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**Cross-Cultural Learning
for Securing Decentralization and Democratization:
Assessing Indonesia's Response to Globalization***

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ABSTRACT

Drawn by globalization, Indonesia governance has been transformed into a more decentralized and democratic shaped in the last decade. Given scale of the challenges, its achievement deserves admiration. Yet, the remaining challenge, namely to ensure that decentralized democratic-governance is culturally deep-seated in Indonesia politics, is enormous. The stage of the transformation hardly reached the fundamentally-required cultural change due to the lack of cultural understanding within the process of transformation. Since democratization and decentralization essentially is a form cultural engagement of global political-economic powers, the article proposes to reframe those two processes as king of cultural transformation. Analyzing them along this line of thought allows us to uncover the fact that Indonesia's difficulty has been o reconcile the intangible, yet continuously-embedded, clash sub-cultures. A kind of cross-cultural learning strategy is important for Indonesia in securing a complete it agenda.

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Globalization is an inevitable challenge to any country on this planet.² It drives most country in the planet transforming itself into a decentralized democratic-governance. In this regard, what really matter is not to agree or to disagree, but how deal with it, instead.³ While the importance of vigilant response is well understood, strategic respond is not easy to make. In attempting to understand the difficulty in making an appropriate response to that issue, this paper offers a reflective overview with making special reference to the case of decentralization and democratization in Indonesia. At issue here is that, while globalization an extensive exposure of externally-induced process of transformation has been well understood, consolidated outward response has been missing from observation.

This paper relies on anecdotal observation, arguing that globalization mainly is as cultural process, even though it political and economic dimension is apparent.⁴ Cultural lens in analyzing how a particular country engage in the process of globalization would allows us to uncover the importance of learning process, by which Indonesia could benefited from. The first part of this paper will establish a claim that globalization is a cultural encounters. Judging Indonesia's response to globalization, it getting apparent that such vision has not been adequately understood,

1. Globalization as Cross-Cultural Encounter.

Needless to say that globalization is marked the engagement of world-class players' engagement in political and economic arena. It has been embedded in the trajectory of human history, at least since colonial era. The recent popularity of the terms 'globalization' in the current discourse, should not in any way, defy the fact that the very practices has been in place culturally for so long. This inevitably involves cultural encounter. Globalization is a settlement of particular cultural practices, through series of instrumental changing. Through political and economic engagement, a certain cultural rearrangement takes place, so much that superior culture be able to transform other. Globalization, therefore, denote global-wide cultural transformation.

Global power secures its roles by ensuring the participating players share the same cultural lens. International norms are produced and discursive processes are at play to allowed hegemonic practice to prevail in favor of the world class players who have worldwide leverage. In order to have a strategic engagement in the increasingly globalized world, each country need to have courage to clearly evaluate and then define it own cultural lens. Otherwise, the country merely serves the interest of global interest which happens to take place within their country, unaware of prevailing hegemony.

²Manfred B. Steger; *Globalism: The New Market Ideology*, Rowman & Littlefield Publisher Inc., 2002.

³ There has been controversy not only in understanding the nature of the problem but also how to go about it. The sceptics respond to globalization with a deep suspicion, while globalization-minded wing sought to have a well-thought strategy to deal with. It opens up new opportunity, but at the same time, exposes a particular country to risks. In the worst case scenario, globalization could drift a country in a chaos or despair.

⁴*Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

In this context, it is fair to suggest that strategic responses and anticipation to globalization should be culturally sensible to the respected country. The problem, then, who are entitled to define the culturally sensible acts. It is easy to say that each country entitle to define what the sensible acts are and what are not. But, given the fact globalization involves reproduction of social construct, upon any response to globalization is subject to framing process undertaken by word class players which have worldwide leverage. While it is desirable that each participating country capable of defining what acts are deemed proper and what acts are not, it takes a great courage to ensure that frameworks which globally-set and nationally implement are compatible a particular cultural standard.

What sort of cultural arrangement globalization process aims to settle? There is no doubt that globalization carries liberal political idea. Liberalism has been the core values expressed in the application and reproduction of norms, institutional set up, procedures and so on at the worldwide scale. This idea goes along with competitive-based and rationalistic modern culture. In the light of globally expressed liberalism, individuality is not only highly valued, but also meant to be the anchor of social order.

As globalization is getting more intensive and deepening its penetration, format of the state is shifting. For some time, state has been traditionally performed as 'collective self'. In many countries, state are losing its control over its 'individual selves' due to the effectiveness in expressing liberal order. Within this order, individual are express themselves as autonomous agency who capable in solving collective problem through voluntary exchanges. The liberal are in favor of governing public affairs through voluntary exchanges, well-known as market mechanism.

Liberally shaped cultural lens is highly suspicious to the state's potential abuse of power. Give the prevail of liberalism and thus its cultural lens, democracy has been commonly understood as a matter of constraining the potential abuse of policy maker or the rulers, either through mechanism setting such as check and balance, mobilizing non state actors namely civil society, or to limits its authority. In this regard, the more the culture effectively reshaped within the template of globalization, the further process of hollowing out the state proceed.

It is important to bear in mind that globalization take place always in a particular country. It means that, unless a country willing to share cultural lens mentioned above, globalization actually is not taking place in that particular country. In each country, there has been a strong strand studies which deemed globalization as cultural threat. Yet, studies in international relation confirmed that that power remains the key independent variable shaping modern international relations. More specifically, globalization has not radically changed fundamental aspects of international relations. It merely altered means and channels for exercisingthe power.⁵

⁵Sean Kay; "Globalization, Power, and Security", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 35, No. 1, March 2004.

As every country prepares to transform itself aided with liberal cultural sense, a transnational process of transforming global governance is taking place. The outcome of that process, according to this line of thought, is some sort of global consensus to restructures state. Liberal political culture is manifested in the advocacy of the growth of popular control in favor to prevent the state abusing its power.

The developing countries, which mostly are former colonial territory, inherited a format known to political scientist as nation-state. It is globalization which reproduces national state in the former colonial territory, and it is also through globalization the nation-state is under stress. The current process of globalization allows the state-centric mode of governance lost its legitimacy, in favor of its alternative namely the market-based one. With regard to the notion of legitimacy, is important to bear in mind that, distinction of the legitimate action from the illegitimate one is made from the point of view of particular cultural lens.

A country makes a sensible respond to globalization through particular lens. The kind of response it makes is dependent on the cultural lens used. There is, therefore, a strong need to have a clear lens and sound basis to engage in cultural encounter in coming to term with globalization. The absence of cultural lens makes the respond to globalization is arbitrary and unpredictable. The respond might take different shapes, either denial (resistance) or acceptance (submission), but essentially it comes out of a particular cultural lens. Apparently, the country's ability to make a strategic response to globalization—in this case democratization and decentralization—depend of the type its cultural lens.

