

Mapping the Perception of Urban Safety, Space and Livelihood of Girl Street Children in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Elli Nur Hayati

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7186-3688>
Faculty of Psychology, University of
Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

Dessy Pranungsari

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5872-9553>
Faculty of Psychology, University of
Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

Ahmad Muhammed Diponegoro

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5964-1852>
Faculty of Psychology, University of
Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

Ghouwa Ismail

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7138-7028>
Institute for Social and Health Sciences,
University of South Africa
South African Medical Research
Council
Masculinity and Health Research Unit,
South Africa

Naiema Taliep

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2726-9750>
Institute for Social and Health Sciences,
University of South Africa
South African Medical Research
Council
Masculinity and Health Research Unit,
South Africa
naiema.taliep@mrc.ac.za
talien@unisa.ac.za

Abstract

Street children remain a social phenomenon in many low- and middle-income countries in which they experience alienation, discrimination, and social and spatial exclusion. The aim of this study was to identify and understand how girl street children perceive safety, space, and their livelihood on the urban streets of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and to identify the multilevel components and processes that can contribute to improving the effectiveness of interventions for this group. A mixed-methods design was applied using a critical community-based participatory research and asset-mapping approach. Both quantitative

descriptive statistics and qualitative thematic content analysis were used. The results highlight that the girl street children are subjected to various forms of hegemony linked to power, space and place, gender, and socio-economic marginalisation. Factors that contribute to their safety and survival include a sense of place, belonging and connectedness, and access to various tangible and intangible assets in their created spaces. We recommend further exploration of the mobilisation of assets to transform the quality of life and livelihood and to enhance the safety of the girl street children.

Keywords: girl street children; asset mapping; participatory research; space; livelihood; Yogyakarta

Introduction

Children living on the street or “street children” remain a social phenomenon in many low- and middle-income countries. Although the exact number of street children globally is unknown, millions of children are street-based (United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], 2012). An estimate by the Consortium of Street Children is that there are over 150 000 street children in Ethiopia, 30 000 in Accra, Ghana, about 30 000 in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, approximately a million in Egypt, and between 250 000 and 300 000 in Kenya, with similar estimates for Asian and Latin American countries (Oguto, 2022). Globally, children who live on the streets experience various health and safety challenges, alienation, discrimination, social and spatial exclusion, and are subjected to live on the periphery of society (Beazley, 2003b; Bhattacharjee et al., 2016; De Moura 2002; Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003; Hoffmann et al., 2017). Over the last few decades, researchers, regulators and practitioners have used various terms to refer to children who live on the street, including street children, homeless youths, children on the street, children of the street, children in street situations and, more recently, child streetism (Bhattacharjee et al., 2016; Consortium for Street Children, 2019; Endris & Sitota, 2019; Scanlon et al., 1998; Stoecklin, 2017).

The variation of terms indicates the struggle to find the most appropriate and relevant “label” to refer to children living on the street. This is owing to the diversity of these children’s contextual experiences of the street, such as the street being a working space or a space of survival, the street being a living space in which the street is constructed as their “home” or the children having strong support networks on the street (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003; Hoffman et al., 2017; Stoecklin, 2017). Despite the various “labels”, Stoecklin (2017) cautions that long-term implications such as stigmatisation, discrimination and subjugation should be considered when using particular labels to refer to these children and proposes the use of the more nuanced term “children in street situations”. In this article, the terms “children in street situations” and “street children” will be used interchangeably as the latter term is still used by the government of Indonesia in its policies and regulations.

The Special Region of Yogyakarta (Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta) Social Service (2013) defines a street child as a child aged 5 to 18 years, who conducts uncertain activities, and/or roams the streets or in public places for at least four hours a day in a month, and that these activities may endanger the children themselves or disturb the public. It can be argued that this definition pathologises and criminalises street children. It construes their presence on the streets as the source of a problem and a danger to public security, and these children as engaging in questionable activities, thereby justifying, producing and endorsing interventionist methods that are incompatible with rights-based approaches (Stoecklin, 2017; Van Daalen et al., 2016).

Street children are recognised as being extremely vulnerable and marginalised, often lacking basic necessities, such as food, healthcare and safe spaces to stay, and are frequently exposed to numerous forms of physical, verbal and sexual abuse on the street (Amani, 2017; Cappa & Hereward, 2019). Despite these risks, little reliable data are available on street children in most countries and existing data are often outdated and unreliable for use at global level (Cappa & Hereward, 2019). There is also a lack of studies in the literature that focus specifically on girl street children. Although acknowledging the presence of girl street children, most studies have also tended to focus on street children as a collective, or on boys, but hardly ever on girl street children (Beazley, 2003a; Friberg & Martinsson, 2017; Malindi, 2014; Van Daalen et al., 2016). In this study, we therefore attempted to bridge these gaps not only by considering females, but also by using an interactive positive participatory asset-mapping approach to give voice to the girl street child by focusing on their subjective experiences. In this study, we aimed to identify and understand the ways in which girl street children perceive safety, space and their livelihood on the urban streets of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and to identify multilevel components and processes that can contribute to improving the effectiveness of interventions for this vulnerable group.

