

**“Divergent Nation: Heterogeneous
Imaginings of “Indonesia” from the Center
and Peripheries”**

Wednesday, 31st August 2016 at 2:30 p.m.

IAS Meeting Room 2.27, Level 2, FASS Building

Abstract

The idea that the nation is a constructed entity occupies an almost unchallenged position in social sciences. One of the most prominent proponents of the view is Benedict Anderson who argued that the nation is an imagined “deep, horizontal comradeship”. While agreeing with him, the presentation takes the argument further by proposing that the imagining is not singular, but heterogeneous and deeply informed by power relations. This proposition is based on a research on how “Indonesia” is experienced and imagined by young people in Jakarta, Kupang, and Banda Aceh. These three cities together represent the country’s diversity in regards to ethnic and religious composition, history, and economic condition. In the national power configuration, Jakarta is at the center while Kupang and Banda Aceh are at the peripheries. The presentation outlines three diverging imaginings of “Indonesia”, these are: 1) Indonesia as an absolute entity, 2) Indonesia as a hierarchical entity, and 3) Indonesia as the Other.

In addition to the main argument, the presentation will also touch on methodology. The research employed photo-elicitation interview (PEI) method in which photographs depicting symbols of the nation and of citizenship were shown to the participants and used to elicit their interpretations about Indonesia. This method was chosen to minimize direct questions that might generate normative answers replicating the official discourses that were instilled through education and the media.

Speaker’s Profile



Stefani Nugroho is a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute of Asian Studies. She obtained her PhD in Sociology from the National University of Singapore, and has a Master in Anthropology from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, and a BA in Psychology from Atma Jaya University, Jakarta. Before joining IAS, she was a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at Santa Fe College, Florida. She is interested in nation studies, identity, popular culture, critical theory, issues of diversity, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia.