A final notable omission is that of Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival, the GCO who had been put in charge of defending the city (in April 1941), but ended up having to sign the instrument of surrender. His role in the defeat made him a perfect scapegoat in the eyes of the British public, the general staff in London and not least Churchill himself, despite attempts (including his own) to clear his name. If the omission of Percival, and the contemporary and later historiographic controversy surrounding him, wasn't caused by the limitation of space alone (keeping in mind that the book started off as a master's dissertation), McCrum has missed a golden opportunity to make his research relevant to a wider debate. Only when read in this light can McCrum's work be seen as a useful addition to the debate about why Singapore fell; otherwise it lacks a certain degree of comprehension and depth.

Tilman Frasch

Catherine Smith (ed.), *Resilience and the Localisation of Trauma in Aceh, Indonesia*. (ASAA Southeast Asia Publication Series). Singapore: National University of Singapore Press / Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2018. Xii, 178 pages, SGD 38.00 / USD 25.55. ISBN 9788776942328 (pb)

Catherine Smith, an anthropologist, achieves something quite rare in the globalised and often entrenched debate on trauma and resilience: in her dense and vivid ethnography she depicts the quest of the local population of Aceh in Indonesia to understand and give some meaning to transgenerational suffering as a consequence of protracted political conflict. Even though the idiom of trauma has entered the medico-moral landscape of Aceh, its decades-long isolation has left the region less affected than other regions by the globalisation of psychiatry and consequent spread of standardised trauma therapies of Western origin. Smith's research focuses on ordinary citizens affected by the separatist conflict (1975 to 2005) between the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM) and the security forces of the Indonesian government. Particularly in the North almost 80 per cent of the population was affected and accused of taking one side or the other. Villagers became victims of shootings, torture, threat, extortion and the burning of houses. Many suffered multiple traumas, as the region was also hit by the tsunami in December 2004, which caused more than 160,000 deaths in Aceh alone and destroyed large parts of the infrastructure.

The author draws her findings mostly from an intensive qualitative field study spanning a total of 17 months in 2008 and 2009, mostly in the northern parts of the country. The author arrived for her field research at a time of hope for a peaceful and more economically stable Aceh, almost four years after the tsunami and the

peace agreement. Her extensive data collection is based on the life stories of 53 Acehnese women, most of whom she interviewed several times, plus expert interviews. All interviews were done in the Indonesian language, a language all interlocutors were familiar with, an asset that contributed to the deep insights the author was able to obtain from her fieldwork.

Smith explores the multidimensional aspects that shape the way the Acehnese population received the concept of trauma and developed their own local responses far from the global trauma industry. She emphasises the reflective and intellectual work that conflict survivors themselves engage in when attempting to recover from political violence. In their quest to bear the unbearable they incorporate "trauma" – defined as "intense internal pressure" (p. 90) and adopted into the Indonesian language since the 1980s – into their already existing moral and normative framework. The latter serves as an anchor for those who seek support and cognitive explanations. The author dedicates a chapter to each of the key orientation points for the population: the memory of past transgenerational suffering (Chapter 2), the traditional spiritual world and the body (Chapter 3) and the support through religious teachings and practices (Chapter 4).

Smith's starting point is the "ever present" (p. 24) historic narrative of Aceh's years of suffering, as exchanged in daily life, which has developed into a healing practice. The constant reiteration and reassurance of heroic accounts culminate in what Smith terms an "ethos of strength and bravery" (p. 56), which has become an essential part of the Acehnese identity. In her third chapter the author describes those who seek recourse within the spiritual world and its representatives – traditional healers and mediums who are seen as experts in matters of the body and corporeal vulnerability. She highlights the contested nature of spiritual practices and particularly of spiritual possession, as well as attempts by clients and healers alike to adjust these to the traditionally dominant belief system of Islam and the authority of the Qur'an. Smith attended more than 50 exorcisms, where conflict-related topics as well as everyday challenges were treated. Afterwards she examines the role religion plays in the local reception of trauma (Chapter 4). Many of her interlocutors describe in detail how it is mainly due to religious practices that they have developed the capacity to bear the pressure caused by trauma: regular prayers make them calm, tensions are released and feelings of gratitude towards God assist them in dealing with their pain. Further support stems from their belief that one's date of death is predetermined by God and has to be accepted as destiny (p. 91). Trauma, in turn, is equated for many of Smith's interlocutors with "the inability to accept destiny" (p. 108). This example illustrates how the traditional imaginary can act in supportive as well as in coercive ways. In the perception of local people, those who fail to recover "do not accept destiny". The tsunami catastrophe, too, is seen as "an act of God" sent to end the conflict – in the perception of most, the natural disaster as well as the resolution of the conflict are

