

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will first explain why I chose the single case study methodology. Then I will describe what steps I took in collecting and analyzing the data. Having described the data collection and data analysis steps, I will then delineate the limitations and/or constraints of this research methodology. Finally I will summarize the content of this chapter.

Rationale for Choosing a Single Case Study Methodology

In the introductory chapter I explained why I chose to focus my dissertation research on this case study. In this section I will explain why I chose the single case study method, and why I treated it in a qualitative rather than a quantitative manner.

There were two possible routes to take: to treat the Kedungombo dispute as one case in a multiple case study, since several large dams were also in the pipeline during this dispute, or, to treat Kedungombo as a single case study. I chose the latter one for the following reasons. First, this case was in itself already such a complex issue and touched upon many aspects of the political life in Indonesia, therefore, one could treat this case as a lens with which to look into many other aspects. Second, since my focus was not the dispute between the dam advocates and the displaced villagers *per se*, but how the media had "packaged" and presented this dispute, just this single case study would yield a tremendous amount of data from all the press clippings about this case. Third, I found a way to overcome the idiosyncrasy of this case study by using the data collected about other dams built in Indonesia before and after Kedungombo, as a "background" against which I could delineate the contours of the Kedungombo dispute on the "foreground" of this study.

This research has not only a qualitative, but also an explorative, nature. It is also research about an unfolding event that has not yet reached its final stage. The qualitative mode had to be taken instead of a quantitative content analysis of the media coverage because the themes discussed in the media were still continuously changing. Some of those themes were discussed in many news media, some were only covered by a handful of news media. Yet, the themes which were underreported were not necessarily unimportant, and could reveal much about the role of the media in covering up certain aspects of the dam. Besides, it was impossible to apply a reliable quantitative content analysis on all the news clippings obtained, because I was not able to obtain all of the copies of all of the newspapers and news magazines that had covered every aspect of the Kedungombo controversy, and instead had to rely on the press clippings collected by several professional research institutes as well as on individuals and organizations, who only collected the press clippings that had a direct relevancy to their work.

Data Collection

This research stage consisted of primary and secondary data collection. Since this was a study about the media coverage of a development dispute, the secondary data collection was the major research tool. The primary data collection was only done to be able to verify what was stated by the secondary data.

I collected secondary data about the displacement of people from Indonesian dam sites from the following types of printed media: (a) the mainstream media; (b) the religious media; (c) the anti-capitalist media; (d) the student media; (e) periodicals of the dam building industry; and (f) official publications from the Indonesian Department of Public Works, the State

Electricity Corporation, the Department of Transmigration, the Department of Labor Force, and the Provincial Government of Central Java.

My major concern in this secondary data collection effort was to obtain as much data about Kedungombo in the first two type of publications, since they were the most widely read media in Indonesia. Meanwhile, my aim in collecting data in the other four types of publications was to complement my reading of the other two types of publications with additional Information about Kedungombo and other struggles against large dams, as well as with technical Information that was needed to verify the claims made the dam advocates and the dam critics in the mainstream media. The bulk of this secondary data collection was began in Indonesia in July 1989 and ended when I submitted my thesis to my committee in early August 1992.

While I was still in the field in Indonesia, I had complemented my secondary data collection with four primary data collection techniques: first, field observations; second, interviews with displaced peoples and their supporters; third, a journalistic method that I called "testing the political space provided by and through the media to debate certain political issues," and fourth, participative observation in some of the activities of the critics of Kedungombo. The aims of those primary data collection efforts were to verify the knowledge claims raised in the media.

Aided by numerous students and other social activists, I carried out field observations in the following locations from November 1990 until July 1991:

- (1) . Boyolali and Sragen districts, Central Java province:
This was the area in which the social impacts of the Kedungombo reservoir had been most well publicized.

(2) . Banjar district, South Kalimantan province:

This was the area most directly affected by the Riam Kanan hydropower dam and reservoir, which was publicized in the 1970s, the Riam Kanan irrigation weir built and reported about in the late 1980s and beginning 1990s, and the proposed Riam Kiwa hydropower dam which had originally been planned to be built soon after the Riam Kanan hydro was finished.

