

Summary Report for the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) website

Written by Pratama Yudha Pradheksa

Seminar and workshop

Technology and Postcoloniality: Historical and Social Studies of Technology in Southeast Asia

Venue and date

Friday, January 25, 2019 (8am – 4pm)

Widyaloka Building, University of Brawijaya, Malang,

Saturday, January 26, 2019 (9am – 5pm)

Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) Purwodadi Botanical Park

Resource Persons

- Dr. Clarissa Ai Ling Lee, Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development, Sunway University, Malaysia
- Dr. Farabi Fakhri, Department of History, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia
- Professor Hans Pols, School of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Sydney, Australia
- Dr. Hatib Abdul Kadir, Department of Anthropology, University of Brawijaya, Indonesia
- Professor Itty Abraham, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore
- Dr. Yuti Ariani Fatima, Senior News Researcher, *Tirto.id*, Indonesia

General remarks

Our seminar and workshop were a series of events, sponsored by Society for the History of Technology (SHOT), *Perkumpulan Eutenika* (Euthenics Research Association), the University of Brawijaya, and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). The events aimed to address key themes and questions regarding technology and postcoloniality on the issue of the imaginary and geospatiality in Southeast Asia. While historical and social studies as well as philosophy of science and technology remain a marginal subject in most universities and research institutions in Southeast Asia, our events aim to put front and center, the historical and social studies of science and technology, as well as postcolonial scholarship, before an audience of largely academics.

First day, Seminar

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

TECHNOLOGY AND POST-COLONIALITY: HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

JANUARY 25TH 2019 // GEDUNG WIDYALOKA - UNIVERSITAS BRAWIJAYA

PANEL 1 - Technology and Postcolonial Society

Pratama Yudha Pradheksa Euthenics Research Association

Medicine and Decolonisation: The Indonesian Experience



Prof. Hans Pols
School of History and Philosophy of Science
University of Sydney
Australia

Techno-Politics and Ontology Turn in Post-Colonial Countries



Dr. Hatib Abdul Kadir
Department of Anthropology
Universitas Brawijaya
Indonesia

Does STS have Nationality? A Quest for an Indonesian STS



Dr. Yuti Ariani Fatima
Senior News Researcher
Tirto.id
Indonesia



January 25th, 2019



08.00 - 16.00 WIB



Gedung Widyloka - Universitas Brawijaya



Certificate and Snack



There are also Student Photo Exhibition about "Humanistic Technology"

PANEL 2 - Doing STS in/of Southeast Asia

Anggun T.H. Susilo Center for Culture and Frontier Studies - UB

Reorienting the History of Science: How to Include Indonesia in the Scientific Historiography



Dr. Farabi Fakhri
Department of History
Universitas Gadjah Mada
Indonesia

Theories, Archives and Field-Sites: The Case of Doing STS in Southeast Asia



Dr. Clarissa Ai Ling Lee
Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development
Sunway University
Malaysia

Form Technological Societies to New Sites, Circulations and Bodies of Technoscience



Dr. Itty Abraham
Department of Southeast Asian Studies
National University of Singapore
Singapore

BOOK YOUR SEAT

0813-3673-3128

Genta Mahardika

0823-3766-6772

Happy Nirwana

Picture 1. The Seminar Publication

The first day was a seminar which was a result of a collaborative effort of the people from the University of Brawijaya and *Perkumpulan Eutenika* (Euthenics Research Association), located in Widyloka building at the University of Brawijaya, Malang. Although the topic of "Technology and Postcoloniality" was relatively new, we received

over 340 registered participants who came from various cities across Indonesia including Bandung, Jakarta, Sumatera, Sulawesi, Surabaya, Malang, Yogyakarta and from another country; Singapore. In addition, the invited speakers were senior and junior scholars who came from Indonesia, Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia. Unfortunately, Professor Bart Barendregt from Leiden University was not able to join us because of an illness.

There were two sessions in the first day of the seminar. Prior to the first panel, the University of Brawijaya's Vice Rector of Planning and Cooperation Dr. Moch. Sasmito Djati, Head of Institute of Research and Community Services Dr. Bambang Susilo, and main convener of SHOT grant Dr. Anton Novenanto kicked off the day with a welcome address. In relation to the seminar's topic, Djati highlighted the history of the University of Brawijaya that is not separable from the development of science and technology, while Susilo provided the rationales for why science and technology should be studied from perspectives of the social sciences and humanities.

As a main convener, Novenanto introduced the idea of the event which was originally came from an undergraduate course, titled *Dimensi Sosial Teknologi* (Social Dimensions of Technology) at the University of Brawijaya. From this undergraduate course, we also had students' photo essays in an exhibition, *Humanistic Technology*, outside the seminar room. Furthermore, the welcome speech noted the seminar would be a good start to explore understudied topics on historical and social studies of science and technology and postcolonial scholarship in Southeast Asia. Their speech was followed by a panel session on "Technology and Postcolonial Society".



Picture 2. The first panel of the seminar, “Technology and Postcolonial Society”.

