Get ready for the flood! Risk-handling styles in Jakarta, Indonesia

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Chapter 6

Orang siap and the scope for change

Up to now, the empirical chapters offered three important insights about risk-handling styles on which this final empirical chapter will build. First, it was shown that people's risk-handling styles are a result of the pressures of the structures of marginalization and power inequality that reinforce a habitus of poverty and a cycle of hazard; but also that people can sometimes strategically alter their actions: the empirical data showed such a process in Bantaran Kali when some residents recognized in their neighbourhood new opportunities for aid.

Second, it was claimed that people's perceptions and practices of risk are related to their perceptions of self-efficacy, as well as trust in actors involved in flood management. We have seen that these perceptions are acquired largely through past experiences, through which hopeful or skeptical expectations of the future are formed. These expectations are not necessarily accurate or realistic, but they are habitual and thereby offer people a sense of calm in a context of normal uncertainty. These habitual ways in which people perceive their own autonomous capacities to handle risk, and their perceived options to make use of patronage support, disposes them towards a specific risk-handling style.

Third, it became clear that, once people have acquired a specific risk-handling style, it becomes hard for them to reflect upon it and challenge it. This seems to be because they have also acquired certain perceptions (self-efficacy; trust in others involved in risk-management) and a specific habitus that suits this style – and tends to block out alternatives.

While accepting that people's perceptions and practices of risk are habitual rather than innovative, this chapter examines the clear exceptions to that assumption. It explores further the decisions that actors can make in new circumstances and specifically considers those instances where agents reflect upon and challenge their own habitual perceptions and practices and eventually develop a new risk-handling style.

Such a focus demands that this chapter moves beyond the sociological theory of habitus. Bourdieu mentions that a radical alteration of people's habitus might occur in 'unexpected situations' (Navarro 2006, p. 16); however, his theory rarely explicates these critical moments and does not tell us much about the experiences of people in those moments. In order to consider these processes, this chapter presents the historical biographies of a group of riverbank settlers whose risk-handling styles have radically altered over the past years from what was presumably typical for them. While their former risk-handling practices differed from person to person, they now have in common that they all went through a process of radicalization and nowadays exhibit defensive and

sometimes violent practices in relation to perceived risk. While other residents describe such behaviour as 'crazy' and wonder 'what has come over them', these people often refer to themselves as the only ones who 'are prepared' (*siap*) for the risks to be encountered in the nearby future.

The people who exhibit practices to become 'prepared', refer to themselves as the *orang siap*.[192] In Bantaran Kali, *siap* means 'ready' or 'prepared' and *bersiap*, the verb from *siap*, means to prepare. In sociological jargon, we might describe the *orang siap* as those people exhibiting a *defensive* risk handling style. In the literature on risk-handling, defensive practices generally refer to aggressive behaviour towards the perceived threat, or to expressed feelings of anxiety about the threat (Baan, 2008; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In Bantaran Kali, the defensive risk-handling practices that can be recognized among respondents include (often loud and publically) worrying about floods and other risk; crying; having nightmares; having feelings of sadness or depression, and readily expressing them to fellow residents; overtly expressing feelings of fear about and anger towards the political institutions that are involved in Bantaran Kali's flood-management (the *kelurahan* or kampong administration and the *kecamatan* or administrative sub-district) as well as to the *orang ajar*; and mistrust of and refusal of support that is offered by the kampong administration (the *kelurahan*).[193] Underlying all of these practices is a strong sense of distrust of external institutions involved in the flood management of Bantaran Kali.[194]

Tracing back when and how a *siap* risk-handling style has developed among some residents of the river bank enables us to recognize and analyze those critical moments in the lives of riverbank settlers where perceptions and practices start to alter – and where people's habitus is seriously challenged. Let us now return one last time to the story of the medium-sized flood in Bantaran Kali,

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[192] 25 out of 130 respondents could be categorized as having a '*siap*' risk-handling style in Bantaran Kali. That equals about 19 per cent of the participants in this study. As explained in chapter 2, this analysis was made on the basis of 1) narrative analyzes of in-depth interviews, 2) observations and 3) a quantitative survey on risk-handling practices. The outcomes of the two first methods for the *orang siap* are referred to throughout this chapter. See Appendix D for the outcome and interpretation of the quantitative survey, and Figure 4 for a comparison of the main risk-handling practices characterizing each of the four defined risk-handling styles in Bantaran Kali. Most importantly, the outcomes show that *orang siap*, in comparison with people representing any of the three other risk-handling styles, rate extremely high on the following items: 'thinking about best response plan in case of emergency'; 'expressing blame on others' (elite, government); 'experiencing anger and aggression'; 'being moody, irritable and acting out'; 'trying to solve problems independent from others'; 'anxiety amplification'. *Orang siap* also rate higher than other people on 'rumination'; 'worrying'; 'fearing future'; 'keeping trust that there are possibilities to survive'; 'underlining personal skills'; 'preparing lights and batteries'; 'preparing house' (e.g. binding valuables with ropes so that they are not taken by currents); 'stock flood food'; 'preparing cooked food'. *Orang siap* rate extremely low in relation to 'indecisiveness'; 'experiencing uncertainty'; 'make use of external aid'; 'helping neighbours with evacuation to *kelurahan* shelter'.

[193] In contrast, let me recap from the former empirical chapters that many other inhabitants never exposed aggressive or anxious emotions towards bureaucrats who were involved in the flood-management of the riverbanks, nor did their survey results indicate angry or anxious emotions when it concerned the topic of flooding. Instead, we saw in the former chapters that these respondents appeared able to calm their minds in an objectively uncertain environment by establishing and maintaining reciprocal relations with trusted elite actors from political institutions, or with patrons from aid-institutions.

[194] Piotr Sztompka has defined 'distrust' as the negative mirror image of trust. If 'trust' can be understood as a positive 'bet about the future contingent actions of others,' (1999, p. 25), then distrust is a negative bet. It involves negative expectations about the (harmful, vicious, detrimental) actions of others towards oneself (Sztompka, 1999, p. 26).

to the *kelurahan* shelter where Ambran and his family members have evacuated after their house was inundated.[195]

Evacuation during a flood

It is seven o'clock in the morning. The sun reflects in the river water that has inundated the streets for five hours now, but the inhabitants of Bantaran Kali can find a dry spot inside the *kelurahan* shelter not far from their kampong. This shelter is made from strong materials to protect individuals from rain and sunshine, and it offers free public facilities: people can wash themselves with piped water and use the toilet. Blankets and medicines are provided, as are soap, water and rice meals, as well as sweet milk for small children. A team of eight civil servants, dressed in blue T-shirts with the emblem of the sub-district printed on the back, are instructed to care full-time for evacuees. In reality, however, there is hardly anything for them to do: the *kelurahan* shelter has remained largely empty.

The thirty-one flood-victims who have settled in the shelter declare that there is 'so much food that we get bored with eating'. Ambran has already received three full plates of rice, boiled egg and tofu, and is told that he can come back for a fourth refill. He does not. Later that day, leftovers are thrown away. Clothes that were supposed to be freely distributed among all flood-victims are now taken to be sold by the few evacuees present. The underemployed civil servants sleep through most of their shifts, or play computer games on their mobile phones. Earlier, they had some tasks to carry out: uniformed males tied up ropes and pulled up poles, while their female colleagues prepared hot meals for evacuees. 'Come in,' they invited flood-victims who were trickling in, 'are you in good health? We feel sorry for you, come in!' But it seems that not many flood victims wanted to make use of their services as was expected by the *kelurahan* institution.

Where are the other inhabitants of Bantaran Kali? What happens to all of the other people whose houses were inundated? I asked these questions to the male civil servant who is in charge of the monitoring of evacuees in the shelter. This man registers the name, age, gender, and address of everyone who comes in. These details help kampong leaders to check who is safe in the evacuation shelter and who might be still in danger, or left behind in the kampong. Yet after hours of waiting, the civil servant has written down the details of only twenty-four people. The low number surprises him, he says, as it contrasts sharply with the situation during former large floods in which he fulfilled the same function:

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[195] The following notes about what occurs in the shelter were taken during two different events in which people evacuated. I have blended the notes first as to ensure the anonymity of several of the respondents that are quoted later on in this chapter, and second, because the actions that my respondents took in both of these events resembled to such extent that combining the data does not change the story.

I am truly amazed that so few people have fled to the [*kelurahan*] shelter this time. During former floods, me and my colleagues had to serve over-time! They were begging for our help! The flood problem remains the same, yet, from my experience, I can see that people along the riverbanks are becoming more and more ungrateful (*tidak tahu berterima kasih*) over the years towards us. Instead of making use of our services, now they prefer to seek their own ways of survival.

The *kelurahan* office does not keep a register of evacuees in past years, thus it was not possible to confirm this claim of the civil servant that the inhabitants of Bantaran kali made less use of *kelurahan* services during this flood by comparison with former floods. However, my interviews with riverbank settlers as well as with *kelurahan* bureaucrats indicate that the above suggestion of the civil servants indeed seems correct. Everyone I spoke to remembered that during large floods in former years, many more people evacuated to the *kelurahan* shelter than in the 2010 flood described in this study. This idea is further confirmed by a comparison with the numbers provided in a research report about a flood that occurred in 2007 in the research area. When social geographer Pauline Texier visited several kampongs along the riverbanks that had been inundated in 2007, she found that nearly 100 per cent of the people evacuated, and most of the evacuees went to shelters set up and maintained by other government institutions (Texier, 2007; Texier, 2008).[196]

By contrast, during the flood that is described in this dissertation, approximately 26 per cent of the total research population (N=130) remained in their flooded house during the whole flood (as Ida did in the introduction). Most of them have an '*antisipasi*' risk-handling style. Another 24 per cent of the river bank settlers sought safety in the *kelurahan* shelter, most of them having a '*susah*' risk-handling style, and also some people known as '*orang ajar*'. Eight per cent fled to the office of the foundation of the priest (see chapter 4 for more information about this foundation), most of them '*orang susah*'. Thirteen per cent of the respondents, including the kampong leader and *orang ajar* Yusuf, kept moving during the hours when flood waters were high, never settling down in one specific place, but instead running back and forth between the *kelurahan* shelter and the houses of inhabitants. Another 6 per cent of my respondents evacuated to the houses of family members who live in dryer neighbourhoods of Jakarta or in rural Java. Another 8 per cent of the research

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[196] However, my observations of the flood described in this thesis, and my analysis of people's narratives about former large floods in their kampong, indicate that Texier's numbers may have been biased due to linguistic confusion and the relatively short time period of this research project. For example, many river bank settlers use the same word (*mengungsi*) for seeking shelter in an external shelter, and for moving onto the tops or the second floors of their houses. As Texier's report is for a large part based on narrated reflections rather than on actual observations of people's actions, it might be that a linguistic confusion has led to a bias in the results. I consider this idea because the information offered by my respondents about the numbers of riverbank settlers who evacuated to government shelters often contradicts the numbers Texier describes in her report. My data exposes more complex and nuanced data about where people head to when their house is flooded. Regarding the fact that it took me months to establish trusting relationships with respondents (see chapter 2), one may also question whether Texier's short research has not suffered from river bank settlers' distrust of outsiders, hence evoking socially correct answers in which the formal safety advice (and specifically the governmental advice that people ought to evacuate to *kelurahan* shelters) are reproduced.

population survived in the streets. Finally, 15 per cent of this study's participants evacuated to a provisionary, self-built shelter that is located on the opposite side of the kampong outskirts, a few hundred meters from where civil servants have set up the *kelurahan* shelter.[197]

It is this latter group of evacuees that we will get to know better in this chapter, as their present risk handling style appears to deviate most radically from their former behaviour during floods. This change in behaviour gives us the opportunity to examine the process in which these people altered their practices.

Evacuation- but where to go to?

Compared to the relatively comfortable shelter of the *kelurahan*, the situation in the provisional shelter appears more problematic for evacuees. One disadvantage concerns its location: the shelter has been built in a relatively low area just outside Bantaran Kali, where the soil is muddy from flood water. Its rooftop, made from pieces of thin plastic that were found in the river and along the streets, is full of holes, allowing the temperature to rise during the hot morning hours, while heavy afternoon showers pour in. Every morning the place smells strongly like urine. Hygienic circumstances deteriorate quickly. As there is no medical service in this provisional shelter, the wounds of several flood-victims are not taken care of. Though several neighbours have brought along cooking pots from their homes, and others have brought along rice and eggs, there is not enough food for everyone, nor is there enough drinking water. Within three days, lice, cockroaches and rats are everywhere and families move to the streets surrounding the shelter because 'even though we cannot protect our heads from rain here, at least it does not smell as bad as over there [inside the provisional shelter].' Many evacuees complain of hunger. Others worry out loud about the money that they feel forced to spend on food now that they cannot cook, or on the costly medications now that they are ill and their wounds need treatment. All of them appear distressed about their situation.

To recount, these flood-victims have other options. They could evacuate to the *kelurahan* shelter, yet they don't. Even though these evacuees can get free meals a few hundred meters down the road, they choose to buy expensive flood-foods in the streets. Even though they can make use of a doctor's services free of charge in the *kelurahan* shelter, these people bandage their own grazed arms and hope that their coughing will not become worse. The question of why they make such decisions when seemingly better alternatives are available, occupied my mind during my fieldwork, and also the minds of the civil servants of the *kelurahan* and the evacuees in the *kelurahan* shelter.

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[197] See Figure 2 for a visualization of this spatial analysis.

Their amazement has to do with the fact that the decision of their fellow residents to refuse *kelurahan* help and instead evacuate to a provisional shelter is *unfamiliar* behaviour in the kampong. 'Normally all of us head here [to the *kelurahan* shelter],' remembers Ambran. 'Whenever there is a flood, this [*kelurahan*] shelter used to be overcrowded,' says his grandmother. But apparently, during this flood, something has changed their fellow residents' minds.

The fact that tens of flood-victims have chosen to reside in a nearby provisional shelter this time around soon becomes a popular topic among the civil servants of the *kelurahan*. They speculate out loud why their shelter remains so empty, while a few hundred meters further down the road people are homeless on the streets. On the first day of the flood, the dominant explanation that circulates in the *kelurahan* shelter is the fact that many people do not *know* that there is a more comfortable place for them to evacuate to.[198] This, however, seems a very unlikely explanation: the shelter is set up in precisely the same spot as it had been during the past floods that inundated Bantaran Kali. If during those past floods, so many river bank settlers found their way to the *kelurahan* shelter, then why would they suddenly be unable to find it this time? The weakness of this explanation is quickly confirmed by riverbank settlers in the provisional shelter. When, at the end of the day, two civil servants head to the provisional shelter to invite flood-victims to follow them back into the *kelurahan* shelter, explaining the route and location to them and emphasizing that there is free food and free medical help available for all, they return flabbergasted and somewhat insulted: all of the flood-victims 'over there' refused their invitation and 'prefer to continue to live like homeless people'.

