBs strategically use discretion to avoid blame.

I will also explicate my analytical contribution to the development of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivist approach towards a more nuanced perspective on practice. It enhances Bevir and Rhodes' approach by incorporating elements of performativity and relationality. The next

section will discuss the practical contributions of my research and provide policy recommendations. I propose that central government actors should exercise critical judgment when adapting and introducing Western public administration (WPA) principles to Global South context. Additionally, recognising the SLBs' discretionary practice and relational dynamics is crucial. It is also equally important to minimise blame games practices during the CCT implementation. This study suggest that central and local governments start to involve facilitators in the decision-making process, clarify individual and shared responsibilities for effective implementation, cultivate collective capacities for shared learning and adaptation, and improving the quality of interaction between facilitators and recipients are essential steps to take.

The next section of this chapter will provide a summary of the research objectives, analytical framework, and research design of this study. In the subsequent section, I will present an overview of the primary findings that address the research questions. After summarising the key findings of the thesis, the following section elucidates the theoretical, analytical and practical contributions of this study. In the final section, I reflect on the limitations of this study and present a future research agenda. This includes ongoing exploration of the intricate relationship between cultural traditions and the dilemmas encountered by SLBs and street-level blame avoidance practices, conducting comparative research across countries and professions to analyse blame games and examine how cultural traditions influence SLBs' discretionary decisions and their interactions with various stakeholders. Additionally, employing diverse research approaches and concentrating on the investigation of front-line supervisors' practices are suggested areas for further study.

9.2 Key research questions of this study, theory, analytical framework and research design

This section summarises the initial four chapters of this thesis, restating the primary research question, literature review, analytical framework, and research design of this study. To begin with, my motivation for conducting this study arises from my interest in examining the

real-world problem (Bartels & Wagenaar, 2018) of how street-level bureaucrats (so-called facilitators) in the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (*Program Keluarga Harapan*) in Indonesia work within complex circumstances characterised by tensions and conflicting demands arising from various governance paradigms. Despite recognition of the key role played by street-level bureaucrats in programme implementation (Ramírez, 2021; Campos and Peeters, 2022) and the influence of governance paradigms on policy practice, this topic has been largely overlooked by both international and Indonesian scholars. Most CCT studies have primarily focused on evaluating or assessing the programme's impacts (Syukri *et al.*, 2010; Adato, Roopnaraine and Becker, 2011; Kusuma *et al.*, 2016; Osorio Gonnet, 2019), while there is a paucity of studies on the relationship between SLB and governance paradigms (Klenk and Cohen, 2019).

While I started out with a broad interest in the role of SLBs in implementing the CCT programme, my understanding of the real-world problem quickly deepened as I further explored the complex design and manifold implementation problems of the programme (Hasan *et al.*, 2019). It turned out that, in their day-to-day practices, facilitators are expected to adhere to hierarchical structures, achieve different performance targets and standards, and build networking and collaboration with different range of actors from different levels and organisations. With these different governance paradigms embedded in the programme design, facilitators often face various tensions and challenges in implementing the programme (Sofianto, 2020). This complexity is further amplified by the programme's execution within the unique Indonesian context, where deeply engrained cultural factors exert a strong influence on its governance system (Irawanto and Ramsey, 2011). Within this context, CCT facilitators may also be expected to accommodate cultural values which can potentially conflict with the ideas introduced by WPA in the CCT programme.

In the course of articulating the real-problem of this research, I delved into street-level bureaucracy concepts to grasp more understanding and engage in the ongoing debate within the literature. This abductive process (Bartels & Wagenaar, 2018; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow,

2012), which involves the interplay between articulating the real-world problem, conducting a literature review, and analysing empirical findings, has assisted me in shaping the focus, conceptual framing and relevance of this study. It led me to go beyond considering factors commonly considered crucial to the practices of SLBs, such as their working complexity, coping mechanisms, and discretionary powers (Gofen, 2014). I identified the influence of ever-evolving and shifting governance paradigms on the practices and dilemmas encountered by SLBs (Durose, 2011; Sørensen and Bentzen, 2020) as an essential, yet relatively understudied topic in the literature, especially when viewed from the perspective of the Global South context (Cohen, 2018; Lotta *et al.*, 2022). The focus of this study was further abductively developed, as I identified emerging and significant themes in my data analysis; blame games during CCT implementation and how it shapes street-level discretion and relational dynamics. This topic is also limitedly discussed in the street-level bureaucracy literature.

Chapter 2 offers a literature review that justifies these research questions and develops the conceptual framing that abductively emerged from the research. It reviewed the crucial roles played by SLBs in the policy implementation process (Lipsky, 1980; Hill and Hupe, 2002) and given the complexity of their working conditions, there is a multitude of dilemmas that SLBs must face (Lipsky, 2010). In responding to the dilemmas, SLBs employ discretion as a means to address the physical and emotional pressures they encounter in their daily work (Maynard-Moody and Portillo, 2011). An important recent development in the SLB literature is also highlighted how SLBs' relational dynamics with different actors also can shape their discretionary decision-making (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000). Often when SLBs doubt their discretionary decisions, they rely on peers' opinions to make sure their judgment is acceptable (Raaphorst and Loyens, 2018). SLBs' discretion is also shaped by their relationship with their front-line supervisors (Keulemans and Groeneveld, 2020). Hence, analysing how SLBs use discretion and relationality is critical to understanding policy implementation.

Within the context of contemporary governance, SLBs are also confronted with shifting paradigms of governance in the public sector (Durose, 2007; Torfing *et al.*, 2020). SLBs are now expected to operate within diverse governance arrangements where they may need to navigate hierarchical, performance-oriented, and collaborative settings simultaneously (Sørensen and Bentzen, 2020). Consequently, it is suggested that Lipsky's traditional explanations of SLB behaviour may not fully capture the complex challenges they face in contemporary scenarios, particularly in relation to the evolving governance arrangements in the public sector (Durose, 2007, 2011; Klenk and Cohen, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to analyse how the evolution of public administration and the shifting governance paradigms potentially influence SLBs' perceptions of their roles, practices, and challenges.

The public administration reform and the evolving governance traditions are not limited to Western contexts but are also happening globally, including in non-Western settings. The introduction of WPA ideas to Global South countries and the often imposed adaptation of these values create challenges because they may not be responsive to or compatible with the local cultures and wisdom deeply embedded in the community (Drechsler, 2015). In the case of SLBs in the Global South, such as Indonesia, they face a unique set of dilemmas and complexities as they must negotiate conflicting expectations arising from the clash between Western WPA principles and local cultural traditions (Haque, 1996, 2019). For Indonesia's context, clashing between WPA ideas and non-Western cultural dimensions can lead to dynamics of shifting blame from top officer to street-level actors .

Blame is recognised as fundamental to our understanding of how political and policy actors and systems work (Hinterleitner and Sager, 2017) as blame avoidance as micro-behavioural phenomenon could influence macro policy-making processes (Weaver, 1986). While blame theory has mostly centred on elite actors' blame practices, it is important to note that blame games can also involve various actors, including SLBs (Hood, 2011). Blame becomes particularly relevant to SLBs' practices during policy implementation, as policymakers often 'conveniently' assign blame to them for policies that fall short (Meyers and

Vorsanger, 2007; Brodtkin, 2012, p.8). Additionally, it is acknowledged that SLBs may employ discretion in different ways as a strategy to avoid blame (Hood, 2020). Despite the relevance of blame games to street-level practice, discussions of blame within the street-level bureaucracy literature are also scarce.

Employing an abductive approach, this study focuses on examining SLBs' practices and narratives within the context of conflicting governance paradigms. It poses one overarching research question and three sub-research questions:

'How do different governance paradigms shape street-level practice in a non-Western context?'

1. How do street-level bureaucrats negotiate conflicting governance paradigms?
2. How do SLBs use discretion and relationality in the face of conflicting governance paradigms?
3. How do street-level bureaucrats' responses to dilemmas through their discretionary and relational practices impact policy implementation and outcomes?

Chapter 3 explains why and how Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism and practice theory were adopted as analytical framework to offer greater depth of understanding on my topic. Interpretivism has been advocated as an appropriate approach for examining street-level bureaucrats (Durose, 2007, 2009; Needham, 2015) because it enables to unpack how individual policy actors make sense and find meaning in relation to their historical socio-cultural context (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; Durose, 2009). Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism offers a framework of concepts (tradition, dilemma, practice and narrative) to analyse the beliefs associated with the diverse governance paradigms underlying the CCT programme (Bevir and Rhodes, 2001, 2006). It also allows us to decentre our analysis of individual SLBs and examine how different expectations stemming from multiple governance paradigms create tensions and dilemmas for SLBs and how SLBs respond to their dilemmas through particular practices and stories. An important limitation of Bevir & Rhodes' framework is that it

oversimplifies the complex nature of practice and fails to capture its performative, relational, and evolving dynamics (Wagenaar, 2012). Therefore, this study incorporates practice theory into the analytical framework to bring more the performative and relational aspects to the exploration of the underlying meaning behind SLBs' practices (Wagenaar, 2016).

Chapter 4 discusses how the research design and methods employed in this study . This study adopts interpretivist approach and case study design to explore how SLBs respond to conflicting governance paradigms in a non-Western context. By focusing on street-level practices within Indonesia's Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, interpretivist approach allows this study to 'meaning-making'; to understand and explore meanings of SLBs' practices and interpret how their practices are shaped by beliefs, traditions and narratives in particular times and locales (May, 2011; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p.10). This design also allows this study to understand individual SLBs' experience on how they deal with these conflicting governance paradigms and dilemmas. Also, by adopting interpretivist approach, this approach helps in making sense of and interpreting the process of social construction and the social world of SLBs' practices and policy process. It allows for an examination of SLBs' practices within the context of their socio-historical backgrounds and perspectives (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). Qualitative methods were used to collect the data, including unstructured interviews with 45 participants, shadowing four facilitators and a programme coordinator, and analysing 54 policy documents. In analysing the data, this study combined grounded theory and narrative analysis. Grounded theory analysis, involving coding, memo-writing, and theoretical sampling, allowed me to maintain close proximity to the data and identify emerging themes through an iterative and abductive process (Thornberg and Charmaz, 2014a). In addition, narrative analysis (by examining storylines, characters, and metaphors) enabled a deeper analysis of the stories participants told, capturing both dominant and counter-narratives (Stone, 2002).

9.3 Key findings of the research

Before delving into the findings in Chapter 6, 7, and 8, I will outline the analysis in Chapter 5 as the starting point for addressing the over-arching research questions; '*How do different governance paradigms shape street-level practice in a non-Western context?*' by investigating different governance traditions embedded in Indonesia's governance system.

