INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Digital Complexity and Disinformation in Indo-Pacific

25-26 September 2024

Deakin Burwood Corporate Centre (BCC)
Deakin University, Burwood, Melbourne, Australia

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Digital Complexity and Disinformation in Indo-Pacific

We are pleased to welcome you to the International Conference, Digital Complexity and Disinformation in the Indo-Pacific, taking place on the 25th and 26th of September 2024, both online via Zoom and in-person in Melbourne. This important conference is a collaborative effort organised by the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (ADI) at Deakin University, Australia, the Department of Communication Sciences at Universitas Indonesia (UI), the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM), the Department of Political Science at Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), the State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga, and the European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS) in Brussels, Belgium.

As we convene for this conference, we acknowledge that while digital technologies have transformed many aspects of our societies, the promises of inclusivity and progress that accompany these technologies do not always align with the realities on the ground. Instead, these technologies are increasingly being exploited as tools for disinformation, political manipulation, and even digital authoritarianism, posing significant challenges to democratic values and social cohesion.

The Indo-Pacific region is particularly vulnerable to these challenges, as disinformation and misinformation spread rapidly across digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram and WhatsApp, exacerbating societal divisions. At the same time, political actors often wield these platforms to silence criticism, control information flows, and even sever access to critical digital infrastructure in efforts to consolidate their power.

The discussions during this international conference will explore the complex interactions between digital technologies, cyberspace, social media platforms and political dynamics in the region.

Scholars, practitioners, and policymakers from various institutions will provide insights on the impacts of digital disinformation and explore pathways to counter these challenges while promoting digital literacy and inclusivity.

This conference is made possible through the generous support of the Australian Research Council (ARC) through a Discovery Project grant, the Gerda Henkel Foundation, the European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS), and the Alfred Deakin Institute (ADI). We extend our sincere gratitude to these organizations for their commitment to fostering academic inquiry into this pressing global issue.

We hope this conference serves as a platform for fruitful discussions and meaningful collaboration, enabling us to better understand the digital complexity and its implications for democracy in the Indo-Pacific.

Sincerely,
Prof Ihsan Yilmaz
On behalf of the Organising Committee

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Digital Complexity and Disinformation in Indo-Pacific

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National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

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The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia

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Head of Undergraduate Programme of Communication Sciences
The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
Universitas Indonesia (UI), Indonesia

Dr Himmawan Sutanto
The Vice Dean of Student Affairs and International Collaboration
The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM), Indonesia

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International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

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Director of Graduate School
The State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga, Indonesia

Dr Bulent Kenes
Executive Director
European Center for Populism Studies, Brussels, Belgium

Hasnan Bachtiar
PhD Researcher
The Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (ADI)
Deakin University, Australia

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Digital Complexity and Disinformation in Indo-Pacific

This conference is supported by:

Australian Government
Australian Research Council

1. The Australian Research Council (ARC) under Discovery Grant (DP220100829), Religious Populism, Emotions and Political Mobilisation.

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2. Gerda Henkel Foundation (The Grant: Gerda Henkel Foundation, AZ 01/TG/21, Emerging Digital Technologies and the Future of Democracy in the Muslim World), Germany.

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3. The European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS), Brussels, Belgium.

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4. The GDP Research Stream Grant, The Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (ADI), Deakin University, Australia.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Digital Complexity and Disinformation in Indo-Pacific

25-26 September 2024

Deakin University, Australia

AGENDA

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Digital Complexity and Disinformation in Indo-Pacific

Day One
25 September 2024

09:30 – 17:00 AEST

Online Event:
Zoom link to be provided to registered participants

Register for Day One at
https://tinyurl.com/yc8mf6fu

09:30 – 10:00 Morning Tea

10:00 – 10:20 Opening

10:20 – 12:00 Panel 1
E-Government, Digital Consumption, Digital Electoral Marketing

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 14:40 Panel 2
Artificial Intelligence, Digital Authoritarianism, Power Asymmetry, Digital Divide

14:40 – 15:10 Tea break

15:10 – 17:00 Panel 3
International and Transnational Issues, Foreign Influence, ASEAN, Indo-Pacific

Day Two
26 September 2024

09:30 – 17:00 AEST

Online Event:
Zoom link to be provided to registered participants

Register for Day Two at
https://tinyurl.com/yc8mf6fu

09:30 – 10:00 Morning Tea

10:00 – 11:40 Panel 4
Sentiments, Perceptions, Opinions, Trust, Disinformation

11:40 – 12:40 Lunch

12:40 – 14:20 Panel 5
Disinformation, Digital Disparity, Gender, Health, and Resilience

14:20 – 14:50 Tea Break

14:50 – 16:30 Panel 6
Countering Cyberspace Disinformation, Digital Literacy, Strengthening Democracy

16:30 – 17:00 Closing Remarks

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PANELS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Digital Complexity and Disinformation in Indo-Pacific

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Deakin University, Australia

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PANEL 1

E-GOVERNMENT, DIGITAL CONSUMPTION, AND DIGITAL ELECTORAL MARKETING

Day 1 | 25 September 2024 | 10:20 - 12:00 AEST

Nazreena Yasin

The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Malaysia

Bridging the Digital Divide: A Look at e-Democracy Features in Malaysian Government Websites

Muchlas Abdi Pratama

The University of Gadjah Mada (UGM), Yogyakarta, Indonesia

The Millennial Generation's Meaning of Government Social Media Content in Meeting Public Information Needs

Anne Parlina and Riri Kusumarani

The Data and Information Science Research Center, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

Digital Consumption Patterns: A Case Study of Dirty Vote Movie

Faizatul Hiqmah and Tanti Handriana

Hayam Wuruk Perbanas University and Airlangga University, Surabaya, Indonesia

From Posts to Polls: Assessing Social Media's Power in Electoral Marketing

PANEL 2

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, DIGITAL AUTHORITARIANISM, POWER ASYMMETRY, AND DIGITAL DIVIDE

Day 1 | 25 September 2024 | 13:00 - 14:40 AEST

Devi T. Indriasari and Karman

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

Silencing Critical Digital Voices: A Hermeneutical Exploration of Electronic Information and Transactions Law in Indonesia

Muhammad Ahalla Tsauro

National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore

Digital Divide in Southeast Asia in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Dewi Wahyu Mustikasari

The State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga, Indonesia

Teachers' Design-Decision making as the Exercise of Power in Digital Adoption within the Classrooms

Virdika Rizky Utama,

Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), China and PARA-Syndicate, Indonesia

The Influence of China's Digital Giants on the Indo-Pacific: A Case Study of Huawei and Xiaomi

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PANEL 3

INTERNATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL ISSUES, FOREIGN INFLUENCE, ASEAN, AND INDO-PACIFIC

Day 1 | 25 September 2024 | 15:10 - 17:00 AEST

M. Luthfi Khair and Gregory Poulgrain,
National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia and the University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC), Queensland, Australia
Islamophobia in the Digital Age: Examining the Economic and Diplomatic Repercussions of Recent UK Incidents on the Indo-Pacific

Win Listyaningrum Arifin and Wuri Arenggoasih
The State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga, Indonesia
Digital Complexity for Islamic Broadcasting Students at UIN Salatiga for Identity Preservation: A Challenge or An Opportunity?

