

# SCRAPS OF HOPE

**‘Researching “Punk Indonesia”’ – interview with Marjaana Jauhola by Jim Donaghey, Research Fellow, Queen’s University Belfast and “Researching Punk Indonesia” special issue editor for Punk & Post-Punk 6(2).<sup>1</sup>**

## Scraps of Hope

is an urban ethnographic research project by Dr. Marjaana Jauhola that offers a critical contribution to the study of post-conflict condition, complexities of rebuilding a city of Banda Aceh in Indonesia in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean earthquakes and the tsunami and thirty years of armed conflict. It combines ethnographic writing and short documentaries. For more information, <http://scrapsofhope.fi/aceh/>

## Dr. Marjaana Jauhola

is a Academy of Finland Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Development Studies at the University of Helsinki, Finland. She holds PhD in International Politics (2010) from Aberystwyth University. Her primary focus is on gendered politics of post-disaster and conflict reconstruction.

Indonesia boasts one of the largest punk scenes on the planet, rich with its own unique expressions of punk. This is already reason enough for any ‘punkademic’ to do research in Indonesia (as many have, especially after the high-profile abduction of sixty-four punks in Banda Aceh in 2011), but most of these researchers have come from the Global North.



Many of these researchers are ‘insiders’ in terms of the global punk scene, but remain as ‘outsiders’ to Indonesian culture. Indonesian punk is often viewed as ‘exotic’ from a Western perspective, which repeats/entrenches Orientalist worldviews. An Anglophone academic world is sometimes deaf to people from the Global South researching their own locales – but outsider research risks misrepresentation, and under the pressures of profit-driven academia, exploitation. This complex research context must be approached carefully.

In preparation for the article **“Researching ‘Punk Indonesia’: notes towards a non-exploitative insider methodology”**, **Jim interviewed a number of researchers who have conducted research on punk in Indonesia.** The article incorporates the views of a number of people who have done research in Indonesia, to consider different approaches to researching punk in Indonesia.

<sup>1</sup> Reference as Donaghey, Jim & Jauhola, Marjaana (2017) ‘Researching “Punk Indonesia”’ – interview with Marjaana Jauhola by Jim Donaghey for the special issue “Researching Punk Indonesia”. <html-address> (Accessed date).

The views of Indonesian punks and academics will be presented alongside those of their Western counterparts in an attempt to negotiate a research approach that is non-exploitative, representative, sensitive, and democratic, while remaining rigorous, analytical, and critical.



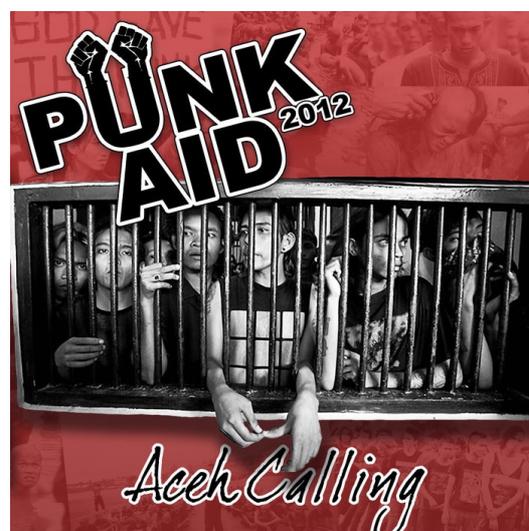
This is the full email interview transcript with Marjaana Jauhola:

**Jim:** Why study punk? And why study punk in Indonesia? How did this research focus come to your attention? Was it easy to do (in terms of access, funding, institutional support etc.)?