(3) . Kampar district, Riau province:

This was one of the districts affected by the proposed Kotopanjang dam project on the island of Sumatera.

(4) . Pinrang and Gowa districts, South Sulawesi province:

These two districts were affected by two major dam projects in South Sulawesi, namely the Bakarlu hydro power dam and the Bilibili irrigation and flood control dam.

While doing my field work, I carried out my interviews in two stages.

First, I interviewed the primary key informants, namely activists who were directly involved in the campaign to defend the Kedungombo people's rights and who lived in the provinces of Central Java and Yogyakarta. After that I interviewed the secondary key informants:

(1) . three officials of the State Electricity Corporation (PLN): one of them was in charge of Kotopanjang dam in Riau and had been in charge of several other dams administered by PLN and the Public Works Department (PU) in West and East Java; while the two others were in charge of the Riam Kanan and Riam Kiwa dam;

(2) . a retiree of the Department of Public Works, who had managed the South Kedu Irrigation Project in Central Java and after his retirement went to work for a PU-owned Consulting company in Jratunseluna Projects in Central Java;

(3) . two foreign consultants who were involved in advising PU on Central Java irrigation projects;

(4) . two lawyers who were staff persons of the Legal Bureau of the Directorate General of Water Resources Management under the Public Works Department;

(5) . officials of the Central Java Forestry, Fishery and Tourism offices;

(6) . an ecologist with 20 years of experience in researching and mitigating the environmental impact of major dam projects in West and Central Java;

(7) . two Islamic intellectuals, one of whom was a board member of an Islamic scholars association who had attempted to help the

Kedungombo problem, while the other person was a prolific writer in various Islamic media who resided in Salatiga, and (8) . board leaders of two Islamic student organizations in Salatiga, who had not been involved in public protests to defend the Kedungombo people's rights.

Since my research topic dealt with the educative role of the media, I also carried experiments to explore the potential as well as the limitations of the media. I wrote several articles about Kedungombo and other dam issues to "test" the political space provided by the media, as well as to explore to what extent this political space had been utilized by the Kedungombo activists to defend villagers displaced by the dams. I chose three types of media to express my own observations on Kedungombo and other dam disputes, namely the student media; mainstream media; and a social scientific journal.

To maintain my rapport with some of the dam critics, I participated in some of their activities in Central Java as well as in Washington, D. C. The Central Java activities in which I was involved included the activities of a legal aid institute and student groups in monitoring and publicizing the human rights violations that still took place in the reservoir area, as well as a campaign to end an industrial pollution case in which both the legal aid and the student activists were involved. These activities provided me with an understanding on how this group of Kedungombo critics were dealing and making use of the mainstream media, how the media covered the critics' public protests, and how the local authorities responded to such protests.

To obtain data about the role of the major funder of Kedungombo, namely the World Bank, I continued my previous involvement in an organization that closely monitored the World Bank's involvement in Kedungombo, namely the International NGO Forum on Indonesia (INGI).

In that capacity I had access to the correspondence between World Bank officials and officials of the Government of Indonesia and INGI, as well as be able to attend two of INGI's dialogues with World Bank officials in Washington, D. C. Meanwhile, I also collaborated with some dam critics in Central Java in sending fax messages to officials of the World Bank, to explore how responsive the officials were in dealing with critical intellectuals outside the Indonesian government bureaucracy. This participative observation proved to be useful to understand the role of this multilateral development bank, which (happily?) experienced a low media profile during the course of the Kedungombo controversy.

Data Analysis

Overwhelmed by this wealth of data, I first weeded out the non-Kedungombo data, but kept it to use as background Information. That background data were needed to obtain a historical perspective about previous struggles against large dams in Indonesia, as well as to understand similar or different policies that had been adopted by the dam authorities in relation to the displaced population.