Evacuees in the *kelurahan* shelter then propose that maybe their fellow residents have not been satisfied with the services offered by the *kelurahan* during former floods, and therefore perhaps they prefer to take care of themselves now. Although at first this seems like a plausible explanation for the changes in people's risk-handling practices, a survey that was carried out for this study among all flood-victims in both shelters reveals that this is not the case. Over 90 per cent of the evacuees in the provisional shelter have experiences with some form of *kelurahan* support during former floods, and out of these people over 80 per cent evaluated the support provided 'good' or 'very good'. The other 20 per cent graded the services in the *kelurahan* shelter 'satisfying'

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[198] *Orang ajar* Yusuf, for example, says that 'the people here are too stupid to leave their houses during floods. They won't evacuate to a safe place if I don't force them, I told you this many times already.. Both Yusuf and other respondents in the *kelurahan* shelter thus assume that their fellow residents' cognition of formal safety advice concerning floods is low. It has already been argued in this dissertation that this explanation must be considered unsatisfactory. That is because my data proves that flood-victims are not only generally well aware about the risk of flooding, but they also have a precise knowledge of what the formal safety advice is. They know perfectly well where their local government - helped by the *orang ajar* - wants them to go. However, for reasons that are examined later in this chapter, they prefer another solution. Another inaccuracy to be found in Yusuf's explanation is that he suggests that his fellow residents have not evacuated at all. But it was already mentioned above that in fact 28 per cent of them do so. My analysis also shows that most people have left their houses and evacuated to a dry spot nearby, but not to the one that is included in formal safety advice: the *kelurahan* shelter.

or 'very satisfying' and related this relatively low evaluation on quality of the food ('They always served fish and I do not like fish.') or with complaints about the overcrowding in the *kelurahan* shelters during former years ('Do you have canned sardines in your country? We looked just like that back then!'). But these criticisms seem hardly substantial regarding the current status of the evacuees in the provisional shelter. We will later consider the actual reason for rejecting the *kelurahan* support during the flood described in this thesis; but first let us consider what happens next in the *kelurahan* shelter, where Ambran and his fellow evacuees are still discussing ways to convince their fellow residents to join them.

Two names are often mentioned in these discussions: Tono and Ratna. 'Did you know that Tono is there as well?', people ask one another, and others will typically reply with another rhetorical question, 'why is he there and not here with his friends?'. About the inhabitant named Ratna, people seem equally surprised that she is at the provisional shelter. Both the civil servants and the evacuees declare 'I cannot believe *Ratna* stays there as well,' and explain to me that 'Ratna always used to be with the *kelurahan* during floods'. For both Tono and Ratna, the evacuees in the *kelurahan* shelter wonder 'what has come over them' as they observe that these inhabitants of Bantaran Kali exhibit highly unusual behaviour.

When evening falls, some of the evacuees in the *kelurahan* shelter, including Ambran and *orang ajar* Yusuf (chapter 3), head to the provisional shelter to find out what has changed their fellow residents' minds. 'At least you could have listened to what the civil servants offered you when they came to invite you over,' Ambran accuses Ratna, who is his grandniece, when he visits her in the provisional shelter. He says to her about the *kelurahan* shelter: 'Their place is much better than the dump where you sleep now. They want to help you. They are close to you.' *Orang ajar* Yusuf, who was the brother-in-law of Ratna before her husband passed away, also tries to convince Ratna to seek shelter with the *kelurahan*: 'You'd better come with us instead of staying here. Let the people of the *kelurahan* care for you. In their shelter, your children will get free food and clothing.' But Ratna stays put. For a while, Yusuf looks in the direction of Tono, whom he knows well, but he decides not to approach him when he sees the angry look on Tono's face.

After their visit, Ambran reports to the evacuees in the *kelurahan* shelter that 'it is as if she [Ratna] has gone crazy. Maybe the flood gave her a trauma and now she has turned mentally ill.' Yusuf disagrees with such a hastily drawn conclusion, but agrees that 'Ratna used to be different. She never acted like she does now! This is not her! She always used to be thankful if the *kelurahan* offered help during past floods, and she has often made use of their support; but now, to be honest, she acts hard-hearted.' The grandmother of Ambran is no less confused by Tono's recent decisions. She has known him from birth and now wonders why 'he acts strangely nowadays.' 'Tono,' adds

Yusuf in a serious tone, 'has become another person, so it seems to me. He did not even want to speak to one of his oldest friends [Yusuf himself].' It becomes clear from listeners' responses that this announcement is shocking for residents in Bantaran Kali. The people who have heard Ambran and Yusuf talk now shake their head in expressions of disbelief, shout out loud 'what has come over them?', or ask, again and again, for more details of the story.

Now that we have read so much about Tono and Ratna, it is time to meet them and see what 'has come over them'.

Tono: from friend to enemy of the government

Tono is a man in his early thirties, extraordinarily skinny and tall, with deep wrinkles in his face. Whenever there are no floods, Tono and his wife, their two children and Tono's old mother live in a self-built house made of cement and stone, located in the lowest part of the kampong, right beside the river. He earns a living by cleaning or serving food in a nearby cafeteria; his wife takes care of the family and the household chores. Tono is typically described by residents as a hard-working man, a 'good' person, a pious Muslim. Moreover, he is widely known as a 'friend' of both the political institutions of the *kelurahan* and the *kecamatan* (see chapter 4 for more information about this latter institution's flood-management involvement in Bantaran Kali). Because of his contacts with bureaucrats from these institutions, different people consider him a potential upcoming *orang ajar* in the kampong.

During the large floods that inundated the kampong in 2002 and 2007, Tono had cooperated with rescue workers sent by the *kecamatan* to help fellow residents evacuate. He also regularly assisted with the lectures by *orang ajar* over the past years, and he reported to *orang ajar* on anything that he believed to be a potential threat to safety in Bantaran Kali (see chapter 4 for more specifics on the operating principles of the *orang ajar*). As a result of all these social investments, Tono is widely known in the river bank settlement as an 'assistant' of the *orang ajar*, and as a man with 'contacts' and 'friends' in the *kecamatan*. For a long time, he seemed eager to maintain and further improve these social relations with powerful actors in Jakarta society. Tono was saving a share of his income for the goal of buying a Handie Talkie (HT), the radio set that is commonly used by *orang ajar*. According to his wife, Tono set aside an average of Rp 10,000 per month for the HT, and planned to buy the device within two years. A month before the 2007 flood, he applied with several civil servants from the *kecamatan* for a radio frequency to receive flood information.

During the time in which this fieldwork took place, Tono's former *ajar* risk-handling practices still seemed to resonate in people's minds more than his actual practices. Their narratives about how Tono used to act strongly contradicted my own observations of the practices that Tono exhibits

nowadays in the face of floods and other risks. For all I saw, Tono exhibits what might be called in sociological jargon a *defensive* risk handling style, or what he calls '*siap*' risk-handling practices.

When his family's house is flooded in 2010, Tono responds in a way that does not remind of the *ajar* style by which fellow residents describe him above. He does not help any of the *orang ajar* spread the risk-warning message in Bantaran Kali, nor does he help people evacuate. Neither does he follow up the formal safety instructions for evacuation that he has himself repeatedly 'taught' to fellow residents. His family does not evacuate to the *kelurahan* shelter – as ordered to by *orang ajar* - but instead he moves to the overcrowded provisional shelter a few meters from their house. In fact, Tono is one of the men who helped set up this provisional shelter. When, a day after evacuation, his son starts coughing, Tono decides that it might be healthier for his family members to move out of the overcrowded shelter. Still he does not go to the *kelurahan* shelter, instead, the family moves to a street a few meters away from their old house. That house is severely damaged and still inundated, so they spend the following days in the open air on pieces of cardboard, their backs pressed against the houses along the side of the road with cars and motorbikes constantly passing them by. During afternoon rains, they try to protect themselves from water with scraps of plastic and canvas. Because their gas stove was severely damaged by the flood, the family is forced to buy meals for all five members – something which they can hardly afford. Tono works long days, but makes far too little to pay for these meals. He therefore decides to spend a part of his savings on it – savings that were initially meant to be spent on the education of his children.

When asked why he would not reside in the dry and yet empty *kelurahan* shelter further down the road, making use of its free services, Tono sighs that he 'need[s] to be prepared (*siap*)...I must protect my belongings.' But weren't most of his belongings lost in the flood already? Stunned by so much ignorance, Tono explains to me that:

> No one in Indonesia has any interest in my furniture, sister (*kakak*)! Have you forgotten how poor I am and how valueless my belongings are? It is not thieves we fear! It is the politicians (*orang politik*)! They know precisely how to act as if they are poor people's friends, but as soon as I leave my land, they will take my house from me! [They will] chase me away! [...] We must be prepared for them always, do not believe anything good that they promise! If the people from the *kelurahan* tell you that they aim to help us, then that is a lie for sure.

Tono's distrust of 'the politicians' is reflected later in an emotional outburst during a news broadcast on the television. About twenty people are gathered in front of a television that is placed by its owner in the middle of the street so as to offer fellow residents the chance to watch a popular

television program.[199] After the show has ended, most people remain seated in order to reflect on the program, and while chit-chatting, they coincidently see a news item about flood problems in Jakarta. The audience sees shots of the central sluice in Jakarta, shots of *the Ciliwung* river, and shots of evacuees in government shelters during former large floods. Most of the residents watch full of concentration and in silence to try to see whether they can recognize a familiar face on television, until suddenly Tono shouts, 'I am sick of the way that the government creates floods here. It is the same again and again: they make a flood, they pretend to care for the victims. And we are such stupid people that we believe them!' Other television watchers try to calm Tono, muttering that 'it will be alright,' or that Tono must 'stay calm, we are all safe now,' but Tono only repeats louder and louder that he 'hates (*benci*) the Jakarta government!' The people around him obviously feel uncomfortable with his emotional outburst. Most of them leave, shaking their heads to indicate disagreement with Tono's behaviour. Still, he continues to scream, now at surprised bypassers in the street:

> They create floods only to chase us away- I am telling you, neighbours, listen to me! They will let us drown and suffer! They will evict us! The government hates poor people like us! Do not ignore this knowledge because you chose to stay naive. I warn you, it has become time to protect ourselves! If they have taken our land, do not tell me that I have not warned you.

Finally, Tono heads to his family, in tears and his body shaking from emotion.

Tono's emotional outburst has to do with an issue that has already been touched upon several times in this dissertation: the risk of eviction by the Jakarta government. As mentioned earlier, legal housing in Jakarta is generally unaffordable for the poorest residents of the city. For that reason, many of them reside in unregistered, often flood-prone or otherwise risky areas. According to formal law, residence on unregistered land is forbidden. This means that the inhabitants of the riverbanks are formally considered illegal occupiers of government land, and therefore run the risk of being evicted at any time soon. The possibility of eviction to decrease flooding in Jakarta has existed for a long time, but the threat has only recently become more concrete to the inhabitants of Bantaran Kali, because the Jakarta government has announced plans to carry out evictions. By clearing the riverbanks, the city government is able to widen the river,

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[199] This program was an absolute hit in the kampong. It shows volunteering couples who are first hypnotised, after which they are questioned about their love life and extramarital affairs. Most of the time, the person listening (and not under hypnosis) burst into tears after hearing too many confessions, while the hypnotised person tirelessly sums up all of her annoyances ('I actually think my partner is boring') and mistakes ('I had sex with three other men while I was engaged to him'). Whenever I watched this show with neighbours, they laughed heartily, called out loudly, empathically denouncing the confessed behaviour. When I once carefully opted that the couples might be professional actors, being paid for acting as if they are hypnotised, my fellow watchers stared at me in disbelief and said that they had never heard such a far-fetched explanation for what people say on TV as the one I proposed.

which is believed to lessen the problem of flooding. Riverbank settlers will thus have to be displaced and compensated financially for their loss.[200]

In Bantaran Kali, there are rumours that the government may try to avoid the slow and complicated process of eviction and try instead to convince people to move 'voluntarily'. These rumours come in different forms: in one version, the government is said to plan arson in the neighbourhood – which will force people to flee from the fire, and which will thus clear the land in one go. A second, more common version of the rumour has to do with floods. Here, the government is said to purposely create recurrent floods in the kampong, thereby making it unattractive for residents to stay put in Bantaran Kali. Part of this gossip is simply untrue: it seems unlikely – and even impossible - that the government purposely *creates* floods in Jakarta. Instead, as noted in the introduction, floods are created by a combination of environmental and infrastructural factors (Brinkman, 2009; Caljouw, Nas & Pratiwo, 2005). However, the rumours about the Jakarta government as a 'creator' of floods also has a sense of truth to it: it is indeed a fact that the kampong is regularly flooded as a consequence of the governmental prioritization of protecting wealthier, economic centers in the city. It may be helpful to briefly elaborate on this 'true' aspect of the gossip.

As indicated in the introduction of this dissertation, floods in Jakarta pose an increasing problem to the government and the cities' inhabitants (Brinkman, 2009; Kadri, 2008). But it also became clear earlier in this thesis that not all citizens of the capital face the floods equally; nor do they experience floods of similar severity. The riverbank settlement under study is considered one of the most 'dangerous' (*bahaya*) and flood-prone areas (*dareah banjir parah*) in the city by bureaucrats. This unequal division of flood-risk in Jakarta not only has to do with geographical location or other 'natural' factors that cause flooding, but also with bureaucratic decisions about where river water in the city can go and where it cannot. Indeed, it must be recognized that to some extent, flood-free and flood-prone neighbourhoods in Jakarta are the effect of an old colonial policy.[201]

When Jakarta was still controlled by the Dutch colonial authorities, one of their efforts to reduce the problem of flooding in Jakarta was to build canals. The construction also included a sluice gate to protect commercially valuable centers in the city from river-flooding.[202] Whenever

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[200] It remains a question whether they will. Many riverbank settlers do not hold the formal rights to their land or house, and hence evictees generally receive insufficient compensation for their loss, or nothing at all.

[201] This is actually the case throughout Java, where Indonesian policy makers largely pursue colonial Dutch flood management policies. See Ravesteijn (2002ab) for a socio-historical analysis of the colonial water management policies in Java.

[202] Soon after the founding of Batavia (the Dutch colonial name for Jakarta) in 1619, a canal system was constructed similar to those of Dutch cities at the time. In 1725, a dam was built to divert waters of the Ciliwung river westwards through the Western Canal. Since then, several other flood control canals have been built. The 'Van Breen plan' of 1917 led to the development of several structural flood defence measures, including the large Western *Banjir* (flood) Canal. Other

floodwater gushed down towards Jakarta from upstream, the doors of this sluice were to be closed by sluice-gate keepers, so that the City Center and the colonial center of Menteng would be protected from damage done by the water currents (Caljouw, Nas & Pratiwo, 2005, p. 258). By closing these sluice gates, the water currents were forced into the rivers and canals, through which they could empty into the sea. In case of severe rains, the rivers could overflow to empty riverbanks and finally be absorbed into the soil.

Over fifty years later, this same policy is still implemented by new generations of sluice- gate keepers who presently control the sluice.[203] Only, these days, the rivers are clogged with garbage, and due to uncontrolled urbanization the soil of the riverbanks is no longer able to absorb much flood water (Texier, 2008, p. 360). To repeat from the introduction: part of the problem is created by past decennia of massive logging of greenery and trees in uphill areas; another part of that problem is created because the riverbanks are now fully populated by urban slum dwellers – Bantaran Kali is situated on the banks of the largest river. Consequently, when the sluice gates remain closed during heavy rains from uphill Jakarta to protect the valuable centers of Jakarta, the negative consequences for the communities along the river banks are enormous. Researchers Caljouw, Nas and Pratiwo (2005, p. 258) observed that during the large flood in Jakarta in 2002, 'the floodgate … was closed. If this floodgate had been open, the presidential palace, [the business district around] Thamrin Street, and Kota would have been inundated. Since this floodgate was closed, the flood in [different poor] parts of the city (…) was very high.' One of these severely flooded areas is Bantaran Kali.