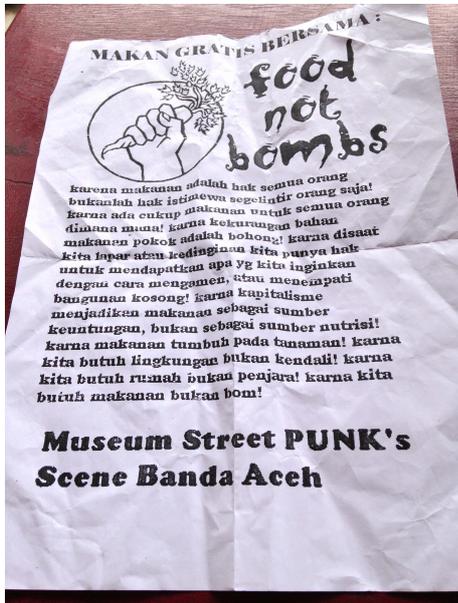
**Marjaana:** Studying the Tsunami Museum punk scene in Banda Aceh became part of my wider research project in which I conducted urban ethnography in the administrative neighbourhoods of the city (2012-16). I had defended my PhD thesis “Becoming ‘Better’ Men and ‘Women’: Negotiating Normativity through Gender Mainstreaming in Post-Tsunami Reconstruction Initiatives in Aceh, Indonesia” at the Aberystwyth University/UK in 2010 (which was a result of 8,5 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Aceh between 2006-9, see details in Jauhola 2013).

Since the defense, I had returned to Finland and had tried gaining research funding in order to return to Aceh to study gendered politics of everyday lives in the urban towns in Aceh through the lived experiences of number of marginal/marginalised communities. That took two years. In between I managed to gain temporary teaching jobs and finally during the spring 2012, got a post-doctoral research fellow position that allowed me to make preparations for returning to Aceh. In my earlier work, studying forms of governmentality, such as *state ibuism* (state motherhood), was an important way of attempting to understand gendered forms of politics that both create and control ideas for being ‘a good woman’ and ‘a good man’.

Thus, although with no funding to conduct further ethnographic research in Aceh, I had followed, increasingly through online and social media, news from Aceh. Given my special interest for gendered politics in/on Aceh, I had followed the urban development and governance agenda in the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, launched by the mayoral leadership as a slogan *kota Madani* (civilized and Islamic city of Banda Aceh, which I discuss in Jauhola 2015 and forthcoming). At the time of the metal and punk band concert in 2011 that was disrupted by the vice-mayor Ibu Illiza (mayor between 2014-17, lost in the 2017 elections), military and Shari’a and civil police (*Satpol PP & WH*) resulting in an arrest and re-education of all-in-all 65 punks and metal followers, I was following literally in front of my eyes on



my computer screen, how a local news item (article by *Serambi Indonesia*) of the arrest circulated in just three days into English speaking Indonesian news (Jakarta Post, Jakarta Globe) and further into global multilingual news and how in that circulation the arrest was gaining specific framings given the global attention to Islam and Shari'a law since 9/11 and war-on-terror (see Jauhola 2013, 2015a,b and forthcoming).



So when I returned to Banda Aceh in September-October 2012 to do a teaching job at one of the local universities, I also initiated my urban ethnographic research in Banda Aceh – by mainly walking the streets and talking to people in order to return later next 4 years for longer periods of research for life narrative interviews and participatory observations. Although I was able to spot the locations where the punks gathered purely based on the news coverage I was following, I was initially not able to find/meet them. It was on my second visit in 2013 when a *Food not Bombs* leaflet was handed to me by a group of punks at a park that had become central location for my ethnography (see details in Bolong and Jauhola 2014, Jauhola 2015a,b). A key ‘street credibility’ and door opener was to ask to meet one of the punks using his punk name. It was a name that was given to me by Acehnese undergraduate sociology students who were his former friends from a critical cultural collective he had earlier been part of.

**Jim:** How are you positioned as a researcher? I’m interested in the idea of being an ‘insider’ in some respects and an ‘outsider’ in others. How did this positioning affect your research? Was it something that you gave a lot of consideration to?

**Marjaana:** All in all after these ten past years, my positionality to do research in Aceh has been in a flux and I have spent the last few years trying to articulate what such an intersubjectively formed ethnographic research encounter means and can be (see specifically Jauhola 2015a). First of all, I am clearly an outsider to Aceh, and to Banda Aceh, but my roles as a former tsunami aid worker (2005), being a citizen of Finland (the 2005 Aceh Peace Process was negotiated in Finland and I had been following the process through my Finnish and Acehnese activist networks), and nowadays a colleague and contributor to the Acehnese academic and scholarly community, makes me someone who moves in and out of various groups and has made me more and more embedded in number of processes, discussions and debates.

