Dealing with Diversity in (Digital) Urban Contexts: From Concepts to Engagement

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Nowhere else in Indonesia is diversity so discernable as in its metropolitan centers. There, diversity is manifested in socio-economic, educational, political, ethnic, gender, and religious difference. Diversity, in the urban context, poses a challenge not least since the rise of digital technologies and freedom of expression facilitated the permeation of divergence into the everyday life of ordinary urbanites. It is not without a reason that some of the most elaborated argumentations for tolerance (toleransi) and peace (perdamaian) have emerged from the educated circles of urban centers, like Yogyakarta or the capital city of Jakarta. Yet, encompassing concepts, like the national motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, do not offer practical, enduring solutions to the oftentimes practical challenges of diversity. The panel invites papers that discuss diversity from the perspective of creative and sustainable practices in urban centers. They shall be able to portray how different agents in the city positions themselves with regard to diversity, starting from individuals, to activist groups, including private and government institutions. Papers submitted to this panel shall discuss not only emerging awareness of frictions related to difference but also the historical conditions that shaped urban realities that are both cosmopolitan and entrenched in local ethnic structures. Papers are welcome to discuss the presence or absence of practical solutions that deal with diversity as well as the challenges related to them, such as community contestation on horizontal as well as vertical levels; multiple, overlapping networks of collaboration; uneven distribution and occupation of public space; inconsistent mediation of difference online and offline; lacking representation of divergent/minority groups; etc. Papers are encouraged to present ethnographic case studies as well as results of on-going research projects.

Bandung’s School of Peace: An Alternative Space Addressing Interfaith and Minority Groups Through Dialogue and Cooperation
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The prevalence of radicalism and discrimination against minority groups in Bandung over the past two decades is undisputable. Former city mayor Ridwan Kamil’s claim that Bandung is a city of human rights is questioned, particularly due to numerous violations towards religious minorities, like blocking the building of houses of worship and other discriminative regulations. Discriminative environments in Bandung emerge partly due to the negligence of the city’s officials which results in the tendency to allow for intolerant groups and their movement to grow stronger. The officials’ disregard along with the support of intolerant groups produce cases such as the delay of the Monologue of Tan Malaka, or the arrest of Wanggi Hoed’s at the celebration of International Body Day, both in 2016. Well-informed anticipation of such cases is key to halt emerging intolerant and discriminative practices in the future. Through direct observation, group conversations, literature study, as well as dialogue and cooperation with various stakeholders in minority and activists’ circles, Bandung’s School of Peace provides an alternative space for students to engage critically.