

## **THE CHANGE IN PERCEPTION OF SUBMITTING CHILDREN TO CHILD WELFARE INSTITUTIONS IN DENPASAR CITY IN THE PERIOD 2006-2014**

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**Received Date** : 07-03-2019  
**Accepted Date** : 15-04-2019  
**Published Date** : 31-05-2019

### **ABSTRACT**

Terroristic events, like the Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005, have major effects on a society. Prior research towards those effects have focused on the financial, economic and social economic effects, however this study focuses on the social cultural effect in the aftermath of the terroristic effects. The changed social cultural perception of submitting children to a Child Welfare Institution in the period 2006 to 2014 in Denpasar city, Bali. Sub questions to this problem statement what the reasons are that children are living in Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar city recently and whether it is possible to connect social cultural perceptions of submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar city to coping mechanisms of the society after the terroristic attacks in 2002 and 2005. This research has used a quantitative approach, interviewing 50 children and 23 parents / familial caretakers. The outcomes have been analysed with help of the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software NVIVO. Research indicates that the trend of submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions, as a coping mechanism, in the first years after the second Bali bombing instigated a change in the social cultural system on Bali. The Balinese kinship system partly fell apart as a result of the Bali bombings, the keluarga besar is less considered to be asked for help and submitting a child to a Child Welfare Institution became an easy solution that currently continues to exist. It is concluded that the ethos, the moral formation as described by Foucault, is victimized by the failing system of aletheia and politeia, but that also ethos itself is victimized by contemporary forms of normalization.

**Keywords:** *social cultural change, terroristic attack, coping mechanism, Child Welfare Institutions.*

## **BACKGROUND**

Denpasar city is the capitol of the island of Bali. The research focused on Denpasar city as reference area for the whole of Bali. There are 863.600 inhabitants in the area and the area is 127,78 km<sup>2</sup> wide (2,27% of the whole area of Bali) and consists out of four *kecamatan* and 43 *desa/kelurahan*. The city is densely populated with 6.759 souls per km<sup>2</sup>. The neighbouring *kabupaten* are Gianyar and Badung (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Denpasar 2016). 648 children lived in Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar city at the commencement of the research, which makes up 0,07% of the total inhabitants.

Denpasar city can be divided in 4 subdistricts, Denpasar *selatan* (south Denpasar), Denpasar *timur* (east Denpasar), Denpasar *barat* (west Denpasar) and Denpasar *utara* (north Denpasar). South Denpasar is the most densely populated area (31.8%), followed by west Denpasar (29%), north Denpasar (22.1%) and finally east Denpasar (17.2%).

Denpasar city consists of 880.600 souls in 2015, comprised of 449.700 males and 430.900 females. The sex ration in Denpasar city is 104. The illiterate rate in Denpasar city is 2.04%. The school participation rate in 2014 can be seen below. After 16 years old the school participation rate declines. In total 675 schools (state and private owned) can be found in Denpasar city, with 18.815 pupils and 2.399 teachers.

In 2014 0.03% of the pupils dropped out of elementary school, the total number of enrolled pupils was 83.013. For 2014 only eleven pupils dropped out of high school, on a population of 36.160 pupils (0.03%) (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Denpasar 2016). 653.326 souls in Denpasar city are in the working age population. The workforce consists of 472.103 souls of who 461.135 are indeed working and 10.968 souls experience difficulties in working.

The main industrial origin for Denpasar inhabitants is restaurant and hotel trade (42.3%), followed by social and industrial services (22.8%) and the processing industry (12.7%) (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Denpasar 2016).

Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Denpasar mentions that Denpasar city is 'a big city, with very complex social problems' (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Denpasar 2016, p. 70). It notes prostitution of one of the problems, noting that there were 50 prostitutes active in 2015 in Denpasar city. The government tries to solve this problem by coaching. Interestingly enough Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Denpasar mentions the Child Welfare Institutes and children in foster care as a social problem as well (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Denpasar 2016).

Every year the ministry of women's empowerment and child protection hands out the price for the city / district most child worthy. Kota Denpasar has won the *Kota layak anak* award in 2019 (Tribunnews, 2019, Republika, 2019, Suara.com, 2019).

