Chapter 2
Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a detailed elaboration of the process of the ethnographic research I conducted. I shall expose the insights I gained from my research experiences about and during the period of crises. As a qualitative researcher, I believe that it is essential to provide an explanation and a justification of the reasons why I chose the methods I used and how I used them in the research process. This presentation gives insights that are important for understanding the chapters that follow. In addition, it will give other researchers the opportunity to evaluate what I have done, to develop ideas, or to make them more alert when they are faced with a similar situation.

I will first discuss the qualitative interpretative research paradigm that I have used in my research about the way small-scale entrepreneurs in the tourism industry in Yogyakarta have coped with the series of crises. The discussion encompasses the ontology, the epistemology, and the reasons for choosing this paradigm and the methodological implications of my choice. The second section presents the research proper. Here the discussions relate to the subjects of my research, and when and where the research was conducted with an elaboration of the reasons behind my choices. The third section focuses on the strategies I used to gain access to my informants. It also relates the difficulties and the easiness I encountered in gaining access to them. The fourth section elaborates on the process of data collection, interviews, observations, and taking field notes. The fifth section describes the way I went about the analysis. Specifically, the discussion addresses the way I treated the information I gained from my fieldwork and the method I used to analyze the data. Before I come to my concluding remarks of this chapter, I present my self-reflection in section six.
Doing Qualitative Research

This research is about the experiences of small entrepreneurs in the tourism sector in coping with the prolonged crisis in Yogyakarta, following the qualitative constructive research paradigm. Constructivism adopts relativist ontology (relativism), a transactional epistemology, and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology. Researchers who adhere to this paradigm produce reconstructed understandings of the social world. Constructivism relates action to praxis and develops anti foundational arguments, while at the same time it supports the production of texts, which are experimental, and multivoiced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b:184). Furthermore, constructionists believe that the truth emerges from the interaction between the members of a stake holding community. Agreement about what is acceptable as the truth is the result of negotiations among the members of a community. The validity of the truth is subject to change consistent with the temporal and historical conditions of the community (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:204). Furthermore, the constructivist epistemological point of view suggests that the researcher and the researched object have a reciprocal relationship, and therefore, ‘the results of the research’ are created literally in tandem with the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 2009:137). With this ontological and epistemological position it is possible that a constructivist researcher employs a variety of strategies and methods in order to collect and analyse a variety of empirical data. Indeed, the use of multiple methods is meant to ensure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a:5).

I adopt the qualitative interpretative paradigm because the end result of this research is to produce descriptions and to develop an understanding of some specific phenomena of the crises. In particular, the focus of the research is to explore the impacts of crises on the businesses of small tourism entrepreneurs in Yogyakarta, how they responded to the crises, and the reasons behind their responses. The intention of this exploration is also to reveal what is behind the external observable behavior of people (Neuman, 2003:76). A researcher can only gain access to other human
beings indirectly through their gestures, sounds, and actions. In order to explore deeper meaning, it is necessary that researchers take further steps leading from the external signs to the underlying inner life (Bleicher cited in Neuman, 2003:77). To obtain this insiders’ view, I went to the field and spent considerable time with the people under research in order to become acquainted with them, I analyzed transcripts of conversations in detail, looked for subtle nonverbal communication, and tried to understand the details of their interactions in their context (Neuman, 2003:75). By going into the field, I was able to reveal a culture from the inside out (Schwartzman cited in Zwart, 2006:41).

**SMEs and Site Selection**

My study concerns small entrepreneurs in the tourism sector in Yogyakarta. I decided to concentrate on three sectors, accommodation, transportation, and the souvenir industry. For my research on the accommodation sector, I selected Melati hotels. In this choice, I followed the classification of the accommodation used by the Indonesian government which broadly divides accommodation into two classes, star-rated and non-star-rated or Melati hotels. The Melati type is a small, family-owned, and family-run lodging which most of the time serves only breakfast to its guests. For the transportation sector, I focus on becak drivers, self-employed bicycle-taxi drivers who specialized in serving tourists. For the souvenir business, I did research among small silver craftsmen.

Before continuing the discussion, two key terms, entrepreneurs and small-scale enterprises, need to be defined. Following Burns (Burns, 2007: 11) entrepreneurs are:

“those who use innovation to exploit or create change and opportunity for the purpose of making profit. They do this by shifting economic resources from an area of lower productivity into an area of higher productivity and greater yield, accepting a high degree of risk and uncertainty in doing so”.

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Furthermore Burns also stresses that people are defined as entrepreneurs based on their activities and not on the size of the organization they work in (Burns, 2007:10). Therefore, in this case, entrepreneurs include those who run small businesses with few employees and self-employed people such as becak drivers as long as they meet the criteria defined by Burns.

According to Dahles (1999b:33), small entrepreneurs in the tourism industry in Indonesia are “enterprising, inventive, innovative, and creative in the exploitation of new niches in the market as well as in the law or government regulations.” Home stay or losmen owners and guesthouse owners gain benefits from budget travelers’ needs for inexpensive places to sleep, becak drivers from the search of tourists for authenticity (Dahles, 1999b:33-4), and, silver entrepreneurs for the tourists’ need for authentic, traditional, hand-made crafts. They also use government regulations to their advantage (Dahles, 1999b:33). They apply for government permits and licenses to ensure the continuation of their businesses although in practice they do not always strictly fulfill the government’s requirements. For example, a losmen or a guesthouse owner may report a vague number of rooms, indistinct quality of the facilities, or imprecise numbers of tourists who stay at their hotels in order to avoid having to pay high taxes (Dahles, 1999b:32). Becak drivers do not pay tax at all and silver craft entrepreneurs do not report their real income to tax officers.