Hence, when Tono shouted out that the government 'creates floods' in his neighbourhood, he was not completely mistaken. Nor is he the only inhabitant of Bantaran Kali who believes that floods are 'created' by the government and that this is unfair. In fact, many other residents share these convictions with Tono and for this reason have developed a *siap* risk-handling style. Later in this chapter I will contextualize Tono's perceptions and practices by elaborating on experiences of other *orang siap.*

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measures that were proposed, but not realised at the time, include a large polder along the north coast and the Eastern *Banjir* Canal. In 1965, the Indonesian government developed a 'master plan for drainage and flood control' (revised in 1973), essentially a modification of the Van Breen plan. In 1984, a new master plan was drawn up, again largely based on the structural measures proposed in the Van Breen plan (Caljouw , Nas & Pratiwo, 2005; Ward, Pauw, van Buuren & Marfai, 2013). Since then, Dutch and Japanese water management companies have carried out several of these measures (e.g. the building of the Eastern Banjir Canal, which became functional in 2010). They have also proposed plans to the Indonesian government to divert the Ciliwung River on two points and connect it to the Cipinang River in Jakarta and to the Cisadane River in Tangerang. These plans have been postponed for years due to financial issues and changes in the political structure of the city government. At the time of writing, they are waiting for the formal accordance of the city government (Personal communication with Jan-Jaap Brinkman, senior flood manager Jakarta working for DELTARES, 1 October 2013, Amsterdam, the Netherlands).

[203] This information is based on personal communication with three anonymous sources: a sluice gate keeper at Manggarai in Jakarta (Interview on 2 February 2011, Jakarta), and two senior Dutch flood-risk managers working in Jakarta (Jakarta, 5 December 5 2010 and 29 June 29 2011).

Three weeks after the flood, Tono and his family members still reside in the street, as it has become impossible for them to live in their severely damaged house. A huge truck enters and stops right in front of the family. It is met by the residents with loud cheers. Many people in Bantaran Kali had already heard from the kampong leaders that the *kelurahan* was planning to support some of the flood-victims, by offering the households living in the lowest areas of Bantaran Kali some free wood, cement and stone to rebuild or repair their houses. Now that this huge truck was parked in the kampong, the residents realize that the promise of the *kelurahan* will be fulfilled. And so it is: the truck is opened, and piles of bags with building materials are offloaded by the truck driver and some local volunteers. One of them puts two bags in front of Tono's family. But unlike his neighbours, Tono does not look at all happy with the gift. Instead, he looks at the bags in disgust. While other beneficiaries in the neighbourhood quickly start rebuilding and repairing their houses with the materials, Tono warns his wife and children 'don't even touch it'. He believes it 'a trap.' He tells me later in an interview:

> When I use those materials to start rebuilding a house, then they [the government] will put me in jail after I have finished. It is forbidden to build a house here, right, because this land is owned by the government. So, if I rebuild my house, then they have the formal right to punish me. They will tell me I have disobeyed governmental orders…[because] I am illegally occupying the riverbanks.

When I question this and counterpose Tono's idea with the fact that the government has given the materials to residents and hence seems to stimulate rebuilding of damaged houses, Tono says:

> It is a trap. They give it, and then they wait until I do anything with it that goes against the law, so that they can lock me up or chase me out. They will justify their deeds by saying that I am a criminal who needs to leave this neighbourhood. The Indonesian government is like that; they seduce you into doing bad things so that they can take it out on you. Especially if they do not like you.

Ignoring the frequently expressed desire of his wife to rebuild a house in order to end their homelessness, 'just like other neighbours do', Tono carries his bags of materials to the market and comes back with his pockets full of banknotes. He has sold the materials to 'some rich Chinese man.' Tono plans to use the money to rebuild a house in another neighbourhood, he says. 'A safe place,' he promises his eldest son, 'a house without floods, and without the bulldozers of the government waiting their turn.'

Yet the little money that Tono was able to earn by selling the building materials is not enough to build or rent a house in a different part of town, especially not in an area where land is

registered and inhabitants live 'legally'. Tono knows all too well that he has earned too little to escape from his current 'illegal' status, but that does not mean that he gives up hope. On the contrary, he seems completely determined to fulfill his promise to his son. In narratives, he emphasizes his determination, his positive expectations for the future, and indicates that he is convinced that one day soon he will finally live his dream.[204] He even visits potential new neighbourhoods by motorbike, pointing out to me and his sons where their school will be, and what a nice street they will live on. 'Can you believe that we will live here?,' he says, 'only the prospect of that makes me want to work harder.' In the two months that follow the flood, Tono tirelessly thinks of new ways to quickly collect more money. One thing he tries is asking neighbours whether they can help him to find more or better-paid work, offering them his services as a jack of all trades. When no jobs are offered to him by anyone, he is seen stealing stones and wood from the newly rebuilt houses of other flood-victims, materials which he again sells at the market. Tono furthermore steals pieces of fruit from food carts of salesmen passing through the neighbourhood, and during a public gathering, I see him taking the food boxes that are meant for neighbours. He tells me later that he sold those to residents of a nearby neighbourhood because he needs money.

In Bantaran Kali, people start to openly declare Tono 'crazy', arguing that something in his mind has 'snapped' and that 'panic has gotten into him'. No one seems to understand why, or precisely what, has caused him to behave so differently in comparison with earlier times. Tono himself offers a justification for his behaviour in an interview with me that suggests a strong feeling of anxiety:

> I need money to move house. Now! So sometimes, yes, I must find ways to get it. It is bad, but in my opinion I have no other choice. You know how dangerous this [neighbourhood] is...it is dangerous to stay here! I need to take my family away from here. We must leave before they come and chase us away. We are like enemies (*musuh*) of the [Jakarta] government.

For similar reasons, Tono stops paying land taxes to the government, indicating that he plans to invest that money in a new house. He also encourages his mother to beg for food from neighbours, which she starts doing nearly each day. 'Food is expensive,' he explains, 'so if she can get it for free, then this helps me to accumulate my money and get away from here. My mother knows I have no other choice than let her do this.'

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[204] This correlates with answers that Tono and other *orang siap* gave to the survey questions about risk-handling practices. As noted and as seen in Figure 4, they rate high in relation to 'positive thinking'; 'underlining personal skills'; 'keeping trust that there are possibilities to survive'. At the same time, there is a tension between these indicators of positive future expectations, and the severe stress and worrying that *orang siap* currently experience. That is, in the above survey they also score high on 'fearing future'; 'rumination'; 'worrying'; and 'anxiety amplification'. This tension may indicate that even though the expectations of *orang siap* of the future are hopeful, they are not necessarily confident about whether their hopes will be fulfilled in any easy manner. Instead, they seem to foresee a struggle to fulfil their hopes.

Fellow residents of Tono disapproved of all of Tono's actions, but they appear truly bewildered when Tono decides to join an ethnic gang or civil militia group called Forum Betawi Rempug (FBR, Betawi Brotherhood Forum). This organization was created in the year 2000 after inter-gang rivalries intensified in Jakarta, and is associated with *preman*.[205] In order to achieve their vision of a Jakarta dominated by Betawi strongmen, the FBR has used a number of controversial tactics and strategies.[206] According to researcher Ian Wilson, these 'traverse the line between legal and illegal, ranging from classic extortion and stand-over tactics, to political lobbying, legitimate business ventures and entrepreneurial initiatives' (Wilson, 2010, p. 252). FBR especially appeals to the poor in Jakarta society, and attracts a broad spectrum of local *preman* looking for a new organizational cover for their racketeering; as well as the unemployed and people working in the informal street economy, in particular *ojek* motorcycle taxi drivers. In Jakarta, an estimated 60,000 people have now become members (Wilson, 2010, p. 252). In the kampong, the organization is especially popular in the residential segment where an FBR chairman occupies a double role as *Kepela RT*.

Tono is described a few months after his initiation with the organization by this FBR-chairman, who is also his *Kepala RT*, as 'a very active member' and even as 'of one of our most loyal members.' My own observations confirm such a view of the role that Tono starts to play in FBR: he assists during all FBR meetings that take place in the wider area of Bantaran Kali; he consistently wears the black clothing of FBR's members; he practices his fighting skills with other FBR members in a nearby FBR-office and invests in a gun to 'protect myself and my brothers'.[207] As was mentioned, the main aim of FBR is to fight for the rights of Original Betawi inhabitants in Jakarta. Yet, Tono has his own reasons for joining the organization, as the following excerpts of an interview show. When I ask Tono if he likes being a member of FBR, he replies:

> Yes. Although, sometimes I feel that the other members and I are looking for other things [...] Many FBR members are native Jakartans who fear newcomers, you know. They like to fight them and always say that we should protect our own, native rights. Some of them are also very strict Muslims. While me, I am a bit more relaxed about such things. Actually I could not care less about such issues. [My membership] has nothing to do with that [the native-immigrant issue or the issue of Islamic religion]! For me.....Look, if the [Jakarta] government wants to evict a neighbourhood because they want to use the land on which people live- they hire FBR. FBR does the dirty job for them...They are the ones to set fire or to chase people out of their houses; they can threaten residents who refuse to go or even torture them...FBR will probably

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[205] Between largely ethnic Madurese and Betawi-based gangs.
[206] The FBR claims to represent the interests of Jakarta's ethnic Betawi, portrayed as the indigenous population of Jakarta.
[207] This only happened three days after my fieldwork ended. The information was provided to me over the mobile phone with my respondents and later through social media communication with yet other respondents. I was also sent pictures of Tono's weapon.

be hired for the eviction in this area too... But, when I am a member myself- FBR will protect my family. They would not evict a person who is a member! We are like brothers!

I asked Tono whether his membership could imply that he will have to help FBR to evict houses of his own neighbours in the future.

> Listen, sister, I know that this is also unfair. But I pray to Allah to forgive me for that. Some of the people here are good-hearted. I used to be friends with many of them. They do not lack a good character! All they lack is the power to stop the [Jakarta] government from evicting us. You must try to understand that I need to protect my children and my wife and myself against the [Jakarta] government. You know they hate us! But do you know why? Just because we are poor! Because we do not want to move away from the river banks! Maybe FBR does bad things, but at least they care for poor people like me. If the government attacks me, FBR-members will protect me for sure. I can fight back! Members of FBR can use the weapons of FBR to protect ourselves. We are also trained to become good fighters, so together we are strong against whoever wants to hurt us. I have no other choice than to be prepared in this way, right?

The shift that Tono makes - from a 'friend' of the *kecamatan* to a man willing to fight the city government - is outstanding in its sharp distinction between past and present risk-handling practices. Simply put, Tono used to trust the government and now he distrusts them; nowadays, he trusts the FBR more to help him out in future times of need. His perceptions of the future also seem to have radically altered: while he used to envisage himself as an *orang ajar*, cooperating with the government in the management of safety in Bantaran Kali, he now aims to move to a legal, flood-prone neighbourhood and aspires to a completely new kind of life. Whenever he speaks about such changes, Tono emphasizes his great expectations for the future. He also emphasizes the belief that he will be able to finally turn his hopes into reality, and often says that he is willing to do what it takes to provide his family with a safer life. I will later show that Tono is not exaggerating when he says this. In order to fulfill his hopes of a safer future, he has even gone so far as to overtly protest the government, something which – as became clear in the former chapters - not many people dare to do in Bantaran Kali.

Tono's behaviour must thus be considered radical in the kampong, but at the same time it needs to be repeated that there are quite a number of other people in Bantaran Kali who exhibit similar defensive risk-handling practices in relation to flood risk. Just like Tono, these people believe that the government consciously causes floods in the neighbourhood to 'chase people out'; just like Tono, these people indicate that they must therefore get prepared, *siap*, in order to protect their own safety vis-a-vis the government; and just like the case with Tono, these people's distrustful and angry perceptions of the government is evident in their refusal to accept aid after floods from the *kelurahan*, or to evict to a *kelurahan* shelter during floods. Instead, they chose to remain in the

provisional shelter or on the streets during the flood in 2010, described in this thesis, and afterwards, they often sold the building materials that they received from the government. Similar to Tono, these people are convinced that this gift was 'a trap', and that they will be punished as soon as they rebuild a new house on the riverbank. They therefore try to find ways to quickly accumulate money and to move house in time 'before the bulldozers come'.

Finally, another thing that these people have in common with Tono - as expressed in interviews and surveys - is that they have a strong distrust of the government, and that they emphasize their self-efficacy whenever considering their abilities to handle risk effectively, for instance, by referring to themselves as people who are already prepared, *siap,* and hence ready to move fast in times of disaster. Tono described himself to me as '*orang siap*,' his self-chosen nickname, in contrast to the other 'naïve' people in Bantaran Kali. He would say, for example:

> I don't understand my neighbours. They just calmly continue to live here, they do not worry about anything even though it is clear that we will be evicted anytime soon. If I tell them to move away and protect themselves, ha ha, they laugh at me. While I know that in the end, they will be evicted, and they will be jealous of me because they will say that I was the only *orang siap*.

His fellow resident Ratna described herself in a similar manner: 'I must get ready to get away from here. While the other people are doing nothing, they are just awaiting their fate! Only few of us are already seriously preparing . It's just me and some other people whom are ready (*siap)*.'

It is relevant to note that the *siap* risk-handling style seemed like a rather recently developed risk-handling style for most people. As mentioned above, the defensive practices of Ratna and Tono were still rather new and unfamiliar to fellow residents, and hence it is logical that fellow residents were not familiar with their self-chosen nickname '*orang siap*'. Most of them seemed to lag behind when describing the people who could nowadays be categorized as '*orang siap*', and still called them by former nicknames. For instance, Tono was still described to me by many as an *orang ajar*, and Ratna was still frequently described as someone who leans on a patron – even though we will soon learn that this was no longer the case during the time I met her in the field. The longer Tono and Ratna exhibited their initially unfamiliar, *siap* behaviour, however, the more their fellow residents noted that 'something had come over them'. Still, the nickname '*orang siap*' was hardly ever used by any of them. Instead, they called the people who call themselves the *orang siap*, 'crazy'. The nickname *orang siap* that I use to depict the risk-handling style of people, such as Tono and Ratna, was thus derived from their own descriptions, rather than from a widely acknowledged nickname.

For Tono, it is because of his extremely radical shift in his perceptions and risk-strategies that his neighbours appear disapproving and even very confused by his recent actions – Tono's

actions come across as absolutely unfamiliar to them. When the kampong leader first hears that Tono has had initial conversations with the local leader of FBR about potential membership, he laughs it off. 'He won't become a member,' he says, 'Tono is a loyal man to our [Jakarta] government, he does not share the radical ideas of FBR.' After he learns from fellow residents that Tono is wearing the FBR uniform, he expresses his concern: 'This is worrisome. He used to be close to me, now I no longer understand what type of person he is.' We may remember from the beginning of this chapter that Ambran's grandmother was also very confused by Tono's recent decisions. She has known him from birth and now wonders, 'what has come over him? He used to be a good son to his parents- now he lets his mother ask us for food, and he is willing to fight other Indonesians...He should be ashamed!' Likewise, *orang ajar* Yusuf recalls:

> Tono used to be a good neighbour, a good Muslim, for all those years that I knew him. He was just as concerned with the problems in this neighbourhood as I still am. So we became close. Tono, me and some of our friends often talked about how we could make things better. Now he acts tough, and I no longer dare to come near him.

