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The politics of dry feet: the political economy of flood risk management in Indonesia

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Propositions

Prepositions relating to the subject of dissertation

1. Effective Flood Risk Management (FRM) is intricately tied to local political dynamics, requiring the involvement of a robust civil society and a strong government-citizenry partnership in monitoring and curbing politico-business collusion before, during, and after flood hazards. Cities that are successful in curbing such business-politics collusion are better equipped to handle floods.
2. The effectiveness of flood defence infrastructures relies not only on technical capacity but also on the local government's willingness and ability to enforce drainage regulations. This ability is contingent on their political independence from business interests and their engagement with civil society. Where progressive state-society linkages exist, enforcement improves, and flood risks are reduced.
3. Differences in flood prevention across cities are shaped by local political dynamics, particularly the collusion of politics and business in spatial planning. Cities with strong civil society activism are more successful in defending water catchment areas and green zones against these pressures from powerful political and economic actors, such as real estate firms, factory owners, and agricultural companies.
4. Effective flood emergency response relies on political leaders forming alliances with progressive non-state actors and remaining independent from political and business elites, enabling responsive, grassroots-oriented governance and better public service delivery.

Prepositions relating to the field of the subject of the dissertation

1. Political factors are crucial but underexplored in Flood Risk Management; existing literature and approaches fail to capture how local political dynamics shape the success or failure of flood management efforts, resulting in a limited understanding of the political mechanisms underlying FRM outcomes.
2. Political dynamics pose a barrier to effective flood risk management (FRM), emphasising the importance of addressing political factors in conjunction with technical approaches in infrastructure, spatial planning, and emergency response.
3. Comparative insights from Indonesian cities reveal that political dynamics—such as business-politics collusion, weak institutions, and the absence of civil society oversight—significantly influence the success of flood risk management (FRM), suggesting that a political economy approach is essential beyond technical fixes. These findings are relevant to other developing and middle-income countries, such as Thailand, the Philippines, and India, where fragmented bureaucracies and elite capture similarly hinder effective and equitable flood governance.

4. Effective climate adaptation, particularly in the context of flooding, necessitates addressing local power dynamics and reintegrating political considerations. Civil society activism plays a crucial role, particularly in countries with developing democratic institutions, such as Indonesia.

Prepositions on societal subjects

1. International organizations implementing flood risk management (FRM) programs should involve political advisors to navigate local dynamics and engage key stakeholders. This approach ensures that programs tackle genuine on-the-ground challenges and remain effective and sustainable by strengthening civil society and public oversight rather than focusing solely on technical solutions.
2. The role of a robust anti-corruption agency, like Indonesia's KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission), is vital for reducing vulnerability to climate-related disasters. The weakening of such institutions undermines climate resilience and local accountability.
3. Campaign finance reform is important to disrupt the collusion between politicians and businesses. Politicians often respond to campaign support from businesses with favourable policies, undermining governance and the provision of public services, such as flood risk management.