

# Social Sciences Still Relevant in Era of Transformation and Disruption

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The use of technology in various aspects of human life has placed studies in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) as important and most prospective studies in the future.

Even so, the transformation and disruption that occur in the community show that social science remains relevant to solving problems that arise from existing changes.

“The rapid development of sciences and technology, especially information and communication technology, has brought social problems. We invited social scientists from various background to discuss and respond to these dynamics together,” said Director of UGM Center for Southeast Asian Social Studies (PSSAT), Dr. phil. Hermin Indah Wahyuni, Tuesday (9/4).

This was delivered in the opening of the *2018 International Symposium on Social Science* held by PSSAT from September 4 to 5 at UGM Senate Hall and Graduate School. The symposium presented speakers and participants from various countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Japan.



Hermin explained, the theme of “Social Science in the Era of Transformative and Disruptive: Its Relevance, Role, and Challenge” was initiated by two main issues. They are social problems caused by the development of technology and questions about the role and relevance of social science amidst the development.

Through this symposium, she hoped that social science studies, especially in Indonesia, can continue to grow and answer the challenges of each era.

“We will discuss together the improvement and development of social science in Indonesia. Hopefully, this forum will be productive and benefit everyone,” said Hermin.

Secretary-General of the Research, Technology, and Higher Education Ministry, Prof. Ainun Na’im, Ph.D., explained that so far, the number of social studies and its students in Indonesian universities is higher than that of science studies. For that reason, the government attempted to increase the capacity of science studies and generate more graduates in this field.

However, this is not because science studies were deemed more important. It is, instead, an attempt to balance the proportion of each discipline that is equally important for nation building.

“The issues we face are very complex. They require a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to overcome. Social science is not inferior because the outcome of technological development is useless without contributions from social science.”


The crucial role of social science was also conveyed by Prof. Anthony Giddens in a video recording projected in this symposium. The social scientist from London School of Economics and Political Science noted that we live in a completely different era from the previous civilizations. He named the current period as “high opportunity high risk society” that has changed world history today.

Social science, he argued, is crucial in understanding the contemporary world, therefore important for any country in the world.

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