Tanisha
Deakin University, Australia
Digital Disinformation and Its Impact on Political Polarisation in Southeast Asia

Viktor Buzna and Tonny Dian Effendi
The Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA), Hungary, The National Sun Yat-Sen University (NSYSU), Taiwan, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM), Indonesia
Techno-Regionalism: ASEAN's Digital Integration as a Strategic Model in the Indo-Pacific

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PANEL 4

SENTIMENTS, PERCEPTIONS, OPINIONS, TRUST, AND DISINFORMATION

Day 2 | 26 September 2024 | 10:00 - 11:40 AEST

Aprilian Ria Adisti, Muhamad Rozikan, and Silfa Dzukhriyah

Semarang State University and the State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga, Indonesia

Tracking the Sentiment Traffic of Young Indonesian Netizens' Chats on the Issues of Peace, Justice and Humanitarian Crisis: A Netnography Study of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

M. Luthfi Khair

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

'The Online Jihad,' Analysis of the Potential for the Spread of Disinformation among Indonesian and Malaysian Netizens on Social Media in the Palestine Conflict

Bhirawa Aronaga

The Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII), Indonesia

On Repeat: Frequent Misinformation and Frauds in Donation-Based Crowdfunding in Contemporary Indonesia

Primasari

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

Harnessing Digital Technology for Disinformation Mitigation: Insights from Indonesia

PANEL 5

DISINFORMATION, DIGITAL DISPARITY, GENDER, HEALTH, AND RESILIENCE

Day 2 | 26 September 2024 | 12:40 - 14:20 AEST

Endah Triastuti and Whisnu Triwibowo,

The University of Indonesia (UI), Jakarta, Indonesia

Digital Disparities and Disinformation: Unveiling the Digital Complexities in ASEAN's Underprivileged Communities

Tri Kurnia Revul Andina

Yogyakarta State University (UNY), Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Gendered Disinformation on Social Media: Cyber-misogyny and 'SJW Feminist' in Indonesia

Ihsan Kamaludin

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

Mitigating Health Disinformation in the Digital Era: The Role of Religious Institutions in Trust Building and Traditional Health Knowledge Preservation

Nina Widyawati, Widjajanti M. Santoso, Ubaidillah, Purwadi, and Ana Windarsih

The Research Center for Society and Culture in the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

Community Resilience to Hoaxes and Disinformation

PANEL 6

COUNTERING CYBERSPACE DISINFORMATION, DIGITAL LITERACY, AND STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

Day 2 | 26 September 2024 | 14:50 - 16:30 AEST

Hastangka, Adison A Sihombing, Herlinawati, Etty Sisdiana and Benny Widaryanto

The Research Center for Education, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

Civic Literacy in Indonesian Schools: Issues and Challenges in Democracy Strengthening

Asfa Widiyanto and Sukron Ma'mun

The State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga, Indonesia

Religious Moderation, Political Literacy and Democratic Maturity in Contemporary Indonesia

Fuadil 'Ulum and Salma Syakira Widodo

The Center for Political Studies, the University of Indonesia (UI) Jakarta and Columbia University, America.

Does Digital Literacy Affect Voting Behaviour?

Syafuan Rozi and Otto Trengginas Setiawan

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

Disinformation, Digital Democracy Space, and Counter Strategy in Indonesia

ABSTRACTS & BIOS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

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Panel 1 – E-Government, Digital Consumption, and Digital Electoral Marketing

Bridging the Digital Divide: A Look at e-Democracy Features in Malaysian Government Websites

In the study of democracy, E-Government is significant as it functions as a platform to promote e-democracy by promoting people's participation through utilizing modern technology such as the Internet. However, it is noted that most of the government websites are still stagnant and lacking criteria and features for embracing two-way communication. This can hinder the process of promoting e-democracy on local government websites. The research employs historical and descriptive methodologies to showcase the influence of e-government websites in Selangor local governments and how it influences e-democracy (people participation) in their local governments. This study will give a guideline to other local governments to promote e-democracy features in their local government websites, where people can participate without any discrimination, and the features provided promote two-way communication between government and people. Selangor local government developed e-government in its local government websites gradually by coming out with more interactive features from time to time. MAMPU plays a crucial role to assist the local government to come out with interactive features. However, challenges that can hinder the successful implementation of e-democracy features in the websites need to be highlighted and improved. In this study, based on the interview conducted with the website administrators, academician and politician, there are several obstacles highlighted by them to be solved in order to make the e-democracy features in the local government websites a successful one, for instance allocation of budget, no features standardization, lack of e-participation features, leader's approach and also public awareness and acceptance in using the services provided in the websites which can promote e-democracy.

Nazreena Yasin or Nazreena binti Mohammed Yasin completed her PhD in the Department of Political Science at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). She is also a lecturer at Raffles College, Kuala Lumpur. Her research focuses on e-government; how the websites can promote e-democracy by encouraging people to participate in the websites. Email nazreenayasin@yahoo.com

The Millennial Generation's Meaning of Government Social Media Content in Meeting Public Information Needs

Like other Indonesian government agencies, the Directorate General of Immigration utilizes social media as a means of public communication. One of the social media platforms used is Instagram, with the account @ditjen_imigrasi. In terms of content, the Instagram account @ditjen_imigrasi presents image and video content with an informal, light-hearted, and entertaining style. This is a departure from the traditionally formal characteristics of government public communication. Building on this, the present study aims to understand the public's interpretation of the content produced by the @ditjen_imigrasi account by using reception analysis theory combined with the concept of open government. The method used for data collection is in depth interviews and focused group discussions (FGD) with six millennial generation respondents who have accessed the @ditjen_imigrasi Instagram content during the period of January-June 2024. The choice of the millennial generation as the subject of this research is since individuals from this generation have now entered a productive age with the assumption that they have an income and are technologically literate. Discussions were conducted to find out the various parties' interpretations of the @ditjen_imigrasi account in fulfilling the concept of open government. Subsequently, in-depth interviews were also conducted as a form of validation of the FGD data. The findings of this research can reveal how informants interpret the public information content from the @ditjen_imigrasi Instagram account. At the same time, observe the effectiveness of the content.

Muchlas Abdi Pratama is an immigration analyst at the Medan Immigration Office. He has been working on the issue of public communication in government agencies in the digital era. He graduated from the Communication Studies programme at the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM), Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Email muchlas.abdi.p@mail.ugm.ac.id

Panel 1 – E-Government, Digital Consumption, and Digital Electoral Marketing

Digital Consumption Patterns: A Case Study of Dirty Vote Movie

This study investigates the digital consumption patterns surrounding the release of the documentary film 'Dirty Vote' in Indonesia, just days before the 2024 elections. The film, which exposes political discourse in the run-up to the election, garnered significant online attention, garnering over 6 million views and 58,000 comments on YouTube within hours of its release. At the same time, reaction videos and coverage from mainstream news channels flooded social media platforms. Focusing on the extensive commentary generated on YouTube, this study aims to analyse the public discourse surrounding the documentary. A total of 58,143 comments were collected on 13 February 2024, one day after the film was uploaded and one day before the general election. The results aim to identify distinct themes among the comments, as well as emerging patterns that lead to the spread of information. The findings provide insights into digital consumption behaviour and public engagement with political content online and offer recommendations for future research in this area.

