

**MANSUR FAKIH ON NEOLIBERALISM,
GLOBALIZATION DAN GENDER ANALYSIS:
MANSUR FAKIH'S LIFE AND THOUGHT
1953 – 2004**

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This paper discusses short biography of Indonesian Freirean, Mansur Fakhri, his thoughts and critiques on developmentalism paradigm and gender analysis as its counter. Fakhri regards globalization as global political economy term and strategy in developmentalism that has been demystified and created forms of neo colonialism throughout poor and developing countries including Indonesia. Fakhri argues that globalization is interrelated with neoliberalism and both of them are global systems that marginalize unbenefited groups mainly women. Fakhri proposes that raising critical consciousness through critical educations as a way to having social transformation and using gender analysis as a tool for Indonesian social justice movements.

Keywords: neoliberalism, globalization, developmentalism, gender analysis, social transformation

INTRODUCTION

This paper studies the thought of Mansur Fakhri on development, Indonesian social activism and gender analysis. The first part of this chapter describes the life of him as an Indonesian intellectual and social activist, the second part discusses the thought of him on development and globalization and its significance on Indonesian discourse of social justice and the third part discusses how he sees gender analysis as a way for social transformation.

Mansur Fakhri is considered as an organic intellectualist, and this is different to many other Indonesian intellectualists who tended to stay on the ivory of academic sphere without being involved in society's real problems. Organic scholar as Mansur Fakhri defines in *Jalan Lain: Manifesto Intelektual Organik* (2002) is a scholar who grows not only in educational institutions but also in community. This kind of scholar understands the realms and the needs of the society where (s)he lives so that the knowledge gained is truly intended for the welfare of the society.

Throughout his life, Mansur Fakhri dedicated his activism in and for Indonesian marginal groups and for Indonesian social justice and becomes one of the most influential activists in Indonesia.

Studying the life activism and the thought of Mansur Fakhri is relevant for several reasons. One, Mansur Fakhri has incorporated the idea of gender justice analysis as one significant tools to create a more just society especially in and after the era of globalization. Two, studying Mansur Fakhri's idea on development and gender is important to understand the development of women social movements in Indonesia.

Method: Literature Review on Mansur Fakhri's Biography

Mansur Fakhri was born in Ngawi village in Bojonegoro East Java Indonesia. He is the eldest son of nine children. His father's name is Mansur bin Yahya and his mother's name is Siti Maryam binti Imam Fakhri. He is married with Nena Lam'anah and they have two sons. Mansur Fakhri's academic career was started when he enrolled in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah (Islamic University of Indonesia which is formerly known as Indonesian State Islamic Institute or IAIN) for Ushuluddin (Islamic theology) undergraduate major. He was graduated in 1979. During the 1970s Islamic discourse in Indonesia was dominated by the idea of modernizing Islam and IAIN with Harun Nasution as the rector promoted this tradition of Islamic modernization. The thought of Islam and modernization was commonly discussed by students in IAIN, Mansur Fakhri's former university. Among his cohorts in UIN were Azyumardi Azra and Komaruddin Hidayat which both are influential Muslim scholars today. Fakhri himself was involved in in the rationalization discourse and joined the *Mu'tazilah*¹⁹. Different to most of his counterparts in UIN he was not interested to join Indonesian political activities. He was, on the other hand, concerned to focus on educational processes in Indonesia. With this concern, he joined the research institute of education, economics and social or LP3S. In 1990 he took a master degree in University of Massachusetts and got an M.Ed in Education and Social Change major. In 1994 he took doctoral degree from the same university and incorporated his field experiences on Indonesian activism with his theoretical building on the study of development and its critique.