What made Tono change his mind – and his behaviour- so radically? Before exploring his historical biography to analyze what made him deviate from former beliefs and habits, and before we consider some theoretical reflections that can offer us some background about how such radical alterations of perceptions and habitual actions can occur in the lives of *orang siap*, let me first offer another example of the practices and perceptions of an *orang siap*: Ratna. We met Ratna briefly at the beginning of this chapter, where it was recounted how she resided in the provisional shelter during a large flood and refused to evacuate to the *kelurahan* shelter. We may also remember that fellow residents appeared shocked about Ratna's behaviour, as this came across as highly unfamiliar to them. I will now describe in more detail the *siap* risk-handling style that Ratna exhibits during and after the flood that is described throughout this dissertation, and explain how her present practices contrast with her past ways of acting.

Ratna: from *orang susah* to *orang siap*

Ratna is a young widow and mother of three. A few hours after the flood, she sits in the corner of the provisional shelter and wipes away tears that roll down her cheeks. 'Have you not heard, Roanne? The government has closed the sluice again. Everything is drowning [flooded] here. They [governmental bureaucrats] must be laughing behind their desks. We must prepare to leave as soon as possible, and I am so confused because I don't know where we should go... Allah knows how we must save ourselves! I must be prepared.' Just like Tono, Ratna refers to the idea that the government strategically 'creates' floods in Bantaran Kali by closing the sluice so that the

floodwaters do not reach elite centers in Jakarta. She also implicitly refers to the threat of an eviction, carried out by the Jakarta government.

Over the weeks that follow the flood, Ratna invests all her money, energy and time in leaving the kampong 'before the bulldozers come'. Ratna believes that she prefers to act quicker than the Jakarta government, so that:

> At least I have the time to prepare and save what is mine. I can take along the building materials from my house to re-use it and I can take my children's school uniforms with me. If I would just wait here until the bulldozers come, they will just demolish all my possessions. I would be left without anything. And they might even put me in jail! Yes, they might actually do that, because they will say we had no legal rights to live here in the first place. If they make other promises to us, we must not be naïve and believe them. Neither must you believe them when you interview them! They are dishonest.

Ratna not only expresses her negative expectations of the *kelurahan* in narratives, but she also acts upon them. For example, she travels by public transport to three neighbourhoods just outside Jakarta that she has in mind for eventual resettlement. I accompanied her during two of these trips, and saw how she - shy but determined - asked residents whether she could live there as well and how high the rent would eventually be. In both cases, she was waved off by these residents, who told her their kampong was 'full', or who demanded a far too expensive rental price. Nevertheless, Ratna remained determined to accumulate as much money as possible so that she could soon move away from the riverbank.

There are several ways in which Ratna tried to accumulate money to move house. First, just like Tono, Ratna received several bags of building materials, and, just like Tono, she sold them immediately at the market, while she and her children remained homeless after the flood. Second, a few days after the flood she took her children out of school in order to save on their educational fees. Third, on the eleventh day after the flood, Ratna started begging, in Bantaran Kali and in a nearby neighbourhood. According to her, she hardly earns any money in Bantaran Kali with her begging:

> Neighbours will not give me money even if I ask them kindly, and even if they have quite a bit of money in their pockets. They won't give it because they disagree with me wanting to move away. They say I don't need the money, and that I should just remain silent and pick up my life here. I have told them that it is dangerous for me to stay here, but they do not even listen.

In a nearby neighbourhood, however, Ratna earns more money with begging. There, she presents herself as a homeless widow and mother of three. 'That is not even a lie,' she says, 'I don't own a solid house anymore – it has been damaged too severely by the flood to live in. Also I won't have

land anymore either, after the eviction.' She always takes along her children for two reasons: first, Ratna has taken them out of school and deems it unsafe for her young children to be alone in the streets without her; and second, she earns more money with begging when she has them with her.

Ratna puts everything she earns with her begging away in a plastic bag that she keeps inside her bra. Each and every time we speak, she knows the exact amount of money in her bra.[208] Three months after the flood, she stops paying land taxes to save even more money, as she is sure that the government will evict her any time soon now, and she feels therefore, 'there is no use in paying them anymore. They will chase us away anyhow.'

Similar to what happened with Tono, negative talk about Ratna's behaviour started circulating in the neighbourhood in the months following the flood, and neighbours appeared confused about the unfamiliar ways in which Ratna had recently started to act. Residents called Ratna a bad mother (for taking her children out of school), a bad neighbour (for begging) and a bad citizen (for not paying taxes for the land), but most often, she is called 'ungrateful' (*tidak berterimakasih*) for refusing the help of the *kelurahan*.

The latter idea that Ratna has turned 'ungrateful' has to do with the fact that Ratna used to be known as a typical '*orang susah*' in the kampong. She was one of the former regular beneficiaries of the *kelurahan*, and during my fieldwork, several civil servants working in that institution reported that 'she used to be a friend of ours' and that 'we have often helped her with her problems'. During the 2002 flood and the 2007 flood, Ratna has indeed received relatively large amounts of financial support from the *kelurahan*.[209] Until recently, she also worked for the *kelurahan* in different side jobs: sometimes volunteering work for free, sometimes she worked in return for a small reimbursement or gift. One of the civil servants who volunteers in the *kelurahan* shelter during the flood still remembers working with her:

> Ratna? She used to work right beside my desk! Yeah, I gave her tasks to do, like putting my files in plastic covers. In return, she could lunch here in the office for free. She liked helping me, and I did not mind helping her a bit. Even though she lives in a slum she is diligent. We [the *kelurahan* employees] have helped her whenever she had difficulties in her life (...) Now she acts like she never knew us. It is ungrateful, in my opinion. But as she clearly feels too good to take what we offer her, she shall survive the next flood on her own.

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[208] The last time I spoke to her, Ratna had earned nearly Rp 800,000 from four months of daily begging. This means that she earned on average Rp 200,000 a month, Rp 50,000 a week. In comparison with other livelihood activities that were pursued in Bantaran Kali, begging seems actually a rather lucrative activity. Ratna earns about as much as motor taxi drivers (*ojek*) do on average, and a bit more than the average income of people who sell rice meals from their houses.

[209] Not all of the information about financial aid was registered in the *kelurahan registration*. Therefore, the incomplete *kelurahan* data was checked three times for this analysis: with Ratna herself, with the kampong leader in Bantaran Kali and with two different neighbours who were aware that Ratna was offered financial assistance after the flood. I provide more detailed information about the aid that Ratna received later in this chapter.

Clearly, Ratna's unfamiliar behaviour does not upset only her neighbours, but also her former patrons.

These mutual frustrations between Ratna and her former patrons come to a head when Ratna runs into two of her former 'friends' from the *kelurahan* one evening and attacks them. This happens about five months after the flood. By then, Ratna is still busy 'preparing', *siap*; hence, she is trying to collect as much money as needed in order to move away from the riverbank. Apparently, the fact that Ratna and her children have turned into beggars is known in the *kelurahan*, because, as Ratna sits in a *kios* late one evening, drinking sweetened tea, two female *kelurahan* employees pass by and whisper that she is a 'bad person' for letting her children beg. Ratna answers that she has no other option, as no one is helping her with her financial struggles. One of the ladies replies that that is nonsense, as Ratna could try to find another job, and that she is a bad Muslim for asking other poor people for money. According to bystanders, Ratna then jumps up and flies at the women, pushes them, scratches their arms and pulls their hair.[210] She screams that she no will longer be treated badly by the government, and that the way in which the *kelurahan* women act towards her is 'unfair' (*tidak adil*). Her loud screaming is heard in the kampong and many residents approach to see what is going on. Ratna is grabbed by a fellow resident, and the *kelurahan* women are protected by others. Even though they threaten to inform the police, the kampong leader eventually becomes involved and convinces them to leave Ratna be. 'I explained to them that she has gone crazy,' he says that evening. 'The police would punishment her too harshly, we must pity her – and also, Ratna says she wants to move away anyhow, so no one will be bothered by her anymore.' Yet even if Ratna is spared this time due to the kampong leader's counsel, her behaviour does not exactly make her popular in the neighbourhood. Most people overtly disapprove of her behaviour, saying that Ratna is 'ungrateful,' and that they want to have nothing to do with her.

Meanwhile, Ratna continues to overtly challenge the *kelurahan*. On her Facebook account, she starts posting harsh comments about the *kelurahan* employees, for example stating that they are 'bastards' *(banjingan)*.[211] If asked whether she is not afraid that this might cause her problems, Ratna says that she has recently decided that she will, from now on, overtly protest the *kelurahan*:

> I am not afraid any longer to give an ugly statement (*pernyataan buruk*) about the government in front of an audience. I am now active like this (*saya sekarang aktif seperti ini*) for the [future of] my children. What kind of life do we have here? I have been obedient for a long time. Now, whenever I have anger [inside me], I just let it out, I express myself.

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[210] I did not personally observe this fight, hence, this story was told to me afterwards by Ratna and several other bystanders, including the owner of the *kios*. Together with many of my neighbours, I only noticed a fight was going on after we heard loud screaming.

[211] In chapter 2 it was explained that Facebook is extremely popular in Indonesia (Grazella, 2013). Even in the slums of Jakarta, people who could read and write often opened an account. They would update it in nearby internet cafes, which charge Rp 1,000-3,000 per time. Ratna opened her account in November 2010, a full month after the flood.

Another way in which Ratna overtly challenges the *kelurahan* is by approaching fellow residents and asking them to join her in a protest against the Jakarta government. Ratna wants them to become united, she says, and 'fight the governor together'. None of them appears interested in such a plan, and again, Ratna is told that they want to have nothing to do with her. Ratna says about this that 'it is their own decision to stay silent. They don't want to know about our problems. I am also afraid of what will happen if we protest the government, but at least I dare to be prepared and save myself'. Two months later, Ratna has left Bantaran Kali. I have since remained in contact with one of her children through social media, and have been informed that the family lives in the street, begging, while still in search of a new home.[212]

We will later examine Ratna's biography more closely to see precisely what made her alter her risk-handling style, but for now, let me end this section by emphasizing that Ratna indicates in conversations with me that she sees no other option than to act in the way that she currently does. She seems convinced that this is the only way to 'stay safe' and that there is no more time to lose. Hence, just as in the case of Tono, Ratna's narrative suggests that she experiences a strong feeling of anxiety. Moreover, she emphasizes her own skills and capacities whenever she portrays what is, in her opinion, the most effective way of handling risk. Hence, again, what she has in common with Tono and the other *orang siap* is that her perceptions of her self-efficacy are high, while her trust in formerly trusted 'friends' is very low. In the next section I will elaborate on these perceptions of risk and distrust held in relation to the political institutions of the Jakarta government, and also consider the factors that might possibly underlie the risk-handling style of Tono and Ratna: risk-cognition, material vulnerability, cultural constructs of risk, and habitus.

Factors underlying

I have commented more than once in this dissertation on the fact that the objective flood-risk cognition of inhabitants in Bantaran Kali is generally high. This also counts for the *orang siap*; hence, we can conclude that this factor offers no explanation for their decision to exhibit a *siap* risk-handling style.

Material vulnerability, then, is another notion that seems to have no effect on the practices of *orang siap*. These people do not score high on most of the factors that are typically associated with material vulnerability towards floods (see chapter 1 for a discussion on the vulnerability literature; chapter 2 for a description of the vulnerability factors taken into account in this study's analysis). Among those people who exhibit *siap* risk-handling practices, one finds older as well as

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[212] See chapter 2 for more information about how I have used social media and internet-contacts with respondents in this research project.

younger people; the relatively poor as well as the relatively wealthy; males and females; those with fixed jobs and the unemployed; those without any formal education at all and those who finished junior school.[213]

Then what do *orang siap* have in common, and what sets them aside from fellow residents in regards to their risk-handling style? I argue that the answer to this question is threefold. First, what *orang siap* have in common is the way in which they construct and create a hierarchy of risk. Second, their life-experiences have led them to critically reflect upon their former perceptions of risk and trust, as well as upon their former risk-handling practices. On the basis of these critical reflections, *orang siap* have challenged their former general habitus and have acquired a specific, alternative habitus that better suits their present world view. In line with this altered habitus, they strategically altered their risk-handling style towards one that is defensive or *siap*. Third, what they have in common are the ways in which they act, not only in the face of flood-risk, but also in the face of other risks that they perceive to be highly threatening to their personal safety, in particular, eviction carried out by the Jakarta government. The next paragraphs elaborate on the first of these three commonalities of the *orang siap*; I will discuss the latter two characteristics later in this chapter.

The survey on risk-perceptions that was carried out for this study shows that what distinguishes this group of study-participants from all others is the way in which they construct risk. This risk-perception is again related to the way in which they subjectively perceive who can be trusted to support them in case of risk, and to the way in which they estimate their own self-efficacy in relation to risk. It is for example clear from the narratives of Tono and Ratna that they regard the city government as a danger to their personal safety and well-being, first because they believe that the Jakarta government strategically creates floods in Bantaran Kali, and second because they believe that the Jakarta government will soon evict the neighbourhood. As mentioned, Tono and Ratna are not the only ones who believe this to be true. The results of the survey about risk-perceptions that was carried out for this study are informative here.

I will begin to analyse the survey results by drawing an imaginary spectrum in Bantaran Kali, with people who hold favourable perceptions of trust in the political institutions involved in the neighbourhoods' flood management on one end, and people who maintain a rather consistent set of unfavourable or distrustful expectations of the political institutions' role in flood management on the other end of the spectrum. The latter group of people is most clearly represented by evacuees who stayed in the provisional shelter where Tono and Ratna also fled to after the 2010 flood

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[213] The factors gender, age and occupation are presented in Tables 3.1 – 3.3. I present those factors, and not the other vulnerability factors that were taken into account in this study's analysis, because they, as explained in chapter 4, correlated with the risk-handling style of the *orang ajar* – but not the other vulnerability factors - and none of them appeared significant for the three other risk-handling styles.

described in this thesis; the former group of people is represented by evacuees in the *kelurahan* shelter.

Let us consider first the survey results of the people in the *kelurahan* shelter. There, many of the *orang susah* (chapter 5) and the *orang ajar* (chapter 4) were to be found. Their survey scores show that all these evacuees carry largely favourable (or trustful) expectations of the intentions of *kelurahan* actors concerning their involvement in the flood events that occur in Bantaran Kali. Explicating these expectations in interviews, these respondents indicate that they expect that the *kelurahan* will either solve the flood problem sometime soon, or that their well-being will be protected by the *kelurahan* during large floods. For example, they often expressed the unfounded conviction that: 'The government will build a dam to protect us against floods,' or that 'the people of the *kelurahan* said that there will be no more floods because they only occur every five years and never in between, so the next year we will be safe anyhow.' Moreover, the survey indicates that most of the people who expect that the problem of flooding will be solved in one way or another by the *kelurahan* often also expect that the government will allow continuation of settlement on the riverbanks. Whenever they talked to me about evictions in interviews or informal conversations, they also appeared certain that the government will 'leave them be' and believe that any news about evictions is 'untrue'; a 'myth' or 'a lie'.

Finally, the evacuees in the *kelurahan* shelter, including Ambran – the young cigarette seller whom we met in the introduction of this thesis- and *orang ajar* Yusuf, have positive views of the *kelurahan* employees' intentions. For instance, while he was filling in the survey on risk, Ambran explained to me that:

> They want to help flood-victims because they pity us. Even though the Jakarta government cannot prevent floods, they try at least to take care of us after we are flooded. It is a positive thing that the *kelurahan* takes up that responsibility.