Anne Parlina is currently working at the Data and Information Science Research Centre, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia. She received her Ph.D. from the Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Indonesia (UI). Her research interests include big data, data science, text mining, social media analysis and information systems. Email anne.parlina@brin.go.id

Riri Kusumarani is a researcher of National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia. She holds a Ph.D. from the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology in Daejeon, South Korea, and has a strong interest in information systems. Her current research focuses on social media and society. Email riri001@brin.go.id

From Posts to Polls: Assessing Social Media's Power in Electoral Marketing

In the digital age, the role of social media in shaping election outcomes is crucial. This study explores the dynamics of social media marketing in elections, examining its influence on candidate image and voter intention across generational cohorts. Using a quantitative survey of 544 Indonesian participants during the 2024 election campaign, the research is grounded in the Elaboration Likelihood Model and Source Credibility Theory. It aims to identify the differential impact of message credibility and content on different age groups, thereby informing targeted campaign strategies. The methodology captures the complex interaction between voter age and message reception, using WarpPLS 8.0 to validate the measurement and structural models. The results show that social media content and its perceived credibility significantly influence candidate image and consequently voting intention. In particular, candidate image emerges as a mediator, strengthening the link between social media marketing and voter choice. Furthermore, generational differences exert a significant moderating effect, highlighting the heterogeneity within voters' responses to social media messaging. This research contributes to the electoral marketing literature by highlighting the critical yet underexplored importance of content authenticity and message trustworthiness on social media platforms. It highlights the need to incorporate a generational perspective in electoral strategy development. The implications extend beyond Indonesia and resonate across ASEAN, Australia and the Indo-Pacific region. The study's findings are particularly relevant at a time when digital communication transcends borders, shaping political arenas and voter behaviour around the world.

Faizatul Hiqmah is a lecturer at Hayam Wuruk Perbanas University, Surabaya. She received her PhD from Airlangga University, Surabaya. The author has a special interest in electoral and social media marketing. Email faizatul.hiqmah-2021@feb.unair.ac.id & faizatul@perbanas.ac.id

Tanti Handriana is a professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Airlangga University, Surabaya. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM), Yogyalarta. She is the coordinator of the Doctoral Programme of Management Science at Airlangga University. Email tanti.handriana@feb.unair.ac.id

Panel 2 – Artificial Intelligence, Digital Authoritarianism, Power Asymmetry, and Digital Divide

Silencing Critical Digital Voices: A Hermeneutical Exploration of Electronic Information and Transactions Law in Indonesia

This research examines the complex relationship between the Electronic Information and Transactions (EIT) Law and digital freedom of expression in Indonesia, shedding light on the restrictive implications of this legislation. Enforced from 2008 to 2021, the EIT Law has become controversial, particularly in its tendency to criminalise individuals who expose wrongdoing online. A qualitative research paradigm underpins this article, which provides an analysis of the concrete implications of the ITE Law through a comprehensive examination of its implementation cases. The study explores the hermeneutic complexities inherent in the EIT Act to understand this phenomenon. The research, based on qualitative methods such as literature review and article analysis, reveals 371 cases of violations of freedom of expression during the implementation of the EIT Law. Three key articles within the legal framework - Article 27, Article 28 and Article 29 - are consistently involved in the criminalisation of the community due to their susceptibility to multiple interpretations, creating a hermeneutic ambiguity. A key argument throughout this research is that the state has exploited the hermeneutic problem embedded in the legislation to its advantage, albeit at the cost of compromising democratic ideals. The interpretive ambiguities within the ITE Act provide the government with a convenient tool for exercising power, stifling freedom of expression and fundamentally undermining democratic principles. This manuscript makes a significant contribution to understanding the concrete implications of the EIT Law for digital freedom of expression, highlighting the central role of hermeneutic complications in the government's exploitation of legal ambiguity for its own ends.

Devi Tri Indriasari completed her PhD in Communication Studies at the University of Indonesia (UI), Jakarta. Her research interests lie in exploring the dynamics of communication in the areas of regulation, law and democracy. She is also a data analyst at the Centre for Public Policy Research, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia. Email devi005@brin.go.id

Karman is a researcher at the Research Centre for Society and Culture, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia. Prior to joining the Agency, he was a researcher at the Ministry of Communication and Informatics of the Republic of Indonesia. His current research interests revolve around communication and media, with a particular focus on the socio-religious context of Indonesia. Email karm002@brin.go.id

Digital Divide in Southeast Asia in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

In the age of artificial intelligence (AI), many countries in Southeast Asia are adapting to the development of the latest information and communication technology (ICT). This adaptation can be seen in government policies in creating and adopting regulations on AI. The advantages of AI can include higher productivity, better decision making and support with accurate information, while the disadvantages of AI can include job displacement, privacy concerns and lack of transparency. The readiness to adapt to AI depends on the available infrastructure and government budget to deal with the sophisticated technologies. Otherwise, there must be a gap in the so-called digital divide, which favours the country with a more stable economy. Southeast Asian countries with less developed ICTs will find it harder to adapt to the current age of AI. Singapore is undoubtedly a leader in the age of AI, having invested heavily in health, fraud detection and government affairs for the benefit of its citizens. Meanwhile, Laos and East Timor's priorities will focus on different issues, such as concerns about increasing tax compliance and reducing crime rates. Policy priorities, government budgets and infrastructure are the main factors contributing to the digital divide in the region in the age of AI. This study aims to explore the digital divide in Southeast Asia in the age of AI based on the readiness in terms of government policies and regulations, as well as the impact on internet usage on social media in the region amidst the growing technology competition between the United States of America and China. Using Van Dijk's digital divide, this paper argues that although countries are moving towards the use of AI, government policies are heavily influenced and contribute to digital inequalities in access to technology in Southeast Asia.

Muhammad Ahalla Tsauro is a research associate at the Department of Malay Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), National University of Singapore (NUS). Previously, he obtained his BA from Airlangga University and shortly after worked at the United Arab Emirates Embassy in Jakarta. He completed the MA programme at NUS. He currently works on politics and religion, political economy, political environmentalism and Indonesian politics. His recent publications have appeared in Political Studies Review, The Jakarta Post, New Mandala, ISEAS's Fulcrum Commentary, Indonesia at Melbourne and The Diplomat. Email ahalla.tsauro@u.nus.edu & ahalla.tsauro@gmail.com

Panel 2 – Artificial Intelligence, Digital Authoritarianism, Power Asymmetry, and Digital Divide

Teachers' Design-Decision making as the Exercise of Power in Digital Adoption within the Classrooms

Most Indonesian education regulations and policies are authoritarian. As a result, teacher educators with different social and economic backgrounds of students experience a dilemma in decision making in developing Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) course and assessment design for English language learners in higher education. This multiple interpretivism case-based study aimed to investigate how power plays a role in teachers' design decision making. The participants of the study were eight Indonesian English university teachers who were recruited voluntarily. Data were collected through interviews, observations, participants' diaries and document analysis. The theoretical framework was drawn from Foucault's Power Relation (2002). The logic of inductive reasoning was used to analyse the data using thematic analysis to understand the power relations. The findings showed that power relations influenced teachers' design decision making to find solutions to their CALL design dilemma at the classroom level. This study revealed the challenge-based teacher educators as the frontline in digital adoptions in a developing country in the context of ASEAN countries. A framework of power relations in digital adoptions, particularly at the CALL classroom level, is proposed to minimise digital complexity and promote social cohesion. The implications for practice are discussed.