The categorization of small-scale industries in Indonesia for the tourism industry is problematic for various reasons. First, the Indonesian government only regulates manufacturing enterprises for certain categories of industry (Dahles, 1999b; Bjerke, 2000). Its categorization does not include the tourism industry because it is service-oriented. As far as Indonesian tourism statistics are concerned, the Indonesian Statistical Bureau only focuses on visitor arrivals and lengths of stay, but does not cover any aspects related to business management such as the number of employees in hotels, their wages and salaries, investment and turnover, or marketing and competition levels (Dahles, 1999b:30). Secondly, the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics classifies industries according to the number of persons employed which is too simple because being a small enterprise is not simply a matter of size. Other characteristics also have to
be taken into account. First, the management and decision making process of a small enterprise is highly influenced by the personality and the behavioral characteristics of its owner manager. Secondly, small enterprises are usually short of cash. This may have major consequences for the strategies these enterprises adopt such as short-term decision-making, because they need quick pay-offs, or they opt for a personal approach instead of spending money on expensive advertisements. Thirdly, they have a limited scope of business operations such as a limited range of markets or products. Fourthly, with a limited market and/or a small range of products, they run the risk of relying on a small range of customers which can have serious consequences for the continuation of their business (Burns, 2007:15). In addition, Mintzberg (1992:21) goes more specifically into the employment management in dealing with the characteristics of small enterprises such as those involving waged and family workers, flexible job descriptions, and simple management structures.

For this research, the category made by the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics is used as a reference but taking into consideration the major characteristics of small businesses discussed above. The Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics defines enterprises that hire up to 4 persons as household and cottage industries or micro enterprises; those that hire five to nineteen workers are identified as small industries, while medium businesses employ between twenty and ninety nine workers. Large enterprises hire one hundred workers or more1. Following this classification, the majority of the enterprises used in my study are micro and small enterprises, some are medium enterprises while only one can be categorized as large enterprise. I decided to include the last enterprise because, looking at its operational activities, it fits the criteria suggested by Burns (2007), Table 2.1 shows a general description of the enterprises involved in the research.

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1 Source: http://www.bps.go.id/aboutus.php?page accessed 10/10/09
### Table 2.1 General Description of Selected Small Enterprises in the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of enterprise</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2005-2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation</strong> (Guesthouse/ Losmen):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Citra Guesthouse</td>
<td>Micro/self employed</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Big</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arso Guesthouse</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lintang Guesthouse</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shinta Guesthouse</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mas Cuk Guesthouse</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desa Losmen &amp; Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surya Losmen &amp; Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elok Losmen &amp; Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arga Losmen</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reva Hotel</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratri Losmen</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berta Losmen</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tresno Pension</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaka Losmen</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losmen Arya</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bumi Losmen</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayu Homestay</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Souvenir (Silver Industry):</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver 17</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mega Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asmo Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasmita Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kios Perak</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safir Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisnu Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satria Silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 to be continued …
Table 2.1 continued ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation (Becak)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tukijo</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pardi</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoto</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugi</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marno</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sur</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragil</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giyo</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratmin</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kardi</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karso</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardjan</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research fieldwork data 2005-2006

The focus on small-scale businesses was motivated by a number of reasons. First, almost 99 per cent of Yogyakarta’s economy is made up of small-scale, family-run businesses and self-employed people (Dahles, 2001; Renstrada DIY²). Second, small-scale enterprises are a vibrant and visible element in the tourism sector. Most of the employment generated by tourism is in the form of self-employed, small-scale entrepreneurs (Dahles, 1997). Third, the categories that play a prominent role in the debate on sustainable tourism development in the tourism industry in developing countries are local owners of small-scale and micro tourism businesses (Dahles, 1997). In addition, there was an increasing interest in small entrepreneurs operating tourism businesses in developing countries before the crisis hit the economy (Dahles, 1997). However, there is a significant lack of studies on small-scale tourism industries after the crises. Therefore, to investigate how different local tourism actors involved in the small-scale businesses in a developing country cope with the vulnerable tourism conditions is not only challenging but also necessary.

Furthermore, there were several reasons why entrepreneurs in these three sectors were chosen as the research focus. Basically, compared with other tourism supporting businesses, the tourists need these sectors most when they visit the area. However, each also has specific characteristics or a particular nature, which may influence the entrepreneurs’ responses to the

² Rencana Strategis Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 2004-2008 or The Strategic Regional Plan of Yogyakarta Province.
crises. In this case, the three sectors can be differentiated in terms of their dependency on tourism, on mobility of resources, on types of investment and on the nature of the employment in the business. The first sector to be discussed is accommodation. Accommodation is a sector most dependent on tourist arrivals. It relies on both international and domestic tourists as its source of market. When the number of international tourists declines due to a crisis, they may refer to the domestic tourist market. Furthermore, the hotel owners controlled and invested static resources – the buildings where they received guests, but to run the business, they also needed to hire employees, which could be burdensome for the entrepreneurs in times of crises.

Second, we will discuss the business of becak drivers who offer transportation for tourists. In terms of dependency, becak drivers are somewhere in between. They are less dependent on tourists compared to the accommodation sector but they are more dependent on tourists compared to the silver producers whose market is more diverse. They can serve locals when tourists are absent. The assumption was that when the number of tourists arriving to the area declines, they could still absorb the local market segment, the residents of Yogyakarta and students from all over Indonesia who come to study in the city. Furthermore, compared to the other two sectors in this research, their resources are highly mobile so that they can move freely with their becaks to look for passengers at any place. The investment the becak drivers make in their business is relatively small, compared to the other two sectors, as they can either rent or buy the becak. In addition, becak drivers are self-employed so that they do not have the burden of having to pay laborers when a crisis strikes their business.