Previous research conducted in four major cities in Indonesia by Save the Children in 2001 found that 70% of street children are categorised as a vulnerable group, and include older children who are in a high-risk category, no longer live with the family, do not go to school, stay on the street, and engage in high-risk behaviours such as alcohol consumption, consuming illegal drugs, and criminal acts (Road, 2006). Similar results were reported in Brazil and South Africa by De Brito (2014). Children 6–12 years old who live with their parents were found to work on the street after school in Indonesia (Road, 2006) and are regarded as children “on” the street who help to strengthen their family’s economic situation (Suyanto, 2010). More recent data reported by Social Service (2020) indicate that there has been a steady decline in street children in the city of Yogyakarta from 42 000 in 2016 to 12 000 in 2020. However, these data do not distinguish between street children, beggars and homeless people.

Numerous interconnected factors propel children to live on the streets. Previous studies have shown that the phenomenon of streetism, ie “living on the streets or being of the streets”, occurs mainly because of poverty, the presence of domestic violence, child

abuse (Boakye-Danquah, 2021; Ehrensaft et al., 2017), poor parenting practices, broken family ties, and the influence of peers “on and of” the street (Boakye-Danquah, 2021; Subhansyah et al., 2005; Suyanto, 2010). In certain instances, parents send their children to beg, steal or engage in small trade on the street (Kopoka, 2000).

Space and power intersect in a myriad of ways (Massey, 2009). Although vulnerable children may regard streetism as a liberating experience to gain their independence from difficult home circumstances or child abuse and neglect, among other things, these spaces are often alienating since these children do not conform to conventional characteristics required of those who usually gain access to such spaces (Malindi, 2009, 2014; Massey, 2009). As proposed by Massey (2009), power itself consists of a geography, which he refers to as “power-geometry”. Macro-level policies are linked to economic regulations and policy, such as the 2015 regulation in Indonesia prohibiting giving donations to street children or begging on the streets, including unregistered vending or selling goods along the street that restrict the street children’s movement in specific spaces, or Yogyakarta’s regulation on child protection which provides an all-inclusive legal framework for children’s protection against discrimination, violence and maltreatment (Pranungsari et al., 2014; Social Service, 2020; Van Daalen et al., 2016). Despite the child protection laws, the reality on the ground contrasts sharply with the content of these documents, as such laws are usually inaccessible to street children who are exposed to many forms of repression and marginalisation (Van Daalen et al., 2016).

Power-geometries include the numerous forms of social injustice interactions, such as “the power of violence, or of authority, or of seduction” (ie forms of soft power) and of domination, all of which are imbued with propensities towards distinct geographies (Massey, 2009, p. 18), social formations (for example, cultural, political and economic), albeit interrelated, and may inflect and reinforce each other (Massey, 2009). Since the passing of the various laws and regulations in Indonesia, street children have become the target of the Civil Service Police Unit (“Satuan Polisi Pamong Praja”/“Satpol PP” or popularly called “pol pp”), which enforces the laws and regulations to maintain security in the city, especially in tourist locations. Street children who contravene these laws and are arrested could spend up to six weeks in prison or pay a fine of 10 million Indonesian rupiah (approximately \$700 or ZAR12 355) (Governor of Special Region of Yogyakarta, 2014).

Several authors, such as Ansell (2005), Beazley (2003a) and Van Daalen et al. (2016), have expressed concern that street children have often been unfairly and negatively portrayed as deviant and in conflict with the law and societal norms. According to Malindi (2014) and De Moura (2002), academics often use a deficit approach when researching street children by focusing on what is wrong with street children or a charity approach by focusing on rescuing street children from the perils of life on the street and placing them in places of care. Duckworth et al. (2005) concur that the majority of studies involving street children tend to focus on the risks faced by street children or the psychopathology of these children and not on the resilient mechanisms or assets that

promote positive growth. In so doing, researchers tend to largely ignore the assets and resources that enable street children to survive on the street.

In this study, we used an asset-based approach and analysed the background contextually using a gender approach. The aim of this study was to explore girl street children's sense of space, place and livelihood and to identify assets and processes to develop interventions that are egalitarian and transform or enhance the rights, safety and well-being of girl street children of Malioboro Street in urban Yogyakarta. Essentially, space refers to the geographical location or the physical space, whereas a place is what gives a space meaning or a personal or cultural identity (Geographical Association, 2018). However, some theorists such as Tuan (as cited in Geographical Association, 2018) see place as security and space as freedom, whereas others such as Massey (as cited in Geographical Association, 2018) see place and space as intricately intertwined. In this study, we drew on the definition of Massey for our understanding of space and place. It should be noted that an assessment of assets does not take place in isolation of needs. When identifying needs in conjunction with assets, a specific challenge and specific actions can be prioritised while maintaining the focus on assets and moving beyond deficit thinking (Kramer et al., 2012; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Taliep et al., 2020). However, when focusing on deficits only, we are likely to overlook the potential of the strengths and resources a community has to offer.

