



Joko Widodo's Leadership

Withaya Sucharithanarugse*

Abstract

After more than over a year in office, approval rating of President Joko Widodo by middle of February 2016 was 84.4%, an all-time high. This opinion survey by Kompas daily shows that people think that he has done a good job and people are impressed by Jokowi's personal communication style. Popularity associated with Joko Widodo dated back to the time he served as governor at Jakarta and mayor of Surakarta. Popularity he earned was due to his leadership in enhancing successful changes in two locations, particularly in Surakarta. Fused with endeared personality, Jokowi provides vision as well as means to solve endemic problems to the satisfaction of the people. He represents a new breed of political leadership that is in need in Indonesia.

Keywords: Joko Widodo/ Transformative Leadership/ Indonesia

Introduction

As the seventh president of the Republic of Indonesia, in office since 20 October 2014, Joko Widodo or Jokowi is comparatively not well-known nationally. His first emergence on the national scene with the title of presidency was rather explosive and surprising in nature since his name was not familiar compared to his running mate, Jusuf Kallawho has been a veteran politician who was a member of MPR from South Sulawesi for 1992, 1997, and 1999, becoming a minister in the Wahid and Megawati's cabinets helping settle peace in Paso, Ambon and Maluku during 2001 and 2002 before serving as Vice-President in the Yudhoyono's administration (2004-2009); while in 2009, he paired with General Wiranto in the presidential election and finishing third. All of these took place at the national level. True that Joko Widodo is a house-hold name for the Surakartans and even perhaps Jakartans; yet this is of local status. Considering this fact, it is naturally obvious to ask as to how Joko Widodo could occupy that presidential palace in Jakarta in 2014 while he was serving as the governor of Jakarta only half-term (2012-2014). Unlike all presidential candidates running in 2004, 2009 and 2014 who were all chairman of parties they represented, Joko Widodo was a mere "functionary" of the PDI-P headed by Megawati Sukarnoputri. Yet his party backed him. It is known that when he ran for mayoral post of Surakarta in 2005, he represented the PDI-P. How long he has been affiliated with the party, it was not known. We know only that his running mate as vice-mayor at that time was the chair of PDI-P chapter of Surakarta. However, Joko Widodo won the presidency at the first round of the running. There must be something that catapults him to the position amid all big names that entered the presidential race. Popularity is the catch word that can be quite elusive because it waxes and wanes. We posit that leadership that Joko Widodo exhibits while serving

* *Chairman of Southeast Asian Studies Program, the Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University and associated with the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.*



as mayor of Solo and governor of Jakarta earns him that status. Leadership is defined as “a process of social influences in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task” (Chemers, 1997). Leadership involves individual and activity. It entails clear vision, sharing it with others, realizing that vision, and coordinating activities.

Joko Widodo is reputedly singled out by media as a new breed of politician who is not part of the conventional political elite with high social status. He has no military connection. He was supposed to come from a poor family background who was evicted three times and this is assured to help him to understand the problem of relocating peoples. He studied for the primary and secondary education in Surakarta where he was born in 1961. He graduated in forestry from GadjahMada University in 1986. He worked in forestry service in Aceh for three years and returned to Solo in 1989 where he learned the furniture making from his uncle. He started his own furniture business from small loan from his father and government business sponsorship scheme and made it into thriving business when once he employed over 1,000 people. He exported his products to South Korea, Japan and Germany and made frequent trips overseas. His business associated urged him to run and serve as head of newly established branch of furniture manufacturers association in 2002. Upon this success, he was pushed into local politics when he ran for mayor of Solo in 2005. He then paired with F.X. HadiRudyatmo who was a Christian and won 36% of the votes cast. But when they ran again for the second term in 2010, they got 90.9% of votes. (RushdaMajeed, 2012, p.17). Being a successful business operator of an enterprise he created himself, Joko Widodo experienced first-hand management and attention that is needed for a good running of the business which helped him in serving as executive⁷². He knows how a business must respond to the customers ‘need and this paves him the way to run local government. When presenting himself to the people, he offers his personal likeability, simplicity and reachability. He prefers to engage the people by talking to them, rather than sitting in the office. He takes good care of the poor by providing them education, health care and basic service. His hands-on style of leadership ensures the success. He pleases businessmen through his policy of anti-corruption and does away with bureaucratic practice of government. He also seeks help from those who can help him to solve problems he confronts. The way he dresses simply and consistently, becomes his trademark. His unannounced drop-in at offices to check on officials is well-known. Refusing to buy a new office car and later opting for the locally made one earn him reputation. As for his salary as mayor, he donates it for public welfare purpose. His personal wealth leaves him no taint of money politics and cronyism. He is reputed to be “not driven by ideology and is a pragmatic, astute problem solver with deep commitment to reform”.(Bob Lowry, 2014). With all of these attributes, we can look at him stage by stage.