For punks, I was initially a total outsider but I soon discovered that in fact, what I was personally (as Marjaana, a researcher) to them, did not really matter that much initially, but rather I arrived as a continuum of other (white female) foreigners who wanted to hear and publish their story. Mostly this had meant both Indonesian, but also foreign journalists, but also at the time of the *Food not bombs* event in the streets of Banda Aceh, the punks were filmed for a documentary film “Street Punk! Banda



Aceh” by Maria Bakkalabulo and Niall Macaulay ([www.vimeo.com/ondemand/streetpunkbandaaceh](http://www.vimeo.com/ondemand/streetpunkbandaaceh), see also Bakkalabulo and Macaulay 2015). I soon realized that punks actively wanted to reach out for outsiders like myself – whose visits they saw as strategic encounters to spread their existence and stories out of Aceh – which would give them more space (and trouble at the same time) locally (I have written about this strategic ‘want’ on both sides of being researched and researcher in Jauhola 2015a,b, forthcoming).

Yet, being an ethnographer, who does not have an immediate output (such as a journal article, YouTube video or blog posting) my role was and become different – which was discussed number of times and on number of occasions. As I actively connected with the punks also through social media, my interaction with a number of them (roughly 15-20, out of which some were visitors to Aceh from Medan’s punk scenes) expanded from those periods spent in Banda Aceh to a longer term interaction. The combination of ‘traditional’ participatory observation and informal interviews, the process included getting to know them – or rather their social media identity work mostly in Facebook. But increasingly in 2014-16 when visiting Banda Aceh, spending time with one family – something which I also found really important for my research perspective which tries avoiding forming life histories centered around individualism or belonging to one group, such as punk scene, only. Yet, this moving in and out of groups had its difficult moments for ethical reasons: maintaining relations without compromising trust and confidentiality of discussions – for example with family members, or law enforcement officers/municipality authorities.



Being a female studying mostly male punk community was something that also needed negotiation, 1) with the punks - in such discussions we took advantage of a situated gendered space to discuss myths about West, assumptions of free sex, but also sexual harassment and what feminisms are about, but also 2) with the municipality authorities, police, and in particular the military police. Accusations of punks being involved with “free sex” was a major locally produced media story – and my presence that was constantly breaking the local gender-separated space local regulation – was an issue that required

attention. In more general, aligning with the gendered spaces in the evenings and night time, punks would indicate to me, as they would do with their girlfriends and female hang around groups, when it was time to leave (they would also warn of possible raids, but also actively keep me “out” of troubles), they would sometimes also walk with me to ‘guardian’ my safety back home, or lend a motorbike from someone to drop me off.

Being a female, however, also opened doors to interact with the female punks, wannabes and girlfriends and learn about the gendered intra-community relations and especially how these relations often were formed through stereotypically heteronormative gender norms (mothering, caring reserved for females), but how these relationships also interacted with class and social status (money, clothes, top up’s to prepaid mobile etc.). This care role became particularly relevant at the time when two punks were arrested and detained for several months in 2014-15 (see the contribution to the special issue, Jauhola & Bolong 2017). It made it possible for me to follow in particular one female punk

taking responsibility for assisting the detained ones, and literally reaching for my help at the time they were detained using Facebook messaging. I clearly became, as would some other human rights lawyers or local aid/service provision NGOs, one of the persons from whom they would seek help and assistance. I became quite closely involved with the two court cases and was no longer at that time an outsider, but clearly sided with them and the human rights lawyers who were at the case. The article in this special issue narrates that process in more detail.



Although I was allowed to become part of the community (or at least follow the groups) and document events and discussions – there were also such moments when this “right” was questioned – and as the punk community would – these were discussed in joint evening meetings and I would clarify and distance myself from the group, if that was required or requested from me.