Next, I separated the Kedungombo data that dealt specifically with the debate over whether to prohibit the displaced villagers from occupying and cultivating the reservoir's green belt, from all other aspects of the Kedungombo dispute. I made this separation because I wanted to treat the "depopulated green belt concept" as a "generative theme" in my data analyses. In a Freirean perspective, which I adopted, a "generative theme" is a theme that is rich in meaning embedded in its associative fields or "thematic fan," a theme that can capture authentically the community members' syntax, the very structure of their thought. In short, it is a theme

that captures the community members' hopes as well as their frustrations (Freire, 1987a: 101-103; Freire, 1987b: 93-95). And the green belt debate, as it turned out, certainly reflected those hopes and frustrations.

Next, I did a "thematic analysis", in Freirean terms, about the "non-green belt" data. I divided the "non-green belt" data into the most often reported and the least reported themes covered by the media. From each "pile" of press clippings I constructed a "thematic fan," or the various interconnected sub-themes that were often or rarely reported by the media.

Then I scrutinized each theme in depth to test the accuracy of its claims, using Information that had been published earlier by the general mainstream media, or, if that was not sufficient, using more specific Information obtained from the literature published by the dam building industry.

After examining the explicit accuracy of the claims made by each sub-theme, I proceeded to examine the implicit, or hidden, messages that could be conveyed by those subthemes.

After analyzing the "non-green belt" data, I treated the "green belt" data with the same procedure. First I divided the media coverage on the green belt debate into the most often and the least often reported themes. In other words,, I decodified the main generative theme, namely the "depopulated green belt concept," into its thematic fan. I started by examining the "explicit" meaning of each sub-theme of the fan, using the data obtained from the mainstream media as well as data from more specialized publications. After that I proceeded to delve more deeply into the implicit or hidden meaning. In Freirean terminology, I searched for the "surface" structure as well as for the "deep" structure of the various sub-themes of the "depopulated green belt" concept.

Some aspects of Kedungombo's social impact were not so highly visible in the media coverage, and also had no alternative data with which to be compared to determine their accuracy. In such cases, I did not further examine the accuracy of those happenings, but I proceeded to examine the hidden messages relayed by the language of the headlines or texts of those news items.

This interpretive data analysis was inspired by the thematic analysis used by Paulo Freire in his cultural circles. I also applied various "spirals of interpretation," moving not only from the "surface" to the "deep" structures of the themes and subthemes, but also moving diagonally from one theme to another theme, by trying to see the interpretation of one theme through the lens of another theme that had already been or was going to be discussed.

The main difference between Freire's method and mine, though, was that Freire's method requires a collaborative effort of participants, who collectively reach a critical consciousness on what they focus on. My method was an individual effort and focused on secondary materials, namely data that had been published by the media and so could not refute my interpretation, so I had to continuously seek for new data to confirm or refute my interpretation of the earlier obtained data. Methodologically speaking, I combined Freire's "thematic analysis" with Glaser and Strauss's "constant comparative method," to obtain the highest level of saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 101-158).

After doing my thematic analyses on the "non-green belt" and "non-green belt" data, I reorganized the results of my thematic analysis into media strategies adopted in the debate about Kedungombo. In presenting these media strategies as they were reflected in the media coverage on Kedungombo, I

used a "tripartite model" of actors. As described in Chapter One, one set of actors in the media debate were "the dam advocates" and the second set were "the dam critics." The third set of actors were the media workers themselves — journalists, cartoonists, editors, and publishers.

Based on that "tripartite model of actors," I separated the media strategies in which the dam advocates were the major speakers from the media strategies in which the dam critics mainly set the tone. After separating those two quite distinct "agendas," I lumped all the other media strategies which were adopted by the dam advocates, the dam critics, and the media jointly into a third category of media strategies. Finally, I "salvaged" all the underreported Information from my numerous press clippings, to be presented in a separate chapter.

Finally, by reflecting on each set of media strategies, comparing them with each other, and comparing those well-reported Information with the underreported Information, I answered the main research questions which I presented as the findings in Chapter Nine.