Third, we focus on the silver producers. They are assumed to be least dependent on tourists compared to the first two sectors as they cater to a wider market, both national and international. Besides selling the products to tourists, they also sell their products to traders from big cities in Indonesia such as Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya who act as intermediaries for both export and domestic retail markets. Generally, they also have relations with foreign traders from the USA or the European countries, who sell their products to retailers or directly to customers. During crises,
these companies may be able to compensate losses on the domestic market through higher export proceeds. However, compared to the first two sectors, the investments silver producers make are more varied. Apart from their craftsmanship, like the accommodation business, they also control immobile resources such as the production house and all the equipment and tools needed for their craft besides hiring a number of workers to help with production. In times of crisis, the problems related to employees may be different from those in the accommodation sector depending on the employment system applied. Some may use a sub-contracting system while others may have full-time laborers. In the latter case, in times of crisis, the silver producers may see laborers as a burden just like the accommodation owners.

Moreover, Yogyakarta was selected as the place for my research for two reasons. First, after Bali, Yogyakarta has been promoted as Indonesia’s second tourist destination. Lacking any other large industries, tourism is a prominent industry on which the city relies for entrepreneurship and employment. As the city is highly dependent on the tourism sector, the impact of a crisis can be enormous as many people rely on the sector for their livelihood. The city’s dependency on tourism will be discussed in more detailed in the following chapter. Second, this research is a follow-up on the study conducted by Dahles (2001) on Yogyakarta tourism. Her study concerned the small-scale tourism industry focusing on the years when tourism was booming in Yogyakarta while my study addressed the situation when tourism in Yogyakarta is under reverse conditions.

I decided to conduct this research in three different locations in Yogyakarta, Sosrowijayan, Prawirotaman, and Kotagede. These places were chosen because here I could find information-rich cases for studying how small-scale entrepreneurs were affected by the crises and their responses to them. These three centers of small tourism enterprises in Yogyakarta were frequently visited by international tourists before the crises took place. Sosrowijayan and Prawirotaman are popular among backpackers because they can find cheap accommodation, while Kotagede is famous for its

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traditional silver craft industries. Therefore, when the number of international tourist visits declined due to the crises, small entrepreneurs in these areas suffered dreadfully.

The three areas are relatively juxtaposed. Kampong Sosrowijayan and Prawirotaman are located in the inner city while Kotagede is further out of the city. Access to these three areas was not really a problem because I could easily move from one place to another by public transport. During field research, every time I completed my research in one area, I moved to the next one. I started with Prawirotaman as the first research site. When I had obtained enough information about this place, I moved on to Kotagede and subsequently to Sosrowijayan. However, even though I had gained enough substantial data in one place, I maintained my relations with the entrepreneurs over there. Occasionally, I went back to visit my informants even when I did not necessarily need to have interviews with them.

My position as an Indonesian conducting research in the home country gave me certain benefits. Geographical closeness of the research site to where I live provided me with flexibility. I could easily keep in touch with the site and adjust to the available time set by the informants during the period of field research. This was also very helpful when it came to writing up my research findings. When further confirmation of data or more details were needed, I could always go back to the informants. Besides that, I also benefited from a long period of field research as I had more opportunity to develop stable relationships with the informants in order to gain access and to acquire information. In this way the possibility of getting unsympathetic reactions from informants can be reduced. In fact, the long research period also helped me to research more deeply.

Language was also not a problem for me because I speak both Indonesian and Javanese, the local language, fluently. Fluency in the local language is essential for the kind of research I was doing as the process of interviewing is done more or less in a neutral setting. I also felt more convenient and comfortable conducting interviews as I could communicate with my interviewees easily.
Methodology

This field research was conducted in two periods. The first was a planned field research to collect data on the impact of the environmental and economic situation following the political crises. The second one was an unplanned field research to collect first hand data on the consequences of the May 2006 Earthquake which struck Yogyakarta during my fieldwork period.

During the first period, from January to December 2005, I spent the whole year in the field. The focus was to gain data on several issues such as the entrepreneurs' businesses histories, the impact of the crises between 1997 and 2005 on the businesses and the strategies the entrepreneurs used to cope with the prolonged crisis. I started my first field research process by preparing a tentative work plan for the whole 12-month field study period. Thinking ahead about areas, actors, and institutions to be interviewed and observed for the first few weeks, I also explored Yogyakarta in order to obtain an overall picture of the city and its tourism map. I spent some time studying documents, having preliminary discussions with a number of scholars and experts in tourism studies at Gadjah Mada and Sanata Dharma Universities in Yogyakarta, and interviewing a number of officials at the Provincial Tourism Department. Meanwhile, I also spent some time identifying the setting before I decided on a suitable place for exploration (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1997:37). Subsequently, I explored the field for the rest of the year before I went to Holland with rich data and continued with literature study for six months. I was back to Yogyakarta for the second period of the field research between July and December 2006 with the intention of exploring the impacts and the responses of the entrepreneurs towards the earthquake.

The earthquake that struck Yogyakarta and its surroundings in May 2006 brought me back to the same sites of my first field research since it was very much relevant to my research explorations on the experiences of the entrepreneurs with the crisis and how they coped with them. As discussed by Neuman (2000:349), it is necessary for a field researcher to identify and grab opportunities and rapidly adjust to fluid (social) situations. The prolonged crisis was intensified by the earthquake, which consequently brought greater adversity and deficiency into the livelihood of the
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entrepreneurs. As I was researching the impacts of earlier environmental, economic, and socio-political crises, I was confronted with the incident, which gave me a chance to explore the fresh experiences of the entrepreneurs with this new crisis.