Yusuf likewise believes that the *kelurahan* offers help to people because:

> Those people [*kelurahan* employees] care for the inhabitants in Bantaran Kali, even though they do not like the fact that we live on the riverbanks. Still, they know that many of us are their friends. So they feel that they should support us for reasons of humanity.

By contrast, all the evacuees in the provisional shelter indicate in the survey and interviews that they hold extremely unfavourable (or distrustful) perceptions of the *kelurahan*. Not only do these people consistently reject the idea that the Jakarta government will solve the flood problem; they also believe that the Jakarta government will soon carry out evictions of the riverbanks. To put it

more starkly: on a survey scale that scores different types of hazards in people's lives from 'most dangerous' to 'least dangerous', people in the provisional shelter consider the possibility of future evictions of the riverbanks nearly as dangerous as the floods themselves. Of the twenty-five *orang siap* participating in this study, twenty-one of them called floods and evictions the most pressing risks in their lives.[214] This risk-perception contrasts significantly with the risk-perceptions of the people in the *kelurahan* shelter, who mostly indicate that evictions are much lower among their concerns than floods are.

Next to the survey results, narratives of the people in the provisional shelter also indicate that they are highly distrustful of civil servants and accuse them of having a 'second agenda'. More specifically, these people claim that what is presented as charity by *kelurahan* actors is in fact a 'trick' that may have negative consequences for evacuees. The following excerpts were taken from interviews with participants who refused to accept *kelurahan* support after the flood that is described in this dissertation:

> If we lose our focus and we relax in the [*kelurahan*] shelter- for sure they will have demolished my house by the time I return.

> The government does not like it that we live here....So they use every …. flood as a chance to evict us … If we are inattentive … *Vroooom!* [respondent imitates sound of large truck] They will come with bulldozers and evict us. So we better protect ourselves and stay put.

> Miss...if you ask me, we need to stay strong and compact together...we need to be prepared....because we have no evidence that we have rights to live on this land...even if we leave our land behind for a few days, they [the Jakarta government] will give us problems! [...] In Indonesia...if the government does not like you, then they can do anything...they can chase you away or even torture you...they have killed people and started fires in poor neighbourhoods like this, sister...Yes! This is the way our government is!

Many of the *orang siap* further expressed the belief that the local government deliberately creates floods in the kampong to 'chase us away'. We already saw that Tono and Ratna used precisely these words to express their distrust towards the government.

During informal conversations in which the evacuees in the provisional shelter talked among themselves, *orang siap* expressed other, similar distrustful opinions about the *kelurahan*:

> They [the government] make floods here so that we move out- after we have left they will create an amusement park here where elite people can bike or run.

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[214] That is the equivalent of 84 per cent. Less often but still regularly mentioned by the *orang siap* were poverty-related risks, and the risk of a fire in the kampong. Only two respondents in this group also considered social problems a risk to their personal safety; a number that was much more often mentioned by representatives in any of the other risk-handling styles distinguished in this thesis. See Figure 6 for a visual comparison of the outcomes of this risk-perception survey per risk-handling style category.

> If all houses are flooded and we have fled to shelters, then it is easier for them to turn this land into an apartment-site...Yes, you better believe me! Rich people will come and live here and the government likes that better.

Similar ideas circulated in the provisional shelter about the hidden agenda that civil servants might have when they offer residents help during disasters.[215] 'They lure us into leaving the land by offering us shelter...but then we turn home and they have already taken this land and turned it into a recreation area', *orang siap* would typically say.

Such perceptions of distrust were expressed not only in the direct period after the flood when people had evacuated to the provisional shelter, but were also reflected in conversations with *orang siap* throughout the time of my fieldwork. Whenever they spoke to me about the Jakarta government in relation to their own safety, they consistently expressed emotions of anger and fear. For example, when local newspapers headlined that riverbank settlers would be granted adequate compensation after eviction by the government (Haryanto, 2011), these people dismissed the news as 'lies'. When the newly-elected governor Jokowi visited the community and suggested that everyone would be displaced to a subsidized flat as a compensation for eviction measures, it was once again the *orang siap* who accused the politicians of telling them 'lies' and 'tricking' them into something bad.[216] These examples show that the narratives of *orang siap* indicate a strong sense of urgency and anxiety whenever discussing the risk of eviction or the floods that are assumed to be created by the city government. These people were doing everything to be prepared, *siap*.

It was mentioned at the beginning of this section that there are several factors that underlie the risk-handling style of *orang siap*. One factor is the shared way in which *orang siap* construct risk; this issue was elaborated upon above. Second, it was posed that what *orang siap* have in common is that their current risk-handling style still seems rather recent and unfamiliar in the eyes of other people, which indicates that their habitus, their risk-perceptions and *siap* practices have significantly altered over the past few years from how they used to think, speak and behave. Third, I claimed before in this chapter that *orang siap* do not only exhibit *siap* practices in relation to flood risk, but in relation to multiple risks. The next section elaborates on these second and third characteristics of *orang siap*. I start by describing the current perceptions and practices of *orang siap* in relation to

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[215] Next to floods, fires were also frequently mentioned by *orang siap* as a typical disaster that would instigate involvement of the *kelurahan*, not just in its role as an external provider of aid but also in its role as a potential prompter of this disaster (through arson).

[216] My fieldwork had already ended when the governor visited the research area. However, through intensive contacts with key respondents, I was regularly updated about events in the kampong. From the visit of the governor, people sent me photos and digital videos. I also interviewed these informants about the visit by email and through Facebook chats. My research assistant went back to the field to do follow-up interviews with those inhabitants who were not eager or able to use the internet for our communication.

different risks, and thereafter trace back how their current risk-handling style differs from what used to be their typical risk-handling practices.

Altering perceptions; altering practices

If we take that *orang siap* generally consider evictions as one of the most threatening and pressing risks to their well-being, then it becomes understandable that during floods they prefer staying as close to their houses as possible, so that they can take quick action in case 'the bulldozers come'. For a similar reason, these people do not like the fact that their names and identity card numbers need to be registered, as would be the case were they to reside in the *kelurahan* shelter during floods. After the 2010 flood, which I witnessed, *orang siap* in the provisional shelter explained to me why they did not want to reside in the *kelurahan* shelter in the following ways:

> Then they can prove that we are living in a dangerous place and that we need their help to survive here, so it becomes easier for the government to refuse our right to live here.
>
> They like to collect our names so that they can check our land rights. If you do not have any documents to prove that you can live here according to the law, then they might destroy your house.

While *kelurahan* bureaucrats hold that this registration is only done to keep track of who is safely evacuated and who might still be in danger and trapped in a flooded house in the kampong, the evacuees in the provisional shelter thus appear convinced that the registration of their names will disadvantage them in one way or another. As a result of their strong distrust of the *kelurahan*, *orang siap* indicate that they believe it necessary to be always prepared, *siap*, to save themselves.

Follow-up interviews with *orang siap* indicated that their defensive risk-handling practices were exhibited not only during this flood event, but their *siap* risk-handling style is also used in the face of other hazards in which 'distrusted' actors associated with the Jakarta government were involved. Let me offer a few examples to clarify this point. Regarding poverty-related risks, it is notable that, in case of illness, none of the *orang siap* ever made use of the services of a (government-subsidized and therefore relatively affordable) health clinic during the period of fieldwork. Instead, they pay high costs to consult alternative medics who may have no formal medical background, but who are at least not associated with the government.[217] According to

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[217] For example, after the 2010 flood, approximately 71 per cent of the *orang siap* refused to be treated by a *kelurahan* doctor who offered her services for free to flood victims. This number is high if compared with other groups: only 20 per cent of the *orang ajar* refused to be medically checked (mostly because they said they were 'too busy' with managing neighbourhood safety during the flood); and nobody from the *orang susah* rejected the offer – they were all medically checked and treated as needed. Another example is provided by a female *orang siap* who probably suffered from breast cancer but refused to be treated by the *kelurahan* health clinic, and instead underwent alternative treatment with a self-declared Chinese 'doctor'. This 'doctor' rubbed stones over the breasts of her patient, which would presumably 'chase the

different *orang siap*, these alternative medics 'treat poor people as best as they can', while the governmental doctors were consistently described as persons who 'hate poor people and [purposely] let us suffer'.[218]

Regarding the risk of eviction, *orang siap* were actively trying to protect themselves from potential future evictions. From my interviews, it can be implied that a large majority of them invest relatively large amounts of money in fake land documents that they believe useful to prove their 'right' to live along the riverbanks; that they hang plastic bags with their most important documents in strategic places in their houses where they can quickly take them 'any time a bulldozer approaches'; and they carry all tax payment receipts with them as proof of their legitimate residence whenever they leave their houses. Also, *orang siap* take radical decisions in order to accumulate money and protect themselves against risk: some took their children out of school to save costs 'because we might have to move soon and therefore we need all the money we can save'; others started to sell their household assets for a similar reason. To recap, in the perception of *orang siap*, the involvement of the Jakarta government in the flood-problem of their kampong by means of eviction is maybe even more hazardous than a flood itself.[219] It is for this reason that they prioritize defending their physical security against the threat of eviction. Many do so by accumulating money that can be used in case they suddenly have to move. Just as Tono did, some of the people who call themselves '*orang siap*' do so by becoming members of the FBR, which offers them a sense of safety amidst the perceived risk of eviction.

Moreover, all of them publically express their anger and frustration against the political institutions involved in flood management, and they overtly challenge the *orang ajar* (introduced in chapter 4). It may have already become clear in chapter 4 that by challenging the orders of *orang ajar*, inhabitants of Bantaran Kali run the risk of being disciplined or punished by powerful actors in

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illness out'. She furthermore informed the patient that she should no longer wear bras, as these cause cancer. The patient went to see this doctor each week and paid nearly Rp 50,000, which matched precisely the full income of her husband. As a consequence of these high medical costs, the family went into deep debt with moneylenders. Furthermore, both children were taken out of school to save on expenses, and goods from the household were sold. The last time I visited the family, the house was nearly empty: the couch, table, chairs and mattresses had been sold. In August 2011, the woman died of her illness.

[218] We may remember from chapter 2 that distrust towards medical professionals was actually widespread in Bantaran Kali. It was thus not so much the perception of *orang siap* about these medics that set them apart from other residents, but more the way in which they sought alternative treatments. If most people in the kampong made use of a local health clinic subsidized by the *kelurahan*, *orang siap* did not and instead chose not to be treated at all in case of illness, or visited an alternative doctor whom they believed was more trustworthy.

[219] They are by far not the first Indonesians who face the 'state as hazard'- and probably not the last either. Disputes over land are a frequent source of conflict in Indonesia, and forced evictions are a long-standing and recurring problem in the history of Jakarta. During the rule of earlier Presidents, Sukarno and Soeharto, government forces carried out brutal large-scale evictions in order to fulfill the urban planning dreams of city and national leaders, and to serve the private interests of a few privileged developers (Human Rights Watch, 2006). Yet Indonesia's transition to democracy has not led to a halt in forced evictions (Kadri, 2008; AGFE, 2005). During past years, 'many tens of thousands of people have watched Jakarta's security forces demolish their homes and destroy their personal property with little notice, due process, or compensation. Many thousands more of Jakarta's poor live in fear that one day the security forces and bulldozers will come to their communities'(Human Rights Watch, 2006, p. 2).

society. Nonetheless, we have seen that Tono and Ratna refused to follow up *orang ajar* Yusuf's safety advice to follow him to the *kelurahan* shelter. Other *orang siap* also raised objections to *orang ajar,* for example, by walking away as soon as an *orang ajar* wanted to start a 'lecture' about floods, or by expressing different opinions about the causes of floods – as Tono did when he loudly commented on the television programme.

As a final note about the practices of *orang siap* vis-à-vis multiple risks, it is relevant to know that their decision not to evacuate to the *kelurahan* shelter did not just take place during the 2010 flood described in this dissertation, but also during other disasters. When a fire damaged a large number of the houses in Bantaran Kali during my fieldwork, it was these same *orang siap* who set up a provisional shelter and who refused to seek shelter with the *kelurahan*. And when another large flood inundated the kampong again in 2013, none of the *orang siap* registered with the *kelurahan*. Instead, most of them stayed in the streets surrounding their houses until the water had receded enough for them to return home. Some *orang siap* stayed in a shelter that was set up and maintained by FBR.[220]

If above descriptions of the *siap* risk-handling style indicate that the risk-handling practices of *orang siap* are rather consistent (in the sense that their practices reflect distrustful perceptions of the Jakarta government in relation to multiple risk events), I also argue that for the large majority of them their 'distrustful' or defensive risk-handling style is rather recent. We have already seen that this was the case for Tono and Ratna, whose behaviour is experienced as unfamiliar by fellow residents. The same can be said about other *orang siap*: while these people exhibit a *siap* risk-handling style nowadays, they often exhibited a very different risk-handling style during earlier years.

Before elaborating on this argument, it needs be remarked that the fieldwork in which the bulk of the data underlying this book was collected covered a time span of only one year. Hence, while the risk-perceptions of respondents could be 'measured' in surveys and interviews during that year, and while the risk-handling practices could be observed, similar real-life data from earlier periods in respondents' lives was obviously not available. However, it was possible – and perhaps also interesting for the aim of understanding the ways in which people typically handle risk from a bottom-up perspective - to discuss with respondents how they perceived and experienced risk in former years, and how they interpret risk events and their own risk-behaviour in hindsight. It appeared from the interviews with *orang siap* that their 'typical' ways of perceiving and handling risks had significantly changed. For example, in hindsight, nearly all of the *orang siap* called

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[220] This was information that I derived after my fieldwork had ended, through personal contact over email and phone with some of my key respondents, and also through the help of my research assistant, whom I had asked to revisit the kampong and do follow up interviews and observations during this flood.

themselves 'naïve' in the way that they used to respond to flood-risk warning messages during earlier years, while they described their recent responses to such messages as more appropriate, that is, 'safe' (*aman*). When asked about the reasons for their changed practices, almost all of these people defined a moment in their lives or a traumatic experience that made them realise that what they used to do was not safe enough – and that therefore, an alternative *siap* risk-strategy was needed.

It seems, then, that we have come to the point in the analysis where it becomes relevant to reconsider the question that has popped up several times already in this chapter. 'What has come over them?,' people wondered out loud about Tono and Ratna. My own research questions are related to theirs: The impact of a general habitus is generally considered so strong that it is hard for people to challenge it or to act outside of it, so what is going on with these *orang siap* that they were, nevertheless, eventually able to develop a new risk-handling style? How and why do people let go of a former risk-handling style? Why did Ratna change from an *orang susah*, dependent of the support of her *kelurahan* patrons, into a person who calls herself '*siap*' and who exhibits defensive practices towards her former patrons? And how can it be that Tono's perceptions of risk and trust have altered so radically over time? In order to answer these complicated questions, we must take a different approach than the one which was used to analyze the underlying factors of the other risk-handling styles up described so far in this thesis. In previous chapters, it appeared most useful to try and understand how people develop a habitual practice and reproduce it; this time, the focus of the analysis lies more explicitly with the dynamics behind the development of new or alternative risk-handling practices. [221]

I commented earlier in this thesis that even though the theory of habitus in principle allows for agentive moves, it offers little detailed insight into when such moves might take place and who might make them. Even more problematically, it tells us nothing about how people experience the alteration of their practices and perceptions. Therefore, I argued in the theoretical chapter that the agentive influence on innovative and reflective human action must be investigated empirically. The following sections will take up this challenge, examining the precise moments in the lives of actors where older habits are critically reflected upon by them and strategically altered.