Chapter 5 draws upon analysis of secondary data, including existing research on Indonesia and policy documents regarding Indonesia's governance and political system, to trace the historical development of the socio-cultural aspects context of Indonesian governance. It demonstrates that key issues which have occurred in the CCT programme are generated by the underlying tensions between governance traditions in the design of the programme. It shows Indonesia's adoption of the CCT scheme aligns with a broader trend observed in Latin America, other Global South countries, and is under the influence of the World Bank (Hasan *et al.*, 2019). However, as an internationally proposed programme, it is implemented using traditions rooted in Western Public Administration (WPA), which may not adequately consider cultural factors. Consequently, conflicts arise between WPA-inspired traditions and the cultural tradition of non-Western contexts. For instance, in Indonesia, there exists a tension between the bureaucratic tradition and the deeply ingrained patrimonialism found in the cultural tradition. While facilitators are expected to act in an impersonal and rational manner, this can clash with their personal beliefs emphasising the importance of preserving family-based relationships in the cultural context.

My research identified four distinct traditions within the Indonesian governance context: the cultural tradition, bureaucratic tradition, performance-target tradition, and collaborative tradition. Firstly, the cultural tradition in Indonesia encompasses a collection of beliefs shaped by non-Western historical socio-cultural factors deeply rooted in Indonesian society. This tradition emphasises concepts such as deference (*ewuh pakewuh*), patrimonialism, and paternalism, which have long been prominent elements of Indonesia's cultural tradition (Irawanto, Ramsey and Ryan, 2011; Soeharjono, 2011). As the public

administration reform and the evolving governance traditions are not limited to Western contexts but are also happening globally, including in non-Western settings, three other traditions within the governance system are informed by WPA concepts.

The bureaucratic tradition has its roots in the colonial era and persisted into the early post-colonial period. It is characterised by the establishment of regulations and procedures, a rigid vertical hierarchy, and a centralised and authoritative government system (Dwiyanto *et al.*, 2012). The performance-target tradition came to the forefront during the 'reform era' in Indonesia. This era signified a transition from an excessively centralised to a decentralised political and governmental system, strongly influenced by global reform trends and the pressures exerted by international donor organisations (Prasojo, Kurniawan and Holidin, 2007). In the initial phases of this reform era, a set of beliefs introduced with the primary objective of enhancing accountability, performance, and efficiency within Indonesia's government (Thoha, 2000). Lastly, the collaborative tradition has recently taken root as a new set of beliefs within Indonesia's government institutions. This tradition is characterised by its emphasis on collective efforts and cooperation among various government and non-government stakeholders in governance practices (Sutiyono, Pramusinto and Prasoj, 2018). These traditions, in practice, can either conflict with or align with one another.

Employing the concept of governance traditions helps this study to identify four distinct governance traditions ingrained within Indonesia's governance system, each associated with its unique set of beliefs. Since the CCT programme operates within the framework of Indonesia's governance context, the different beliefs and traditions are reflected within the CCT programme itself. This chapter underscores that the complexity within the CCT programme arises from inherent tensions between these diverse governance traditions. Indonesia's cultural tradition, deeply embedded in its bureaucracy, creates friction with other traditions shaped through uncritical adaptation to WPA ideas, leading to dilemmas for SLBs.

The subsequent three subsections outline the key empirical findings presented in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. These findings address the three research questions of the study,

offering new empirical and conceptual insight into how conflicting governance traditions give rise to dilemmas faced by SLBs and shape their fear of blame and how their responses to dilemmas and blame games through their discretionary and relational practices impact policy implementation and outcomes.

9.3.1 How do street-level bureaucrats negotiate conflicting governance paradigms?

Chapter 6 identified different dilemmas that emerged during CCT programme implementation and three narratives that SLBs constructed to address these dilemmas. First, SLBs encounter a dilemma stemming from conflicting beliefs between the bureaucratic and performance-target traditions, where they are expected to adhere to regulations established by the CCT programme while concurrently achieving predefined targets. Another dilemma emerges as a result of a commitment to adhere to deeply entrenched hierarchical structures as manifestation of the bureaucratic tradition, which conflicts with the newly introduced belief to engage in coordination with different levels of government. A third SLB dilemma is generated by the conflicting beliefs between the performance-target tradition, which requires SLBs to attain established objectives/targets, and the collaborative tradition, which requires SLBs to develop shared aims in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Fourth, SLBs also experience conflicting beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition, where SLBs are expected to uphold deference and patrimonialism norms embedded in society, and the bureaucratic tradition, which expects SLBs to maintain impersonality and adhere to stated regulations during programme implementation. A dilemma is also generated by the '*ewuh pakewuh*'/deference norm part of the cultural tradition and the performance-target tradition. SLBs experience an informal obligation to maintain positive relationships with recipients and community members, which clashes with the objective to achieve graduation targets. Lastly, SLBs encounter a dilemma due to conflicting beliefs between Indonesia's cultural tradition and the collaborative tradition, where SLBs are expected to take initiative to collaborate with other actors, but they also hold deference beliefs such as the 'wait for command' belief rooted in Indonesia's cultural tradition embedded in the bureaucracy.

In addressing the dilemmas arising from conflicting governance traditions, this chapter reveals that facilitators employ different narratives: the 'stamp and sign,' 'changing mindset,' and 'asset mapping'. The 'stamp and sign' practices adopted by some SLBs demonstrate beliefs stemming from both the bureaucratic tradition and Indonesia's cultural tradition. These facilitators exhibit a strong inclination to adhere to hierarchical directives from their superiors while performing their duties. They exercise discretion by prioritising rule adherence, maintaining a formal rapport with recipients, and prioritising procedural compliance over collaboration with others. As for the 'changing mindset' facilitators, their practices align closely with beliefs of the performance-target tradition. Their primary focus centres on prioritising the achievement of the programme's specified targets and desired outcomes, including ensuring compliance with the conditionalities. On the other hand, 'asset mapping' facilitators show a strong proclivity for establishing effective collaborations with other policy actors and fostering meaningful relationships with their recipients. They actively engage with recipients in programme implementation, recognising the significance of building trust in their practice. These facilitators exercise discretion by adapting their practices, displaying flexibility, and fostering innovation in their work, often going the extra mile to adjust services and remain attuned to the community's needs rather than rigidly adhering to regulations.

Interestingly, the findings of this study shed light on the fact that SLBs' reactions to dilemmas, as conveyed through their narratives and practices, do not follow a linear trajectory with easily foreseeable responses of rejection, accommodation, or acceptance. While SLBs indeed demonstrate distinctive patterns of practices and narratives that mirror and correspond with beliefs associated with particular governance traditions, their responses to dilemmas during policy implementation are not confined to, or consistently aligned with, the traditions to which they appear to lean towards. For instance, consider SLBs categorised as 'stamp and sign' who generally align themselves with established beliefs deeply rooted in Indonesia's cultural and bureaucratic traditions. When confronted with dilemmas arising from conflicting expectations between the bureaucratic tradition and the performance-target tradition, where

they must follow standardised procedures while also meeting unforeseen targets, they prioritise the achievement of these unexpected targets. Similarly, 'changing mindset' facilitators, despite predominantly embodying the beliefs of the performance-target tradition in their practices, tend to embrace cultural tradition over performance-target tradition when facing dilemmas that require them to choose between adhering to cultural norms or pursuing performance targets.

9.3.2 How do SLBs use discretion and relationality in the face of conflicting governance paradigms?

Chapter 7 illuminates another key finding that conflicting governance traditions not only give rise to dilemmas but also lead to blame games during CCT implementation. Therefore, in the face of conflicting governance traditions where blame games emerge, SLBs strategically use their discretion and relationality to mitigate the risk of blame. Additionally, this study unveils that SLBs' assessment of the potential of blame and their perspective on the most effective means to avoid blame significantly shape their discretionary actions and the dynamics of their relationship with recipients and other actors.

My findings indicate that scapegoating emerges as a dominant narrative among various policy actors. Policy actors consistently employ a similar causal story to link problems in CCT implementation with facilitators, attributing facilitators as the primary causes (Stone, 1989; Shanahan *et al.*, 2014) and consequently assigning blame to them. Facilitators, in turn, perceive themselves as scapegoats, targeted by other actors for policy failures, such as inaccuracies in data and mistargeting recipients, coordination issues, and the inability to achieve specific objectives. In response to this dominant narrative that portrays them as scapegoats and targets of blame for implementation challenges, SLBs construct a counter-narrative to support blame avoidance strategies and justify their deliberate decisions regarding how they exercise their discretion and foster relationships with other actors.

The findings depict five strategies employed to avoid blame. Firstly, SLBs strategically employ their discretion by rigorously adhering to established regulations, a process referred to as 'protocolisation,' in order to mitigate any blame associated with their discretionary decisions. Secondly, facilitators intentionally exercise discretion by deviating from the rules, strategically manipulating or 'gaming' their practices to avoid blame. Thirdly, SLBs opt to bend the rules, utilising the existing coordination structure as a means to diffuse blame. Furthermore, SLBs strategically manage relationships with diverse actors to minimise blame exposure associated with their discretionary choices, particularly when they choose to flex the rules. To illustrate, as a way of diminishing blame risk, facilitators employ the 'locking-in' strategy by involving supervisors in their discretionary decision-making. Facilitators intentionally foster relationships with supervisors to include them in discretionary choices, thus reducing the likelihood of shouldering sole blame. Consequently, should blame surface due to their decisions, facilitators can partially share the responsibility with their superiors. Finally, SLBs resort to shifting blame onto the beneficiaries or redirecting it towards central government actors as part of their blame avoidance tactics.

This exploration of blame avoidance practices underscores the nexus between blame games, SLBs' practices, and governance traditions (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003). The argument here is that SLBs' narratives of blame – including their fear of blame or blame risk, and their assessment of the most effective practices to reduce or limit blame risk – shape their beliefs about governance traditions. For instance, when facilitators deem adherence to rules as the most effective approach for diminishing blame, their utilisation of protocolisation as a blame avoidance practice inclines them towards alignment with the bureaucratic tradition, and this, in turn, guides their discretionary decisions towards rule adherence. Hence, a connection exists between blame games and the identified typology of SLBs. SLBs respond to dilemmas not solely because they fit into one of the three identified categories, but rather because they perceive these narratives as useful in blame avoidance.

My findings also emphasise the significance of relational dynamics and performativity, aspects that have been overlooked in Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism. The findings have revealed that while SLBs may exhibit discernible patterns of practices and narratives that align with particular governance traditions during programme implementation, their responses to dilemmas are not fixed or consistently aligned with the traditions they appear to favour. My findings on blame games clarify that in the context of CCT implementation in Indonesia, SLBs' relationships to certain governance traditions are shaped by blame dynamics and SLBs' fear of blame. Crucially, this underscores how blame dynamics exert a significant influence on SLBs' actions, steering them towards upholding particular traditions during CCT implementation. This highlights how SLBs' discretionary practices and relational dynamics give shape to how governance traditions manifest in policy implementation.