Dewi Wahyu Mustikasari completed her PhD at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Australia. She works for the State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga, Indonesia. She is currently the Secretary of the English Education Department of the Post-Graduate Programme. Her research interests include Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), technology-enhanced language learning, learning design and teacher practice. She is also an associate member of the UTS Centre for Research on Education in a Digital Society. Email dewi_wm@uinsalatiga.ac.id

The Influence of China's Digital Giants on the Indo-Pacific: A Case Study of Huawei and Xiaomi

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies in the Indo-Pacific region has led to significant social and political transformations. This study aims to examine the influence of Chinese digital companies, particularly Huawei and Xiaomi, on the digital development of the Indo-Pacific region and its implications for democratic governance. While the discourse on digital authoritarianism often highlights tools such as Pegasus, there is a critical gap in understanding how major Chinese companies contribute to the region's digital infrastructure and political dynamics. Huawei, a global leader in telecommunications, and Xiaomi, a major player in consumer electronics, have been instrumental in shaping the region's digital ecosystem. This study analyses their role in technological expansion, digital infrastructure diffusion and socio-political impact. This study will contribute to the discourse of digital complexity and disinformation in the Indo-Pacific by exploring the intersection of technology, politics and foreign influence. Methodologically, this research will use a mixed methods approach, incorporating qualitative case studies, policy analysis and empirical data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The findings will illuminate the double-edged nature of digital development led by Chinese companies, highlighting both the opportunities for growth and the risks of authoritarian practices.

Virdika Rizky Utama is a political researcher at the PARA Syndicate in Jakarta, Indonesia. He completed a postgraduate programme in political science at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), China. He is a recognised Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) observer and has authored two books on Gus Dur. His most notable work is 'Menjerat Gus Dur' (NUMedia, 2019) and his latest publication is a novel titled 'Call Me Mutia, A Novel' (Islamidotco, 2023). Email virdika@parasyndicate.id

Panel 3 – International and Transnational Issues Foreign Influence, ASEAN, and Indo-Pacific

Islamophobia in the Digital Age: Examining the Economic and Diplomatic Repercussions of Recent UK Incidents on the Indo-Pacific

The recent wave of Islamophobic incidents in the United Kingdom (UK), exacerbated by digital platforms, has raised widespread concern, particularly regarding its potential impact on the UK's relations with Muslim-majority countries in the Indo-Pacific region. This paper uses a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of Muslim communities in the UK, while also analysing the wider implications of these events for international relations, particularly in the areas of trade, diplomacy and tourism. The theoretical framework is based on phenomenology, which allows for an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of those affected by Islamophobic digital disinformation. Methodologically, the study combines qualitative interviews with affected individuals in the UK and a comprehensive analysis of online discourse on Islamophobia. It also examines how these narratives may influence perceptions of the UK in Muslim-majority Indo-Pacific countries and those with strong diplomatic ties to Muslim countries. It explores the potential diplomatic and economic consequences, including possible shifts in trade relations and a decline in tourism from these regions. The paper assesses whether Islamophobic sentiments, as disseminated through digital media, could strain the UK's economic ties with key Indo-Pacific nations such as Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as impact the influx of international tourists from these areas. By integrating the analysis of digital Islamophobia with its geopolitical and economic consequences, this study contributes to an understanding of the far-reaching effects of disinformation. It highlights the importance of addressing digital Islamophobia not just as a social issue, but as a significant factor in international relations and economic stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

M. Luthfi Khair is a researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia. He graduated from the University of Indonesia (UI) with an MA in Humanities, specialising in historical research methods. He honed his skills in archival research, critical analysis and qualitative data interpretation, laying the foundation for his future endeavours as a historian and social researcher. Email ananda.aprilian@gmail.com

Gregory Poulgrain has taught Southeast Asian history and politics at the University of New England (in Armidale, New South Wales), Griffith University and the University of Queensland (in Brisbane) since the 1990s. From 2008 to 2019, he had focused on Indonesian politics at the University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC), becoming an adjunct with the changes that came with Covid; now he is also an adjunct professor at the University of Malang, Indonesia. Email ypoulgrain@gmail.com

Digital Complexity for Islamic Broadcasting Students at UIN Salatiga for Identity Preservation: A Challenge or An Opportunity?

Islamic Broadcasting Commission students must be able to demonstrate their ability to market their skills in supporting digital da'wah internationally. Digital complexity encourages transformation through the increasing openness of competition from within and without. The increasing opportunity for foreign cultures to enter means that technology users must be able to compete, but still be able to show their identity. It is a showcase opportunity. Digital complexity can also be an arena for personal and social branding for students in the correct presentation of Islam. This right can be a forum for correcting misinformation about Islam in the international arena, especially in countries where Islam is still seen as a religion that is intolerant of changing times. By being a student in the Islamic Broadcasting Commission, the ability to be a good speaker as he is also technologically literate. Digital complexity should be a good opportunity. If it is necessary, it turns into digital disruption, where digitalisation has penetrated all dimensions of human life and changed various things or old ways of life into better ones. Again, it is a challenge or an opportunity.

Win Listyaningrum Arifin is a lecturer at the State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga and obtained her PhD from the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM). Her interests include intercultural communication, identity politics, Islamic studies, social work and English language and literature. Email arifinwiwin@gmail.com

Wuri Arenggoasih is a lecturer specialising in Islamic Communication and Broadcasting at the Da'wah Faculty, Islamic State University (UIN) Salatiga, Indonesia. She is interested in research on media and communication strategies. Email rorowuri@iainsalatiga.ac.id

Panel 3 – International and Transnational Issues Foreign Influence, ASEAN, and Indo-Pacific

Digital Disinformation and Its Impact on Political Polarisation in Southeast Asia

In an era dominated by the proliferation of digital technologies, the complex interconnection between technology and politics has become increasingly pronounced, particularly within the context of Southeast Asia. This region, characterised by its diverse socio-political background, has witnessed a profound transformation in the way public discourse is shaped and disseminated, owing largely to the ubiquitous presence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the dynamics of digital disinformation and its consequential role in exacerbating political polarisation across Southeast Asia. Utilising a qualitative methodology, this study aims to undertake an analysis of disinformation campaigns observed during recent electoral processes within the region. By scrutinising case studies and employing content analysis methodologies, the research seeks to uncover the complex mechanisms through which false narratives permeate the digital sphere, exerting an influence on democratic values and processes. Drawing upon established theories of political communication and media effects, this inquiry aims to shed light on the disruptive potential of disinformation in eroding social cohesion and fostering undemocratic tendencies within the region. Moreover, this paper contributes substantively to the ongoing discourse surrounding digital authoritarianism, particularly within the context of the Indo-Pacific region. By elucidating the covert influence exerted by foreign entities through the dissemination of disinformation, this research seeks to underscore the imperative of countervailing strategies aimed at fortifying democratic resilience. Additionally, the study aspires to furnish actionable insights geared towards mitigating the adverse effects of disinformation and cultivating digital literacy among the populace, thereby fostering a more robust democratic fabric across Southeast Asia.

