HEARING THE VOICES OF EX-COMBATANT WOMEN

Intersecting Identities and Situated Realities of Ex-Combatant Women of The Free Aceh Movement in Relation to Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Programs in Pidie Regency, Aceh

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ABSTRACT

Background: Gender mainstreaming policy has gained prominence in climate change adaptation and mitigation programs around the globe and considered as a priority. However, the current critique of gender aspect in climate change efforts pointed out the simplistic dichotomy of gender that victimized women and denied the dynamics and complexities of individual/community.

Research objectives: To explore the perceptions and experiences of ex-combatant women towards the current practice of climate change mitigation and adaptation programs in Aceh and to explore ex-combatant women's positionalities in the society through their specific identities and situated realities in the post-conflict of Aceh.

Methods: This research is a qualitative study that involved unstructured interviews and participatory observations with four ex-combatant women of the Free Aceh Movement in Pidie Regency, Aceh. All participants were beneficiaries in the women's empowerment program of the Village Forest Management Program from Fauna & Flora International Indonesia. I am using the intersectionality framework to explore participants' perceptions and attitude towards the program based on their specific positionalities and situations as ex-combatant women.

Findings: Participants' non-involvement to the women's empowerment program revealed various social struggles and vulnerabilities experienced by ex-combatant women from gendered-related obligations to struggles for reintegration. The current practice of climate change and adaptation program in Aceh has insufficiently accommodated the specific positionalities of ex-combatant women caused by the systematic non-acknowledgement of their identities. All participants rejected a generalized gender identity as women and victim and presented complex perspectives on post-peace agreement situation based on their experiences as women combatant.

Conclusion: The multifaceted identities and realities of ex-combatant women where gender intersects with another socio-political identities and factors, illuminate the diverse and dynamic notion of identity and challenged the general narratives of empowerment, development, and transformation in the post-conflict Aceh.

Keywords: Ex-combatant women, intersectionality, climate change, gender, adaptation and mitigation, women's empowerment program, post-conflict, Aceh.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

FFI – Fauna & Flora International Indonesia Aceh Office.

INGO – international non-governmental organizations

VFM – Village Forest Management

GAM – *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* or The Free Aceh Movement

BRR – *Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekontruksi* or the Aceh Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency

MILF – Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MSR – Multi-Stakeholder Review of Post-Conflict Programming

NSD – Norwegian Social Science Data Services

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

As the effects of climate change are increasingly being seen around the globe, the climate change issue has gained prominence in the development agenda and has become considered a threat for development (Okereke & Massaquoi, 2017). Current studies have recognized the importance of including social factors in climate change analysis, including a special focus on aspects of gender (Alston, 2014; Djoudi, 2015). This has resulted in a surge of gender mainstreaming[1] in policy making and climate change adaptation and mitigation programs (Alston, 2014; Thompson-Hall et.al, 2016).

Aceh Province, the westernmost province of the Republic of Indonesia, has also taken part in the climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. Since 2007, the Aceh government has declared the 'Aceh Green' initiatives as efforts to control climate change, with a primary focus on forestry issues (Dunlop, 2009). The commitment of the Aceh Government is supported by several international non-governmental organizations (INGO), one of which is Fauna & Flora International (FFI) Indonesia. Since 2009, FFI Indonesia, a conservation-focused INGO, has collaborated with the Aceh government in community-based climate change adaptation and mitigation projects. One of these programs is the Village Forest Management (VFM) Program in the conservation area of Pidie Regency in Aceh. The project has two pathways: first, environment and conservation focus and second, community development with one of the sub-programs concentrating on women's empowerment programs.

FFI's assistance conservation focus has run successful pilots on issues including the reduction of illegal timber harvesting and the clearing of illegal mining practices (Walhi Aceh, 2015; Busra, 2016). One impressive aspect of this progress has been the realization of Qanun Adat (customary law) which regulates forests management and forests utilization based on local customs. However, in contrast to these conservation successes, community development efforts, especially those related to women's empowerment programs, have failed to meet program targets and objectives. This resonates with the current global critique on the implications of gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation and mitigation programs. Specifically, a gender paradigm focused heavily on women is partially to blame. Djoudi et al., (2016, p. 248) pointed out a narrow translation of gender mainstreaming as a dichotomy

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[1] The term gender mainstreaming was first coined on the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, 4-15 September 1997. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to achieve gender equality by including the concerns and experiences of women and men in any planned action including legislations, policies, or programmes (ECOSOC, 1997).

between men versus women. That simplistic dichotomy concerning gender cannot capture the range of complexities and the dynamics of vulnerability in society (Djoudi, 2015; Djoudi et al., 2016). Moreover, it ignores how "vulnerabilities are socially constructed and context-specific" (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014, p. 421); and "denies social struggle, contestation and the complexity and fluidity of identities" (Alaimo, 2009, p. 30).

Apart from that, Aceh is historically and politically distinct when compared to other parts of Indonesia. Aceh Post-2004 embodies the notion of complex circumstances: it faced massive reconstructions from a tsunami, still reconciling after the 30 years of prolonged civil war, underwent a massive political transformation with the conferment of autonomous regions, until transforming into an exclusive region with the enforcement of Sharia Law. Considering the complexity and specificity of Aceh and its social structure, there seems to be some kind of inherent problems in Aceh's adaptation and mitigation paradigm something which is reflected in the implementation of women's empowerment program from FFI Indonesia—where climate change is only seen as a separate reality without sufficient attention to other circumstances that have occurred over the past 14 years. In fact, all of these circumstances are inseparable and mutually influencing the lives of the Acehnese themselves. That is why for this research, I propose a holistic and contextual perspective to look at the issues of women's empowerment program within the climate change adaptation and mitigation agenda in Aceh.

1.2. Problem Statement

The current literature has increasingly acknowledged the diversity and complexity of social factors in the analysis of climate change. (Agarwal, 2000; Tschakert, 2012; Thompson-Hall, et al., 2016), and recognize gender as a key element in exploring social complexity (Carr & Thompson, 2014; Djoudi et al., 2016). Recent studies on gender and climate change, have focused on identifying the barriers and vulnerabilities based on gender differences. However, less attention has been paid to intra-gender/group differences and power relations among 'the vulnerable' themselves (Djoudi et al., 2016; Thompson-Hall et al., 2016). A growing number of studies propose intersectionality as a concept valuable for analyzing gender and climate change in a more contextually-sensitive way, that gives attention to power relations and the variety of gender identity (Arora-Jonsson, 2011; Carr & Thompson, 2014; Thompson-Hall et al, 2016; Kaijser & Kronsel, 2014; Djoudi et al., 2016).

This study applies the concept of intersectionality to climate change and gender studies using the case of women's empowerment programs within VFM Program in Pidie Regency in

Aceh to portray overall climate change adaptation and mitigation policy in Aceh. Looking at Aceh contextually in accordance with the principle of intersectionality, this study situates the case under study within the post-conflict (and post-disaster) Aceh. The importance of understanding the conflict/political context for Aceh's mitigation and adaptation efforts is explained by Levine et al., (2014, p. 17): "A failure to frame conflict-climate change relationship… could have serious negative impacts, potentially exacerbating conflicts and increasing the vulnerability of marginalized population, rather than building their resilience". Hence, this study focuses on the social dimensions of climate change and gender study.

1.3. Relevance of the Study

The central relevance of the study lies in the interconnectedness of the social analysis in climate change and gender discourse, particularly for the Aceh context. In 2004, Aceh was hit by a tsunami that killed nearly 350.000 number of people with total damage cost to reach 42,7 trillion rupiahs[2] (Athukorala & Resosudarmo, 2005). Before the tsunami, Aceh was plagued with prolonged conflicts for 30 years between an armed independence group known as GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*/ The Free Aceh Movement) and the Indonesian government. The 2004 tsunami was referred to as 'disaster diplomacy' which accelerated the peace process leading to the signing of the MoU of Helsinki between the Indonesian government and GAM in 2005 (Schulze, 2007). This situation also created a specific condition in which the reintegration of ex-combatants process and disaster rehabilitation went hand-in-hand (Waizenegger & Hyndman, 2010), something which illustrates the synergistic relationship between the Indonesian government, GAM, and international institutions (Awaluddin, 2008; World Bank, 2009; Fan, 2013). Furthermore, Aceh is also considered a role model for a peaceful transfer of power for autonomy leadership from the Indonesian government to GAM former combatants which was to happen in a democratic and participatory way (Aspinall, 2009; Stange & Patock, 2010). In the restoration and sustainable development scheme, an abundance of international assistance and humanitarian programs were facilitated through the special government agency of BRR[3]. Former combatants, as a group, were stated to have received a greater amount of the BRR's assistance compared to the civil society in general (World Bank, 2009, p. 18). However, some studies on the post-conflict period and the INGO's empowerment program (Lundström & Marhaban, 2016; Marhaban & Affiat, 2017; Kamaruzzaman, 2008; Sindre, 2014) shows the

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[2] Equal to 2,9 million US dollars
[3] *Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi* or the Aceh Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency

opposite. While ex-combatant men gained strategic positions and benefitted from the INGO's programs, ex-combatant women have been marginalized due to the GAM's internal command chain and overall power structure in Aceh. Moreover, INGOs incorrectly identified ex-combatant women as simply 'women victims'—the same as other Acehnese women—in the women's empowerment and humanitarian program. This project will hear the voice of ex-combatant women of GAM in an effort to re-acknowledge ex-combatant women as a specific identity in the Acehnese social structure.

1.4. Research Questions

The following questions have been formulated for this study:

1. What are the perceptions and attitudes of ex-combatant women towards the current practice of climate change mitigation and adaptation programs in Aceh?

2. How do the women perceive their own positionalities as ex-combatant women in the society, and how are these positionalities reflected in the current practice of climate change mitigation and adaptation programs in Aceh?

3. In what ways and to what extent do their specific identity and situated reality affect their social struggles and vulnerabilities in the post-conflict Aceh?

1.5. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into eight chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and the scope of my study. In the second chapter, I present the conceptual framework. The third chapter contains a review of relevant literature while chapter four presents the methodology of my study. In the fifth chapter, I present the short background of each participant to inform the reader about participants' characteristics and situations. The sixth chapter discusses participants' attitude and positionality towards a current practice of climate change mitigation and adaptation programs. The seventh chapter discusses participants' intersecting identities and realities in relation to their social struggles and vulnerabilities in the post-conflict of Aceh, followed with the conclusions in chapter eight.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Intersectionality Framework

The concept of intersectionality has evolved within feminist theory and is grounded in a feminist understanding of power and identity. As an analytical tool, it "serves to shed light on

how structures of power emerge and interact" (Kaijser & Kronsel, 2014, p. 418). The term of intersectionality was first coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) as a way to show the various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of colour; where they are not simply discriminated against by their 'race' or their 'gender', but as a result of the intersecting of both. This is due to the dynamic and shifting nature of social categories that are always intertwined with other social categories within the power system (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). People from different groups or different identities might experience multiple oppressions coming from their multiplicity of experiences, contexts, and systems (Matsuda, 1991). Intersectional theorists are particularly concerned with, "how these systems mutually construct one another or how they articulate with one another" (Collins, 1998, p. 63). Even though intersectionality was developed based on the experiences of black women, the framework could also be applied to analyse other individuals, social groups, or social problems. The concept of intersectionality can address some of the important issues in the debates on vulnerability and adaptive capacity to climate change and disaster. As Kaijser & Kronsell (2014, p. 419) illuminate, "power structures in a specific social categorization system determine how individuals relate and react to climate change".

2.2. Intersectionality Framework for Gender and Climate Change Study

A significant body of literature (Agarwal, 2000; Alston, 2013; Denton, 2002; Eriksen et al., 2011; IPCC, 2014; Mimura et al., 2014) analyses gendered aspects in climate change discourse which showing how women and men perceive and experience climate change differently, and how women usually become the most vulnerable to climate change risks. However, recent critiques question the commonly binary notion of gender in climate change studies and call for a more holistic perspective for analyzing the social context using an intersectionality view.

Studies on the nexus between gender and climate change are already available. The notion of intersectionality, looking at the complex power-dynamics and gender-differentiated aspects of vulnerability, has been recognized as a useful framework for producing more comprehensive studies of gender and climate change (Djoudi et al., 2016; Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014; Thompson-Hall et al., 2016). Arora-Jonsson (2011) challenges the generalized belief in women's vulnerability in that it "silences contextual difference where gender gets treated not as a set of complex and intersecting power relations but as a binary phenomenon carrying certain disadvantages for women and women alone" (p. 744). She also argues that predominant themes,

women as victims and as virtuous people, present a static conception of women as a homogenous group who become vulnerable only because of their marginal position in comparison with men. Hence, gender is important but needs to be seen in its particular context, and it is clear that more context-specific case studies are needed to understand the linkages between gender and climate change.

Thompson-Hall et al., (2016) highlights the increasing awareness on current gendered climate change research to recognize broader social dimensions affecting vulnerability than those easily associated with men or women. They show how social dimensions of identity (encompassing gender) "are bound up in systems of power and social institutions—both formal and informal—to shape situation-specific interactions" (p. 376). Hence, understandings of localized realities need to be sought for in order to better understand distinct exposures, sensitivities, and adaptive capacities within climate contexts.

Kaijser and Kronsel (2014) provide a concrete intersectionality framework specifically to analyze climate change and gender issues, especially in marginal communities. Based on the three levels intersectionality analysis dimensions suggested by Winker & Degele (2011), they expanded it so it can be applied to critically conduct climate change and gender research:

Table 1. Three levels of intersectionality analysis for gender and climate change study

LEVELS	EXAMPLES OF SENSITIZING QUESTIONS
1.Social structures	Which social categories, if any, are represented in the empirical material? Which social categories are absent? Are there any observable explicit or implicit assumptions about social categories and about relations between social categories? What identities are promoted and considered to serve as grounds for political actions? Are any other aspect of identity neglected or deemed insignificant?
2.Symbolic representation	How are relations between humans and the environment portrayed? How is nature represented? What type of environmental knowledge is recognised and privileged?
3.Identity construction	Are any norms for behaviour discernible in the material? Are there norms about the relation to other humans, resources, and nature? What are the norms that set the standards for a 'good life'? How are these norms reproduced, reinforced, or challenged? How are they reflected in institutional practice?