9.3.3 How do street-level bureaucrats' responses to dilemmas through their discretionary and relational practices impact policy implementation and outcomes?

The last key findings is discussed in Chapter 8 highlighting that the narratives and actions adopted by street-level actors when they choose to confront particular dilemmas hold considerable importance. There are positive and negative implications associated with how SLBs engage in discretion and relationality when responding to dilemmas within the context of conflicting governance traditions during policy implementation. These implications encompass aspects related to the recipients, the policy implementation process, and the ultimate policy outcomes. While the strict adherence of SLBs to rules (protocolisation) as a tactic to mitigate blame may yield positive outcomes, especially in terms of accurately reaching the intended recipients, it also constrains their creativity and responsiveness to recipients' needs due to a fear of blame. Consequently, it also impedes co-production and mutual interaction between SLBs and recipients. SLBs' departure from rules through gaming practices poses a risk of hindering the achievement of programme goals and obstructing recipients from accessing their entitlements or rights. Moreover, how SLBs strategically build relationships

with other actors through coordination arrangements to mitigate blame may result in prioritising collaborative practices as a means to avoid blame rather than enhancing the overall quality of programme implementation. Finally, the widespread occurrence of blame games has the potential to amplify public dissatisfaction and undermine trust in the government.

9.4 The original contributions to knowledge

This study presents three main original contributions to the street-level bureaucracy theory and public administration. First, this study widens the understanding of street-level practices and dilemmas in the context of coexistence of different governance paradigms. Second, by analysing SLBs' practices in a non-Western context, this study broadens the discussion on how context-related circumstances can create different dilemmas and complexities for SLBs and shape how they negotiate their practices in handling these dilemmas. Third, by exploring SLBs' practices in a non-Western setting, this study provides rich insights into the intersection of blame avoidance practices and street-level practices, thereby offering a different perspective to enhance our understanding of SLBs' discretionary decisions and relational dynamics.

9.4.1 Contribution: Broadening understanding of street-level practices in the context of conflicting governance paradigms

As discussed, street-level actors enact their day-to-day practices in a contemporary governance context, characterised by shifting and reformed governance arrangements (Torfinn *et al.*, 2020). While Lipsky's theory originally emerged in the context of the Traditional Public Administration governance paradigm or early New Public Management paradigm, the evolving governance context has raised questions about the applicability of Lipsky's theory in contemporary governance settings (Durose, 2007, 2011). Specifically, given that shifting governance arrangements are not straightforward one-on-one replacements, and different governance paradigms may potentially layer with one another, it is argued that more research is needed to analyse how these layering, coexisting, and yet conflicting governance paradigms

shape street-level practices (Klenk and Cohen, 2019). Particularly, how these conditions create dilemmas for street-level bureaucrats and how these dilemmas are addressed needs further examination.

As previously explained, prior research has indeed discussed how shifting governance arrangements in the public sector significantly impact the roles of SLBs and potentially create broader dilemmas and complexities for them (Brodkin, 2011; Tuurnas, Stenvall and Rannisto, 2016; van Gestel, Kuiper and Hendriks, 2019). However, previous studies were primarily focused on how each different mode of governance affects the practices of front-line workers. The way conflicting demands from multiple governance paradigms shape SLBs' practices remains underexplored, particularly how demands from different overlapping and conflicting governance paradigms can fundamentally create dilemmas for street-level actors is limitedly discussed (Klenk and Cohen, 2019).

This thesis makes a significant contribution by responding to the imperative for heightened attention to comprehending street-level practices within a context where the logics and elements of various governance paradigms not only coexist but also mix and clash (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013; Klenk and Cohen, 2019), as a way to address existing limitations in the literature. Through a comprehensive analysis of the day-to-day work of SLBs in implementing Indonesia's CCT programme, this study significantly advances street-level bureaucracy research. It deepens our understanding of street-level practices, particularly illuminating how SLBs navigate diverse dilemmas within a challenging context where different governance paradigms coexist.

This study importantly introduces both theoretical and new empirical insights into our understanding of street-level practices and dilemmas. It identifies that within specific contexts, such as the implementation of Indonesia's CCT programme, frontline workers face heightened challenges as they navigate different logics and expectations—complying with rules and hierarchical structures, achieving target goals, collaborating with other actors, and maintaining cultural dimensions simultaneously. Also, by unveiling new empirical insights, this research

asserts that street-level dilemmas extend beyond the traditional challenges of dealing with high demands and scarce resources extensively discussed in the literature (Lipsky, 2010). In the contemporary governance context, street-level actors must grapple with diverse challenges and dilemmas in policy implementation (Sørensen and Bentzen, 2020). This complexity arises from the evolving and shifting nature of governance arrangements, wherein SLBs experience changes and clashes in expectations regarding their discretion, relational dynamics, and their roles in the process (Torfing *et al.*, 2020).

Once again, the empirical findings of this study fill a void in existing literature, where the challenges faced by front-line actors in dealing with conflicting demands and expectations arising from different governance paradigms are rarely discussed by scholars. This empirical evidence not only highlights that dilemmas and challenges in SLBs' practices extend beyond Indonesia's CCT programme but also underscores the crucial need for further exploration by other researchers. The situations illuminated in this study profoundly transcend Indonesia's CCT context and manifest in other settings where the fluid and dynamic nature of governance paradigms prevails (Aschhoff and Vogel, 2019). Not only does this study reinforce previous arguments regarding the need to reexamine Lipsky's concept of street-level bureaucracy, particularly in analysing street-level practices and dilemmas within contemporary governance settings (Durose, 2007, 2011; Klenk and Cohen, 2019), but it also prompts fundamental reflection and reconsideration on the factors shaping street-level practices and the delivery of public service and public policy at the street level—specifically, related to the clashing of multiple governance paradigms in this case.

9.4.2 Contribution: Analysing street-level practices from the lens of a non-Western context

As discussed, street-level bureaucracy theory is primarily drawn upon research in Western contexts with strong bureaucratic and institutional capacity. Consequently, street-level bureaucracy largely reflects theoretical developments from Global North societies (Lotta *et al.*, 2022). There is limited exploration of how the theory of street-level bureaucracy is applied in the Global South context with different political traditions and cultures (Cohen, 2018;

Mohammed, 2021). In general, discussions of public administration from a non-Western perspective remain underexplored.

By selecting Indonesia as the context for this study, this research makes an original contribution to the existing street-level bureaucracy literature, offering a unique perspective on understanding the work and practices of SLBs based on findings from a non-Western setting. This study expands our understanding of street-level dilemmas, revealing that within the non-Western governance context, SLBs encounter different complexities and dilemmas in their practice. My study uncovers that in non-Western contexts, specifically in Indonesia, its bureaucracy is deeply rooted in a particular socio-cultural-historical background and has its own cultural tradition such as "*ewuh pakewuh*" (deference norms), paternalism, and a paternalistic culture. As a result, SLBs in Indonesia face dilemmas stemming not only from conflicting expectations rooted in Western governance traditions but also from existing cultural traditions internalised within the bureaucracy.

My study also contributes to street-level bureaucracy theory by demonstrating that in Indonesia, where SLBs operate within a context where non-Western cultural dimensions stem from local culture and socio-cultural history are deeply embedded in the governance system, these cultural aspects inform the way SLBs exercise their discretionary power and build relationships with policy actors and citizens. For instance, my finding shows that with deference norms (*ewuh pakewuh*), SLBs are discouraged from engaging in meaningful and creative discretionary practices, and with paternalistic aspect, it intensifies the imbalanced power dynamics between SLBs and citizens or SLBs-high-level officers, shaping their relationships during policy implementation processes. This study also supports previous arguments from the comparative public administration literature that in the Global South context, policy actors may need to contend not only with conflicting beliefs among Western traditions but also with the tension between administrative attitudes demanded by the WPA and the actual administrative practices informed by local traditions and knowledge (Haque, 1996, 2019).

Additionally, by examining SLBs' practices through a non-Western lens, the intersection between discretion and the management of blame is highlighted, underscoring the value of employing a single case study approach (Flyvbjerg, 2006). By employing a single case study approach to analyse SLBs' practices in implementing the CCT programme in Indonesia, where different governance traditions conflict, my study offers rich insights to expand the theory of street-level bureaucracy, particularly by reframing our understanding of street-level discretionary practices (further discussed in the next section). From this single case study, we can learn that within a setting where street-level actors enact their practices amidst conflicts between cultural and Western traditions, SLBs' work is not only related to how they navigate their complex working conditions and dilemmas in their daily practice but also how they drive to strategically use their discretion to manage and mitigate blame games and the risk of being blamed in the course of their work. This distinct street-level phenomenon has been largely overlooked in street-level bureaucracy research that predominantly relies on findings from Western contexts. The findings of this study may have relevance and applicability to other settings and this study is beneficial for other scholars interested in studying street-level bureaucracy in Indonesia or other Global South contexts.

Lastly, this study reinforces previous arguments in the public administration literature that the forced imitation of Western public administration frameworks in non-Western contexts may not necessarily yield advantages due to its incompatibility with socio-political factors and local cultures/wisdom in Global South societies (Haque, 1996; Drechsler, 2020). My study demonstrates that the dilemmas faced by SLBs and the emergence of blame games during the implementation of the CCT reflect a broader issue within Indonesia's governance context, particularly the government's uncritical adoption of Western governance traditions and its hasty attempts to reform its public administration and bureaucracy. This research contributes to the study of public administration in a broader sense as it encourages research in this field to embrace a more comprehensive perspective, recognising the diverse traditions and histories that have influenced the field beyond the confines of Anglo-American influence.

Moreover, my study highlights the value of local knowledge and cultural dimensions while challenging Western dominance and the notion of a universally applicable public-service perspective or ethos (McDonald et al., 2022, p.63).

9.4.3 Contribution: Extending understanding of SLBs' discretionary practice and relational dynamics by bringing blame games theory into street-level bureaucracy literature

As mentioned above, exploring street-level practice through a non-Western perspective enables this study to identify the intersection between street-level discretionary decisions and the management of blame. Therefore, another contribution of this study is that it links the street-level bureaucracy theory and the blame games theory, significantly reframing our understanding of analysing SLBs' discretionary practices and relational dynamics.

Chapter 2 explains that although it is observed that SLBs' practice is closely connected with blame games, the discussion of the dynamics of blame and SLBs' blame avoidance practices is largely absent in the literature on street-level bureaucracy. The analysis of SLBs' stories and practices through the lens of blame theory is still rare (Klijn et al., 2020). The original contribution of this research lies in creating a new path within the street-level bureaucracy literature by integrating the theory of street-level bureaucracy and blame games and offering a discussion of blame games to examine SLBs' narratives and practices. This thesis significantly contribute to the existing literature by examining how SLBs actively transition from being blame takers to being proactive in managing and negotiating blame by strategically utilising discretion and building relationships with other actors.