The first panel, “Technology and Postcolonial Society,” explored the relationship of historical and social studies of science, medicine and technology, to postcolonial scholarship. This panel began at 9am with Professor Hans Pols’ talk, *Medicine and Decolonisation: The Indonesian Experience*. Drawing from his latest book, *Nurturing Indonesia: Medicine and Decolonisation in the Dutch East Indies*, Pols delivered a presentation about the role of “Indonesian” physicians in the social, cultural, and political movements before and after Indonesia’s independence in 1950s. He began by discussing the hierarchy of medical profession in the Dutch East Indies. Using an institutional analysis on the Association of Indonesian Physicians, he examined re-interpretation of decolonization of medicine and how Indonesian physicians would occupy all positions within the colonial health service after Indonesia’s independence. The movement was a prototype of community health services (*Puskesmas*) in Indonesia.

The second speaker was Dr. Hatib Abdul Kadir from the University of Brawijaya’s Department of Anthropology. Kadir’s presentation, *Techno-politics and Ontology Turn in Postcolonial Country*, discussed how technology interacts with politics, science, and the expansion of capitalism. Kadir opened the presentation with a critique of technological determinism, which adopts the expertise of modern engineering, technology, and social

science to improve the defect of nature, to transform peasant agriculture, and to repair ill society and fix the economy. Drawing from philosophy of technology, Kadir argued that scientific technology and technology infrastructure itself have their own subjectivity when creating classifications, descriptions, and priorities. To the audiences, Kadir offered reflexive question interrogating how science and technology can support multiple ontologies, especially in the Global South.

The last speaker of the first panel was Dr. Yuti Ariani Fatimah, who delivered a presentation titled, *Does STS Has Nationality? A Quest for an Indonesian STS?*. Based on her review of the post-colonial and globalization agenda in STS, Yuti discussed any chance of having an Indonesian STS. She argued that “a quest for an Indonesian STS should be built through friction between terms that define differences between one actor/event with the others and performances that tries to trespass and build interconnection across these boundaries.” In her conclusion, she emphasized that the plurality of re-definition of the terms is important to position Indonesian STS as an interdisciplinary study, as it is being shaped by the background of the people who constructed it.

The panel was followed by discussion with the audience. The participants who came from various academic backgrounds and institutions including Ma Chung University, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), the University of Indonesia were mainly interested in practical matters like the relevance of STS approaches to the current economic issues. In addition to such practical questions, the participants were engaged with conceptual arguments on the demarcation of science and non-science in the Global South. The first panel was closed by a group discussion on how science and technology maintain colonial legacy in the Global South. It was moderated by Mr. Pratama Yudha Pradheksa from Eutenika Research Association.

The second panel of the seminar, “Doing STS in/of Southeast Asia” covered a comparative experience of historical and social studies of science and technology in Southeast Asia. As the moderator of the panel was Mr. Anggun Susilo from the Center for Culture and Frontiers Studies, University of Brawijaya.

The second panel began with Dr. Farabi Fakhri's talk, *Reorienting the History of Science: How to Place Indonesia in the Scientific Historiography*. Fakhri first reviewed the power relations of Eurocentric nature and the history of science, and then discussed its implications to Indonesian studies on the history of science scholarship. He demonstrated how Indonesia's peripheral position in modern science has continued to the present period, suggesting that it results from Indonesians' lack of faith, given our absence in the historiography. His presentation suggested that the Indonesian people

have to be convinced that science and the history of science is essential to our everyday lives.

The second speaker of the second panel was Dr. Clarissa Ai Ling Lee who delivered a presentation titled, *Theories, Archives, and Field-Sites: The Case of Doing STS in Southeast Asia*. In her talk, Lee considered the meaning of doing STS in Southeast Asia. Drawing from her experience in doing STS research in Malaysia, she discussed the establishment of locally-situated scholarship against general theories for framing STS research agenda. She closed her talk by putting a reflective question to the audience, whether it is necessary to embark on an investigation of STS matters in Southeast Asia, and if the response is an affirmative, how it might transform extant reception of science and technology in the region.

The last speaker of the second panel, Professor Itty Abraham delivered a talk, *From Technological Societies to New Sites, Circulations, and Bodies of Technoscience*. Abraham introduced “*Technological Societies*”, top-down, expert-led societies common in the Global South. His presentation reviewed postcolonial scholarship and global capital and contradictory ways. To illustrate his argument, Abraham also provided the example of anti-nuclear movement in Philippine. Postcolonial scholarship, according to Abraham, is not merely simply a distinction or criticism; it has a broader scope. He noticed that the consideration of other entities, like corporations, is necessary to the study of technology.

The second panel was followed by discussion with the participants. While the first panel of the seminar mainly discussed STS frameworks, the second session’s audiences considered methodological aspects of doing STS research. In the discussion, the audience’s comments and questions mostly addressed STS methods and their relation to the importance of postcolonial scholarship. Through the seminar, the audiences learned what does STS look likes and how the history of science and technology account could be useful to them.



Picture 3. Group photo of volunteers of the seminar

Following the seminar, we had a gala dinner at Inggil Museum Resto, Malang.