Source: Summary from Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014, p. 450

These levels of sensitizing questions can be used as a tool of discovery in order to identify the intersections that are relevant in a particular case. However, Kaijser & Kronsel also emphasize that for the actual application in the research, we do not have to include all analytical levels as listed in the table above. As a research strategy they suggested that "the individual

researcher may need to select and prioritise the most interesting or relevant intersections in the particular case, while keeping in mind the bigger picture" (p. 422).

Djoudi et al., (2016) developed the Kaijser & Kronsel's model by adding the fourth dimension that highlights the importance of agency and emancipatory transformational pathways in the adaptation process. The critical intersectional assessment would contribute to unveil "agency and emancipatory pathways in the adaptation process by providing a better understanding of how the differential impacts of climate change shape, and are shaped by, the complex power dynamics of existing social and political relations" (p. 251).

2.3. My Application of Intersectionality Theory

In this research, I followed Kaijser & Kronsell's (2014) advice to choose the most relevant intersections for my case in Aceh. I mainly focus at the first level, social categories, as the initial mode of discovery for analyzing climate change and gender processes in Aceh. The intersections that I consider the most relevant to explore are between climate change, disaster and post-conflict situations with particular focus to the ex-combatant women of GAM. I explore the contextual identities, realities, and experiences of ex-combatant women of GAM in the Aceh VFM Program to unveil an unidentified social category in the current climate change and gender program in Aceh. The framework of intersectionality is underpinning the overall study but I will explicitly engage with the framework in chapter 7.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will present existing research that is relevant to the research theme and research questions. The discussion presented here will be providing a context for my research and enrich the discussion of my research findings. My search strategy to find the relevant literature was by using keywords and concepts from my research questions and objectives such as ex-combatant women, Inong Balee, GAM, and post-conflict Aceh. I typed those keywords on Oria—the University of Bergen's Library search engine, as well as online databases such as Google Scholar and researchgate.net to find articles, books, or journals that relevant to my study.

3.1. Ex-Combatant Women in Post-Conflict Situation

A good deal of studies concerned with the role and experiences of women combatant in armed warfare are found in social science studies (Sajjad, 2004; Utas, 2005; Hauge, 2008;

Gjelsvik, 2010; K. C. et al., 2017; Tonheim, 2017; Sindre, 2014; Bouta & Frerks; 2002; Yahya et al, 2018). Some research from peace studies conducted in Central and North America, West and South Asia, and Northern Africa (Hauge, 2008; Gjelsvik, 2010; Sajjad, 2004), illustrate how women combatants in different conflicts made significant contributions during armed conflicts in roles ranging from frontline combat, logistics, communication and negotiations, to diplomacy. Therefore, from various reviews of the role of combatant women in the conflict, it can be argued that "guerilla movements value women to the same extent as their male counterparts are valued" (Sajjad, 2004, p. 8). Furthermore, various studies show how women's involvement in the armed conflict as combatants also gave them a sense of accomplishment, empowerment, and emancipation where they were able to be equal with men, perform tasks outside their assigned gender role, and being recognized as a significant figure in the public sphere (Sajjad, 2004; Shekhawat, 2015; K. C et al., 2017).

However, several authors have shown that this significant role of women combatants was not manifest during the peace negotiations and in post-conflict periods (Hauge, 2008; Ortega, 2010, Abdenur, 2018). The ex-combatant women as a specific identity have often been neglected (Hauge, 2008; Lundström & Marhaban, 2016), within a dominant narrative that depicts ex-combatant women as mere victims (Utas, 2005; Gjelsvik, 2010). This happened as a consequence of a narrow concept of women and men in the peace narratives, based on gender stereotypes such as "men make war; women make peace" (Dilorio, 1992, p. 54). As a result of this oversimplification, women ex-combatants often remain marginalized and stigmatized in the post-conflict period (Ortega, 2010; Goswami, 2015; Abdenur, 2018). In addition, in relation to the reintegration and peace-building process, this invisibility of ex-combatant women's identities has made it difficult for them to access programs and policies that can meet their needs and desires (Tonheim, 2017; Lundström & Marhaban 2016); and to actively participate in post-conflict decision-making processes (Hauge, 2008; Goswami, 2015; Abdenur, 2018).

Sajjad (2004), did a comparative analysis of women's guerillas experiences in several conflict areas, namely Iran, El Salvador, Sri Lanka and Algerie, and found similarity in between cases: former women combatants struggle to "renegotiate their new identities as women and fighters in the post-conflict period" (p. 6). Sajjad also highlighted the 'systematic non-acknowledgement' (p. 11) where women as ex-combatants were expected to return to their domestic space and perform their traditional gender role after the war is over. This resulted in a sense of alienation and exclusion felt by ex-combatant women in the post-conflict era. Similar things related to the process of renegotiating identity and struggles with gender role

expectations could also be found in the study of female ex-combatants in Colombia (Gjelsvik, 2010); ex-combatants of the Maoist conflict in Nepal (K.C. et al., 2017); and female troops of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Filipina (Marhaban & Affiat, 2017).

Recommendations from several studies show the importance of policy makers and international institutions to start stepping outside the 'victimization' framework (Utas, 2005; Gjelsvik, 2010) and begin to give attention to the ex-combatant women's identities and their specific experiences and needs in the post-conflict development process (Goswami, 2015; Abdenur, 2018; Lundström & Marhaban, 2016; Marhaban & Affiat 2017).

3.2. *Inong Balee*: Ex-Combatant Women of GAM

Few historical studies (Clavé, 2014; Alfian, 1994; Ibrahim, 1996) show that Acehnese women always played an important role in society, including in wartime. Starting from the war against the Dutch colonists (1873-1912) to the period of conflict against the Indonesian government (1976-2004), Acehnese women occupied various positions in the battlefield such as armed soldiers and war commander, and even held top strategic position (Clavé, 2014). In the 30 year-long conflicts in Aceh between the GAM and the Indonesian government, Acehnese women also participated by forming their own army unit under GAM called *Inong Balee*. The history of the name *Inong Balee* itself (which literally means widowed woman), came from the name of naval forces under the leadership of the female Admiral Keumalahayati (16th century). She was the greatest historical figure of a woman warrior in the history of Aceh, who was able to lead a battleship after her husband died in the fight against the Portuguese. She then formed a female army, called *Inong Balee*, which contained 2000 widowed warriors whose husbands also died on the battlefield (Clavé, 2014). Within the more recent GAM ranks, the *Inong Balee* troops no longer only contained war widows, but the name *Inong Bale*e was used to describe the brave spirit of Acehnese women who continued to struggle despite having to leave their husbands and families for the war.

According to the Multi-Stakeholder Review of Post-Conflict Programming (MSR) survey, there are 680 armed women combatants who entered the GAM's military structure, while 3800 other women were women guerrillas who played other supporting roles (World Bank, 2009). In addition, even though it was not well recognized and not much discussed— especially not in the international narrative. Some research from Indonesian female Acehnese scholars (Kamaruzzaman, 2008; Marhaban & Affiat, 2017; Nor & Inayatillah, 2011) also

mentions the significant role of *Inong Balee* of GAM during the peace process as the very first initiator of the peace agreement.

Despite the increasing awareness of the importance of women's involvement in the peace process, a few studies about ex-combatant women of GAM shows that in reality *Inong Balee* are marginalized and forgotten in the narrative of post-conflict and post-disaster development (Kamaruzzaman, 2008; Lundström & Marhaban, 2017; Marhaban & Affiat, 2017). During a workshop held between *Inong Balee* of GAM and MILF combatant women in the Philippines, participants identified five barriers for combatant women in post-conflict leadership involvement: 1) The culture of exclusion in the movement's organisation where combatant women tend to be seen as supporting figures and not the main actors; 2) Unequal access to international support; 3) Improper terminology and classification of combatant women in the peace agreements and empowerment programs; 4) The culture of patriarchy in society as a whole; 5) The lack of formal education and the poverty level due to the inheritance of war (Lundström & Marhaban, 2016, p. 2-7)

3.3. International Aid and Gender in the Post-Conflict and Post-disaster of Aceh

Several studies garnered a typical pattern of development, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment initiatives around the globe which revolves around livelihood program, direct economic approaches, and skill training (Hippert, 2011; Cornwall, 2003; Chant, 2008). This common practice is based on the assumption that by expanding resources and accessing economics, women will be able to make changes in other areas of their lives (Kabeer, 2011). Yet, recent feminist critiques question such approaches. For example Cornwall (2016) who did a comparative analysis from different countries around Asia, Africa and North America, found that the mainstream approach to the women's empowerment agenda may enable women to 'better manage their poverty', but fail to address the root causes of poverty which are highly correlated with gender inequality in women's everyday life. Cornwall (2016, p. 357) then proposes to be more critically conscious in formulating gender and development efforts: "Fundamental to this is a process that engages women in thinking differently–about themselves, about the situations they are in, about their social worlds, relationships and horizons"

The multi-dimensional situation of Aceh between armed conflict, various natural disasters, and climate change risk creates an opportunity for humanitarian agencies to 'build back better' (Jauhola, 2010; Daly et al., 2016; Fan, 2013). Build back better is a concept that connects long-term relief action with long-term development, where aid assistance and

humanitarian response programs are not only aimed to restore but also to improve, 'leave the community it had affected better, fairer, stronger and more peaceful than they had been before the disaster struck' (Fan, 2013, p. 1). This slogan became widely used by many organizations and international agencies from various sectors involved in the Aceh development process (Jauhola, 2010; Venton et.al, 2012; Fan; 2013; Daly et al., 2016).

However, the concept of 'build back better' also gave rise to several criticisms around the implementation in the field, claiming that it tended to be simplistic and uncritical. Without considering the specific circumstances in which the implementation of a program takes place— no matter where it is—the humanitarian program mostly used the same patterns and narratives as those used in other contexts (Jauhola, 2010; Jauhola, 2015; Fan; 2013; Daly et al., 2016). The implementation process to 'build back better' also tended to give more attention to the physical side and ignored the transformative power relations process in the community (Levine et.al, 2014). In addition, as many and diverse actors are involved in the development of the Acehnese community, criticism related to power relations arise. As Fan (2013) has argued, the question arises: 'According to whom, and who has the power to interpret a better life for the people of Aceh?'

In the context of gender in the post-tsunami and post-conflict of Aceh, Lee-Koo (2012) highlighted the tendency toward silencing certain women and identity groups in the public discussion agenda. Jauhola (2010), in her study about gender policies in Aceh, criticized gender mainstreaming and gender advocacy in Aceh, which she called 'coca-colaisation' or 'cut-and-paste' methods (p. 45) where gender policy in Aceh merely adopted the gender concepts of international organizations. This non-contextual gender mainstreaming process then leads to 'heteronormative boundaries' (Jauhola, 2010, p. 37) which eventually reproduced or even exacerbated gender inequalities, especially for women, identity /ethnic/religious minorities, and other vulnerable groups.

> "Indicators in all key gender mainstreaming documents focus on the inequalities between men and women within the given structures and system, not on differences between women. Thus, it leaves intersectional sensitivity hanging in the air" (Jauhola, 2010, p. 45).

To engender future development processes in Aceh that are more relevant and considerate of variations in gender and identity, some related recommendations are to include "equitable

gendered social relations within the Acehnese context, and the recovery of women's experience" (Fan, 2013; p. 15); and start to draw attention the hidden narratives, the multilayered and diverse experiences of Acehnese community (Jauhola, 2015; p. 740).

3.4. Literature Gaps

Based on the literature reviewed above, several gaps were identified. Even though a good deal of literature has recognized multidimensional outlook and significant roles of women combatants during the conflict, yet, women combatants as specific identity remain overlooked and underrepresented, especially in the post-conflict narrative. From the aspect of climate change and gender studies, although there have been many suggestions from the literature to apply the principle of intersectionality and to look at gender identity contextually, the actual implementation of those principles has not yet been utilized in empirical research in Aceh. My study hopes to make a small contribution to filling these gaps.

4. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will describe and reflect on my research design. I will explain my rationale for the approach that I chose to identify and to analyse the problem. I will also explain the justifications behind decisions that I made during the fieldwork. This would serve as a guidance for a reader to understand my research process in accordance with my research problems.

4.1. Research Design and Epistemological Approach

In this research, I was interested in the nuances of the experiences of a few selected research participants. I explored the ways these experiences were shaped and challenged by the political, religious, economic and social processes. I also explored the ways different social positionalities affected peoples' situations related to how relevant the existing climate change adaptation and mitigation programs are to them. This is in line with the interpretive epistemological paradigm of qualitative research which focuses on meaning-making in context. As Neuman (2014, p. 168) describes this paradigm: "social reality is largely what people perceive it to be and exists as people experience it and assign meaning to it". I applied a semi-narrative approach in the engagement with my study participants. This approach implies a combined focus on the participants' background and the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences (Josselson, 2006, p. 4). In-depth interviews were carried out to understand the context-specific issues based on the participants' personal reflection, while participatory

observation was conducted to gain deeper insight into the participants' realities through their everyday lives and interactions in the community.

4.2. Study Area

The study was conducted in 3 villages within Pidie Regency, in the Special Region of Aceh, Indonesia. Pidie Regency is located in the northern part of Sumatra Island in Western Indonesia (see figure 4.1). The Special Region of Aceh was granted autonomous status since 2001 by the Indonesian Government. However, the autonomous government only came in place after the MoU Helsinki peace agreement between GAM and the Indonesian government was signed in 2005. The Islamic religion is very important in Acehnese society where 99 per cent of the population follow Islam. Since 2009, Aceh has become the only province in Indonesia that has implemented Sharia law.

