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"When House Becomes Home"—Reading Normativity in Gender Equality Advocacy in Post-tsunami Aceh, Indonesia

Marjaana Jauhola

Abstract

This article contributes to the ongoing discussion on the question of feminism, gender, and post-tsunami response (Akerkar, 2007; Hyndman, 2008) by offering an analysis of the normative boundaries of gender policies in the context of post-tsunami reconstruction in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam. The analysis focuses on the normative ideals portrayed in Oxfam International's radio drama "Women Can Do It Too!" broadcast in the tsunami-affected coastal areas in Aceh in 2006 and 2007. What kinds of images of tomorrow does the radio drama construct as the ideal picture for Aceh? How do these idealized sexed, gendered, and sexualized images intersect with other social hierarchies? Drawing on postcolonial feminism, queer studies, and "feminism and development/disaster" literature, this article argues that by focusing solely on gender inequalities and promotion of equality between men and women/girls and boys, the radio drama normalizes heteronormativity and other social hierarchies. Using the image of the empowered adolescent girl,

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the radio drama's plot aligns with the neoliberal developmental discourse of "working hard," silencing other experiences of social hierarchies in Aceh.[1]

Keywords

Gender advocacy, Aceh, tsunami reconstruction, normativity, social inequalities

Introduction: Build Back Better

> We will rebuild Aceh and Nias and we will build it back better.
>
> (Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, 2005)[2]

> Better? I say, in a small voice. How can he think this is better? Better never means better for everyone, he says. It always means worse, for some.
>
> (Atwood, 1985/2005, p. 222)

The epicenter of the Indian Ocean earthquakes and the tsunami in December 2004 was 100 kilometers off the coast of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (henceforth referred to as Aceh), the western-most province of Indonesia. The earthquake and the tsunami had devastating results: lost and displaced lives; destroyed and damaged infrastructure. Eight months after the tsunami and some 30 years of conflict, the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on August 15, 2005, leading to disarmament process, a new governance law, and local elections in 2006. It was time to "build Aceh back better," a slogan adopted by many organizations involved in the post-tsunami reconstruction efforts. Some organizations add that the importance of the reconstruction processes is in "rebuilding of lost and damaged values and norms" (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2005). So the "better" is not understood just as reconstructed houses, roads, and bridges with better quality but also as reconstructed ideas, ideals, and norms.

Dominant gender norms in Aceh are constructed and negotiated as a continuous interplay between customs (*adat*), Islam, Indonesian state ideology, and the 30-year-long ethno-nationalist independence movement

(Aspinall, 2009; Siapno, 2002). Since 1999, Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that has the formal right to the full implementation of Shari'a law, which includes the codification of Shari'a law principles into positive law and all public policies. Local women's organizations are concerned that the local regulations "are based on symbolic, literal and decontextualized interpretations of Islam" (Gender Working Group, 2007, p. 14). Portrayed as the symbolic value of the society, women become targets of normative control (Noerdin, 2007). Attempts to open up discussion on feminist interpretations of the Qur'an are interpreted by some religious leaders, who have a role in forming public opinion, as anti-Islamic, or non-Acehnese, behavior.

Gender mainstreaming, formally endorsed by the UN member states at the fourth United Nation's World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 as a policy strategy to promote gender equality and the advancement of women, can be seen as one of the many attempts to define the slogan "build back better." Although gender mainstreaming policy approach has been a part of the provincial government's structures in Aceh since 2000, the focus on gender mainstreaming has been intensified in the post-tsunami context as many of the international organizations have advocated gender mainstreaming actively in their work.

Recent research on the various tsunami-affected areas has argued that gender policies and discourse on gender equality reduces power analysis into a universal position of "vulnerable women" and omits men's gendered vulnerabilities (Fulu, 2007). Further, it is maintained that gender analysis is not enough to address the complex vulnerabilities and barriers faced by the various groups of disaster-affected people (Akerkar, 2007; Hyndman, 2008).