Mayor of Surakarta/Solo (28 July 2005 – 1 October 2012)

Surakarta is the former seat of Mataram kingdom with its own rulers known by the title of suman. The present ruler is SunanPakubuwono XIII. This kingdom was sliced to create smaller principedom known as managunegaranwhose present ruler is AdipatiMangunegara IX. Dutch once made Surakarta a residency which included six other regencies. With the creation of Surakarta city, it comprises five Kecamatan (now



translated as district) and 51 Kalurahan (village). But the Surakarta municipality has the area of about 44.03 km². We are here dealing Surakarta municipality.

By 2005, Solo had a population of about 500,000, 16% of which lived below the national poverty line (US\$ 1.55 per day) in the city area of 44 square kilometers, with Chinese minority with a long history of distrust with Javanese residents; and with 73% Muslim and 25% Christians. Civil unrest in 1998 in which crowds protested against rising oil price, food shortage and unemployment ruined 300 business and 900 vehicles mostly belonging to the Chinese. In 1999, Megawati's supporters burned down the City Hall in protest against her loss in presidential run. The roots of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was also traced to Solo. (Majeed, 2012, p.3).

As for Joko Widodo, by 2005, he has run his business for about 19 years and was well-known in the business community of Surakarta. That he decided to enter local politics might be motivated by a number of factors. At the matured age of 44, Joko might like to try his luck in politics. He might have been persuaded by his running mate Rudyatmo who led the PDI-P chapter of Surakarta and who might have had good impression of Joko who was ready to try a new page of life. Rudyatmo was happy to run with him and Joko must also have known that his running mate was able to make use of grassroots. Rudyatmo has been a seasoned politician. Besides PDI-P has been popular in Surakarta. The year 2005 was the year that decentralization process dictated to have first direct election of local chief and his deputy. The winner must garner 30% of the votes cast in which case Joko-Rudyatmo got 36%, testifying that Joko was not that well-known. A campaign theme was the slogan "BerseritanpaKorupsi" (Beautiful without corruption) Joko was to revitalize a clean and safe place to live and work.

Like other big city, Solo faced problems of local poor vendors who use the city roadsides to sell their wares and good to the distaste of the shopkeepers, causing congestion, littering and loss of open space. Supporters of the PDI-P were the poor and the marginalized. The municipality government was recovering from the fiscal crisis. Joko has to work for good coordination and build trust within the office and constituency, plus to maintain good cooperation from wealthy businessmen. The first challenge picked up by Joko was the Banjarsari Park Around 1,000 street vendors occupied the park and was protested by residents in the area while the vendors complained about abuses by authority and illegal fees they have to pay per day to stay there (Majeed, 2012:4). Mayor of Solo has the power to relocate, renovate, expand or demolish markets, yet only a few of Solo's 49 traditional markets were turned into modern shopping centers.

Pursuing the policy of beautiful city, Joko started to relocate street vendors from the Banjarsari Park. The vendors strongly protested and refused to move, challenging the municipality to use force. Joko reversed tactics to talking with them over lunch and dinner. Joko held more than 50 lunch talks with them for six month period. After well-prepared study and inner work with councillors, a new venue was offered: the KithilanSemanggi and a number of help and facility were offered the vendors. By December 2005, agreement was reached, six months after election. Concessions given to vendors was assured by Joko to return in benefit in full after



seven years (Majeed, 2012, pp.7-8). By July 2006 there was a celebration of relocation by the vendors led by Joko.

Between Joko and Rudyatmo, Joko will develop vision and strategy for reform and build public support while Rudyatmo concentrates on civil servants implementation of policy and to secure support from councilors. Joko believed in openness and dialogue to enforce the reform and to resolve contentious issues through negotiation. As businessman, he mastered brokering agreement informally. He was open to ideas suggested by citizen.