Figure 1 : Map of Aceh Regencies

Source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File: Aceh_Regencies.png

4.3. Recruitment of Participants

My study participants were four ex-combatant women of GAM located in Pidie Regency. Before the research took place, I had worked for three months in the research sites to assess the Village Forest Management (VFM) Program as part of my internship at the FFI Indonesia. I made use of those periods to conduct an initial assessment to identify and recruit potential participants for my study. FFI Indonesia staff helped me to identify several former combatant women that were included in their women's empowerment sub-program. I then personally approached prospective participants to get to know them further. An informal pre-interview was carried out to see how comfortable they are to talk openly with me about their experience. Three participants were recruited from that group, while one more participant was recruited through snowballing as a colleague of one of the participants. My prolonged engagement in the pre-research phase allowed me to recognize participants' character, in terms of the variety of ways each participant expressed their thoughts and experiences. As for exclusion criteria, I

excluded potential participants if they had a history of mental illness or were psychologically unstable. This was to avoid the risk that my research process would induce or exacerbate emotional distress to the participants as I am not properly equipped to support them in facing such things.

Table1: Participants' list and characteristics

PARTICIPANTS	AGE	OCCUPATIONS	WAR EXPERIENCES	DISASTERS AFFECTED	MARITAL STATUS / CHILDREN
1- Mutia	48	- Housewife - Cacao Farmer	- 5 years - Logistic guard - Untrained guerilla - Politically imprisoned	- Tsunami - Earthquake	Married / 3
2-Hayati	37	- Housewife	- 4 years - Commander's wife - Untrained guerilla	- Tsunami - Flash floods	Married / 2
3-Intan	40	-Housewife - Coffee Farmer	- 4 years - Military trained guerilla	- Tsunami - Landslide	Divorce / 1
4-Kemala	60	- Housewife - Rice Farmer	- 3 years - Untrained guerilla	- Tsunami - Flash Floods	Married / 5

I also interviewed 3 key informants who occupy positions of responsibility in the VFM Program in Pidie Regency. They were an FFI Indonesia field staff (male), a customary council member (male), and the vice chairman of the VFM Institution, which also happened to be a male ex-combatant of GAM.

4.4. Methods of Data Collection and Accumulation

The process of data collection took place from 17 September until 19 October 2018. Data were obtained through participatory observations and in-depth interviews. The participatory observation was used to achieve a level of understanding of participants' life and to see how their life unfolded in a natural setting (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015, p. 76). I lived in the house of one of the villagers for three weeks, where I was actively involved in the community's everyday life. I also spent the night at the house of two of my participants by their request because they wanted to chat more with me. I observed participants' daily activities, among other the traditional role of women in Acehnese society who are responsible for significant amounts of unpaid domestic labour but also participate in income-generating activities. Observations were also carried out to capture the power dynamics present between participants and the community,

especially between those involved in the VFM Program. The observed activities included the FFI Indonesia staff meetings and the *Duek Pakat* (Acehnese traditional community meeting) that discussed the FVM program planning. All participatory-observations were documented in the form of field notes.

The interviews took place informally while the participants were carrying out their daily activities. I conducted the interviews in the form of everyday-like conversations with the consideration that some of the topics in the interview were not easy for them to talk about. Interviews with each participant were conducted on subsequent occasions with varying degrees of intensity depending on the time availability and level of comfort of each participant. At first, I developed an interview guide for semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). However, in the midst of a casual atmosphere created during the interview, I saw that participants became more comfortable in conveying their stories. I then decided to let them take the lead in the conversations to express their views in their own way. This unstructured way of interviewing promoted equal participation in the research process, as it made the person interviewed become more in charge of the meaning-making (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). Interviews were conducted in Acehnese and/or Indonesian with Acehnese dialect without the assistance of intermediaries or translators in order to keep the intimacy while maintaining the participants' confidentiality. All of the interviews were audio-recorded except when there were certain circumstances that make recording difficult. I then thoroughly noted down participants' responses in my field note diary. I have also carried out the interviews with key informants in a casual manner. Interview questions were derived from my observations and fieldwork notes which I then discussed with each key informant.

4.5. Data Management and Data Analysis Model

On my computer, I generated a password-protected folder that contained participant information, including signed consent forms which were scanned to protect against the risk of physical copies being lost (physical copies were retained). They also contained encrypted audio, anonymized interview transcripts, and NVIVO files documenting transcript analyses. All data were stored safely in password protected files on my electronic device. All generated data will be destroyed once the study has been terminated.

I employed thematic networks analysis to facilitate the structuring and depiction of the themes salient in my material at different levels (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387). Following Attride-Stirling's (2011, p. 388-389) guidance and rationalizations I started by breaking up the

text into the most evident topics (basic themes), organizing the basic themes into groups of similar issues (organizing theme), and finally producing global themes (see Appendix B for the outcomes of these processes). I used Nvivo 12, a data management software, to help me organize, analyze, and find insights from my data gathered from both interviews and field notes. The data material was analyzed in Indonesian.

4.6. Trustworthiness of the Research

To assess the rigour of qualitative research, Lincoln & Guba (in Yilmaz, 2013) highlight the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. All these criteria can be achieved through systematic data collection procedures, multiple data sources, triangulation, thick and rich description, and external reviews (Yilmaz, 2013). In order to achieve credibility, I implemented verification strategies both during the process of inquiry as well as for the overall results. Participants were fully aware that they have a chance to verify their statements and to fill in any gaps from earlier interviews. The prolonged interaction before and during the fieldwork process, provided an opportunity for me and participants to undergo a continuous verification. As for transferability, I provided a rich and clear description of the participants and their contextual situation, research process, and research findings. This will make it easier for readers to make their own judgment whether my research is transferable to another setting. For dependability and conformability, I tried to be persistent in following my research plan and when I made changes, I did that after thorough reflections. Following the research plan and taking a reflection step in the data gathering process, was applied to avoid the possibility that I could "arbitrarily interject personal opinions, be sloppy about data collection, or use evidence selectively to support prejudices" (Neuman, 2011, p. 168). I ensured that my interpretation in this research was grounded in the data.

4.6.1. My Role as a Researcher

As a researcher, I took on the role of participant observer that was present in the setting being studied and spent time observing and participating in the community life. I have a very definite sense of myself as a relative insider 'Acehnese' (inauthentic one, I am of the Javanese ethnicity) who speak their language and share an experiential base of life from a rural community in Aceh. I worked as an education facilitator in the rural village in Aceh for more than one year (from 2013 until early 2014), where I lived with a combatant family, with whom

I still keep a close relationship with them as my stepfamily. This position afforded me access into groups that might otherwise be closed to "outsiders".

I was also conscious of my situational identities and the power imbalances. Although I might feel part of the Acehnese culture, I do not share the identity of being an ex-combatant woman and indeed have more privileges compared to my participants. I applied a principle of reflexivity during my research process, which implies engaging in "explicit self-aware meta-analysis with intersubjective reflection, mutual collaboration, social critique and discursive deconstruction." (Finlay, 2002, p. 224). All of the interactions and the ideas that emerged from the research process were documented in the fieldnotes. Fieldnotes were my tool for critical reflection to continually monitor and audit the research process and also to evaluate my own interaction, bias, and judgement towards participants so that these should not tweak the research results.

4.7. Ethical Considerations

The main ethical challenges in this project were related to sensitive issues which might create anxiety and discomfort among participants, such as when they were asked to recall unpleasant events e.g. experience in the wartime. I was aware of the fact that I did my research in a place that I called home where I have acquired a certain level of understanding of the characteristics of the community. Hence, I developed an empathetic approach of awareness to look for the cues/signals through which the participants indicated discomfort. All participants were made aware that they could end or pause the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable and with no explanation.

I am mindful of the fact that ethical procedures need to be culturally and contextually sensitive (Pant & Singal, 2013). Seeking consent to undertake fieldwork in a communal-traditional society was a staged process. I first sought official approval to conduct research at the regional level with the FFI Aceh Program as my intermediary (see Appendix C), then I sought a verbally-traditional consent by asking permission to the three community leading bodies in the village based on the Acehnese traditional structure which are *Geuchik* (village head), *Mukim* (customary council), and *Imeum* (religion leader). A range of opportunities to express consent was provided to the participants who had none or little educations. Consent forms (see Appendix D) were available in Indonesian to be read and explained together in Acehnese language. The participants were given the freedom to express their consent either through signatures, thumbprint or verbally. In obtaining informed consent, I ensured that all

participants had received appropriate information about the purposes and procedures of the research. This project has gone through an ethical clearance process with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) which approved of the study (see Appendix E).

4.8. Challenges and Limitations

The main challenge was related to the traditional role of the Acehnese society where women are fully responsible for households work without the help of men. Two of the four participants were mothers with small children who were almost always around. I had to choose the right time to ask about their experience of war because I believe it was not psychologically good for the children to hear that kind of stories. I could only ask these questions when the child was not in place (being busy playing or napping).

In addition, there were also challenges related to restrictions posed on women by Sharia Law in Aceh region. Community meeting always took place at night so as not to interfere with the everyday farming activities of the community. However, most of the female participants in the meeting usually had to leave early, while a 'casual meeting', only attended by FFI's staff and community leaders (all of them are men), continued until late at night. Although the FFI staff asked me to stay in this casual meeting, as a fellow woman, I did not want to create the impression of being someone who received special treatment. I then decided to act the same as other women participants. Because of this, there were probably important moments and interactions which I missed to observe. On the other hand, this condition also increased my insights related to the life of Acehnese women in general and ex-combatant women in particular, and the way they are limited from participation and decision making in the local society.

A limitation of this study also lies in the limited number of participants. While all of the participants share the same identity as ex-combatant women, this research could not be generalized to measure the situation of the whole group. In accordance with the purposes of the intersectionality framework, this study gives voices to individuals who, despite sharing the same identity, possessed their own social struggles and experiences. Another limitation concerns the process of translation involving material in different languages and traditional dialects. In translating cultural expressions or terms with complex meanings, the English translations were inadequate to convey the original tone or intent. Moreover, in order to make the English reader understand the text, the translations sometimes had to be adjusted in ways

that could probably slightly shifting the original meaning. However, I have tried to be as precise and accurate as possible.

5. PRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANTS

5.1. Mutia

In Mutia's yard, there are two buildings that stand side by side: a brick-cemented house and a small wooden house. The brick house, which was built with her family's labour after returning from the war, was a dwelling for Mutia, her husband, and their three children for three years, up until an earthquake rocked Pidie in 2016 and left a deep trauma for Mutia. She feels reluctant to return to live in her brick house for fears of future disasters making the brick house collapse and trapping her family inside. Thus, she chose to forget her desire to live comfortably and made another house to live in, a simple wooden house from the remnants of wood. Her brick house, she said, now only functions as a display. "Even to be able to live peacefully in our own house that we built with our own sweat is difficult", Mutia said.

If the 2016 earthquake had brought trauma, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that destroyed Aceh, is regarded by Mutia as means to gain freedom. Before the tsunami, she had spent two years in prison as a political prisoner. The Indonesian army arrested Mutia in the forest near her village. At that time, she had spent nearly 5 years, starting from 1997, as a guerilla with 80 other GAM combatants. During her two years in prison, she did not even know where her husband was—he was also a guerilla—or the fate of her children whom she had to leave behind with her extended family. "When the tsunami occurred, the guards were all running away and we were left behind. Luckily, we could break free because the guards left the cell keys," she said. If a tsunami did not occur, Mutia believes she would have been left to rot in prison forever.

Compared to her past guerilla life which Mutia described as "a difficult time but full of togetherness and joy", she feels that her life in the post-war era is so tiresome. Her daily life only revolves around the house with all of her housework and her areca nut farm which she manages with her husband as a secondary income for the family. Her main concern now is to be able to continue to finance her two oldest daughters' college education. Mutia confessed that: "It is very difficult to make money but I have determined that I want my kids to have a better education. I do not want them to be like me and my husband who could not even finish elementary school because of the war".

5.2. Hayati

The most striking thing about Hayati is the variety of gold jewellery that is always jingling around her body. Hayati, her husband, and two of their children live in a fully furnished two story house, in which they always clearly exhibit the history of the homeowners: a *Bintang Buleun*[4] flag and a number of photographs of GAM troops during the war. "Our family is a family of fighters. My father, mother, my [first] husband, all died on the battlefield. My current husband is also a GAM Commander," Hayati explained. In 1998, Hayati joined the guerrilla where she spent four years in the jungle with the GAM forces led by her late husband. "We only slept on tarps. Sometimes I even have to sleep on the ground. Sometimes we could not even eat rice for one week. However, no one thought of giving up. We were all solid, *sampai titik darah penghabisan* [fought until the last drop of blood]," Mutia explained. In 2002, when her first husband was shot by Indonesian soldiers and passed away, Hayati decided to return to the village. One year after the peace agreement was ratified in 2005, she met her current husband and decided to remarry.

Hayati said that her life now is far better than when she had just returned from war. Her first child who is currently in high school is getting education funding specifically for war orphans. She also received funding to repair her home which was burned down when the war broke out. As for conflict relief assistance, she got that in the first three years after the peace agreement amounting to 1 million rupiahs/year[5]. However, she also admitted that not all ex-combatant women receive the same thing as her, "Our fate is different. I might be living well, but like my sister [a fellow ex-combatant woman], her life is very difficult. No income and the assistance never reached her".

At present, being able to sleep calmly and being together with family is more than enough for Hayati. "Of course, there is a lot of dissatisfaction with the current situation in Aceh but I don't want to think about it anymore," she asserted. However, she said without hesitation that she would not think twice if there is an invitation to go back to war and to do the guerilla again.

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[4] A *Bintang Buleun* (*bintang*: star; *buleun*: moon), is the GAM's flag which symbolized the independence movement and resistance against the Indonesian government. The Indonesian Army used to carry out raids for the flags appearing in public and often arrested people who dared to raise the flags. After the peace agreement, the Aceh provincial government adopted the *Bintang Buleun* flag as its official provincial flag.

[5] Around 70 US Dollar/month. Minimum wage per month for Aceh in 2019 is 2.9 million rupiahs/ month or 203 US Dollar/month.