Globalization is affecting each country on this earth by continuously reshape the cultural lens used in of each country. Hypothetically, the reshaping process is no longer required when all participant within the global governance share exactly the same cultural lens. This might never come by in the real world, nonetheless helps us to understand that it is the very cultural lens than allow globalization process to succeed in the country. The matching of cultural lens adopted worldwide with the typical lens adopted by why a particular country allows the country to embark on the transformation process simply for the sake of global interest.

Globalization is, essentially, ensuring that national cultural lens is compatible with, if it is not exactly the same to, the one employed in other countries. For this reason, this paper will examine to what extent Indonesia has a clear cultural lens when it embark on massive process in the aftermath of Suharto's presidency. Two tier of transformation—namely democratization and decentralization—has been taking place since then. The question is what drive the transformation in the country. Is it to respond internal problem Indonesia, such as cultural diversity, the size of territory etc ? Is it to comfort itself with the prevailing global governance ? is it dedicated to both of them. In other words, has it been a panic or a smart move to respond globalization.

What does aforementioned finding tell us? There have been a lot of cultural things keep changing under the banner of globalization, yet they all demand a proper political respond.

Otherwise, within wherever countries globalization process taking place there would cultural disorientation. Politics of culture has been prevailing in virtually any country.⁶ Moreover, understanding globalization as politically critical cultural transformation is imperative. Encountering globalization essentially is managing cultural change. It could be pro-active as well as reactive. To follow this argument, this paper treats democratization and decentralization—which has been considered as necessity within this globalized world—as cultural matter. Democratization and decentralization are a cultural transformation.

Democratization and decentralization are, among others, a good example of the changing character of means and channels being used by various actors in exercising their power eventually. On the name of democracy and autonomy, new means and channels are introduced and shared all over the world and eventually reshape global-wide mode of governance. At this point, there is a double-edge cultural transformation. On the one hand, pre-disposition to particular style of democracy in each nation-state lead to the formation to the so-called cosmopolitan democracy.⁷ On the other hand, the formation of context-specific within the advance of global democracy in each country retained, unless the country unconditionally surrender to the externally-imposed standard.⁸

In keeping global-wide governance in order, a governing principle is required. One among other concept on offer is cosmopolite democracy. Even though cosmopolite democracy and alike are subject to sever criticism⁹, it is important to note that it has a hegemonic capacity.¹⁰ For example, in an attempt to adopt and adapt to the norms established within the banner of cosmopolite democracy, globalization process, eventually, manage to alter the way we understand democracy. We no longer treat it merely as a set of norms, but also an appropriate process dealing with public affairs.¹¹ On the name of democracy each country engenders “new social movements” engaged with issues that affect other individuals and communities”.¹² Engaging in globalization, in this regard, means allowing each nation state erodes its own power. Democracy, within the mainstream interpretation of globalization “erodes states’ political autonomy and thereby curtails the efficacy of state-based democracy”.¹³

⁶Kirk S. Kidwell, “Politics, Performativity, Autopoiesis: Toward a Discourse Systems Theory of Political Culture”, *Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, Volume 9 Number 4, August 2009 533-558.

⁷Daniele Archibugi, “Cosmopolitan Democracy and its Critics: A Review”, *European Journal of International Relations* 2004; 10; 437

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Allen Chun, “Globalization as Indigenization, or the “Culture” in Taiwanese National Politics”, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 2000; 35; 7

¹¹Daniele Archibugi, *op. cit.*

¹²Daniele Archibugi, *op. cit.*

¹³Daniele Archibugi, *op. cit.*

The shifting of the way we conceptualize democracy—which no longer state-based—make the idea of decentralization irrelevant. The discourse of decentralization attached to the internal transformation within a state. As the increasingly globalized framework is getting more prominent, the concept of decentralization is also shifting. A new concept, namely decentralized governance, is on offer.¹⁴ One significant ideas conveys in this concept are: (1) the primacy of cultural, and hence includes, institutional arrangements to deal with public affairs at the local level, and (2) no matter how local the arrangement might be, it directly at play in the dynamic global governance. The mainstream interpretation has been that the locals—be the state agencies, mass-based organization or business—interact intensively at the international arena within the least possible constrain from the state.

Apparently, globalization appears to be transformation of mode of governance upon which a market-based global political and economic order comes to play. As the state-based mode of governance retreat and simultaneously the market-based mode gaining more prominence, the corporate enjoys more prominent role. On the name of cosmopolitan democracy, a set of cosmopolitan social standards are put in place. There has been a regime of truth in formation, along with its international legal instruments. Nonetheless, acceptable form of accountability has not been settled.¹⁵ Unreliability of global economic accountability and social justice justify each nation to apply its own cultural lens in encountering the prevailing globalism which typically market oriented.

The idea of democracy which globally accepted is the one which is derived from liberal political philosophy. From a theoretical stand point, the term ‘democracy’ is not necessarily take shape in liberal form.¹⁶ Yet, given the hegemonic nature of discourse on this issues easily drag us into the stream of the predominantly liberal. Bearing this in mind, it is important to declare that this paper has no intention to neither deny nor advocate liberalism as the governing principle of globalization. It treats liberalism as the setting of inevitable process of transformation a country need to do. Nonetheless, for the sake of preparing cultural ground to engage in continuous learning process within the predominantly liberalized world, it is important to make some important proposition.

First, no matter what ideological standing a country wish to take, a good form of governance should have a strong cultural ground and at the same time be able to express it consistently. Cultural transformation could take place through process of interpretation and internalization and by doing so, the existing cultural beliefs are enrich or revitalized. Failure to do so would lead to cultural colonization or subjugation by other. In the context of transforming a country into democratic and decentralized governance, the country has to

¹⁴G. Shabbir Cheema, Dennis A. Rondinelli (eds); *Decentralizing Governance : Emerging Concepts and Practices*, Ash Institute For Democratic Governance And Innovation Harvard University, Washington, 2007.

¹⁵David Held, “Globalization, Corporate Practice and Cosmopolitan Social Standards”, *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2002, 1, (59–78).

¹⁶Stephen C. Angle, “Decent Democratic Centralism”, *Political Theory*, Vol. 33 No. 4, August 2005 518-546. Se also Martin Leet; “Democracy and the Individual Deliberative and existential Negotiations”; *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, vol. 29 no 6, pp. 681–702

critically interpret and internalize things which are culturally deemed valuable. This is the point where understanding how Indonesia understands democracy and decentralization is not only important but also interesting.

Second, transformation through cultural learning requires a certain degree of confidence. Eagerness to learn from other culture should be safeguarded by cultural awareness of its own. Overvaluing the predominantly liberalized mode of governance is fair indication of the lack of confident in its own culture. Such an overvaluation in an absence of cultural framework potentially leads to adoption of eclectic mode of governance. This might be desirable but deems to fail when it has no mean of reconciling contradictory demands. In this regard, it important to note that engaging on transformation toward liberal format, potentially entrap into various contradiction.