Joko exploited his credibility and strong image while initiating reforms. His salary of 6.2 million rupiahs (about \$700) per month was donate to the city. He made use of old official car and flew economy class. He opened opportunities for city official to be trained in order to deal with problem they faced such as street vendors, tourism, service by sending them to observe the management in Singapore, South Korea, Spain and Germany. He urged officials in different department of the city office to work closely together. He met department heads every Monday and kept close check on what were communicated. He visited different offices unannounced, having monthly evaluation meetings with officials. He hold regular meetings at his official residence. Hespoke with all classes of citizens. On Friday morning, Joko with vice mayor and department heads bicycled to meet resident of some neighborhoods. He made impromptu visits to certain areas to hear complain from the local people. This practice is known as blusukan. He also hold meeting at his official residence with business owners including Chinese which complemented bimonthly “coffee morning” (Majced, 2012, p.7). “One-Stop-Service” was adopted in December 2005 after examples from other places. It facilitated people who come in for licenses, permit at the city hall office. Customers filled out one form for most service and after validation and consideration, customers can pick them up within six days 10,000 permit were issued per year compared with 5,000 before 2005. Service at Solo was best in speed and simplicity compared with other places that adopted the some practice (Majced, 2012, p.11). Joko make good use of Surakarta’s richness in arts and culture which he used to tourism and economic growth through branding like “Solo: Spirit of Java” or “Solo’s future is solo past” feathering traditional orchestral performance, traditional dances, shadow puppet show.

By the end of his first term in June 2010, Solo was named a World Heritage City. Tempo, the national magazine named him as one of the “10 Best Indonesian Mayors of 2008.” By 2009 Solo was known widely as one of Indonesia’s most business-friendly cities. In 2010, another newspaper “Republika” gave him the Changemakers Award. As supporter of good government, in 2010, he earned the national Bung Hatta Anti-Corruption Award. (He forbided his family members from bidding for city projects). Solo was promotionally tagged, “Shining without Corruption. The Ministry of Home Affairs of Indonesia named him “Best Mayor 2011”. In 2012, Joko won third place for the Best Mayor awarded by World Mayor Foundation. Solo became a hub for MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, Exhibition) launching International Ethnic Music Festival in 2007 Solo Batik Carnival in 2008, International Performing Arts Festival in 2009, and during 2011 hosting some meeting for ASEAN Asia-Pacific, etc. Reputation of Solo under management



of Joko Widodo, enabled him to say “People come from Indonesia cities, and also from China, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos to see how we have managed traditional markets and street vendors” (Majeed, 2012, p.16, 17).

Jokowi and Rudyatmo won the second terms in 2010 with the votes of 90.9%. With greater visibility, his actions became well-known over Indonesia and Joko was drawn into national politics. An academic summed up his leadership role as a success one because he could establish interactional relationship with people of Solo. (ChayatiIndranants, June 2012)

As Governor of Jakarta (5 October 2012 – 16 October 2014)

Jakarta was a city of about 10 million and run by Fauzi Bobo (Foke) during 2007-2012, a former regional government secretary (Sekda) which was the highest position for a regional bureaucrat. Bowo also served as a vice-governor in 2002 before becoming the governor in 2007. As a new governor of Jakarta, Bowo used the slogan “Give Jakarta to the Expert”. This was based on his more than 20 years of work with Jakarta. He got a master and the doctorate degrees in regional planning from Germany. Bowo also capitalized on popular idea during the decentralization period that promote local son to the highest position. Bowo was a half Betawi for his mother was a leader of the Betawi Consultative Body. Bowo was also the former leader of the Jakarta Regional Branch of Nadhlatul Ulama. These two factors helped push Bowo to be chosen as governor. But then Bowo got involved in sour relationship with his vice-governor, Prijanto, who questioned lack of transparency in the bureaucracy and the appointment of some high ranking positions, plus the complaint that he was assigned no job. Prijanto resigned and Bowo accepted it but the Jakarta Representative Council (DPRD) reinstated him as vice governor. This undermined Bowo’s power and image. (Hamid, 2014, p.91-2)

It was in late 2011, the Cyrus Network and the Political Psychology Laboratory from the University of Indonesia conducted an elite survey called “Looking for the Best Jakarta Governor Candidate”. It was not a survey of candidate popularity, rather it nominated political figures with high capability and quality as best governor. Jokowi get the highest score in the survey (6.98), followed by Faisal Basri (6.7), Fadel Muhammad (6.53) while Bowo scored only 5.44 (Hamid, 2014, p.90). In the Jakarta gubernatorial election, PDI-P, on 18 March 2012 nominated Joko Widodo as its candidate. It was slated that PrabowoSubianto, the founder of Gerindra Party (Greater Indonesia Movement Party) offered Megawati his full support of Joko, plus campaign fund. Prabowo then paired him with Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok who resigned as MP of Golkar to join Gerindra. Six candidates contested in the first round of the election on 11 July 2012; they were (1) FauziBowo and NaehroviRamli supported by PD, PAN, Hanura, and PKB with 34.5%, (2) HendradjiSoepandji and Ahmad Riza Patria running in depently with 1.98%, (3) Joko and Basuki supported by PDI-P and Gerindra with 42.60%, (4) HidayatNur Wahid and Didik J. Rachbini supported by PKS with 11.72%, (5) Faisal Basri and Biem T. Berjamin running independently with 4.98% and (6) Alex Nurdin and NonoSampano supported by Golkar, PPP, PDS with 4.67% Joko first round victory defied almost all pre-election polls (Hamid, 2014:92-3). The second round took place on 20 September



2012 in which Bowo and Ramli won 2,120,815 votes as 46.18% while Joko-Basuki got 2,472,130 votes or 53.82%

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/jakarta_gubernatarial_election_292.accessed on 3/10/2016).