Some of the activities and events that took place later in 2015 – two punks being involved with a major *ganja* trafficking and later detained and trailed – meant that I decided to actively distance myself from the ally where the evening gatherings were taking place. I considered it to be too risky to me personally as it could lead to be potentially questioned/arrested for alleged possession of drugs – which is a major crime in Indonesia, and occasionally misused to extort money from foreigners. The police, army and major political and economic players are involved with drug trafficking and the risk of stepping on too

important toes caused major concern for me in the later stages of the research.

**Jim:** What was it like to do the research? Please include details of how long your research lasted, where you visited, which scenes you were engaged with etc., but I would also be interested to hear anecdotal stories of your research experience. How did you feel during the process?

**Marjaana:** All in all, I have spent some 6-7 months in the streets of Banda Aceh, and shared social media spaces with the punks from 2013 until now. At the height of some violent events involving the punks and the military police in 2013, I felt, as a female and foreigner, quite vulnerable. Given how militarized the city of Banda Aceh still continues to be (Jauhola 2015a,b, Jauhola & Bolong 2017), my fears were related to the big powers and their involvement with both drugs, but also other crimes taking place in the city. Yet, when I was sexually street harassed by an ex-combatant *becak*



driver, the support given by the punks and by one of punk's well-connected family, made me feel connected (instead of vulnerable and isolated) and it calmed me down.



The time spent with the punks consisted mainly hanging around in different parts of the city following their daily routines: usually I would go and search for them around noon (when they would slowly wake up), hang with them during the daytime waiting for the *maghrib* prayer, which was then start of an evening activities – i.e. playing songs in middle class restaurants to gather money for food, and drugs (alcohol and others), ending the evening in their evening hang-about. When the two punks were detained, those routines were regularly broken when I would accompany one of the girlfriends to visit them in prison, take part in the court sessions, visit the human rights lawyer's offices, but also spend long time with one of the family whose son was detained. Those months in particular turned the ethnography away from the center of the city where the punks would take their walks singing and playing, to the other spheres in the city, such as their family life and engagement with the law and order, but also legal aid that eventually become available for them.

In later stages, when for some of the punks, the drugs were becoming a major addiction and problem I also extended my field sites to one of the few charities run drug rehabilitation center and their outdoor rehabilitation meetings in the city. I also spent time with those who would these days identify belonging to the Banda Acehese metal scene – some of whom had been also detained and re-educated in 2011 – but whose stories were not included in the global media circuit. Again, focusing on the metal scene will be part of my monograph chapter on punk and metal in Aceh, and hopefully some later publications and talks.

**Jim:** In retrospect, is there anything you would have done differently during the research? Would you have taken a different approach in general? Did any new avenues of investigation appear that you would like to revisit?



**Marjaana:** Given that my funding required me to do a full amount of teaching during the academic years of 2012-2013, it was literally impossible to spend longer than my summer breaks in one go in Aceh. In retrospect, that was not ideal, and that definitely changed the way in which I was able to interact with the punks. It required using social media and chats to keep contact with them – with varying success. Again I see this as a way how the precarious working conditions of early career researchers really do not give the possibility for such a long ethnographic fieldwork that would be ideal – even with my own standards although I am not a trained anthropologist.

**Jim:** What was your approach to analyzing the research data? To what extent did you apply theory? To what extent did you critique the research information? Were your research subjects included in

this process in any way? In these questions I'm interested to understand the role of the researcher in terms of interpreting information, especially interviewee testimony. Do you take the interviewee at face-value, or are you more critical?

**Marjaana:** This for me analysis is still an ongoing process. Yet, my writing process started with a joint photo essay with one of the punks, Yudi Bolong (Jauhola and Bolong 2014), who has appeared as one of the leaders/elders of the group in number of other occasions (news paper articles and several documentary films). This writing process was a result of a joint process of learning about local "punk politics" (see also Jauhola & Bolong 2017).