Third, liberal format of governance is very seductive to learn from, yet adopting such a format requires particular attitude. That form of governance—which manifest for example in the function of opposition—equips itself with capacity to engage in a continuous learning process. Expression of individual freedom (or liberty, rather) which is the very foundation of liberalism does raise conflicts. Interestingly, liberalism survive and even gaining popularity due to its capability manage conflict. Moreover, liberal format of governance equips itself with capacity to learn by the way of transforming contradictions into dialectic. Progress through dialectic engagement, however, leaves serious backdrop. Pre-requirement for dialectic engagement is fair competition. This, eventually leave the public to the hand of those who win the competition, and potentially disregard those who loose or fail.

Four, learning cultural practices, actually is beyond anyone comprehension. This is because learning process is inherent within the daily cultural engagement itself. Supposed, learning process is thoroughly conducted by someone through research, the problems to learn from and the lesson obtained should deeply shared by the public. Otherwise, the learning process end up merely end up with report, instead of gearing toward process of transformation. The tricky process of cultural learning is that the people normally attracted to appearance, including artifacts. Moreover, to learn from the apparent appearance actually is the least important one. The most important, and also the most difficult one, is learning cultural values. With regard to the topic of this paper, liberal values, which are the very foundation of the globalized mode of governance to refer to, are actually hidden beneath observable behavior or activities.

2. In Trouble with Globalization:

The Absence Cultural Sensitivity

Democratization and decentralization is a matter of transforming the state in a culturally sensible way. It, indeed, is a matter of reshaping the prevailing power structure from time

to time. Hence, democratization and decentralization, involve a constant process of change within a particular dynamic within them.

The searching for suitable format of governance in Indonesia has been troubled by pragmatism. This is apparent from its unwillingness to learn from history and to analyze an issue from its cultural perspective. In fact, globalized discourse has been gone unchallenged simply because since following globalization is considered as following the most up to date trend. On the other hand, the prevailing global players use their global leverage to actively set the trend. It is no surprise that Indonesia has been constantly preoccupied with internal affairs, as if there is no war other than maintaining inward looking perspective. This will be elaborated in the following sections.

a. Unacquainted to Cultural Ground of the State.

The basic format of governance in each country, including Indonesia, has been the idea of nation state. It is also known as Westphalian model of state. It emerged from European history, and then actively being propagated by European countries which happened to be colonial rulers of other part of the world. Through colonialism Europeans were able to apply Westphalian mode of governance within their respective colonies.

The application of this model leaves numerous cultural problems, yet the idea of Westphalian nation state persisted along the history of the post-colonized state. In this regard, the search for proper governance in Indonesia requires a certain degree of understanding on the legacy of Dutch colonial rule. Westphalian model of governance was invented to settle conflict among each nationality in Europe. As the setting of the globalized world was changed, so is the design of the state. In the recent wave of globalization, the former colonial rulers (European countries) have reshaped their own model of governance. They change from a better understanding that what they need is not merely to end wars but more importantly to share collective progress through trans-national cooperation. The consolidation has gone so far, manifest in the institutionalization of European Union. A prototype of trans-nationality state has been put in place.

This is not historical studies, and therefore will not present much historical explanation. Historical matter was touch up merely to suggest that the current wave of globalization must be understood in its connection with unsettle implantation of the idea of nation state. The Dutch colonial rule had to engage in many encounters many nationalities, when she attempted to establish Indonesia. This project later on was taken over by Indonesia nationalist movement, especially the idea of nation state which basically means one state for each nation. Each nationality has a particular cultural set up. Nation state of Indonesia, essentially is a trans-nationality; equivalent to the European Union (EU). Unlike institutionalization of EU which is bottom up in its character, institutionalization of Indonesia has not been thoroughly bottom up. This fact leaves perennial deep-seated discontents which rarely expressed. The important lessons we can draw from this case are the following.

First, decentralization, essentially is paying respect to cultural basis of each locality. This is contrary to the common understanding of decentralization, which proceeds along top-down process.

Second, decentralization is a cultural affair in contrast to the prevailing discourse in Indonesia which treats decentralization is bureaucratic process. The failure to understand to unsettle nature of nation state in Indonesia, hypothetically, link the difficulty of the country to further pursuing the trajectory of globalized governance known as democratization and decentralization. Endless debates of democracy vs. authoritarianism, or decentralized vs. centralized format, have been taking place on the basis of prevailing notion of nation state. What does it mean? In thinking appropriate format of governance for Indonesia, we easily forget the following things.

- (1) The proper format of governance within the mind of the people was not necessarily consistent with the very idea of national state;
- (2) Indonesian encounter with, and long-drawn-out usage of, the concept of nation state allows us to have a false impression the only way to make Indonesia governable is through development of a nation state for Indonesia. Moreover, if the very foundation of Indonesia as a nation state found to be culturally ungrounded, that currently available framework for comprehending and conducting transformation is subject to reformulation.
- (3) There is a need to democratize and decentralize the mode of governance which, at the same time, also overcomes the overdue process of mending nation state. Apparently, there is no urgency to go back to the original design of nation state but the problem that it cause need to be adequately addressed.

Academic analysis of governance in Indonesia no longer questions the nation Indonesia as a nation state. The predominance of legalistic-administrative understanding which has been well in place in the country since declaration of the country's independence in 1945 leaves no room to revisit Indonesia as a nation state. The patriotic perspective which presupposed that the state was born through independence from colonial rule on August 17 1945 conceals alternative understanding that, no matter how important the day of the declaration, the people's daily life retain legacy from the past. Patriotic proposition which deny any involvement of colonial rule in shaping the state fails to recognize that colonial framework are retain. Even the very idea of Indonesia as nation state is actually was taken from colonial cultural politics by the activists of independent movement. Through politics of language, namely facilitate Malay language (*bahasa Melayu*) as a lingua franca was conducted by the Dutch colonial for uniting the country's vast diversity. Despite the denial of patriotic lens, the mode of governance in the post-independent period, including the operation of modern bureaucracy, was not automatically gone. Culturally speaking, the legal birth date of the state does not necessarily mean immediate cultural death which then lead to cultural discontinuity.

At issue that to bring back here is that nation state of Indonesia is different from most of nation state in Europe. In most of European country, the idea nation state implies one nation to have one state. There is a state for each nationality. In Indonesian context, there at least two layer of nation. The first is the so-called civic-based nationalism. In this regard, nationalism refers to the existence of Indonesia as a collective imagination of various ethnic groups, or various religious communities, or all localities within the territory. Discourse of nation state usually refers to this type of nationalism, and hence we might call this national nationalism. What really important to stress here is that, even though this type of nationalism essentially is encompassing ethnicity, religious affiliation and local identity, basically still in the formation. The second type has narrower scope, uniting collective imagination of each ethnic group, religious community or local adherence. Nonetheless, this sort of nationalism is, undoubtedly, powerful and effective in consolidated collective or concerted actions. Moreover, even though national nationalism attached to the state, the narrow type nationalism capable to subvert the exercise of the state. The frustration of the New Order government in encounter the subverting capacity of mobilizing such imagination, eventually leave a stigmata usage of it. The pejorative meaning of the concept *nasionalisme sempit* signifies the power of the society to challenge the state through cultural means. The legally new-born Indonesia apparently lays on the top of fragile national nationalism in the sense that it retains and potentially in conflict with then might be dubbed as 'local nationalism' or 'parochial nationalism'.

