

The Role of Houses in the Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Aceh, Indonesia

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Abstract

The paper will deal with the idea of resilience in the disaster management in Indonesia. The international community assumes that they have the authority to make all of the decisions regarding what kind of humanitarian aid program should be provided, but at the same time people in the afflicted area would be looking at the other side to see what people on the other side can provide. Another feature we need to note is high social flux in which people are always struggling for the better livelihood, therefore the people struggle for the “reconstruction” even when there is no disaster. In such a society, “rehabilitation and reconstruction” should not be measured by simply comparing with the pre-disaster condition. Instead, the idea of resilience in such a society should be regarded in relation to the attempt and practice to bring their society for the better, accordingly to their goal of rebuilding the community.

I will focus on the socio-cultural aspect rather than the physical aspect of reconstruction in this paper. Throughout the world, people have a desire to understand the whole process of how to go about positioning ourselves in the world. In order to position oneself in the world, it is important to first position oneself in relation to people of the past, present and future; not only among the living, but also among the deceased. This very attitude shows how the design of houses is treated in Indonesia, and how the houses of those who survived the disaster and the houses of the deceased differ. After discussing the houses of survivors and the houses of the deceased separately, I will introduce the role of the Tsunami Museum in Aceh which can be thought of as an attempt to integrate both types of houses mentioned in this discussion.