In fact, recent feminist analysis suggests that three simultaneous, yet contradictory, discourses of gender have emerged. One discourse, predominantly elaborated in the policy context, focuses on women's empowerment and equality between women and men in relation to national development programs and policies aiming to center the social and political analysis on a "gender analysis." The second discourse deconstructs the concept of gender altogether and critiques the heteronormative practices of the state (Bedford, 2005; Cornwall, Correâ, & Jolly, 2008; Griffin, 2009; Jónasdóttir & Jones, 2008; Menon, 2009; Wieringa & Blackwood, 1999). The third discourse draws from the "women of color" and postcolonial feminist writings that critique the primacy of "gender"

in feminist analysis. This discourse problematizes the idea that there is a universal oppression of women based on their gender and deconstructs the ideal of "global sisterhood" that assumes that sharing a common goal of empowering women is possible and desirable (Desai, 2005).

This article elaborates how gender advocacy materials produce normative ideals of "better" in the Acehnese context and offers an attempt to understand the challenges in using the concept of gender as the sole focus of feminist activism. The article has two parts. The first part elaborates a method of reading intersectionality of norms in gender policies. The second part examines the textual normativity of Oxfam International's (OI) radio drama production "Women Can Do It Too!"

Queering the Sex/Gender Paradigm

The distinction between sex (male/female), as a matter of biology, and gender (masculine/feminine), as a set of culturally and socially defined characteristics, has been central to a significant body of gender theory: "sex is a natural, biological fact, but gender is a cultural, historical and linguistic production or achievement" (Chambers & Carver, 2008, p. 56). A common notion of gender is based on the idea of the binary opposition of two sexes: man and woman who are posited as exclusionary categories. On the basis of this construct, "one can be only one gender, never the other or both" (Flax, 1997, p. 175). Yet at the same time, Terrell Carver (2004) has argued that there is no definition of "gender" that "just is," as all definitions are embedded in methodological and theoretical aspirations. Carver finds it highly problematic when gender becomes a "euphemism for sex" (that is, male or female, M or F) as it erases and silences the complexities of sexualities and gender identities (Carver, 2004, p. 4).

As an attempt to critique the idea of sex as stable and gender as socially constructed, Judith Butler has argued that instead of being a man or a woman, it is necessary to replace the verb, "being" with a vocabulary of action—becoming or doing. Gender is a way of acting the body, yet one does not become gendered through free choice, as gender identity is governed by taboos, conventions, and laws that operate within social practices (Butler, 2004, p. 41).

Butler (1990/1999, p. 208, ft 6) further argues that the category of women achieves its stability and coherence only in the context of the heterosexual matrix in which bodies become comprehensible through a stable gender pair (masculine–male, feminine–female) that are constructed oppositional and hierarchical through the practice of heterosexuality. This assumption of coherence and stability of bodies requires processes of regulation, where certain behaviors and ways of life are constituted as ''normal'' and ''natural''—against which all people are measured (Carabine, 1996, pp. 59–60).

The concept of heteronormativity is used to refer to a dominant social order and power that maintains heterosexuality as the norm and describes it as normal in culture, society, and politics (Richardson, 1996). Although this concept allows an analysis of inclusions and exclusions in relation to norms governing gender and sexuality, it has been argued that the analysis omits questions related to other social hierarchies, such as class, race, or ethnicity. However, the interconnections between postcolonial feminism and most recent debates in queer studies provide an important insight for understanding the processes of normativity more holistically. First, postcolonial feminists and women of color have for long criticized the way in which gender has been made into a universal priority for feminism and offered the concept of intersectionality to understand the complexity of subject formation and the existence of hybrid subjects (Crenshaw, 1991; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006).

Second, postcolonial studies have provided a more general critique toward the attempts to universalize analytical categories, arguing that these attempts reproduce a binary between tradition and modernity, in which modern refers to the Euro-American scholarship that promotes Western-based subject positions and sexuality as a global identity in which ''the western body stands as the normative body in scholarly discourse and in public policy'' (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001, p. 666).

Third, the most recent feminist queer studies' debates seem to share the same concern with postcolonial feminists of universalizing analytical categories and subject positions around gender/sexuality and propose a move toward a broad-based study of lives lived outside of the conventional life narratives of family and reproduction, with the focus on modes of resistance that survive between marginal subjects and dominant cultures, such as neoliberal capitalism (Eng, Halberstam, & Muñoz, 2005). Drawing on this broad critique, I argue that the analysis of norms

remains Eurocentric/Western dominated if it solely focuses on hetero-normativity and if other localized processes of normalization are not considered simultaneously.