It is important to note that, awareness how fragile the nation state was deeply felt in the early era of post-independence. There are at least to evident. The founding father actively reproduced an old slogan, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) which meant to be guiding principle to deal with diversity. On the one has establishing as nationwide system and at the same time allowing diversity to flourish. The paradoxical situation was very clear of the mind of the founding father, and resolving this paradox was is not simple. This explains as to why the slogan incorporated in Coath of Arm of the country. Secondly, the first President, Sukarno then, embarked on what he himself called national building. One among the issue has been ethnicity or parochialism, which undeniably prevails and at some point hinders the proper function of government bureaucracy. Local values and sentiments, has been easily subvert Weberian rational-legalism which state's bureaucracy officially aim to ensure.

There are two issues of governance which needed careful look. *First* is the problem of relationship between state-hood and nation-hood. Failure to distinguish and inability to establish synergetic relationship among the two is recipe to have failing governance. Nationwide state-hood which relies on the function of bureaucracy and technocracy are seriously taking into account cultural practice of governance. The best response to this failure is to continue subverting.

The *second* problem is appearance of the government. Governance process takes place both at the formal and informal domain. Beneath the formality of the process, lays a dense and complex network which operates according the cultural norms in place. The proper or

appropriate governance for Indonesia inevitably has to deal with these two issues. Our search for proper or appropriate governance would be loosely grounded, if culturally uprooted, unless these two issues are well incorporated. This, unfortunately, has not been the case.

Indonesia has been understood as a 'weak state' or 'failed state'. This is ironic because it endows with cultural power concentrated on various cultural entities. The state has been uneasy—not to say unable—to discipline itself. State consistently faces difficulties in implementing its own policies given inconsistency of normative ground to govern. For example, citizenship is often in conflict with kinship. Normatively state is responsible to serve the public on the basis of citizenship grounded on the idea of civic nationalism, but bureaucrats are culturally prevented to do so for the to respect kinship which is essentially appearance of the so called *nationalisme sempit*. In this situation, the commonly taken solution is to give priority to relatives they have and hide the evidence of discriminative practice administratively.

The point here is not merely state apparatus weaken the state itself for cultural reason, it shows capacity of cultural power to make the state kept in check. Interestingly, the power has been at play silently and even beyond the interest experts on governance studies in the country. This is the basis for setting up whatever mode of governance for the country, and hence explains why democracy and decentralization are problematic issue for Indonesia. There is a good reason to suspect that the problem is rooted from the missing of cultural dimension within the studies and discourse of democratization and decentralization. The following section attempts to probe this matter by over-viewing the discourse.

The most important practice is making an appropriate category. This paper has introduced various ways of making category; state-hood vs. nation-hood; formal vs. informal governance; strong vs. weak state etc. The failure to make a clear and consistent category indicates the lack of mastery in responding external challenges and pressure. Other countries or players easily control the lacking country by imposing their own category. Evaluating through this yardstick raises a deep concern. Public discourses are easily trapped into category which is not culturally grounded.

First, since Sukarno no longer leads the country and engaged the process of national building, ungrounded assumption has kept in mind. The fact that the mode of governance was not satisfactory, there has been to interest to relate with is basis, namely nation state. Secondly, overstatement of the capacity of the nation state takes place simultaneously with the use of formalistic lens through which informal governance was missed out despite its strength in cultural sense.

Discourse on democracy and decentralization in Indonesia has been naïve in assuming that the Indonesia, as a nation state, no longer inherits cultural problems in order for it to perform properly. As mentioned earlier, nation building in this country is a yet unfinished agenda. Unless the public of this country share a strong sense of urgency to do so, Indonesia is actually committed to globalization in a reversal way. It leaves to global

forces which have been penetrating the country through the prevailing discursive engagement, to decide to whatever direction they wish. The nation state has been transforming itself in adapting to the changing and globalized world indeed. What Indonesia fails to do is to make it a solid and well-placed stepping stone to ease the future challenge of globalization.

To my observation, cultural context has not been well-thought out, especially among political scientists in this country. This has allowed the stepping stone unreliable. The community of Indonesian intellectuals rarely, if ever, makes use cultural lens in their analysis and hence fails to prevent cultural imperialism. Such an enlightened layer of the society is basically unaware of the hidden practice known as 'academic imperialism', 'orientalism' or 'euro centrism', and hence fails to connect its own cultural basis with the globalized world.

Believing that public discourse potentially frame the social practice, the missing of cultural lens allows democratization and democratization at odd with cultural practices. This leads to two conditions. First, the discourse and the practice fail to grasp the problem. Secondly, it overstates the perceived success. These are the subject of the following section.

b. Not Framing but Framed by Global Crisis.

The second test on Indonesia cultural ground to engage in globalized order its ability to identify and response discursive power conceal beneath the daily practice. The country had not been able to settle the fundamental issues lay beneath democratization and decentralization. This explains as to why democratization and decentralization periodically appear in the contemporary history of the country. Radical changing was taken at some point, and after a certain period the country came to new consensus that the direction taken was wrong. The consequence this is apparent, namely go back the beginning. This indicates that something very fundamental has been falsely addressed.

In terms democratization, there were pressure and attempt to adopt liberal democracy not long after the independence. The legacy of the attempt was the term *era demokrasi liberal* (liberal democracy era). This term has been popularly used during Suharto's authoritarian era to discredit the choice or adherence to liberal institutional or design. Interestingly, as authoritarianism rule under Suharto broke down, the country returns to the old set up, that is liberal democracy. Similarly, the era of liberal democracy was also the era for launching massive scale of decentralization. The return to liberal democracy also accompanied by massive scale of decentralization.

The fact that the issues is happened to be appeared, disappeared and then reappeared indicate that Indonesia has not been able to, culturally settle them down. At issue here is not necessarily the refusal to the idea of democracy or autonomy derived from decentralization, but it is surely a matter of institutional arrangement to convey these ideas

real context, which certainly diverse and in the constant changing. This paper has no interest in defending authoritarianism in asking why that is the case. Democratization was brought about as it was like computer software to be installed. Elite who promote democracy, precisely liberal democracy, imagine that democratization is a matter of introducing sets of organization and procedural arrangement. They practically do not bother to check whether the public think and act according to liberal mindset or not. The miss-match between institutional or procedural setup with the mindset of the public leaves the supposedly democratic practice as ambivalence or hypocrisy.