Picture 4. Group photo in front of Inggil Resto.

Second Day, Workshop

This workshop aimed to have productive discussions and about improving the quality of scholarship regarding STS and postcoloniality. It was focused on how one could establish a collaboration addressing marginal topics in the philosophical, historical and social studies of science and technology that would take into account postcolonial concerns. The conveners called the participants together to present their works at the workshop. We received 19 applicants and then selected 10 participants consisting of an environmental activist, graduate students, and lecturers. Their diverse academic backgrounds in social sciences, humanities, engineering, and natural sciences made the workshop discussion rich and valuable. The workshop also had a large presence of under-represented scholars and graduate students, signifying an interest in historical and social studies of science and technology and postcolonial scholarship is growing in the region.

The workshop took place at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) Purwodadi Botanical Garden, located in Pasuruan, from 9.30 am to 05.00 pm, and followed by dinner together in Malang. It was significant for the workshop to be held in LIPI Purwodadi Botanical Garden: as a “laboratory” established under the Dutch imperial government, it was an ideal place to discuss about the nexus of history, science, technology and its relation to postcolonial scholarship. Led by Deden Mudiana, Head of LIPI Purwodadi Botanic Garden, we took a tour around the garden, where their botanists produced scientific knowledge. The tour was followed by Deden Mudiana’s presentation demonstrating the history of LIPI Purwodadi Botanical Garden and then discussed its role in the purposes of research, tourism, and conservation with the participants.



Picture 5. The Participants of the Workshop

The workshop was organized into three sessions. Each session was followed by discussion with the other participants and resource persons. During the workshop, each participant presented their works about 15 minutes covering a broad range of topics including the development of the syllabus of social dimensions of technology; the philosophy of technology; the production of knowledge; the politics of expertise; urban cities; science communication; technological failures; postcolonial architecture; history of technology; scientific controversy; the evolution of recording technology; and environmental studies. The objects of their examination were largely centered in Indonesia although there was a potential for theoretical generalization from the objects in question for consideration beyond the Indonesian context. Nonetheless, despite the breadth and richness of possible field sites, the participants were largely not too familiar with STS discourses, so the next possible step for them would be to consider how their projects could enrich present STS discourses, while responding to the challenged thrown out on the objective behind doing STS in Southeast Asia.

In the last session, each resource person had 10 minutes to respond the participants' presentations. The workshop was also an opportunity to gather ideas among participants for proposing a panel at the 2019 SHOT meeting in Milan. The success of the workshop can be measured by the contribution it made to historical and social studies of science and technology by offering alternative narratives of modern living and how we should understand it from a postcolonial lens.

FOCUS DISCUSSION #1 — TEACHING AND RESEARCHING STS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Moderator : Clarissa Ai Ling Lee

Presentation :

1. *Social Dimensions of Technology's Syllabus*

Anton Novenanto, lecturer at the Department of Sociology & researcher at the Center for Culture and Frontiers Studies, University of Brawijaya

Pratama Yudha Pradheksa, researcher at Euthenics Research Association

2. *Researching STS? Reflections from Examining Social Media Buzzers*

Pradipa P. Rasidi, master student of anthropology, University of Indonesia

3. *Assembling Transparency: Political Representation of 'Transparency Project' in Bojonegoro District in 2008-2018*

Indah Surya Wardhani, researcher at PolGov & PhD student at Political Science, Gadjah Mada University

4. *Grab & Go-Jek Driving the Digital Street Economy in Southeast Asia*

Onat Kibaroglu, PhD candidate at the National University of Singapore

5. *Changing of Communication Pattern in Agricultural Society*

Kadhung Prayoga, lecturer at the Department of Agribusiness, Diponegoro University

**FOCUS DISCUSSION #2 — TEACHING AND RESEARCHING STS:
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES (Cont.)**

Moderator : Clarrisa Ai Ling Lee

Presenters :

1. *Pavilions of International Exhibitions and Mediating Progress and Technology in Postcolonial Indonesia*

Yulia Nurliani Lukito, lecturer at the Department of Architecture, University of Indonesia

2. *Transportation and Translation of Post-Colonial Modernity*

Mushab Abdu Asy Syahid, lecturer at the Department of Architecture, University of Indonesia

3. *Dangdut East Java, Subculture, and the Evolution of Recording Technology*

Nindyo Budi Kumoro, lecturer at the Department of Art and Anthropology, University of Brawijaya

4. *Entangling Multi-stakeholders in CBR to Assess Multi-dimensional Impacts of Lapindo Mudflow*

Bambang Catur Nusantara, National Board, WALHI

5. *Aquatic Sediment for Water Management*

Barlah Rumhayati, lecturer and researcher at the Department of Chemistry, University of Brawijaya

FOCUS DISCUSSION #3 — WRAPPING UP

Moderator : Clarrisa Ai Ling Lee

Resource persons :

Itty Abraham

Farabi Fakhri

Yuti Ariani Fatimah

Hatib Abdul Kadir

Hans Pols