Methodology

Research Design

An integrated mixed-methods design situated in a critical community-based participatory research (CBPR) and asset-based approach was used in this study. A critical approach questions the normative aspect of social activity, problematises the situated agent's point of view on the effects of oppression, attempts to reclaim the "female voice" of girl street children, and resists male hegemonic practices or patriarchy (Bohman, 2016; Napikoski, 2020). To amplify the protective factors or assets of girl street children, a CBPR approach using asset mapping was adopted to ascertain the resources and challenges of the Malioboro girl street children. This approach was used to identify possible contextually appropriate strategies to deal with these challenges. CBPR is a partnership approach to research that equally involves community members and various stakeholders in all of the aspects and phases of the research process (Lazarus, Duran et al., 2012). In this study, the gatekeeper provided access to the participants, who then interactively brainstormed, mapped and prioritised ideas using manual frequency (analysis) tables. The mapping process is sequential and has a particular flow and logic where activities build on each other. The maps and tables served as vehicles for engaged discussion and suggestions for the way forward. CBPR also promotes change through co-construction of knowledge, raising awareness of local assets and foregrounding praxis to enhance the health and well-being of community members (Baum et al., 2006; Lazarus, Taliep et al., 2012; Lazarus et al., 2017; Taliep

et al., 2022; Wynn et al., 2011). CBPR recognises power dynamics, promotes democratic practices, advances knowledge development, especially through the recognition and inclusion of local knowledge, encourages local capacity building, and tackles the real needs of community members (Lazarus, Taliep et al., 2012).

Research Setting and Participants

Profile of Yogyakarta

The study setting was located in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a country with a rich cultural heritage. Yogyakarta is one of the big cities in Indonesia, well-known for its educational and historical background. Malioboro is one of the main streets, about 2.5 km in length, and stretches from Tugu in the north to the southern plaza. The street has many historical buildings and is an important component of Yogyakarta's traditional identity (Septirina, Takeo, & Satoru 2016). The urban upgrade of Malioboro Street has resulted in a large number of local people selling goods and many artists offering services such as painting, tattooing, playing traditional music made from bamboo (angklung) and street performances. It is famous for its culinary art prepared by the local people. Malioboro Street is vibrant and is a very popular foreign and domestic tourist location.

Our gatekeeper, who was an ex-street child, provided access to the girl street children community. One of the research team members knew the gatekeeper from her previous work at a non-governmental organisation working with street children. The gatekeeper accompanied the researcher to invite participants to participate in the study. In a CBPAR approach, the community is the central focus; therefore our definition of childhood considers the community's own subjective perspective of what it means to be a "child" in street situations. The eldest participant was 18 years old. As demonstrated by Adioetomo et al. (2014) in the second UNFPA Indonesia Monograph Series, age category groupings are quite fluid and cannot be inhibited by fixed categories. The "youth" includes individuals in the 16 to 30 years age range according to the 2009 Indonesian Law on Youth, whereas the youth is defined by the United Nations (UN) as persons aged 15 to 24 years of age (Adioetomo et al., 2014; UN, 2022). Even though one of the participants was above 18, in Indonesia, street children refer to each other as a "child" ("anak") even if they are in their early twenties. Similarly, an unmarried girl may also be referred to as a child even if she is in her late twenties (Beazley, 2002). The eligibility criteria in this study were, therefore, females aged between 12 and 20 years who were classified as girl street children.

Table 1 disaggregates the participants with regard to age, education and self-identified community.

Table 1: Demographics of participants

Name	Age (Years)	Education	Marital Status	Number of Children	Self-identified Community
Participant 1	13	Junior high school	Single	–	Altar
Participant 2	12	Elementary school	Single	–	Altar
Participant 3	14	Junior high school	Single	–	Altar
Participant 4	19	Elementary school	Married	2	Kopi Jos
Participant 5	20	Elementary school	Married	2	Kopi Jos
Participant 6	20	Elementary school	Married	2	Kopi Jos
Participant 7	17	Elementary school	Single	–	Kopi Jos

Eleven participants were invited to participate in the study. Two of the participants did not receive parental consent, and therefore ethically they could not participate in the study because they were minors. Consent was obtained from and for the nine selected participants, but two did not arrive at the agreed upon pick-up location for the participants. Given that there is no standard for the number of participants in community asset mapping (CAM), the conveniently selected (purposively selected based on availability and willingness to participate) sample size ($n = 7$) was deemed appropriate for this study. The workshop sessions were facilitated over two days. In addition to receiving transport to the venue and catering, a caregiver was provided for the participants with children.

Data-Collection Methods

CAM was used to explore the participants' lived experiences and local knowledge. CAM is defined as “an action-oriented method that foregrounds and mobilises often unexplored and “taken-for-granted” assets in a community and develops strategies to address various issues including different types of violence” (Taliep et al., 2020, p. 2). Foregrounding street children's assets is vital for increasing their visibility to relevant decision-makers to take action (Cutts et al., 2016). The CAM workshops comprised several exercises implemented in a step-by-step logical flow, each building on the previous exercise, including an introduction to asset mapping, contextual considerations, safety in the community, community assets in the community, and a reflective discussion (see Cutts et al., 2016). Table 2 provides an overview of the process of each activity.

Table 2: Asset mapping process

Activity	Objective	Key Tasks
Activity 1: Introduction to asset mapping	To orientate the participants	Orientate the participants about the workshop and house rules Introduce the participants to the asset-mapping process
Activity 2: Contextual considerations	To define community	Have the participants draw a map of their community and identify key social features and amenities in their community
Activity 3: Safety in the community	To identify safe spaces in the community	Have the participants identify the key places and factors of safety and risk in their community. This will include assets and resources (ie individuals, organisations or entities) that make their society safer and healthier
Activity 4: Community assets in the community	To identify the relative contribution of community assets to safety and survival on the street	Combine some of the key community assets (individuals, organisations, or entities) identified in Activity 2, with key factors contributing to safety and survival from Activity 3, to create a community asset or safety and survival ranking matrix. This enables the participants to rank the relative contribution of community facilities to the group-identified factors contributing to safety and survival
Activity 5: Face-to-face discussion	To obtain the participants' views and experiences in relation to all the previous activities	Conduct a guided discussion on all the previous activities, which then moves towards an integrated identification of characteristics of local examples of promoting positive forms of safety, peace and interventions that promote social justice and sustainability