Given the fact that the state has been weak, discourse on decentralization—which take place on an assumption that it takes place internally within the—found to be misleading. Why? Whether or not the authority of the state is decentralized, the locals basically find their own way to go about their problem. The locals have various way of hijacking the state's power. Culturally speaking, local has not been desperate for local power as it commonly thought. Public in Indonesia are consolidated along cultural and religious affiliation, and to some extent they are self-governing. Whether the state decentralizing its mode of governance or not there is a self-governing capacity in practice which is difficult to ignore by the state. The problem, which apparently taken so seriously by legalistic-administrative point of view, is that governing process takes place within informal domain, relies on informal actor. In essence, decentralization is willingness to acknowledge the fact that prevailing mode of informal governance is legitimate practice.

The reluctance to acknowledge the existence and the functioning of culturally-rooted and locally-based mode of governance give a false impression that the decentralization cause problem at the local level. Indeed, the prevailing local power works in accordance with their own logic, their own interpretation of what it the proper things to do. In this respect, decentralization is reliance on local power in dealing with public affairs. This is what decentralization is all about. Decentralization was presented as problem-creating policy because those who have been accustomed to centralized mode of governance. They, essentially are uneasy to deal with diversity, and unable to see things from local perspective.

Global financial crisis which hit East and South-east Asia in mid 1990s raised economic and then political crisis in Indonesia. This ruined the institutional design of authoritarian-centralistic state under Suharto, especially its legitimacy. Deep crisis, as policy studies recognize well, provide wide opportunity to embark on radical change. This was the case, in terms of democratization and decentralization. From that point on, numerous legislations were produced, aiming basically to liberalize its political and economic structure. It regulates the previously sensitive issue such as: elections, political party, local government, press and so on. In the wake of enthusiastic changing, the constitutional changed took place to legally signify them.

3. Democratization and Decentralization:

Loosely Grounded Reform

Unlike Europeans who consolidate the existing state within a broader banner, namely European Union, Indonesia does the reverse. As the country get back to the framework of liberal democracy along with large scale decentralization, demand to have new local governments were mounting. The number of local government has been almost double within only a decade. This is also a manifestation of inward looking driven cultural lens.

In order to see the cultural lens employ in the country, there are two important notes. First, the process they face was understood as domestic process. This paper does not meant to justify authoritarianism or centralism, the fact that the driving force behind the change was globally derived financial crisis lead to no suspicion that what have been happening was, at least partly, the negative or sign of failure of global financial governance. The predominating discourse which united public and lively debate leaved an impression that main problem was Suharto which morally wrong to choose authoritarian and centralistic governance. The point is that market-based governance, which was the thrust of globalized governance, drives the country in serious turbulence, this kind of perspective never goes up to the surface. This might be called as public blindness, up on which a number of politically motivated actors take advantage. The second note is that, as deep hatred to Suharto which happened to take place with ample opportunity to make radical changes has provide a strong confidence that democracy and decentralization, which apparently is liberally-designed democracy, is the only way to go. Moreover, the enthusiasm leaves a strong impression that whatever associated with Suharto was bad, even though in reality people could not easily disassociate themselves from it.

Within the light of the changes prevailing discourse, democratization and decentralization sit as among the most important issue. Since proper response to globalization requires strong local basis and at the same time aims to have a strategic role in global arena, the prevailing legal and institutional arrangement should subject to investigation. Reading on the Act on local government would provide us with some basis to uncover the cultural lens taken by Indonesia.

a. Central-local relationship.

The first post-Suharto which specifically designed to push for decentralized democracy was Act No. 22 of 1999 which was ready for official implementation in 2000. This Act set Indonesia to radical change in that central government was treated like a federal government, which basically responsible to look after issues typical to federal authority such as defense, foreign relation, judiciary, etc. The Act officially declare that most of the state's authority, apart from those usually attributed to federal government, goes to Regency or Municipal government. To protect this arrangement, the Act also provincial governments are different set of local government. It is no longer in position the place for Regencies of Municipalities to take instruction.

Observation we can make from this change is that consciousness on the diversity has made the Act implicitly adopt federalism. This was a brave attempt given federalism discourse to the divisive nature of federalism has been so strong and institutional framework to unite the country was not put in place. While federalism offers a framework to govern cultural diversity, it does not adequately address uniting instrument was not well-thought. Inter-regional discrepancy, such as different level of economic development or absence of infrastructure in part of the country, was not taken into account. This is was, the west-edge and the east-edge of the country retain their discontent, and continue in struggling for different treatment. Later on, these two province manage to get special arrangement. Special Law for Papua, and some time later for Aceh were enacted. What does that case tell us?

First, federalism, which has been readily available framework which were discovered and implemented elsewhere, was not enough. Careful and prolonged negotiation which took place at one by one level apparently consolidate new understanding which then known as asymmetric decentralization. Decentralization was initially, and still officially, understood as one design for all. Moreover, it proceeds from the “top” level to the “bottom” (top-down). Apparently, it works through negotiation and inevitably takes into account the differences seriously. To allow the negotiation to take place they have to make a high call by armed-based movement.

Second, transferring state’s authority from Jakarta-based central government to each Regencies and Municipalities was a sympathetic idea for Indonesia. What was missing was appropriate process to carry out. The Act does not provide any ideas on how to achieve such a wonderful idea. Moreover, the imagination that decentralization is a matter of transfer of authority is deceiving. At issue was—from field observation though—not so much about the attribution of authority to the local but to make the authority functioning to serve the public. In other words, the trouble in decentralizing the governance is to match the formal authority with the informal which currently exist. The mismatch between the formal and the informal authorities potentially lead to underperformance, if not dysfunction, of local governance. Obviously, pretending that informal authority is not in existence, and pretending that administrative approach is the only process take place, are not only deceiving but also potentially disastrous for decentralization and democratization.

b. Empowering local legislature.

The other point set out by the Act was that local legislature, since then on, was no longer part of local government. The point here is that local legislature become very powerful, and in it happened in a sudden. This it is the institution toward which heads of local government (Regents, Majors or Governors) responsible for. Important observation on this particular issue is that expecting legislature at the local level immediately empowered, simply because the Act say so, was awfully naïve.

c. *Overstate Superficial Achievement.*

To counter balance the critical account on what has been done, it is important to reveal the fact that Indonesia has been enjoying international recognition for its ability to sustain with big-bang model of democratization in tandem with decentralization. Judgment on the success on this matter, however, is based on superficial aspect. Success in democratization, in this regard, is oversimplified by success in conducting general elective with tolerable degrees of violent. Success in decentralization is oversimplified by formal or legal process of delegating extensive amount of national authority to the locals. These perceived successes, in fact, conceal the very fact that success in general election does not lead to democratic policy-making, and legal attribution to local authority retain deep-seating conflict between national authorities with its local counterparts.

As earlier section has demonstrated, democratization and decentralization process has been moving forward-backward alternately. The changes which take place extensively during the post-Suharto create. This creates a slippery impression that Indonesia has undergone a fundamental process of democratization and decentralization.