seen as concurrent, though in reality the peace agreement was only signed eight months after the tsunami.

In her last chapter, the author emphasises that the incorporation of the idiom of trauma into the medical-moral landscape has enabled a greater flexibility within the moral framework which, before the trauma discourse, declared those who failed to recover from their grief within a fixed time frame as "mentally ill", leading to their social exclusion. One of her interlocutors pointedly expresses the change: "Actually things are better these days. These days we have *trauma*, it's much lighter than before. In the past if a person was insane [peungo] [their] family would be forced to lock them up or carry them to the psychiatric hospital (p. 75)." Nonetheless, during Smith's field research it was still a known practice to chain up family members in shacks if they had failed to recover from their grief and had become aggressive or drug addicted. As psychiatric hospitals were seen as "a place outside society" (p. 89), families feared that relatives sent to hospital would never return. The author in her last chapter outlines a new politics of care that is mainly driven by politicians, psychiatrists and journalists propagating medical care as a human right. They have managed to portray reformed mental health care as associated with emancipation and modernisation, yet an inadequate health care system, stigma and mistrust in doctors still prevail.

One of Smith's major strengths is her ability to raise awareness of why individuals perceived as "mentally ill" and therefore "insane" represent such a danger for local communities. Her empiric findings include local understandings of the body and corporeal vulnerabilities – a research field that has still not been extensively researched. In the conception of many Acehnese, a person's inner state and energy (*jiwa*, translated by Smith as "spirit/psyche", p. 82) can easily be influenced by the actions and behaviour in their social surroundings. The role of a healer consists in strengthening and balancing the jiwa, an imaginary concept that in Aceh is given utmost importance, as it is also backed by Islamic teachings of an inner and outer body (p. 82). Smith's profound research, which blends different perspectives, allows us to understand why, within the Acehnese imaginary, a burdened survivor represents a potential danger to the community, as his or her *jiwa* may act negatively on others. In doing so the author, in a probably unprecedented way, provides readers – particularly those with a Western background – a deeper understanding of why a community might fear serious problems when being confronted with traumatised individuals. In light of the presumably large number of people with potentially multiple traumas – according to one survey in the northern region, which suffered the most from the conflict, up to 36 per cent met the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 65 per cent potentially suffered from depression (p. 6) – social exclusion processes come to be understood as a necessary, if not commendable, consequence. In the perspective of parts of the local population, the large number of sufferers represents a threat, as their *jiwa* might impact negatively on others.

Another major strength of the study is to draw our attention to interlinkages between the mental, the cultural, the social and the political, especially when the author talks about "emancipation" from rigid norms and the perceived temporal coincidence of the tsunami and the peace agreement. One could also wonder if more flexibility within the medical-moral landscape, less stigmatisation and a new politics of care might lead to more emancipation and empowerment of local ordinary people – something the political elites might want to contain.

