

# Cultural Mapping of Nusantara Dances: The Development of Multiculture-based Cultural Political Policy Strategies

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**Keywords:** mapping of dance culture, the development strategy of culture politics, multiculturalism.

**Abstract:** This is the study of mapping the dance culture of Nusantara based on the categorization of the style of culture that is based on the mental map-- that the new awareness about the way to think based on the geographies of that particular culture. The mental map will act as a foundation for understanding the complexity of the culture in Indonesia. Difference in the mental map, not only give birth to the difference in ethnicity and geography but also gave divergent new point of view at different matters; to show the active value system that is different from one group to another; an also to accentuate the presence of social, economical, and political behavior that is different from one another. Based on that, then every pattern assembles a certain transformation inside the society of the mental map itself, and the pattern from the outcome will give an aspect of cultural identity that will connect to the human mind of the society that supports it.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes and presents the maps of Nusantara (Indonesian Archipelago) dances based on the culture style categories, which are in accordance with a mental map. It is a new awareness of the new perspective based on cultural geography. The basic principle of the mental map is to understand the complexity of cultures existing in Indonesia. The different mental map does not only trigger the emerge of ethnics and geographical areas but also shows different perspectives in various ways, shows the different value systems among groups, and confirms the existence of various social, economic, and political behaviors. Thus, each pattern supports the transformation of the mental map in a society. In addition, the pattern depicts the cultural identity aspects which lead to the society's "human mind". In fact, what people have in mind is a partial meaning, such as an artifact or event comprising separate meanings.

Indonesia is known as a plural nation consisting of more than 17,000 islands and 205 ethnic groups. A large number of ethnic groups living in many regions represents the complexity of Indonesian cultures. Indonesia is an agricultural country where a large majority of people work as farmers and where the green and fertile paddy fields look like "zamburut

khatulistiwa" (the green or dark green gemstone of the equator). Indonesian people are mainly divided into two groups, namely the maritime and the agrarian societies. Toer (2001) mentions that Nusantara is a country supported by maritime and agrarian societies. Therefore, Toer criticizes the New Order governmental system saying that it is a total failure for relying the economy only on the agrarian sector. As narrated in Toer's (2001), Gusti Ratu Aisyah (a character in the novel) in a conversation with her son, Sultan Trenggono, the established system in the past failed in governing the country because it implemented the agrarian rules as the basis of the maritime country.

You need to know that marine is the one and only force defeating the colonial or the enemy. The army force can only fight their own brothers, not their enemies (Toer, 2001: 470)

Sultan Trenggono (the king of Demak) tended to develop the army force in order to make his power greater. The king wanted to prove that her mother's idea was wrong, and he was right, stating "even without the sea, Demak kingdom will continue to grow and be prosperous." He trained with his riding troops that he was proud of. Moreover, he trained with Sodor (jousting) and developed his agility to race while training swordsmanship. On the other hand, the mother, Gusti Ratu Aisyah, as well as Pati Unus (Sultan Trenggono's brother who died in an

attack in the Malacca Strait in order to expel the colonial), tended to prioritize the marine force to protect the kingdom from the outside forces in which the concept is relatively applicable nowadays. It is the same thing needed to be done in this era. Gusti Ratu Aisyah told his son that she was a native to coastal area possessing different characteristics from the inland people.

Listen to your late brother, "The ones proposing an idea that ruling Javanese is more important than defeating the colonial will be cursed by their offspring since they know in advance, and it is like surrendering the sons and daughters to the colonial even when they are still in their mothers' wombs. (Toer, 2001: 475-480).