Each interviewee had different stories about his experiences with the earthquake. The impact of the earthquake on the becak drivers and the silver producers in Kotagede were worse than that on the guesthouse owners in Prawirotaman and the losmen owners in Sosrowijayan. A number of becak drivers lost their houses. In Kotagede, my informants’ houses were intact and were only slightly damaged but they could not immediately continue production. Many of their workers could not come back to work immediately because many came from badly affected areas. Many of their tools were also damaged. At Prawirotaman, many guesthouse buildings were damaged but they could still rent out unaffected rooms. My informants in the Sosrowijayan area were safe because the area was not badly affected by the earthquake. No buildings were ruined and only some suffered from slight cracking. The losmen owners could still operate their businesses and a few even gained profits from the disaster as I will discuss further in the Chapter about Sosrowijayan.

Gaining Access

Before starting the research, I found that seeking contacts from within was crucial. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1997) explained, in order to gain access to any field, it is necessary to have someone who can help to introduce the researcher to the potential resource persons or the people the researcher wants to know more about in the field (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1997:60). However, meeting someone who can act as an intermediary to the potential resource persons is a process. Therefore, at the beginning, my plan was simply to get acquainted with the people who lived in the sites I was researching. Through this process, eventually I was able to meet people who could link me to the resource people.

I also learnt that access is more than just gaining or not gaining permission to do research. Research is not always straightforward but often requires a
process of negotiations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1997:55-6). Therefore, I believe that doing preliminary site exploration is necessary before a researcher can start his or her research. During the process, besides getting to know the area better, I also tried to get acquainted with as many people in the area as possible in order to help me develop effective strategies to obtain the relevant information.

During my research among the guesthouse owners in Prawirotaman, I did not manage to gain access to my targeted group easily. At the beginning, I thought I would be able to gain access to the informants easily since I knew someone whose family has lived in the area for generations. To my surprise, this family refused to introduce me to their neighbors, the guesthouse owners. The family admitted that they knew their neighbors personally and often met them on several occasions but they felt inconvenient to introduce me to the guesthouse owners. Although they did not explicitly reveal their reasons to me, from what they expressed I sensed that the inconveniences arose from differences in social status. The mother used to work as a batik worker for one of the entrepreneurs. Guinness (1986:5) who was conducting a study in one kampong in Yogyakarta identified a complex stratification among urban residents who lived in the kampong. In Prawirotaman, one can recognize class segregation between the rich and the poor. The rich were those who owned guesthouses and the poor were those who owned nothing but their small houses. Those who had guesthouses on the main road were considered as the elites in the kampong while the rest generally came from lower ranks. People who came from different classes had only limited formal interaction (Guinness, 1986:5). Therefore, it was understandable that the family I knew earlier felt uncomfortable to introduce me to the guesthouse owners.

Since the first strategy did not work out, I decided to look for other ways to gain access to the owners of the guesthouses. Together with two Chinese students from the university where I worked, I tried to visit each guesthouse in Prawirotaman. Although I wanted to see the owner immediately, every time I tried to I only met guesthouse staff. The staff often indirectly refused to introduce me to the owner managers by giving vague reasons. On two occasions, where I met with the owners (both were
women), they were unfriendly and suspicious and refused to talk further after initial greetings. One said that she was only the maid in the house (while later I knew that she was the wife of the owner manager) and the other did not say much and looked annoyed with my presence.

After a few weeks, when the doors remained closed to me, I changed my strategy. I went to the same guesthouses but this time I decided to stay for two or three days. Every week I stayed at different hotels or guesthouses. During my stay, I talked to the personnel and approached the receptionists so that they could get used to me. This process helped to diminish the mistrust that they may have felt towards strangers, in particular researchers like me. After they knew me better, I asked their help to link me to the owners. This technique worked better. Although not all the owner managers agreed to be interviewed, this technique enabled me to gain access to a substantial number of guesthouse owners in Prawirotaman.

During the negotiation process, I decided not at first to express my intention to do research for my dissertation. Instead I told my informants that I intended to write a book on tourism. To make it more attractive, I also expressed that it is a joint project with an institution in Holland. Actually, it was very inconvenient for me not sincerely to express my intention to do research for my dissertation but I decided to do so in order to smoothen the process of gaining access to my informants. My past research experiences in Indonesia proved that people tended to avoid having a researcher interfering with their businesses and their routines. Therefore, I always tried to make people feel comfortable with my presence before introducing myself as a researcher instead of as the author of a book.

After I managed to gain access to the owner manager of one guesthouse, I tried the snowball method. From the interviews, I obtained information that many guesthouse owners in the area were related and I asked if he could connect me to other guesthouse owners he knew. However, to my surprise, my informant refused and only suggested some names to contact but he refused to link me with other guesthouse owners. Later I learnt that the guesthouse business situation in the area was very competitive. Each entrepreneur tended to keep his relations distant. The idea of ‘rukun’
(social peace) in the Javanese culture manifested itself in their daily conduct as avoiding conflicts and keeping their distance from each other as they all ran the same business and targeted the same market.

I had different experiences with the becak drivers in Prawirotaman. My access to them was relatively easy for several reasons. My research about the becak drivers was done at the same time as I was doing my research about the guesthouses in Prawirotaman. To conduct the interviews with the guesthouse owners I needed to make appointments and therefore I used my free time to do my research with the becak drivers. Access to becak drivers was easy because I met someone who could connect me with the targeted group. I was fortunate to meet Aseng, a Chinese who had opened an antique shop in Jalan Prawirotaman. Aseng introduced me to a number of becak drivers who used the space in front of his shop as their base of activities. He also allowed me to use his shop as a place for me to conduct my interviews with the becak drivers.