5.3. Intan

For Intan, the most memorable things about became a women combatant was when she attended GAM's military training. In 1998, Intan just joined the GAM when she was elected to train along with hundreds of other GAM troops from various regions in Aceh—both men and women. For three months, she was taught all kinds of fighting skills, war strategies, and survival. "Everything was interesting. I learned to assemble weapons and install the bullets. Once, I also had to crawl on the ground under burning bars of wire. I felt like I was very strong back then. I won against men a lot," said Intan excitedly. After the training, Intan went to the forest to join the guerilla. She always participated in battles and was also often assigned to go down to the army base to ask for medicine for injured guerilla. "We [combatants and Indonesian army] both knew our respective position but they sometimes only attacked if there were orders. We only needed to know when it's the right time and how to approach them. I was the one who was slick enough to do that," Intan explained. After 4 years of guerrilla warfare, in 2002, Intan and other remaining guerillas returned to their respective villages after received an order for a temporary ceasefire to start peace discussion with the Indonesian government. That was until the 2004's tsunami occurred which then accelerated the peace agreement. That made her realized that since then, she had to rearrange her life with her own efforts.

As Intan chose to divorce her husband several years ago, she is now being a single family head and responsible for raising her only child. Her own house burned down when she left it during the war. Intan was unable to rebuild it because she said there was no help coming to her, not even a fund that is specifically intended for former combatants. Intan then decided to return to live with her parents and take care of the coffee plantation which is her main source of income. Intan expressed that being a single parent is very hard. Even so, she had given up the idea of remarrying in spite of her own parents constantly pushing her to do so. "Indeed, being a divorcee is not good in this village. Neighbours gossip a lot about you. But if I remarry, it will only add another trouble to my life," she asserted.

5.4. Kemala

For Kemala, her past story as a women combatant was not that special. "It was not like I had any other choice than to join the movement. I wanted to stay in the village, but the army often raided our village. Rather than stay at home but constantly feeling scared, I just went straight to the forest," Kemala said. Joining the guerillas in 2000, she lived in the forest with a troop of 50 combatants where only 7 were women. "Once, we were almost arrested by the army.

We were on the river when we saw two Indonesian army soldiers approaching. We sunk our bodies into the river and held our breath until they left. "Waah... it was one of the tensest moments of my life," she said. Three years later, news came that there would be a ceasefire and peace agreement. She returned to the village following the command from the GAM central. "Out of the 50 people in my troops, only 27 people left, including 5 women. Some had already given up, some had *syahid*[6], "Kemala said. After the war, it was very difficult for her to rebuild her life after the war since she never received any kind of assistance.

Now, Kemala said that the day that she likes the most is Friday. It is the day when a female recitation group in her village gathers once a week to recite the Quran. As the head of the female recitation's group, Kemala said that only there she could experience to lead others again. Aside from Friday, she never really leave the house that much except to take care of the rice fields that belongs to her family. Most of the time, she spends her day in the house where she lives with her husband and her youngest child—number five. The first four children are married and do not live with her anymore. She acknowledges that life has become easier after her children grew up and got married.

6. Ex-Combatant Women's Attitudes towards Humanitarian and Women's Empowerment Program

This chapter shows participants interactions with the women's empowerment programs within the VFM Program of FFI and their perceptions towards aid and humanitarian programs in general. This chapter also shows how participants' interactions with aid programs were influenced by their specific positionality. Four participants in this study came from three different villages with different phases of the program's engagement with FFI. Kemala and Intan are living in the same village where the FFI's program is still in the planning stage with routine community meeting as main activities. Whereas Mutia and Hayati live in two different villages where the women's empowerment program had been implemented.

6.1. Attitudes towards Aid and Humanitarian Program in General

This section reflects the ex-combatant women's attitudes and experiences towards women's empowerment programs that they have already been completed or will be implemented in the future. Initially, my research questions were specifically intended to address

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[6] Islamic concept for the one who dies while fighting following God. It has a similar meaning to the concept of martyr.

the implementation of the women's empowerment sub-program of the VFM Program that is currently running in Pidie Regency. However, as the participants in this study took the lead in the discussion process, they gradually spoke more broadly about their experiences towards various kinds of aid and humanitarian programs—from disaster rehabilitation, conflict reintegration, conservation, and climate change—which they had once been a part of or had seen operating in their area. Rather than redirect my participants, I followed their lead towards broadening the insights for this study, and will, therefore, explain their particular attitudes towards current climate change adaptation and mitigation practices in Aceh, as well as women's empowerment programs of FFI's Indonesia.

All of the participants showed reticence towards any kind of program that has a women's empowerment theme. Furthermore, although all the participants basically accepted the existence of foreign assistance programs in their area, they did not show an enthusiastic attitude about actively participate in any of those programs.

> Whatever [program] that is given to me is not a problem for me. If they want to come and give us a program, it's good. If they want to train us this and that, go ahead. However, I don't feel like I want to go along with it. I have had enough with my life. (Hayati)

Intan felt sceptical about any kind of assistance program. She felt that outsider intervention in any form will never really help her with her problems.

> I feel like I'm tired of such assistance. Because in reality, my life has never changed. With assistance programs or not, there is no effect on me. Here, we could only rely on ourselves for our own survival. (Intan)

As for Mutia, she linked her perceptions towards the aid programs to her experience in witnessing the coming and going of various assistance programs that occurred in her area.

> I know that they all have good intentions. Just by the fact that they paid attention to people in this rural village is more than good. I actually really want to take part in the programs that are beneficial for me. However, because I have had bad experience from the previous aid program, now every time I hear there will be a new aid program coming to this village, I am not enthusiastic. I am afraid that I will be given false hope. (Mutia)

Mutia then exemplified of the distribution process for the 2016 earthquake's relief that she experienced which she found to be very bad.

> At that time, we had to evacuate because our house was cracked but for weeks no help came to us. My husband then heard from his combatant's colleague that the emergency package had actually arrived not long after the earthquake. We then went to the sub-district office. There, we saw tons of rice sacks already eaten by mice. Instead of being distributed, they just piled them up. Why bother making an aid program if you did not want to help people in need (Mutia)

Kemala felt that the poor management of aid distribution in the past conflict reconciliation programs had estranged many Acehnese communities from each other, which eventually led to a sense of antipathy towards any aid or humanitarianism programs.

> They [the conflict reconciliation program] divided us as a close community. It made us had to compete with each other just to be included in the program. Our *gotong-royong* concept as an Acehnese was damaged just because of one or two programs.

Kemala spoke about competition to be included in the program. My interpretation about what she actually meant is that it had created envy amongst community members by making them think that aid might be distributed unequally. Regarding the *Gotong-royong*, it is a philosophical concept found in Indonesian culture especially for those who still live in traditional community. *Gotong-royong* greatly determines the sense of being an Indonesian which follows the idea of communal value and the spirit of cooperation.

These findings demonstrate that in general, all participants have negative preconceptions about aid or humanitarian programs that do not necessarily have something to do with the current practices of empowerment programs of the FFI Indonesia Aceh Program. However, to a certain degree, their preconceptions also had influenced the low participation and disengagement of the ex-combatant women in the implementation and/or planning process of the women's empowerment program of FFI Indonesia.

6.2. Social Barriers and Vulnerabilities not Related to Past-history as Women Combatant

Various reasons for non-involvement in women's empowerment program associated with social barriers and vulnerabilities were identified by the participants during the study. The issues described in this section concern many different aspects of participants' lives ranging from gender-related obligations, organizational challenges, and physical challenges.

Gendered-related obligations: This reflected a social-cultural norm regarding women's place in society. All participants confirmed that their obligations in the households as mother and wife often prevented them from having other activities outside the home, including to participate in women's empowerment programs. They confirmed that they regularly feel tired of their everyday house chores that seemed never-ending and repetitive. Observations showed a variety of unpaid labour that all participants had to perform every day. These included cleaning the house; preparing food for breakfast, lunch, and supper; washing clothes; and taking care of the children. In addition, as part of a farming community, all participants had to engage in some parts of farming labour such as sowing seeds, watering plants, or harvesting farm produces. All of this labour was done manually by the participants alone with minimal assistance from their husbands.

For Mutia, besides the workload on the plantation, the primary burden associated with her housework overload was closely related to her toddler's situation who was very attached to her. However, this situation turned out to be closely related to the low economic capacity of Mutia in financing her children's education.

> This child is the most difficult. Even when I just left her for a minute, she's still crying. I sometimes have to wait until she's sleeping, then I can start to do the chores. She should have entered kindergarten by now. If only she could get into kindergarten, maybe I could relax a little. But we could not afford that. Our money has run out for her sisters [college fee]. (Mutia)

As for Hayati, the most well off of my study participants, the double burden of house chores and land cultivation felt by other participants was not so significant. Due to the high school dropout rate, there are many unemployed young people in the village and it was thus easy for her husband to hire daily farm labourers who could be paid cheaply to take care of her family's farm. Even so, she still feels overburdened and stressed the never-ending cycle of her house

chores. This illustrates that the workload of women in the household does not correspond with the level of the family economy.

> It's never-ending work. So how can we have time for other things, to socialize? Not even for just hanging out in the kiosk. It is just our duty as a wife. (Hayati)

As for Kemala, she associated her roles and obligations in the household with her *'kodrat'* as the caretaker of the family. *Kodrat* is a term originating from Islamic beliefs about the differences between men and women that have been determined by God. That is why she feels that she must always ensure that her house is well managed before she thinks of going outside the house.

> How can I leave the house if the house is not maintained? I am the one who understands my children and my house. This is what it's like to live in the village. This is just our work (Kemala)

Intan's position as a single head of the family resulted in her having multiple burdens aside from unpaid labour. This differentiated her from other participants. Intan had to perform her duties as both a breadwinner and as a family carer, which left her with little time to rest. The fact that she lived with her elderly parents also added the burden of taking care of them. These factors combined to result in both physical and emotional fatigue.

> You can see for yourself right, I'm often wearing this *koyo* [warm patch for pain relief]. It's not for nothing but when it's late at night my body feels very sore, my head is very dizzy. Either my body is tired, or it is my mind, I don't know. But I have to do everything myself. Allah gave me the fate to live alone (Hayati)

Another gendered-related obligations were identified by Hayati. Because males are considered the head of the family, Hayati said that she must always ask permission from her husband if she wanted to do activities outside the house, including if there were training programs or village meetings. Just like Kemala, Hayati also linked this situation as her 'kodrat' as a woman and wife.

My husband always says, 'there is no need to participate in things like that. You better stay at home, take care of me, take care of your children!'. Yes, as a wife, is our *kodrat* to follow what the husband says (Hayati)

Organizational challenges: These were barriers to participation described by two participants living in village where the women's empowerment program of FFI Indonesia had been implemented. Two program activities that had been running in their village were sewing skills and wedding decoration skills. Organizational-related challenges depicted participants' feelings and experiences, when they were informed or were being assigned to participate in these women's empowerment activities.

Mutia confessed that she had only participated at the beginning of the program. Mutia then chose to slowly withdraw from the program as she felt that program supervision was lacking that made people from her own village, who were appointed by FFI as local administrators, behave arbitrarily.

The truth is, the program was not a failure [we are not the ones that caused the failure] but those who are given the responsibilities were doing things as they please. Those people were sneaky, tinkered with funds. The funds were flowing, but only a few machines were provided even though people [the program participants] were many. We also could not use the machines freely. (Mutia)

In addition to Mutia's statement, based on the observations, what Mutia complained about is likely caused by problems with the distance between FFI's office and the program area. The FFI's office is located in the capital city of Aceh province, Banda Aceh, whereas Pidie Regency is 7 hours away by motorized vehicle from Banda Aceh. As a result, it was difficult for FFI staff to be able to monitor the program's implementation process. This may have created a gap for facilitators at the village level who are given the role of daily program implementers.

As for Hayati, she never tried to participate in the activities of the women's empowerment program even though she participated in the program planning. The communication from program facilitators which she considered to be one-way, became a factor for her absence. Hayati indicated a problem with unequal participation between men and women. Even though Hayati was included in community meetings for program planning, she said it was hard for her and women in general to actively participate in the discussion and decision-making process.

Even if we were invited to the meetings, we were just expected to be silent. We got together, ate snacks, but couldn't speak up. (Hayati)

Hayati also gave another example when the program was about to start and she was given an announcement to attend the program by the facilitators. She expressed that, as program participants, they were never given the opportunity to determine their own schedule and were expected to obey village leaders' orders only.

They always gave us an order: 'You come today, at this time, to join this activity. Okay?'. Yes, right, they just told me to come along without knowing the purpose of the program. It seems they don't even care about that. They just need people, anybody [to fill the quota]. (Hayati)

6.3. Social Barriers and Vulnerabilities Related to Past-history as Women Combatant

This section describes various factors related to the non-involvement of the participants in the women's empowerment program of the FFI Indonesia in connection with their identities as ex-combatants. Several issues emerged based on interviews and observations that show that the history of the participants from wartime is still very significant for them in the current peacetime. Problems mentioned here are programs' incompatibility, stigmatization, and struggles for reintegration.

Program's Incompatibility: Three participants expressed an incompatibility between the types of program activities that were offered to them with their needs and aspirations as ex-combatants. As conveyed by Hayati, when the peace agreement was still being negotiated, the majority of female combatants were being supportive of this effort on the condition that they can still actively participate in the community after the war. However, after the agreement ratification, Hayati felt that her group's aspirations were ignored and their substantial role and position as women combatants seemed to have been forgotten. This kind of oversight is not only reflected in the community system, but also in the planning and implementation process of the aid program.

It's not like just because we are *Inong Balee* so we demand special treatment or given this and that positions. However, now... we are like nothing and couldn't go anywhere. It is true that in village organizations there is always an allocation for combatants but that almost certainly means for *Ureung Agam* [male combatant] only. Whereas we are only offered some kind of women activities. (Hayati)

As for Intan, program mismatches could also be seen from the tendency of donor agencies to generalize aid programs without looking at the context of the community at hand. This could be reflected from the choices of activities in women's empowerment programs that were stereotypically feminine and tend to value domesticity without considering the particular experiences and characteristics of ex-combatant women.