The proposed notion of Nusantara based on the system of governance, namely agrarian and maritime, is supported by Onghokham (2003) and Kuntowijoyo (1987). Onghokham (2003) states that there is a different concept of the maritime and agrarian kingdom called "Keraton". In contrary to the maritime kingdom, the agrarian will remain as long as there are heirlooms and *siti hinggil* (Thorne). In brief, as long the keraton exists, the kingdom is in place. Even when the kingdom no longer had a political function, for example, Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII who was still addressed as *ratu gung binantahara* (the great defied king), the power of controlling the culture was given to the king. Kuntowijoyo (1987:13) states that in the societies where maritime and commercial kingdom exists, the central of the kingdom seems not important. Therefore, it is difficult to find the continuity of institutions generating the symbolic wisdom since the maritime societies commonly live in river banks and seashores, such as the kingdoms in Malayan, Sumatera, and Kalimantan peninsulas. The kingdoms are usually democratic because there is no large gap between the societies and the government, for example, kings, nobles, and common people all take part in the trade. The kings and nobles have the necessary capital (ships), which is sometimes managed by themselves or entrusted to merchants called *Syahbandar* guarded by *Hulubalang* called *Hang* to secure the environment around the business (Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia, 1990: 4).

From cultural ideology aspects, Onghokham (2003:358) states that in the 19th century, Southeast Asia was divided into two major civilizations, namely Indic civilization (India) and Sinic civilization (China). The Indic civilization culturally and ideologically influenced Indonesia, Thailand, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia. Meanwhile, the Sinic civilization greatly influenced Vietnam's culture.

Sumardjo (2006) states that the structure of Indonesian society currently overlaps each other, but it can be said that the current structure of society is based on the cultural patterns of primordial Indonesian society which are divided into a two-way, three-way, four-way, and five-way pattern. The social patterns can be observed synchronically and diachronically. Although there are similarities among ethnicities in Indonesia, each ethnicity has its own uniqueness. For example, Batak and Lampung people have similarities in certain aspects. However, it cannot be said that the two ethnicities are identically the same. Based on the cultural patterns of primordial Indonesian society, Sumardjo (2006) divides Indonesian society into a two-way, three-way, four-way, and five-way pattern.

These concepts are used to criticize the categorization of 'Nusantara' by combining the theories of Onghokham, Kuntowijoyo, and Toer, all of which come to a conclusion that Indonesian people are not strictly divided into maritime and agrarian societies. The maritime society is also divided into a maritime society that solely depends on the sea, and the one also depends on both the sea and farming. The Nusantara's agrarian culture is distinguished into wet rice cultivation and shifting cultivation (see Geertz, 1971: 12-37 and Nasikun, 1984: 44).

Based on the system of each cultural pattern, the two-way pattern expresses the hunter-gatherer culture; the three-way pattern is field farming culture; four-way pattern depicts the maritime culture, and the five-way pattern expresses rice farming culture. However, the cultural pattern of Lampung depicts maritime-field farming culture. The maritime-field farming culture is also found in coastal and farming areas where the people living there develop themselves in shipping and trade activities, such as those living in Sumatera (Malay), Sunda, Java, Bugis, Makassar, and Aceh (Sumardjo, 2006: 28). Therefore, the existing notion that 'Nusantara' only has farmed and maritime culture is a misconception. This study critically discusses the culture of Nusantara by dismantling its elements to prove that the value of diversity within Indonesian society is Indonesia's strength. It is expected that the cultural misconception that occurred in the past will not occur in the future.

This ecological issue also reflects the different systems of governance as stated by Soewarno (1997) that there are three systems of governance in Nusantara, i.e. the Malay governance system (maritime) with the consensus agreement system, Bugis-Makassar (coastal-field farming system) with the House of Representative system, and Java-Bali

(inland – agrarian – rice farming) with the kingdom governance system.

## 2 COASTAL-FIELD FARMING SOCIETY: THREE-WAY PATTERN

Soebing (1988:14) proposes that the ‘seruas tiga buku, tiga genap dua ganjil’ philosophy (the concept of three joint knuckles in a finger equals to three- even and two-odd) contains three traditional rules that should be followed by the people of Lampung. The three rules are (1) personal values in the form of attitudes and behaviors (*adat cepala*: *pi-il pasenggiri*); (2) family values in the form of marriage (*adat pengakuk*); and (3) ancestral values or the position in the traditional institution (*adat kebumian*, *pepadun*). *Adat cepala*: *pi-il pasenggiri* is the pillar; *adat pengakuk* is the body, and *adat pepadun* is the position supported by the pillar and body.