Access was also easy because becak drivers operate in the public space. During my research, I managed to have lengthy and in-depth interviews with them, in either groups or individually. I also had the time to observe them freely. The crises caused them to spend a lot of their time sitting around and playing chess or reading Aseng’s newspapers. I took the opportunity to have free conversations with them. I soon managed to build friendly relationships with them based on trust. Sometimes I asked one of them to drive me around to other places such as Malioboro or Kotagede. On the way, we would have conversations and I would take notes of what he was saying. In some cases, they extended their hospitality by inviting me to their houses in the villages near Yogyakarta city to meet with their family. By doing that, I could both have a closer relationship with them and unearth more information from other members of the families.

The snowball method also worked out well with the becak drivers because they have strong social relationships and solidarity among themselves. Knowing one person made it easy to meet others without any difficulties. Everybody in the group knew each other well because they belonged to a becak organization that conducted regular monthly meetings. However,
The snowball method also had some downsides as by using this method, a researcher ends up with a biased group of interviewees as the interviewees tend to be ‘similar’ when they are found through a network of people who know each other. In my research, I could not avoid using the snowball method because all becak drivers operated in one alley and they tended to congregate.

The becak drivers told me about their organization and from both the committee and from its members I learnt about its activities. Basically, the organization was set up to decide on the rules and the regulations for becak drivers operating in the same area in order to avoid conflicts. Accordingly, they took turns in taking passengers. They also conducted social, monthly gatherings. With other becak organizations in the area, they also set up the geographical borders of operation. Therefore, they could work in the same area without unnecessary conflicts. This social context helped me in gaining access to different informants.

As I proceeded to Kotagede and Sosrowijayan, I had already learnt from my research about the guesthouses in Prawirotaman that it was necessary to have contacts with people inside the organizations. Learning from my experience in Prawirotaman, relying on front liners such as receptionists could be very effective in gaining access to the owner managers. Therefore, when I was conducting my research in Kotagede and in Sosrowijayan, I used the same technique. I started by approaching the sales persons and the receptionists respectively. In Kotagede, I was acting as someone who was interested in the products on display. I sometimes had a conversation while I was looking at their products. I avoided expressing that my true intention was to do research. I relied on my senses to decide when the time was right to reveal my true intentions. After a while, and when the person looked more relaxed, I would come up with the topic. This technique worked effectively for me. I managed to gain access to the silver producers through the sales persons.

Eventually, from conversations with one shopkeeper in Kotagede, I had the chance to get to know Pak Naser, the head of the Kenanga NGO. This NGO, located in Kotagede focused on community-based heritage
conservation and the development of arts, culture, and tourism in Kotagede. He introduced me to a number of silver producers. Through him, my access to these producers became extensive and much easier. He was also very knowledgeable about the situation of the craftsmanship in Kotagede so that I was able to form a picture of the industry from him. His information was especially important in helping me to focus on more specific questions when I was interviewing the producers. This strategy worked well and he was an alternative source of information whenever I failed to gain access to the entrepreneurs themselves. Although the information I obtained may have lacked specific and concrete details, I still could use it after I checked its reliability with other people. It was not too difficult to do so as the areas of my research were small and compact.

In Sosrowijayan, just like in Prawirotaman, I decided to check in as a guest in different *losmen*. However, the process of doing research in Sosrowijayan was relatively easier after I got to know Mas Indra, the owner of Desa Losmen and Restaurant. From him, I learnt many stories about Sosrowijayan and he led me to a number of *losmen* owners in the area. It was the night when I had just finished conducting my interviews in Kotagede and intended to stay overnight in Sosrowijayan because I also wanted to start with the exploration of the area the following day. I checked in at Desa as recommended by Pak Naser. Pak Naser informed me that his foreign guests often stayed there. When I was at the reception desk, I saw a black and white photograph of an Indonesian man and a western woman hanging on the wall. I asked the receptionist about the photograph and was informed that it was a photo of the owners. After storing my belongings, I met the receptionist again to ask if he could introduce me to the owners, which later I got to know as Mas Indra and Elsa, his German wife. Within an hour, the receptionist informed me that they agreed to see me.

When I managed to gain access to the owner managers, I tried to tape every interview. Sometimes people did not like to be recorded, so I turned off my recorder. About 90 percent of my informants did not mind to have the interviews recorded. With the other 10 percent, I just listened and soon after I finished the interviews I would write down all the information.
Besides recording the interviews on tape, I also took notes during the interviews. For those I did not manage to tape, I would write more detailed information especially on points related to years and dates, which I found difficult to remember while I wrote down key words for other information. I tried to keep eye contact while talking and taking notes. This was important because I also wanted to be alert to any gestures coming from my interviewees so that I would know when I had to stop. After I finished the interviews, I would write down more complete notes.

Furthermore, getting access to informants after the earthquake was an experience in itself as I was exploring a new field. I found that the exploration was methodologically very challenging. It was very hard for me to start again with the research in this kind of situation. For me, it was crucial to find the right angle before I could come back again to my informants who were still suffering from the catastrophe. I decided to start exploring the sites first before I went to my informants.

I visited my informants in July 2006, two months after the earthquake. Before that, I made some explorations about the site to find the suitable time to revisit my informants. I tried to be careful and gave the impression that I came to visit them as an ‘old friend’. I expressed my sympathy but while I talked to them, I tried to unearth the information I needed for my dissertation. Through these conversations, I was able to detect the problems or even the benefits\(^4\) the earthquake had for their businesses and how they handled problems.

