

Theodora Davis
CRM 233: Environmental Crime and Justice
Professor Pugh
Analyzing Documentary Film Assignment (60 points)

1. What are the environmental issues this documentary focuses on? (2-4 sentences) (3 points)

The environmental issues are that a company called Lapindo was drilling for natural gas. While drilling for natural gas they went two miles under the earth and hit a mud pocket. This caused a mudflow that is going to be happening until 2030. This mudflow goes into the river which causes fishes to die and no access to clean water. It also causes the air to smell like sulfur and “daggers.”

2. After you watch the film, take a moment to reflect. What are you led to believe are the causes of these environmental issues? Were these causes explicitly articulated or were they implicit or implied? That is, how intentional was the filmmaker in calling attention to those responsible for the environmental issues in the film? (1-2 short paragraphs) (10 points)

I am led to believe that the causes of these environmental issues are greed and power. The Lapindo company wanted gas for their company and had the power to obtain the gas. They also had the power to make the court say that they are innocent, and the cause of the mudflow was from an earthquake. These causes were explicitly articulated. The filmmaker made it clear to hold the company responsible with the storyline and everyone in the community coming together protesting this company. This film also showed that the company did not want to take responsibility and it seemed as if the guy in charge of the Lapindo company believed that he did not cause these environmental issues.

3. Are there possible causes or factors that the film omits based on what you’ve learned in class? If yes, what were they? If not, explain what causes they discussed that aligned with this class. (1-2 short paragraphs) (10 points)

There are not any causes or factors that the film omits based on what we learned in class. One cause is ideology. The Lapindo company felt as if they were superior to earth and was able to harm it with no repercussions. They also felt like it was okay for the people in those villages to live in an environment where the water, air, and soil was contaminated. Another cause is Lapindo having power over the people in this part of Indonesia. The company was greedy and went into other people’s communities to extract natural gas. This causes people from the villages to suffer with air that smelt like sulfur and “daggers,” and water and soil that is not clean. Someone in the film wrote “Rakus” in the mud which means greed. The company also did not want to take responsibility.

I would say another cause is Neoliberalism. The Lapindo company was able to get away with harm that they caused for almost ten years. They were able to get the courts to say that it was from an earthquake. The only reason why they had to pay full compensation is because Indonesia had a new president and promised compensation. Also, from the people's perspective of Neoliberalism this company was profit driven and at the end of the film they were protesting so the Lapindo company can't drill into the earth for natural gasses anymore which might put some regulations into place if their protesting is successful.

4. Reflect on this documentary using a critical criminology lens. (1 paragraph) (5 points)

In this documentary, a powerful company called the Lapindo company drilled for natural gas causing a mudflow in a community that they do not live in. Drilling for natural gas was to benefit their company but it harmed others in the process. The drilling for natural gas killed 16 people and displaced 60,000 people from their homes and they also lost their jobs. The Lapindo company did not want to take responsibility for their actions and blamed an earthquake. This company promised those who were harmed full compensation if they can show proof of ownership and took almost 10 years to give compensation.

5. Does the film highlight issues around environmental racism or poverty? In other words, does the film implicitly or explicitly point to the fact that those affected by environmental issues usually are poor people of color, Indigenous peoples, or white poor people, (all with little political power). If yes, how? If no, where/how could they have included them? (1-2 short paragraphs) (10 points)

Yes, the film highlights issues of environmental racism and poverty. Those that were affected by this environmental issue lived in East Java Indonesia and they were people of color. When the film maker showed where the head of Lapindo resided, it looked like he lived in a wealthier city away from where they were drilling for natural gas. It shows that he was not directly affected by it, his water, air, or soil was not contaminated. The people in this community were displaced and lost their jobs which caused some of their children to not be able to go to school. They appeared to have dirt all over their bodies at times in this film whereas the owner of Lapindo and the people that were around him were clean and well dressed. One thing that the girl Dian said that showed environmental racism and poverty is "we may not be rich, but we have our voices." Even after they received compensation for what happened, the company had the permission from the government to go back and drill for natural gas in the same area to pay the government back.

6. Make three separate connections between what was in this film and what we have covered in class thus far. Make these connections explicit, do not expect me to know what connection you're making. I recommend writing this answer in separate bullet points, with 2-4 sentences for each. (12 points, 4 points per connection)

- Connection 1: One connection that could be made is structural/state violence and Flint Michigan. The Lapindo company affected the environment of those who lived in East Java Indonesia and said that it was an earthquake instead of taking responsibility. They also did not receive full compensation until almost 10 years later.
 - Connection 2: Another connection that could be made is power with. Everyone in this community constantly protested until they received their compensation. Even after they received it, they were protesting because the Lapindo company was allowed to drill for more natural gas and the people in that community wanted to use their voices to create change.
 - Connection 3: One more connection that could be made is the ripple effect metaphor. The drilling for natural gas caused a mudflow which displaced and killed people. The mud is mixed with toxic gas which contaminated their soil, water, air, and affected their local economy.
7. Reflect on this assignment. Questions to consider: Did you enjoy watching this film? Why or why not? What did you learn that you did not know before? What was the most difficult part of this assignment and why? Do you have any suggestions on how I can improve this assignment in the future? Any other comments? (1 paragraph) (10 points)

I enjoyed watching this film. It was educational, but it was something about the documentary that made me want to watch more. Some documentaries I'm not able to finish because they don't interest me but this one did. Everything in this documentary was new to me. I did not know that there was a mudflow in Indonesia that has been happening since 2006. I also didn't know something like that was possible. The most difficult part of this assignment was watching how the people in Indonesia had to live. Their life changed. They were displaced from their villages, they lost many jobs, their air, water, and soil are contaminated, and some of the children had to stop going to school because their parents could not afford to send them. It is sad to see that this all happened because a company was drilling for natural gas and the company did not want to help. I don't have suggestions on how to improve this assignment. I think it was very straightforward.