Yes, we are tenacious even we can do rough work. Now, every day, I have stayed at home all day. Why they only discussed sewing or decorating? Isn't that boring? (Intan)

When participants were asked to provide examples of empowerment programs or activities that they considered relevant to their characteristics, experience, and needs, all participants mention examples of programs that would lead to strengthening their capacity. One of the most frequently mentioned activity was entrepreneurship/commerce.

If we sell goods, we can have independence. We can set our own time according to our work at home. I knew how to move around in the group. The most important thing is to initiate the small talks. Asking the trivial, everyday things. I certainly am used to talking to the people, how to convince them. Even if at first they were not interested in buying anything, with a few small talks and being friendly, over time they will become curious and want to find out more and may be interested in buying later. (Mutia)

The most essential thing about commerce is negotiating. How to make prospective buyers interested, make them believe in us. Well, let alone the buyer ... even [in the war] the army ends up befriending me. Just don't bother to create [women's empowerment] groups. Just give me the capital that I need, I can do it by myself. (Intan)

Entrepreneurial/commerce place value on several traits such as confidence, independence, freedom, and leadership. All of these traits resonate with participants' former activities as female combatants in wartime. Mutia's words illustrate well the relationship between their experiences in wartime and entrepreneurial values.

> I think we have a high sense of leadership compared to the other [non-combatant women]. Even though we know the heavy risks and the danger that we have to face, if we have to deal with it, we will face it. Now, if you want to compete about who can survive a difficult life, we can, we've been able to survive that before. Whatever the risks. We are ready to take the responsibility. (Mutia)

Stigmatization: Stigmatization observed in this research related to the communities' resentment of women combatant group in particular and the GAM members in general. According to all participants, the stigmatization which they have experienced or are still experiencing came from the general society and fellow women who were not part of the GAM group, who have never been involved in the combat, or who did not support Aceh's independence.

For Hayati, negative resentment connected to her background and her family as a GAM family also had something to do with social jealousy related to her family high economic level.

> Many people in the village don't support us, they don't like GAM families. There must be someone who doesn't like us. Especially now, that I am happy like this, living well. I mean, I could feel it. For example, if I went to the kiosk when they [other women] were hanging out it seems like… they stared at me. (Hayati)

As for Intan, not only her status as an ex-combatant but also her current situation as a divorcee leads her to the stigmatization that she felt.

> There is a sense in me that we are hated as *Inong Balee*. That kind of sentiment exists because not everyone is a combatant and wants Aceh's independence. Especially when I am alone and I go everywhere by myself. Maybe they despised such behaviour, look down on me. Like, how dare you to be different, how come you don't have a man. (Intan)

Mutia felt that the prejudice become stronger especially when they are 'forced' to merge and collaborate with other women in one group both in village meetings and women's empowerment activities. Mutia thought that the root cause of her stigmatization was jealousy:

> As they already had ideas on their mind just because we were GAM people that means that we were privileged, got special treatment, got money. So, I guess they got annoyed as to why we have to be together with them and took their place. If only they knew that lower rank like us more often got nothing. (Mutia)

Interesting findings emerged based on interviews and observations with Kemala. Even though Kemala acknowledged that the stigmatization of ex-combatants was present in general, it did not affect her daily life anymore. This is due to the fact that Kemala had achieved a new status in her community through taking the role as both an elder and religious community leader. The value of Islam and respecting the elders are two things that are highly upheld in the traditional system of the Acehnese society. That is why, even though Kemala has the same background as the other three participants, the two honourable positions that she has achieved in her current life ultimately outweighs the stigmatization that she had previously felt.

Struggles in Reintegration: The struggles in reintegration reveal inner sentiments coming from the participants themselves. Reintegration in this context refers to the process of moving from the position as combatants to become a member of ordinary society. Even though almost 13 years have passed since the war ended and the peace agreement was ratified, all participants expressed that until now they still feel some challenges related to fitting in with other people in the communities. In the context of planning and implementing a women's empowerment program from FFI, the struggles are more strongly felt when they are expected to be able to collaborate together in groups with other women[7].

For Mutia, the difference in experience between her and other women, being the most fundamental contrast that makes the cooperation effort becomes burdensome.

> Yes, we are all women. But have they ever felt and experienced exactly what we went through? How to fight in a difficult situation? How to survive in the forest? Never. We

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[7] Women who are not members of GAM and have never been involved in the combat

almost had no similarities. Our will is different, our feelings are different, our experiences are different too, but we have to come along with them. (Mutia)

As for Mutia, her distinct characteristic which was developed through her association in women combatant's group became the basis of differences between her and other women.

As Inong Balee, we like to be solid and unified. If one said A, all said A. No one wants to be selfish. We decided for one goal and we would all work together to the end. If it is with the others [non-combatan women], they are so used to living well and normal and sometimes just wanted the easiest way. So, I think it's hard for us to unify. (Intan)

Hayati views common values as a very important factor in the group work's success. That's what Hayati saw as not being shared between herself and non-combatant women.

I think if you want to work together to achieve something together, you have to be on the same spirit. Same feeling, same mind, same concern. We wanted to have leadership and to be independent but they [non-combatant women] don't have the same thing. So, it's hard to reach an agreement (Hayati)

Kemala then exemplified that such differences between groups of women could even be seen in the daily situations.

Take the daily chat, for example. If we are with *Inong Balee*, we still like to talk about how Aceh will be in the future, what can we make for Aceh. Meanwhile, if I'm with others [non-combatant women], like when we were chatting in the recitation group, we could only talk about the small stuff. Our ideas and purposes are also different. (Kemala)

Based on my observations during the program planning process, I would suggest that the challenges of reintegration felt by participants could also come from social expectation aimed at ex-combatant women who returned to being housewives. They were expected to be able to return to the traditional gender roles and values as they used to do before the war. As they were being considered mere women/housewives, the program's facilitators tended to exclude women

from strategic discussions, and only giving them administrative or domestic tasks such as secretarial tasks or preparing the food for meeting.

6.4. Discussion

My findings indicate a general sense of program fatigue among the participants. The engagement methods, which were considered by participants to be overused and emerged as a key source of fatigue. This finding supports earlier studies from Fan (2013), who conducted comparative studies about the restorative process in three post-disaster areas: post-tsunami Aceh, post-cyclone Myanmar, and post-earthquake Haiti. Based on the three cases, Fan concluded that there was a common practice of concepts' replication which shows an uncritical process in implementing assistance programs which also corresponds to what my study participants claimed about the program they had been exposed to.

My findings are also consistent in terms of program fatigue and concepts' replication with the studies done in Aceh context by Jauhola (2010), Levine et al., (2014), and Daly et al. (2016), but in addition, they contribute novel and complementary aspects. First, I expand the scope of studies focused on Aceh to look beyond the capital of Aceh province, Banda Aceh City. Previous studies largely focused on the context of Banda Aceh. This is due to the aid programs distribution which have mostly been centred in the area of capital city due to the fact that most international agencies have their offices there. My findings from Pidie Regency add to discussions on development processes of post-conflict and post-disaster Aceh by demonstrating that similar situations also occur in areas with less intensive aid intervention programs than Banda Aceh. The previous studies mentioned above, only focus on macro analysis from external stakeholder relations' points of view, meaning the perspectives various actors in development efforts such as central government, regional government, and the donor agencies themselves. My study findings complemented these studies by displaying perspectives from the other side of development aid, targeted communities and beneficiaries. Adding targeted communities and beneficiaries perspectives to this analysis contributes to a more clear understanding on the subject of foreign aid efficacy and accountability.

Accordingly, previous studies regarding the abundance of aid programs and humanitarian assistance in Aceh (Jauhola, 2010; Fan, 2013; Daly et al., 2016) discussed the failure of program assistance in maintaining the sustainability of the programs and achieving the anticipated outcomes. Some recommendations from previous studies suggested restructuring programs' typical concepts and adjusting the engagement approaches and delivery methods so that they

are more considerate of the structure of the Acehnese target communities. It should, however, be noted that the success rates of the program, as well as the outcomes, do not always depend on the types of methods and approaches that are implemented, especially for the context of Aceh. This is evident in the participants' accounts of program fatigue. All participants concluded that all aid programs were basically the same, no matter what the concept, the purpose or the approach of the program. That is why, it is also probable that the failure of aid programs highlighted in previous studies is not solely due to inappropriate approaches, but perhaps also because there has been a sense of distrust from the program's recipients themselves in the first place. Further examination of the condition of the program's fatigues needs to be discussed and recognized, especially in how to break the cycle of fatigue and how to restore the community's trust in aid and humanitarian programs in general.

My findings show that the key factors of my study participants' non-involvement to the program are problems closely related to gendered-related obligations, especially those pertaining to the multiple burdens of the gendered labour. This creates a sentiment from participants towards the women's empowerment programs—which of course, require the presence and activity of participants—that the programs just added another responsibility and burden to their lives instead of helping them. This finding is confirmed by other studies done in rural areas such as that of Hippert (2011), who examined women's participation in gender-based development programs in rural Bolivia. Finding that women are overburdened in the household, Hippert pointed out underlying issues related to the imbalance of power relations between men and women in the social system, especially in rural/traditional communities. This also corresponds with my findings about participants' perceptions of their work in the households, showing the social and cultural norms about gender roles which largely divides and rations labour between women and men.

However, there are also other dimensions from my study findings concerning women's work in the household that is not found in Hippert's study. The addition from my study is a distinct and contextual dimension which concerns religion. As a culturally and lawfully Islamic region, some participants reveal how they justified the amount of work that they need to bear based on their religious values. They believe that the division of household labour is an order from God. But what cannot be revealed from my study findings is whether these values are already formed from long-standing Islamic culture in the community, or newly formed as a result of new enforcement of Sharia Law in Aceh. As I searched for a similar study that will support the findings of my study, I found that these religious aspects has not yet been included

as a dimension of analysis in previous studies and is only used as a general background to explain Aceh society. That is why, for further studies, I think it is worth specifically exploring the relationship between the customary Islamic system and Sharia Law in Aceh related to women 's gendered work.

Other findings indicate the lack of success in the implementation of women's empowerment program of FFI. Some similar studies, such as Jauhola (2010), also detected the lack of success of several women's empowerment programs run by the Aceh government in collaboration with international organizations. Jauhola found the root causes of the program's failure to lie at the conceptual level where the program failed to adopt an international gender concept into local Acehnese terms. The same finding also emerged in Daly et al.'s (2016) research. Their study pointed out the conditions of 'gender fatigue' which highlight a common practice in the use of 'women' or 'gender' in empowerment programs only to satisfy donors checklist, while it becomes meaningless in the actual program implementation.

My study findings in the next section, which discusses intersection between gender and other social identities from participants' positionality, will support findings from the previous studies above. However, in this section, my findings also indicate an organizational problem, which is not related with the process of creating the program. Problems concerning the technicalities of program delivery and the lack of managerial, communication and socialization skill from field facilitators were revealed. Therefore, my findings call for better attention to the overall process of program planning, not only from the conceptual design of women's empowerment programs, which are crucial, but also to pay attention to the practical problems during implementation. In addition, as my study findings indicate, the lack of skills of field facilitators in managing the program, shows the need for better training or better selection processes for field facilitators to improve programs' implementation.

There is a general sense that the main cause of participants' non-involvement and rejection of women's empowerment programs is strongly related to their positionality as ex-combatant women of GAM. My findings indicate the incompatibility between the choices of empowerment program activities offered (i.e. sewing and decoration skills) and participants' aspirations and pre-acquired skills gained from being women combatant. This is consistent with the study of Marhaban & Affiat (2017) which compared women former combatants from GAM in Aceh and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines. Both cases show the ill-suitedness of women's empowerment programs from international institutions in the post-war period. A main problem is the identification and classification of program recipients. Ex-

combatant women are rarely specifically referred to in the list of beneficiaries, and more often, simply incorporated into the female category only. This outcome is also consistent with my study findings. My findings also confirmed Kamaruzzaman's (2008) study which shows the conditions of the post-peace agreement in Aceh where ex-combatant women of GAM were never identified in any type of assistance—whether in conflict, disaster or the environment program. This shows that even after 10 years, the same conditions are still experienced by former combatant women despite the continued arrival of various assistance programs in Aceh.

Participants also demonstrated a desire for assistance programs that are particularly related to capacity building such as leadership programs or organizational skills. As is evident in participants' descriptions, such programs are very difficult to access for ex-combatant women, and most often only allocated for ex-combatant men. Similar findings can be found in other studies about the Aceh reintegration process such as the study of Lundström & Marhaban (2016). They pointed out the tendency of international institutions to only provide leadership training to male ex-combatants due to the militant groups' chain of command and internal power structures within the GAM organization itself.

A prominent theme in participants' accounts was entrepreneurial endeavours or commerce as the preferred choice of women's empowerment program. This preference indicates a correlation between the traits of entrepreneurial/commerce with the traits of participants' past activities as women combatants during wartime. This generates an interesting outlook about the potential skills of the ex-combatant women that they have acquired in the war which are likely to be hidden and cannot be channelled through programs that supposedly should empower them. This shows the importance of a more detailed and accurate program assessment process about the beneficiaries and community background for the targeted community.

Findings related to lack of convergence between different members of recipients group, depict the relationship between participants with other women (non-combatant) particularly in women's empowerment groups and generally in community everyday life. This incompatibility is associated with other women's stigmatization of my study participants regarding their past history as women combatants. This issue contributes to assimilation and cooperation problems between ex-combatant women and non-combatant women within the women's empowerment groups. My study findings confirm those other studies about former women combatants done in different settings, such as Goswami (2015) about the Maoist Women of Nepal, Abdenur (2018) about women combatants in Colombia, and Tonheim (2017) about girl soldiers in

Congo, all showing that a main factor contributing to stigmatization towards former combatant women comes from prejudice or negative preconceived opinions related to the status and behaviour of former women combatants. Society's negative assumptions about ex-combatants which see them as 'dangerous rebels' or 'people who are transgressing the women norm' positioned participants as a deviant party in the community that intensified a widened distance with other women, which in turn reinforces the stigma in society.