Hamid (2014) argued at length of the root cause of why Joko won this election Hecited (1) Jakartans were uneasy, with the weakening of social order and the political system's feeble ability to achieve restoration; (2) decreasing trust in political parties; (3) the profound changes at the level of economy, culture and society through process such as urbanization, economic modernisation and globalization, and (4) forms of political representation outside of tradition political institutions were emerging, especially the mass media as "representative institution". Hamid even wrote: "Jokowi's story became something of a legend, written about in many books before, during and after the Jakarta elections. At least 20 books on Jokowi are sold in Gramedia, the largest bookstore chain in Indonesia". (Hamid, 2014, p.103)

Joko was blessed in enthusiastic support of the mass media which connected Joko directly with Jakartans and Indonesian population. His impromptu direct visit (blusukan) to Kampung daily was well covered. This was applied also with his sudden and uninformed visit to some offices but he cajoled the officials to relieve their distress, yet emphasized the work culture. Yet after six months in office, he introduced the "lelangabatan" (literally auction of office position) or open recruitment of civil servants with proper qualification which, in this case, applied to the positions of camat and lurah. He broadcast live on national television the discussion with stakeholders on mass rapid transport (MRT) planning. The Jakarta MRT was put to construction on 10 October 2013 and on 16 October 2013 Joko restarted the construction of the green line Jakarta monorail. In late 2012, Joko introduced the universal health care programs in Jakarta through implementing the Jakarta healthcare card (Kartu Jakarta Sehat). The popularity of the scheme raised demand for health service across Jakarta by 70% in the first few months. Confusion over detail of implementation and the very long queues of waiting caused dissatisfaction. Yet when the Jakartan members of House of Representatives threatened him with interpellation that could lead to impeachment, public responded by issuing petition to fire those members. Some even circulated their names and pictures, advising people not to vote them in again in 2014 legislative election (https://wn.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joko_Widodo, accessed on 5/11/2016, p.5). "Smart Jakarta Card" was put on use on 1 December 2012 allowing students to withdraw allowances from the ATM to buy school books and uniforms.

Not long after his inauguration, Joko decided to raise regional minimum wage by 44% from to 1.56 million rupiah (US\$ 132.4) to 2.2 million rupiah (US\$ 186.7), welcomed by workers but disappointed employers. For transparency, Joko and his vice governor published their salaries and the city budget. They initiated online taxes, e-budgeting, e-purchasing and a cash management system. He relocated street vendors in PasarMinggu and Pasar Tanah Abang to a new building. He built and renovated five traditional markets in 2013 and four more in 2014. These vendors was not charged for rent. They must keep their kiosk and pay fees for maintenance, electricity and water. To lessen flood hazard in Jakarta, in 2013, normalization ofpluit reservoir and Ria Rio reservoirs were made and dredging of Pesanggrahan river. Joko used tactics of lunch talk with people who lived around the reservoirs in order to relocate them to new place. The movement gained praise from Mark Rutle, the prime



minister of the Netherlands. Joko's style of doing things were imitated by politicians in order to garner support even at national level.

As President (20 October 2014)

Why, or what factors contributing to, Joko deciding to enter 2014 presidential election, was not known. The PDI-P nominated him as its candidate early on 14 March 2014 and why Joko decided to enter national politics after serving about half time as governor of Jakarta was not clear either. Megawati, the PDI-P chairperson contested the direct presidential election twice in 2004 and 2009 and failed both times. The party thus must look for a new comer. Joko, under the party which put him in the seat of governor of Jakarta, must have been the best option and Joko must also have been easily persuaded, taking the queue to hit the iron while it is hot as his popularity has been souring. In the 9 July 2014 direct presidential election, Joko Widodo paired with Jusuf Kalla from Golkar and the pair was endorsed by the Indonesia Hebat group comprising PDI-P, Hanura, Nasdem and PKB. The other groups the Red and White, comprising Gerindra, Golkar, PPP, PKS, PAN and PD, supported PrabowoSubianto who paired with Hatta Radjasa. After some confusion, the KPU officially announced the result on 22 July 2014 that Joko-Jusuf won 70,997,833 votes or 53.15% while Prabowo-Hatta won 62,576,444 vote or 46.85%. Politics now shifted to the parliament where Joko's supporters backed up by 246 seats while those of Prabowo was 314 seats. Tension occurred when Prabowo's group tried to monopolize the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of the various parliamentary commission. On 26 November 2014, Joko announced his cabinet of 36 member, comprising 14 politicians of which 5 were from the PDI-P, 3 from Nasdem, 3 from PKB, 2 from Hanura and 1 from PPP while 20 were professional and academic.