The ‘seruas tiga buku, tiga genap dua ganjil’ is a philosophy referring to “number three”. According to this philosophy, number three is considered an even while two is considered the odd one. This philosophy refers to the fact that a human finger has three knuckles. It is only possible for humans to hold things with the help of the three knuckles in each of their finger. The knuckles are compared to the joints of a sugarcane stalk, suggesting that the sweetness in the sugarcane can only be enjoyed after it is extracted. On another note, for the people of Lampung, the word ‘odd’ means something ‘weird’, or ‘does not conform to the general norms.’ It can also be defined as ‘abnormal’, ‘strange’ or ‘ridiculous’, or those who demonstrate irrationality.

From this philosophy, the value of a person in a community, as well as the respect and appreciation that he or she deserves is determined by (1) personal values in the form of attitudes and behaviors (*adat cepala*: *pi-il pasenggiri*); (2) family values in the form of marriage (*adat pengakuk*); and (3) ancestral values or the position in the traditional institution (*adat kebumian*, *pepadun*). The three-way pattern in the ‘seruas tiga buku, tiga genap dua ganjil’ philosophy can be seen in the pattern of *pohon hayat* (the tree of life) in the form of *tumpal* or ‘letter A’ motif as seen on the *tapis* and *kapal* traditional fabrics. In this case, *adat kebumian* works as the basis of one’s social status, which represents the manifestation of earth, the lower world. Meanwhile, *adat pengakuk* represents the behaviors, the middle part or the human world, and *adat cepala* refers to the values of norms

that become the guiding point for how one must behave in social engagement, and become a part of the upper world, which represents an ideal condition for the community.

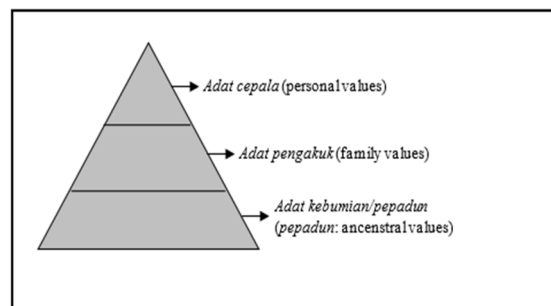


Figure 1: The three stones of values

The three-way pattern philosophy consists of the lower, middle, and upper world. It is a development of the two-way pattern which is based on the antagonistic dualism way of life. The two aspects are separate and distanced, but the separation is considered to cause death. Thus, the opposing views must come together to end the antagonistic notion. The foundation lies in how life is viewed as harmony, and life is enabled by the two opposing yet complementing entities (Sumardjo, 2006: 73). In contrast with the gatherers who are prone to conflict, the farmers’ harmony does not eliminate the two opposing entities but instead bring them together to generate a new entity. A harmonious event is a paradoxical one; no side is losing or winning. Both sides are winners, which may even give birth to a new life. The three-way pattern aesthetics focus on the formation of the ‘middle world’ as the paradox symbol, which harmonizes the dualistic-antagonistic notions. The manifestation of this form is horizontalist, meaning that the material world paradox is put first before the heavenly one. This is certainly different from the five-nine pattern culture of the agrarian community. In fact, the three-way pattern is not accustomed to the adagium of ‘*manunggaling kawula-Gusti*’ (becoming one with God), which has a more vertical approach, in relation to the mysticism of the agrarian community’s five-nine pattern.