Due to the complexities and dilemmas faced by SLBs, previous studies have extensively investigated how they use discretion to deal with these challenges (Gofen *et al.*, 2019; Hadna, 2022; Pedersen and Pors, 2022). However, it has almost gone unnoticed in the literature on SLBs how the fear of blame can shape their discretionary decisions (except for Catney and Henneberry, 2012). In their study, Catney and Henneberry (2012) did mention that SLBs' non-decision-making, where they decide not to follow the rules because the consequence of such a decision is too risky, is influenced by their awareness of blame risk.

However, they do not further discuss how blame can shape street-level discretion in different ways, for instance how blame can shape SLBs' decision to deviate from rules or how blame can shape SLBs relationship with other actors when making discretionary decision. This study contributes to the literature by providing new conceptual and empirical insight into how SLBs' perception of the risk of being blamed can also become an important factor that shapes the way SLBs engage in discretion. As discussed in Chapter 7, depending on SLBs' considerations about the most effective way to avoid blame, they tactically utilise their discretionary power, either by bending the rules or strictly following them, for a similar reason: avoiding blame. When SLBs perceive that bending the rules or creatively adjusting their practice to adapt to field conditions can attract blame, they engage in discretion in restrictive ways by mechanically following instructions or written regulations. Conversely, when SLBs consider that strictly following the regulations may put them in a position to attract blame, they decide to improvise their practice to spread the blame. Thus, this study reframes how we perceive and understand street-level discretion.

This research enriches the current body of knowledge by highlighting a new dimension that the exercise of discretion by SLBs is influenced not solely by factors such as SLBs' personalities (Henderson, Țiclău and Balica, 2018), substantive or goals of the policy (Keiser, 2010), clients' attributes (Davidovitz and Cohen, 2020), governance arrangements (Brodin, 2011), or information and technology (Bovens and Zouridis, 2002), but also by their perception of the potential risk of blame that they may face.

Similarly, previous research has examined how SLBs handle complex work situations by focusing on negative coping mechanisms such as moving against clients, rationing, stereotyping, or discrimination (Hjörne, Juhila and van Nijmegen, 2010; Tummers *et al.*, 2015; Einstein and Glick, 2017), as well as positive coping mechanisms like moving forward to clients, being creative entrepreneurs, strategic shapers, or citizens' agents (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000; Durose, 2009; Virtanen, Laitinen and Stenvall, 2018). However, there has been a lack of discussion regarding another potential way for SLBs to cope with their

complex work circumstances and dilemmas through blame avoidance practices. This research reveals that while implementing programmes or policies, SLBs are also confronted with blame games and that blame avoidance behaviours can be considered as another type of coping strategy for SLBs in handling complex working situations. These practices involve strategic use of discretion, either strict compliance with rules to limit blame or bending rules to spread blame.

This study also highlights the importance of relational dynamics in the study of street-level bureaucracy (Bartels & Turnbull, 2020; Blijleven & Van Hulst, 2021). As discussed above, my study shows that SLBs' practices, for instance, the way they use discretion, are not predetermined by beliefs within institutions or written regulations. SLBs practices are performative and emergent as they develop in relation with the situation at hand and attempt to understand and negotiate such circumstances; such as dilemmas and dynamics of blame. This study also offers a different perspective on understanding the relational dynamics between SLBs-citizens, SLBs-front-line supervisors, or SLBs-other policy actors. One of the distinctive features of SLBs is that they have direct encounters with citizens (Bartels, 2013). In explaining SLBs-citizen relationships, studying their relationship through blame games perspective, such as how SLBs use their relationship with the citizens to avoid the blame, is scarcely discussed by scholars.

This research re-emphasises Lipsky's (2010) argument that SLBs may create a destructive relationship with citizens by 'blaming the citizens,' thus allocating and shifting responsibilities back to citizens, potentially leading to a relationship of distrust between them. This research also expands our understanding of the relationship between SLBs and their supervisors. While it is recognised that front-line supervisors' opinions can influence SLBs' discretionary decisions (Keulemans and Groeneveld, 2020), this study reveals an additional intriguing finding: SLBs also consult their practice and involve their superiors in the decision-making process as a strategy to reduce the risk of blame. Thus, by analysing the SLBs-citizens or SLBs-front-line supervisors relationship through the lens of blame games, this study offers

an alternative perspective for examining the relational dynamics between SLBs and those actors, which could be a promising area for future exploration.

9.5 Analytical contribution

This study contributes to the development of Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivist approach by introducing a more nuanced perspective on the concept of practice. It enhances Bevir and Rhodes' approach by incorporating elements of performativity, relationality, and emergence into their understanding of practice. Bevir and Rhodes (2015, p.15) define practice as 'a set of actions, perhaps a set of actions that exhibit a pattern...a pattern that remains relatively stable across time'. However, this definition oversimplifies the complex nature of practice and fails to capture its performative, relational, and evolving dynamics (Wagenaar, 2012, 2016). By integrating practice theory into Bevir and Rhodes' interpretivism framework, this study elucidates the complex interplay between SLBs' everyday practices, their social context, and the historical and cultural dimensions that shape their actions. Significantly, this study also underscores that practices are not static patterns of actions; rather, they constitute an ongoing and evolving web of activities carried out by SLBs in their professional roles, intricately intertwined with their social and historical context (Bartels, 2018; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

My findings indicate that while SLBs exhibit a certain pattern of practice in their responses to dilemmas, these practices are far from being consistently stable over time. This underscores the complexity of the relationship between belief and practice. Depending on how SLBs interpret the dilemmas they encounter, there are instances where they deviate from the expected pattern of practice associated with specific governance traditions, acting in ways that do not align with the prevailing beliefs they appear to incline to. For example, consider the case of 'asset mapping' facilitators who display a pattern of practice reflecting beliefs aligned with the collaborative tradition. However, there are occasions when they diverge from this pattern when confronted with specific dilemmas. For instance, when faced with a conflicting belief between meeting targets and fostering collaboration, these facilitators sometimes choose to prioritise meeting targets over collaboration. This departure from the collaborative

tradition's beliefs demonstrates the dynamic nature of their practices, which are shaped by various relational dynamics, including their specific circumstances, the individuals involved, and other contextual aspects. SLBs, therefore, have reasons guiding their responses to dilemmas that are shaped by these relational dynamics.

My research also underscores the performative, relational, and emergent aspects of SLBs' practices as revealed through their narratives of blame. This study shows that their fear of blame or blame risk and their assessment of the most effective practices to reduce or limit blame risk shape their beliefs about governance traditions. SLBs' blame narratives serve as a driving force for them to adapt their actions in line with certain governance traditions. Through their interpretation and negotiation of the risk of being blamed, SLBs mobilise patterns of practice that aid them in mitigating blame, aligning with beliefs associated with certain governance traditions. Once more, my findings emphasise the notion that even when SLBs exhibit practices that appear to align with and reflect beliefs from specific governance traditions, their practices are not consistently stable over time, and they do not consistently act in accordance with those beliefs. SLBs base their actions on their interpretation of the circumstances they face (for instance, the perceived risk of blame). Their decisions to align their practices with a particular governance tradition are shaped by their perception of blame in the context at hand. Hence, the ways in which SLBs mobilise their discretionary power is shaped by their interpretation of their work's value, the recipients, the prevailing working conditions and dilemmas, and, crucially, their fear of blame as instilled by their relationships with other actors and the meaning of blame in their context. My study demonstrates how blame dynamics influence SLBs' actions, guiding them to uphold specific traditions during CCT implementation which then indicates that SLBs' practices give shape on how governance traditions are manifested in actual practice. Therefore, this research demonstrates that the practice of SLBs is not a static set of actions, as defined by Bevir and Rhodes (2022). Instead, SLBs' practice is relational, performative, and emergent, revealing the complexity of the relationship between belief and practice. While SLBs might uphold certain beliefs that reflect

certain tradition, their practice might not be not curbed, limited to, or always in line with the traditions they seem to lean towards. Their practice is inherently performative, shaped by various relational dynamics, including specific circumstances, individuals involved, and contextual aspects.

9.6 Practical implications and policy recommendations

In addition to the theoretical and analytical contributions discussed earlier, this research provides practical contributions and policy recommendations for the Indonesian government to improve the CCT implementation process. These involve appreciating SLBs discretionary practices, specifying individual and shared responsibilities for effective implementation, fostering collective capacities for shared learning and adaptation, and enhancing the quality of interaction between facilitators and recipients.

The discussion and analysis in chapters 5, 6, and 7 illuminate that deference norms contribute to an inferiority-superiority dynamic and an imbalanced power relationship between facilitators and top officers. There is a belief that when facilitators take the initiative to improve their practices, it is perceived as 'overstepping' the authority of higher-ups. Consequently, facilitators become hesitant to exercise meaningful and creative discretion, leading to reduced responsiveness to citizens' needs. Therefore, the first recommendation is to raise awareness among higher-ranking officers that SLBs' discretionary decisions, including creativity and improvements in their practices, are crucial for street-level actors and often necessary during policy implementation. This can enhance SLBs' responsiveness to recipients' needs and improve the quality of implementation. Higher officers should create spaces and demonstrate appreciation for street-level discretion and creative problem-solving practices, especially when such discretion can address policy gaps. A viable strategy could involve convening meetings between researchers, NGOs concerned about SLBs' work and practices, and organisational leaders to discuss the findings of this study, emphasising the importance of SLBs' discretion in policy implementation.

This study has also revealed that due to Indonesia's deeply ingrained cultural traditions, characterised by hierarchy and paternalistic tendencies, all decision-making regarding CCT regulations and activities is centralised within the government. Chapter 6 discusses some SLBs' experience a goal displacement and their growing sense of frustration stemming from central government decisions and targets that often fail to consider their field limitations and complexities. Thus, my second policy recommendation emphasises the need for central government actors to increase SLBs' involvement in decision-making processes, ensuring that their voices and concerns are heard and taken into account.

Chapter 7 and 8 reveals that when policy problems arise, central, local, and street-level actors tend to shift blame onto each other to avoid being held accountable. This shows a significant issue—an unclear line of responsibility, where actors hold varying perceptions regarding their responsibilities in the implementation of the CCT programme. Thus, the third recommendation is that to clarify individual and shared responsibilities for effective implementation. Importantly, all policy actors involved need to foster collective capacities for shared learning and adaptation.