Mansur Fakhri is considered as Indonesian Freire's critical pedagogue since he utilized the critical education methodology in his thought and social activism. He also integrated the idea of social activism with the ideal of academic theorizations, and built the tradition of organic Intellectuals among Indonesian scholar activists. Among Fakhri's life philosophy is "*idealisme tanpa ilmu kosong, dan ilmu tanpa idealisme mubazir,*" an Indonesian saying which means idealism without knowledge is nonsense and knowledge without idealism is a waste. This

life philosophy brought him to go back to the popular education and his lifework activism after he was done with the Ph.D program. During his Ph.D works, Mansour thought was deepened by the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and theories of the feminist movements. Among his professor was Arturo Escobar, a Latin America anthropologist who augmented the idea of Dependence Theory on the case of poverty and underdevelopment in Latin America. However, since Escobar's thought was considered as too structural and deterministic due to her heavily colored by classical Marxian analysis, Mansour learned and discussed with a direct student of Paulo Freire, William Smith, who developed the theory and the practice of Freire's pedagogy of liberation (Markoes, et.all., 2004).

In 1994, together with his friends including Roem Topatimasang, Zumrotin K. Susilo, Wardah Hafidz, etc. Mansur Fakhri joined the establishment of the Resource Management and Development Consultants (REMDEC) in Jakarta. This organization was intended to provide facilitation and capacity building consultancy services for NGOs and community organizations. However, in 1997 the Suharto regime aggressively reacted to any form of Indonesian activism that was viewed as rebellious. As the result of long discussions with Roem Topatimasang

¹⁹ In Islamic history, *Mu'tazilah* is known as the first *sunni* rationalist theological school. Its emergence is related to political turmoil of Islam during the 800s. *Mu'tazilah* incorporated ratio as the source of religious dogma interpretation which led to the formation of the science of speculative theology or *ilm kalam* (Dr. Muhammad Kamal, <http://www.rationalist.com.au/archive/62/p27-34.pdf>).

on this problem, Mansur and Topatimasang initiated to form an organization that is more “flexible” than REMDEC. This organization was named the Institute for Social Transformation or Insist (Tribute to Mansour Fakih, www.umass.edu/cie/off_campus/Fakih-Mansour%20tributes.doc). Insist is initiated to response the development of Indonesian Non-Governmental Organizations that supported the unjust systems applied on Indonesian societies and became foreign fund dependents for globalization. Insist, as further explained in its website, is initiated to reform Indonesian Non-Government Organizations and represents the forefront of Indonesian efforts on developing critical discourse, alternative perspectives and new discourses. In 2004, to commemorate the 100 days of Mansur Fakih’s death, the members of this organization with Roem Topatimasang changed the organization’s name from the Institute for Social Transformation into Indonesian Society for Social Transformation (<http://.insist.or.id>). Mansur regards Insist as the place where Indonesian social movement activists learn and enrich each other. In his sight, Insists functions not only as school, but also as a place where many well-known Indonesian activists deal with both intellectual discourse and the struggle of social transformation (Tribute to Mansour Fakih, www.umass.edu/cie/off_campus/Fakih-Mansour%20tributes.doc).

From 1993 to 1996, Mansour served as the representative of OXFAM-UK-I for Indonesia. Through OXFAM, Mansour introduced the gender analysis and gender-based approaches on Indonesian social movement activists more comprehensively. He was also elected as Indonesian representation on "Helsinki Process,” an international forum initiated by Finland foreign minister, several southern countries and international NGOs to open an inclusive dialogue between major stakeholders with global governance and work for a solution to the problems of globalization. From 2002 until 2004, Mansour was elected as the member of Indonesian national commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM). On February 16, 2002, Tempo, along with many other national news media reported that Mansour Fakih passed away due to a third stroke attack, and was buried in Sleman Jogjakarta (<http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2004/02/16/05539705/Mansour-Fakih-Meninggal-Dunia>).