Tanisha *studies Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) at Deakin University, Australia. She is interested in the complex relationships between digital media, political communication and democratic governance, with a particular focus on the implications of digital disinformation. Email* tanishakumar1205@gmail.com

Techno-Regionalism: ASEAN's Digital Integration as a Strategic Model in the Indo-Pacific

The resurgence of techno-nationalism, driven by competition among great powers over emerging technologies, limits international cooperation and impacts global relations negatively. Conversely, ASEAN's digital integration reflects decades of collaborative progress underpinned by comprehensive structures and policies extending beyond its borders to partners like Australia, China, the EU, India, Japan, and the US. ASEAN's rapid digital integration aligns with the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region, where ASEAN centrality could shape future regional dynamics. This article challenges techno-nationalism, introducing techno-regionalism as a strategy for middle and small powers to counter great powers' assertiveness. ASEAN's digital integration exemplifies techno-regionalism, demonstrating effective intra-regional cooperation to strengthen negotiating positions with great powers. We employ techno-regionalism's conceptual framework, analysing ASEAN's comprehensive strategic partnerships (CSPs) with Australia, China, India, and the US through qualitative examination of policy documents. We argue that ASEAN's digital integration influences CSP negotiations, positioning CSPs as extensions of the digital integration process. Consequently, ASEAN's digital integration mechanism becomes a strategic tool for pursuing its interests externally. Our analysis provides insights into how middle and small powers can leverage regional cooperation to navigate complex international technological and geopolitical contexts.

Viktor Buzna is a research fellow at the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA) and a PhD fellow at the National Sun Yat-Sen University (NSYSU), Taiwan. As a member of the Connectivity Team at HIIA, he is responsible for digital connectivity projects. At NSYSU, his research focuses on competing data governance models. Previously, he worked as a journalist and East Asia correspondent for Hungarian and international media outlets.

Tonny Dian Effendi is a lecturer at the Department of International Relations, the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. He is also a member of ROLES, a university-based think tank at the University of Tokyo, Japan. He was a visiting research fellow at the Japan Institute of International Affairs (Japan), the Institute of International Relations (Taiwan), and the Center of Asia Pacific Area Studies-Academia Sinica (Taiwan). His research area is international relations in East Asia, diplomacy, constructivism, diaspora, and Chinese Indonesian studies. Email tonny@umm.ac.id

Panel 4 – Sentiments, Perceptions, Opinions, Trust, and Disinformation

Tracking the Sentiment Traffic of Young Indonesian Netizens' Chats on the Issues of Peace, Justice and Humanitarian Crisis: A Netnography Study of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is characterised by complex issues related to peace, justice and humanitarian crisis. Meanwhile, TikTok in 2023 as one of the social media platforms with about 105.51 million users in Indonesia serves for individuals to express their views, engage in conversations, and contribute to shaping public discourse on the issue of Israel-Palestine conflict. This study aims to track the sentiment traffic of 26,201 young Indonesian netizens' chats on the Palestine vs. Israel conflict based on the content of 10 Muslim and non-Muslim influencers. John Rawls' Theory of Justice was adapted to measure the sentiments of young Indonesian netizens. Then, to analyse the data, conversation analysis was used through netnography study, which involves systematically gathering information from online sources to gain insights into the behaviours, interactions and cultural dynamics of young netizens' chats. Using a netnography approach, the study delves into the digital interactions of this demographic, seeking to understand the nuances of their perspectives and responses within the complex socio-political realm of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The results showed that there are 11 trending topics in the Israel vs. Palestine conversation, such as 16.9% religious commentary, 15.8% misinformation war, 14.7% pro-Palestine, 12.3% prayer, 11.6% hate speech, 9.8% history of Israel-Palestine, 6.5% conflict resolution, 5.5% ceasefire, 3.2% donation, 2.9% United Nations, and 0.8% pro-Israel. The data also showed that 59.9% of young Indonesian netizens had a positive sentiment, 27.1% a negative sentiment and 13% a neutral sentiment towards the Israel-Palestine issue. The findings of this netnography study provide valuable insights into the sentiments of young Indonesian netizens, shedding light on their perceptions of the Israel-Palestine conflict and its underlying issues. The findings have implications for understanding the role of digital platforms in shaping public opinion, as well as informing strategies for promoting dialogue, empathy and intercultural understanding in the context of international conflicts.

Aprilian Ria Adisti holds a PhD in Language Education from Semarang State University and is currently a lecturer at the State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga. She is also the director of the Centre for Gender and Child Studies at the Institute for Research and Community Service at UIN Salatiga. Email aprilian@uinsalatiga.ac.id
Muhamad Rozikan, who heads the Early Childhood Islamic Education programme, is a PhD student in Guidance and Counselling at Semarang State University. He is also a lecturer in the Islamic Guidance and Counselling programme at UIN Salatiga.
Silfa Dzukhriyah, who is currently studying for a Master's degree in English Education at UIN Salatiga, also works as a teacher at the Agro El Falah Islamic boarding school in Salatiga.

'The Online Jihad,' Analysis of the Potential for the Spread of Disinformation among Indonesian and Malaysian Netizens on Social Media in the Palestine Conflict

This study examines the dissemination of disinformation regarding the recent Palestine-Israel conflicts on social media, focusing on Indonesian and Malaysian netizens. It also explores the concurrent Israeli products' boycott campaign. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, this research combines quantitative social media analytics with qualitative content analysis. The theoretical framework is rooted in the agenda-setting theory and social identity theory. Agenda-setting theory elucidates how media priorities shape public perception, while social identity theory explores how group affiliations influence individual behaviour and attitudes online. Data collection involved scraping social media platforms such as TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for posts containing specific keywords related to the Palestine-Israel conflict and the boycott campaign. Sentiment analysis and network analysis were employed to identify the spread and impact of disinformation. Additionally, in-depth interviews with social media users in Indonesia and Malaysia provided insights into the motivations behind sharing certain types of content. The findings reveal a significant prevalence of disinformation among posts from Indonesian and Malaysian netizens, often driven by emotional responses and group identity. The boycott campaign against Israeli products emerged as both a reaction to the conflict and a symbol of solidarity with Palestine, though it also attracted disinformation about the efficacy and consequences of such actions. This study contributes to the global discourse on disinformation by highlighting the specific dynamics within Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries. It underscores the need for improved digital literacy and critical thinking among social media users to counteract the spread of false information. Moreover, it emphasises the role of social media platforms in moderating content and the potential for international cooperation in addressing the challenges posed by digital disinformation. The insights gained can inform policymakers and educators aiming to mitigate the impact of disinformation and foster a more informed and discerning online community globally.

M. Luthfi Khair is a researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia.

Panel 4 – Sentiments, Perceptions, Opinions, Trust, and Disinformation

On Repeat: Frequent Misinformation and Frauds in Donation-Based Crowdfunding in Contemporary Indonesia

Over the past decade, donation-based crowdfunding has grown rapidly in Indonesia, with people using crowdfunding platforms and social media to donate and raise funds. This trend is positive, as it encourages citizen participation in addressing various social issues and highlights concerns that might otherwise be overlooked by the government. However, several crowdfunding cases have involved misleading information, with some campaigners misusing funds for personal purposes. Prominent social media influencers have been found guilty of such fraud. The most significant scandal involved Aksi Cepat Tanggap, one of Indonesia's largest Muslim philanthropic organisations, which was alleged to have misused funds and provided misinformation in its campaigns. Despite numerous scandals, crowdfunding in Indonesia remains thriving. Observers argue that the main cause of these issues is weak and outdated regulations concerning public fundraising. This study argues that multiple factors have contributed to the repeating fraud cases in crowdfunding, including platform providers, donors, and campaigners' orientations. This study examines the case of Kita Bisa, the largest crowdfunding platform in Indonesia, to explore its mechanisms for screening submitted campaigns and preventing fraud. Additionally, the study investigates donors and campaigners' motivations to understand their perceptions and trust in crowdfunding practices. It found that donors often fail to properly check the credentials of crowdfunding campaigns due to their religious and emotional motives, which hinders their critical evaluation. Although Kita Bisa has implemented systems to avoid and report fraud, donors rarely prioritise the accountability of campaigners. Moreover, campaigners tend to focus on creating sensational narratives to make campaigns viral and raise more funds. This study calls for updated fundraising regulations and emphasises educating donors to be more critical in their donations. It also highlights the role Kita Bisa could play in fact-checking crowdfunding narratives and reporting.