However, as is evident in participants' accounts, my study findings also provide contrast to the previous studies mentioned above. I identified other social factors that are additional determinants of the ex-combatant women's stigmatization. Prejudice triggered by social jealousy related to differences in economic and welfare status is one apparent theme. It is very probable that this finding is specific—if not unique—to the Aceh context, due to the unique regional autonomy systems where the majority of leadership is filled by former GAM combatants (mostly men). Social jealousy added to the negative preconceptions in the community that generalizes all ex-combatants of GAM as those who have more privilege related to power, economic access, or aid funds than the general public. While some of that is true, the privilege of power and economic access is, in fact, not evenly distributed among former GAM members, and very much depend on the rank/position of former combatants within the GAM organization itself. This prejudice was clearly pervasive at the time of the study and was reflected in the sentiments of the general public, which, in turn, created negative impacts on the public perception of GAM combatant groups. Closer examination needs to be done on the ongoing process of autonomy reign by former GAM combatants in Aceh and how it creates social segregation that affects social relations between people in the communities.

A final topic emerging in my research concern the fact that participants found it difficult to assimilate with other women because they could not feel a sense of harmony and congruence between them as ex-combatant women and non-combatant women. As ex-combatant women try to return to live in the middle of the community, they are faced with situations that expect them to return to their traditional gender roles/values that they used to do or have before the war. Having had life-changing experiences during the war, it is very difficult for ex-combatant women to fulfil the expectations when they have to renegotiate their identities that are more complex than outdated expectations of them as women. Their situation is further complicated by the tendency of development programs from both the government and international institutions that abandon the specific situation of ex-combatant women by not providing options other than programs for women. These findings confirm earlier studies that highlight the

reintegration process of women combatants in the post-conflict situation from various areas (e.g., Sajjad, 2004; Hauge, 2008; Utas, 2005; Goswami, 2015; Tonheim, 2017; K.C. et al., 2017). The study area of previous studies mentioned is evenly distributed on almost every continent around the globe. Added with my study findings, this indicates that non-acknowledgement of former women combatant women in post-conflict is a systematic issue that widespread globally. This shows the significance of identity acknowledgement to former combatant women in the formulation of women's empowerment programs in former conflict areas. The suggestion of identity acknowledgement does not mean that former combatant women should get special treatment or be separated from non-combatant women, which will be counter-productive to the idea of integration and post-conflict peacebuilding. Rather, the goal would be to alleviate the systematic gender specific ignorance in the policy formulation and program development in conflict areas, by building awareness and sensitivity through acknowledging that former women combatants have specific experiences.

7. Intersecting Identities and Social Positionalities for the Ex-Combatant Women

As we saw in Chapter 6, all participants challenged conventional gender identities and social positions by emphasizing their particular characteristics and experiences as ex-combatant women. This chapter will add depth to the understanding of individual participants' identities, which are comprised of intersecting gender identities and social positions. Intersecting gender identity and social positionality in this context illustrates how gender interacts with other social identities by the stance/position taken by each participant to understand and make sense of their own self.

This chapter will explore participants' perspectives regarding common narratives used repeatedly in the construction of empowerment programs or international assistance, including the Village Forest Management Program. The first narrative is that of 'women' regarding the identity constructions in which gender is only seen in a binary manner between women and men. The second narrative is the narrative of 'feminization of vulnerability' based on the assumption that women are the most vulnerable and are seen as victims. The first two narratives will be discussed in section 7.1. Whereas in the next section, section 7.2, I will display the third narrative, that of a 'better life', and the fourth narrative, the narrative of 'empowerment'. The narratives in 7.2 were taken from the objectives of the empowerment program within the VFM

program corridor that was created with the aim of empowering the community and making their lives better.

7.1. Narrative of Feminizing the Victims

These findings emerged from discussions with participants about how they wanted to identify themselves and how they viewed the general identity labels pinned to them both in women's empowerment programs and other aid programs.

Gender as Binary: These findings revolve around the generalized simplified view of gender as comprised of a binary category of men and women which has led to the ultimate positioning of my participants as mere women. None of the participants wanted to simply identify themselves as women. There were socio-political events that happened in the participants' lives, in which they fought during the war, that formed a distinct synthesis of identities that only those who had experienced the same thing could possess. All participants shared commonalities about how they wanted to be defined: as *Pejuang Perempuan*. '*Pejuang'* means fighter/warrior and '*Perempuan'* means Women. I deliberately did not want to translate them to English because it would change the sentence structure to Women Fighter, which would put 'Women' as the first word rather than 'Fighter'. They chose to label themselves first as fighter/warrior and only after that as women.

Mutia and Intan showed how problematic it was for them to carry a label that generalizes women as a homogenous entity. As a former combatant woman who had to fight and thrive as guerillas for years, this label was incomparable an experience. Those experiences were so impactful and significant that they had to renegotiate their sense of self in the post-war era.

> Of course, I want to be called a fighter/warrior. Just look at how I lived in the forest for years. Who thrives in those hard lives in the forest and endures everything? Us, combatants. I used to have everything. Money, home, family. But I left it all to fight for freedom and peace. So, it's important for me to keep that in mind to remember what I have been fighting for regardless of my current situation. (Mutia)

> Yes, the past is the past. If I can, I don't want to remember about that anymore. Lots of sad things, trauma... However, in reality, of the things that I do every day, I couldn't help

but think far back into the past because things like that couldn't just be erased. Why did they think that we are the same? (Intan)

Furthermore, Hayati and Kemala explained the differences between the identity of the *Pejuang Perempuan* (*Inong Balee*) and Woman. For them and other female ex-combatants, the *Inong Balee* is a meaningful name that contains a principle about the idea of independence. That is why, the participants indicated that carrying this title even in peacetime, gave them a sense of purpose and pride because they once fought for a common goal for the people of Aceh.

They will never understand. All that they could see is the suffering part, how we used to live a difficult life. I am an *Inong Balee* to death. Even though my life now is ordinary, that's my pride, that's my family's pride as a warrior family. (Hayati)

Even if I didn't have a choice [whether to join the war or not], why would I stay in the forest for so long even though it was difficult? That was because I had a sense of awareness like, 'oh, this is for Aceh, for our own people'. I have at least contributed something for that even if it was insignificant for others. Now, my life is just mediocre, poor, even. That's okay. I fought not because I want something. I fought selflessly. But to be forgotten, to be invisible? That's different. (Kemala)

All participants confirmed that to be considered as mere women, is like undermining the values of independence and freedom and removing traces of the struggles they have made.

Women as Victim: In addition to the generalized labelling of gender identity, all participants also challenged the idea of women as victims, which became the basic narrative of the establishment of women's empowerment programs of FFI[8].

For Intan, she found that the labelling of women as victims was debilitating especially for ex-combatant women. According to Intan, instead of picturing her as someone who can actively contribute to the community, victimization places her as weak and powerless entity that could only live by the help of others.

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[8] Based on the observations during the program planning meeting and interview with key informants.

Calling us victims just made me feel that we are the loser, that we are weak. No, I have fought. Yes, maybe you can say that I'm a victim too because I had sacrificed all of my fortunes for war. However, even though I am now a victim, I am a victim who have fought. (Intan)

As for Hayati, the narrative between fighters and victims always came one after another as she always imagined her situation in the past in comparison to what she had achieved in the present. Even so, just like Intan, she also questioned the label of the victim who was defined by the outsider.

Maybe they are both true. I am a victim because I have no family left due to the war. But I'm also a fighter because I have participated in the war. I have fought. But then to say that we are the victim just to be pitied, how does that sound? No way that we are weak. Even if we were told to go to the forest right now to fight, we will leave right away. Even if I have to lose all of my fortune again, live a difficult life again. (Hayati)

Mutia felt that she was not a victim but someone who was victimized by the situation. The idea of labelling her as a victim of disaster or a victim of war is considered as bizarre for her. She said that it is not a war or a disaster that made her a victim but today 's system and social situation instead.

Well… now I feel like a victim. I am victimized. We have sacrificed our own wealth, children, homes to fight. Supposedly, in this peace period, I should get back all of the things that I have sacrificed. This is not the idea of peace that I imagined. Life is still as difficult as before. If someone says that the victim's title is degrading, meaning that they cannot do anything, well… then, I will now have to accept it. That's the reality. I cannot do anything. I am stuck. My life is way more difficult than before. (Mutia)

Kemala then pointed out the victim narratives that were repeatedly applied by the aid organizations or empowerment program. For Kemala, it was counterproductive to the empowerment ideals of the aid organizations.

They always said that they wanted to lift us up, they wanted to make us better, stronger. But how does it feel if every time you were being told that, Yes, you are a victim? Don't be surprised that after being told like that over and over again we were like, 'Oh, okay, maybe I am the victim'. That's unfair. (Kemala)

7.2. Narratives of a 'Better Life' and 'Empowerment'

Adding to participants' specific ways to identify themselves, is also a particularity in the way they interpret a reality based on their situated experiences. This section explores the narratives of 'better life' and 'empowerment' from the participants' positionality and point of view. 'Building back better' is also used as a slogan or concept in the restoration and development process in the post-conflict and post-disaster period in Aceh. Based on the interviews, all participants conveyed thoughts about what the notion of a better life is means to them and what it means to be empowered according to their own views and experiences. In this section, I decided to not included themes related to climate change and disaster experiences even though all participants had experienced and been affected by climate-related to disasters. This is because based on the interviews, climate change factors did not come out as something significant to the participants and did not become part of their thinking in defining 'better life' and 'empowerment'.

Goals and Motivations: Essentially, all participants had the same reasons and motivation for joining the war, that they wanted to fight for a better Aceh. Interesting findings emerged when they tried to describe what a 'better Aceh' meant and the way that they interpreted a better life based on their own aspirations.

For Hayati, her ideal of a better Aceh came from her family's upbringing. As a family of fighters, the idea of freedom and independence is the two main things that she wanted to achieve in fighting as a women combatant. Hayati's idea of freedom and independence is in related to Aceh becoming a sovereign territory separate from the government of the Republic of Indonesia. However, she also accentuated one's individual freedom and independence.

At that time [my motivations] were mainly about independence. [Independence] in the sense that I want the Acehnese lead by the people who really care about the people of Aceh. That's what our family always talk about, that we have to fight for our own people.

But also for myself, I also think that... hmmm.. how I'm going to say it... like we can do our own things.. like we can be ourselves. I also wanted that kind of freedom (Hayati)

As for Mutia, the idea of a better Aceh was projected through her role as a mother. She confessed that the main driver that motivated her to fight as combatant was she want to make Aceh a better place, at least for the sake of the future lives of her own children.

I imagined that children can go to school easily and no more unemployment. I thought that because I myself did not have the chance to get it [the education]. So I thought I wanted to go to war so that at least my own children can get high education, that they can go to school easier [than me] so that their life can prosper later. (Mutia)

Whereas for Kemala, her ideals of a better Aceh and motivation to fight was based on her own circumstances when she had to join the guerilla movement. As she was forced to leave her village for a safety reason and had to live in the forest with discomfort, she was convinced that she need to fight in order to achieve tranquillity and security.

My hope was only one, I wanted serenity. That means that when the situation is safe, we can do anything calmly and comfortably. It is not just about the situation, but also about inner peace, like mind and body peace. So, you don't have to always feel afraid of what is going to happen tomorrow. I always told myself that I have to survive so I can experience peace. (Kemala)

While Intan insisted that prosperity and peace will not mean anything without justice. For Intan, a sense of injustice and lack of equality in treatment that she often felt was the things that motivated her to join in becoming a woman combatant.

For me, the ideals are about justice. I wanted justice for Acehnese, no partiality. The point is not to be the stepchildren in our own land. Not to be ignored, underestimated. Why did I think like that? I don't know.. maybe because I always think that life is not fair, that my life is full of trouble. So I thought if I joined the fight, I can get justice for myself. (Intan)

In the next section, I will show how the participants compare their lives in two periods, the conflict period and the post-conflict period, and how they interpreted the reality of their lives in both periods. The questions that were asked and discussed with participants during the interviews were: in which period did the participants feel more empowered?, in which period did participants feel their lives were better?, and whether their dreams and hopes for a better Aceh have been fulfilled in the current period of peace? This discussion does not intend to downplay the development actions that have been pursued by the Aceh government along with international aid agencies operating in the Aceh, as well as the results achieved by them. Instead, this discussion will add nuances in understanding the meaning of progress and development from another perspective which could be contrasting from what is usually written in official government and organizational reports.

In addition, although all participants stated that the whole experience of fighting and becoming a combatant was difficult and even traumatic for some, none of them expressed a sense of regret for being combatants. Not only that, behind all the sad and anguished stories they experienced during the war, the facial expressions and tones of voice that I observed from the participants when they were telling their experiences, indicated that senses of pride were more common than sadness. Coupled with the fact that all participants voluntarily participated in the war and none of them surrendered before the war was over except on orders from the commander. Based on the ideas mentioned above, I made the presumption that there might be aspects concerning personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement in the participants' involvement in armed conflict.

Conflict Period: All participants delivered various statements about what they felt when they were guerilla/combatants which indicated feelings of being empowered, useful, and beneficial. The forms of being empowered and beneficial were conveyed differently depending on the roles and responsibilities carried out by each participant in the guerilla forces or GAM organization.

For Mutia, the guerrilla experience in the forest taught her about the meaning of togetherness and understanding. At that time, Mutia said, she felt quite sad because she had to be separated from her child and husband. However, because of a high sense of solidarity and emphatic feelings between members, Mutia could overcome the sadness. Mutia's following statement seems to want to dismiss the general notion of the war's sorrow and suffering.

To be honest, if I had to recall the days of the guerilla in the forest, most of them are pleasant memories. It was a life full of freedom. Imagine it like doing a camping trip but the only difference was this happened for years. Even though we live in a very limited and difficult situation, the atmosphere was more often cheerful. (Mutia)

However, Mutia then signified that she actually felt more useful when she was not yet a guerilla. Before left the forest to hide, Mutia had joined the GAM forces where she was in charge of maintaining warehouse for military logistics in her own house. This position gained her a sense of responsibility and the feeling that she had a significant role in helping the troops operation.