How, then, to read normativity of gender policies and advocacy materials? I locate the radio drama production as a linguistic and aesthetic "text" that is located in a web of meanings. Thus, normativity could also be called as "the cultural image-repertoire" that passes for "reality" consisting of representations that both enable and constrain how we perceive others and ourselves. I apply a "close reading" method to locate the norm and the subversion to the norm in the radio drama production. Sara Ahmed (1998) describes this process as

> …reading which works against, rather than through, a text's own construction of itself (how the text "asks to be read"). The disobedient reader…is a reader who interrupts the text with questions that demand a re-thinking of how it works, of how and why it works as it does, for whom. (Ahmed, 1998, p. 17)

When a House Becomes a Home

> Access to safe and adequate housing is important to all of us. Our house is not simply a place where we go to sleep at night, but it represents our home, which means everything to our lives as women, men, girls and boys. (Andy Siswanto, BRR Deputy of Housing & Resettlement, quoted in Bureau for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias, 2006, p. 20)

The remainder of this article analyses the twelve-episode OI radio drama production, "Women Can Do It Too!," broadcast by five radio stations in the tsunami-affected coastal Aceh (Banda Aceh, Sigli, Lhokseumawe, Meulaboh, and Lamno) in 2006 and 2007. The analysis focuses on the recordings and scripts of the radio drama episodes and the posters used to advertise the program, as well as on OI's post-production assessment conducted in 2007 and interviews with members of the production team. Although my focus is on these selected OI materials, to develop an inter-textual analysis, I also draw on a wide range of gender mainstreaming policy documents produced by the provincial government of Aceh and the central government of Indonesia. The points raised in this article

should not be read as an overall analysis or evaluation of the reconstruction efforts by the OI or tsunami initiatives in general. Rather, it is an attempt to interrogate how OI's radio drama production participates in the constitution and reiteration of norms within the wider Acehnese context.

The radio drama introduces a 15-year-old girl Ida, her family (mother Pocut, father Umar, little brother Adi, and grandmother), and the village where the family lives in. Ida and her family have already settled in their new home and throughout the episodes utilize the "products" of post-tsunami initiatives (housing, schooling, legal aid, support from the women's group, etc.). The genre of the OI's radio drama production belongs to what is also called "entertainment-education" or "development communication," a program format that has been commonly used by development agencies and governments since the 1970s (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). It further contributes to the already existing archive of "cultural politics" in the Indonesian context, a concept that is used to describe how various forms of performing arts are incorporated into the wider development agenda (Hellman, 2003). As this article illustrates, in the current context in Aceh, the "cultural politics" is not only used by the state, but importantly by local and international actors involved in post-tsunami and post-conflict reconstruction efforts aiming to convey normative messages of the post-tsunami futures in Aceh.

The radio drama production constructs normative narratives of "better" with binary positions and dichotomies such as backwardness–progress, passive–active, lazy–productive, and so on. Each episode is both introduced and closed by a narrator who introduces the punch line of each episode in relation to women's rights or gender relations. The narrator and the punch line establish a normative framework, or cultural repertoire, of how each episode should be understood or listened to. In this way, the radio drama constructs an ideal picture of the ongoing shelter construction projects, which not only provide a physical protection to people but also provide a possibility to develop and rebuild community life. I argue that it is the process of rebuilding the norms around family and community where a new house becomes a home and ideal images for "better life" are performed simultaneously. In the following sections, I will provide some examples of the kinds of lives that are idealized in the radio drama.

Although different episodes take different aspects of gender inequality as their focus, there are two characters whose normative transformations

are significant: Ida and her father, Umar. Ida is portrayed as the "future," whereas her father, Umar, is portrayed as patriarchal, traditional, and being initially against the fulfillment of women's rights in his family. But then, he changes his position to reach a happy ending in each episode. I argue that the radio drama reiterates the significance of a heterosexual adolescent girl as the signifier of the success of the tsunami reconstruction process, the progress of the nation, and ultimately, the progress of the globe and global feminism. The radio drama constructs ideals for the New Acehnese citizenship in relation to their rights and responsibilities and constructs the adolescent girl as an ultimate signifier of modernity and progress, framed through economy, employability, reproduction, and religiosity. The radio drama reconstitutes the ideal of liberalism: anything seems to be possible for "Ida," reiterating a liberal ideal that subjects have limitless capacities for realizing their dreams and while doing so, omitting a variety of social inequalities that prevent "Ida" from achieving the dream (Grabham, 2009, p. 189).

