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Children’s Experiences of Flooding in Surakarta, Indonesia

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Emergency Management

at Massey University, Wellington
New Zealand.

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2011
Abstract

This thesis presents a rich contextual discussion of the social effects of flooding on children who live near the Bengawan Solo River in Central Java, Indonesia. Research was conducted with thirty-two children between the ages of nine and thirteen who were exposed to a moderate flood event in December 2007 in the municipality of Surakarta. This event and the Indo-Javanese culture provide the context in which the children’s perspectives and personal experiences are understood.

Research revealed that in disaster situations where children are involved the cultural and social context and the geographic and circumstantial context matter. It was found that the cultural practice of *gotong royong*, the local government structure, and religious beliefs and practices increased their resilience, the interruption of education was a great concern, and the social condition of poverty increased children’s vulnerability and exacerbated the impacts of the flood. The physical geography of the flood event interacted with the geography of daily life, altering the physical landscape of the community and forcing the children to either adapt or suspend regular activities. The impacts of the flood during and after the event were affected by the circumstantial context of the event: the short duration and moderate intensity of the flood, the lack of serious injuries or deaths, the significant loss of possessions and income and the post-disaster environment which was characterised by adequate living conditions and extensive social support that contributed to children’s resilience.

While these aspects are relevant for both children and adults in disasters, children are social actors who have distinct and important capabilities that the disaster research field need to take into account. Children were identified as social actors in this study by their active participation in their peer culture and adult society, and the demonstration of their capabilities through the application of their knowledge of flooding. The recovery process was sped up by child participants’ contributions, and findings point towards research on the long-term resilience of the community being enhanced by involving children in disaster risk reduction activities.
Acknowledgements

I would like to first thank my supervisors, without whom this research would not have been possible. The extremely generous support of Professor David Johnston and his unwavering belief in a project that seemed almost impossible at the start enabled me to proceed with ease and confidence. Associate Professor Robin Peace took an engineer and turned her into a social scientist – without her patience and faithful guidance in the development of the research methodology, the analysis and the writing process I could not have produced this thesis. Professor Douglas Paton offered insightful ideas and theoretical knowledge that enriched the direction and shape of this research. I also want to acknowledge Professor Tim Davis for starting me off in the area of hazards research.

I am grateful to the School of Psychology at Massey University for accepting me into the PhD programme, and to Dr. Steven Humphries for assisting me with the statistical analysis. Many thanks go to the Geological Department of Canterbury University for hosting me over the duration of this research; special thanks to John Southward for fixing all my computer woes, Kerry Swanson for assisting with access to facilities, and Allison (Pat) Roberts for stocking the tea and milo supplies that kept me going each day. I have greatly appreciated the friendship and advice of Dr. Tom Wilson and Dr. Kate Pedley. I am also grateful for my various office colleagues that provided me with daily encouragement, synonyms, and made coming to ‘work’ enjoyable: Monica Gowan, Shaun Williams, Solene Pouget, Andy Mackenzie, Josh Radford, Simon Stewart and Josh Blackstock. I would like to acknowledge the Canterbury fault system for bringing my thesis to life before my eyes, and adding surprises and the ‘wobble’ effect to days spent writing.

The third group of people to thank are those in Indonesia. Firstly, thank you to Matthew Barus for teaching me my first words in Indonesian, for travelling with me and Mark Johnston on my first visit to Indonesia, and for being my ‘texting’ translator of random words. Thank you to the Lantu family for hosting me in Solo and becoming my Indonesian family, along the Anthonys – Dany, Nita, Riel, Gio and the future Pamela – whose assistance and wonderful friendship made daily life in Indonesia possible and fun. I’m grateful for the friendships and support of the Hangout Team and other teachers at Charis Playschool who helped me improve my Bahasa and cultural understanding. I want to acknowledge Wisma Bahasa language school in Yogyakarta and my teachers Niken, Itha
and Roro for their efforts in improving my language skills, and Dr. Rahmat Hidayat and Dr. Kwartarini Wahyu Yuniarti of the Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Gadjah Mada for their valuable insights into disaster research in Indonesia. Above all, I am indebted to Pak Paimun, Ibu Yuli and Maria for generously giving up their home (and patiently sitting outside) for several hours each week so the children could learn English and this research could happen. And to the amazing group of kids that I got to hang out with, thank you for sharing your time and lives with me.

The financial support of the Tertiary Education Commission’s Bright Futures TAD Scholarship, the Massey University School of Psychology Graduate Research Fund and the NZAID Postgraduate Field Research Award is gratefully acknowledged. In addition, recognition must be given to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Southern B, Application 09/24) for their review and approval of this research.

Lastly, I must thank the people that have supported me personally in this research. Thank you to my parents who have provided me with lifelong inspiration and encouragement, especially to Dad who took the editing of high school essays to a whole new level and faithfully proofread this thesis. Thanks to the Addington Crew for their support and encouragement, and to my flatmates who put up with crazy hours, saved leftovers and shared in small achievements – especially to my sister, Steph, who offered chocolate treats, hugs and edited random sections. Thank you to Maurice and Lisa Gardiner for setting up a makeshift office for me in their home after earthquake no. 3. To my dear friends and fellow future ‘doctors’, Kristen, Jodie and Sarah, thank you for your friendships which sustained me as I travelled the globe and hit highs and lows. And to the God who took me on a crazy adventure that I could not have possibly imagined and worked out every little detail in an astounding way, may this work honour You.
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<td>BNPB</td>
<td>Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (Indonesian National Disaster Management Agency)</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Children in a Changing Climate</td>
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<td>DRR</td>
<td>disaster risk reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>Rukun Tannga, small neighbourhood unit of 60-70 household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RW</td>
<td>Rukun Warga, local neighbour unit of ~700 households, composed of several RTs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UN-HABITAT</td>
<td>United Nations Human Settlements Programme</td>
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<td>UNISDR</td>
<td>United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction</td>
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<td>USGS</td>
<td>United States Geological Survey</td>
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*Quote Formatting*

(pseudonym, gender, age)  
e.g. (Bella, female, 9)

[ ... ]  
portion of individual quote removed

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portion of conservation removed

Number one., **pray** and  
bold used for emphasis of relevant portion