Bhirawa Anoraga is a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies at the Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII). He earned his PhD from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at UNSW Canberra. His doctoral thesis, titled "New Media and Social Engagement: The Promotion of Civic Pluralism in Contemporary Indonesia," delves into the impact of crowdfunding and online philanthropy on social engagement and Islam in Indonesia. His research interests encompass digital Islam, Islamic economy and philanthropy, as well as youth and online movements. He has contributed to various journals, including Indonesia and the Malay World, Advances in Southeast Asian Studies, and the Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies. Email bhirawa.anoraga@uiii.ac.id

Harnessing Digital Technology for Disinformation Mitigation: Insights from Indonesia

This scholarly research focuses on mitigating and countering disinformation in Indonesia, using digital technology within the scope of the humanities and social sciences. The challenge of disinformation is particularly pronounced in archipelagic regions such as Indonesia, where access to digital technology is variable. The research methodology uses a social psychological approach to decipher the influence of disinformation on individual opinions and behaviours. The research involves conducting surveys and interviews through widely used social media platforms in Indonesia to understand the public's perception and response to disinformation. The theoretical framework of this research is rooted in information and communication theory, focusing on the mechanisms of information dissemination and comprehension in a digital context. The research also incorporates social psychological theory to elucidate the impact of disinformation on individual opinions and behaviours. Potential contributions of this research include the development of advanced algorithms and software that can be used by social media platforms and news organisations to detect and counter disinformation. In addition, this research will provide a new understanding of the impact of disinformation on Indonesian society and the potential role of digital technology in countering this phenomenon. The expected results of this research could significantly contribute to local initiatives aimed at combating disinformation and promoting the dissemination of accurate and reliable information in Indonesia.

Primasari is a researcher at the ASEAN Connectivity Research Group, Research Centre for Area Studies, Research Organisation for Social Sciences and Humanities, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), with research interests in health, diplomacy, mobility and area studies. Her professional experience includes lecturer at the Nursing Academy of the National Development University "Veteran" Jakarta, researcher at the Ministry of Health, researcher at the Research Center for Areas Studies and Head of the ASEAN Connectivity Research Group at BRIN. Email prim010@brin.go.id

Panel 5 – Disinformation, Digital Disparity, Gender, Health, and Resilience

Digital Disparities and Disinformation: Unveiling the Digital Complexities in ASEAN's Underprivileged Communities

This study examines the digital complexity pivoting around the disinformation ecosystem in ASEAN in the context of underprivileged communities. This comparative study asserts that although internet access has increased in the Southeast Asian region, especially with the proliferation of smartphones, a new problem has emerged in which underprivileged communities are disadvantaged. As a result, the underprivileged communities in ASEAN face challenges in accessing accurate information and navigating the digital sphere. Building on Van Dijk's digital divides and Webber's inequality and stratification theoretical lens, this study extends a new understanding to unfold a complex relationship between multifaceted digital divides, social stratification, and economic inequalities. The paper argues that dis/misinformation can be understood by scrutinizing relevant factors, including socioeconomic, political, and individual behaviour toward technologies. Moreover, socioeconomic inequalities predating the advent of the Internet era have exacerbated societal disparities, mainly digital divisions. Employing mixed-methods data collection that includes surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth semi-structured interviews, this study identifies the extent the inequalities rooted in social contexts significantly determine underprivileged community members' media uptake, platform use, behaviours, purposes, and information reliability across social groups and locations, and thus lead to how they respond to dis/misinformation. Furthermore, the study delves into the repercussions of responding to dis/misinformation, highlighting the potential damage to democratic values, the economy, and social structures, ultimately fostering deeper marginalisation. Conclusions and recommendations are provided in the final part of the paper.

Endah Triastuti is a lecturer at the Department of Communication, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Universitas Indonesia. Her research interests include media anthropology, minority groups, feminism and digital ethnography. Email endah.triastuti@ui.ac.id

Whisnu Triwibowo is assistant professor (Communication) and head of Undergraduate Studies at Universitas Indonesia. He holds a Ph.D. in Information and Media from Michigan State University. His research interests lie at the intersection of information and communication studies. In particular, he studies the social dynamics of the Internet. Email w.triwibowo@ui.ac.id

Gendered Disinformation on Social Media: Cyber-misogyny and 'SJW Feminist' in Indonesia

Feminism is a concept and practice that has been discussed extensively in recent years. Most of the time, especially in the Global South, feminism is often seen as a culture and belief that has been brought from the West. Therefore, the attitudes towards feminism, either as a concept or practice, have been ambivalent. On the one hand, some perceive feminism as incompatible with Global South's cultures and demand that any feminist discussions and values diverge in their society. On the other hand, some believe feminism aligns with restoring humanity and eliminating discrimination against women. Thus, for some, putting the concept into practice is essential as a pivotal foundation for women's movements. In Indonesia, this dualism has also been a source of heated debate, especially in this era where debates can happen online and offline. The fourth wave of feminism, the latest wave, is marked using social media platforms to advocate for eliminating violence against women. This wave also indirectly indicates the rising discourse of feminism in social media. 'SJW Feminist' or Social Justice Warriors on feminism or women issues is a term that is often used to address those, particularly women feminists, who speak out against the patriarchal system, gender and sex discrimination, and power imbalance. However, 'SJW Feminist' has a negative connotation, referring to the group of women who intend to defeat men. Therefore, those called 'SJW Feminist' have been targeted to gendered disinformation and cyber-misogyny on social media. This research aims to examine more closely gendered disinformation and cyber-misogyny experienced by 'SJW Feminist' on Twitter and employs a content analysis method. This research will be conducted within transnational and decolonial feminism frameworks coined by Mohanty (1988) and Spivak (1988).

Tri Kurnia Revul Andina is a lecturer at the Department of Communication Studies, Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia. Her teaching and research interests include gender studies, media and cultural studies, digital literacy, inclusive digital society and civil society empowerment. She is interested in media dynamics and the political economy of media practices in Indonesia. She has contributed to various projects, including a study on cases of violence against women, cases of online gender-based violence, public service media policy, etc.. Email trikurniarevul@uny.ac.id

Panel 5 – Disinformation, Digital Disparity, Gender, Health, and Resilience

Mitigating Health Disinformation in the Digital Era:
The Role of Religious Institutions in Trust Building and Traditional Health Knowledge Preservation

In the digital age, health disinformation has become a serious problem, posing individual and community health risks. Religious institutions, with their central role in society, have the potential to play an important role in mitigating health disinformation and maintaining traditional health knowledge. This study aims to analyse the role of religious institutions in mitigating health disinformation in the digital era, with a focus on trust building and maintenance of traditional health knowledge. This research used a qualitative approach, with a case study method and interview analysis. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with leaders and members of religious communities, as well as analysis of relevant documents. The research found that religious institutions have significant potential to play a role in mitigating health disinformation. The role of religious institutions starts from improving the quality of social literacy to monitoring practices and developing health science based on local wisdom and religious values.