SOSIOHUMANIKA:  
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**HAMDANI M. SYAM & EFFENDI HASAN**

**Perkembangan Komunitas Anak Punk di Kota Banda Aceh: Pandangan Masyarakat dan Kebijakan Pemerintah Kota**

**RESUME:** Penelitian ini mengkaji pandangan masyarakat kota Banda Aceh terhadap perkembangan komunitas anak "punk" di kota Banda Aceh. Penelitian ini dilakukan di empat kecamatan di wilayah kota Banda Aceh, yaitu Kecamatan Luang Bata, Baiturrahman, Meuraxa, dan Kuta Alam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode bersifat deskriptif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi lapangan, wawancara mendalam, dan studi pustaka. Sedangkan penentuan informan dilakukan secara purposive. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perkembangan komunitas anak "punk" di kota Banda Aceh, dalam pandangan masyarakat kota Banda Aceh pada umumnya, adalah negatif. Hal ini terlihat dari tingginya tingkat persentase sikap masyarakat kota Banda Aceh yang menolak perkembangan dan keberadaan komunitas tersebut di kota Banda Aceh, yaitu sebesar 88.63%, serta tingginya persentase masyarakat kota Banda Aceh yang mendukung tindakan pemerintah kota Banda Aceh dalam memberantas perkembangan serta keberadaan komunitas anak "punk" di kota Banda Aceh, yaitu sebesar 90.60%. Sedangkan persentase masyarakat kota Banda Aceh yang menerima keberadaan dan perkembangan komunitas anak "punk" di kota Banda Aceh hanya sebesar 11.37%, serta tingkat persentase masyarakat kota Banda Aceh yang tidak setuju dengan tindakan tegas pemerintah kota Banda Aceh dalam memberantas komunitas anak "punk" di kota Banda Aceh hanya sebesar 3.40%.

**KATA KUNCI:** Komunitas anak "punk", pandangan masyarakat, tindakan pemerintah, peran keluarga, tokoh masyarakat, dan pemerintah kota Banda Aceh.

**ABSTRACT:** This paper entitled "The Development of 'Punk' Adolescent Community in Banda Aceh: Views of the Acehese Society and Policy of City Government". This study examines the views of Banda Aceh's society on the development of "punk" adolescent community in the city of Banda Aceh. The research was conducted in four sub-districts in the city of Banda Aceh, i.e. Luang Bata, Baiturrahman, Meuraxa, and Kuta Alam. This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The data was collected through field observation, in-depth interviews, and literature. Meanwhile, the determination of the informant is purposive sampling. The results showed that the development of "punk" adolescent community in the city of Banda Aceh, in the view of Banda Aceh society in general, is negative. It is evident from the high level of public attitudes percentage of Banda Aceh society who rejected the development and existence of the "punk" adolescent community in the city of Banda Aceh, in the amount of 88.63%, and the high percentage of people who support the policy and action of Banda Aceh government to eradicate the development and presence of "punk" adolescent community in the city of Banda Aceh, amounting to 90.60%. While the percentage of people who received the development of "punk" adolescent community in the city of Banda Aceh was only 11.37%, and the percentage rate of the Banda Aceh society who disagree with the policy and action of city government to eradicate the "punk" adolescent community in Banda Aceh was only 3.40%.

**KEY WORD:** Community of "punk" adolescent, public opinion, government policy and action, the roles of family, community leaders, and the government of Banda Aceh city.

**PENDAHULUAN**  
Masyarakat Aceh dikenal sejak puluhan abad yang lalu sebagai masyarakat yang menjadikan Islam sebagai nilai, norma, dan standar etika yang memayungi setiap gerak individu dalam kehidupan keseharian. Nilai dan norma tersebut menjelma sebagai

nilai positif yang dipatuhi dan diikuti oleh seluruh masyarakat Aceh sebagai referensi dalam menjalankan kegiatan sehari-hari. Nilai-nilai dan norma Islam ini juga akhirnya melahirkan panduan baku bagi masyarakat Aceh dalam menjalankan sejumlah interaksi sosial.