Women sympathizers were used to outwitting the army to hide the supply of weapons, money, foods, and bullets that came from different places. Every day, the combatants from xxxxxxxx and also from xxxxx, came to my place to take the weapons. I stayed in my home to guard the warehouse and to warn the guerillas if there were any suspicion or movement come from the army. It was challenging! The items [that I had to hide] could be unexpected. I even had to hide a motorcycle and complete set of radio equipment for broadcast! (Mutia)

As for Intan, the most significant thing that she perceived when she became a combatant woman was self-confidence. She especially earned it from her experience when she was chosen as one of the few combatant women who were allowed to enlist in the GAM's military training. The statement below indicates the sense of pride felt by Intan when she was being recognized by her ability and capability.

It was like, 'wow, I am great!'. We even use army-like uniforms. It was really cool. When we were in the training, we couldn't behave like spoiled or weak women. If the trainer said 'push up for 100 times!', we, men and women, pushed up for 100 times immediately. Yes, it was tough but that was also what made me feel great and enthusiastic. Sometimes I am still like being amazed by myself, how come I used to be like that? (Intan)

Kemala stated that she felt she had no special role and contribution when she became a combatant. When she joined the guerilla forces, she was basically still performing her domestic duty that was almost identical to her normal role as a housewife which was cooking. However,

based on the interview analysis, there were still indications of Kemala's sense of achievement gained from her not so specific role in the forces. This is related to her scale of responsibility that differs between a cooking role only for her family and a cooking role for all forces' members in the forest. Kemala felt proud that she could keep the members' wellbeing from her cooking so they could stay healthy and fit to fight.

> The funny thing is, many people think that just because we live in the forest, so we could only eat leaves or some stuff. hahaha. I mean, it did happen but not always. When I was in charge, our members could eat full meal. I even smuggled a kerosene stove without getting caught by the army! If you have been living in the forest for quite some time, you eventually knew some tricks. No way that I could let our members starve. They were all like my kids that I need to take care of. [Kemala]

As for Hayati, even though she was the wife of a combatant, this did not automatically place her in a significant position within GAM forces. Just like Kemala, Hayati also claimed that she was more often doing domestic chores such as cooking. During the interview, she also revealed her unofficial role as an adviser to the movement, I still felt that Hayati was trying to suppress her sense of personal achievement. This is because Hayati saw her involvement in the war as something that just should naturally happen as she was born into a family of fighters. Besides that, she also struggled with a sense of remorse from losing many family members during the war that made it difficult for her to openly feel proud of herself.

> I sometimes don't want to remember anymore what it's like or said that I did this and that. Because all my family died there. Sometimes there is a feeling of regret. Not regret about why we became GAM, or why we have to fight because our family had sworn under the Quran [to fight]. After all, in my heart, I just want to live forever in the village, together with my family. Live happily. But because we are destined to fight, it is okay. (Hayati)

Post-conflict period: All participants expressed that they were all grateful that the prolonged war had finally come to an end with the enforcement of the peace agreement. They were also grateful that they no longer had to hide in the forest and could be reunited with their relatives. However, three participants explicitly declared dissatisfaction in accordance with their respective hopes of better Aceh, which they considered to not have yet been achieved in the

current period of peace. They also related to what they have been able to achieve/experience in wartime compared to the present time.

Mutia never felt that her current life situation was better than her situation during the war. Her family's low income coupled with narrow employment opportunities were the main reasons for her deep disappointment with the current situation. Moreover, with the high cost of education which continues to increase every year, it made her feel that the main cause of her struggle in the war can never become a reality.

> My vision of a free and peaceful Aceh is far from reality. I sometimes think it's funny. In the wartime, we could pay for school, but it was not safe. So, we couldn't go to school and get educated. Now, it's safe, but we couldn't pay for school. It is the same after all. They [young people in her village] still couldn't go to school. Without school, a lot of them became thieves. They stole everything. Even my betel trees were stolen. Nothing's change and it feels worse. (Mutia)

In addition, if during the war Mutia's position as a logistics made her feel useful and have the authority, at the present time she cannot feel the same enthusiasm as she feels trapped in her mundane daily life.

> Most of them [fellow women combatant] are just like me. They just stayed at home and become a housewife. That's because we don't know what to do anymore. Life is pretty dull now. (Mutia)

As for Intan, the fact that she becomes the head of the family and the single breadwinner might look like she gained independency and a sense of empowerment, just as she gained when she received GAM's military training. However, she was not getting the same pleasure and satisfaction as she used to feel during the war. This is because Intan does not interpret her current reality as a form of self-actualization but only as her obligation to fulfil her family basic necessities due to her bad economic situation and her lack of capital ownership.

> There is no such thing as prosperity and justice here. Everybody is only busy looking after themselves, depending on themselves. Good life? Where? I have no regrets about my past, but I am sorry about my present. (Intan)

In contrast to Mutia and Intan, Hayati personally claimed to be quite satisfied with her current life situation and indicated that she feels that current peacetime is better than wartime. This resulted from Hayati's self-awareness in interpreting her current situation by comparing herself to the other ex-combatant women's situation that she knew.

> I think I am not supposed to be ungrateful. With what I have right now [being wealthy], I am supposed to be happy and be grateful for everything. I can now live comfortably and gather with my family again. I will be ashamed if I feel it's not enough. (Hayati)

However, Hayati also indicated that there was still a slight sense of disappointment regarding the condition of Aceh in general. Hayati confessed that her war aspirations about Aceh's independence has been largely fulfilled through an autonomous system held by former GAM combatants. Her dissatisfaction arose from the aspect of self-governing which did not meet her expectations.

> What I want is for them [local government] to really take care of the Acehnese people. But over time I just realized that people could change after getting a position. They act as they forget our initial purpose even though they are also GAM people[9]. (Hayati)

In contrast to other participants, Kemala was the only participant who indicated that her life was far better in the current time than in the war. She felt this way because she felt that her war aspirations had been realized and she felt empowered. Kemala's main hope during the war was primarily about wanting some peace and tranquillity in life. As an elder with children who are all grown up and most of them are married, this situation seems to provide a sense of tranquillity for Kemala. In terms of feeling empowered, her current position in the community as the head of a women's recitation group in her village, a position that is quite respected in Acehnese community, made her feel empowered. Although the area of Kemala's leadership is very specific and limited, but compared to her previous role as women combatant which was not

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[9] She actually used the word 'amanah', an Arabic/Islamic concept about credence/reliance. In this quote, she spoke about people who were not 'amanah', with indications about corruption but she did not stated this explicitly.

significant (she did domestic work only), it is understandable that Kemala treasured her current situation more than her past position, even though she still identified herself as the *Inong Balee*.

7.3. Discussion

The findings show that all participants rejected a generalized gender identity as women only. Despite the tough experiences during the war, all participants still preserve their identity as *Inong Balee* (combatant women). This distinct identification of self that is evident in all participants' accounts show how their gender identity interact with another identity based on their social and political experience. The finding confirms similar studies about former combatant women in the post-conflict situation such as those of Sajjad (2004); Hauge (2008); Marhaban & Affiat (2017). These studies generate interesting insights in the impact of war and the way it reconstructs people's perception of themselves. My study findings supplement earlier studies in terms of the discovery of what symbols or values ex-women combatant of GAM use to signify their choice to keep carrying the identity of *Inong Balee* in the post-conflict era. The values of independence, freedom, and fighting spirit are three recurrence themes that are evident in participants accounts, which explains why they chose to continue to carry this identity even after the war. The *Inong Balee* identity in the post-conflict era is a symbol that provides a sense of purpose for each participant to be able to live their daily lives positively. This brings an interesting outlook to the meaning of women combatants or combatants in the general who are broadly equated with aggressive labels such as "rebel" or "separatist" which reproduces certain negative stereotypes about what the label entails. It is necessary to critically assess labelling that is often highly subjective and very dependent on people's stance.

As traumatic as it looks, the war experience turned out to be a core value for ex-combatants in looking at the world. From an intersectionality perspective, my findings show the idea of gender not as a binary male-female model, but as a set of multifaceted and complex characterization developed from the different exposures in people's lives (e.g. social or political experience). This confirms recent critique's around the generalized outlook of gender as two exclusive categories that eliminate gender variability and specificity (e.g. Arora-Jonsson, 2012; Hall, Carr & Pascual, 2016; Kaijser & Kronsel, 2014; Djoudi et al., 2016). Thus, my findings are also in line with previous studies above that emphasize the importance of looking at the gender aspect from its context-specific point of view.

My study finding shows that participants consider the label victim as essentially degrading and debilitating. For the participants, being perceived as victims perpetuated the idea

of them as helpless and weak, a notion totally contradictory to their self-perceived resourcefulness and strength. This finding complemented previous findings that questioning a victimization practice towards ex-women combatant both studies in Aceh (e.g. Lundström & Marhaban, 2017) and in other countries (e.g. Gjelsvik, 2010; K.C. et al., 2017). The finding also indicates that this generalized belief in feminizing the victims turn out to be counterproductive to the intention of empowerment efforts in development programs. This is in line with the critiques from several studies that highlighted the disadvantages of women's victimization narrative in development programs such as Arora-Jonsson (2011) or Chant (2008).

In contrast to the general perception of Aceh post-peace agreement as a better era than the war period, my participants have more complex opinions on this matter. This conclusion is obtained from the exploration and comparative process between three aspects. First, participants' hopes for a better Aceh and their cause of the struggle such as justice, peace, freedom, and prosperity. Second, participants' experience and interpretation of their experiences in the conflict period with essential themes such as the act of self-actualization, feelings of contribution and being useful for the society. Third, their experiences and interpretation of reality in the post-war period such as the feeling of impasse and the feeling of injustice, that resulted in the participants' general idea of life after war as being no better than life during the war—or even worse for some. In addition, in terms of feeling empowered, the finding shows that most participants feel more empowered in the wartime than in current time, considering various roles and situations that they could do as combatant women in the war.

This finding corresponds with a study from Sajjad (2004) that identified several types of empowerment in women's involvement in an armed conflict. Just as the findings in my studies, Sajjad's (2004) also show that the precarious war situation produces an opportunity for gender equality and blurs the line between women's and men's roles which allow women to show their skills and abilities as contributing members in society. My findings also confirm the study of Gjelsvik (2010) about former women combatant in Colombia. Gjelsvik's study highlights competencies and positive experiences that women combatant gain from being part of armed groups.

My study findings contrast the results of the MSR Survey (World Bank, 2009) which concludes that the lives of former combatants in the post-conflict Aceh have become far better than non-combatants, and suggest the elimination of specific assistance programs for former combatants. Based on my study findings, I suggest a more balanced survey process with more

understanding of the context of GAM's organization. Instead of giving advice for removing all special assistance programs for ex-combatants, the survey can be done more carefully by examining which units or parties that are more likely to benefit from the assistance program and which units or parties that have not yet been reached by the assistance program.

Even so, my findings also show contrasting opinions about a better life and being empowered. For one participant, Kemala, she actually could experience those things in the post-conflict period when she gained a position as a religious leader. This contrasting opinion demonstrates that the degree to which empowerment and better life are perceived depends on various factors such as how much participant's current reality meets their individual expectations and dreams, the kind of role that participants were given or acquired during the war, and participants position and role in current society. In addition, other areas of variability were psychological wellbeing, economic status, and the level of responsibility and the number of dependents in the household. My findings support a study from Hauge (2008) that records the determinant's variability of social and political participation among former combatant women in Guatemala.

By showing that betterment of life is contingent on participants' specific positionality, my study findings support the argument of Fan's critique (2013) about the ownership of the 'building back better' in the narrative of development and restoration after the disaster and post-conflict Aceh: "What exactly does better look like? Better for whom, where, how? Who decided?" (P. 2). My study findings conclude Fan's questioning of the principle of a better life itself is relative, highly subjective, depends on who evaluates it, and from which side the assessment is carried out. From an intersectionality point of view, my findings also show the actual example of women's differentiated realities and situations as proposed by intersectional theorists (Kaijser & Kronsel, 2014; Thompson-Hall et al., 2016, Djoudi et al., 2016). In dealing with reality, especially concerning everyday experiences in a small, rural location, this reality is often considered as something that is shared, absolute, and actuals. In fact, as evidenced in the study findings, the intersections between various social factors such as gender identity, political identity, economic class, age, and religion, turned out to create unique and specific situations which differ from one individual to another. Therefore, the reality/experiences are a broad spectrum which is a product of intersecting social patterns.

8. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to explore the perceptions and experiences of ex-combatant women towards the current practice of climate change mitigation and adaptation programs in Aceh. This study was also conducted to explore ex-combatant women's positionalities in the society through their specific identities and situated reality in the post-conflict of Aceh. Perceptions and attitudes of ex-combatant women demonstrated reluctance, the loss of interest, and lack of excitement towards women's empowerment and aid or humanitarian program in general. One among several reasons of program fatigues coming from the abundance of community assistance and humanitarian programs operating in participants area. This has proven to influence the implementation and program planning of the women's empowerment program of the VFM Program of FFI In Indonesia in which participants showed a non-involvement attitude.

Further exploration of participants' non-involvement in the women's empowerment program of FFI Indonesia, revealed various forms of barriers, social struggles and vulnerabilities arise from the intersecting patterns of participants' specific identities as both women and former women combatants. While gender-related challenges are significant factors, participants' past histories as women combatants proved to be equally or even more important for the ways participants relate to the women's empowerment program.

The current practice of climate change mitigation and adaptation program in Aceh has insufficiently accommodated the specific positionalities of ex-combatant women in society. The systematic non-acknowledgement of ex-combatant women's specific identities and needs, which is reflected in the women's program options limited for women, has made it difficult for ex-combatants to access aid and humanitarian programs that would be in accordance with their interests and aspirations as former women combatants.

