Inequalities and the Everyday in Post-Tsunami Banda Aceh

Dr. Marjaana Jauhola
Docent, Academy of Finland Research Fellow
Gender Studies
University of Helsinki
An Urban Ethnography of Peace

https://youtu.be/sH3TNxS2mGI
Studying politics of reconstruction through urban ethnography, life narratives and film documentarism

- Indian Ocean earthquakes and the tsunami in December 2004
- Armed conflict between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (1976-2005)
- Post-conflict legal, economic and political framework
- Provincial capital Banda Aceh:
  - Low intensity of conflict
  - 78,000 residents died (out of 270,000)
  - 61-85% of infrastructure destroyed
  - By 2011 270,000 residents – birth rate and migration
Research aims to

• Study how reconstruction materializes itself in the everyday
  • ”Build back better”
  • ”Civilized Banda Aceh” (kota Madani)

• In what ways do personal narratives challenge linear notions of transformation for “better”, expectations of recovery, resilience and return to normalcy?

• What forms of social inequalities and silenced histories do those narratives illuminate?

• Explore the possibilities for combining ethnographic writing and film documentarism
  • 2012-14: 7,5 months ethnography
  • 2015-6: 2 months filming + 6-10 months post-production/writing/talks + screenings
feminist analysis of reconstruction requires a move away from
gender analysis towards understanding of intersections of
normativity (Hyndman 2008; Jauhola 2013)

• Everyday as a site of struggle: provoking norms in relation
to gender, class, caste, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion, in
particular through normative calls for piety and propriety

• The analysis draws from ethnographic data around the
liminal urban spaces, and the attempts by the provincial
and municipality government to normalise subjects in
accordance with their visions, such as civilized city (kota
madani) ahklah dan aqidah (morality and belief) and pious
adolescence

• But also how the global media circuit is attracted mapping
Aceh in relation to global politics of modernity, Islam,
Eurocentrism, war on terror

• Resisting binaristic representations of subjects of Islamic
law or political Islam in need of rescuing, rather on the
complex ways in which people orient and negotiate
normative codes, material, corporeal and social constraints
(Dupret et al. 2012)

Ethnographic sites: street, municipal
governance and political elite around
the (vice)-mayor

Social media (Facebook)

Oral life history
(Auto)photography – video
documentarism/activism

Media circuit
Some observations

- Layered and connected lives in the city, continued militarized masculinities – history that goes beyond the tsunami
- Repetition and new forms of patterns of conflict, violence and displacement
- Gendered violence not restricted to that of women/girls
- Ethnonationalist independence struggle – post-conflict dynamics of Acehnese identity – minority politics
- Struggle for the political and economic power, unfinished de-colonialization, transnational/global politics
- Resistance and critique found in multiple locations: subaltern analysis of the political economy, money politics, identity politics
- The making of middle classness in Banda Aceh
Story of the Cleo water cups
Hybrid monograph

7 chapters

1. Rebuilding the Islamic city
2. Female political populism and elite women
3. Chaotic pavements – punk/metal and post-conflict masculinities
4. Careful management of women’s good reputation
5. Battles of ex-combatant masculinities
6. Queer in Aceh
7. Political economy of the plastic bottle

scrapsofhope.fi/aceh

Facebook: Scraps of Hope

10 short documentary videos

6 life history narratives
- Transman’s life
  - From young ex-combatant to ageing Sufi healer
  - Inter-province migrant from religious and ethnic minority
  - Single parent gardener
  - Merry-go-around entrepreneur seeking divorce
  - In search of middle class dream

2 Zubaidah Djohar’s poems
- Because you’re woman
- Peace for Whom?

Acehnese women talk back to the Helsinki peace process – interview with Prof Eka Srimulyani/Islamic State University Ar-Raniry and Donna Swita / Solidaritas Perempuan

Sharia law: moral panic vs. blueprint for social and economic justice – interview with the head of Shari’a Department Prof. Dr. Syahrizal Abbas
SCRAPS OF HOPE

Videos

Facebook: Scraps of Hope
Youtube: Scraps of Hope

Publications

Scraps of Hope: Ethnography of Peace (monograph in process)

Article A.C.A.B. – Studying up the rule of law in Banda Aceh, Indonesia (article manuscript in process)


Chapter "On Being Bored" – on ethnography of 'here and now' and punk masculinities in Emotions, Politics and War (2015, Routledge)

Photoessay with Yudi Bolong – The punks of the Tsunami Museum (2014, Planet the Welsh International)