Ihsan Kamaludin is a social science teacher at Bent Tree School and a freelance researcher at several institutions, including the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), focusing on religion and culture research. He graduated from the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM), Yogyakarta. Email ihsankamal95@mail.ugm.ac.id

Community Resilience to Hoaxes and Disinformation

The spread of dubious information or rumours has existed since the pre-digital era. In the agrarian era, Javanese people usually start their rumours with the word "jarene" or "reportedly". Culturally, the recipients of the message do not usually immediately believe the information by answering "tenane" or "is it true? The receiver's clarification is followed by a discussion about the possible truth of the information. This pattern shows that the wisdom of clarification before fake news spreads demonstrates the resilience of Javanese society. In the era of mass society, several rumours have spread nationally through the mass media. In the late 1970s, there was the Cut Sahara Fona case, a fake news story about someone claiming that the child she was carrying could speak. This case was cleared up after it was investigated by the authorities. In the digital age, hoaxes or disinformation evolve very quickly. In Indonesia, the ecosystem for dealing with disinformation in the form of fact-checking works well. The government, civil society organisations and the media industry work together to carry out these activities. However, this good ecosystem has not reduced the spread of disinformation. Some people believe disinformation more than scientific clarification. This shows that managing and preventing disinformation is a complex issue. The aims of this research are a) to create a socio-historical map of disinformation in Indonesia, and b) to describe patterns of community resilience to disinformation. The methods used were interviews and FGDs. The research was conducted in the special region of Yogyakarta and West Nusa Tenggara. The research findings show that the digital society lacks resilience to disinformation. Dealing with hoaxes and disinformation needs to be done comprehensively by linking the socio-historical context. The same needs to be done to prevent disinformation by looking at the resilience of communities since the pre-digital era. The debunking approach of fact-checking needs to be balanced with the pre-bunking approach of preventing hoaxes and disinformation from spreading.

Nina Widyawati is a senior researcher at the Research Centre for Society and Culture at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN, Indonesia). She is the coordinator of the research group "Digital Research for Social and Humanities". Email nina001@brin.go.id & widyawati1960@gmail.com

Widjajanti M. Santoso focuses on sociology, gender and media. Her books are on gender and education, feminist sociology, and gender mainstreaming as Indonesia's gender policy.

Ubadillah focuses on the relationship between language and power to explore cultural, agency and social change. In 2023, he coordinated the research team "Model for handling and preventing disinformation based on local knowledge: debunking and prebunking" at BRIN. Email ubai001@brin.go.id & 23ubaid@gmail.com

Purwadi is a researcher and communication practitioner with over 11 years of experience. He currently works as a researcher at BRIN. Previously, he worked as a public relations practitioner at the Bureau for Cooperation, Law and Public Relations at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI).

Ana Windarsih is a researcher at the Research Centre for Society and Culture at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). She holds a Master's degree in Communication Studies from the University of Indonesia (UI). Her research focuses on new media and communication technology and popular culture. She is currently working on wayang or puppets in the politics of mediatisation.

Panel 6 – Countering Cyberspace Disinformation, Digital Literacy, and Strengthening Democracy

Civic Literacy in Indonesian Schools: Issues and Challenges in Democracy Strengthening

The issue of civic literacy in Asia and the Pacific still faces several challenges. One of the challenges that arises in the educational process in schools is digital literacy. The issues that arise are related to digital literacy and strengthening democracy. In general, digital literacy addresses critical issues in society, such as comprehension and knowledge skills, and the use of digital technology to locate learning resources, such as downloads and browsers. Not all students know how to use digital sources of information. Secondly, how to obtain adequate information and determine the accuracy of information sources in digital technology is not yet fully understood and recognised by students at school. This study will focus on how civic education in Indonesian schools can have an impact on improving and maturing the young generation in democracy. This study aims to systematically convey the issues and challenges of civic literacy in order to strengthen the ecosystem and democratic values in Indonesia. The method used in this study is a literature review and interviews with digital media users among high school students and teachers in Indonesia.

Hastangka is a researcher at the Research Centre for Education, National Research and Innovation Agency. He completed his Ph.D. in Philosophy at Universitas Gadjah Mada in 2019. He has research interests and expertise in education policy, philosophy, general education, higher education, educational science, indigenous education, Pancasila education, civic education, politics and education, and others. Email hastangka@brin.go.id

Adison Adrianus Sihombing is a researcher at the Research Centre for Education, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). He received his Ph.D. in Education from Universitas Negeri Jakarta in 2024. Before joining BRIN, he worked as a researcher at the Research and Development Center for Religious Literature and Organizational Management of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. He has research expertise in management, education and religious culture. Email adis009@brin.go.id & sonadi2017@gmail.com

Etty Sisdiana is a researcher at the Research Centre for Education, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). She started her studies at the Faculty of Chemical Technology Education Jakarta Institute of Teaching and Education (IKIP Jakarta) and continued her studies at the Education Assessment and Evaluation Program Jakarta State University (UNJ). Before joining BRIN, she worked for about 41 years at the Centre for Educational Assessment, Standards, Curriculum and Educational Assessment Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, which is responsible for research and development of educational policies. Email etty005@brin.go.id

Herlinawati is a researcher at Indonesia's National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). She has a PhD in Communication. She has 32 years of experience, starting as a lecturer, then for the past 27 years she has focused on research work on education policy. Before joining BRIN, she worked for the Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia. Email herl008@brin.go.id

Benny Widaryanto, is a researcher at the Research Centre for Education, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). He started his studies at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, UGM and continued his studies at the Faculty of Psychology, Gajah Mada University. Prior to joining BRIN, he worked at the Centre for Educational Assessment, Standards, Curriculum and Educational Assessment Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, which was involved in research and development of educational assessment for about 33 years. Email benn006@brin.go.id & ryanbenk2020@gmail.com

Panel 6 – Countering Cyberspace Disinformation, Digital Literacy, and Strengthening Democracy

Religious Moderation, Political Literacy and Democratic Maturity in Contemporary Indonesia

This paper seeks to examine the dynamics of religious moderation, political literacy and democratic maturity in the context of the digital age, looking specifically at the Indonesian experience. During the 2024 general election, the relationship between religious moderation and political literacy becomes more complex. The presence of political actors and cyber troops adds to the digital complexity, as these can in some ways trigger misinformation and disinformation. People's confirmation bias can also be exploited by political actors to maximise their votes. Specifically, this paper examines three interrelated research questions. First, how does religious moderation contribute to political literacy in Indonesia in the context of the post-truth era? Second, what are the prospects for political literacy in Indonesia? Third, to what extent do religious moderation and political literacy contribute to the improvement of democracy in Indonesia? This paper argues that religious moderation can play an important role in promoting political literacy and the maturity of democracy if it is transformed into a 'knowledge culture'.