The ministry of women's empowerment and child protection looks at the following criteria for handing out the price:

- Institutions
- Basic health and well being
- Family environment and alternative child care
- Civil rights of freedom
- Special protection
- Education, free time utilization and cultural activities (kla.id, 2019)

According to Tribun news the Mayor of Denpasar that the award was given because Denpasar was considered successful in terms of fulfilling the rights of children, one of which was giving benefit programs to the community. From the fulfilment of children's rights, both from providing creativity space to children in each government program to providing comfortable facilities for children when interacting outside their family environment (Tribunnews, 2019).

In the same article the head of the Denpasar City Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency I Gusti Agung Laksmi Dharmayanti said that the Denpasar government had been able to meet the requirements of being a child friendly city as assessed by the central team so that the city of Denpasar could rise in the rank of *Nindya* (4 times in a row) to become winner of the main category.

"We have tried our best. And the results of the assessment from the central team said, the city of Denpasar has met various requirements so Denpasar obtained the highest award in the event. Of course we are very grateful for this achievement and in the future we will continue to try to maintain and improve it again", he concluded (Tribunnews, 2019).

Child Welfare Institutions are not specified as a criteria measured in the evaluation of which city should win the *Kota layak ank* award. *Pengasuhan alternatif* is a criteria that is described as:

'The child has the right to have a substitute family or family so that his life and development can be fulfilled properly, the replacement family or family is responsible for fulfilling the basic rights of the child, while the state is obliged to take steps so that the right of the child to obtain a replacement family or family can be fulfilled and so that the family or surrogate family can carry out their responsibilities to the maximum' (Kla.id, 2019).

The central team seems to expect a perfect implementation of the Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia NO.30/HUK/2011 in which Child Welfare Institutions should not exist in the form they are existing currently.

## **DISCUSSION**

This research has been undertaken on a sample of 50 children living in Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar city, on a population (2014) of 694 children (7,2%). To define the sample considerations have been made considering defined age groups in similar research by Save the Children, Child Welfare Institutions located in Denpasar city and their considered religions.

29 children in Hindu Child Welfare Institutions, ten children living in Christian Child Welfare Institutions, eight children living in multi religious Child Welfare Institutions and three children living in Muslim Child Welfare Institutions were considered to be the interviewees for this research. Nine Child Welfare Institutions participated in this research, as well as the parents of sixteen children living in Child Welfare Institutions.

The topographical background of the interviewed children is Karangasem (22%), Denpasar (20%) and Tabanan, Gianyar and Buleleng (14%). This means that 80% of the children living in Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar city are not from Denpasar city themselves, but from other *kabupaten* in Bali.

Children and familial caretakers were asked about the way of submittance to the Child Welfare Institution. Research shows that several Child Welfare Institution actively recruit children in underprivileged villages and in families with poor financial conditions.

The main reason children are being submitted to Child Welfare Institutions remains the possibility to follow education. Other reasons being given are economic hardship, family situation / sickness, negligence and 'to be independent'. Recruitment is prohibited under the decree of the Minister of Social affairs:

"Child Welfare Institutions should receive referrals for children in need of alternative care but should not proactively recruit children in communities that do not require alternative care". (Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia 2011, p. 30).

The decree of the Minister of Social affairs also responds to economic needs and educational needs:

“Where the primary issue faced by the family is financial inability, the Child Welfare Institutions should provide support for the child in the family through financial assistance or economic empowerment of the family, or support the family in accessing existing social aid programs” (Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia 2011, p. 33).

a. If the primary issue faced by the family is access to education, Child Welfare Institutions should facilitate access to education through providing support for tuition costs, school supplies, and transportation.

b. Child Welfare Institutions must prevent the placement of children in their Institutions for the purpose of accessing education (Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia 2011, p. 33).

Some children are referred to the Child Welfare Institutions by government employees, sometimes doubling as family. The decree of the Minister of Social affairs stipulates referrals in practice (Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia 2011, p. 30) but the decree is not followed in practice.

The hypothesis that some children are placed in Child Welfare Institutions far away from their hometown on purpose cannot be proved. The fact that 80% of the children living in Child Welfare Institutions far away from their hometown is a strong indication towards this hypothesis. Reason behind a placement far away are possibly feelings of guilt and shame. The interviews with parents were inconclusive towards the hypothesis.

When looking at the reactions of the *keluarga besar* it can be concluded that the *keluarga besar* does not particularly mind the submittance of a family member to a Child Welfare Institution.