I started my second field research by visiting Prawirotaman to meet the guesthouse owners and the becak drivers there. The only guesthouse owner I managed to interview was Pak Gondo, the owner of Citra Guesthouse and Pak Cuk, the owner of Mas Cuk Guesthouse while others refused to be interviewed. I really appreciated their willingness despite the problems they had with their guesthouses. However, I could also understand when others refused to be interviewed. They were very much under pressure since many parts of their guesthouses had been severely damaged and they

\(^4\) A small number of losmen owners in Sosrowijayan benefited from the earthquake as will be discussed in the chapter about Sosrowijayan.
needed a lot of money for renovations. The damaged buildings directly affected their livelihood and many guesthouse owners in Prawirotaman were really stressed. To gain more information, I decided to approach Mas Warso who owned a travel agency in the area while, at the same time, he acted as the Mullah of the local mosque. He provided additional information about the business conditions of the guesthouses after the earthquake because he got along well with many of the guesthouse owners in Prawirotaman. From him, I learned about the problems the guesthouse owners faced due to the crises and the earthquake and how the entrepreneurs coped with the unfavorable situation.

Becak drivers were also badly affected but I did not have problems gaining access to them. My relationship with them became even closer since I managed to collect money from a number of friends to help those who lost their houses during the earthquake. As usual, I met them in front of Aseng’s place. I especially focused on interviewing becak drivers who were badly affected by the earthquake. I visited becak drivers whose houses were ruined. I managed to conduct intensive interviews with four becak drivers and five others as additional informants.

Conducting research after the earthquake in Kotagede and Sosrowijayan was also not easy. I started with my first contact in Kotagede, Pak Naser, from who told me many stories about the situation during the earthquake because he was also directly involved in helping those who lost their houses and to take care of the injured and the dead. He showed me around the affected areas. I continued to have interviews with four silver producers in order to understand their experiences with the earthquake. In Sosrowijayan, I could still rely on Mas Indra, the owner of Desa Losmen and Restaurant for general information about the situation after the earthquake. However, I also visited five more losmen owners to gain a better insight in their individual experiences with the earthquake.

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5 He got along well with guesthouse owners in the area of Prawirotaman so that he also knew a lot about the lives and businesses of the guesthouse owners there.
Data Collection

To collect ethnographic data about the coping strategies of the entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, I interviewed people from different backgrounds. I conducted interviews with sixty-two informants in three locations, Prawirotaman, Sosrowijayan, and Kotagede. For the research on the guesthouses at Prawirotaman, I interviewed four guesthouse owner managers and nine other informants consisting of family members of the entrepreneurs, guesthouse employees, local residences, and the RT’s staff. For the research on the becak drivers, I interviewed twelve of them and four other informants such as Aseng, the owner of the antique shop close to the becak driver’s operation base, free lance guides operating in Prawirotaman and two entrepreneurs who used to be becak drivers in Prawirotaman. For the research on the silver industry in Kotagede, I interviewed eleven silver producers and five other informants consisting of family members of the entrepreneurs, employees of silver producers and the head and members of the Kenanga NGO. In Sosrowijayan, I interviewed nine losmen owners and eight other informants consisting of the family members of the entrepreneurs, losmen employees, and freelance guides operating in the Sosrowijayan area. To gain a better picture of the impacts of the crises and their coping strategies, I also interviewed those who were out of business due to the crises. They were also important informants in the context of my study because switching to a different business could be part of their strategies to cope with the crises. However, generally, entrepreneurs still maintained their businesses and only a few decided to switch to other types of business. Therefore, in my research, only few informants came from this category.

In-depth interviews with individual informants were the main data collection method I used. Before I went into the field, I prepared lists of topics I would ask my informants about. They were checklists to help me to ask questions. Whenever a topic had been dealt with, I ticked it off. However, after several interviews, I also made some modifications on the topics because not all the topics I prepared at the beginning appeared to be

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6 RT stands for Rukun Tetangga. It is a neighborhood association which is the lowest administrative unit.
relevant or as I talked to people, they came up with more interesting facts for further exploration. For example when I asked them about their way of coping with the series of crises, in all research areas they came up with the topic of the importance of networks for the entrepreneurs to help them cope with the crises. Subsequently, I went on asking about what they were, and how they built their networks.

Generally, getting into the core topics of research cannot be done instantaneously. During the first meeting, after explaining the purpose of my research to my informants, I preferred to be more passive, raised only few explorative questions, and let the informants tell their own stories because sometimes I obtained unexpected valuable information as the stories flowed. Starting from their stories, I would raise more focused questions to gain more focused answers. I had different experiences with different informants. Sometimes I could quickly proceed to the core topics of my dissertation but at other times I could not gain rich data in the first meeting at all as the informants seemed to be reluctant to discuss the problems they had with their business with a stranger.

Sometimes I also conducted group interviews with the becak drivers in the afternoon while they waited for customers. For these interviews, I targeted to obtain a general overview of how different tourism conditions were before and after the crises, what they remembered about tourism in the past, and about conflicts or the problems they had.

Generally, I made more than one visit in order to build up and maintain a long lasting relationship with my informants. After the first visit, I always asked them if it was possible to come again later. I usually came for a second or third time with more specific questions based on the information from previous interviews. All my informants agreed to allow me to visit them more than once except one who declined after his son returned from the USA. Maybe the son was afraid that I would reveal stories from the family to other guesthouse owners in the area since I had been around in the area for a couple of months.
Apart from that problem, sometimes people refused to be interviewed because they did not want to waste their time. I encountered this problem especially in Kotagede. The nature of the business made people in Kotagede more concerned with time allocation than other informants. The silver producers had production deadlines to meet and the workers were paid on the basis of the number of products they produced during certain working hours. Therefore, some people refused to be interviewed because for them it was a waste of time. As soon as I realized this problem, I would carefully watch the time I spent for the interviews so as not to bother them too long and if I needed more time I would ask them if it was possible for me to come back later.

Besides holding interviews, I also used observations as an additional method to gain a better picture of what my informants expressed but also in order to check previous information. I made observations throughout my field research and focused on the settings. How different was one setting from another? Who used or bought the products that were offered? How well was the business running? How did the people in the area interact with one another?