The very foundation of Indonesia as a nation state for culturally diverse nations has not been put right. Yet, the country felt to have to undergone liberalization which essentially is transformation of the state itself. In a way, liberally inspired transformation in Indonesia is inevitably triggered by the reemergence of unsettled issue.

Cultural problems in bringing about those ideas are stem from the fact that they are heavily loaded with contradicting values to settle. Moreover, the country has not been able to settle its foundation to govern the complexity within it. The process of nation building which President Sukarno long time ago has started, were terminated involuntarily. The agenda were demise as President Suharto led the country. In the aftermath of Suharto's presidency, the country still unable to deal with a paramount problem in devising institutional devises to govern it vast territory and cultural diversity. The cyclical appearance of issue of democratization and decentralization basically rooted from inability to solve the necessity paradox philosophically passed down by the founder father of the country, namely to respect diversity and at the same time relying on a uniting system. This paradoxical principle is well-known in the country as *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, or Unity in Diversity. In governing the country, Suharto gave heavy emphasize on the unity due to worrisome from diversity that he encountered, and the current style of governance overemphasize the diversity and troubled with maintaining the unity.

The latest reemergence of the issue of democratization and decentralization was triggered by financially-driven political crisis which forced President Suharto to step down. The absent and the ruin of the legitimacy of centralized rules during the crisis allowed the enactment of a radical agenda to transform the country to take place, marked by the ability of academic-minded political reformed to push the enactment of Act No. 22 of 1999 on Local Government. Apart from the mounting euphoria at that time, this Act aims to simply reverse the mode of governance institutionalized during more than 3 decade of Suharto

presidency. It dedicated not only to bring about a radical political transformation by dismantling the previously centralistic-authoritarian governance into highly decentralized governance within the set up of liberal democracy.

4. Securing the Process:

Cross-Cultural Learning

The aforementioned description shows democratization and decentralization has been treated merely as bureau-technocratic matters. Moreover, a mere bureau-technocratic approach toward democracy and decentralization is insufficient. The preponderance of that approach to duplicate the same mistake of neglecting and overlooking the cultural dimensions of the Indonesian society is very likely to bring us no where forward.

The bureau-technocratic perspective and approach put the value of effectiveness and efficiency of the democratization and decentralization as the main virtue. Translated into mere rules and procedures made by the experts among the state bureaucracy and universities, however, these rules and procedures are in most cases found incompatible with the factual context and situation where it should be applied.¹⁷ It is mostly due to the assumption that these rules and procedures will be surely compatible and applicable for all situation and context.

This assumption, somehow, is an exaggeration and becomes repeatedly committed mistakes from the central government since it is widely known and accepted that Indonesia is constituted by so diverse groups based on identities which overlapping and cross-cutting memberships among its society. Whether this fact, however, serves us, as an advantage or deficit for our goal, depends on the perspective we use to see it. The dominant formalistic and legalistic perspective tends to see the Indonesian diversity as a problem, or at least a barrier, to build a unified Indonesia.

We may see this as an inherent and logical consequences of the dominant logic of bureau-technocracy which sees 'politics' and 'the muddling through' process of participation and deliberation as something at odds with the goals of effectiveness and efficiency. In this positivistic bureau-technocratic approach, politics should be reduced into merely a matter of technical and expertise.¹⁸ Thus, on the one hand, the currently dominant bureau-

¹⁷"Perjuangan Menuju Puncak:..." PLOD UGM and Regency Government of Puncak Jaya, Chap. 1 and 2. shows a good case of how the procedures and rules for democratization and decentralization, specifically in the Formation of New Autonomous Region Policy, found incompatible in some areas in Indonesia, The analysis in that book stated that mere view and judge the policy through the lens of formal procedures and rules has made the government prone to overlook the contextual needs and cultural dimension for the decentralization policy, especially in presenting itself, in the form of public service, before the Indonesian people and citizen who live in remote isolated and border areas. In its turn, this will bring consequences both for the citizens, having their rights for public service provided by the state denied, and for the state, the perennial threat of separatism in some areas of Indonesia.

¹⁸See also Fischer, Frank (1990) *Technocracy and the Politics of Expertise*, Sage Publications: Calif . pp. 15-17.

technocratic perspective and approaches used to deal with democratization and decentralization pose, somehow, a threat toward democratization and decentralization themselves. On the other hand, it is acknowledged that the future of those two processes also depends on bureaucratic and technocratic arrangement and expertise too.

In this dilemmatic situation to synchronize the needs for participation and deliberation, the very spirit of democratization and decentralization, and effectiveness and efficiency as the main virtue in bureau-technocratic mind, cultural perspective serves as an alternative for examining democracy and decentralization in Indonesia, besides the conventional bureaucratic and formalistic perspectives. Through this perspective various parties are encouraged to actively participate in the process of learning through intensive cultural encounters. It does not necessarily seclude the existing formal institutional and organizational arrangement; in fact, the encounter and learning processes are built based on the existing institutional arrangements.

Indonesian government and society need to make a thorough reflection and evaluation on what they have achieved so far. It is imperative to make sure that the involved parties are involved themselves in these processes of cultural encounter and learning with the logic of accumulation, instead of distribution, in their mind. With this logic in mind; the continuation of the unfinished process of Indonesian national building will be possible. Consequently, the decision to adopt this logical framework of accumulation should be complemented with the primacy of collective identity alongside the particular ones of religious, ethnicity, language, culture etc.

The cultural encounter serves as a media and forum for various particular identities among Indonesian society to directly meet each other and engaged in encounters which enable them to get to know each other. Only from such encounter it becomes possible for the multitude of Indonesians to continuously negotiate and build genuine understanding. It departs from the understanding that each particular identity constituted the imagined communities of Indonesia is not and should not be treated like some sort of relics displayed in museum to represent something long gone and decayed under the burden of time as the previous New Order did.¹⁹ These particular identities are something with their own lives which still have the living energy to act, react, and adapt themselves to the environment they encounter, including other identities. It is also noteworthy that most of these particular identities have been existed long before the common identity of Indonesia saw its first dawn, even before the colonial powers came and established their rules on this archipelago.

Since centuries the now considered particular identities which serve as components of Indonesian identity have engaged and established themselves among other cultural entities worldwide. Through sea trade networks they engaged and encounter other cultural entities

¹⁹ A major example of how the New Order regime treated the Indonesian diversity is the most notorious project of Taman Mini Indonesia Indah. For further explanation how this project is designed to treat the Indonesian diversity as mere lifeless relics see Dhakidae, Daniel (2007) *Cendekiawan dan Kekuasaan di Masa Orde Baru*, Gramedia: Jakarta.

and through it each learned, built shared understanding, and adapted itself both to the other entities it encountered and the changing environment. Lombard's work of "*Nusa Jawa Silang Budaya*" and Reid's "*The Lands Below the Winds*" show that various cultural entities in the islands of Nusantara have been long connected through various encounters and each has been able to draw some lessons through these encounters.²⁰ Since each of these cultural entities has draw their own lessons and develop its own path to adapt itself, it is not surprising if the effort to unify them becomes a laborious and, without proper approach, could be a hazardous as reflected in various ethnic and religious conflicts which sprung right after the fall of the New Order regime.

