

Panel Suggestion

Democracy and Education in Indonesia

Panel Convener:

Dr Saskia Schäfer, Humboldt University Berlin (Saskia.schaefer@hu-berlin.de)

Panel participants:

Dr Teguh Wijaya Mulya, University of Surabaya, Indonesia

Dissa Julia Papatungan, Humboldt University Berlin

Mutmainna Syam, Humboldt University Berlin

+ One free slot, tbd

+ one discussant, tbd

Since 1998, Indonesia's political system has experienced moments and phases of democratization, but also of autocratization. Most recently, the Covid pandemic and the subsequent restrictions in schools have exacerbated inequalities in the realm of education. Assuming that education is a central prerequisite for political participation, this panel focuses on different aspects of the Indonesian educational landscape. Three planned presentations focus on different aspects of Indonesian education. In addition, we welcome contributions in the broad field of Democracy and Education in Indonesia for a fourth presentation. We also invite colleagues interested in this field to serve as discussants on this panel. Please send your suggestions to saskia.schaefer@hu-berlin.de

Democratising Education in Indonesian Schools:

Locality, Postcoloniality, and Alternative Constructions of Democracy

Teguh Wijaya Mulya, University of Surabaya, Indonesia

The current study concerns the (re)production of democratic citizenry through education, that is, how individuals relate with, internalise, practise, and negotiate democratic values in/through schooling practices in contemporary Indonesian contexts. Complementing previous studies that have pointed out how democratic practices might have been deteriorating in Indonesia in the last decade, the study explores the other side of the spectrum, namely, the ways in which democratic educational practices have survived among some Indonesian schools, and unearths local socio-cultural discourses underpinning their democratic ways of seeing. Co-constructing qualitative data through site visits and interviews with principals of five uniquely democratic Indonesian local schools, the initial findings led the analysis into critical questionings of what democratic education may mean in relation to local contextuality, philosophy, history, and postcoloniality. The Western notion of democratic education characterised by ostensibly universal democratic virtues such as individual freedom, equality, social justice, and participation might have been predicated upon the construction of the autonomous, rational, Enlightenment subject. Exploring how democratic education looks like when it is understood through collective sensibilities, the initial analysis revealed some possible alternative constructions of democratic education including community-groundedness, embodied participation, inclusiveness beyond deliberative practices, and spiritual democracy. By identifying and circulating these

alternative constructions, it is hoped that the very idea of democracy and democratic education themselves may continuously be democratised.

Islamic Values in Education: Growing Intolerance in Indonesian Public Schools **Dissa Julia Paputungan, Humboldt University of Berlin**

After the transition from an authoritarian regime in 1998, western commentators hailed Indonesia as a model democratic Muslim-majority society. However, recent developments have called this interpretation into question. Scholars have identified the “conservative turn”, the rise of Islamic populism, and diminishing roles for Islamic organizations as signs of democratic decline. The religious authorities and society have become hostile towards other religions than Islam, as well as towards minority interpretations within Islam. Moreover, Islamic identity or piety expression are praised in many places and Islam exclusivism has been a prominent practice for society.

Against this backdrop, this paper aims to contribute to the debate on the democratization process in Indonesia by focusing on the education sector, where the dissemination of Islamic norms is most visible. The analysis focus on civic and religious education in public schools as well as competition between, and the polarization of, various actors involved in the democratic discourse. Drawing on interviews, observations, and textbook analysis, this paper explores transformations in the education policy of public schools from the reformation era until recently. By exploring civic and religious education at the national and local level, the paper contends that schools have been influenced by conservative Islamic values through various ways such as schoolbooks and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, this paper highlights the roles of civil society organizations beyond the efforts of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, and of how they respond towards public policies that challenge both the western and local human rights discourses, freedom of religion and expression, and the country’s putative pluralist values.

Democracy and the Changing Landscape of Education in Indonesia **Mutmainna Syam, Humboldt University of Berlin**

In the post-reform era, Indonesia’s democratization has faced numerous challenges, including the rise of conservatism, Islamic majoritarianism, and the mainstreaming of intolerance. Focussing on the city of Makassar in Central Indonesia, this paper discusses Islamic organizations and their roles in shaping the education sector. How and why have polarization and competition between various Islamic organisations undermined the democratization in the city? This paper makes two related arguments: First, in a place where no dominant religious authorities prevail – Makassar’s religious landscape is highly fragmented — the new conservative organizations have successfully and rapidly grown. Second, the rapid growth of the religious-conservatives education network has been conditioned by both by the weakening of the national moderate organizations (NU and Muhammadiyah), as well as the new form of competition that characterize what has become an education market.