Asfa Widiyanto is Professor of Islamic Thought at the State Islamic University (UIN) Salatiga, Indonesia. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Bonn and his M.A. from the University of Leiden. From 2011 to 2013, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Marburg and the University of Bamberg, funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He is currently the editor-in-chief of the Indonesian Journal of Religion, Spirituality and Humanity (IJoReSH). His research interests include Islamic Studies, Sociology of Religion and Philosophy of Religion. Email asfa.widiyanto@gmail.com

Sukron Ma'mun is a lecturer specialising in the sociology of religion at UIN in Salatiga, Indonesia. He earned his PhD from the School of Social Science at Western Sydney University, Australia. His instructional and scholarly endeavours centre on the examination of Islamic movements, the intersection of Islam with local traditions, and the broader field of Indonesian Islamic studies. Email sukron.mn@uinsalatiga.ac.id

Does Digital Literacy Affect Voting Behaviour?

In this digital era, our reliance on digital platforms is growing, and political campaigns have evolved to capture the voters' attention, often contributing to the massive spread of disinformation and misinformation. In facing this issue, people are required to have the ability to check and criticize the information they are exposed to. While existing studies indicate some factors, such as individual-level, socio-cultural, and political factors, play significant roles in shaping voting behaviour, the influence of digital literacy remains underexplored, particularly among first-time voters. This research aims to analyse young adults' exposure to social media and their digital literacy in the context of the Indonesian 2024 national election. According to Kepios Analysis, the demographic profile of Meta's ad audience in Indonesia is mostly 18-24 years old, roughly 32% of the population. This study employs regression analysis to examine the relationship between digital literacy and voting behaviour among first-time voters (aged 17-21) at the University of Indonesia. First-time voters in the digital age are unique because they are at a critical juncture in forming their voting habits and political opinions and are engaged with digital platforms. The research will assess digital literacy as the independent variable with dimensions including the ability to use media, managing digital learning platforms, advanced use of social media, and ethics and safety in using digital media. By examining the relationship between these variables, this research will contribute to adding an understanding of what affects young voters' voting decisions in the digital age. In democratic societies in the Indo-Pacific region, digital literacy is essential for fostering informed citizenship and countering the spread of digital misinformation and disinformation, particularly during elections and political campaigns.

Fuadil 'Ulum is a researcher at the Centre for Political Studies, Universitas Indonesia (PUSKAPOL UI). He is particularly interested in digital technology and democracy. His recent work entitled "Infusing Start-Up Spirit into Indonesia's Bureaucracy: A Critical Analysis of Indonesia's Technological Regime in Public Service Delivery", won the Best Paper Award at the Lien International Conference on Good Governance at NTU Singapore in 2023. He has also authored several journal articles and op-eds on contemporary political issues in Indonesia, which have been published in media outlets such as Kompas, The Conversation Indonesia and other platforms. Email fuadil.ulum@ui.ac.id

Salma Syakira Widodo is an MPA in Urban Policy student at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University. She is interested in urban development, good governance and digital governance issues. Prior to joining SIPA Columbia University, Salma worked as a budget analyst at the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning. Email ssw2162@columbia.edu

Panel 6 – Countering Cyberspace Disinformation, Digital Literacy, and Strengthening Democracy

Disinformation, Digital Democracy Space, and Counter Strategy in Indonesia

Since 2014, the spread of disinformation or hoaxes has become a significant problem in Indonesia's digital politics. The increasing role of social media to access news by the public tends to be followed by a trend of using it to spread hoaxes and hate speech. Disinformation continues to increase until the 2024 general election. Indonesian government through the Ministry of Communication and Informatics and civil society movements for fact-checking programs have begun, such as Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia (MAFINDO) and Turnbackhoax. Such massive, structured, and systematic hoaxes on social media also require comparable fact-checking technology and more sensitivity in detecting lies and falsehoods. This research aims to mitigate and counter disinformation through digital technology. The research question is: how does disinformation affect the digital democratic space in Indonesia, and what are the strategies to deal with and anticipate it? The method used in this research is qualitative. Data collected from existing regulations, and collaboration pattern of Menkominfo, MAFINDO, Turnbackhoax, POLRI, BIN, and BSSN were examined in terms of secure cyberspace and democratic life in Indonesia. Although there are concerns from some parties that the government will refrain from using the presence of regulations to deal with hoax content to silence opposition voices, our research concludes that polarisation and hoaxes will strengthen themselves if not supported by solid information filtering and literacy in society. This is because social media technology allows the production and viralisation of hoax-based information, sometimes tinged with hate speech and even ethnic, religious, and racial issues, to occur at a very high speed. Meanwhile, the regulatory readiness and law enforcement still needs to be faster and more robust, so the fact-checking system innovation used by the Menkominfo, MAFINDO, Turnbackhoax, and other institutions is less rapid than the flood of hoaxes and polarisation.

Syafuan Rozi is a senior researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). He received his B.A. and M.A. in Political Science from the University of Indonesia (UI). His research interests include urban politics; policy analysis/public policy politics; bureaucratic reform; Indonesia-Malaysia relations; parties, elections and parliament; conflict and peace studies; mining and new energy politics; transport politics; public housing politics; green economic and environmental politics. Email: syafuanrozi@gmail.com

Otto Trengginas Setiawan is a researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). He holds a master's degree from the Risk Management Programme of the Perbanas Institute, Indonesia. He focuses on law, constitution, political economy and parliament and his writings have been published either in academic journals or newspapers. His latest paper is "Approaches and Policy Measures for Implementing the Resolutions of the People's Assembly in the Indonesian Decision-Making System" (2023). Currently, he is one of the researchers in the study of the Papuan conflict after the establishment of the four new autonomous regions in Papua and the study of the New Capital (Nusantara). Email otto.trengginas@gmail.com

Australian Government

Australian Research Council

Australian Research Council (ARC) Funded project (DP220100829) Religious Populism, Emotions and Political Mobilisation

This 3-year project is led by Ihsan Yilmaz and seeks to explore the defining characteristics of religious populism, particularly through the lens of emotional influence in political engagement. Focusing on three key countries—Turkey, Indonesia, and Pakistan it employs a range of analytical methods, including the examination of populist rhetoric, populist digital communication and interviews with voters to understand the reception of the populist messaging. The goal is to deepen both theoretical and empirical understandings of religious populism, especially how emotional appeals contribute to political mobilisation and societal polarisation. By developing benchmark data sets and conceptual frameworks, the research aims to offer insights that can be applied to other contexts where religious populism threatens democratic institutions. Ultimately, the project aspires to equip democratic governments with the knowledge needed to devise informed policies that mitigate the potential harms of religious populism, safeguarding the stability and integrity of democratic systems.

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GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG

Gerda Henkel Foundation (ARC)
Funded project (AZ 01/TG/21)
Emerging Digital Technologies
and the Future of Democracy in the Muslim World

This 3-year project is co-led by Shahram Akbarzadeh and Ihsan Yilmaz. Smart digital technologies have had both positive and negative impacts on democracy worldwide. On the positive side, these technologies have weakened the dominance of traditional media, giving ordinary people a platform to share their voices, communicate politically, and organize protests more effectively. They have also made it easier for people to connect with their governments. However, these same technologies provide governments and large tech companies with vast amounts of personal data, raising concerns about privacy and surveillance, which can harm democratic processes. In the Muslim world, where digital technologies have grown rapidly in the last two decades, this mixed impact is evident. In some countries, these tools have enabled protests and revolutions, while in others, they have strengthened government control. This project explores how smart digital technologies have affected democracy in the Muslim world by examining four countries: Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and Egypt.

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