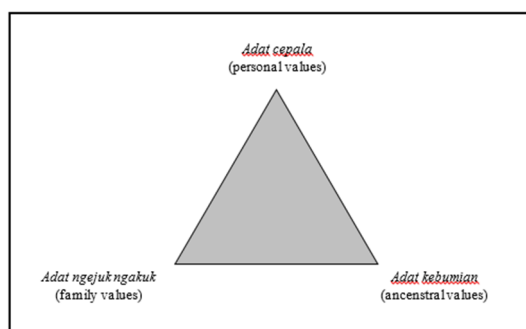


Figure 2: The three stones of values in the horizontal landscape

The horizontal orientation of the three-way pattern is also reflected in the three aspects that the people of Lampung aim to reach the pinnacle of life, namely (1) *benuwa*, having a house; (2) *begawi*, having a traditional wedding ceremony for their sons or daughters; as well as (3) *cakak haji* or *cakak Mekkah*, or taking a Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca. These notions imply that the ideal that the people of Lampung attempt to achieve involves material possessions (*benuwa*), offspring as a result of marriage (*begawi*), as well as spiritual necessities for the afterlife (*cakak Mekkah*). These are the ideals that one must be able to fulfil once he or she becomes an adult (*punggawo*). It is only when all three aspects are completed that one may earn respect in the community, as described below.

Nyou kesusahan pesekam lagei, kak benuwou, radu ngamatu, kak kaji.

Meaning: there is no more sorrow for you, with the house you own, and your children married, and the Hajj you went on.

For this reason, a *punggawo* always strives to aim for the three matters. In fact, family members and relatives would gladly help each other to obtain these goals. They believe that by helping their relatives when the time comes, they will also receive the same assistance (*tanoman*). The help may take the form of money, food, or either moral or material support in a larger sense. The recipient side will be content only if they manage to return the kindness, and vice versa.

The three values work as the manifestation of an ideal state that one must have in order to be respected in the community. In Lampung wedding system (the *adat pengakuk*), those within the same *marga* (clan) must follow the *adat kebumian* (social status based on the balance system); in which the bride side is the one sending off the wife (*ngejuk*), and the groom side is the one accepting the wife. Earth custom (*adat kebumian*) is a position of someone who is determined based on the base of stem/*pangkal batang*

(male lineage; *kepenyimbangan*). *Adat pengakuk* is a provision and ways to propose marriage for and/or to accept a marriage proposal from other people that contain articles on a person's customary rights related to the rights of someone about the number of *dau* that must be paid when marrying a girl in a family that has rights of *adat pengakuk*. There is a difference between *sereh* and traditional rights of *adat pengakuk*.

*Sereh* is *dau* (money that must be paid), or it can also be an animal or object left by a girl who gets married as a substitute, and it can be in the form of things or furniture placed in an empty room because of her leave, while *pengakuk* is "someone's customary value". *Ngejuk-ngakuk* literally means giving and taking. Based on the custom, there is a provision applied to someone who takes a girl (*ngakuk*) and to whom someone else gives his daughter (*ngejuk*). This is because the issue of *ngejuk-ngakuk* is an important factor in determining the purity and burden of the blood descendants of a chief of *adat*. Lampung custom is also upheld on blood descendants who are considered good or bad judged by married women.

Of all the perfection that the people of Lampung want to achieve, marriage is a condition that must be carried out to reach *benuwa* and *begawi*. In addition, marriage is very important because, for Lampung people, unmarried people are categorized as children or are considered immature. Of course, there are adults who are not married, but sociologically, they are still considered immature. Only those who are married play a role in making decisions at traditional ceremonies, and may speak in family matters. From the facts, it can be said that marriage is the most important life cycle for Lampung people.

Marriage will increase the social stratification of a person to become a leader by leading his *batih* (family). When a person enters a marriage life, he is permitted to have a house (*benuwa*), and automatically the ceremony he is carrying out is *begawi* of the custom itself, especially if the married one is the eldest son/daughter. In the Javanese community, the identity of an adult is confirmed when he/she gets a personal *keris* and uses a new name at the time of the marriage which causes the new nuclear family to be separated from the larger group of descendants.