Ida's father, on the other hand, makes a full transformation from a patriarchal and "traditional" father to a "New Acehnese Man" who is sensitive and understands the importance of fulfilling women's rights in reaching development and progress, or as Kate Bedford (2009, p. 4) put it: "[W]omen are emancipated through employment and men are included in the family as responsible fathers and husbands."

For example, the first episode of the radio drama narrates a story where after being convinced by Ida's teacher, mother, and grandmother, Ida's father grants her permission to continue her education and take the first steps towards her dream: to become a doctor. In the beginning of the episode, the narrator announces that this episode is about "opinions in our society, according to which women do not need higher education because after marriage they will only work in the kitchen and manage the household. This although all people have a right to education" (Oxfam International, 2006a, Episode 1).

This normative message of the right to education is supported with a poster with a slogan "Achieve it...a future with continuing education," portraying a girl in a school uniform studying at a desk that has a globe on it. The globe reminds the viewer of the global focus on girls' higher education, which is not only an Acehnese ideal for gender equality, but in fact, a standard for the whole globe.[3] In Sara Ahmed's (2000) words, "The life course of the girl becomes a metaphor for the life course of 'the

globe' itself. In this way, the fulfilment of the girl's potential marks the course or trajectory of the globalisation of feminism" (Ahmed, 2000, pp. 175–176).

Fantasies of the adolescent girls' futures have clear intertextual connections with other gender advocacy materials. Ahmed's (2000) analysis of the Beijing conference's final document illustrates that the Beijing conference constructed a significant relationship between the girl child and the future woman: Growing from a girl into a woman becomes a measure of global development, a move from underdevelopment to development. The life course of a girl child becomes a wider metaphor for the progress of the globe (Ahmed, 2000, p. 176). In the case of the radio drama, the girl child becomes an indicator of the progress of the tsunami reconstruction efforts in Aceh.

Images of the female body are used to signify the transition from tradition to modernity. Female bodies act as indicators of modernity of the nation, illustrated with qualitative and quantitative gender-sensitive indicators. The narrative of the future of the girl child coincides with the idea of new generation that refers implicitly to the language of heterosexuality and to "the importance of the heterosexual couple to the international community" (ibid.). The last episode confirms these aims by offering a heteronormative prediction of Ida's potential future: After studying and becoming a doctor, she will get married. Just like Tuti, a friend, whose wedding Ida attends.

The normative story of the female body, therefore, is that it makes the transformation from a girl to a woman, from a child's body to an adult's body, thereby acquiring reproductive roles that are assumed to be natural. Ultimately, adolescent girls are seen as future mothers who have an employment outside of the home (Muhammad, 2002, p. 3). Bruhm and Hurley (2004) have argued that projecting children into a heteronormative future relies on an assumption that childhood is essentially heterosexually determined and implicitly increases "the pressure on producing the proper ending of the story" (Bruhm & Hurley, 2004, p. xiv).

When Ida's father, Umar, tries to raise concerns about family economics and the high rate of unemployment of university graduates among Acehnese, the issue is quickly solved by the teacher who comments that if Ida works hard enough, she will surely get a scholarship. The punch line of the episode takes no notice of the father who points to the linkage between low education and economy, or unemployment, but

focuses on the right to education and working hard. This ideal of individual's responsibility to work hard for success repeated in several episodes can also be found in the March 2008 issue of the magazine *Voice of Women* (*Suara An-Nisa'*) published by the provincial office of the Bureau for Women's Empowerment. The articles were accompanied with aphorisms on the margins of the page: "Winners make things to happen, losers merely wait for it to happen," "Winners have time to think, losers are lazy to think," and "Winners follow the winners, losers follow the losers" (Badan Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, 2008).

