

**VIEWING THE WEST: OCCIDENTALISM OF AIESEC  
(ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES ÉTUDIANTS EN  
SCIENCES ÉCONOMIQUES ET COMMERCIALES) MEMBERS IN  
SURABAYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Occidentalism, the way how people see Western images is the form that is shaped by the orientalist to counter orientalism. In specific the writer did research in international organization called AIESEC (Association Internationale des Étudiants En Sciences Économiques et Commerciales) in Surabaya to observe how its members view the West. The method that is applied for this research is qualitative approach with field study of in-depth interview based on method that used by Amir Marvasti which incorporated a good deal of personal experience into his research as the writer also a member of AIESEC Surabaya. This research was held by interviewing twelve members of AIESEC Surabaya. Due to amount of members of AIESEC Surabaya are mostly female and also restricted criteria for the respondents, one male and eleven females which suitable for the criteria were chosen to become the respondents. The West as white world has its hegemony, enchantment of modernity, prosperity and freedom as a highly valued expression and moral threats. Finally this study discovers the changing of AIESEC members' view towards the West after they experience in AIESEC. Through its internationalization, AIESEC has given its members the better understanding in cross cultural communication, especially with Western people and its culture.

**Keywords:** AIESEC; occidentalism; the West; white world

## **1. Introduction**

Globalization refers to the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterizes modern social life (Bly, 2005: 880). In the context of globalization, the one who gets the good position in the eye of the world is the West. Actually some studies about the Western in creating its good image had been done. One of the ways to achieve it was by creating their point of view toward the East which famous with the term of orientalism, popularized by Edward

Said. According to Said (2003:2), “Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles”. Orientalism criticizes the East and this theory of orientalism is one of the results from globalization and it is also created the image of the East. Then to counter the orientalism, some scholars created the counter attack of the orientalism which called occidentalism, the way of how the East sees the West.

In viewing the West, some critics are built in order to give some impressions toward the West. One of the examples is taken from Budi Dharma article in Kompas Magazine about the dignity of our nation, Indonesia. His writing is very interesting because although we have been an independent state since 17 August 1945, we still have what is referred to as a ‘colonized mentality’. Dharma presents to his readers that is one of his friend Michael Junarko, a writer in readers’ letter of KOMPAS became the victim of racism. Junarko wanted to take a photograph of a café. However the owner of the café became angry with him, asking Junarko to pay if he wanted to take the photograph. This occurred while many white people were being allowed to take photographs of the café freely, without being warned to pay by the owner.

By those examples from Budi Dharma in viewing and criticizing the West, the writer is interested in having the research about occidentalism in AIESEC Surabaya members, thus the writer wants to seek more first-hand information about the perception and view of the West in the eyes of AIESEC Surabaya members. It is because AIESEC is international organization and it is run by the youth, in this case globalization becomes one of some important parts in influencing AIESEC organization.

AIESEC is the world’s largest youth-run organization (2010: 1). It is a French abbreviation that stands for Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales. AIESEC’s primary focus is on providing a platform for youth leadership development. AIESEC also offers young people the opportunity to become a global citizen, problemsolver as a local citizen, gain experience and skills that matter today and to change the world. AIESEC participants achieve this through having integrated AIESEC experiences, exchange and leadership opportunities in 110 countries of the AIESEC network (ibid). By joining this international organization, the youth believe that they will be one of tomorrow’s leaders, who could bring positive impact to