An adult will be truly honored if he builds his own family, which will be the main source of social identity for his children (Mulder, 1985: 35). Based on the form of a horizontal three-pattern, the relationship is more emphasized on worldly elements, as 'three-stone furnace' (*tungku tiga*) which symbolizes three stones used to support a pot for cooking. All three

stones have the same strong position. It is illustrated as follows.

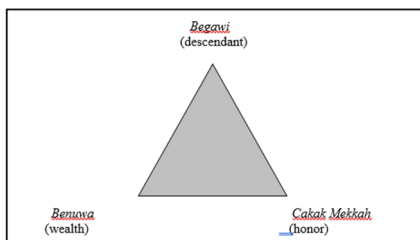


Figure 3: Three-stone furnace illustrating the worldly elements

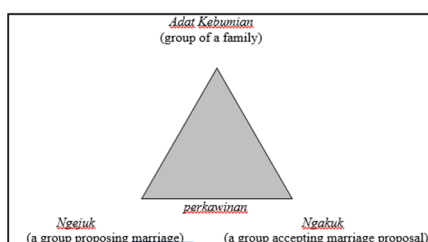


Figure 4: Social structure scheme at the wedding ceremony

However, the custom of ngejuk-ngakuk in Lampung society is not as firm as that of Batak people. The 'three-stone furnace' in the Lampung community is built based on the unity of one's adat cepala, adat ngejuk-ngakuk, and adat kebumian. It means that in Lampung society, individual values are more taken into account based on their personal abilities than group values. Therefore, someone's success and appreciation to others are more determined based on the person's ability. In a cangget and marriage ceremony, the structure of the 'three-stone furnace' in the life cycle of a woman and cangget that goes with her is illustrated as follows.

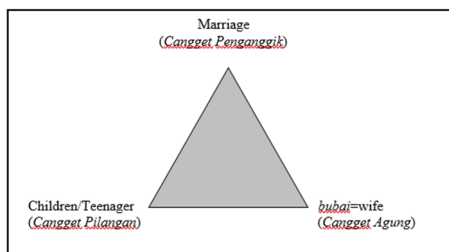


Figure 5: The scheme of cangget accompanying the ceremony

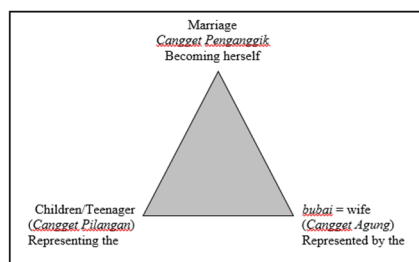


Figure 6: The position of a girl in a wedding ceremony and the cangget

For Lampung people, marriage is not merely an individual matter, but it is a customary matter. Marriage is a report for someone's "social relationship value" in a society. This will be a measure of "honor" in the community based on wealth, positions, and relationships that are intertwined among people.

Generally, people say the reason for their presence at a wedding party is first based on personal relationships, then social status, and other reasons later. The 'good value' of one's social relations is determined based on the guests who come to the wedding. This can also be a measure of 'who' carries out the customary 'work' (begawi). Therefore to show respect for the invited guests, the host will welcome them with good hospitality. In addition, the respect and dignity of Lampung people are at stake in the way they welcome the invited guests. What counts as a successful wedding party concerning the social value of these people might be the support of their relatives, attending guests, and the high-end party held. These might best express the value of respect and strength of Lampung people, especially if the family are about to hold the wedding party for the first time.

### 3 MARITIME SOCIETY: FOUR-WAY PATTERN

The identity of Malay or Melayu is not that of an ethnic group or race, but the royal family that seems to be associated with the king or 'raja'. The word Melayu in the practical book Malay History or Sejarah Melayu means the genealogy of the Sultan. However, after Malacca fell to the Portuguese in 1511, the royal family fled to Johor, and there was no ethnic holding the reins of what Melayu means. The word finally spread out together with the diaspora of post-Malacca traders. Melayu no longer resembles the identity of the social stratification, but a "horizontal identity." This identity has become a

marker in different but equal social groupings – especially in the view of European colonialist powers.