Data Analysis

The interactive participatory asset-mapping process yields qualitative data (drawing maps, brainstorming, open discussions, facilitator reflexive notes) and quantitative data

(ranking un-safety¹ and safety promotion factors, developing graphs). Conversations, and facilitator reflexive notes (taken during the asset-mapping workshops) were analysed manually using qualitative thematic content analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps for coding and categorising data were used to achieve inter-coder consensus among the researchers, and to select key themes. Data from the maps (safe and unsafe spaces) and the brainstorming activities were integrated manually into the graphs to produce a quantitative community asset or safety and un-safety or peace matrix (Taliep et al., 2020). Quantitative descriptive statistics, using Microsoft Excel, was utilised to disaggregate the demographic profile of the research participants, and frequency distributions were utilised to organise and display the ranges of scores or values of different variables.

Ethics

Ethical clearance for this project was sought and received from the Ethics Committee of the University of Ahmad Dahlan through ethical clearance letter number 011904029 in June 2019. In addition to the formal university process, ethics agreements were developed and signed by both the academics and the participants.

Results

The results and analysis attempt to address the aim of this study. The study findings are presented systematically according to the following three key areas: contextual considerations, safety and un-safety in the community, and assets in the community that could be mobilised to promote safety.

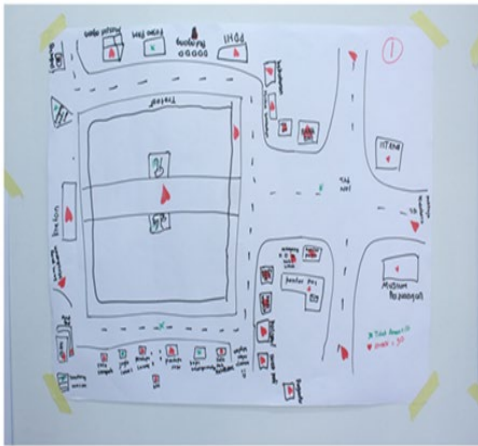
Contextual Considerations

The participants were asked to form two groups to identify the boundaries of their community. They were then asked to construct maps (Figure 1) of their community to represent their perspectives of the boundaries of their community. They were also asked to include all the main features, such as safe and unsafe spaces, and community assets and resources based on the two street communities that the girls in this study affiliated with. The CAM process revealed two distinct communities in Malioboro, namely, the Alun-Alun Utara (Altar) and Kopi Jos communities. The girls in Altar were still living with their parents, whereas the girls in Kopi Jos were living on their own. The boundary of the Altar community, according to the participants, stretched from Sultan Palace in the south to the Nol Kilometre Junction in the north, and Kopi Jos stretched from the

1 Although this term is not commonly used, it is used in this context to denote a situation that is opposite to safety.

Yogyakarta Railway Station to the monument in the junction known as Tugu Junction in the north.

Map 1: Alun Alun Utara (Altar) Community



Map 2: Kopi Jos Community



Figure 1: Maps of the girl communities in Malioboro Street

In Map 1, the participants identified 39 safe spaces that included three resting places, one mosque where many people gave alms to them, one Muslim Union Building near the mosque, two museums which offer knowledge about history, one school which the younger three girls attend, two government buildings, two banks which the girls also used as shelter when it rained, one train station where they played in the yard, three stalls where they knew the owner and obtained help when needed, and 22 places to eat where they could also earn money.

In Map 2, the participants identified 24 unsafe spaces in the community. These included four areas where many road traffic accidents had taken place, four cafes as sites of violence (where fights often occur due to drunkenness), one cafe where people gamble, two spaces with two trees where sexual harassment is common, one “vapour” smoking place seen as unsafe because it endangered the health of children, and 12 places where they were anxious because these were Satpol PP operation areas.

In the plenary discussion, each group reported on their map. The following key themes emerged from the discussion: a place and space of everyday existence, a place of collective efficacy, and restricted freedom of movement.

A Place and Space of Everyday Existence

Owing to economic hardships (for example, poverty or parental unemployment) and other social and structural challenges (for example, broken homes or dropping out of school), children are forced to earn money on the street for their parents or to adopt Malioboro Street as their home (Consortium for Street Children, 2019). The street is the everyday familiar setting of their existence and connectedness as is evident in the following quotes²:

Malioboro is our home. (AL – P1)

I am here in Malioboro because we were always moving house, we never stayed in one place, because we could not afford to pay the rent. Malioboro is a place where I can meet my family (my older brother) because we don't stay together, and we are always moving around in the street. My brother, he come here to meet me. (KJ – P5)

My husband and I got married when I was 17 years old through customary practices. I had a child and had to move out of my parent's home because my husband must take care of me, but we don't have a marriage certificate. We don't have identity documents because we had no birth certificates. Now we live as a family on the street. (KJ – P4)

Their statements indicate that living on the street was not a choice, but a result of poverty, financial instability, and social and structural impediments. They also described the street as the primary place to earn their livelihood by vending small goods such as tissues, snacks and bottled mineral water.