Exploration of participants' specific experiences and roles during the conflict as women combatants and the interpretation of those experiences in the post-conflict era, revealed more dimensions of the spectrum of self-identification. The multifaceted identities and realities of participants have challenged conventional gender identities and normative social positions. The way each individual manifests her concept of self, shows the unique and distinct variants of social intersections among participants—regardless of whether they share the same intersecting identities as a combatant woman or not. Other social and cultural labels owned by participants—whether as mothers, religious leaders, or head of the family—also played a large part in influencing their everyday realities and self-conceptualization beyond the contestation

between the identity of 'women' and 'women combatant '. Thus, this example of the personal positionalities' spectrum has also challenged the linear concept of 'build back better' in Aceh. It helps to illuminate the diverse and dynamic notion of Aceh post-conflict situation with hopes that it can result in a better understanding of a climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts--or any other development efforts--which are currently underway in Aceh.

Applying the intersectionality framework to view climate change and gender issues have proven to be useful to uncover differentiated social vulnerabilities and multiple barriers experienced by specific individuals or groups in society. This framework helps to create a pathway to illuminate how different individuals or groups are differently affected, exposed and challenged in relation to climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. Having a deep understanding of the context-specific situation of the participants and their community, is an important factor to successfully apply the intersectionality framework in research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview guide

Identity	Pre-2004	- What does being a combatant mean to you?
	Post-2004	- What does the term 'victim of war' bring to mind? How does it make you feel? - What does the term 'ex combatant' bring to mind? How does it make you feel?
Role and Positions	Pre-2004	- How did you get involved in the GAM female unit? - Tell me about your jobs in the organisation? What did you get out of this? - What is the best and hardest part of being a combatant? - Tell me about an experience that stood out for you while you were participated in the war? - What were you hoping to achieve by joining the war?
	Post-2004	- Tell me about your daily life in your village and what do you do - How does the 'ex-combatant' title affect your daily life? - What is the best and hardest part of living in this village after the war has ended? - Do you think your hopes were met after peace?
Climate change stories: experience and impacts		

Appendix B: Thematic Network Analysis of Data

Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Program Fatigue	Attitudes towards Aid and Humanitarian Program in General	Ex-Combatant Women's Attitudes towards Humanitarian and Women's Empowerment Program
Gendered-related obligations	Social Barriers and Vulnerabilities not Related to Past-history as Women Combatant	
Organizational challenges		
Program's incompatibility	Social Barriers and Vulnerabilities Related to Past-history as Women Combatant	
Stigmatization		
Struggles in reintegration		
I am not just a woman	Narrative of Feminizing the Victims	Intersecting Gender Identity and Social Positionality for the Ex-Combatant Women
I am a fighter		
I am not a victim		
Goals and motivation: Reason joining the war	Narratives of a 'Better Life' and 'Empowerment'	
Conflict period		
Post-conflict period		

Appendix C: Research approval from FFI Indonesia (in Indonesian)

FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL

FFI Aceh - Indonesia Programme

Jln. Tenggiri No.4 Kec. Kuta Alam Lampriet – Banda Aceh, Aceh 23121
Telp. 085103406686 Fax. (0651) –8051092 , website: www.fauna-flora.org
NPWP: 02.690.719.6-101.000

SURAT KETERANGAN
025/ADM/FFI-BAO/VIII/2018

Fauna & Flora International Aceh – Indonesia Programme dengan ini menerangkan bahwa sdr/i. Cahaya Ramadhani adalah mahasiswa program *Master's Programme in Global Development Theory and Practice, University of Bergen*. Dalam rangka program pendidikan yang dilakukannya, sdr/i Cahaya Ramadhani akan melakukan studi dan kajian lapang di wilayah hutan desa di Pidie dan Pidie Jaya (Rencana studi lapang terlampir). Berkenaan dengan hal tersebut kami berharap agar kajian yang dilakukan dapat memperoleh dukungan data dan informasi terkait.

Demikian atas perhatian dan kerjasamanya diucapkan terimakasih.

Hormat kami,

FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL

Silfi Iriyani, S.Hut., M.Si.
Policy & Governance Coordinator

Appendix D: Consent Form in English

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN
Faculty of Psychology

Request for participation in research project

"Hearing the Voices of Ex-Combatant Women of GAM in Northern Aceh: Intersecting Identity, Marginality, and Vulnerability in the Face of Climate Change and Disaster."

*This information will be presented orally in Indonesian and/or Acehnese in most cases due to literacy levels of the population, as well as the social norms of the community.

Background and Purpose

This research project aims to investigate what are the positions and roles of ex-combatant women of GAM in the post-conflict and post-tsunami Aceh, and to what extent do the current positions of ex-combatant women of GAM influence the ex-combatants vulnerabilities and risk to the future disaster. This research is a master's thesis project in fulfilment of the requirements to earn the degree of Master of Philosophy in Global Development-theory and practice with Specialization of Gender in Global Development at University of Bergen, Norway. Funding comes from Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP RI) from Ministry of Finance, Republic of Indonesia.

You have been chosen because as an ex-combatant woman of GAM, you will have knowledge and experiences to talk about life experiences in the wartime as well as life experiences in the post-peace agreement period. In addition, you also have life experiences in dealing with flood disaster events and could share your experiences in receiving disaster risk reduction and empowerment programs provided to you, both from government and international agencies, regarding your specific identity within the Aceh community.

What does participation in the project imply?

Your daily activities will be accompanied and observed by me as a researcher where we will be talking about your past experiences as an ex-combatant woman and what you are doing now after the peace agreement. You will also be questioned about your experience during the floods in North Aceh last year and your thoughts or feelings about your current life situation with your status as an ex-combatant woman. You may also wish to agree to a follow-up interview to find out more about your opinions and thoughts about the things we discussed earlier. The whole process is expected to take about two months. We will choose time to meet together with the frequency that is also up to you. Please answer the questions I ask you only when you feel comfortable to answer them. There are no other commitments associated with participating.

Participating in the research may cause you any disadvantages or discomfort especially in the part when we talk about the experiences during the war. The potential psychological harm or distress will be minimized as much as possible by doing the interview in a place that is convenient for you, according to the time and situation that you want. However, if the discomfort persists, the interview can be stopped without the need to provide an explanation. I can also help to connect you to psychiatric experts in Northern Aceh who can support you in overcoming your emotional distress.

Observations data will be collected in the form of field notes while the interviews data will be collected in the form of audio recordings. All of the data will be used to formulate the research report. Multiple interview quotes of your statement will be in the report as a part of research findings. You will be given a chance to see the draft of the study and you will be able to revoke your interview quote if you feel the quotation is untrue or you just do not want them to be published.

What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially and only used for purposes of this project. Any data collected about you will be stored in a form protected by passwords and other relevant security processes and technologies. All personal data will be stored separately from other data. It shall not be shared with anyone other than my project supervisor. You will not be able to be directly identified in any reports or publications. Your data will be anonymised and your name in the report will be replaced by a fictitious name. However, it is still possible for you to be indirectly identifiable through your background information such as place of residence and organisation affiliation combined with data on age, gender, and occupation. The project is scheduled for completion by June 30 2019. After the project is completed all data shall be deleted.

Voluntary participation
It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact me, Cahaya Ramadhani (081284284254 or cahayaramadhani7@gmail.com) as the researcher or you can also contact Paul Kellner (+4755583970 or paul.kellner@uib.no) as my supervisor from University of Bergen.

If you have any complaints about the project in the first instance you can contact me as a researcher. If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact my supervisor to take your complaint further. If you feel that you are too reluctant or uncomfortable to convey the complaint directly to me, you can submit it to the Geuchik as a leader in the village to be delivered to me later. There will be no consequences of any kind to your complaint.

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

Signature.. Date......../........./.........

Appendix E Ethical clearance from NSD

NSD

University of Bergen
Att: Paul J. Kellner
paul.kellner@uib.no
Att: Cahaya Ramadhani
cahayaramadhani7@gmail.com

ASSESSMENT OF PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA IN HEARING THE VOICES OF EX-COMBATANT WOMEN OF GAM IN NORTHERN ACEH: INTERSECTING IDENTITY, MARGINALITY, AND VULNERABILITY IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER

In reference to the Notification Form sent to NSD - The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS on 04.07.2018. The notification concerns the processing of personal data for research purposes.

In accordance with our agreement with the data controller, The University of Bergen, NSD has carried out an assessment of the planned processing of personal data in accordance with data protection legislation.

The result of NSD's assessment:

NSD finds that you will be processing personal data in the form of background information that can identify a person until 30.06.2019.

NSD's assessment is that the processing of personal data will be in accordance with data protection legislation, and that the legal basis for processing personal data is consent.

Our assessment presupposes that the student and supervisor will process personal data in accordance with:
- The information given in the Notification Form and attachments
- Dialogue with NSD, and our assessment (see under)
- The University of Bergen's internal guidelines/routines for information security, including rules for which technical aids are allowed to be used
- The University of Bergen's guidelines for the processing of personal data outside the EEA/EU.

Basis for NSD's assessment:

1. **Description of the planned processing of personal data**

The purpose of the project is to explore the differentiated social vulnerabilities experienced by the ex-combatant women of GAM (Free Aceh Movement) in the face of climate change and disaster. This is a region in Indonesia.

The sample consists of one person of at least 21 years of age. However, the respondent represents a group of identity belonging to a communal society where all of the community structures will certainly know and indirectly participate in the whole research process. Therefore, following the traditional customs in the place, the process of taking the consent must be carried out thoroughly, starting from the village head, the group agreement, and finally the respondent herself. In total, the number of people who will be asked to give their consent is around 4-5 people, even though when the research begins only one person would be interviewed.

All data will be stored in SAFE (Secure Access to Research Data and E-Infrastructure) provided by IT department at the University of Bergen which will ensures that information security with regard to confidentiality, integrity and accessibility is taken care of in the processing of sensitive personal data. A physical signed consent forms will be scanned to protect against the risk of physical copies being lost. Identifiable information and any other information about the participant on consent forms will be retained separately. Personal computer will be given a strong password and will be stored in a locked locker. After thesis, all identifying data shall be deleted.

Participation is voluntary and the participants give their informed consent to participate.

According to the Notification Form, collected personal data will be processed until 30.06.2019

2. Principles relating to processing personal data

NSD's assessment is that the processing is in accordance with the principles relating to processing personal data, since:
- personal data will be processed legally, fairly, and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subjects (see point 3 and 4)
- personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes (see point 1 and 3)
- processing will be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purpose of the project (see point 10)
- personal data will be stored in such a way that it is not possible to identify data subjects for longer than it is necessary for the purpose of the project (see point 6 and 10)

3. Legal basis for processing personal data

Consent (art. 6.1 a)
NSD finds the planned processing of person data to be legal on the grounds that consent will be gained from the data subjects.

NSD finds the planned processing of person data to be legal on the grounds that:
- explicit consent will be gained from the data subjects and the consent is documented with a signature on the information sheet.
- the researcher has fulfilled the requirement of consulting with a Data Protection Officer or equivalent

4. The rights of data subjects

NSD's assessment is that data subjects are entitled to exercise the right to
- access their personal data that is being processed
- request that their personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data is corrected/rectified

- receive a copy of their personal data (data portability)
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer of the data controller, or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority, regarding the processing of their personal data

NSD finds that the information letter received 04.07.2018 will provide data subjects with adequate information about what participation involves and which rights they have.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, The University of Bergen has a duty to reply within a month. We presuppose that the project leader informs The University of Bergen as quickly as possible and that the institution has routines for how inquiries from data subjects will be followed up.

5. Information Security

According to the Notification Form, personal data will be processed using a digital sound recorder. All data will be stored in SAFE, provided by the IT department at The University of Bergen. Only the responsible student and supervisor will have access to the data material.

NSD presupposes that personal data are processed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and The University of Bergen's guidelines/routines for information security.

6. Processing personal data outside the EU

According to the Notification Form, personal data will be collected in Indonesia. This involves transferring personal data to a third party/international organisation based outside the EEA/EU.

NSD presupposes that the project leader clarifies the transferring of personal data to a third party with The University of Bergen. We remind you that The University of Bergen has the responsibility to demonstrate that the processing of personal data meets the conditions in Chapter 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation.

7. Duration

According to the notification form, personal data will be processed until 30.06.2019. Collected data that can be linked to individual participants will then be anonymised.

Anonymising the collected data entails processing it in such a way that no individuals can be identified. This is done by:
- deleting name, national ID number/other ID number, address, telephone number, email address, IP address and other online identifiers
- deleting/rewriting age, place of residence, institution, localisation data and other background information
- deleting/editing digital photographs/video recordings and audio recordings

The University of Bergen must be able to demonstrate/document that the collected data has been anonymised.

Notifying changes to the project

If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data, it may be necessary to notify NSD via 'Min Side'. You can find information on our website about which changes should be notified. Do not carry out the change until you have received a reply from us.

Information about processing is published on 'Min side', 'Meldingsarkivet' and our website

All relevant information and documentation is available:

- via 'Min side' (My Page) for researchers, supervisors and students
- via 'Meldingsarkivet' (notification archive) for employees at The University of Bergen with internal auditing tasks must be able to demonstrate/document that the collected data has been anonymised.

NSD will contact you regarding the status for processing personal data

In accordance with our agreement with The University of Bergen, NSD will follow up the processing of personal data at the end of the project.

We will send a written inquiry to the project leader and ask for a written reply to the status for processing personal data.

Look at our website or contact us if you have questions. Good luck with the project.

Best wishes,

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren
Head of Section

Øivind Armando Reinertsen
Adviser

Reference to legislation

NSD's assessment is that the planned processing of personal data:

- is regulated by the Personal Data Act, cf. § 2.
- complies with the following principles in the General Data Protection Regulation:
    - lawfulness, fairness and transparency cf. art. 5.1 a)
    - purpose limitation cf. art. 5.1 b)
    - data minimisation cf. art. 5.1 c)
    - storage limitation cf. art. 5.1 e).
- may take place pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a)
- will be carried out in a way that safeguards the rights of the data subjects cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 11-21.

NSD presupposes that the data controller also ensures that the processing of personal data is carried out in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation:

- art. 5.1 d) and art. 5.1. f), and art. 32 regarding information security
- Chapter 5 for transferring personal data to a third party/international organisation outside the EEA/EU