This study also demonstrates that some facilitators tend to attribute their inability to achieve targets to the recipients, while certain recipients feel that they receive limited assistance and support from the facilitators. This underscores the pressing need to enhance the quality of interaction between facilitators and recipients. Both local and central government actors should consider providing assistance and support to facilitators. In addition to the Family Development Sessions, drawing inspiration from Needham's study (2008) on the benefits of co-production, the Department of Social Affairs could establish a forum where facilitators and recipients can engage in dialogue to share their experiences and negotiate mutual expectations. Both facilitators and recipients would benefit from support in developing their communicative capacity (Bartels, 2015). Importantly, the forum also can be used to encourage both facilitators and recipients to engage in joint-problem solving. These actions can lead to an improved quality of relationship between facilitators (as service providers) and

recipients (as service users) and also foster increased empathy, trust, and a greater willingness to collaborate (Bartels, 2014, p.669).

Finally, in Chapter 5, this study delves into the ambitious bureaucratic reform strategy implemented by the Indonesian government, known as 'the grand design bureaucratic reform.' This strategy advocates a shift from the bureaucratic tradition to other governance traditions, such as performance-target or collaborative traditions, within a 5-year linear plan. The first recommendation is for the Indonesian government to adopt a more critical stance when considering Western governance ideas and when designing large-scale, often overly ambitious and unrealistic bureaucratic reforms. The Indonesian government should begin by critically recognising that transitioning between governance traditions is not a simplistic or chronological progression process as these traditions tend to overlap and compete with one another. By decentring the analysis to the micro-level practice, Chapters 6, 7, and 8 provide empirical insight into how the forceful adoption of Western governance ideas and uncritical bureaucratic reform to linearly shift the governance traditions is rife with challenges. In practice, it generates dilemmas for SLBs and contribute to the emergence of blame games, which, in turn, result in various unintended negative consequences. Merely 'imitating' Western governance traditions may, at times, prove highly counterproductive in addressing bureaucratic issues (Drechsler, 2015, p.107)

Therefore, it also would be beneficial for the Indonesian government to demonstrate sensitivity and appreciation for the local wisdom and cultural traditions deeply rooted in different regions of Indonesia (see, Saputra et al., 2018). Consequently, the government may need to devise contextually appropriate solutions that draw from local knowledge and culture to effectively address bureaucratic issues.

9.7 Limitations of the research and recommendations for further research agendas

After discussing the theoretical, analytical and practical contributions of this study, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations and propose directions for future research agenda.

Firstly, a limitation of this study arises from the temporal aspect of the data. Data collection occurred from early March 2021 to September 2021 where facilitators and local actors were grappling with uncertainty, confusion, and conflicts arising from new instructions regarding the synchronisation of CCT recipient data. Consequently, dominant themes revolved around facilitator frustration due to these instructions, the complexity of their work, unexpected targets and deadlines, unclear responsibilities, and blame games involving various actors, including SLBs. These findings are reflective of the context within a particular window of time. Therefore, future research should explore SLBs' practices, dilemmas, and blame dynamics under varying policies, programmes, and contextual circumstances.

Moreover, conducting fieldwork amid a global pandemic introduced disruptions and practical issues, impacting data comprehensiveness. For example, I faced difficulties, such as being unable to conduct in-person interviews with some recipients, leading to a shift from in-person to online data collection methods. Thus, scholars planning fieldwork in pandemic conditions should anticipate and adapt to such constraints, emphasising flexibility in data collection methods.

Using a single-case study research design, this study reveals the complex interrelationship among street-level discretion, relational dynamics, and strategies for avoiding blame. The study has demonstrated that blame games emerge as fundamental factors that shape the behavior and practices of SLBs. This study also highlights the relative scarcity of discussions surrounding blame within the existing literature on street-level bureaucracy. Consequently, this study sets the stage for further research agendas aimed at exploring the dynamics of shifting blame and how SLBs practice, discretionary decision-making, and interactions with other policy actors involved in the policy implementation process are shaped by such blame games and interrogated through the lens of the theory of blame. This presents a novel focal point for the analysis of SLBs' discretionary practices and relational dynamics. It is also important to note that while the concept of accountability is closely connected to strategies for mitigating blame, this study does not explore deeply into the element of

accountability. Thus, an additional research agenda could delve into the multifaceted analysis of street-level accountability and its intersection with practices for avoiding blame, elucidating how these aspects collectively shape the practices of SLBs.

Another limitation of this study is related to its primary focus on analysing street-level practice within one profession: social workers. Previous research has argued that different professional backgrounds among SLBs can lead to variations in their choice of coping mechanisms (Tummers *et al.*, 2015) and their approach when dealing with dilemmas (van Gestel, Kuiper and Hendriks, 2019). This suggests that various professions shape how SLBs respond to the circumstances they encounter. Additionally, the exposure of actors to public scrutiny and media influences their perception of the risk of being blamed (Hood, 2011). These insights imply that there may be differences in how SLBs strategically exercise their discretion from other professions in response to blame games. Thus, it would be beneficial for future research to analyse blame avoidance practices among SLBs in different professions. Further studies could also conduct comparative analyses to explore similarities and differences in blame avoidance between social workers and other types of SLBs.

Furthermore, in Chapter 8, this research has identified several unintended consequences of blame games for the SLBs, recipients, and the CCT programme. Given the qualitative nature of this research, the interpretation of such implications is presented in a thick descriptive manner without employing statistical analysis. Building upon the findings of this study, future research could employ different research design by formulating and testing hypotheses, such as whether SLBs who perceive a need to implement high-risk programmes or policies tend to abstain from exercising discretion. Additionally, other studies may consider conducting experiments or surveys to investigate correlations between SLBs' behavior in avoiding blame and various factors, including policy learning, citizens' perceptions of government performance, and levels of trust (or distrust) towards both the government and SLBs. Also, another limitation of the research design in this study is that I conducted research on participants rather than with participants. Future research could collaborate with them to

improve capacities to address implementation dilemmas and reduce the adverse effects of blame games

In the context of the analysis of SLBs' practices for avoiding blame presented in Chapter 7, I also explored the dynamics of the relationship between front-line supervisors and the facilitators. Specifically, I elucidated the manner in which facilitators strategically 'locked-in' their supervisors to deflect blame. While this study does not specifically focus on front-line supervisors' practices, future research agendas could explore blame attribution dynamics from their perspective or delve into the practices of front-line supervisors in the policy implementation process, an area scarcely discussed in the existing street-level bureaucracy literature (see, Hupe & Keiser, 2019).

Finally, this study has highlighted the importance of researching street-level bureaucracy within the Global South context to expand our understanding of street-level practices. It has interrogated how Indonesia's cultural tradition clash with traditions stemmed from Western ideas, resulting in dilemmas for SLBs. Furthermore, this study has illuminated how non-Western cultural elements ingrained in bureaucracy shape SLBs' practices, discretionary decision-making, and relationality. Hence, utilising this study's findings as a foundation to argue the significance of non-Western cultural traditions embedded in a governance system in shaping SLBs' practices, further research agendas need to continue to further explore the complex relationship between cultural traditions and the dilemmas faced by SLBs as this area of discussion remains underrepresented in the literature on street-level bureaucracy specifically and in public administration more broadly. Further studies also need to investigate in what ways non-Western cultural traditions can shape SLBs' discretionary decision and their relationships with citizens and different actors, particularly in other Global South contexts. To enhance our understanding of discretionary practices at the street level, future studies should also conduct comparative research between countries, including both Global South and Global North, or among different Global South nations. Such comparative

studies should seek to investigate how the similarities and differences in these countries' cultural traditions, as embedded in their governance systems, shape SLBs' practices .

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Index and component cash transfer of the *Program Keluarga Harapan* 2015-2020

Component of Cash Transfer	Amount of PKH Cash Payment per year (IDR)					
	2013	2015	2016	2017/2018	2019	2020
A. Regular Cash Payment/Households						
Regular	300.000	500.000	-	500.000	550.000	-
PKH Access	-	-	-	-	1.000.000	-
B. Cash Payment for each category in one household						
Pregnant Woman	1.000.000	1.000.000	1.200.000	Flat system: 1.890.000/ household/year if they have the category of Children (under five years old) Elementary Student Junior High School Student Senior High School Student	2.400.000	3.000.000
Children (under five years old)	-	-	-		2.400.000	3.000.000
Elementary Student	500.000	450.000	450.000		900.000	900.000
Junior High School Student	1.000.000	750.000	750.000		1.500.000	1.500.000
Senior High School Student	-	1.000.000	1.000.000	And 2.000.000/ household/year if they have category of Disability Elderly	2.000.000	2.000.000
Disability	-	-	-		2.400.000	2.400.000
Elderly	-	-	-		2.400.000	2.400.000
Minimum of cash transfer/household	800.000	950.000	450.000		1.450.000	900.000
Maximum of cash transfer/household	2.800.000	3.700.000	3.950.000		10.150.000	10.800.000
Mechanism to distribute the benefit	Cash, directly collected at post office	Cash, directly collected at post office	Cash, directly collected at post office	Cash, directly collected at post office	Non-cash, transferred through selected bank	Non-cash, transferred through selected bank

Appendix 2. Eligibility components and criteria for participants of the CCT programme

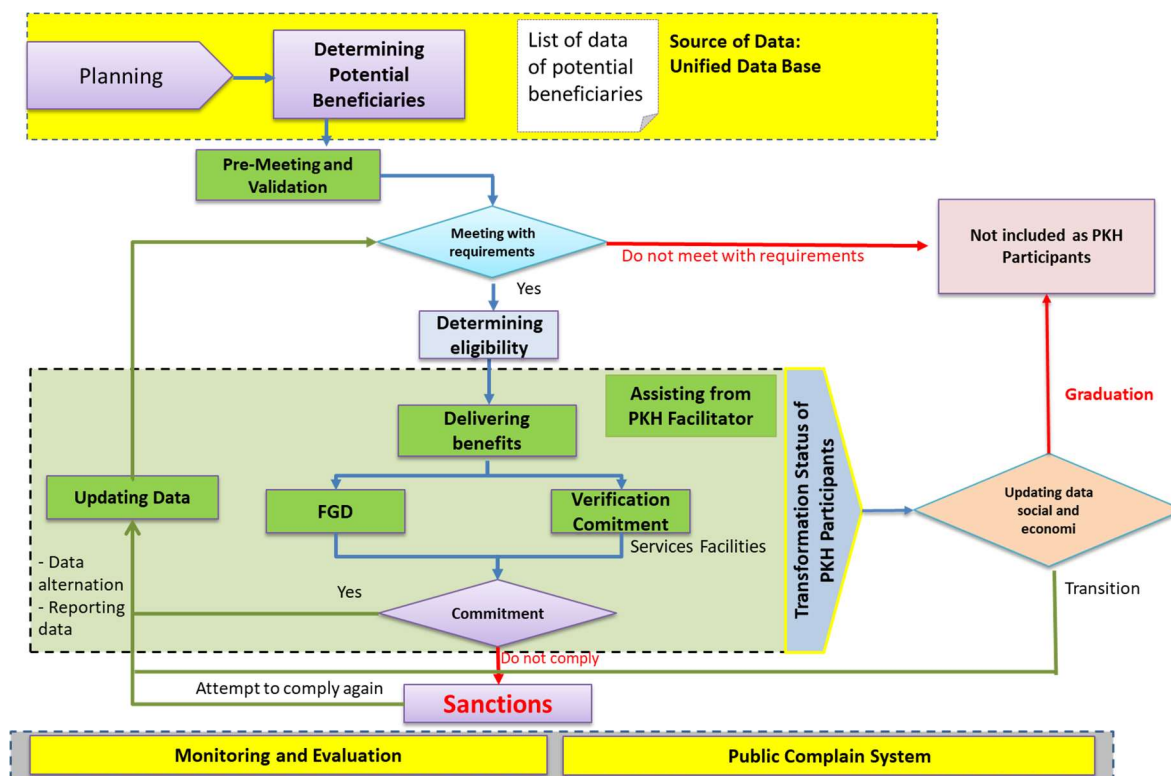
Components	Criteria
Health	- Pregnant/breastfeeding mother; and/or - Child/children up until 6 years old
Education	- Elementary students - Junior-high school student - Senior high school student; and/or - Child/children between 6-21 years old who have not finished yet 12 years compulsory education
Social Welfare	- Elderly starts from 60 years and above; and/or - Severely disabled

Source: Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs number 1 of 2018.