These materials share a common ideal with the Indonesian government's gender mainstreaming documentation, where both women and men are seen as productive and reproductive human resources and key elements in the development process. While the gender ideology of the New Order period[4] is described as "state ideology of motherhood" (Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis, 1987/1992), Krishna Sen (1998) has argued that in the early 1990s there was a clear shift from women as "wife and womb" into "women as reproductive workers" (Sen, 1998, p. 44).

Indonesian gender mainstreaming documents have a clear focus on ensuring the quality of the female workforce which is seen as essential for national development, economic growth, and welfare, and upon which the economic welfare of families is said to depend (President of the Republic of Indonesia, 2000). The 1996 National Action Plan on Women's Empowerment, just one year before the financial crisis, stated that "Indonesia also develops programmes to advance the status, capabilities, self-reliance and mental endurance of women…it is hoped that men's and women's potentials will be utilized more effectively" (Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women, 1996, pp. 3–4).

The focus on labor market and economy points toward measuring people's worth according to their ability to participate in the economic development. In general, it seems that focus on both women and men is highest during the "reproductive years" or on adolescents who are about to enter this "natural" phase in their lives. Those who fall outside of this structure are outside of the scope of gender policies, or are given special attention as "vulnerable groups."

Another episode and a poster convey a portrayal of a successful family sharing the kitchen chores between the wife and the husband: The husband prepares a meal while the wife breast-feeds a baby. The poster

captions, "Sharing work, why not?" and "Women's participation in decision-making is an example of harmonious/peaceful household" (Oxfam International, 2006b), are used to convey messages of the ideal family life. In fact, both the UN and the Indonesian government regularly use the concept "harmonious equal partnership between men and women." The concept appears in the Declaration of Mexico, the first UN Conference on Women in 1975, which stated that the family is a basic unit of society, and men's active participation is required to provide home and work possibilities for both partners (United Nations, 1975, paragraph 5). Similarly, Indonesian policy documents have emphasized the role of both women and men "as citizens and human resources for development" actively since 1993. "Harmonious equal partnerships between men and women" was a program initiated by the Indonesian government after the Beijing conference in 1995. According to this program, it is the responsibility of both women and men to "build a healthy, prosperous and happy family along with the nurturing of children, adolescents and youth in the effort to fully develop the Indonesian character" (Sen, 1998, p. 44). The word *sakinah*, used in one of the posters, refers to the concept in the Qur'an which is translated as "inner peace of mind and heart." Aisyiah, the women's wing of the Muhammadiyah, the second-largest Muslim mass organization in Indonesia, launched the concept of *sakinah keluarga* (harmonious family model) in 1985, and it includes a checklist of indicators, such as participation in ritual prayers, keeping household budget, and restraining the time children watch TV actively. The Aisyiah family is considered a failure if men do not participate (van Doorn-Harder, 2006, pp. 114–115).

The story line of the radio drama reiterates the sex binary and the monogamous heterosexual nuclear family as the norm. This could be seen as a strategic decision by gender advocates: A focus on equal rights and opportunities of women in relation to men could be regarded as an attempt to have a dialogue with the ongoing Shari'a law codification process in Aceh. The dominant discourse on Shari'a implementation and moral norms in Aceh draws the normative boundary along the binary sex difference and reinforces heterosexual marriage as the most prestigious moral option for women. However, reducing the debate to one about equal rights and opportunities of women, and framing the concept of equality as solely concerned with the relations between women and men, omits other social inequalities from the analysis. The key normative

message of the shared domestic chores relies on the nuclear family model, or family of two adults. Throughout the advocacy materials, the construct of the "family" (father, mother, and children) inhabits the modern official spaces where the ideal Indonesian or Acehnese is built (see also Shiraishi, 1997/2000, p. 164). What is remarkable about this construct is that the family is not considered as a private sphere, but part of the rhetoric of nation-building and religious piety—it is aimed at producing Indonesian citizens as modern Muslims.

What's Gone Missing?

> The language used in the dramas is too urban; they do not reflect our condition in the village. We feel uncomfortable listening to it. (Info Aceh, 2007, p. 13)

Post-tsunami gender reporting from Aceh has been criticized for "coca-colaization" or "cut and paste" policy making: deleting the name of the region or the references to tsunami or the conflict would make it impossible to tell the context the documents have been produced for. The focus on future and improving things, or making tsunami-related issues manageable, seems to create a vision of Aceh that loses touch with the "ground." I elaborate this with several examples.