Joko's administration inherited rather weak economic performance which saw the first quarter of 2015 year-on-year growth at 4.92%, with 4.6% grow in the second quarter, 6% growth is needed each year for Indonesia to absorb new entrants to the labour market. Rupiah weakened falling to Rp 14,000 per dollar in August 2015. The year-on-year inflation in June 2015 was 7.26 Fuel subsidy reduction since Yudhoyono's administration has been unpopular but a necessary measure. Joko's government implemented a fixed diesel subsidy of 1,000 rupiah a liter while subsidy for gasoline were reduced or scrapped. This caused demonstration, yet the government pushed on arguing that money was needed to fund infrastructure, education and health programs.

In his inauguration speech on 20 October 2014, he talked about being a big nation, to engage in transforming Indonesia to be a sovereign state politically, economically, and culturally. He encouraged Indonesia as a maritime power. Indonesia would maintain the practice of free and active foreign policy, looking after the national interest while also contributed to the world order. He also urged all Indonesia to embark on national ship setting sail towards Indonesia Raya (Great Indonesia).

In his address at Naypidaw on 13 November 2014 at the East Asian Summit, President Widodo expounded the concept of global maritime axis (parosmaritimдания) and set clear the position of Indonesia in between Indian and Pacific Oceans. It composed of five pillars, reproduced in full hereunder. (Witular, 2014)



- 1) Rebuild Indonesia's maritime culture. As a country consisting of 17,000 islands, Indonesia should be aware of and see the ocean as part of the nation's identity, its prosperity and its future are determined by how we manage the oceans.
- 2) Maintain and manage marine resources with the focus on building marine food sovereignty through the development of the fishing industry.
- 3) Provide priority to the development of maritime infrastructure and connectivity by constructing sea highways along the shore of Java, establish deep seaports and logistical networks as well as developing the shipping industry and maritime tourism.
- 4) Through maritime diplomacy, Indonesia invites other nations to cooperate in the marine field and eliminate the source of conflict at sea, such as illegal fishing, violation of sovereignty, territorial disputes piracy and marine pollution.
- 5) Indonesia has an obligation to develop its maritime defense forces. This is necessary not only to maintain maritime sovereignty and wealth, but also as a form of our responsibility to maintain the safety of shipping and maritime security.

Soon after taking office, Joko caused quite a stir when it was learned in December 2014 that he authorized the sinking of Thai and Vietnam fishing that poached in Indonesian water. He later on elaborated about the loss of around 300 Trillion rupiah or about 24.4 billion dollar per year because of illegal fishing of about 5,400 foreign fishing boats. Newspaper reported that he had to tell official concerned three times of his order to sink the boats. The other issue was the execution of drug offenders in January and March 2015. They were a Brazillian, a Dutch, two Australians yet a Filipino was spared after Philippine's president appealed in person.

Joko's administration has vowed to develop and upgrade infrastructures particularly road and railway expansion, seaports and airports development and irrigation projects. State budget for 2016 allotted the infrastructure sector Rp 290 trillion or \$22 billion, the biggest ever. His hand-on style of management makes him to personally check on works implemented. He was supposed to inform ASEAN journalists whom he met in Jakarta that he "like to go around" meaning frequent visit to follow up on construction work, meeting and talking with officials and local people. He explained that by talking to people, he gained firsthand information and it forced officials to pay good attention on works carried out. He said he did not like to sit in the office but preferred to be out in the field to check (The Nation: April 28, 2016, p.6A). Joko maintains his simple life style flying Garuda economy class with his wife to Singapore in late November 2014 to attend his younger son on graduation and had a selfie-photo session with his son's classmate. (The Nation, 24 November 2014, p.4A) although he had to comply with premier Lee Kuan Yew's insistence to have lunch with him.



As president, Joko has yet to make an imprint on Indonesian politics while question has been raised whether, under him, Indonesia would lead ASEAN or neglect it. As of now he is preoccupied with internal problems of corruption in various places, slow economic growth, security issue and religious intolerance.

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