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Editor's Note

The classical challenge facing Indonesian social science scholars since independence is the fact that their sciences were mostly borrowed from Western European and American academia and their knowledge about their own country were very often also constructed by outsiders. The research agendas, and the salient issues to be pursued by such agendas, are very often the logical extension of the Western interest. The history of Indonesian social sciences is a history of scholars and practitioners trying to establish their own knowledge-production focusing on the most relevant and salient problems to Indonesians.

Half century ago the Indonesian Institute of Science, on January 20, 1970, held a big seminar discussing the "Role of Social and Cultural Factors supporting Economic Development". The seminar was designed to support the newly embarked Five Year National Development Planning, 1969-1974. The big academic gathering reflected very clearly the role assigned to social science scholars, that is, to support economic growth-oriented and technocratically-controlled development plan. A new scheme to mobilize the state and national resources to engage in economic growth.

The new scheme of planned development implemented in Indonesia in 1969 was the result of a political-economic project that started in early 1950s. A time when the United States emerged from the World War II not only as a victor, but also as the strongest economy in the world. The success of American assistance to the reconstruction of War-torn Europe, the Marshall Plan in late 1940s, gave impetus to the initiation of similar economic assistance program for newly-independent countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This set into motion a politically motivated academic activities to learn about the former colonial areas, by establishing "area study" programs. One of such research centers was established at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), i.e., the Center for International Studies (CIS or CENIS), with a specific job: to devise conceptual framework and to produce knowledge about the areas necessary to initiate "social change" in the direction favored by the West.

Undergirding this academic activity was a geopolitical reasoning of the Cold War against the Communist Soviet Union. In the U.S. of early 1950s, the ideological competition between the Capitalist West and the Communist East resulted in an anti-Communist hysteria in domestic politics, called "McCarthyism," and in an aggressive foreign policy of buying friends and making anti-Communist alliance. Popular back then was a slogan "Fighting the Red, by greening field." Help the poor countries with agricultural development programs to protect them from Communist-inspired insurrections.

Research centers like CENIS were assigned to provide American government with policy tools to develop good relations with the newly independent but poor nations. Supported by philanthropic foundations, especially the Ford, the Rockefeller and the Carnegie Foundations, CENIS develop a multi-dimensional, conceptual framework that was generally termed "modernization theory." With this concept, they explain why the poor country came to the condition they were and how they could get out of poverty by the help from external sources. The most influential of the works produced by the center was the book by Walt Whitman Rostow with a provocative title

The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (1960). According to this line of thinking, the essence of economic development is capital accumulation. In the Rostovian model, economies of all nations grow in a linear way and as a sequence of stages: starting with agriculture, through industrialization and end-up with high mass consumption societies, as exemplified by the Western European and North American nations. The “modernization” project was the basic recipe to be implemented by the newly-independent countries. The nature and process of development as elaborated by Rostow became the blueprint for development plan in many poor countries. Indonesian Five-Year Development Plan that started in 1969 was based on such modernization ideals.

The scholars working for CENIS devised modernization theory to address the issue of how to shape the economies of the post-colonial states along the capitalist line. Among the most important elements of their recipe for increasing economic productivity were: increased savings and investment by encouraging capital inflow; adoption of new technology, knowledge, managerial skills and entrepreneurship; foreign trade, together with foreign investment and aid, as the engine of growth for countries like Indonesia.

Concerning Indonesia, CENIS helped constructed knowledge about Indonesia via the “Mojokuto Project,” a large anthropological research project which was designed by the MIT/CENIS and done by six doctoral students from Harvard University and Radcliff College. Among them was Clifford Geertz, a very notable figure in Indonesian studies. In 1953-1954, the group did field research especially in Pare, a small town in East Java. The main task of the group was to study why Java failed to develop economically.

