

**Editorial Foreword**  
***IKAT: On the Right Track***

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This is the second edition of **IKAT: The Indonesian Journal of Southeast Asian Studies** and I have been honoured with a request to write an editorial foreword for this welcome addition to global research publishing with a focus on a region facing important challenges and interesting times. I thank Dr. phil. Hermin Indah Wahyuni, Dr. Vissia Ita Yulianto and her editorial colleagues for the invitation and opportunity to collaborate with this quality research initiative. The Center of Southeast Asian Social Studies (CESASS) at the Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, must be commended for launching such a valuable publication. The Pacific Media Centre at Aotearoa/New Zealand's Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is proud to be associated with the venture.

While the first edition of six articles of **IKAT** last year focused on a series of issues facing ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member countries, this next edition offers a perhaps even more wide-ranging selection of topics for the region. Papers range across Japanese automobile production (with a Toyota case study); how the Metro Manila urban traffic congestion is forcing a brake on development; the strained relations between Indonesia and China over illegal Chinese fishing; gender mainstreaming trends in the region; contestation practices and strategies in bilingual Khmer/English literature in Cambodia; and visual and performative arts representations on the sensitive subject of Indonesian mass killings of 1965-66 – can art make a difference? All timely and topical research papers.

However, first a brief message about the challenges of producing a research journal of this kind. It is a huge commitment on the part of an editorial team to get a publication off the ground with a high quality, and then to maintain that excellence over time. It is often a thankless task, one not always as well recognised as it should be in university, and yet so vital to developing a strong local and global research culture. I praise the editorial team involved in **IKAT** and urge the UGM journal publications management to strongly support this initiative.

In my own case, I have been editor of a research journal for 23 years, *Pacific Journalism Review*, which was born at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port

Moresby in 1994 and has thrived on a host of Asia-Pacific collaborations ever since and is now currently based at AUT in Auckland. While the hard work of editorial teams builds and develop the publishing ethos of a journal, it is also the contributors themselves who bring the publication and its reputation “alive”.

According to **IKAT’s** editorial mission, the journal has three special focuses: “economic welfare, socio-cultural and political transformations, and developments in information and communication technology” in the Southeast Asian region. I hope that this will encourage more critical and scholarly works to provide a “broader horizon” for debate in the humanities and social sciences. On the evidence of the papers published in the first two editions so far, **IKAT** is well on the way to achieving its goal.

In the first of the six articles in this edition, the authors, Riza Noer Arfani, Awan Setya Dewanta, of Universitas Gadjah Mada and Universitas Islam Indonesia, seek to explore the phenomenon of the ASEAN regional automotive industry through desk study and fieldwork data gathering. The paper examines patterns of production and manufacturing activities of leading Japanese automotive companies and upgrading strategies as reflected in this Toyota case study. According to the authors, the long-standing and strong historical relations between ASEAN and Japan contribute to an “enhanced collaborative automotive industrial development” and augurs well for the future.

From automobile production to congestion and this paper about the traffic chaos in Metro Manila argues that the notorious problem has become a “major roadblock” to economic development in the Philippines. The author, Joshua Ramon Enslin, of Goethe University, analyses three contrasting traffic-related websites aimed at providing insights – the blog PH-Commute.com, Taxikick.com which is a service for short messages about taxi driver “misbehaviour”, and the navigation service Sakay.ph. In spite of their different objectives, all three share a lot in common as they are highly dependent on cooperation.

The next paper ‘Frenemy in Media’, about Indonesia’s efforts at grappling with the issues of maritime sovereignty and propaganda on the South China Sea, is likely to find a wide-ranging readership in Western academic outlets. The author, Lupita Wijaya, of Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, has aptly pointed to the paradox of a nation trying to protect its offshore fisheries from pillaging but is confronted with a nation that backs its illegal poachers with “military force”. Since 2016, the Indonesian

Navy has caught several Chinese fishing boats trespassing in its 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Natuna Island. While some of the Chinese boats have been scuttled and Indonesia has protested, China has responded with a claim that the EEZ area in question is actually a “traditional Chinese fishing area”.

“This position may leave Indonesia in a frenemy position with China,” argues Wijaya. “Regional conflict such as [in the] South China Sea has been diligently highlighted in international coverage. If it’s about involvement of home country conflict, the concept of objectivity [in] journalism has been under question.”

Applying comparative content analysis of Indonesian and Chinese state-run wire services of ANTARA and Xinhua, and three most popular news websites, *China Daily*, *People’s Daily* and *Kompas*, the author’s study identifies types of national interest frames including common conflict and threat interest frames. The paper examines closely how the media perform “propaganda techniques” to advantage their national interest.

While studies on gender mainstreaming in Southeast Asia, in the context of very diverse socio-political backgrounds of ASEAN member states, are relatively under-explored, this paper is a welcome contribution. The author, Athiqah Nur Alami, of the National University of Singapore, examines the implementation of gender mainstreaming in ASEAN countries. Meanwhile, the region has shown its considerable economic growth and rapid development of human rights issue in the last decades. Although the study recognises constraints, it calls for a long-term gender mainstreaming strategy and implementation to fulfill the goals of the ASEAN Community

Applying literary study and classical ethnographic methods, a study by Fransiskus Tri Wahyu Setiawan, of Universitas Gadjah Mada, shows that political distance from the government in the field of cultural production allows external forces to “interfere with and reshape” the Cambodian literary field. Strategies are mainly intended to create new network and to gain legitimacy, thus accumulating cultural capital, argues the author. As the paper acknowledges, Bilingual Khmer/English literature is an important literary phenomenon in Cambodia as it indicates practices of contestation in response to the global field of cultural production.

An intriguing paper, the final one in the collection, deals with how various artistic initiatives are facing up to the public debate and collective memory of the

period of genocide in Indonesia during 1965-66 (between 500,000 and 2 million people accused of being PKI members or “sympathisers” are estimated to have been killed). Researched by Michal Bielecki, of the Graduate School for Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, and Gadjah Madah, has a particular focus on Joshua Oppenheimer’s controversial 2012 documentary, *The Act of Killing*. Through an analysis of media reports, interviews with artists, films (fictional and documentary), Bielecki applies content analysis to address the collective memory about these events.

“It seems that debate concerning the painful past is gaining momentum. People reluctant to recognise the version of events proposed by artists and activists, as well as by others taking up the subject, will soon be forced to change their attitudes,” concludes Bielecki. “The complicated process of settling with the traumatic past, once started, is extremely difficult to stop. However, two basic narratives concerning those events still coexist in the Indonesian public space. One speaks of violence against Indonesian communists, the other tries to legitimise it, directing attention to the PKI’s alleged violence against the Indonesian State.”

This is a very thought-provoking paper and captures the essence of this journal’s research and publication mission. The editors hope that **IKAT** will provide a rigorous and wide-ranging platform for interdisciplinary knowledge in Southeast Asia Studies. So far, it is on the right track. May I conclude with a message from Aotearoa/New Zealand in our indigenous Te Reo Māori language:

Kia Kaha, Kia Maia, Kia Manawanui – *Be Strong, Be Steadfast and be Willing (in your academic mission)*

Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, January 29, 2018

*Professor David Robie*