"Interruption!" said my late grandfather and political inspiration during Suharto's dictatorial regime (1967-1998) in the people's consultative assembly, where interruptions were prohibited. His ability to vocal what is right and making his mark by fighting against injustices despite going against the system made me eager to uphold what my grandfather instilled: Politics is sacred. To continue his legacy, I hope to establish my own political research and path by constructing a new positive political nuance by integrating political studies and ideologies from foreign countries with Indonesia’s.

I was privileged to interview Joko Widodo, Indonesia's current president, for an independent research project where I learned the importance of a system in a government to keep order. I extended my study to examine how his rival, Prabowo Subianto, joined his ministerial cabinet through a psychological lens. I unveiled that despite their differences in political ideology (individualistic) they shared a mutual interest in upholding Pancasila (collectivistic), Indonesia’s statutory law which is an ideal portrayal of a representative democracy. The study gained me recognition from executives of Indonesian think tanks and a seat in critical conversations. My ability to contextualize and observe was valued in discussions, for instance, when discussing the recent government decision to raise fuel prices due to inflation, I suggested that government should subsidize programmes that benefit the citizens welfare to ease the burden, and this was taken in account positively. I was also one of the editors and sole advisor for a member of the parliament book called 'Diplomasi parliamen dan Politik Luar Negeri R.' Again, we used psychological theories to inspect motives behind Indonesia's foreign policy; how democracy was first introduced, and its progression as a result. From these experiences, my view of politics has changed because of my discovery that politics is not just a subject within its realm but one that integrates others to magnify its own. This enhanced my political literacy and made me understand political matters in a pragmatic and calculative approach. I also learned to not only assess issues but also provide solution that accounts all factors and the unintended consequences.

After witnessing a Pro-Palestine rally outside of the US embassy from my car, I started researching on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Exploring the US foreign policy made me understand that USA’s interest in the Israeli Palestinian conflict comes from their shared commitment of democracy and regional security, which ties back to the findings of my study that mutual belief of the society surpasses individualistic values. I continued my investigation in the Oxford University-led international politics summer program I participated in where I discovered that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is much more complex than the common media portrayal of the conflict being solely a religious root issue, as there are other contributing factors, such as land territory.

I was chosen to represent North Korea at the London International Model United Nations (LIMUN) Conference. I believe LIMUN would make me understand diplomatic processes as the world is increasingly becoming interdependent with one another which would be transferable when talking in international forums and congress later. My role involved researching and discussing threats from cyberspace with fellow delegates; in the scenario, we had to find a collective solution that married with the theme of 'Peace and Security'. Recognizing the need for international collaboration in finding solutions to global problems made me reminisce about my dear friend, Miguel Panduwinata, whose life was lost in the downing of flight MH17 in 2014. I thought about the book, 'Bellingcat,' which discusses how the global intelligence network uses open-source data to carry out international investigations. The book gave me solace as it simplified what happened based on the evidence - having access to publicly available data allowed Bellingcat to investigate and reveal the truth about what happened after seven years. I thought about this during my LIMUN experience. Contrary to nationalizing cyberspace, the resolution I proposed to reinstitute peace, cyberspace intelligence should be transparent, and information should be exchanged between countries.

During my gap year, I co-founded a thrift shop called Velvet Youth Club (VYC) and started a project on how to distribute food waste through an app. I learned how to collaborate and communicate with charitable organizations to support cancer survivors, animal shelters, and COVID-19 frontlines. Through these experiences, I have become a better communicator, collaborator and a confident person which are attributes I will take in student organizations I will partake in university.

Through the holistic insights, depth of knowledge, and research skills I will gain during my undergraduate study, I plan to continue my good work in preparation for becoming an advocate of change in restoring political sacredness and strengthening international relations by upholding moral value and reforming the systematic flaws in Indonesia’s system by adopting better and proven systems from other countries.