First, the claim that (gender) inequality in education is "largely driven by the (false) self-interests of…men…ignores the ways in which other aspects of the social shape and influence gender relations" (Cooper, 2004, p. 50). According to this view, gender inequality is solvable through attitudinal change rather than focusing only on social or structural processes (ibid.). In fact, a closer analysis of the social inequalities of the education system in Aceh demonstrates that an analysis that focuses solely on gender inequalities or patriarchal attitudes does not "capture" the totality of challenges of the inequalities that Acehnese people face in accessing education or how gender norms intersect with other social differentiations. In fact, the sole focus on the father's "patriarchal values" masks several other important factors that hinder access to education in Aceh. The tertiary enrollment in Indonesia was 17 percent in 2006 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2008) and in Aceh, the figure in 2003 was under 9 percent, and university education under 6 percent (Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2005). Attendance in higher education in Aceh is

overrepresented by male and female students from urban areas, rich households, and ethnic Acehnese. Thus, differentiation is not only based on gender but also on ethnicity, geography, and economic situations. Among those are the context of the conflict, economic situations and urban–rural divide, quality and relevance of education, access to formal employment, and tsunami corruption, the fact that not all tsunami-affected children have benefited equally from the tsunami aid.

Second, the invisibility of gendered experiences of the conflict-affected communities, particularly in relation to the constructed female and male identities, leaves out an important part of the context in which experiences of social inequalities are reiterated in Aceh. Adolescents were targets of intimidation by both the military and the independence movement, and schools were burnt as part of the conflict tactics leading to several generations of Acehnese not completing their schooling. Similarly, the sole focus on nuclear family model omits the existence of other forms of households and family structures, where power analysis would require a more complex understanding of the specific Acehnese context.

Third, gender equality or gender mainstreaming materials assume the binary of sexes, and heterosexual desire as the only way of structuring family life. For example, *waria* (male-to-female transgender people) remain unintelligible within the gender mainstreaming framework and most public policy and are subjected to harassment due to the stigma of sex work as many *waria* work in beauty salons. *Waria* as a group is mentioned only in the provincial social work regulations attempting to find "cures" for social problems such as sexually transmitted diseases and the elimination of prostitution. None of the organizations working on gender issues in post-tsunami reconstruction has included transgender as a category in their gender analysis.

Fourth, when the radio drama's portrayal of Ida as the future hope is analyzed jointly with the posters, another ideal becomes evident: fair skin color. In the posters, Ida's family is portrayed as fair skinned, a beauty norm that is visible widely in women's magazines, TV programs, and whitening powders and creams used not just for adults but also for children, both females and males alike. I link this idealization of skin color with what Ahmed (2007c) has reflected as the "phenomenology of whiteness": "an effect of racialization which shapes and orients how bodies 'take up' space and what bodies can do" (Ahmed, 2007c, p.150). The comments made by post-assessment participants concerning the

urban gaze reveal a desire to empower the Acehnese rural population: the poor (rural) men who are portrayed as being more oppressive, lazy, and violent than their better-off urban counterparts (Bedford, 2007, pp. 303–304). The radio drama presents a highly problematic worldview echoing "colonial lines of demarcation" (Braidotti, 2006, p. 46).

Finally, by portraying an overtly successful reconstruction process, the narrative of the radio drama silences the other narratives available of the post-tsunami context in Aceh. For example, during my visits to Aceh between 2006 and 2009, I found that narratives of lost family members and friends are part of the everyday life of many people, including narratives of people still hearing the screams of the dying people, or appearances of the spirits and ghosts. For some, the present is lived through the past or with memories of those who were lost. This is not to say that all survivors suffer from trauma, but rather that for some, the events of December 26, 2004, or the 30 years of conflict are part of their everyday life and of narratives of their family and home.