In order to reveal such dynamics, I propose to use Niklas Luhmann's theory of risk and trust, as he clarifies that people's habitual perceptions of risk and trust can only be maintained as long as these remain 'relatively disappointment-free' (Luhmann, 1985, p. 25). If we experience too many events that challenge these habitual perceptions, our disappointments accumulate, until a certain

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[221] The reproduction of habitual, cognitively structured perceptions and practices were most explicitly discussed in chapters 3 and 4, where the empirical data offered insights into people's general habitus. In addition, we saw in chapter 5 how new opportunities also may lead to the development of a specific, alternative habitus.

point of no return has been crossed, and we need to radically change our habitual expectations and actions. Luhmann thus agrees with Piotr Sztompka and Möllering (their arguments are presented in chapter 5) that people's perceptions of risk and trust are generally habitual or structured, but at the same time he is interested in highlighting a more dynamic aspect of human actors' cognitive risk-handling mechanisms. According to Luhmann, we habitually perceive our environment as more or less risky, but only '*bis man die schwelle uberschreitet, und dan bringt ein kleiner Schritt große veranderungen*' (1968, p. 96). In other words, we maintain these habitual perceptions for a fairly long time, but not after a critical point, *schwelle,* has been reached – a disappointing experience or realization by which we feel forced to change them radically.

I will now turn to an analysis of the biographies of Tono and Ratna to define the precise critical moments in their lives when their *schwelle* was reached, or where we might say that their habitus was altered.

Tono's biography

Tono was born as the son of a garbage collector in Bantaran Kali. He helped his father from an early age, but he never came to like the job as much as his father did:

> My father earned relatively well compared to other inhabitants. Our house was fairly large, and we possessed two carts to collect garbage. He was proud of his job and of his accomplishments. But [unlike my father], I never liked the work. Whenever I helped him, my back ached and I did not like the smell. I was also ashamed of doing this job! Girls would not even look at me because I always smelled so bad.

So at the age of twelve, Tono was happy to accept a job as a cleaner in a cafeteria and he quit collecting garbage. Ever since then, he has worked in different cafeterias and restaurants nearby the riverbank settlement: as a cleaner, as a jack-of-all-trades and, sometimes, as a waiter. He was twenty-two years old when he married his wife Vita, who also grew up in the kampong. Vita gave birth to two sons, who were aged four and six at the time the fieldwork for this research project took place. Tono reflects about this period in his life as follows:

> I remember when my wife was pregnant from the second child, I told myself that this was the best time in my life. You must understand, I am only a man from the slums, and still I had a regular income, a wife, children, and also I had some friends here, even some friends who worked in the *kecamatan* [...] I was always helping them to teach the other people here about

floods. I was also planning to buy a HT, so that I could help and protect other people against the floods.[222] [...] It was a good time in my life, I think. I felt comfortable each day.

His youngest son was born in rural Java on the day in 2007 that a large flood would demolish Tono's house. Tono recalls about that day:

> Three days before the flood occurred, my wife had travelled to her family in the countryside to give birth there. So when I first heard that a flood was coming our way, I was home alone with my eldest son, who was aged three at that time.

Tono's son was obviously too young to swim, and Tono himself had never learned to swim well enough to swim through strong currents of a flood either. Still, Tono felt certain that he would stay safe during the flood, as he expected that one of his 'friends' would save him:

> I was close to [names of two *orang ajar*] back then, I was always helping them, so I just knew that one of them would help me evacuate or call in the rescue team of the *kecamatan*. They know I am a bad swimmer, and that I am afraid of floods, and they were always laughing at me for that. So I really did not worry when I first heard that a flood was coming, because I knew I was on their radar....All of their friends are helped first during floods.

Therefore, instead of quickly evacuating, Tono decided to first assist the people known as *orang ajar* in the kampong by spreading the flood-risk message among his fellow residents, as he had done during former floods. With his son in his arms, he walked through the streets to check whether everyone had received the flood-risk warning message and he ordered them to evacuate to the *kelurahan* shelter. Meanwhile, the streets outside became inundated. After about an hour, Tono went back home and packed as many goods as he could carry. He took his time to collect all of his valuable goods, as he did not want to make a large economic loss if his house were to be flooded. He then spent about half an hour tying up his furniture with ropes so that his valuables could not be taken away by the currents, and he took some more time to barricade the windows and the door so that these would not be easily smashed by waves. When his wife heard on the news that Bantaran Kali was flooded, she called him up and appeared concerned when she learned that he had not evacuated yet. Tono recalls:

> I told my wife to worry about the birth of our second child, not about me! I told her: 'they will come to save us no matter what, because we are befriended.' She felt calm after that because she knew I was speaking the truth and we would be safe.

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[222] HT is the abbreviation of Handie Talkie, the radio set that is used by *orang ajar* to receive information about the water level in the Jakarta and Depok sluices. See chapter 4 for more information about the HTs and the ways in which they are used by *orang ajar* in Bantaran Kali's flood management.

But Tono's positive expectations of his 'friends' at the *kecamatan* were let down during the flood:

> I waited and waited. One hour...two hours...there was still nobody to help me and my son, but the water rose higher than what felt comfortable. I kept telling myself that they were busy and that they would come soon, but to tell you the truth, I became nervous, I did not like to wait that long. Finally, I called two of my acquaintances in the *kelurahan* on their cellphones, but they did not respond. I also texted the kampong leader, saying that I needed help and that nobody had yet come to evacuate us. And I called [the name of an *orang ajar*], but he was too busy to pick up the phone. After three hours, I was still standing in the water, holding my son above my head. Can you imagine how scared I was? The water was waist-high, and the current was too strong for me to wade through. My son was crying. I sent another text-message to the mobile phone of a man who works at the *kecamatan*, saying that I needed instant help. He was not as close to me as my friends here, but he nevertheless knew my name because I helped manage the safety here. So I dared to ask him for support. It was cold...I was so afraid to drown, so very afraid... Then! I could see a helicopter circling above my head. I was so happy! I thought that they [the Jakarta government] would finally save me and my son! I shouted: 'help me, there are still people here!' But they didn't care about us; they left again. It felt like I froze, but it was not from the cold in the water, but from the cold in my heart. They did not care less that I was drowning.

About twenty minutes later, Tono's hopes were up again when he heard a voice shouting that a government rescue team had arrived with boats. But none of the boats eventually entered the water. 'Those people just stood there, next to their boats, and they did not even try to rescue me,' Tono says,

> When a neighbour was finally able to save me, four hours had passed since I knew that the flood would come. The water had risen as high as my chin by that time and my son was shivering from the cold. His lips were blue. I cried. The neighbour had heard me screaming and decided to save me. He had to risk his own life because he had no boat. Instead, he helped me to pull myself and my son through the water with a rope. We could have drowned were it not for that brave man! I was in shock to realize that I mean so little to the people [in the local government] whom are close to me. Even though I have always helped them and we called each other friends!

We might take from Tono's narrative that his trustful or favourable expectations of his 'friends' were dashed at that point in his life, but this following quotation indicates that he in fact still maintained some trust towards his acquaintances in the Jakarta government, by considering the event an exception to the norm, like Yati and Ahmed also did as we saw in chapter 5. Reflecting upon the above incident, he says:

> My wife was upset when she heard that our son nearly drowned. She immediately commented that those people are no longer friends to us, and that I should stop spending so much time on

them, but I objected. I explained her that there had been a mistake. I told her that they must have confused me for another person and this is why they did not help me. I wasn't even lying to her when I told her this [laughs]...Now I see that I have been stupid, but this is truly what I believed back then!

Few days after the flood, Tono visited the *kelurahan* to share his story with some civil servants he was acquainted with, and perhaps also to demand a confirmation of his own understanding of what might have happened. He was told, however, that there had not been a mistake at all. Instead, he learned that the helicopter was never meant to help riverbank settlers evacuate, but that it had only circled above the kampong to monitor the situation. Furthermore, Tono was told that boats of the rescue teams had not entered the water, because it was feared that the strong currents would damage the boats. Tono remembers that he felt 'confused' and 'sad' after having heard this. As a final attempt to understand why his positive expectations of his 'friends' were disappointed, Tono also went to the local institution of KORAMIL, but there he did not get to talk to anyone. [223] The front gate remained closed for him. He reflects on this experience as follows:

> I waited in front of KORAMIL for six hours. Six hours! I could see people watching me through the windows of their office, but they did not come to see me. I had taken my identity card to prove that I am an honest man and one that is close to them, but nobody would speak to me.

When I asked Tono what he did then, he replied:

> Nothing! Because there was nothing that I could do at that point other than wait and hope that they would explain it all to me. I just stood there a long time and talked to satay sellers and passengers by. Eventually I went home. So I did not *do* anything physically, if that is what you want to know. But in my mind...inside me... I was thinking so much it gave me a headache. I told my wife at home that they had misused me the past years. I told her that maybe we should use our savings for something other than a radio set.

The above quote indicates that after Tono was confronted with another disappointment of his habitually positive expectations of the intentions of actors from the political institutions involved in Bantaran Kali's flood management, his interpretation of the events started to alter.

The feelings of shock and disappointment that accompanied this nalternative interpretation are reflected in Tono's next quote:

> That day I came to understand that many civil servants act tough, but they are in fact scared like children during disasters like floods... that is because they do not care so much about people like me as they want us to believe. I think that they only care because we help them

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[223] The military institution that cooperates with *orang ajar* in Bantaran Kali's flood and safety management (see chapter 4).

with the radios. But if they feel threatened by a flood themselves, yeah, they act as if we are strangers again.

Nearly a week later, Tono's *schwelle* would finally be exceeded when his trustful expectations of the *kecamatan* and the *kelurahan* were dashed once again. This happened when Tono, together with about thirty other flood victims, participated in a public protest at the Jakarta sluice. Tono describes what happened:

> I went along to the sluice with some other men who were angry with the [Jakarta] government. We went by motor...I wanted the [Jakarta] government to understand that floods traumatize us. We went there to remind them that we lose everything if a flood enters our neighbourhoods! If they cannot solve the flood problem, then the least they can do is save the people who always loyally help them. They cannot forget their friends during floods, nor can they allow civil servants to behave like wimps. So we went to the sluice and screamed that they should offer us more help. I told them that I was friends with them, I asked them: 'How can you let your friends drown?' But the civil servants over there called in the army, and I was punched in my stomach and my upper leg. I repeated again and again my name, saying that I usually help them as a friend. But we were all chased away. Now you understand why I am so sure that they do not care for poor people like me?[224]

It seems that at this point in time, Tono's world view was shaken to such an extent that he was forced to radically alter his former, habitual, positive expectations of the city government. As a result, he also strategically altered his risk-handling practices.

The word 'strategic' needs be emphasized here, because Tono shows in the following quote that he critically reflected upon his former beliefs and consciously came to challenge these:

> I came home from the sluice, and I cried so much that my wife thought I had been physically hurt, and she insisted on finding medical treatment for me. But I was not crying because of the bruises! I can deal with pain! I was crying like a baby because I was so angry! I have always helped the people of the *kecamatan* to keep this neighbourhood safe, I also voted for the governor because I believed that he would take care of us. But now I felt confused...Nah...I am no longer stupid! I will always remember how the government acted towards me during floods! They almost let my son die! They abuse me! They do not care![225]

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[224] Even though the emphasis must remain here with Tono's experiences and memories for the sake of our analysis of his 'point of no return', it is relevant to note that I have cross-checked his story with the memories of a sluice-gate keeper who attended the protest as well as with a senior formal flood-manager working for the city government at that time (names withheld). Both of them acknowledged that the event had occurred largely in the way Tono describes (interviews on 12 February 2011 and 5 December 2010 – both in Jakarta). It is also interesting to note that Indonesia scholars have described similar protests that had taken place at the same sluice already in 2002, leading as well to physical encounters between protesting flood-victims and civil servants. Caljauw, Nas & Pratiwo (2005) wrote that 'People went to the Manggarai floodgate and wanted to open it, but they had to face soldiers who had instructions to shoot anyone who touched the gate' (p. 458).

[225] Fauzi Bowo served as governor during the time Tono speaks of. He was replaced by 'Jokowi' in 2012.

This realization shuffled Tono's formerly structured set of favourable or trustful expectations about the future actions of his acquaintances in the Jakarta government. While he had invested in his social network over the past years and expected personal benefits in return in times of need, the events of 2007 challenged his habitual, trustful perceptions to such an extent that Tono's perceptions of the intentions of government actors became much more negative. Tono realizes in retrospective that he was 'naïve to think that we were friends, when in fact they did not care at all.'

He makes a commitment to himself in the hours after the protest at the sluice that from that moment on, he will act differently. He immediately starts distancing himself from *the orang ajar* in Bantaran Kali, and he also stops investing his time in 'lecturing' other people about safety. Instead, he starts investing most of his time and energy in his paid work, and sets aside savings. *Orang ajar* Yusuf remembers that Tono started behaving differently during this period:

> He used to be very active, but during the past years he has become more lazy. Well, perhaps not lazy, because he was working very hard, I think... But we were less close because he was always busy. He made a huge loss after the flood in 2007, so he was always working to pay for his losses. This is why we hardly ever saw him again.

Years later, when Tono and I met during fieldwork, Tono's perceptions and practices seem still altered. We have seen earlier in this chapter that he expects that, during a future flood, *kecamatan* actors will not offer support to him. Nor does he trust actors from the *kelurahan*. Therefore, he exhibits defensive, *siap,* risk-handling practices in the face of flood risk, and expresses distrustful perceptions of the intentions of government actors.

Tono's biography shows once again that perceptions of risk and trust are correlated. Despite his high flood-risk cognition (his objective knowledge of floods), Tono had always felt safe in the kampong, because he trusted that, in case of a flood, he would be helped in time by actors from the Jakarta government. After he came to realize that he might have trusted these actors for no good reason, his risk perceptions changed along with his trust perceptions. He nowadays indicates that he is extremely afraid of floods; that he lacks a sense of safety; and, moreover, he appears convinced that he should actually *fear* the Jakarta government.

A similar correlation between perceptions of risk and trust can be recognized in the narratives of other *orang siap* that were presented in this chapter: they strongly distrust the *kelurahan*, and this distrust makes them feel unsafe and vulnerable in relation to the risk of flooding. It is furthermore interesting to take from Tono's biography that unfavourable or distrustful expectations of *orang siap* regarding the intentions of the Jakarta government are not limited to the government involvement with the hazard of floods in Bantaran Kali. Rather, their distrust of the Jakarta government can be related to the multiple risks that characterize a context of normal

uncertainty. In this way, we might also say that their distrustful expectations influence their broader world view, and consequently also their repertoire in risk-handling practices.