At the beginning of my exploration in the areas, I relied more on observations. I spent the first week in each place becoming familiar with the area and trying to figure out how I could approach potential informants. I moved around, observed, stopped at different places such as guesthouses, shops, and restaurants, and talked to people. When I had gained access to the informants, I would utilize my spare time either for observations or for informal conversations.

When I was researching Prawirotaman and Sosrowijayan, staying at different guesthouses and losmen helped me to gain access to the owner managers and gave me more opportunities to make observations about the situation of the different guesthouses. I paid specific attention to the following questions: How busy was the guesthouse or the losmen? What were the daily activities of the workers and the owner managers? How was the interaction between the owner manager and his employees? What were
the conditions of the guesthouses or losmen? Did they hire many workers or were there only a few?

I could easily observe the activities of the becak drivers. I would sit at Aseng’s antique shop, where they spent most of their time, observing what they did while listening in to their conversations. As they invited me to their houses, I could also see the condition of their homes, check who lived there, and what they had inside.

I used a similar approach when I was doing research in Kotagede. Whenever possible I tried to see the production house and observed the activities there. This observation process could only be done in the presence of the owner manager because they generally showed me around their production houses while we had our conversation. However, the possibility to look around at least provided me with some idea about their business and the laborers they employed.

Taking field notes was also part of my research method. Besides writing a descriptive note of what I had observed, at the end of the day I always took the time for reflection. I usually spent the end of my working day recalling what had happened during the day; wrote down my impressions; did some analysis and made plans for the next day. This process also helped me to direct the interviews.

Furthermore, interviews and observations, which were done simultaneously, were used to complement each other during the data collecting process. The data obtained during the interviews could be checked as I made my observations. On the other hand, my observations sometimes inspired me to ask further questions during subsequent interviews. Observations also helped me to gain a more thorough and better understanding about what the informants had told me during the interviews.
Data Analysis

I regularly allocated time for transcription during my field research period. After three or four interviews, I went back to Salatiga, my home town which is only two hour drive from Yogyakarta, for two or three days to transcribe the interviews from the tapes. I decided to type the transcriptions by myself in order to recall the circumstances of the interviews to achieve a better insight into the data. As I went through the transcriptions, I made lists of missing or unclear information, which still had to be followed up, and planned how I should proceed. Indeed the process of analysis started after the data collection process and continued all the way to the end. Simultaneous process of collecting and analysing the data minimized the possibility of missing vital information and unclear or missing information could easily be followed up. Furthermore doing data analysis simultaneously with data collection allows the researcher to focus and to identify the pattern of the on-going study (Glesne, 1999:130). I consistently wrote a field log on my perspectives on and thoughts about the findings. For me, the process of analysis was like working with scattered pieces of a jigsaw puzzle which I collected bit by bit to form a global and complete picture of a phenomenon.

After gaining sufficient information on one research subject, I would write a comprehensive report to my supervisors. Writing up these organized reports was very helpful when I had to write the empirical chapters of my dissertation. I started by identifying themes from the information I had obtained from my informants and to classify them under a broader category. Based on that, I would write complete and detailed reports about my findings from the field.

The analysis process was done at two different levels. The first was when I was making a descriptive analysis, which I did when I was writing up the empirical chapters. The second step was when I was writing up the analysis, which functions as the synthesis of the four empirical chapters.

For writing up the empirical and analytical chapters of the dissertation, I developed matrixes for every subject of the research. First, based on the
data I had, I made separate matrixes for *becak* drivers, owners of guesthouses in Prawirotaman, owners of *losmen* in Sosrowijayan, and the silver producers in Kotagede. Each matrix showed the details of the descriptions on the enterprise operation, how and when they started with their business and aspects of the business management. The second theme was on the impacts the different crises had on their business. The third theme was on their coping strategies to deal with the different crises. There were a series of incidents of different natures taking place all over Indonesia, but from the transcribed interviews all the entrepreneurs in the different areas in my research identified three incidents which severely affected the running of their businesses, the monetary crisis followed by social and political crisis between 1997 and 1998, the First Bali bombing in 2002, and the 2006 Earthquake. I further looked closely at how they reacted after these incidents in order to identify their coping strategies as well as their reactions towards the different crises. From these separate matrixes, I wrote separate empirical chapters. Then I developed another matrix in which I compared the different subjects of the research in terms of their coping mechanisms. I drew an abstraction of the different choices and delineated the similarities and the differences in their coping strategies. This I then analysed to figure out the reasons behind their choices of strategies by relating them to the context of the characteristics of the business, its location, the entrepreneurs’ social and cultural background, and the level of impacts during the different crises after which I wrote the analysis chapter.

**Doing Research in the Home Country**

To some extent, not only the subjects under study but also the researcher influences the overall character of the fieldwork and the writing the ethnographer produces. Researchers may encounter problems of limited access because of their gender, race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation (Glesne, 1999:95). However, a researcher can overcome these problems by emphasizing attributes, which might neutralize the disadvantages resulting from the ascribed attributes (Glesne, 1999:98). Throughout any fieldwork process, when meeting or hearing about a researcher, people in the field will label him or her with certain identities based on their ‘attributed
characteristics’, appearance and manners. Meanwhile, the ethnographer will generally attempt to construct the nature of his or her role by adopting specific dress and behavior in order to enable him or her to obtain the data needed (Glesne, 1999:99). Furthermore, ethnography encompasses who is telling, who is writing, where and when something took place, when it was written down and within which historical and institutional context (Clifford and Marcus cited in Zwart, 2006:58). Therefore, I would reflect here on the kinds of interactional processes that were going on while I was in the research sites. How people reacted to my presence, and with the experiences I gained, I tried to give meaning to the data. As stated by Dahles, ethnographic studies have changed from the notion that the data only derive from inside, (Brewer, 2002:17) towards the understanding that ethnographers also play a role in creating and reproducing situational discourses (Dahles, 2004:30).

