Today the issue of ethnicity is considered “weaker” compared to religious issues, particularly after the 2017 Jakarta Governor election which was followed by the emergence of the so-called 212 movement. Nevertheless, the fact shows that it’s still as strong as ever.

The issue of socio-economic gap between ethnic groups is now being complicated by digital divide between those with access to social media and those without. Information and opinion are mostly constructed by surveys conducted among those with access to internet or social media. Even though, as Carmen Steele (2018) said, “[d]ifferences in income and literacy are most significant contributors to the digital divide, but group differences are not marked by poverty per se like the era of 1980s and 1990s.

Politics of difference has been dictated by new type of communication which, according to Christian Fuchs (2013), is both an ideology and a capital accumulation strategy through a promise of participatory internet prosumers. It disguised the strategy of targeted advertising and the crowdsourced exploitation of digital labour. Study by Yong-chan Kim, Joo-young Jung and Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach (2007) confirmed the effect of ethnicity on internet connectedness: individuals who reside and congregate in a particular place collectively influence the area’s communication infrastructure. In comparing whites, African Americans, Latinos and Asians in Los Angeles metropolitan areas, they found that whites and Latinos connected to the internet more for business and finance related goals, while Asians and African Americans connected more for entertainment related goals. It means that internet connectedness is “embedded in specific spatial and temporal contexts”.

In this paper I would like to discuss the issue of ethnicity and class within the context of the changing Indonesian middle class, which according to McKinsey, “presents an intriguing paradox”; Indonesia’s digital denizens are among the world’s most active (time spent on internet 3.5 hours per day, time spent on social media 2.9 hours per day, 90% of internet users are Facebook visitors, Jakarta is widely considered as the Twitter capital of the world), and it has a vibrant startup ecosystem, but overall the country lags in embracing the benefits of modern technology. Indonesia’s internet penetration rate is “half of Malaysia”, i.e. 34% only.

In the last few years, we see the public emergence of the term “Indonesia Middle class Moslem” with the argument that since the majority of Indonesians are Moslem (87.13% or 2017,176 million people in 2010), it is appropriate to talk about Indonesia’s middle class Moslem. Even though there is no standard definition of the middle class, based on Asian Development Bank criteria, the majority of Indonesia’s middle class Moslem is at lower middle level with $2-$4 expenditure a day. Based on their survey over 1,200 respondents (586 males and 613 females), Hasanuddin Ali & Lilik Purwandi defined middle class Moslem as “a group of population, who has both purchasing power and a degree of religiosity. Munawir Aziz’s observation suggested that the growing of Moslem middle class in Indonesia has been “supported by a positive trend on the sharia economy market: the increasing economic circulation in the market with sharia label to the rapid development of the sharia bank. Wasisto Raharjo Jati believes that middle class Moslem who hold onto shar’i as their guidelines in values and norms is a consequence of their desire to be recognized as modern
Moslem with modern symbols. But, shari’ah consumerism among middle class Moslem, for Jati, is an indication that Islamic teachings is still at the scriptural level, because shari’ah is just an icon to persuade people to become a ‘modern’ Moslem middle class. As reported, Indonesia’s Moslem majority has embraced more overt signs of religiosity and shifted toward Arab-style devotion (flowing clothes and veils, Arabic names and Middle Eastern devotional architecture). According to Mr. Uil of the Liberal Islam Network, “Salafism is a magnet for people because it’s very simple and easy to understand”. Many students in Mr. Zaenal Abidin’s Islamic school, which is part of a Salafist community build on the outskirts of Jakarta in 1998, are middle class government employees. According to him, “We were colonized for so long by Christians, so we have an inferiority complex, but this is a country with the world’s largest number of Moslems, so we must show our true Islamic nature”. The issue of “being Moslem” and “becoming more Moslem” is a new political trend which governs people’s life in Indonesia today. It has become the most significant trait for identifying friends, working partners as well as community and state leaders. But, seeing class distinction as the core determinant for middle class Moslem grouping, we could safely say that Moslem identity is just an ‘ethnic factor’ that has been created for the purpose of distinguishing a certain group from the general Indonesian middle class. Hence is the beginning of what I will call class-based ethnicity.

If we look carefully at the underlying issue about the needs for “decent employment” and “well-paid job” which was raised by Muhammad Chatib Basri as the reason for the growing discontentment of [Moslem] middle class, we could argue that the statement is clearly targeting economic disparities of ethnic based majority and minority which has long been established since before the Indonesian independence, namely between indigenous and non-indigenous, as well as between those were economically weak and dominant, albeit now between the ‘poor’ Moslem majority and ‘rich’ non Moslem minority.

Host, Guest and Stranger: Exoticization and Exploitation at Tourism Indonesian Practice

Coordinators: Irfan Nugraha, Sundjaya, & Febrian (Universitas Indonesia)

As a subject of anthropology, tourism had its dynamic perspective, from interest in culture contact (Smith, 1989), form of imperialism (Nash, 1989), into representation problem (Urry, 2002). Through its dynamic, the host-tourist relation seems could not escape from its dilemma, which the two groups are likely to encounter and the less natural they are likely to act. As Theodossopoulos (in Salazar, 2014) described, the situation led to exoticization, “limiting vision of indigenous host as passive recipient of tourism imagination; appreciate the agency of host in renegotiating their self-identity during tourism encounter”. Exoticization often co-exist in parallel in the tourist imagination, producing contradictions that set in motion the imagination of local host. The local is constructed in contradictory ways and has always been, at least in part, the product of outside influences (Appadurai, 1996:178–199), yet the exchange of values happens in this relations. In contemporary Indonesia, the tourism is imaged as instrument of beneficiary. Since Jokowi’s era, Indonesia’s tourism boom considered positive for the economy as can be seen in the flood of overseas visitor, massive investment, and acceleration of tourism infrastructures. In that situation, this panel wants to elaborate and present cases on the Indonesia’s tourism acceleration and its impact. This panel want to discuss how the host and guest relations in tourism at the time of Indonesia’s booming tourism? How and what kind of values exchange that happened in contemporary Indonesia, present and future? And also, how we reflecting the