Thus, it is necessary to give rooms and more opportunities for these diverse cultural entities and particular identities to express themselves in order to build genuine understanding. This is possible only we are able to facilitate the occurrence of more encounters among these cultural entities and particular identities, and the genuine encounters are less likely to occur in the court or meetings rooms at the parliament building complexes with abstract discussions but rather in the everyday live related to simple matters of day-to-day living. Another task no less important than to facilitate these cultural encounters is to get these cultural encounters manageable and leads to the desired goals. At this point collective identity plays crucial role.

The collective identity serves to bind together the wide diversity of Indonesian society. Once, the common goals of gaining political freedom from Dutch colonial rule, though controversial it is, served as the main base of this collective identity. The post-independence development, however, has grown to situation which put this common goal into question and reconsideration, especially the discrepancy between Java and outer-Java. The grim precedent of imposing a collective identity through modern development goals under the previous New Order regime which, unfortunately, were pursued more through coercive means, has embittered some Indonesians, especially they who live in Aceh; Papua; and other several regions in Indonesia with long history and tradition of separatism. Their respond toward collective identity is mostly skeptical, for not to say totally in distrust.

The previous New Order regime treated the diverse nature of Indonesian society mainly through manipulation which served two goals of binding them in the chain of dependency to the central government at Jakarta and making them as easy targets for political mobilization to ensure the continuation of the regime's rule. Through such a policy, the

²⁰Lombard's work shows the case of Java and Javanese societies as a site and actor of this cultural engagement and learning, resulted Java and its societies as a cultural intersection, where the influence of various cultures gave color to what now known as Javanese culture. In this case, the Javanese still holds the control of what is considered appropriate and what is not from these strange cultures. They, however, acknowledge that such encounter is inevitable thus they adapt themselves to adapt as well to manage the occurred encounters and the influence coming from them. See, Lombar, Denys (2000) *Nusa Jawa Silang Budaya*, Vol 1, 2, 3; Winarsih P.A. et.al transl., P.T. Gramedia Pustaka Utama: Jakarta; first published 1996.

previous regime has produced a mono-polar governance, with only one center, Jakarta.²¹ Every idea about creating other center could be considered as an act of disobedient or, worst, separatism, and the center would certainly react with its iron-fist.

The demise of central government control after the fall of New Order regime burst of the long oppressed expression of various particular identities and cultural entities to claim their once denied rights. Unfortunately, in expressing their demand each particular identities and cultural entities tend to target symbols which once represented the privileged ones during the New Order era and on most occasions of conflict which escalate into violence these symbols are attributed toward other particular identities or cultural entities. This phenomenon is mostly due to the previous New Order policy that rather develops interaction and engagement between the particular identities and cultural entities and the central Government than among themselves. Alongside the discriminative policy of the ruling regime, which gives privilege to certain particular identities and cultural identities at the expense of other, the lack of communications; encounters; and understanding among these particular groups have created prejudice and stereotype among them. Never been confirmed through communication and reproduced throughout the members of each particular groups, these prejudice and stereotype are finally accepted as truth, and serve as base for the members of the group toward referred groups and their members.

As mentioned before, in order to reverse this negative effect of the previous regime's policy, it is imperative to open wider room for engagement among these particular identities and cultural entities framed in a collective identity as Indonesian. This common identity must be based on more relevant and commonly shared purpose and direction which available through the involvement of these particular identities and cultural entities in the bigger framework of Indonesia.

Only after these pre-requirements of reflections, cultural engagement and collective identity are met we may begin to build Indonesia in multi-polar framework. This multi-polar framework places various overlapping and cross-cutting identities, constituted the Indonesian identity, in a process of intensive mutual learning in order to build mutual understanding among them. To be cautious, it necessary to state on the first place that this process requires audacity, determination, as well as big heart from the involved parties to keep work on this long quest for lasting mutual understanding among them. Logical fallacy of distribution in and impassionate respond toward the accumulation process leads to the phenomenon of rocketing number of new autonomous region in Indonesia in a matter of a decade. Worse, the problems of logical fallacy and impassionate respond from the particular elements of Indonesia go along side the central government failure in wealth distribution.

²¹This pattern of mono-polarity is clearly seen in the flight route of almost all Indonesian major flight company. To reach one place, even one on the same island, people have to take the long route to Jakarta first, and then take another flight to the intended destination.

I acknowledge that such multi-poles mode of governance based on accumulative logical framework is only possible, in Indonesian context, requires a leadership with strong vision forward. This vision, however, must be structurally shared and institutionalized and it must be done through consensual process among particular identities and cultural entities which constituted Indonesia. One of the main roles of the leader here is to facilitate the cultural encounters which make understanding and consensus building among these diverse particular groups and cultural entities possible.

Physical infrastructure is one of the most needed to make such cultural encounter possible. The central government, for now, is the only party who has the ability required for the development of physical infrastructure which connected various parts of Indonesia, since such a project requires a huge planning capacity. Thus, the leader at the central government should make maximum contribution by gives it best on it.²²

From the particular identities and cultural entities within the society, such vision and opportunity should be responded through developing their institutional learning capacity. If during the previous regime they were demanded mere to obey, now they are demanded to develop their capacity to learn, articulate, and negotiate their interest with other particular groups and the central government.

In developing this organizational learning capacity, each particular groups need to, first, make self-evaluation and self-reflection on what they have done so far and what they would do in the future. Through the cultural engagement this self-evaluation and reflection are shared and communicated with other groups. The willingness to share and to communicate are crucial here since only through it that it is possible for those groups to build mutual understanding which could be transformed into cooperation and inter-linkages.

The government, at every level, should develop the same capacity and involved themselves in the cultural engagement process. On the part of government, the organizational learning capacity could be translated as maximization of research and developments (R&D) function within its structure. The government organization that runs this function should become a reference in policy making process.

It is also important that in such a process, each party should avoid the technocratic and positivistic traps. Since, as it is mentioned above, the mistake of overlooking the cultural dimension of Indonesian society and its diversity has been mostly due to the reduction of Indonesian political and social phenomenon into mere calculation for effectiveness and efficiency. In this cultural perspective, historical path becomes one of the determining factors for what is and would be happened in the future.

²²At provincial and local levels leadership at the Province of Kalimantan Tengah could be made as a good example. See “*50 Tahun Kalimantan Tengah*”, Postgraduate Program for Political Science, Local Politics and Regional Autonomy, 2007.

