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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

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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 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.

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Table of Content

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	VII
GLOSSARY	IX
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 CHILDREN IN DISASTERS	2
1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION	6
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
1.4 BENEFITS OF RESEARCH	8
1.5 THESIS STRUCTURE	9
2 CONTEXT	10
2.1 OVERVIEW OF INDONESIA	10
2.1.1 <i>Geography</i>	10
2.1.2 <i>Demographics</i>	11
2.1.3 <i>Population Distribution</i>	12
2.1.4 <i>Political and Government Structure</i>	12
2.1.5 <i>Economy</i>	14
2.2 INDONESIAN CULTURE	14
2.2.1 <i>A Brief History of Indonesia</i>	15
2.2.2 <i>Indonesian Ideology</i>	19
2.2.3 <i>Javanese Culture</i>	21
2.2.4 <i>Religion</i>	23
2.2.5 <i>Family</i>	24
2.2.6 <i>Children</i>	26
2.2.7 <i>Social/Community Relationships</i>	26
2.2.8 <i>View of Nature and Natural Disasters</i>	27
2.3 NATURAL DISASTERS IN INDONESIA	30
2.3.1 <i>Flooding in Indonesia</i>	31
2.4 BENGAWAN SOLO RIVER BASIN	33
2.4.1 <i>Flooding of the Bengawan Solo River</i>	34
2.5 SURAKARTA	36
2.5.1 <i>Flooding in Surakarta</i>	37
2.6 DECEMBER 2007 FLOOD	39
2.6.1 <i>Flood Event at Research Site</i>	41
2.7 CONCLUSION	41
3 METHODOLOGY	43
3.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM	45
3.1.1 <i>Realist Ontology</i>	46
3.1.2 <i>A Social Constructionist Epistemology</i>	46

3.2	REFLEXIVE METHODOLOGY	48
3.3	RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN	52
3.4	RESEARCH DESIGN	54
3.4.1	<i>Research Team</i>	56
3.4.2	<i>A Priori Knowledge</i>	57
3.4.3	<i>Cultural Familiarization</i>	58
3.4.4	<i>Entry into the Community</i>	59
3.4.5	<i>Selection and Recruitment of Child Participants</i>	61
3.5	METHODS	62
3.5.1	<i>Methods Appropriate to a Reflexive Methodology</i>	63
3.5.2	<i>Nature of Participants</i>	64
3.5.3	<i>Practical Constraints</i>	65
3.6	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	65
3.6.1	<i>Interviews</i>	67
3.6.2	<i>Focused Group Interviews</i>	72
3.6.3	<i>Filming Observation</i>	75
3.6.4	<i>Questionnaires</i>	76
3.6.5	<i>Child-Centred Data Production</i>	78
3.7	ANALYSIS METHODS	83
3.7.1	<i>Content and Thematic Analysis</i>	84
3.7.2	<i>Statistical Analysis</i>	86
3.7.3	<i>Validation</i>	88
3.8	ANALYSIS PROCEDURE	93
3.8.1	<i>Open Coding</i>	94
3.8.2	<i>Axial Coding</i>	95
3.8.3	<i>Selective Coding</i>	96
3.9	ETHICS	96
3.9.1	<i>Power</i>	99
3.9.2	<i>Solo Researcher</i>	101
3.9.3	<i>Professional Relationships</i>	101
3.9.4	<i>Ethics Approval</i>	103
3.10	CRITIQUE	104
4	CULTURE, CHILDREN AND DISASTERS	110
4.1	CULTURE	110
4.1.1	<i>Culture Defined</i>	111
4.1.2	<i>Models of Culture</i>	113
4.1.3	<i>Characteristics of Cultures</i>	117
4.1.4	<i>Cultural Comparison</i>	121
4.2	CHILDREN	128
4.2.1	<i>Traditional Social Theories and Socialization</i>	129
4.2.2	<i>Sociology of Childhood</i>	133
4.3	CHILDREN IN NATURAL DISASTERS	139
4.3.1	<i>Vulnerabilities of Children</i>	140
4.3.2	<i>A Child's Disaster Experience</i>	141
4.3.3	<i>Contributions and Agency of Children</i>	149
4.4	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	151

5	RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	155
5.1	SOCIALLY AND CULTURALLY SPECIFIC PRACTICES, ATTITUDES AND CONDITIONS	156
5.1.1	<i>Gotong Royong</i>	157
5.1.2	<i>Local Government Organisation</i>	159
5.1.3	<i>Religion</i>	163
5.1.4	<i>Scholastic Orientation</i>	168
5.1.5	<i>Poverty</i>	172
5.2	SITES AND CIRCUMSTANCES	177
5.2.1	<i>Geography of Daily Life</i>	177
5.2.2	<i>Traumatic Exposure</i>	191
5.2.3	<i>Post-disaster Environment</i>	204
5.3	CHILDREN AS SOCIAL ACTORS	215
5.3.1	<i>Active Participation</i>	216
5.3.2	<i>Capability</i>	224
5.4	DISCUSSION	238
	<i>Gotong Royong</i>	238
	<i>Local Government Organisation</i>	239
	<i>Religion and Worldview</i>	240
	<i>Scholastic Orientation</i>	242
	<i>Poverty</i>	243
	<i>Geography of Daily Life</i>	245
	<i>Post-disaster Environment</i>	247
	<i>Participation in Adult Society</i>	248
	<i>Capabilities</i>	249
6	CONCLUSION	251
6.1	CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH	255
6.2	APPLICATIONS	260
6.3	LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH	263
6.4	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	264
7	REFERENCE	268

APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL

APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

APPENDIX C: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

List of Illustrations

Figures:

Figure 2-1: <i>Map of the Republic of Indonesia.</i>	11
Figure 2-2: <i>Administrative structure in Indonesia</i>	13
Figure 2-3: <i>Annual number of flood events in Indonesia from 1985 to present</i>	32
Figure 2-4: <i>Bengawan Solo River Basin</i>	33
Figure 2-5: <i>Regional Map of Surakarta City</i>	36
Figure 2-6: <i>Municipality of Surakarta and administrative precincts</i>	37
Figure 2-7: <i>Extent of flooding in Surakarta in 1966 and 2007</i>	38
Figure 2-8: <i>Bengawan Solo River Basin - December 2007 flood</i>	40
Figure 3-1: <i>Flow chart of research process</i>	55
Figure 3-2: <i>Example of statistical analysis data entry</i>	87
Figure 3-3: <i>Descriptive statistical analysis results of priority lists</i>	88
Figure 3-4: <i>Data analysis process</i>	93
Figure 3-5: <i>Preliminary categories for coding data</i>	95
Figure 3-6: <i>Secondary categories and emergent themes</i>	96
Figure 4-1: <i>Ishii's cultural model</i>	113
Figure 4-2: <i>Hofstede's cultural "Onion Diagram"</i>	114
Figure 4-3: <i>"The Stabilizing of Culture Patterns"</i>	119
Figure 4-4: <i>Factors affecting a child's experience of disaster</i>	143
Figure 5-1: <i>Child participant drawing (Leon, male, age 12)</i>	168
Figure 5-2: <i>Child participant drawing (Kantel, female, 11)</i>	174
Figure 5-3: <i>Child participant drawing (Rooney, male, 13)</i>	175
Figure 5-4: <i>Child participant drawing (Jordan, female, 11)</i>	176
Figure 5-5: <i>Map of researched community</i>	178
Figure 5-6: <i>Child participant drawing (Bella, female, 9)</i>	181
Figure 5-7: <i>Child participant drawing (Ricirit, male, 12)</i>	188
Figure 5-8: <i>Child participant drawing (Pamungkas, male, 11)</i>	188
Figure 5-9: <i>Child participant drawing (Melati, female, age 11)</i>	194
Figure 5-10: <i>Child participant drawing (Jesika, female, age 11)</i>	194
Figure 5-11: <i>Child participant drawing (Aknes, female, age 9)</i>	195
Figure 5-12: <i>Child participant drawing (Cinta, female, age 10)</i>	196
Figure 5-13: <i>Child participant drawing (Mamar, female, age 10)</i>	196
Figure 5-14: <i>Child participant drawing (Calsye, female, 9)</i>	200
Figure 5-15: <i>Child participant drawing (Tukul, male, 12)</i>	204
Figure 5-16: <i>Child participant drawing (Aquarius, female, 9)</i>	222
Figure 5-17: <i>Child participant drawing (Aquarius, female, 9)</i>	244
Figure 6-1: <i>Factors affecting a child's experience of disaster, including 'cultural practices'</i>	258

Tables:

Table 2-1: <i>Types of natural disasters* in Indonesia between 1907 and 2004</i>	30
Table 2-2: <i>Land use in Bengawan Solo River Basin (in 1992)</i>	34
Table 3-1: <i>List of data collected</i>	66
Table 3-2: <i>Parent interviews</i>	69
Table 3-3: <i>Focused group interviews: group divisions</i>	72
Table 3-4: <i>Priority list categories for analysis</i>	86
Table 5-1: <i>Ten most important items in a disaster, according to participants</i>	205

Glossary

BNPB	Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (Indonesian National Disaster Management Agency)
CCC	Children in a Changing Climate
DRR	disaster risk reduction
RT	<i>Rukun Tannga</i> , small neighbourhood unit of 60-70 household
RW	<i>Rukun Warga</i> , local neighbour unit of ~700 households, composed of several RTs.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
USGS	United States Geological Survey

Quote Formatting

(pseudonym, gender, age)	e.g. (Bella, female, 9)
[...]	portion of individual quote removed
.....	portion of conversation removed
Number one.. pray and	bold used for emphasis of relevant portion