We can sell snacks to make money. We can earn a living for our survival in Malioboro. (AL – P2)

With the limited money they earned, the girls were intelligent and resourceful in procuring essentials for their daily existence. The girls were aware of the most affordable vendors, and people and places to purchase goods for selling.

Here I can buy things like cheap dresses, food, especially around the traditional market. We know the seller so it [the goods] is much cheaper. (KJ – P5)

The girls portrayed Malioboro Street as a place where they not only existed, but where they also earned their livelihood.

2 All of the names of the participants have been removed and replaced with the letter P, with the area indicated as AL or KJ to protect and conceal their identities and to maintain the confidentiality of the data provided by the participants.

Place of Collective Efficacy

Collective efficacy, described as feelings of connectedness and solidarity with neighbours in a community, social cohesion and trust, and informal social control (ie neighbours intervening to reach common goals) were key to their survival (see Pabayo et al., 2020). These girls were familiar with street life from an early age. They therefore had a special bond with their peers and the groups of people around them along Malioboro Street as reflected as follows:

Malioboro is a place for spending time together, to relax, and to hang around and joke. I like to be here because I have many friends. (AL – P3)

We are a family; we help and care for each other. (AL – P1)

For me, this place is memorable and historical [significant] because I met my husband here. (KJ – P7)

Clothes and food vendors, parking attendants and street beggars shared common struggles in their efforts to eke out a living and overcome structural inequalities. They shared a sense of care and connectedness that epitomised a sense of a cohesive community.

We share everything . . . food, clothes . . . also the burden of living in this area. (AL – P2)

When any of us or the parking attendants see Satpol PP, we warn each other and shout out ‘Pol PP . . . Pol PP’. (KJ – P4)

Daily surviving and alerting others of the security officers, raids, harassment and “illegal” sellers, beggars and homeless people were a constant struggle and part of the vigilance of the girl street children.

Restricted Freedom of Movement

Living on the street has common unregulated rules that are different from stringent familial and home rules. For these girls, the street rules signified “freedom”, which they preferred, as expressed in the following excerpts:

We can move around and go anywhere in Malioboro as we wish at any time (KJ – P7)

To earn money in Malioboro, we have to be registered with the local government, but we can’t register because we don’t have identity paper, and we don’t have money to pay the registration fees. If we want to sell things or beg, then Pol PP takes us to jail if they catch us. (KJ – P 6)

If I stay at home, I don’t have freedom. In jail, the government gives me basic needs, but not freedom. We want freedom. (KJ – P4)

The girls' desire for freedom also became evident during the workshops. The researcher noted that they

looked restless during the workshops over the two days. We gave them two rooms, but they preferred to be together in one room. I noticed that when we visited the street children in their community, the children slept peacefully in the open area on the hard ground, but when they were in the room in a luxury house they had difficulty falling asleep. They could not sleep on a comfortable bed or a space of comfort; perhaps because they were so used to being on the street. In my observation, I could see that they felt anxious and every time they asked to go outside.

Safety and Un-safety in the Community

The participants identified numerous factors that contributed to or worked against their feelings and experiences of safety and un-safety in their community. Figures 2 and 3 disaggregate the factors that both hampered and contributed to the girls' safety and livelihood in their community.

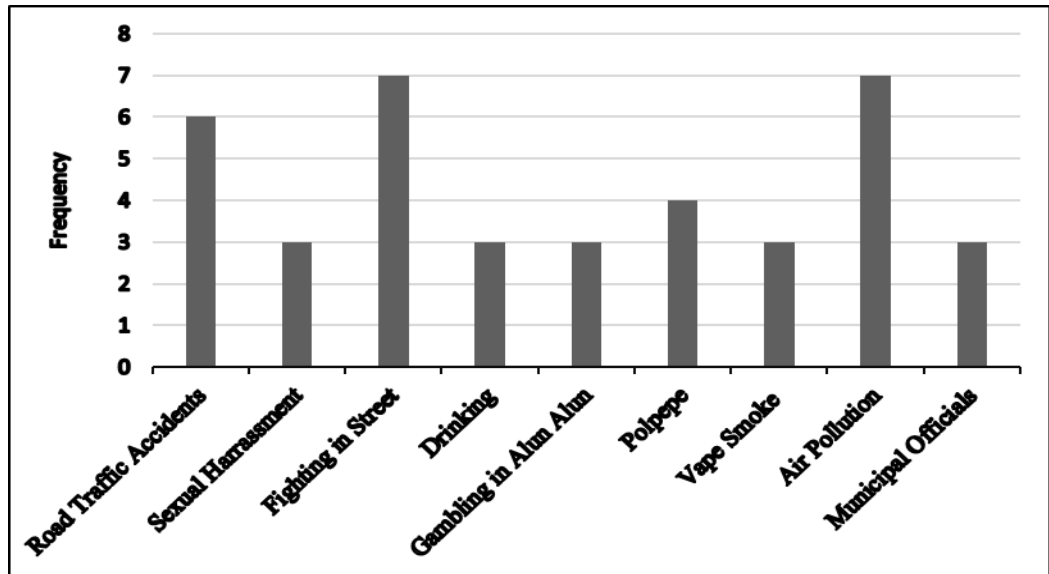


Figure 2: Factors that work against feelings of safety and survival in Malioboro Street, Yogyakarta

As seen in Figure 2, factors hampering the girl children's safety were: fighting in the street, air pollution, road traffic accidents, and Satpol PP (the law enforcement officers). Other unsafe factors identified were municipal officials (which can be linked to Satpol PP as they serve the same purpose, ie removing the street children from Altar), sexual harassment, drinking, gambling (which they linked to fighting in the street), and smoke from vaping.