Regarding this, the liberation from the colonialism with the intention to escape from its steely gaze is considered as one of the attempts to return to the identity, Melayu. Since the 1930s, Indonesian poetry is influenced by the poems of the "musyafir lata" or wanderers who have nothing but freedom to explore. Indonesia was born from this exploration, and that is why Indonesian nationalism does not upraise the property inherited from the past, neither in the form of temples nor natural resources, but it is the archipelago itself that matters. This might be the best reason why the word "Indonesia" and its nationalism seem to have 'great' power for its people as both really pull on their heartstrings. Thus, the Indonesians do not want to be called "Indon", but "Indonesia" since it is the name "Indonesia" that have been fought with might and main since the beginning of the 20th century. It just shows how hard the struggle really was. How many thousands were imprisoned and died for that name? Shall the Indonesians forget it?

Regarding its society, Soewarno (1997: 11) proposes the three patterns of power (governance) of Nusantara as a result of its freedom, namely (1) Java-Bali, (2) Malay, and (3) Bugis-Makassar. The Java-Bali pattern of governance places the center of power on the king. The king is the center (microcosm) of the kingdom he leads (the macrocosm). He holds absolute power, from which all power comes from. King is the law, and the law is the king. The words the king says are comparable to the command of God that must be carried out by all his people.

In the second pattern, Malay, the system of government was a constitutional monarchy. Sultan as head of the government is accompanied by a Council of Ministers who are authorized to elect and appoint the Sultan. This council, together with the Sultan make laws and regulations. The regional government is handed over to the judges or Hakim. Hakim Kerapatan Tinggi is headed by the Sultan, then the Hakim Polisi (Police Judge), Hakim Syariah (Sharia Judge), and finally Hakim Kepala Hinduk (Head Judge of Hinduk). The example of this type of governance would be the Sultanate of Siak Sri Indrapura. The representation of four-way pattern in the Indrapura Siak's Kerapatan Adat includes (1) Kampar, (2) Pesisir, (3) Tanah Datar, and (4) Lima, Puluh Kota.

The last pattern, Bugis-Makassar, found in the Sultanate of Bima, puts the top power on the Sultanate Council called "Hadat". Hadat consists of a chief and 24 members. These members are 6 Jeneli

people, 6 Toreli people, and 12 Bumi people. The chief of Hadat is called "Raja Bicara" or "Ruma Bicara", who is the highest employee in the kingdom who has the position of the First Minister, while Jeneli is the Second Minister. Jeneli and Toreli are chosen by village leaders so that they were the people's representatives. Seen from the second and third governance pattern, the Malay inspires deliberation and consensus, while the Bugis-Makassar imbues the House of Representatives.



Figure 7: The symbol of the Sultanate of Siak Sri Indrapura, as an example of the Malay Governance Pattern

The manifestation of the four-way pattern in the structure of the Riau-Malay community includes:

1. the story/tale (the legend sung in poetry) that has four kinds of intonating techniques, i.e. (1) kapal, (2) burung, (3) selendang delima, and (4) nandung,
2. the basic movement of dance (Zapin, Joged, Inang, or Langgam), including (1) back and forth; (2) forward (sud); (3) forward snatching; (4) siku keluang, and
3. the decoration motifs.