Appendix 3. Conditionality for the CCT's participants

Components	The PKH's conditionality
Health	- Pregnant mothers: examine and consult their condition at minimum 4 times in their pregnancy period to health facilities; examine post-delivery condition at least 42 days after delivery. - Child/Children 0 – 11 months: to examine and consult children conditions at minimum three times in the first month, provide exclusive lactation for children at least in the first six months, examine children's weight and height regularly every month, receive Vitamin A at minimum once between 6-11 months and monitoring children's development condition at minimum twice a year. - Child/children 1-5 years old: to receive additional immunization, examine children's weight and height at minimum twice a year and get vitamin A twice a year - Child/children 5-6 years old: to examine children's weight and height and monitor children's development condition at minimum twice a year.
Education	Child/children must be enrolled in educational institutions with a minimum of 85% of school attendance on an effective day of school and must receive 12 years minimum of compulsory education.
Social Welfare	- Severe disability: family members or caregivers of severe disability must take care of and ensure to examine the health condition of the disability at minimum once a year by accessing home visit service. - Elderly above 60 years old: to ensure regularly examine health conditions and utilize elderly health care services and daycare services (social community activities in the neighbourhood) at minimum once a year.

Appendix 4: The CCT's implementation mechanism



Appendix 5: Participants for unstructured interviews

List of interviewees				
Group of Participants for Interview		Organisation	Actual interviewees	Methods to interview
(Key) Street-level bureaucrats	CCT Facilitators	Department of Social Affairs	15 (repeated 6 facilitators, each for one interview)	In person and online (WhatsApp call, facebook call, and Zoom)
(other) street-level bureaucrats	Teacher	Department of Education	1	In person
	Village health worker	Department of Health	1	In person
	District Social Welfare Workers	Department of Social Affairs	1	In person
	Sub-district officers	Department of Government Administration	2	In person
Street-level supervisors	Coordinator area of CCT	Department of Social Affairs	1 (repeated 2 interviews)	In person
	Former coordinator area of CCT	-	1	In person

	Former supervisor of CCT facilitators	Department of Social Affairs	1	In person
Officers of Department of Social Affairs	Head of Department	Department of Social Affairs	1	In person and online (Zoom)
	previous of sub-division of social assistance	Department of Social Affairs	1 (repeated 2 interviews)	In person
	sub-division of social assistance	Department of Social Affairs	1	In person
	The DoSA officers	Department of Social Affairs	1	In person
	Data poverty operator	Department of Social Affairs	1	In person
Local government Officers	Members of technical coordinator team of CCT at Sukabumi City	Department of Health	1	In person
		Department of Education	1	In person
Central Government Actors	Staff of directorate of family's social security	Ministry of Social Affairs	1	Online (Zoom)
	Staff of directorate of family's social security	Ministry of Social Affairs	1 (Group interview)	Online (Zoom)
	Director for Population Planning and Social Security	Ministry of National Development and planning	1	Online (Zoom)
Other local departments	Head division of population's data and information	officer of Population and Civil Registration Agency	1	In person
	Sub-division of empowerment for small and medium enterprises	officer of Department of Small and Medium Enterprise	1	In person
Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries of PKH	-	6	In person
Members of community	Head of Village	-	2 (repeated 1 interviews)	In person and online (WhatsApp call)
	Members of community	-	2	In person
Total numbers of interview			45	

Appendix 6: Key topics for interviewing

Questions for group of street-level bureaucrats

- Themes: General questions about CCT programme
Questions:
 1. Could you explain what are the aims of CCT programme?
 2. How has the CCT programme developed since 2007 in your experience?
Probing on: alternations within the programme, how they respond with any changes within the programme, since they are local actors, how adequate information that they received about those alternations (are they well-informed?)
- Theme: Describing the current role of street-level actors (e.g. CCT facilitators, village health worker, teacher, district social welfare workers, facilitators from other poverty programmes, sub-district officers)
Questions:
 1. Could you describe the circumstances in which you first started as a CCT facilitator?
 2. What is a typical workday for you? Could you talk me through it in detail?
Probing on their tasks in each stage of CCT implementation process (e.g. deciding eligibility, conducting family development session, or exclusion process of recipients from the programme) and their role within CCT programme
 3. In your opinion, does your role differ from what you think the role of CCT facilitator should be?
Probing on their expectation regarding their role as CCT facilitators and how those expectation actually put into practices.
- Themes: governmental traditions that they work within
Questions:
 1. Could you explain the role of regulations or rules for you in your decision-making process at day to day work?
 2. Could you give me concrete example about the situation when you have to use or not use regulations in your work?
Probing on the reasons behind their decision to follow (or not to) follow the regulations.
 3. Could you describe your involvement within decision-making process of CCT programme?
Probing on how their voice is heard (or not) during meeting with managers or higher-level officials, their type of interaction with their supervisors or managers.
 4. Could you describe about how do you report your work to your supervisor/manager?
Probing on: are there any targets in achieving their works? What are the targets that they have to attain and in what kind of activities? (for instance: CCT facilitators might have to ensure that recipient get 100% their benefits, target to ensure that recipients follow behavioral conditions, how many FDS per month that they require hold, target to update data of recipients, target to recheck all data from central governments during eligibility process). Are there any punishments for CCT facilitator if they cannot achieve the targets?

5. In what ways do you interact with other 'actors'?
Probing on: On what activities and how they interact with village health worker or teacher in ensuring behavioral conditions of recipients, on what activities and how they coordinate with other social workers or facilitators and for what purposes.
 6. What do you (and they) do to coordinate your efforts?
 7. What do they (and you) do to hold you accountable for your work?
- Themes: Interaction with recipients
Questions:
 1. How do you view the recipient of the CCT programme? Could describe what recipients' role within this programme?
 2. How is the programme viewed by the wider public?
 3. How do recipients engage with the CCT programme?
Probing on in what activities that they are involved, intensity or degree of their involvement (do they only attend the activities and just 'be quite' or they are actively involved?)
 4. Could you describe the situations in which you interact with recipients? For instance, what happens during family development sessions?
 5. Could you give an example of how the CCT program has influenced beneficiaries' lives?
 - Themes: Tensions and problems during CCT implementation
Questions:
 1. Could you remember any problematic/challenging situation in your work as CCT facilitator? Could you describe about this situation, about what happened?
 2. In terms of regulations of CCT programme, could you describe how clear the regulations to handle all situations during CCT implementation?
Probing on regulations vs real practice in the field, how they use professional judgment or use discretion in tackling such circumstances.
 3. Have you experienced any difficulties or conflicting situations in implementing various regulations related with CCT programme? Could you explain in detail to me about your experience?
Probing on any conflicting or tensions within substantive of regulations or how the substantive of CCT regulations may conflict with one another, how they respond to this situation.
 4. What is the most challenging situation that you have experienced in your role with the CCT programme?
 5. What is the most important lesson you have learned based on your experience with the CCT programme?

Questions for group of managers

- Themes: General questions about CCT programme
Questions:
 1. Could you explain what are the aims of CCT programme?
 2. How has the CCT programme developed since 2007 in your experience?

Probing on: alternations within the programme, how they respond with any changes within the programme, since they are local actors, how adequate information that they received about those alternations (are they well-informed?)

- Theme: Describing the current role of managers (e.g. Coordinator area of CCT, Head of division of social protection, Head of sub-division of social assistance)

Questions:

1. Could you describe the circumstances in which you first started in your role?
2. How did you get involved with the CCT programme?
3. What is a typical workday for you? Could you talk me through it in detail?

Probing on their tasks in CCT implementation process, how they use their time (mostly in the office or also they go to the field).

4. Could you describe what CCT facilitators do? how your role relates to the CCT facilitators?

- Themes: governmental traditions that they work within

Questions:

1. Could you explain the role of regulations or rules for you in your decision-making process at day to day work?
2. Could you give me concrete example about the situation when you have to use or not use regulations in your work?

Probing on the reasons behind their decision to follow (or not to) follow the regulations.

3. Could you describe your involvement within decision-making process of CCT programme?

Probing on how their relationship with central government actors in the process of decision making, in what area that they usually interact with central government in the context of CCT programme.

4. Could you describe CCT facilitators involvement within decision-making process of CCT programme?

Probing on how their relationship with CCT facilitators, in what type of activities that CCT facilitators are usually being involved in the process of decision making (e.g. about target that CCT facilitators have to achieve, are they involved).

5. Could you describe about how do CCT facilitators report their work to you as supervisor/manager?

Probing on: are there any targets that CCT facilitators have to achieve? What are the targets that they have to attain and in what kind of activities? Are there any punishments for CCT facilitator if they cannot achieve the targets?

6. In what ways do you interact with other 'actors'?

Probing on: On what activities and how they interact with other actors from related departments (health or education), ask about 'technical coordinator team of CCT' at Sukabumi City e.g. the purposes of the team, how this team coordinate (only meeting every 3 months or is there another coordination mechanism?)

7. What do you (and they) do to coordinate your efforts?

8. What do they (and you) do to hold you accountable for your work?

- Themes: Their perception about CCT facilitators and recipients

Questions:

1. Could you describe the situations in which CCT facilitators interact with recipients?
Probing on type of activities and how often that usually CCT facilitators interact with recipients
2. Could you describe how CCT facilitators interact with recipients?
Probing on how close they are, how CCT facilitators treat recipients, any challenging or difficulties situations that CCT facilitators usually rise to managers when they interact with recipients
3. Could you describe what skills do you think that CCT facilitators should have in implementing CCT programme?
Probing how CCT facilitators current performances, in what aspects that CCT facilitators need to be improved, any training provided to improve CCT facilitators' skills.
4. How do you view the recipient of the CCT programme? Could describe what recipients' role within this programme?
5. How is the programme viewed by the wider public?
6. How do recipients engage with the CCT programme?
Probing on in what activities that they are involved, intensity or degree of their involvement (do they only attend the activities and just 'be quite' or they are actively involved?)
7. Could you give an example of how the CCT programme has influenced beneficiaries' lives?