DISCUSSION

Mansour Fakih’s thought on Neoliberalism and Globalization

In his works *Jalan Lain Manifesto Intelektual Organik* (2002) and *Neoliberalisme dan Globalisasi* (2004), chronologically explains how globalization means in Indonesian contexts of development. He notices that just as African ex-colonized countries have experienced, Indonesian

archipelago has never really had its national independence especially in term of economy and development. Along with Michael Watts in *The End of Poverty* (2008) and Susan Gorge on *Neoliberalism* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viNHVzadeM>), Fasih formulates that globalization is a term that is strongly related to neoliberalism and neoliberalism is, as a matter of fact, the continuation of capitalism and developmentalism. Neoliberalism, according to Fasih, has not been shifted from Adam Smith's concept of liberalism. It is as a matter of fact the reinvention of capitalism, which was declined by the emerging concepts of economics for social justice, numbers of traditional based land protections, and many other forms of social based welfare by the end of the 20th century. Neoliberalism believes that social prosperity is basically measured from the national economic growth. National economic growth itself, would reach its maximum benefit when the market follows the rules of neoliberalism principles. Among the basic rules of neoliberalism are liberalizing market and financial currency, stabilizing inflation and macroeconomics, privatizing public assets and services, and free interference from the state. Those basic ideas of how market should globally run developed into what we recognize now as globalization, which was agreed and massively promoted in the Washington Consensus. Globalization is also recognized as the rapid development of capitalism through the globalized markets, investments, and Trans National Corporation's massive productions. The international institutions such as International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and World Trade Organizations (WTO) rule this constructed global economic condition.

In its simple understanding, Mansour defines globalization as the process of economic integration from different developing nations into a so called global economic system. However, by investigating the long history of economic development, neoliberalism is the continuation of the previous history of colonialism and developmentalism (Fasih, 2004). The result of this mystification is that the paradigm of liberating markets does make developing countries and the disadvantaged people marginalized into the very corner of development since it is always the capital owners who benefits from the non-regulated trade. The idea of development that is preserved by the WTO and its alliances through its Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) furthermore has become the never-ending disasters for the poor and developing countries. Poor and developing countries are given no choice to freely decide what they needed to develop for their local national economic developments. Instead, they are obliged to develop their economic models following the conditions set basically on the needs and interest of those capital holders (TNCs and the benefited developed countries). The debts of poor and

developing countries are the effective tools to 'tame' them as well as to force them following the WTO's models of development. Debts and aids are two among many proofs for the unfair global trade game initiated by the WTO, IMF, World Bank, and TNCs. Along with Mansour, we do consider this global trade as unjust since the idea of giving debts and aids to those poor and developing countries are initially advantageous only for the TNCs and affiliated developed countries.

Mansour Fakhri's Ideas on Social Transformation

Through many of his works, Mansour believes that third world countries absorb the idea of globalization as the mainstreaming process of development through various means of impositions from SAP applied for their countries. Not only that, developmentalism paradigm that is largely acquired in the south countries was coopted through many other ways including national and international regulations, stabilizations and educations. We see this process through understanding that there are puppetry regimes in different parts of the world, which utilize military ways to stabilize their national security in order to partly secure international economic interests in their regions. In addition, educational processes are also utilized to maintain such kind of neoliberalism paradigm. In a paper based on his dissertation, *In Search of Paulo Freire Perception in Indonesia*, Muhammad Agus Nuryatno (2005) argues that education in Indonesia is not neutral. Education that is supposed to be neutral and aimed to serve humanity values was used to lengthen the continuation of power holders. Along with this, Mansour (2003) narrates that means of education are often used to propagate ideologies, powers and politics in supporting the paradigm of developmentalism. So that challenging the structures of society and changing the system is, thus, requiring the actions of transforming societies through education and through building conscience among societies.

Mansur Fakhri's Idea on Gender Analysis

Not only considered as the father of Indonesian critical pedagogy, Mansour Fakhri is also regarded as one pioneer of Indonesian gender mainstreaming among Indonesian women and activism. According to Mansour, the first element of transforming society is creating a just relation among the oldest forms of inequality, that is mattering gender injustice.