In this process of self-reflection and evaluation and, then, communication with other parties, inevitably, there must be some things which may sound unpleasant to hear or share with others. The parties involved, however, should deal such cases with open-mindedness, since truth, however bitter it is, is always better than falsity. Indonesian historiography could serve as a good example. As recently revealed to most of Indonesian, the Indonesian history has had many missing links which need further search and thorough search in order to get clearer picture. This is, partly, due to the previous regime policy to manipulate history to legitimize its rules. The manipulated history, reproduced over the span of decades, has been deeply rooted in the mind of most Indonesian and accepted as nearly undeniable truth. People's understanding on history gives influence to how he/she understands and responds to his/her current situation. If one responds to his current situation based on manipulated history, inevitably, he is prone to arrive at wrong decision which could lead to unintended consequences. One first important step to get clearer view on our history is through opening "the other stories" which may reveal truth other than one imposed on us as the only truth by the previous regime.

In cultural perspective, managing the diversity of Indonesian society the state should not co-opt various entities, including religious organizations. Instead, the state should facilitate the engagement among these entities, more than mere through consociational model of representation, but also through provide them with channel to make direct encounters which make it possible for them to know each other more and take lessons through such encounters.

In the governance context, this organizational learning capacity should include, at least three components. They are political learning and policy learning. Policy learning itself to include the so-called instrumental learning and social learning²³

The political learning capacity will provide the involved parties the tools to understand the contextual dimension of their existence and then relate their ideas with the existing context. This capacity will help them to determine their strategy in order to promote their ideas or to respond the policy problems they encounter. For the various groups within the society this capacity is useful to articulate and promote their ideas in the agenda setting process. For the government, this capacity serves to guide them to formulate the relevant policy and frame the diversity of the Indonesian society in a unifying framework in more democratic manner.

The policy learning is consisted of two components; the social learning capacity and instrumental learning capacity. The social learning capacity is related to the ability to understand the social construction of any given policy. It will give the involved parties sensitivity toward the values and norms which are pursued through any given policy. Last, but not least, is the instrumental learning capacity. This type of learning capacity will give the involved parties more options and alternatives on possible measures of policy intervention or implementation designs.

²³May, Peter J., *Policy Learning and Failure*; Journal of Public Policy part 4, 1992, pp. 331-354.

The case of Jogjakarta which succeeds in maintaining its status as the capital for Javanese culture and, at the same time, the weaver for the unity of Indonesia could be seen as a best practice here. This is due to its political learning capacity which enables her to see and understand to political propensity during which favor the establishment of a nation-state and in order to maintain its existence in this new situation the old institution of the Sultanate must gave correct respond. Instead of simply being a spectator of the establishment and institutionalization of the new nation-state, the Sultanate, under the visionary leadership of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, decided to play active role of the process since the very beginning. First, during the harsh time, the Sultan offered the Yogyakarta to be the capital city of the newly born republic, though it meant to risk this city to be the main target of military attack of the returning Dutch power. This decision had proven the Sultanate's commitment toward the establishment of the new Republic of Indonesia, and through it, maintains its existence in the new context.

Second, considering the inevitable interaction with modernity, the Sultanate quickly responded by handing over some of his estate for the establishment of the first university of the independent Indonesia, the Gadjah Mada University. Through this university, the Sultanate plays the role as one of the main weaver of Indonesian unity, since the students of this university come from all over Indonesia, and made Jogjakarta dubbed "Indonesia Mini". In contrast to the "Taman Mini Indonesia Indah", the "Indonesia Mini" has positive association since the diversity in Jogjakarta are represented in its living form, when the students from all over Indonesia with their own cultures, customs, languages, values, and norms are involved in continuous peaceful interaction. In this interaction, there must be moments where each participant has to learn each other and from there they build mutual understanding among them. The beautiful diversity and harmonious interaction and relationship among various particular identities and cultural entities in Jogjakarta are the paramount of the continuous effort of cultural learning through direct-day-to-day cultural encounters of its participants.

The case of Jogjakarta shows the indication of successful cultural encounter and learning. The process produce some sense of proud toward Indonesian as a cultural without the imposition to neglect the particular identities of each participant involved. Through the accumulative logical framework, the Indonesian identity is expressed through the expression of the particular identity, which in fact constituted the earlier. Thus, my particular identity as Moslem or Christian or Javanese or Papuanese is not in against my identity as an Indonesian. Instead, my identity as an Indonesian enables me to express my particular identity stronger because it is one of many parts which constituted the Indonesian identity.

The explanation above deals with how the cultural encounter and learning are carried and institutionalized at the society level and mostly through informal channel. For this scheme to work, parallel effort must be made at government level, in its broad sense, and through formal channel. The Regional Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Daerah – DPD*) may serve this cause of weaving Indonesian unity through its diversity.

As we know, DPD is a national body which most of its members come from among the locals of all over Indonesia. Their function is to represent the regional and local interest at national level. In order to maximize the DPD function it is necessary to facilitate this body and its members to be better-rooted to its constituent at the local level and maintain engagement with members representing other localities. Trough it there will be well-connected-chain-of-representation where the populace from various localities have access to policy making process at national level and maintain the cultural encounter and learning through formal channel for better mutual understanding.

5. Conclusion.

No matter the prevailing external interests in Indonesia, decentralized democracy in highly need its people. The currently predominating stream thought which guide the process of democratization and decentralization in the country misjudged the importance and the role and culture, and particularly phobia to cultural diversity. Uncovering the way the transformation has been taking place in this country reveals that culture serve more as burden, rather than, the pave way of democratization and decentralization. Indonesia has been entrapped in keeping its progress in decentralization and democratization due to its unwillingness to engage in a critical evaluation and honest self-reflection.

Indonesia ability make sufficient response to globalization require the completion of the forgotten agenda; establishing Indonesia as a strong (highly capacitated) nation-state, up on which cultural diversity serve as its strength, rather than its weakness. Indonesia needs to make sure that manage to establish democratic and decentralized political structure based on cultural feature. The importance of putting universal value in place does not necessarily imply the disregard to prevailing culture.

Its ability to do so, depend on dual-edge strategy. On the one hand it needs to reshape the prevailing cultural lens of the public so that it is sensitivity identifying the root cause and the superficial cause of the problem. On the other hand it have to make sure that the reshape lens equips the public with capacity to learn from each other as well as from their past. Beneath the dynamic of the cultural transformation, a silent and salient process of learning shall takes place. Yet, what we require is not merely adopting what has been established elsewhere in particular context.

There must also be a process of creation and, in some case, co-creation. Various ideas and aspiration circulated within the discourse and practices of cosmopolitan democracy serve as either common point of reference or a threat to challenge. Willingness to learn allows and capability to make a critical understanding would allows us to come up with entirely new things, which is not necessarily fall under the conflicting dichotomy. While open mindedness is important, this approach will not, in anyway, have any logical reason to suppose that “we will be ableto control the outcomes of our creations and activities”.²⁴

²⁴Jim Whitman, *The Limits of Global Governance*, Routledge, London, 2005, page. 114.

Mobilizing collective capacity to learn is the only hope left, since the norm of interdependence in this globalized world requires our willingness to accept indirect effects of other's activities.*