- Themes: Tensions and problems during CCT implementation

Questions:

1. Could you remember any problematic/challenging situation in your work as managers or supervisors? Could you describe about this situation, about what happened?
2. In terms of regulations of CCT programme, could you describe how clear the regulations to handle all situations during CCT implementation?
Probing on regulations vs real practice in the field, how they use professional judgment or use discretion in tackling such circumstances.
3. Have you experienced any difficulties or conflicting situations in implementing various regulations related with CCT programme? Could you explain in detail to me about your experience?
Probing on any conflicting or tensions within substantive of regulations or how the substantive of CCT regulations may conflict with one another, how they respond to this situation.
4. What is the most challenging situation that you have experienced in your role with the CCT programme?
5. What is the most important lesson you have learned based on your experience with the CCT programme?

Questions for group of Policy Makers of CCT programme

- Themes: General questions about CCT programme

Questions:

1. Could you describe how CCT programme emerged?
Probing on relation between emerging of CCT and previous poverty program e.g. Unconditional cash transfer programme (UCT).
2. Could you explain the key purposes of CCT programme?
3. How was the process of formulating CCT programme? Could you talk me through it in detail?
4. How has the CCT programme developed since 2007 in your experience?
Probing on alternations within the programme

- Themes: Involvement of other stakeholders and local government in policy making process of CCT

Questions:

1. Could you describe who were key stakeholders involved in the process of formulating CCT programme?
2. How was the involvement of local government during formulating of CCT programme? In which ways were they involved?

- Themes: Their perception about CCT facilitators

Questions:

1. Could you describe what roles of CCT facilitator in implementing CCT programme?
2. What quality that should we look for CCT facilitator? Would you tell me what makes an ideal CCT facilitator?

- Themes: Challenging/problems

Questions:

1. What is the most challenging situation that you have experienced in your role with the CCT programme?
2. What is the most important lesson you have learned based on your experience with the CCT programme?

Questions for group of beneficiaries of CCT programme

- Themes: recipients' involvement within CCT programme

Questions:

1. Could you describe the circumstances in which you first heard about the CCT programme?
2. Could you explain the process on how you become a recipient of the programme?
3. Could you explain about your understanding about the programme?
Probing on who gives them information about rules of the programme, do they have sufficient information about their conditionalities (obligations and rights), in what ways CCT facilitators (or other actors) inform them about regulation of CCT.
4. Other than receiving cash transfer, could you explain other CCT activities that you are involved with?

Probing on type of activities, frequency of activities, street-level actors involved (other than CCT facilitators), their awareness of the activities.

- Themes: Interaction between recipients and street-level actors
Questions:
 1. Could you describe the situations in which you interact with CCT facilitators? For instance, what happens during family development sessions?
Probing on materials that they receive during FDS (or KUBE), any opportunities for them in deciding what materials that they want to have during FDS, their ability to express their opinion.
 2. Could describe about what difficulties have you experienced while interacting with CCT facilitators?
Probing on language that CCT facilitators use while interaction with them, how they feel about the relationship that they have with CCT facilitators (is it close or rigid?)
 3. Could you explain in what ways do you interact with other officials?
- Themes: benefits of CCT programme
 1. How has the CCT programme influenced your life?
Probing on positive (or may be negative) impact of the programme
 2. How has the CCT programme influenced the lives of other people you know?
 3. Could you describe about the things that you would like to change about CCT programme?

Appendix 7 Shadowing activities

No	Dates	Activity	Place	Duration	Participants involved
1	1 March 2021	Coordination activity between the PKH facilitators and the Head of sub-district	District office	1 hour	CCT facilitator
2	2 March 2021	The FDS activity at one of sub-district (the FDS activity is combined with the health education activity)	Prayer Hall (Mushola)	2 hours	CCT facilitator
3	3 March 2021	Monitoring and evaluation process related to the target of data synchronisation (zoom meeting). Multi-stakeholders from other departments.	DoSA office	1 hour	A front-line supervisor
4	5 March 2021	Signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the PKH and one of college in the Sukabumi to collaborate in implementing 'Ayo Kuliah' (let's go to college') programme for the recipients.	Mobile: STKIP-PGRI Collage and The Facilitator's house	1 hour	CCT facilitators
		Discussing with other facilitators regarding the letter from the central government about target to update and synchronise the data		1 hour	CCT facilitator

		The Facilitator activity in dealing with the data synchronisation and target		3 hours	CCT facilitator
5	15 March 2021	Coordination activity between the PKH facilitators and the head of social welfare sub-division	District office	1 hour	CCT facilitator
6	23 March 2021	Monitoring and evaluation process related to the target of data synchronisation. Actors: the PKH facilitators, the Coordinator of PKH, The DoSA officers	DoSA office	1 hour	A front-line supervisor
7	26 March 2021	Informal coordination meeting, attended by the facilitators, the district social worker, sub-district officers	Sub-district office	1 hour	CCT facilitator
8	31 March 2021	E-Waroeng KUBE activity	e-Waroeng KUBE, Cisarua Village	1 hour	CCT facilitator
9	1 April 2021	Activity of the Family Development Session	Hall of sub-district office	1 and half hours	CCT facilitator
10	22 April 2021	Activity of the Family Development Session	The PKH recipient's home	1 hour	CCT facilitator
11	8 May 2021	'The PKH sharing' activity (innovative activity that is not included within 'the formal regulation' or 'formal business process')	Mobile: Praying hall, the recipient's house	3 hours	CCT facilitator
12	21 May 2021	Distribution of 'social welfare card' and bank account for the PKH recipients	One of Bank in Sukabumi City	3 hours	A front-line supervisor
13	30 May 2021	The facilitators' weekly meeting: seeing their discussion related to the data synchronisation	The DoSA office	3 hours	CCT facilitator
14	26 May 2021	The facilitators meeting: the coordinator explains 'the new regulation about independent graduation' based on zoom-meeting results with the Central Government	The DoSA office	2 hours	CCT facilitator
		Activity of the Family Development Session	The recipient's home	2 hours	CCT facilitator
15	27-May 2021	The process of PKH independent graduation. Attending the recipient's house to inform (and give her understanding) about independent graduation	The recipient's home	3 hours	CCT facilitator

16	2 June 2021	Coordination with the sub-district officers, meeting with the library officers, visiting recipient's house to proceed the independent graduation, and visiting the community leader.	Mobile: sub-district office, house of recipients, community leader's house.	5 hours	CCT facilitator
Total Hours				36,5 hours	

Appendix 8: Policy documents analysed

No	Type of documents	Total documents	Source
1	Policy documents related to Indonesia's bureaucratic reform policy.	10	Official website of Central Authority Ministry of Law and Human Rights of The Republic Of Indonesia. https://jdih.go.id/ accessed on 27 July 2020.
2	Regulations related to the CCT	3	Official website of the Ministry of Social Affairs, https://kemensos.go.id/laporan , accessed on 27 July 2020.
3	the CCT's technical guidelines	10	Official website of the Ministry of Social Affairs https://kemensos.go.id/laporan , accessed on 15 March 2021.
4	Power Point Presentation related to the CCT	8	Official website of the Ministry of Social Affairs https://kemensos.go.id/laporan , accessed on 15 March 2021.
5	Policy document related to the Integrated social welfare data (poverty data)	3	Official website of the Ministry of Social Affairs https://kemensos.go.id/laporan , accessed on 20 March 2021.
6	the technical guidelines related to the Integrated social welfare data (poverty data)	4	Official website of the Ministry of Social Affairs https://kemensos.go.id/laporan , accessed on 20 March 2021.
7	Official letters from the central government related to the CCT	8	The Department of social affairs
8	Official letters from the mayor related to budgeting	4	The Department of social affairs
9	Budget execution documents	4	The Department of Social Affairs.
Total documents		54	

Appendix 9:

Nvivo codebook: Conflicting different paradigms and street-level bureaucrat's practices.

Code	Files	References
Collaborating	18	43
Enablers to collaboration		
Having personal networking	8	14
Trusting other departments	4	7
Previous working experience	5	12
Having the existing team	3	6
Problems of collaboration		
Conflict with other actors	3	7
Discontinued information and socialisation	6	14
Lack of budget and networking	11	19
Dominated by top-officers	7	12
Previous 'bad' experiences	6	10
Rotation of working place	3	6
Lack of commitment	9	20
Sectoral egoism	19	30
Treating collaborations as formality	5	11
Lack of SLBs' involvement	7	13
Responsibility denial	3	5
<i>Ewuh pakewuh</i>	3	4
Purposes of collaborations		
Adding value to the programme	10	29
Exchanging benefits with other programmes	6	10
Exchanging information to ensure compliance	12	25
Following up community's needs	7	15
Gaining trust	8	11
Getting feedback and information	11	24
Integrating with other programmes	3	5
Getting stamp and sign	4	9
Minimising cost	3	10
Helping recipients to be better	8	19
Complexity of working condition	34	98
Discretion of SLBs		
Reason for not or engaging with discretion	41	113
Adjusting with field and recipients' conditions	14	34
Cutting the complex procedure	2	4
Having empathy for citizens	4	13
Professional judgment	7	18
Making work easier	5	12
Adhering to cultural tradition	5	9
Fearing to be blamed	6	11
Ways to engage with discretion	40	101

Strictly following rules	6	17
Bending the code of conduct	2	7
Being flexible in applying criteria of the poor	4	18
Being leeway in giving punishment	6	11
Bending rule for eligibility	9	20
Modifying FDS activities	6	21
Modifying validation process	7	11
Modifying home visit process	3	7
Dilemmas of SLBs		
Collaborating and adhering to <i>ewuh pakewuh</i>	9	12
Collaborating and chasing targets	19	35
Following regulations and maintaining cultural aspect	14	30
Following regulations and chasing targets	24	67
Adhering to the hierarchical structure and collaborating	12	18
Chasing targets and performances and adhering to <i>ewuh pakewuh</i>	11	23
Feeling the role displacement	6	16
Gaming behaviour		
Manipulating reports	9	23
Manipulating verification process	6	11
Manipulating FDS activities	4	9
Governance paradigms		
Hierarchy structure	11	12
Chasing targets	21	44
Indicators of standard performance	17	27
Indicators of the programme effectiveness	9	16
Too many SOPs	14	19
Cultural dimensions	15	22
Future hopes for the PKH		
Reasonable task burden for facilitators	13	17
More involvement of facilitators in decision making	10	15
Changing regulation about the PKH graduation	8	12
Increasing the quality of the e-PKH system	7	11
Receiving more training	8	14
Asking before instructing	9	13
Integrating data of the poor from all departments	3	9
Impact of blame	1	2
Pandemic effects on the PKH implementation	7	19
Identities of street-level actors		
Asset-Mapping	17	39
Building emotional closeness and trust	6	15
Two-ways communication	4	9
Mapping recipients' potential	9	17
Empowering recipients	5	14
Initiating collaboration and using network	7	15
Achieving long-term programme's goals	4	5
Making initiative decision	5	12