Family relations are disrupted by submitting a child to a Child Welfare Institution. Contact with children is usually kept by phone and children usually go back to their hometowns during Balinese holidays. Big concern should be considered on the fact that parents / familial caretakers do not know what the child is experiencing psychologically and emotionally. Kaur, Vinnakota, Panigrahi and Manasa (2018) state

‘Orphans and other vulnerable children and adolescents living in institutional homes are more prone to behavioural and emotional problems than others as they are deprived of a family’s love and care’ (p.1).

The hypothesis that Child Welfare Institutions are used as cover ups to spread religion is not proven, though strong indicators have been given towards the hypothesis. Some familial caretakers note their fear of submitting children to a Child Welfare Institutions of a different religion due to conversion, some children made statements towards this hypothesis.

The word orphan / orphanage is commonly used in marketing outings of Child Welfare Institutions, but research shows that 76% of the children in the sample cannot be defined as orphan as stipulated by Unicef and her global partners. While is impossible to make a value statement on perceived poverty, research shows that many parents of interviewed children belong to the working class. Other solutions, as stipulated in the Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs should be implanted to prevent those children from living in Child Welfare Institutions. It can be concluded that Child Welfare Institutions are considered an option or a solution, by some familial caretakers even as the only solution.

Violence and force are evident in Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar city. During this research cases of violence or indications of violence were discovered. The media uncovered more cases relating to Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar and Bali, showing that issues are recurring.

When asked whether familial caretakers would make the same decision to send their children to Child Welfare Institutions the result was mixed. Some parents show regret were others see the submittance as the best solution.

## **NEW FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH**

The new findings of the research are as follows:

1. Children in Denpasar city are mainly submitted to Child Welfare Institutions for the sake of education.
2. Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar city mainly use education as factor for accepting children, or even recruiting children, though this is forbidden by the Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia NO.30/HUK/2011.
3. Forms of abuse are happening in Child Welfare Institutions in Denpasar city.
4. Child Welfare Institutions often recruit children and funds under the name of orphanage, while in Western perspective an orphanage is something else than a Child Welfare Institution in Indonesian perspective.

5. After the Bali bombings in 2005 and its economical aftermath submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions has been a coping mechanism that still has its cultural effects till recent.
6. By submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions Balinese kinship ties are changing.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The conclusions of this dissertation are twofold. On one hand conclusion are drawn on based on the position of children living in Child Welfare Institutions, their parents / familial caretakers and the Child Welfare Institutions themselves. On the other hand, conclusions are drawn based on the social cultural change in perception of submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions.

### **The position of children living in Child Welfare Institutions, their parents/ familial caretakers and the Child Welfare Institutions**

This dissertation has explored the position of children living in Child Welfare Institutions. It can be concluded that 76 percent of the children researched still have both parents alive and another sixteen percent of the children have one parent alive and known. Therefore the translation of orphanage for *panti asuhan* is incorrect even though the term orphanage is often used in the marketing of Child Welfare Institutions.

The sample of 50 children had the following demographic background:

- Karangasem 22%
- Denpasar 20%
- Tabanan 14%
- Gianyar 14%
- Buleleng 14%

It is expected that children are placed in Child Welfare Institutions far away from home (80% of the sample) to hide the fact that they are submitted (feelings of guilt and shame) to a Child Welfare Institution from villagers. This hypothesis could not be proven by data.

Main reason given for children living in Child Welfare Institutions are the possibility to follow education, economic hardship, family situation / sickness, being neglected and learning to be independent. The Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia NO30/HUK/2011 prohibits submittance to Child Welfare Institutions for the sake of education. In this case Child Welfare Institutions are supposed to provide support for the family through financial assistance (tuition costs, school supplies, transportation) or economic empowerment of the family or assist the family in accessing social aid programs.

Parents and familial caretakers are executing the Ostrich Syndrome, having no long term vision, but seeking solutions for short terms without wanting to see consequences. Answers given by parents / familial caretakers about their feelings were diverse, possibly driven by feelings of guilt and shame. Taken to the level of the *keluarga* and *keluarga besar* it is identified that the family does not care too much that one of the children is submitted to the Child Welfare Institution, even members of the nuclear family refer to Child Welfare Institutions. Parents / familial caretakers see submittance to Child Welfare Institutions as a solution, sometimes even an easy solution. In hindsight some parents showed regret, but the majority do not regret submitting their children to a Child Welfare Institution.