Several factors made the girl street children feel safe and comfortable to survive on the street (see Figure 3), such as a safe space to earn money, local unions, food vendors and parking attendants, places of shelter, religion, religious studies, health services, and school education. Education was an important asset identified by the participants. Of the seven participants, three attended junior high school and wanted to study at college. The remaining four participants did not have any formal education. Some received education and training from informal institutions. The adult participants hoped their children could attend formal school and become successful.

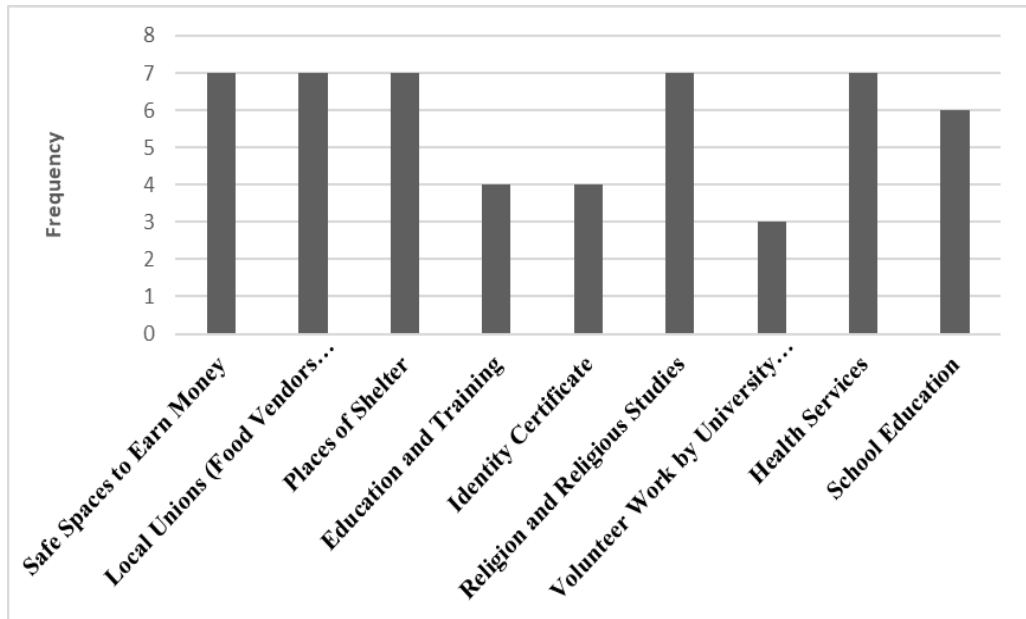


Figure 3: Factors that contribute to feelings of safety and survival in Malioboro Street, Yogyakarta

Other factors contributing to the girls' feelings of safety included informal education and skills development, having an identity document, and the health-related volunteer work provided by university students. With regard to health, the female street children in Altar regularly receive a basic examination from students who volunteer health services and who can also access health insurance services for the poor. Unfortunately, formal health and education services require birth certificates, identity cards and other related documents, meaning that some children cannot access these services. At present, street children or women who do not have an identity document are assisted by a non-governmental organisation – Harapan Fian. In the plenary discussion, the participants highlighted the following:

The identity certificate is important for us because, if we can get it, then we can sell our stuff and make a living. (KJ – P5)

School is a safe space for us because if something goes wrong, we can ask the teacher to help us with protection. (AL – P3)

The vendor outside the newspaper KR building permitted us and provided us with the space to sell our things and perform music so that we can earn money. This contributes to our safety. (KJ – P6)

The female street children in this community felt safe on the street because they received sympathy from the community, as demonstrated by the quotes below:

The street vendors that we know contribute to our safety because they help us to cross the street safely and they protect us. (AL – P3)

There are people we know in Alun-Alun and they help us, they provide support when we need help. (AL – P1)

In these excerpts regarding perceptions of safety, the girls not only highlighted objects that contributed to their safety (such as an identity document) but also drew attention to particular individuals who contributed to their safety.

Factors that Contribute to Un-Safety

For the girl street children, things that made them feel unsafe included sexual harassment, drunken men, Satpol PP, traffic, carbon emissions and smoke.

Sexual Harassment and Drunken Men

A key concern for the participants from Altar was their exposure to men's overt acts of misconduct in their area, as is evident in the quotes:

Some people in Alun-Alun, by the big tree . . . there are a lot of men hanging around and they harass us, sometimes they show us their private parts. (AL – P2)

Many times, the men make a [wolf-]whistling sound when we walk pass. (AL – P3)

Some adult men touch us inappropriately. (AL – P1)

At night-time, men usually gather around Altar, chat and laugh loudly, and drink alcohol. Often their chats end up in high tensions between themselves or even fights, often thought to be caused by the alcohol they consume.

The drunken men, sometimes they fight each other in the area so they make us afraid. (AL – P2)

Law Enforcement Officers (Satpol PP)

As mentioned previously, the new provincial regulation on beggars, homeless people and people living on the street has assigned Satpol PP to monitor, control and crack

down on violators. This has been a real threat for the participants, causing them to feel unsafe as demonstrated below.