The radio drama seems to portray a picture of a neighborhood that has successfully started their new lives in the newly built village. However, as OI has documented extensively in its land rights advocacy, the housing construction has not been as smooth for all tsunami victims, with 300,000 land parcels totally or partially damaged and land records destroyed and with some 50,000 families needing relocation to new land (Fan, 2006). The division of families and communities into tsunami or conflict victims has also caused inter-neighborhood/village tensions, as the reconstruction of conflict victims' houses has received less funding and attention than that of tsunami victims. The situation has been particularly difficult for those who were displaced during the 30-year-long conflict, as their property may have been claimed by other people or lost to the tsunami. Although one of the episodes of the drama attempts to address the issue with the punch line "land certificate is very valuable as an evidence of the ownership of the land," the complexity surrounding access to housing is lost (Oxfam International, 2006a).

Radio Drama as Subversion?

With these critical observations, listening to the humorous radio drama, and looking at the posters' naïve art style, helps to illustrate the problem

with analyses of the situation in Aceh that focus solely on "gender relations" or advocate equality between women and men. Problems are portrayed as solvable through addressing women's access to equal rights: Women become intelligible within the heteronormative family setting and through the wider market-oriented society (Griffin, 2009, p. 153).

However, returning to Butler's idea of gender and norms in general as performative, and subversive, I suggest that instead of reading the radio drama as a reflection of Achenese reality, it could be read as a construction of Aceh. This construct, when considered as a performance, opens up new possibilities for locating alternative story lines and subversions within the overtly idealistic narratives of "better life." Although the radio drama reproduces hegemonic heteronormative culture and norms, the out-of-place feel offers a possibility of analyzing subvertive parallel stories within it. The "parodic repetition of the 'original'…reveals the original to be nothing other than a parody of the *idea* of the natural and the original" (Butler, 1990/1999, p. 43). Parody to Butler offers possibilities: "[T]he perpetual displacement constitutes a fluidity of identities that suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization" (ibid.). I provide examples that offer possibilities for alternative understandings of the post-tsunami context in Aceh.

For example, the textual space of the posters conforms to the main plots of the radio drama: Each poster repeats the women's rights that the radio drama episodes aim to advocate. Yet, the posters offer possibilities for other readings as well, challenging the assumption of the "direct relationship between the visible and the real" (Campbell, 2009, p. 54). First, the child-like, simple, and naïve posters that mainly use juxtaposed primary colors offer a subversive space away from the story line of the radio drama. What is known as "naïve art" or "raw art," either looked down on by high art critics or considered not subversive enough by theorists, deserves a closer reading as a potential subversive space. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes naïve art as "work of artists in sophisticated societies who lack or **reject** conventional expertise in the representation or depiction of real objects" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2009, emphasis added). The absence of a perspective "creates an illusion that figures are anchored in the space with the result that the figures are floating" (ibid.). The posters are drawn without using the effect of a shadow, thus making the landscape two dimensional or "flat." Drawing

from Michael Shapiro's notion of "gothic Otherness" (Shapiro, 2009), or the fact that humans literally always have a shadow that follows them, the shadow signifies the dark side, the unknown, or the tragic. Characters without shadows could be read as people whose experiences of grief have been erased.

Second, all posters portray people with smiles on their faces. Ahmed (2007a, 2007b) holds that "happiness functions as promise, which directs us towards certain objects, which then circulate as social goods" (Ahmed, 2007b, p. 123). Laurent Berlant has called the fantasy of happiness a "stupid" form of optimism: "[T]he faith that adjusted to certain forms of practices of living and thinking will secure one's happiness" (Berlant, 2002, p. 75, quoted in Ahmed, 2007c, p. 10).

> It is the very assumption that good feelings are open and bad feelings are closed that allows historical forms of injustice to disappear. The demand for happiness is what makes those histories disappear…these histories have not gone: we would be letting go of what persists in the present, a letting go which would keep those histories present. (Ahmed, 2007b, p. 135)

Carla Bienpoen (2001), an Indonesian art critique and a feminist, remarks that a closer look at the atmosphere of familial happiness and intense child-like joy could reveal a well-hidden pain: "[T]he vibrant colours reflect optimistic expectations and wishful thinking rather than reality" (Bienpoen, 2001). The use of motionless figures with their child-like smiles could be seen at the same time as playful, but also haunting, in search of happiness and joyfulness. "The violence is in the knowing…not directly in seeing" (Santu Mofokeng, quoted in Hayes, 2009, p. 37).