Let me use Tono once more as an example, to show that his present negative expectations of the Jakarta government are related to multiple hazards. A few examples are enlightening: when Tono hears vague rumours about an eviction in about three years time or so, he is convinced that it will occur very soon: 'within months'. When the governor promises in a news article that riverbank settlers will be adequately compensated after this eviction, Tono accuses him of lying.[226] And when a fire breaks out in Bantaran Kali during my fieldwork, Tono appears convinced that it is arson committed by the city government 'to chase us away'. He tells me:

> It cannot be a coincidence that the electricity cable that snapped and created fire was installed only a week earlier by a state-owned company for electricity... I knew that the government in this city sometimes acts this way if they want to use land on which people live...But who would think that they would try and kill us? They set fire without warning so that they can use this land! They think we are like animals and they can just kill us! But even though we are poor, we are not animals!

Similar distrustful perceptions to multiple risks are expressed in the following quote of another male *orang siap*. This respondent tells me during the 2010 flood, which I witnessed, that he suspects that the Jakarta government might have created it as a way to encourage river bank settles to move:

> This flood might not be natural, Roanne. It has nothing to do with the rain, that is what I think [...] It might well be a political thing. They [politicians] close the doors of the sluice on purpose when it rains. So we get a flood [...] Because this is how they force people to evacuate and then they can demolish our houses. I do not have proof for you that this is why this flood occurred, but if you ask me, that is what happened.

Because of all of these distrustful perceptions, formed and strengthened over the years, Tono and other *orang siap* nowadays try to protect their personal safety, as well as the safety of their family members, by using defensive strategies against the Jakarta government – strategies that give them the feeling that they are prepared, *siap*. For Tono, we might also say that his feelings and beliefs have radicalized, and that he has come to invest most of his time, energy and money into defensive and violent risk-handling practices, such as joining in FBR activities.

In order not to narrow the analysis down to the story of one, perhaps somewhat extreme, example of how a person might develop a *siap* risk-handling style, I now turn to the analysis of the biography of another *orang siap*: Ratna. It examines at which point in her life her '*schwelle*' was

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[226] This concerned a digital news article from 2012 (Saksono). I had by that time left the field, and read the article online from the Netherlands. I asked my research assistant to ask respondents for reactions to it. It was she who noted down Tono's denouncing reply and told me about it.

reached, or in other words, when and why her risk-handling style was radically altered. As mentioned earlier, it could be considered remarkable that Ratna refused the help of the *kelurahan* during the flood that she experienced during my stay in the field, because she had always received regular aid from the *kelurahan* during past crises. We will consider what caused her perceptions to change from trustful to distrustful.

Ratna's biography

Ratna's parents moved to Jakarta from rural Java. Her father found a job as bus driver in Jakarta, and, thanks to his monthly salary and the family's determination to accumulate their money for the education of their child, Ratna would become one of the few adult riverbank settlers in Bantaran Kali who would graduate from junior secondary school (SMP). When she was aged twenty-one, she managed to find work as the secretary of a local politician at the *kelurahan*. About that time she remembers:

> I was grateful that I could get my school diploma and a good job in an office...Truly, I did everything to keep my boss satisfied. I knew this job was my best chance to get a good life for me and my family, and so I worked day and night.

That latter part of the sentence must be taken literally, as neighbours remember how often Ratna slept in the office. Ratna did not mind working overtime, she explains, as she received a lot of aid in return from her boss during floods:

> In 2002, my boss had only just recently hired me and my house was already flooded. I lost everything: clothes, money, documents... I was embarrassed, but I asked him whether my husband and I could sleep in the office for a week or so until we had rebuilt our house.

Her boss did not mind her asking, and he pitied his employee. Besides allowing Ratna and her husband to spend six nights in the office, he also provided them with three meals a day and Rp 300,000 in cash to rebuild their house. Ratna reflects upon that gift as follows:

> I worked even harder for him after that. I literally lived in that office. I took all the extra jobs, I offered to do things free of charge, just to show that I was grateful that he cared for me like a father.

Ratna and her husband had three children together, and the family became relatively well-off in the kampong. Ratna's husband made a living as a taxi driver, for which he took night shifts. Ratna received a fixed monthly income from her office job, and her boss sometimes treated her with small

extras, which enhanced their financial situation. For example, he gave her school shoes for her children, and sometimes an extra meal for herself. Ratna recalls:

> My husband looked after the children during the day, while I did it at night. We hardly ever saw each other, but we were happy, nevertheless, because we knew that we could save enough money for our children to become educated. We also knew that we had friends at the *kelurahan* who helped us with problems.

Even a second large flood in 2007 did not affect the family's well-being too much, as Ratna's family members were again financially supported by the *kelurahan*. Ratna's trustful expectations were thus consistently fulfilled at this point in time. 'We were among the first to be evacuated,' Ratna recalls. 'My boss had sent in a boat to get us. He also paid for our losses afterwards.'

But when Ratna's husband started suffering from heart problems, the family was faced with high medical costs, and it appeared for the first time that Ratna's patron would disappoint her. Ratna soon realized that she could not afford the recovery surgery that her husband needed and decided to ask her boss in the *kelurahan* to give her a loan. Instantly, her employer refused, which astonished Ratna:

> I was sure he would help me because my contract stated that employees' families have some insurance for health, but that existed on paper only. In reality, it was a lie, and they only paid for the first two days in hospital. After that, no one supported me. While my husband still needed much more treatment… And he needed surgery or else he would die! I cried and I begged them, I reminded them of my good work during all past years, but…nothing.

Ratna's husband passed away after one week. She was, of course, devastated by her loss. But at the same time her biographical narratives indicate that she interpreted the incident as a tragic, yet also somewhat understandable *exception to the norm* – the norm in which her patron was still regarded by Ratna as the one who cares for her 'like a father'. When Ratna reflects on how she felt in the weeks after her husband died, her narrative shows how she managed to maintain her trustful expectations towards her patron:

> First, I was depressed. I only wanted to cry and sleep. I also felt upset because no one had helped my husband. But then I also realized that my boss himself is not a very rich man. He is only averagely rich. So I realized that maybe he has only enough money to help me with floods, but he lacks money needed for surgery.

Similar to how Tono's risk-handling style slowly but steadily altered, we could thus define this experience of Ratna's as a critical moment in time, where Ratna interprets the refusal of her boss to help her pay medical costs as an exception to her normatively positive expectations of the *kelurahan*

actors. Although she was let down this one time, she still trusted that he would continue to support her financially in future times of need. In that way she was able to maintain her sense of safety and calm. But several months after the death of her husband, it became more difficult for Ratna to stay positive. Left as a widow at age twenty-nine, with three small children, it was hard for her to earn a living. Although Ratna experienced the combination of work and motherhood as challenging, the real problem arose when she was told by colleagues at the *kelurahan* office that they could no longer hire her. The following excerpts from an interview show how Ratna experienced that message:

> One day I entered the office and I felt people were staring at me. When I asked what was going on, one of my seniors told me that there were no tasks for me to do. I laughed, because I thought they were joking, but they said they were serious and that I had better go home. I waited for a couple of hours in the office, but nobody gave me a task. Then a colleague said that they were hiring other people who had higher diplomas. That day I begged them to let me stay because I needed the income of my job. I said that I was grateful for any kind of work, even to work in return for free, and so we decided that I could work as a volunteer and they would give me some money only whenever they felt I deserved it.

When I asked Ratna why she offered to do work for free, and why she did not instead seek a new, paid job, Ratna explains that at this point in time she believed that volunteering was a way to maintain friendly relationships with the employees of the *kelurahan*:

> [I thought that] in that way, at least we [the civil servants from the *kelurahan* and Ratna] could still remain close to one another, and if I would have difficulties, *susah*...maybe my boss could help me again. Because I knew that they had helped me during floods, so that is why I still trusted them [...] to help me again.

As was agreed, Ratna worked as a full-time volunteer for the *kelurahan* office during the next year, but she only received an income for two weeks of working. In order to pay for her rent, Ratna picked up side-jobs such as cleaning the house of one of the civil servants. She felt overworked, sleep-deprived and constantly worried about money. This became worse when, a full year after her husband had passed away, Ratna started hearing more and more rumours of possible evictions of the houses on the riverbank. Ratna feared that she would lose her house and her social network. The idea of a potential eviction also frightened her because she had already experienced one before when she was still a teenager and lived in another Jakarta neighbourhood with her parents:

> When we first moved to this city, we lived a few hundred meters away from this neighbourhood. My father had built us a wooden house next to the railway: I can still point out to you the exact spot. One day men dressed in suits came and told us that we had to move

house. They said that they were from the government. They ordered us to move, but nobody wanted to because we knew of no other place we could live. Two weeks later, bulldozers demolished our house and we lost most of our belongings. We took only those goods that we could carry. I cried...I cried...We lived on the streets for a few days, but then my father luckily managed to find us a new house here.[227]

As an adult, Ratna had not often thought about this experience, but when she heard of the rumours that Bantaran Kali would be evicted, her childhood memories of the eviction returned. She wondered whether the *kelurahan* employees that she knew so well would order this eviction, even if they knew that Ratna's house would then be demolished. After days of pondering, Ratna went to see her former colleagues in the *kelurahan* to seek their support. She had hoped that they would at least understand her concerns about eviction, but they sent Ratna away and told her that they had nothing to do with it. Ratna did not give up at that time, but, instead, she demanded to see her boss:

> I dared to ask him for help again because I was so desperate! He knew of my problems, *susah*, and he had helped me before. So I just asked him very politely why he had never warned me before that he was going to evict us, while I was always close to him? I told him: 'If you had warned me, *Pak*, then maybe I could have accumulated more money or move house earlier!' I also reminded my boss about the reports that I had typed for him in the last weeks. Then I showed him my receipts for the land taxes that I had always paid the local government. But he said it was not worth a thing and he even said that I am illegally occupying the land of the government. Then he just left his office and he did not speak to me again.

It is at this point in time that Ratna's *schwelle*, her point of no return, seems to have been reached. She radically alters her habitual expectations of the *kelurahan*, from what Möllering (2001) calls 'favourable' (trustful) to 'unfavourable' (distrustful). Ratna used to feel relatively safe in Bantaran Kali due to her high trust in her patron, but now she started to feel unsafe. Like Tono, in hindsight, Ratna feels naïve about her former perceptions, and indicates that she feels betrayed by those she considered to be her 'friends'. She describes her feelings as follows:

> I always thought I was smart because I was educated, but it took me a long time to see how naïve I actually was! I had always ignored all of the stories of neighbours about how the government hates poor people. I just believed that they [*kelurahan* actors] were good people, and that we were friends. But they showed me well that we are not. They could not care less about me. In fact, they like to make my life more difficult!

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[227] Similar memories of evictions were common among riverbank settlers, as these slum dwellers often move from one 'illegal' neighbourhood to another 'illegal' neighbourhood in Jakarta. One female participant showed me around the remains of what used to be nine neighbourhoods where she and her family had lived before they moved to Bantaran Kali. They had been evicted every single time by the order of the government. These evictions were usually forceful, mostly carried out by bulldozers and special police officers, and two times by 'thugs (*preman*) who set fire to our house.'

As a result of this realization, Ratna learns to perceive the governmental institution as distrustful and starts taking defensive actions to 'prepare' and 'protect' herself from the *kelurahan*. While in former times of need Ratna still turned to her *kelurahan* patron for help, we have seen that, at age thirty-two, Ratna would not even accept the support that the *kelurahan* offered to flood victims, and that she tries to move away from the neighbourhood 'before bulldozers come'. Moreover, she is willing– literally and overtly – to fight her former patrons.

Tono and Ratna's biographies offer only two of many examples of people who have become highly distrustful of the Jakarta government, because their former favourable expectations have been let down. Ratna's point of no return was finally crossed after she was threatened with yet another eviction via the talk of the governor; Tono's point of no return was reached when he was physically abused by people whom he used to trust. Other *orang siap* had their own reasons for moving from positions of trust to distrust of the *kelurahan* or other political institutions of the Jakarta government that are involved with flood-management, but space does not allow me to recount more than these two.

What Tono and Ratna have in common with other riverbank settlers with a *siap* risk-handling style is that they were not born with natural feelings of distrust towards the government, and neither were their risk-handling practices statically structured by a general habitus that reflects the marginalized social position in which they were born and raised. Instead, my data shows that these people lost their trust through daily life experiences. After reaching their *schwelle* following one disappointment after another, they developed an alternative risk-handling style that better suits their current perceptions and needs. For Tono and Ratna, the critical moments described in their biographies provoked such grief that it forced them to challenge their habitual structure of perceptions. She was an *orang susah* with trustful expectations of acquaintances in the *kelurahan*; he was an *orang ajar* and trustful of the intentions of his 'friends' at the *kecamatan*, but over the years, both of them have changed so much that people nowadays wonder 'what has come over them'. What has come over them, I have tried to argue so far in this chapter, is that their expectations were dashed, until it was just one time too many. In the next section, the above analysis is embedded in theories of radicalization and protest.

Radicalization

In an article by McCauley and Moskalenko, political radicalization is described as an increasing extremity of beliefs, feelings and behaviour in support of intergroup conflict and violence (2008, p. 415). This goes hand in hand with an increasing amount of time and money that is invested by people in their beliefs, as well as with increasing risk-taking and violent behaviour (McCauley &

Moskalenko, 2008, p. 416). Although the beliefs and feelings of people differ from context to context and from person to person, the authors note that, generally, a similar pattern in thinking can be recognized among people who radicalize. This thinking pattern can be summarized as follows: we are a special or chosen group (superiority) who have been unfairly treated and betrayed (injustice); no one else cares about us or will help us (distrust); our group is in danger of extinction (a feeling of vulnerability towards the perceived threat) (2008, p. 416). Hence, we might say that what people who radicalize have in common is that they experience feelings of 'being special' (which can refer to a positive belief that one is 'chosen', but which could also have a more negative meaning, for example when an ethnic group feels discriminated against), feelings of injustice, of distrust, and of vulnerability towards a perceived threat.

Taking this definition of radicalization, it may be argued that the *orang siap* in Bantaran Kali, including Tono and Ratna, display many of the above characteristics of radicalization in their perceptions and concrete behaviour. Let me start first with their risk-perceptions. Their narratives indicate that they feel unsupported by the Jakarta government, and also feel personally hated and disadvantaged by its political institutions ('they hate us'; 'they like to make my life more difficult'). *Orang siap* furthermore believe that they have been treated unfairly, expressing sentiments of injustice and feelings of betrayal by their former friends and patrons. As a consequence of this distrust, they feel extremely vulnerable towards the risk of floods and eviction.

Characteristics of radicalization are not just recognizable in the perceptions of *orang siap*, but also in their actual behaviour. It was shown in the above analysis that both Tono and Ratna invest increasing time and money because of their belief that it is necessary to be ready, *siap*, and we might also define some of their recent strategies to become *siap* as risky and violent (such as becoming homeless in order to save money; or joining a civil militia group; or overtly protesting and fighting powerful actors in society). Hence, their perceptions and practices provide examples of what is generally meant in the literature by the concept 'radicalization'.