The four-way pattern is reflected in the pictures below:

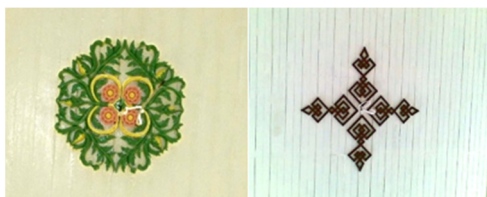


Figure 8 and 9: The decoration motives in the customary court of the Sultanate of Siak Sri Indrapura

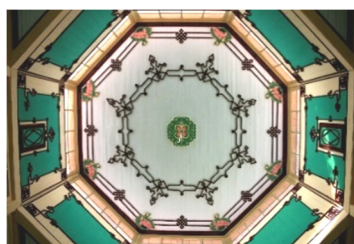


Figure 10: The eight-way pattern on the roof decoration of a traditional court building of the Sultanate of Siak Sri Indrapura

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

In this study, culture is interpreted as an analysis instrument and at the same time, acts as the object of a study. It may also be seen as a unit of study or analysis instrument consisting of interrelated elements, related to one another in integral units, and functioning, operating or moving in a unified system. The concept of culture is also understood as a systemic unit and an understanding that lead to the individual, social, and cultural aspects of human life as elements having reciprocal guiding and energy functions.

Benedict (in Poerwanto, 2000: 56) in her concept of the 'patterns of culture' states that an anthropologist must be able to dive into the soul of culture by paying attention to the ideas, feelings, and emotions of individuals in a society. Benedict's 'patterns of culture' is a whole emotional network in a culture that appears to give the soul and character of one culture. Geertz (1996), in relation to this, argues that culture means a pattern of meanings transmitted historically and embodied in symbols. Culture is an inherited system of concepts manifested in symbolic forms which become a means for humans to convey, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge of their attitudes towards life. Symbolic forms in the particular social context later exemplify a pattern or system called culture.

In addition, interpreting culture means understanding the system of symbolic forms to elucidate its authentic meaning. Therefore, 'the meaning embodied in symbols and concepts revealed in symbolic forms' is central to cultural studies. By focusing on religious or sacred symbols, Geertz contributes a paradigm that religious symbols function to synthesize the ethos of a nation - their character, quality of life, style, moral and aesthetic sense - and their outlook on life - the picture they have about the way things are, their most comprehensive ideas about order. Regarding this, religious symbols are those synthesizing and integrating "the world as lived and the world as imagined" (in Dillistone, 2002: 116). The way of life and the view of life are complementary, often manifested through symbolic forms giving a comprehensive picture of the order and, at the same time, embodying the synthetic pattern of social behaviors. There is a connection between lifestyle and view of life - the arrangement of the universal order - and this is revealed in symbols associated with both.

The analysis used to explore Indonesian people's mind is Levi-Strauss's structural analysis with the assumption that the phenomena embodied in the Indonesian dances can be captured by rationales in structures related to order and repetition (regularities) which are in mathematical laws resemble a structure existing in the unconscious nature of Indonesian people. With this structural analysis, the meanings displayed in various phenomena of Indonesian dances are considered intact. The analysis not only covers the effort to express the referential meanings but also opens the logic behind the 'laws' governing the process of manifesting various semiotic and symbolic phenomena that are not realized by the Indonesians. This is the fundamental difference between Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology and Radcliffe-Brown's structuralism-functionalism taking many models from Biology (developed by Dutch anthropologists). By constructing models showing the existence of certain structures in Indonesian dances, this research seeks to reveal the relationships existing within the structure of performance and society that has enabled Indonesians to build symbolic nets, until finally, they can open up cultural values and identity of Indonesians.

Finally, there are always two choices, whether we want to see the philosophy of art in detail or to see the development in order to understand the multiculturalism in Indonesia's diverse culture well. This research is on the first choice, aiming to explore Indonesian dances in depth to find the characteristics

of the 'art' to discover the patterns of equality and diversity of the Indonesians' diverse culture. In this case, this study has apparently found the cultural characteristics of Indonesians and revealed the patterns immersed. The findings are finally expected to be able to propose such an understanding of cultural diversity resulting in the wisdom of views in assessing other culture. This understanding will expose the notion that we cannot urge people from other cultures to always understand ours while denying other cultural values. Unfortunately, we seem always to judge another culture from our cultural point of view. Thus, Levi-Strauss's perspective allows anthropologists to see the diverse patterns of Indonesian cultures.

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