Reflecting the modernizationist paradigm, Geertz provided the answer in his book, *Agricultural Involution*. In short, Geertz argued that the underdevelopment of Java resulted from cultural backwardness rather than from structural problems (Geertz, 1963). Javanese were poor because of their “low propensity to save” and their traditional way of doing things. So, “the goal of the development process was to push or pull tradition-minded peasants into modernity.” From this perspective, the major barrier to “modernization” is the “culturally based, obstructive values of the peasantry” and the way to overcome these is: “by education and greater technical expertise” (Gilman, 2002:12). Since there was nothing wrong with the structure, “there is no need for radical changes in the distribution of power and wealth” (Gilman, 2002:13).

This line of thinking fitted very well with the American military establishment. In his book, *Cold War Anthropology: The CIA, The Pentagon & the Dual Use Anthropology* - David H. Price showed how the works of social scientists like Clifford Geertz were used by military and intelligence agencies in the United States for their own purpose. Price introduced the notion of “dual use anthropology”, that is, “research that could serve both to support theoretical work in the field and to provide interpretations useful to the military for waging war” (Price, 2016).

The point I would like to make here is that knowledge about Indonesia’s society, culture, economics, politics and other social dimensions of life, at least during the Cold War, was constructed by American scholars, financed by American money (involving some philanthropic foundations), and for the purpose of supporting American government in a geopolitical competition that was not relevant to Indonesians.

As a consequence, for very long time, social science research and teaching in Indonesia were heavily influenced by the “Cold Warrior” scholars. The research questions that we pursue in our research on Indonesia and what we do to proceed the research activities have been shaped by concepts and theories developed by American scholars. Up to now, the way Indonesians perceive their problem is still colored by Western point of view and the manner they measure up their progress is by using Western standard.

However, not all is bleak in Indonesia social sciences. History, our sister discipline, back in 1970s, managed to solve this problem. It was Professor Sartono Kartodirdjo of Universitas Gadjah Mada, who led Indonesian historians to adopt what was called an “Indonesia-centered perspective” and to throw away the “Western-biased perspective.” Since then, research on Indonesian history produced a lot more and deeper knowledge about Indonesia.

Prof. Kuntowijoyo, another notable UGM’s historian and a serious thinker, classified Indonesian historiography into three waves: First, when Indonesian historians embarked on “decolonizing” Indonesian historiography. Second, when historians who treated their discipline as scientific endeavor had to deal with those who used it for political purpose. And, three, when history developed to become part of social critique. Within the last category, Kuntowijoyo develop “liberation historiography.”

My point here is that, by reorienting their perspective students of Indonesian history discovered a lot of phenomena that were not conceivable before.

In a similar way, we would like to study countries of the Global South, like Indonesia, by using a perspective suitable to their conditions. So far, the mainstream IR literatures have been unable to satisfy the need of the Global South scholars. First, it might be because some theorists, like those of Structural Realism, aimed at creating general theory applicable to all types of international players. Second, some theorists focused on the behavior of the most important players in international arena, i.e., the great powers, especially in their competitive struggle among themselves. Third, most of the mainstream theorists emphasized on the issue of war and peace. Hence, the issues most salient for the theorists are war prevention and conflict management. As a consequence these theorists emphasized the values of order, stability, predictability and prudence. And to get into it, you have to be skillful in diplomacy and devising strategy.

Whereas, countries at the margin of “great power politics” are more interested in gaining knowledge about human emancipation, about community and solidarity. Order is, of course, important. But, justice should take priority. Similar to what Indonesian historians trying to achieve, we can develop “IR studies” into “emancipatory social science.” Emancipatory in the sense that the production of knowledge must be based on some moral purpose, i.e., the elimination of oppression and the creation of the conditions for human flourishing. This also implies that human emancipation depends upon the transformation of the social world, not just the inner self.

The journal of “Global South” is created for similar purpose. It is designed to cater the need to develop fresh ideas about the problems facing countries characterized by the term. As we still have no single Global Perspective, we can start with the generic goal of creating an “emancipatory IR” as we consider fit to our specific condition.

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