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Through my campus contacts I got to know that two local researchers had conducted research on the Banda Acehese punks (Syam and Hasan 2013). I decided to ask them for a meeting to learn about it. When I was on my way to the meeting, I realised that one of the researchers had been a PhD student few years ago, who had quite dramatically attacked one local women's activist for being Western and anti-Islam, and for having advocated for gender equality of post-tsunami recovery programs (Hasan 2008).

In that meeting I realised that the punk community had refused to be studied by these two local researchers who instead had conducted a survey within the neighbourhoods where the punks were known to hang around. They had had published the results in an Indonesian academic journal *Pendidikan Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan*. After having gained access to the article and their description of the aims of the survey, it was rather clear that their agenda was to provide a case how the municipal government had failed to fulfill the "wishes" of Banda Acehese population: wiping the punks out of Aceh.

Going through the article, which is assumably peer reviewed, it became clear that it had major problems methodologically, and ethically. In my polite ways I tried discussing what ethnographic methodology and ethics entails for me, and revealed that I had gained access to the punk community, but that due to ethics I did not feel comfortable discussing my research, or my data, with them. When the meeting was over, I decided to bring the survey and the journal article into the attention of the punk community – as we had over the weeks been discussing how the local civilian authorities, police, military, and the media were using their power to tell the story of the punks – and how local academics – were also obviously involved. Yudi was one the first persons with whom I discussed the results of the meeting, and we together read the article at the museum. He made notes of the academic journal article, and then later in that same evening, had a meeting with the group where he summarized the contents. Yudi also recognised that authors/journal had used images that were not



from Banda Aceh punk scene, but in fact were photos taken from a famous punk movie *Punk in Love* (2009) that had been released few years earlier.

For me this process was, a very important way of reversing the gaze, and allowing the punks to do analysis of the impacts of the academia, especially the ones, who collaborate with the authorities – but also engage in discussions about informed consent, research ethics, and what does reclaiming voice through research, but also postcolonial research methodology means.

This then led to the publication that was written with my laptop in the following way: Yudi wrote his reflections of the situation and his detention, combined with poems/lyrics of his songs written in the prison, and I wrote an introductory text trying to contextualise and explain how we had met. One could analyse the hierarchical positionalities, embedded power relations, and dynamics of that article and collaboration (my laptop,

my translations into English and back to Indonesia). Being an ethnographer and having studied postcolonial theory, I by no means argue that collaborative writing such as that is unproblematic, or that such form of publishing solves power hierarchies. Yet, I argue that experimenting such forms of analysis and publications that are done jointly has a potential to challenge such forms of research that are kept behind paywalls, or complex academic language (be it Indonesian, or any other language) - that exclude the researched, or at least make it difficult for them to gain access to what has been written of them. Yet, academic writing on punks is not the only form that excludes. That of course may happen with film makers, but also print/online journalists. How often do “we” consult the people before our final products are published, and how do we make such publications available to the communities that we research, or write about?

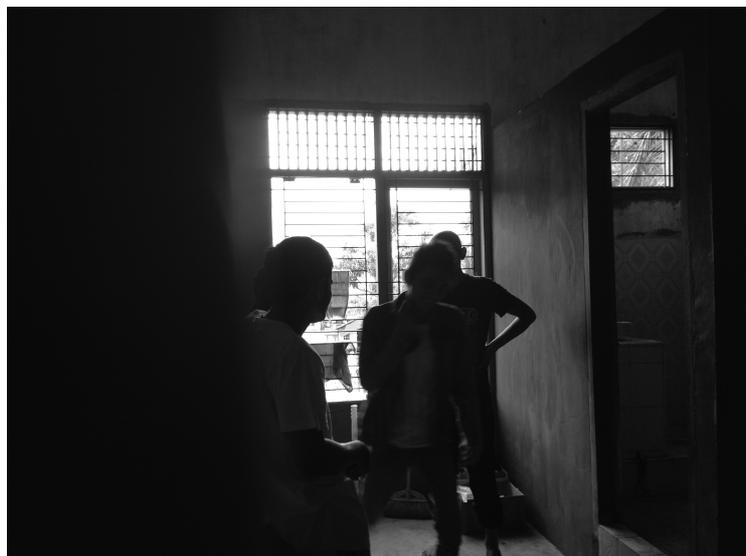
Punks in Aceh may be more rehearsed in trying to gain access to the media coverage on them than, let say, some of the other communities I have conducted ethnography with. In fact, right after the 2011 detention the punks had actively created transnational solidarity networks all over the world by using Google translate – which at times had created misunderstandings and even conflicts (see Jauhola & Bolong 2017)– but which were, an active attempt to connect and create new forms of groups that transgress language boundaries and necessity to be present in the movement physically.