Changing-mindset	15	33
Achieving short-term programme's goals	6	10
Seeing recipients as instrumental 'partner'	6	11
Focusing on ensuring recipients' compliance to the conditionalities	8	13
Heart-to-heart conversation	5	7
Stamp and sign	11	21
Having formal relationship with recipients	6	10
Seeing recipients as passive users	5	8
Focusing on following the programme's guidelines	7	14
Focusing on delivering the cash	7	11
Formality collaboration	5	8
Prefer not to modify regulations	5	11
Problems during the PKH implementation		
Conflicting and frequently changing regulations	7	26
Unclear guidelines	8	11
Overlapping data across departments	5	15
Too many workloads for facilitators	12	31
Lack of commitment from other departments	5	14
Lack of socialisation of the programme	6	16
Lack of coordination amongst related actors	7	17
Lack of training for facilitators	4	15
Mistargeting programmes' recipients	11	47
Creating social jealousy	13	20
Putting all implementation tasks to facilitators	11	18
Unclear line of responsibilities	5	11
Lack of other actors' understanding about the PKH	6	9
Unable to meet the target graduation	13	27
Lack of trust towards officers and facilitators	4	14
Distrust amongst related actors	4	12
Perception facilitators about the programme recipient		
As a person who has ability	8	19
As a partner to achieve the programme's aims	11	21
As passive recipients	5	8
Active and less active SLBs	7	18
Responding to the dilemmas		
Being passive and not initiating collaboration	8	13
Choosing meeting target first	14	22
Feeling cultural aspect is more important	9	11
Following SOP strictly	8	14
Prioritising collaboration	4	5
Trying to juggle collaboration and target	6	7
Roles of facilitators		
Assisting recipients to follow the conditionalities	13	34
Changing mindset	8	10
Conducting home-visit	4	6

Coordinating with other actors	6	9
Empowering recipients	8	19
Ensuring the accuracy data	5	8
Ensuring the PKH's cash delivery process	6	10
Deciding eligibility	10	14
Validating data	7	13
Target graduation	18	37
Why target graduation is not met		
Unrealistic to be achieved	6	10
Unclear guidelines	7	14
Characteristics of recipients	10	16
Avoiding being blamed	6	9
Covid-19 pandemic	3	5
Family closeness	8	10
Difficult to coordinate with other actors	3	5
Emotional closeness with recipients	4	4
Lack of time	2	3
Lack of training or support	5	9
Target routine of SLBs		
Conducting FDS	11	15
Monthly report	15	20
Updating data routine	13	16
Verification	12	21
Validation	4	7
The blame games		
Being scapegoated	12	23
Facilitators are blamed for		
Being 'inactive'	6	18
Causing cash delivery problems	5	10
Causing mistargeting recipients and inaccuracy data	16	23
Failed to empower the recipients	6	12
Lack of coordination	3	8
Not achieving programme's targets	6	10
SLBs' blame avoidance strategies		
Blaming complexity of work conditions	22	45
Blaming the limited supports	8	15
Blaming the unreadiness of the system	9	19
Blaming short and unexpected deadline	5	11
Blaming unclear and contradicting of the programme's aims	12	16
Shifting blame to other actors	13	22
Blaming sub-district officers in DTKS process	8	17
Shifting back blame to policy makers	12	18
Using discretion to blame spreading	12	21
Blame spreading to front-line supervisors	11	13
Blame spreading to other SLBs	6	16
Blaming the recipients	11	20
Questioning the achievability of targets	8	14

Blaming unfairness of performance indicators	3	6
Using coordination structure	8	20
Rigidly following the rules or instruction	7	11
Responsibility denial	5	9
The unexpected target of SLBs	20	32
Problems with unexpected target		
Overlooking facilitators' burdens	8	12
Having no training	9	11
Lack of coordination	11	16
Unclear information/instruction	14	19
Lack of time	10	13
Unsupportive/unprepared ITC	6	9

Appendix 10 The List of memos

No	Memo title	Words	Reflection
1	Research report (combining different themes in one memo)	12,317	As this was my first time writing a memo, I found the process to be awkward, confusing, and overwhelming. I also realised that I had made some mistakes in my first memo-writing by including several 'big themes' in one memo, which made it difficult to convey a clear focus, structure, and main insights of the findings. However, I view this as a learning experience, so I can improve my memo-writing skills going forward.
2	Memo from theme: Modifying the regulation.	13,892	In this memo, I have identified various types of discretion exercised by facilitators. However, I have noticed that the discussion of discretionary practices has been presented uniformly for all facilitators. At the time of writing this memo, I had not yet acknowledged or fully understood how the different types of facilitators may have distinct preferences in engaging with discretion.
3	Memo: As a service user, a partner, or a person with capability: Different street-level actors' narratives in perceiving their recipients and how the narratives influence their day-to-day practice.	9,596	Through the comparison of data and codes or codes and codes, this memo provides a detailed analysis of the distinct "pattern of practices" among various facilitators. Building upon the findings of previous memos, this memo highlights the diverse preferences of discretionary decisions for each type of facilitator.
4	Memo Target: routine and 'unexpected.'	9,753	This memo is focused on another crucial theme that discusses the pressure faced by SLBs due to different types of targets, which often leads to frustration and confusion.
5	Memo: The PKH's team of	7,846	This memo focuses on the perceptions of facilitators and other policy actors regarding coordination activities in the implementation of PKH. While the focus is not on the 'blame issue', the analysis of

	coordination: Turf war and lack of commitment		this memo provide insight into how facilitators and policymakers tend to hold each other responsible for the lack of coordination, indicating the presence of blame games.
6	Blame games in the implementation of the PKH: Analysing street-level actors' blame avoidance strategies	16,335	This memo centers on a significant and unexpected theme; the blame issue. Through an in-depth analysis that draws on existing literature, I analyse different blame avoidance strategies employed by SLBs. My supervisor commented my work, noting that I had 'gold struck' by successfully identifying a key theme that has a significant impact on the daily practice, performance, and relationships of the PKH; that is blame games. This memo thus lays the groundwork for further conceptual development of the blame issue in this research, indicating its potential for further exploration.
7	Blame avoidance behaviours (BAB): How actors' perspective shapes their BAB and how bureaucratic cultures motivates actors to engage in blame games	12,111	This memo presents a further analysis of the blame issue. I analyse SLBs and other policy actors' perception on the policy problems that are commonly regarded as blame-generating events and highlight how the bureaucratic cultures embedded in the PKH serve to foster blame avoidance practices.
8	Narratives and the blame avoidance strategies of street-level and other policy actors	11,905	I attempted to create a more specific memo; focusing on narratives. Specifically, my analysis revealed the presence of five distinct narratives that shed light on how actors frame themselves and others in the context of blame avoidance practices.
9	Memo: Blame avoidance strategy, mode of governance, and its implication	9,411	In this memo, I can see a thread of connection between SLBs' blame avoidance practice and governance traditions. The contents of the memo reveal that the practice of blame avoidance is not a singular phenomenon; rather, it is closely intertwined with existing governance traditions. Notably, it reveals that the perception of blame among SLBs shape their adherence to specific governance traditions. Furthermore, it emphasises that these dilemmas and blame avoidance practices have the potential to engender adverse unintended consequences.

Appendix 11: Member-checking process

No	List Member Checking	Dates	Materials for member-checking	Strategy to do the member checking
1	FC1	15 May 2021		

	F8		Memo 4: Routine vs unexpected target	Meeting in-person (discussion over lunch)
2	FC1 DSA1	9 June 2021	Memo 5: Team coordination	Meeting in person
3	FC1 F1 F5 F6	28 July 2021	Memo 6: SLBs' blame avoidance strategies	Via WhatsApp phone Via WhatsApp phone Via zoom Via WhatsApp phone
4	FC1 DSA3 F1	30 August 2021 1 September 2021	Memo 7: Blame avoidance behaviours (BAB): How actors' perspective shapes their BAB and how bureaucratic cultures motivates actors to engage in blame games	Via WhatsApp phone Via WhatsApp phone Via WhatsApp voice notes (due to unstable internet connection)
5	F5 F1 FC1	29 October 2021 30 October 2021	Memo 9 Blame avoidance strategy, mode of governance, and its implication	Via WhatsApp phone

Appendix 12: Tasks and functions of the facilitators in *the Program Keluarga Harapan*

Key Tasks	Routine Tasks	Extension or developing tasks	Supporting tasks
- Preparation tasks before the process of the cash transfer delivery: conducting a pre-meeting PKH, socialisation PKH programme to related stakeholders and potential recipients, dan validation process. - Follow-up tasks after the pre-meeting: conducting a home visit to the potential recipients that do not attend the pre-meeting, reporting results of pre-meeting within a week to the local government level, accompanying recipients to their 'first attendance' to the health and education services.	- Ensuring the recipients receive their cash transfer to the right persons, at the right time and the right amount. - Updating data - Facilitating and solving complaints - Conducting home-visit if one of the recipients do not attend the Family Development Sessions (the FDS) - Coordinating with related stakeholders in the area and with health and education workers and facilities - Conducting the FDS and the PKH group meeting monthly - Verifying the recipients' commitments by having routine visitation to the health and education facilities (monthly) - Motivating the recipients to comply with their conditionalities and utilise the cash correctly and productively. - Facilitating recipients to obtain other social assistance programmes (complementarity programme) - Reporting all the routine tasks and activities to the Department of Social Affairs.	- Coordinating with respected people in the neighbourhood (traditional and religious leaders) to support the implementation of the PKH. - Collaborating with village social institutions (e.g. the family welfare movement (the PKK) to increase recipients' awareness of family aspects. - Encouraging and developing a spirit of entrepreneurship of the recipients by introducing productive economic activity - Identifying resource and potency within the facilitator's working area that can be utilised to support poverty alleviation activities. - Building synergy and collaborating with other programmes such as developing a small and micro economic programme, the Joint Business Group for small business (the KUBE), and other relevant programmes.	Increasing self-capacity in communicating, negotiating, building networking during the PKH implementation

Modified from: The handbook of the PKH facilitators, 2013 and Ministry of Social Affairs the Minister Social Affairs Regulation No.1/year 2018