As an Indonesian, Chinese, and female researcher doing research among Javanese male entrepreneurs, I obtained specific experiences during my interaction with my informants. I had the feeling that I needed to work harder to gain the trust of my informants who were Javanese and almost one hundred percent male. When I first entered the site, I felt very insecure with my position as an Indonesian, Chinese, female researcher especially when I met repeated rejections when I tried to gain access to my informants.

Although I was born in Java and strongly influenced by Javanese culture, as a Chinese I think people still cannot accept me as a native. With this kind of self-perception, I deliberately tried to minimize the negative effect, which might hamper the field research process and influence the quality of the data. I tried to emphasize other self-attributes which could help me overcome the problem. As proposed by Narayan (cf. Williams, 2007:9) a field worker never presents him or herself in a fixed role but he or she tends to be flexible and shifting between identifications in the field depending on social and power relations. This is also what I did when I was in the field - I adopted different roles and identities.
Once I managed to gain access to my informants, I emphasized that the purpose of my research was purely academic. Throughout the initial meetings with them, I implicitly conveyed the message that although I am a Chinese, I had no interest in doing business so that they would not see me as a threat. This strategy worked out as my informants more readily accepted me after they learnt that I was a lecturer.

Once I gained access to my informants, I had various types of relationships with them. Some were close, some were reciprocal, and others were distant or even difficult. After a few meetings, some informants opened up and accepted me as a friend. On other occasions, it took me quite a while before I could really reach the core problem of my research. However, in most cases, reciprocity was important to ensure the continuity of the access. The informants were more enthusiastic when they also saw the benefits of my presence especially in the times of crises. They saw me as an asset to pave the way to the outside world in order to improve the market in the tourism sector. They expected to make use of my links and networks when they learned that I went back and forth to Holland. At least they expected me to promote them in Holland. When they learned that I often had contacts with government officers, they also expressed their complaints and critiques about the regional tourism development policy. They may have expected me to be on their side to pass on their messages about the problems they faced to government officers. On other occasions, different informants explicitly expressed that they hoped that the government would listen to what I said since I worked at a university. Some of them complained that the government never listened to what they said even though sometimes the business owners invited government officers for meetings but they did what they wanted without taking the small tourism entrepreneurs’ voices into consideration. I generally did not want them to expect too much from me but I expressed that I hoped that the outcome of the research I did would have positive effects for their businesses.

I found my position as a local female researcher in a male-dominated setting sometimes problematic because I did not ‘fit in’ in the community. As a local woman, I was not supposed to wander around alone in tourist spots. People stared at me suspiciously. My decision to stay at different
hotels in order to gain access to my informants was difficult for me because I know that it is unacceptable for an Indonesian woman to stay in hotels on her own. Although all hotels used to be frequented by foreigners, including many individual female travelers, my informants had different perceptions of the position of Indonesian women and foreign women. In this sense, people in the research sites tended to be more tolerant towards the behavior of white people doing cross-cultural research than towards local women as it has been revealed by Glesne (1999:98). Sometimes I asked a friend or my husband to come with me in order to resolve the problem. However, it was not always possible to have company. I also had annoying experiences when, at the night, I had a mysterious phone call and no one answered when I picked it up, or there were strangers who knocked on my door. Sometimes people also did not take my presence seriously simply because I am a woman. I encountered these problems especially when I was approaching people to gain access because they still did not know much about my identity.

Apart from the problems discussed above, being Indonesian, although not considered an indigenous Indonesian, I benefited from my background in the sense that I could easily get into the points my informants discussed which may have been problematic for researchers without any prior knowledge of their cultural background. I am used to being exposed to Javanese culture since I grew up in Java. This exposure helped me come to a better insight when I was doing research in Yogyakarta where all my informants were Javanese. During the interviews, I could easily grasp the issues and the problems my informants faced without having to worry about my misinterpretation of the information. As an Indonesian, I also experienced the same crises they told me about so that I could easily understand the context of the conversation I had with my informants.

I decided to use Indonesian language and not Javanese during the interviews although all my informants were Javanese. Using Indonesian was more convenient and common in the urban setting. Without exception, they all speak Indonesian well and the use of the language was more neutral because it is hierarchy free. The becak drivers also spoke Indonesian fluently irrespective of their education. The only problem was
with the structure of the information provided. It was much easier to understand information from better-educated informants than from the *becak* drivers who mostly had not finished secondary education. However, I was able to solve problem by asking more questions in order to get at the details. I could also understand their way discourse better after various intensive visits.

After all, even though I did my research in an area I am familiar with, I remained an outsider. Therefore, I also needed to put in efforts to ensure that my informants and the environment where I was conducting my research accepted my presence as a researcher.

**Concluding Remarks**

My experience doing my research in times of crises was unique and enriching. I had to be prepared to different types of surprises. Crises experiences are sensitive topics to discuss as it is not easy for many people to reveal their failures or talk about the crises in their business to others. Along the field research process, I found it important to be ready to adjust to the prevalent field research conditions. Getting access was sometimes difficult for a variety of reasons, which truly challenged me as a researcher. In some cases, people looked upon my presence with suspicion ending with access denial. Sometimes I managed finally to get access with the help of an intermediary but sometimes I completely failed. In other cases, people had high expectations of me as a researcher and as a person with contacts abroad as they hoped that I would be able to connect them with potential buyers. In addition, anticipating unexpected events was also necessary such which became clear when the earthquake struck the area where I was doing my research. The earthquake badly influenced my access to informants. In this situation, I had to be flexible. Flexibility characterizes the whole process of my research. In this case, doing research in my own country gave me sufficient room to maneuver with time.