Here is nice as long as there is no regulator [Satpol PP]. (KJ – P4)

I am scared of Satpol PP because if I want to sell things . . . they will put me in jail. (KJ – P6)

When I was a child, I was caught by Pol PP and it was traumatic, so I am afraid. My parents were caught by Pol PP and they tell me to follow them because they thought who will take care of me when I follow? But I thought ‘why must I follow because I did nothing?’ But I still went to jail. I am afraid when I see Pol PP. (KJ – P7)

In Alun-Alun the regulator is okay because they are not strict with us, they don’t take us to jail. (AL – P2)

Traffic Safety and Carbon Emissions

As one of the main roads in urban Yogyakarta, Malioboro Street has heavy daily traffic. The participants therefore regarded it as dangerous and harmful owing to accidents and the levels of carbon emission as illustrated in the following quotes:

There are a lot of traffic accidents at the big intersection in Alun-Alun area so we feel unsafe. (AL – P1)

We are scared of the road because we are exposed to many accidents. (AL – P2)

My son is very active, and I am scared of the danger for my child of the traffic. (KJ – P7)

The smoke from the traffic and the vape users is not safe for the children. (KJ – P4)

The descriptions of the participants’ responses to life and their assets highlight the challenges and advantages they encountered daily.

Mobilising Assets in the Community to Promote Safety

The participants felt that family, friends and school were the most important protective factors. These assets protected them against strangers, road traffic accidents, sexual harassment, the Satpol PP, municipal workers, drunk people and the fighting that so often accompanies drinking. The local unions, public areas, local institutions and mosques were also regarded as protective factors, with mosques specifically being regarded as a protective factor against sexual harassment. Malioboro is located close to the Kauman mosque, and the participants usually received alms from mosque worshippers, especially during the fasting month of Ramadan. They still identified with their religious beliefs despite not practising them. Even though the participants regarded the police and being jailed as a risk to their safety, one participant noted the following:

When we were in jail, they put us in a skills development programme to do beauty therapy; but I did not want to do that and never used it, but maybe, now I am thinking, maybe I can use it now. (KJ – P5)

Although some of the participants had acquired certain skills against their will while incarcerated, they began to reflect on the value and the benefits they could derive from these skills through their participation in the asset-mapping workshops. The asset-mapping process inevitably foregrounds visible and invisible, but overlooked, assets.

Discussion

A participatory CAM method was employed to understand the ways in which girl street children related, connected, obtained, and made use of the various available physical and social tangible and intangible assets. It was also employed to understand the ways in which they described and experienced safety and survival in their own community of Malioboro Street, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The discussion focuses on four critical issues that emerged from the results, namely, sense of place, belonging and connectedness; cartography of power, place and space; reclaiming female voices; and dilemmas of feeling safe and unsafe. The main findings will be synthesised below.

The participatory engagement of asset mapping was particularly valuable in this study as it ensured that the marginalised street children reclaimed their “female voices” and recounted their own narratives by physically mapping their geographies, freedom of movement and space, and their different social and economic landscapes from their situated perspectives (see Corbett & Lydon, 2014). When children’s perspective is taken into account, it affirms their agency and portrays them as effective prosocial actors who can develop skills of survival by balancing the socio-political and cultural influences and pressures (Awad, 2002).

Maps enable us to present our realities in distinct ways, such as how we see and experience the world (Corbett & Lydon, 2014). Although the girl street children in Malioboro Street are viewed as one community by outsiders, the participants represented themselves as two distinct communities: Altar and Kopi Jos, with the Altar community comprising younger girls and both groups depicting a particular geographical landscape of their space, their place and their home on polar-opposite ends of Malioboro Street. Notions of home and community have constantly been linked to the idea of “sense of place”, an overarching term utilised to explain aspects “of place identity, sense of purpose, belonging, and living . . . a meaningful life” (Fang et al., 2016). Furthermore, “sense of place” might be interpreted as a “domain”, since these street children live in constant flux and they construct and reconstruct their daily world, including enjoying the feeling of a sense of home as permanent or temporal on the street (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003).

In the plenary representations of their maps, the participants described their communities as having a sense of connectedness and solidarity (ie social cohesion) among themselves, through friendships they form, and the time they spend together – “hanging out” and having fun. A previous study by Beazley (2003b) revealed that the street children in Yogyakarta are a cohesive and highly socialised group. Cohesiveness is associated with identifying with a particular social group and generates communal intra-group behaviour (Turner et al., 1987). The participants noted that the street vendors provided a sense of safety and security because they assisted the girl street children during difficult situations, such as crossing the street. The participants spoke about the ways in which they shared material resources, provided social support by caring for, helping, and looking out for each other, and relied on each other to cope with adversity (for example, Satpol PP). Aptekar and Heinonen (2003) and Aisenberg and Herrenkohl (2008) note that a sense of connectedness or social cohesion to a certain group or community is a protective intangible asset to counterbalance the deleterious physical health outcomes attributed to living in high-risk situations or communities. These findings corroborate those of a study on street children in Russia by Stephenson (2001). It is these intangible assets that contribute to a sense of space and safety (ie Malioboro Street) experienced by girl street children.