Nonetheless, one misses in Smith's – at times repetitive – account a more critical stance towards the "ethos of bravery" and its potential link to the political realm. Though she states that the ethos plays a crucial role in the identity-building process of a "collective polity" (p. 25), and herself draws the link to GAM, the exact role of the liberation movement in this process remains unclear. One wonders the extent to which the discourse on bravery is not only reflected in GAM pamphlets but also driven and even prescribed by the political organisation: firstly, as an outcome of the need to continue recruiting fighters and secondly, with the intention of continuing its socio-political domination in the region even in times of peace. One can assume that the discourse on an ethos of bravery has probably been instrumentalised by political actors to create a specific memory policy, as we know from other regions in the world – (see e.g. Katharine Hodgkin: *Contested Pasts. The Politics of Memory*. London: Routledge, 2014; Cath Collins: *The Politics of Memory in Chile. From Pinochet to Bachelet*. Boulder: First Forum Press, 2013; Pierre Nora: *Les Lieux de Memoire*. Paris: Gallimard, 1984) – particularly as the author mentions that she received many similar responses from different people. From an anthropological perspective it would have been interesting to consider the extent to which political actors such as GAM have benefited from cultural and religious norms – to contain mourning and to accept destiny – or actively shaped and instrumentalised them to promote their political aims.

Moreover, with regard to the social exclusion towards those who do not live up to this model, one cannot but wonder about the impact of GAM in this process of creating insiders and outsiders, a common feature of liberation movements worldwide and part of an in-group effect of particular significance in times of threat and violence. Still, social in- and exclusion processes are also common in rural areas where those who do not conform to the norm risk being stigmatised. Therefore it would have been revealing to obtain more information about the local circumstances leading to social marginalisation processes and to determine whether the label "mental illness" was more quickly applied to those who, in addition to struggling to come to terms with traumatising events, also challenged the norms of the rural populace in other ways.

In Smith's very detailed and dense account on Aceh, readers might wish for references to similar or differing concepts, attitudes and behaviours elsewhere in Indonesia and the regional and transregional contexts in which local communities have had to come up with their own solutions to suffering and trauma (see e.g.

Jaqueline Aquino Siapno, *Gender, Islam, Nationalism and the State in Aceh*. London: Routledge, 2002; Jesse Hession Grayman et al., Conflict Nightmares and Trauma in Aceh. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 33 (2009), pp. 290-312). A more pronounced theoretical framework and definition of such currently popular key words – prominent even in the title of the book – as "resilience", "collective resilience" (p. 25) and "transgenerational resilience" (p. 26) would have added further value to the book. The author uses the terms mostly in reference to the continuous narratives of past and present bravery of the Acehnese population. However, one could have critically examined the extent to which these narratives can be regarded as a solid and enduring foundation for resilience. The still strong normative restriction of feelings of bereavement hints towards the (survival) practice of suppressing feelings, evident in statements such as the following: "[…] but if a person cries and says […] 'Why did my husband have to die?!' […] that is very bad. If a person mourns in that way we become dizzy" (p. 111). This example shows that regardless of the many "survival strategies", pain and suffering remain a challenge, particularly as they risk undoing the precarious balance a person has managed to build up for herself.

This highly relevant ethnography adds to our still fragmentary knowledge about trauma, its somatic dimensions and the potential cultural and moral implications it holds for survivors. The multidimensional reception of trauma on the side of the affected population shows quite clearly the necessity of a more cross-culturally oriented psychiatry. Smith's findings also underline the importance of more interdisciplinary research, in which the perspectives of anthropology, sociology, history, political sciences, psychology, medicine and neurosciences are combined to approach the complexity of the reality that one encounters not only on a macro but also on a local micro-level.

Beatrice Schlee

Jürgen Rüland, *The Indonesian Way: ASEAN, Europeanization, and Foreign Policy Debates in a New Democracy*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017. 312 pages, $65.00. ISBN 978-1-5036-0285-4

The Indonesian Way is first and foremost an empirically dense interrogation of the beliefs, worldviews and historical narratives that inform and shape the policy preferences and responses of Indonesian foreign policy makers with regard to regional integration processes in Southeast Asia. But it is also an attempt to refine the theoretical field of comparative regionalism, especially of the dominant constructivist concepts of norm transfer and norm diffusion that have been heavily shaped by Eurocentric ideas and experiences of regional