It follows, then, that the literature on radicalization might offer some relevant insights on what causes this behavioural change amongst the *orang siap*, and, taking this question one step further, it might help us understand why the *orang ajar* and the *orang susah* in Bantaran Kali do *not* use defensive, *siap* risk-handling practices but instead cooperate in a hegemonic patronage system, or why the *orang antisipasi* acquiesce to be exploited by more powerful actors in society. McCauley and Moskalenko's research on why individuals become radicalized and the factors involved in the pathway towards radicalization is relevant to such an analysis.[228]

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[228] These authors were especially interested in what we might call the very extreme version of radicalization: suicide terrorism. Obviously, the defensive risk-handling style of the *orang siap* in Bantaran Kali is by no means comparable to the actions of suicide terrorists, but nevertheless I believe that the research of McCauley and Moskalenko offer useful

Of the different reasons for individuals to become radicalized, 'personal grievances' and 'personal victimization' are considered the most important (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008, p. 420). Hence, if people personally experience something that aggrieves them, they have more chance to radicalize than others who do not go through such hurtful experiences. In the case of Tono and Ratna, we have already seen that they were let down. Their deep trust in friends or patrons was dashed to such an extent that their whole world view was shaken, altering their perceptions of risk and trust, as well as their ideas about which practices need to be exhibited in order to stay safe. On the basis of my research, I found that the *orang siap* in Bantaran Kali had experienced various but comparable personal grievances, which led to their adopting a *siap* risk-handling style. To recap from above: almost all of the *orang siap* defined a particular moment in their lives that made them see that what they used to do was not safe enough – and that, therefore, an alternative *siap* risk-handling style was needed. As did Tono and Ratna, *orang siap* would often describe this particular moment as a trauma or an emotional shock. For example, one male *orang siap* (aged twenty-eight years old) who moved to the neighbourhood in 2008 from rural Java told me that he had always trusted the *kelurahan* to financially support his family after floods because he was the nephew of a secretary who had been working in the institution's office for over twenty years, and that he felt let down when this did not happen:

> At first I did not dare to move to Bantaran Kali because the area is known as very flood-prone. I am the father of a two-year-old; now, who wants to live in a flood-prone area in that situation? But I needed to find a job, and so I dared to move here – but only because my aunt works in the *kelurahan* office of Bantaran Kali. I was always joking to my aunt that she must work hard and be diligent, so that the *kelurahan* likes our family. She was like our insurance, you know? [laughs]. My aunt always comforted me, saying that if there would ever be a flood, for sure we would be helped by the people in the *kelurahan*. Then! A flood [in 2010]! My house, flooded! My television, broken! It was very scary, very frightening. My son got very ill afterwards, I spent all my money on his medicines. And you think that we got any support? Nothing! Not one Rupiah. My aunt said she did not understand it either....I got deep into debt. It was a shock for me that the *kelurahan* did not want to support a family member of a loyal employee, and even now, when I tell you about it, I feel traumatized. I want to have nothing to do with these politicians here. I feel like I want to hurt them!

Another riverbank settler who called herself an *orang siap* told me that she had been trying to get support from either the *kelurahan* or the priest's foundation for many years, but she never managed to get it.[229] Despite her volunteer work for both these institutions and her socializing efforts with employees working in these institutions, she was never accepted as a beneficiary. When she noticed

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explanations for what drives people towards defensive or violent practices. These are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

[229] See chapter 5 for more information about the aid that these institutions provide to selected flood victims in Bantaran Kali.

over and over again that fellow residents received financial support from these institutions while she did not, she – in her own words – 'went crazy because of the shock'. She started publically offending civil servants whenever they passed by the neighbourhood, screaming that they did not care for her and that they had let her down. She nowadays volunteers for FBR. Whenever the civil militia group has a meeting, she caters for them free of charge. Her husband has already become a member of FBR, and when her son turns fifteen, 'he must do so too,' she says. For this female respondent, the FBR is a better institution to help one become *siap* than the aid foundation of the priest, or the *kelurahan*.

The above quotations from *orang siap* show that their experience of 'shock' and 'trauma' is specific, but what binds all their stories is their feeling that this experience was unfair or unjust. James C. Scott emphasizes the crucial role of feelings of unfairness and unjust in instances of protest and rebellion. In his famous book *The Moral Economy* (1977), Scott analyzes different mass protests in Asia and concludes that these were always the product of people's conceptions of social justice; hence, what they deem morally right. Even if it is true that many of these instances in which protests were organized were marked by objective poverty, Scott emphasizes that rebellion is not just a response to objective circumstances. This is an interesting observation because it underlines the subjective experience of people's circumstances, while it somewhat plays down the role of these objective circumstances. Scott implicitly warns us that not everyone who is marginalized - objectively speaking - radicalizes. On the contrary, there are many other non-violent ways in which marginalized people find to cope with poverty and disenfranchisement. People only start to protest and rebel, so Scott claims, if they feel that these objective circumstances are unfair and unjust. This is what Scott calls the 'moral economy': people's notions of economic justice and their working definitions of exploitation. He writes that 'violation of these standards could be expected to prove resentment and resistance...not only because needs were unmet, but because *rights* are violated'(Scott, 1977, p. 6, my Italics).

Scott's observation is helpful for understanding why *orang siap* radicalized while others in their neighbourhood did not. *Orang siap* do not simply act defensively because they are living in a poor, flood-prone and eviction-prone neighbourhood. Neither do they necessarily protest their objective marginalization in wider society. After all, they have been living with such risks and marginalization for a long time and did not seem to experience this as 'unfair'. That was because, during these times, they believed that they had 'friends' or patrons who would support them, and this idea offered them a sense of safety and calm. What was regarded as unfair in later stages of their life, then, is that this support had at some point in their lives stopped, and that unwritten agreements of reciprocal obligations were thus unmet by the other party.

Horgan (2008) adds to the analysis several other 'predisposing factors' that highlight why one person may step towards radicalization and the other may not when they are both exposed to the same conditions. Here, I will discuss only the factors that seem most relevant for the case of the *orang siap*. Just as McCauley and Moskalenko claim, Horgan regards personal victimization as one very important contributing factor towards radicalization. He furthermore emphasizes the 'presence of some emotional vulnerability, in terms of feelings of anger, alienation...and disenfranchisement' (Horgan, 2008, p. 85). Put differently, people must be upset and *feel* powerless or marginalized in order to finally radicalize. From the biographies of Tono and Ratna and other *orang siap* in Bantaran Kali, it became clear that this certainly is true of them. Next to the fact that they feel betrayed by their patrons, formerly perceived as friends, they express anger, grief and frustration about what they now perceive as their vulnerability.

Finally, Horgan clarifies that people who radicalize often experience a strong dissatisfaction with the activities that they had in the past used to reach a certain goal. People might, for example, have expressed their discontent with their marginalization by engaging in symbolic resistance, but then realize that such practices are not strong enough to change their situation. Or people might have been engaged in political or social protest, until years later, when they comprehend that this practice does not lead to a fulfillment of their goals. Hence, they become convinced that more radical action is absolutely necessary (2008, pp. 84-85). This dissatisfaction with former activities is also visible in the biographies of Tono and Ratna. Although they used to believe for years that their *ajar* or *susah* risk-handling style was an effective way of staying safe in Bantaran Kali's context of 'normal uncertainty', after several disappointing experiences, they became convinced that their former practices and social investments were in fact not guaranteeing them protection against risk. In hindsight, they call themselves 'naïve' and feel that they must strategically change their risk-handling practices in order to become prepared, *siap*, to face the risk.

Now that we have examined several of the underlying factors that explain why *orang siap* exhibit a risk-handling style that may be called 'defensive' while others in their kampong do not use this style, the question that pops up is: does the newly acquired risk-handling style of *orang siap* help them to decrease their personal risk of floods, eviction and poverty? Is becoming *siap* more effective than their former risk-handling style? I argue in the final section of this chapter that it is not necessarily more effective.

Effects of a *siap* risk-handling style

One reason why a *siap* risk-handling style does not necessarily decrease the personal risks that *orang siap* encounter has to do with their social isolation. It is problematic that not many fellow residents

join the overt protests of Ratna and Tono. For any protest to have even a slight chance of making a change, larger-scale organization and mobilization would be needed, or at least a shared sense among participants of what is wrong and what needs to be changed (Scott, 1977, p.250; Gramsci, 1977/1980, pp. 144-145). These demands are not easily fulfilled in the fragmented society of Bantaran Kali.

This is because, as it became clear throughout the empirical chapters, many inhabitants of Bantaran Kali cooperate in a patronage system with elite actors, through which they receive small incentives in return for large investments in time, money and energy.

We might say that these strategies function as patchwork solutions for the marginalization of riverbank settlers, while they make it hard for the inhabitants of Bantaran Kali to alter the social structures that underlie the risks of floods, poverty and eviction. This problem is also noted by James C. Scott, who writes that marginalized people deal with exploitation and poverty through short-term patchwork solutions that tend to reduce the likelihood of more direct and violent solutions, more often than overtly protesting these issues (Scott, 1977, p. 192). To put it simply, if one becomes dependent on a patron, then one cannot protest him or her without running the risk of losing this support. For the people who regard their current patronage risk-handling style as somewhat effective, and who still hope and believe that their current practices are their best option to stay safe, it is hardly attractive to disturb these social relations. Rather than challenging them, riverbank settlers generally try to maintain their reciprocal relationship with patrons, thereby reproducing the social structure as it is.

The fact that most people prioritize their own interests of course does not necessarily mean that they disagree with Tono, Ratna and other *orang siap*. It might very well be that some of them frequently experience similar feelings of injustice and vulnerability in cases of risk and uncertainty. However, these feelings are apparently not pressing enough to risk losing the benefits that they may enjoy now. Therefore, as I have noted, if people protest at all in Bantaran Kali, this mostly happens in covert and symbolic forms – for example, by mocking the *orang ajar* behind their backs, or by ignoring formal safety advice ordered by the *kelurahan*. This covert protest has the advantage that people can express their dissatisfaction with unequal power structures, while they avoid being disciplined or even punished by more powerful actors in society.

In sharp contrast to these covert protests stands the defiant behaviour of *orang siap. Orang siap* make no use of such subtle forms of 'everyday resistance' but instead have become engaged in overt, provocative and public protest. This puts them in a very vulnerable social position in the riverbank settlement: they dare to speak up, but they are not backed by fellow residents – at least not overtly. Therefore, they cannot link their personal sense of injustice to a broader-felt class

consciousness, from which larger-scale protests could be organized. This is especially the case for Ratna, who is considered 'ungrateful' by both her former patrons and fellow residents.

Tono and several other *orang siap* have found some support through the civil militia group, FBR; but even though they might feel that this social network will help them stay safe, it is questionable whether it actually can. Remember that FBR attracts members from the lowest socio-economic classes in Jakarta society: those who are often unemployed, marginalized and relatively powerless. Admittedly, FBR-membership brings *orang siap* in contact with other members of this civil militia group, but it needs be realized at the same time that the power of FBR members in wider society is generally limited, and that most members are there for different reasons than the specific complaints and frustrations of *orang siap* in Bantaran Kali. FBR membership itself thus seems insufficient for helping *orang siap* escape from the cycle of hazard.

The case of Tono serves as an example that helps me to clarify this argument. Since Tono radically altered his risk-perceptions and practices, he has not been able to make enough money to move away from the flood-prone kampong. At the same time, Tono made enemies among people who have the power to discipline or control disobedient, 'crazy' or radicalized individuals. Even though Tono might have acquired better fighting skills than ever because of the FBR training that he engages in, it seems unlikely that these skills will change his social status in wider society. Like most other members of the FBR, it is probable that Tono will remain poor, marginalized and hence vulnerable to risk. Thus Tono and other *orang siap* stand more or less alone in their protest. They become more and more excluded from the social network in Bantaran Kali, while they are at the same time unable to alter unequal structures on their own.

This brings me back to the argument that was made in chapter 3, which concerned people's 'humble aspirations' or their pessimistic future expectations. Against Appadurai's claim that an improved capacity to 'aspire' to a better future would help poor people out of poverty, I argued there that aspirations by themselves are not enough in order for riverbank settlers to escape from a cycle of hazard. First and foremost, for an actual improvement in people's circumstances, unequal political and economic structures need be altered. Until that happens, people will choose to deem it more effective to stick to their 'pragmatic kampong aspirations' and hence to the habitus of poverty that was acquired in early stages of life, helping them to overcome daily problems in a context of normal uncertainty. For them it appears to be a safer option than acting out on the basis of unrealistic aspirations and thereby increasing their vulnerability in an unfamiliar or unfriendly social environment. The findings in this chapter seem to strengthen this argument.

Orang siap do indeed seem to aspire to a radically different life. We saw for example that Ratna and Tono are preparing to move house, away from the flood-prone riverbanks and towards a

'safe' neighbourhood. Other *orang siap* also believe that they can reach similar goals of a 'safer' life, as long as they make sure they become ready, *siap*; as long as they 'protect themselves' and as long as they never become 'inattentive' to risks that may befall them in the nearby future. These convictions were reflected not only in their narratives, but also in the survey discussed above, which showed that they generally scored very high on self-efficacy. [230] They were also often actively trying to reach their goals, as became clear from the analysis of their risk-handling practices. In reality, however, it needs be emphasized that there is little chance that their investments will pay off. Tono promises his children a 'safe' house, but in daily practice, he loses all his time and money to his FBR membership, and it remains to be seen what he will get out of it. Ratna's situation is even worse: she wanted to move house and tried to accumulate money for that goal, but as a widow with three children, expelled from a social network in Bantaran Kali and without a patron to help her with her problems, *susah*, Ratna is not able to buy a legal and safe piece of land, let alone build a house for her family on top of that. Therefore, Ratna, together with her children and her aspirations, ended up alone - on the streets of Jakarta.

Conclusion

The foregoing empirical chapters showed that people's perceptions of risk and trust are generally habitual; however, the biographies of *orang siap* that were presented in this chapter make clear that people's risk-handling styles are not completely determined by structured cognitive dispositions. They are also strongly influenced by dynamic processes in daily, immediate experiences. This chapter examined in detail those experiential moments in time in which people reflect and adapt habitual actions and perceptions. An in-depth analysis of the biographies of key informants helped me to show that although a general habitus of poverty predisposes people's perceptions of risk and trust, this habitus can be reflected upon and altered in critical, traumatic moments. For *orang siap* we saw that, after their trust was disappointed and they had an experience of personal grief and injustice, they chose to take actions that go against their former, habitual risk-handling style.

We saw earlier that riverbank settlers are largely unable to escape the habitus of poverty and the cycle of hazard, as their risk-handling styles generally tend to reproduce unequal structures of power. In contrast, this chapter shows that *orang siap* take actions that go against these structures. Tono is literally fighting against it; Ratna decides no longer to lean on a patron for an

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[230] This finding raises the question, which comes first? Do people score high on self-efficacy because of their action (in refusing support offered by distrusted actors) or do they take a certain action as a result of their perceptions? Although intuitively I tend to believe that this process is interactive, more research would have to be done to understand these connections.

improvement in her situation. Instead, they and other *orang siap* try to take their futures into their own hands – whatever the outcome.

This means that people are not inherently trustful or distrustful, but they can become that way through agentic reflection on past experiences and by acquiring a specific habitus in lived experience. If the labels and nicknames that circulate in Bantaran Kali suggest that riverbank settlers are born with preformed and static perceptions and actions (remember from former chapters that Yati holds that she is an *orang susah*, while she is a lickspittle in the views of others, Edi is an *orang antisipasi* 'like that' according to his neighbours, and Yusuf is believed to be smart enough to be able to cooperate with the government while others are described as just plain stupid), this chapter has underlined the temporality of people's risk-handling styles: Tono and Ratna slowly but steadily changed, became convinced that they needed to alter their former risk-handling styles, and finally turned into *orang siap.* Local nicknames and labels thus suggest a fixedness of human behaviour that I did not necessarily recognize in the field. In the conclusion of this dissertation, I return to this point by elaborating on the usefulness of the concept of 'styles' for an analysis of risk-handling.