To these girls, the street also represented a place of belonging, a place they regarded as home, and a place that enhanced their resiliency (see Killian, 2004; Malindi, 2014). According to Malindi (2014), a sense of belonging is crucial to ensuring that vulnerable street children get social support from one another when needed. The peer group provides strong attachments to one another, a sense of helpfulness, a sense of being valued, empathy and ingenuity, and enables mutual aid to occur (Awad, 2002; Sauvé, 2003). Their survival on the street is therefore strengthened by the emotional support, the relationships, and sense of belonging, all of which are crucial to their overall health, well-being and the ability to navigate the negative outcomes of unsafe conditions (Aptekar & Heinonen, 2003; Full Frame Initiative, 2013).

A key unsafe factor identified by the girl street children centred on power. Power emerged as visible, where “formal rules, structures, authorities and procedures of decision-making determine how and who can participate in a given space, as well as invisible power that shapes the boundaries of participation” (Gaventa, 2006, p. 26). As elsewhere (see Moolla, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2014), the street of Malioboro is an urban space where girl street children are exposed to structural violence and prejudices, are socio-economically segregated, and face the threat of eviction or removal, or are criminalised for being homeless while trying to make a living (Methula, 2014; Shatkin, 2006). The findings demonstrate the power-geometry at play in Malioboro – the ways in which different social groups (ie street children) are placed in relation to the actual flow of movement and who is allowed to move or not in Malioboro (Massey, 1993).

Since Malioboro has become a key tourist attraction, Satpol PP and the municipal officials are tasked to maintain order, ie they are in charge of mobility and ensuring the

security or comfort of tourists by keeping the street clear of beggars and homeless and street people, and ensuring that street vendors with permits comply with the regulations (see Van Daalen et al., 2016). This appears to be ethically and humanely contradictory, since their responsibility is to uphold safety and security, yet they deny the freedom of these girl street children, who recounted experiences of trauma, feelings of insecurity and un-safety and fear of arrest. A case study on Yogyakarta street children by Van Daalen et al. (2016) revealed that as long as the current law exists, they must constantly be on their guard or always be vigilant, especially when selling merchandise, so that they are not caught by Satpol PP. This form of state-sanctioned power and biased regulations hampers the movement of the girl street children and privileges selected interests, individuals and groups. Street children are therefore alienated and deprived of access to these spaces because they do not “conform” to established characteristics required for access to such spaces (Malindi, 2009, 2014; Massey, 2009). This further perpetuates inequality and the exclusion of already marginalised individuals by determining what is normal, appropriate, safe or unsafe (Gaventa, 2006).

Another key form of power that emerged was gender and male hegemony, which perpetuates the subordination of women. The younger participants identified sexual harassment as an unsafe experience in their community. These children found themselves vulnerable to the sexual exploits of men, ranging from wolf-whistling, making advances at them, to groping and exhibitionism. They tried to avoid responses that they feel might incite violence and/or be viewed as an invitation for more aggressive harassment. The girl street children were doubly vulnerable and powerless owing to being minors and because of their gender. These experiences are similar to findings in Semarang by Widyawati et al. (2005) on girl street children’s vulnerability to sexual violence and their silence because of a fear of the police. The sexual violence which girl street children are exposed to daily has been documented by Kissling (1991) as “street harassment”, which is a form of social control, usually perpetrated by male strangers on the street. These incidents of harassment are conceived as acts of power and male domination, which essentially subjugates and disempowers girl street children, hampering their safety (Smith et al., 2015).

Their daily struggle to find food, work and shelter, to avoid confrontation with law enforcement and the public police, and not having proper identity documents, limits girl street children from “legally” selling things to survive, hinders their own children from going to school, and hampers their freedom and safety. Moreover, feelings of un-safety were reported by all of the participants because of pollution in Malioboro (the carbon monoxide level ranges from 30 000 to 42 000 micrograms daily, and the lead level is about 2 ppm) (Wicaksono, 2015). In addition, Malioboro is a place where young people socialise and connect with their peer groups, where smoking, drinking and gambling, which often leads to fights, cause anxiety among the girl street children.

Girl street children in school and places of worship feel safe and protected. These assets and protective elements can be regarded as mechanisms and strategies of mobilisation,

resistance and survival in invented or claimed spaces (Gaventa, 2006; Miraftab, 2004), as those “which are claimed by less powerful actors for themselves, against the hegemony of the power holders”, through collective action and resistance (Gaventa, 2006, p. 27). The mapping process made visible to the participants the significance of tapping into their assets and using their agency for transformative action.

Conclusion

In this article, we provided a detailed account of girl street children’s subjective experiences and perceptions regarding factors that contribute to their feelings of safety, un-safety and survival on Malioboro Street, Yogyakarta, through a community-based participatory asset-mapping process. Four critical issues were highlighted, namely, a sense of place, belonging and connectedness; cartography of power, place and space; reclaiming female voices; and dilemmas of feeling safe and unsafe related to their lack of a formal identity document. At the same time, the girl street children were subjected to various forms of oppressive power linked to space, place, male hegemony and socio-economic marginalisation. The asset mapping assisted them in reclaiming their voices and challenging the status quo, by sharing and speaking about the un-safety that they often experienced on the street and the ways in which it had an impact on their living space and their emotional well-being, which can have lifelong consequences on their health. Asset mapping, particularly, provided the participants with the opportunity to become aware of their own assets and their agency to effect change, and also to identify possible solutions that could redress the challenges they encountered.

Considering that these street children are Indonesian citizens, the government must deal with the needs of this particular vulnerable group. As citizens, they have the right to access a legal identity card and legal birth certificate, to live safely, and to have access to alternative schooling or other informal education.

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