Based on her interview with Mansur Fakhri in the *In Spirited Politics: Region and Public Life in Contemporary SEA* (2005), Suzanne Brenner mentions that as a term, gender term had commonly been recognized in Indonesia not only among women NGOs activists, but also in universities, public forums and media by the mid-1990s. This condition was partly resulted from the efforts of international

organizations that focus on gender issues such as OXFAM, where Mansour was involved, and NOVIB (Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation). Those international organization demanded Indonesian NGOs to also dedicate their greater attention to gender issues in Indonesia. However, even though gender has become one of the popular terms in Indonesian social justice, the real implementations of gender justice in many elements of society especially in governmental levels are still considered as lip services. Basically there are still many understandings on feminism as social justice activism among Indonesians, including among male and female social justice workers. This is mainly because feminism is often regarded and distorted into a single movement of women seeking liberations from men. Feminism is, in fact, as Mansour clarifies a large activism umbrella for women movements criticizing unjust social orders.

In his book *Analisis Gender & Transformasi Sosial or Gender Analysis and Social Transformation* (1996), Mansour explains that gender analysis is considered new in the history of thought on social justice. Gender analysis, as he further explains, sharpens the existing critical analysis, for example, Marx's critique of class and capitalism becomes much more accurate if he had also examined the unequal gender relations. Mansour also considers that Antonio Gramsci's critique of cultural and ideological hegemony would be much contextual if he had questioned gender problems. Mansur argues that challenging gender structure means challenging the oldest form of injustice system in the world so that gender analysis gains fewer defenders compared to other social justice analysis tools.

I personally agree with Mansour on his views about several social justice activists that neglect the importance of using gender analysis. In my limited gender-related activism experiences, bringing equal gender relations in society is difficult, not only because it challenges men-women relations in society but gender based thought and activism are also considered as western products that are not appropriate to be applied in several Indonesian gender relations. There are many women activists in other parts of the world commonly share this experience I have. Their cultures are commonly referred as in opposition to values brought from the West, just as what it is commonly viewed in Indonesia. This thought on placing indigenous values of gender relation as in opposition the West-thought product such as feminism and gender equity is in fact neglecting the value of justice that much indigenous wisdom acquired in its various local contexts. It is important to having this perspective on building the tradition of global feminism instead of blaming both local traditions and the West product thought so that it is possible to build social justice in society. This discussion on local tradition and West

thought addresses two aspects: first, learning from various women's experiences on their activism in different countries, since it is understood that creating gender balance relations in society is not necessarily exclusive to the West's women activists so that the notion on white Western women saving the colored south women do not become a perspective. Second, there are aspects from most different cultures that support the existence of gender imbalance relations in society so that without leaving the indigenous values and realms of society, a more global view on gender justice including that are resourced from the West thoughts are needed (Narayan, 1997).

Mansour (2008) clarifies that the history of gender differences in society is structured in a very long process. Gender differences are constructed and reconstructed based on social, cultural and even political contexts; it is then socialized and regarded as God's willing which are considered as natural and not possible to be changed. Gender is different from sex. Sex is biological characterization on men and women, while gender is social, religious, political and cultural distinctions. It is also said that sex is about nature, while gender is about nurture. It is true that man and women are biologically different so that they demand the very same rights as human being. However, it is not true to differentiate them socially, religiously, politically and culturally based on their biological differences.