Children are experiencing psychological and emotional stress as they are deprived from family's love and care. Family relations and the Balinese kinship system are disrupted due to having children surrendered to the Child Welfare Institutions. Parents / familial caretakers do not (want) to see those consequences in the long run. Physical, psychological and sexual abuse is happening frequently in the Child Welfare Institutions. Within this research cases of physical and psychological abuse are discovered.

The hypothesis that Child Welfare Institutions are cover ups to spread religion cannot proven by data, though there are indicators that this is in fact happening. Some parents / familial caretakers showed reluctance to submit children to a Child Welfare Institution of a different religion, some children made statements towards this hypothesis.

To give this dissertation philosophical reserve the work of mainly Foucault has been deconstructed, specifically looking at *aletheia*, *politeia* and *ethos*. When looking at *aletheia*, the production of truth, one can relate issues of short term vision by parents / familial caretakers, specifically relating to the child's safety, one can conclude that *aletheia* is disturbed. The exercise of power, *politeia*, is binary. The prescribing authority, the Directorate General, has executed its task well by a well thought through decree, though the implementation by means of the Social Service is inadequate. When deconstructing *ethos*,



the amalgamation of norms, morals and ethics, the discrepancy between the parents / familial caretakers and the child are compromised. Foucault describes that the best place for a child to be is the nuclear family. Submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions has become part of a normalization, a rising norm (a natural rule) which can be considered dangerous seen the many cases of abuse and the estrangement of children to their nuclear family and kinship ties. It has to be concluded that the ethos, the moral formation, is victimized by the failing system of aletheia and politeia, but that also ethos itself is victimized by contemporary forms of normalization.

### **The incline of children being submitted to Child Welfare Institutions as a social cultural effect of the Bali bombings.**

Research has been undertaken to examine the social economic effects of the Bali bombings. No research has been undertaken to examine the social cultural effects of the Bali bombings nor any other terroristic attack.

This research shows that when looking at the number of children being submitted to Child Welfare Institutions on Bali and in Denpasar an interesting turning point can be discovered. The terroristic attacks launched an enormous decline in tourist arrivals and with that a crisis on the island heavily dependent on tourism and hospitality.

As a coping mechanism people tried to decrease expenditures. One way to decrease expenditures is to submit children to Child Welfare Institutions, a practice already happening prior to the terroristic attacks. By submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions parents / familial caretakers can reduce costs of tuition fees, uniforms, books, stationary, food, clothes and hygiene.

Submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions on Bali actively happened in the aftermath of the second Bali bombing and from 2008 onwards in Denpasar city.

The traditional kinship system in which everyone belonging or feeling to belong to a common ancestor is usually a system in which people help each other. Due to everyone being in the same position of coping with a crisis instigated by the heavily decreased tourist arrivals the kinship system fell apart. There are indications that this is the moment in which Child Welfare Institutions started to recruit more actively in less privileged areas.

The vast submittance to Child Welfare Institutions instigated a trend, possibly led by peer pressure and seeing an 'easy' solution to an existing problem. As explained before there

is no long term vision by parents / familial caretakers within submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions.

The trend of submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions in the first years after the second Bali bombing instigated a change in the social cultural system on Bali. Now the kinship system partly fell apart as a result of the Bali bombings, the *keluarga besar* is less considered to ask for help and submitting a child to a Child Welfare Institution became an easy solution.

## **FINAL CONCLUSION**

Child Welfare Institutions are often marketing themselves as 'orphanages', which would make a child living in such an institution an orphan. This is proven to be wrong, as 76% of the children researched still had both parents alive. Main reason to live in a Child Welfare Institution is receiving education and economic hardship. The Decree of the minister of social affairs of the Republic of Indonesia NO.30/HUK/2011 prohibits that Child Welfare Institutions are housing children for the sake of receiving education. The Child Welfare Institutions should provide financial assistance and give help in accessing social aid programs instead.

Parents / familial caretakers do not recognize the danger for children living in institutions. Research has proven that children suffer from being institutionalized and that abuse is happening. Ultimately children also estrange from their familial ties, the kinship system, that is so important on Bali.

The financial and economic results of the second Bali Bombing have instigated a change in the social and cultural perception of submitting children to Child Welfare Institutions. This trend is ongoing till date.

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