I am still writing up most of my research data into academic monograph and have just in March finished short documentary films as a collaboration with documentarist Seija Hirstiö (see [scrapsofhope.fi/aceh](http://scrapsofhope.fi/aceh) and Jauhola forthcoming, for the overall audiovisual/



documentary film approach I use in my research). I have made my photo archives of the community available to them using social media, and I have published some videos of their gigs, which are circulating in the punk social media scene. The other future publications may have less direct involvement of the punks in the drafting process, but my plan is to use social media to communicate my work and allow critique and discussion on them.

**Jim:** How has your research been received (both by the academy and by the punks)?



**Marjaana:** The provincial government used my 2012 visit to the mayor's office to label me as a supporter of the government policies by feeding a falsified story to a local newspaper (*Serambi Indonesia*) that released it one day after the original meeting. This incident/encounter became an important focus of both analysis (of locally constructed power relations and setting political agenda), but I also read it as an attempt to communicate to me that I should stay out of criticizing the establishment during the research process. Punks, and human rights activists and women's movement, who

also know me since 2006 from my previous work and research, had no difficulty in reading the article critically and it led to very interesting discussions about how the political elite controls and concretely feeds news favorable to their agenda. I have written on this in relation to the LGBTI community, who have witnessed how media is invited to witness and report raids and arrest attempts (Jauhola 2015b, forthcoming).

Furthermore, having had my name and face in the local newspaper early on in my research provided me an easy icebreaker to conduct the rest of the research. Having been labelled as a punk researcher in the article, of course meant that I had to explain my position multiple times, but it also made the non-elites quite interested in having a discussion on the punks with me. Using the local punk song lyrics allowed me to introduce topics of social and economic justice, corruption and militarism in ways that might have otherwise been difficult to get into. Those lyrics also worked at the level of creating awareness amongst the Banda Acehese that what they were seeing as dirty, illegal, unreligious, was in fact a group of young, sometimes former tsunami affected children turned into young adults, who were raising their concern of the ongoing political, economic and social dynamics. Being labelled as a punk researcher also eased the pressure when studying other marginalized and oppressed groups/individuals – it created space, but also positioned me into the streets rather than to the spatialities used mainly by the local academia and (upper) middle class and foreigners.

In academia, I have been contacted mostly by other punk researchers although the research speaks to number of other audiences on post-conflict masculinities, continuities of violence and political economic order. Interestingly, some of the other political science/International Relations scholars who write about global punk movement, have not been in touch with me. However, being a female and feminist academic, I am quite used to being pushed into margins of citations and debates, yet I think

the analysis of the transnational and global punk movement deserves to be pushed into ethnographic detail and contextualised analysis, that is sensitive to the questions of gender – forms of masculinities and femininities the movement negotiates, simultaneously locally, but also globally. Another aspect of Asian/Indonesia/Acehnese punk movement is the question of geopolitics and of race. Is the gaze on Acehnese punks a form of Orientalism, cute young adults copying their Western idols –as the media has at times portrayed punks in Aceh, but also in Myanmar represented. In my research – at least I hope - I will be able to communicate that the groups, individuals and the ideology that they debate internally, is not essentially about them copying the West punk movement, but in fact, they actively engage with local issues and create their own ways of being a punk – or using punkness to create a feeling of belonging in the post-tsunami and post-conflict city. In my research I am less and less interested in defining what punk or punkness is or should be, but am rather interested in what making that claim does in a specific context and how does it change when it e.g. becomes a headline on BCC/ CNN and a global circuit of stories.

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