The Limitations of This Research Methodology

The methodology I had adopted suffered from the following limitations. First, since this research topic was mainly about the curriculum of the Kedungombo debate as reflected by the content of the mainstream media, and not about the readers as learners, I did not seriously study how the media coverage really affected the readers. My interpretation of the knowledge claims advanced in the mainstream media was basically informed by other written Information elicited from the media, complemented with the data collected through the several primary data collection techniques discussed earlier. Based on that limitation, I may have overestimated the effectiveness

of some media strategies of the dam advocates and critics, while underestimating others.

Second, with my background as an environmental activist since 1977, it was impossible to present myself as a "neutral" researcher to most of the dam critics. This constraint became quite explicit to me, when I wrote about some of the aspects which had not yet been covered by the critics (see Aditjondro, 1900a and 1990b), which was interpreted as an attack of a non-student activist on the student activists (see Budiman, 1990; Ondi, 1990; Sutrisno, 1990).

Third, with the same background described in the previous point, it was also impossible for me to present myself to the Kedungombo critics as a passive outsider, observing what "they" were doing. This was another reason for me to cross the boundaries between "me" and "they" and to become one of "us" in observing the interrelation between the Kedungombo critics and the media. Crossing this boundary had its disadvantages, namely that I could not concentrate on the Kedungombo issue solely, but had to divert some attention to other latent and emerging developmental *cum* environmental disputes in Central Java, such as industrial pollution, nuclear energy, and municipal social issues.

Fourth, by doing most of my participant observation with some groups of the dam critics, I unconsciously developed a distance from other critics of the dam. I was able to reduce that distance when I became involved in defending student activists who were interrogated by the local security apparatus for distributing the "Land for the People" calendar (see Chapter Six).

Fifth, the danger of being closer, or interpreted as being closer to some groups of Kedungombo critics was also aggravated by one systemic weakness of my research methodology: I had no financial resources to begin with, and had to depend on the honoraria from my articles in the media, and the consultancy and translation jobs offered by my colleagues in the environmental movement to cover most of my research costs.

Sixth, I encountered some political constraints which made me unable to interview two main actors in the Kedungombo debate: Soenarno, the Public Works engineer who was in charge of supervising the Kedungombo project during the height of the controversy (1989-1991), and Governor Ismail. 'Hence, the ideas and rhetoric of these two major actors in the Kedungombo debate, discussed in this thesis, were mainly distilled from the media and other publications, complemented by interviews with other key informants.

Summary

I have explained in this chapter why I chose to apply a qualitative, single case study methodology to explore the nature of discourse in the media coverage of development disputes in Indonesia. I then described the steps I took in collecting the data about the media coverage of the Kedungombo dispute, which was followed by a description of the steps I took in analyzing these data. After describing these data collecting and analyzing steps, I highlighted the limitations of this research methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

TWO GENERAL MEDIA STRATEGIES APPLIED BY THE DAM ADVOCATES

This chapter is the first of four chapters that focus on how the contending parties advocated their different viewpoints in the media. In this chapter I will describe two major media strategies that were applied by the dam advocates. These media strategies were first, the Javanization of Kedungombo, and second, the marginalization of the opposition. Then, I will describe the challenges raised by the dam critics to the major themes of the dam advocates' media strategies.

The Javanization of Kedungombo

The Javanization of Kedungombo, or the framing of support for the government's policy in dealing with Kedungombo's social issues in Javanese role models and terms, was the most dominant media strategy adopted by the dam advocates, especially by the Central Java Governor, Ismail. This strategy capitalized on figures and episodes from the Javanese shadow puppet, or *wayang*, tradition, Javanese heroes, mythological language, Javanese terms, and a popular Javanese slogan, *jer basuki mawa bea*.

(a). The use of *wayang* figures and episodes

Characters and episodes from the Javanese shadow puppet, or *wayang kulit*, stories, were repeatedly used to justify the various government steps in dealing with the dam's social problems. When the Information Minister, Harmoko, visited some of these displaced people in Kayen, the first government -built resettlement site near Kedungombo, he used an episode from the Ramayana epic to justify the displacement of villagers from Kedungombo. He told the villagers that when Rama wanted to conquer