In the same book, Mansour Fakhri argues that gender analysis is also a critique to two major branches of feminism, functionalism paradigm feminism and conflict paradigm feminism. Liberal feminism and Social feminism that emerged from both paradigms are considered not solving women's problem from of inequality. Liberal feminism that is influenced by functionalism paradigm, argues that in order to have the stabilized reformation on the unjust social order, the status quo should not be challenged (2008). Women in Development or what also recognized as WID is among the women movements that are emerged from this branch. As a response to developmentalism paradigm promoted by liberalism politics, WID argues that it is women's irrationality that caused them suffering the condition of social inequalities so that in order to be equal women need to participate in non-domestic activities that are considered rational. WID approach promotes women's equity and was introduced in UN Women's Decades in 1976-85. WID considers that women have triple roles and they are active contributors for development so that through its strategic gender needs WID requires state interventions to open political and economic autonomy to women hoping that their inequality to men will be reduced (Caroline, 1993). Feminists and scholars however argue that WID widen the gaps between men and women in development. Women's economic and political roles

involvement do not necessarily replace their domestic roles, this condition rendered women to suffer the double burdens in their life. Economic neoliberalism that becomes the world's mainstream economic system worsened social life conditions, not only for women but also for men. Transnational corporations require women's nimble hands for their mass productions and at the same time they consider women as not having strong alliance with labor parties and movements so that women's works can be paid with much cheaper salaries. Men on the other hand do not get as many job employment as women so that they do not only lose their lands and farms but they also do not get new jobs since the available jobs are for cheap labors, women²⁰.

Based on gender analysis researches done, Mansour (1997) categorizes that there are at least four forms of social injustices that commonly exist in society. The first one is gender and women marginalization. This process of women marginalization is frequently referred as women impoverishment. Looking at globalization that also means modernization and industrialization, scholars argue that women have been marginalized from their traditional economic resources. In Indonesian case, Mansour describes that rural female farmers were marginalized from their farms due to green revolution that focused mainly on male farmers during Indonesian new order era. Mansour further clarifies that in this period of time, there were programs of farmers' empowerment from the government, however, because farmers are generally referred to male farmers, female farmers were slowly but surely marginalized from their farms. Second, gender subordination, which subordinate women as emotional being rather than rational being, dependent, weak, etc. this gender subordination on women effects women's role and positions. The third is related to gender and violence. Due to social considerations that men has more supremacy on women, it is common for women to get more violence or harassment in their social life. Mansour narrates that in several places for example, rape is often considered as women's mistakes rather than as men's violence. The fourth is related gender and work burden (women double workloads). Women traditionally work in domestic spheres and other non-formal jobs. After modernization however, women are involved in political and economic activities. This new social economic and political constructions for women, especially in most developing countries, is not followed by

²⁰ I gain this understanding through lectures and readings in Ohio University with Dr. Elizabeth Collins in her Women and globalization class on Spring Quarter 2012 and Dr. Risa Whitson through Gender and Development class offered on Fall quarter 2011 and Global Feminism class on Fall quarter 2012.

altering traditional women's role. This condition thus rendered women bearing the doubled burdens as both family nurturers and breadwinners.

Mansour further explains that the process of marginalization in many places often resulted in creating poverty for both men and women. However, there is a continuous poverty mechanism applied for women due to the existing gender differences. From this, Mansour sees that it is important to build particular interest in gender issues in NGOs circles, which were broadly concerned with fostering human rights, on which women's rights were seen as a part.

CONCLUSION

As someone who has long been involved in Indonesian social activism Mansour Fakhri believes that understanding gender analysis in its relation to inequalities within communities that are resulted from the new political economic system of the world, neoliberalism or globalization, is highly important. Disseminating his ideas not only from academic spheres but also from social activism experiences, Mansour argues that one way to change the unjust social condition is through social transformation in which critical consciousness is required. Gender transformation is one way to liberate all genders forms of oppressions, marginalization and discrimination based on any social institutions such as economy and politics. So that gender analysis completes other social critical analyses such as class and hegemony analyses by Marx and Gramsci. In a tribute dedicated to him, his social activists friend, Pieter quotes a song taken from the epitaph of Ali Archam:

For us, you are not lost without a sign
This day was born from your time
Our hands will continue
The great work, the struggle of your life
We erect noble words
A life full of hope
A torch lit in your night
We are the ones who will continue
To those who will come after

www.umass.edu/cie/off_campus/Fakhri-Mansour%20tributes.doc