All in all, a closer analysis of the radio drama production (episodes, posters) provides a possibility to locate multiple narratives of post-tsunami Aceh. On one level, the explicitly narrated normative story line focuses on the promotion of gender equality, simultaneously projecting these norms into the intersectional web of other social differentiations. However, the details of the radio drama offer the possibility to treat this gender advocacy narrative as a parody, with sarcastic, but also at times tragic overtones.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to do two things: to provide a theoretical framework and a method of reading intersectionality of norms. This method was then used to read textual normativity of Oxfam International's radio drama production broadcast in the tsunami-affected areas of Aceh. I have argued that the radio drama not only normalizes heteronormativity but also reinforces other social hierarchies. Using the images of an empowered adolescent girl and a new Acehnese man, the radio drama's plot aligns with the neoliberal developmental discourse of "working hard." It also conforms to a linear and progressive understanding of time and space that silences other parallel discourses of life in post-tsunami Aceh.

In sum, the materials paint an ideal picture of women and men who are healthy, active members of the village life and who contribute to national development as mothers and fathers in formal heterosexual monogamous families. It is through the process of repetition, where a house becomes a home and various subject positions are iterated to form the ideal picture to occupy the newly built house and form the "new community." Bodies are sites for deployment of ethical and political values, and thus the idea of "building back" can be seen to be articulated in moral and cultural terms, not just as technical reconstruction. Home, family, or community is not a prediscursive element of a society, but rather a product of an active process aimed at making one.

The narrator and the story line of the radio drama produce a normative framework of how the current Acehnese society and culture is asked to be read. In the process of narrating the "better," gender advocacy retells the story of bodies and desires with the vocabulary that is intelligible, or comprehensible to it. However, this attempt to translate Acehnese society also illustrates the limits of the sayable. The dominant normative framework cannot totalize the discourse, but neither can it completely establish a new script for bodies and desires to exist. Rather, the production of gender norms can be seen as a dynamic site of contestation which, while producing the norm, simultaneously creates the possibility of subversion to the established norm.

The examples used in this article are by no means unique examples of how development planners and experts have used educational posters or

popular culture to convey norms and ideas to the population in different parts of Indonesian archipelago. It would also be too simplistic to assume that the viewer and listener simply read and accept this material as it asks to be read (Ahmed, 1998, p. 17). Narratives of Acehnese resistance to government policies is well reported in earlier studies on Aceh (Siapno, 2002).

What lies outside the happy images of turning a house into a home, or bodies to women and men, are the stories of Acehnese people who have refused to accept houses and infrastructure provided to them due to the lack of consultation, bad quality of construction, and corruption surrounding reconstruction initiatives. Further, while writing this article in early 2010, people who had not received their permanent houses were demonstrating regularly in front of government offices across the tsunami-affected coastline in Aceh.

The announced moves from the "world of drama" back to the "real" by announcing the names of the actors in the end of the episode allow another moment of reflection, a possibility to reflect on the authenticity of the narratives of the drama episodes, and to take them as constructs, and not as descriptions, of reality. Those moments provide moments of true drama: parody and performativity. Disruptive moments of reading and listening to gender advocacy materials allow the listener/viewer to recognize the lives that are lived outside *the* normative order: lives that are lived outside the heteronormative and reproductive arrangement of space and time.

Notes

1. The author wishes to acknowledge the support of the European Community under the Marie Curie Early Stage Research Training Programme and the Academy of Finland project "Gendered Agency in Conflict" coordinated by the Tampere Peace Research Institute.
2. The slogan "building back better" was initially used by the Former US President Bill Clinton right after he made his first public appearance as the UN Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery. When the Indonesian central government established the Agency for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias (BRR) in May 2005 with the mandate to coordinate the reconstruction efforts in Aceh and Nias, the President of the Republic of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhono used the slogan. Ever since, it has been commonly used in post-tsunami reconstruction efforts.

3. One of the goals of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to promote gender equality and empower women, and the target by 2005 was to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education.
4. New Order is commonly used to refer to the period of Suharto's presidency (1965–1998).

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