

THE SUCCESS OF SOEHARTO IN MANAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDONESIA : A NON-INDONESIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This piece of work stems from a leadership discussion on a leader's effective ruling ideas in helming a nation's development process. Soeharto was the second Indonesian President who was also a towering statesman. The late former president successfully implemented pragmatic actions to achieve his planned mission and vision. Soeharto embraced the western democracy spirit but he limited its implementation, following his own mould. His leadership capability has brought Indonesia to a level that remains hardly imitable by other leaders of his time or contemporary ones. As such, to serve as lessons, his ruling ideas and development management are exemplary practices that are necessarily and suitably to be analysed by non-Indonesians. A research on one (1) term of governance that focuses on a collection of Soeharto's "New Year Speeches", "Independent Day Speeches" and "Party Speeches" was initiated to identify his ideas of governance and inclination in carrying out development. It was discovered that Soeharto used the Independent Day (Nationhood Speeches) as the most significant speeches which required attention. On the other hand, his "Power-Oriented" speeches dominated the values in development. In conclusion, leaders with governing ideas and dynamic development leadership are very much needed. The society also needs to strengthen their attitude. Reinvigoration of competent local wisdom is also needed as a sustainable development tool. It is suggested that future study should focus on more than one term governance to support the current discoveries and discover newer and more interesting findings.

Keywords: *Ruling Ideas, Development, Soeharto, Leadership Style*

INTRODUCTION

This piece of writing stems from a discussion on leaders and their leadership in helming development of their country. Soeharto, the Second Indonesian President, was a towering statesman in the South East Asia, who successfully implemented pragmatic actions in achieving his planned mission and vision. He embraced the Western democratic spirit but implemented it in a limited manner, moulding it in his own way. The Indonesian people have been prospering from one level to another but Soeharto's leadership is hard to be imitated by leaders of his time or even the contemporary ones. The inculcation and manipulation of values in his ruling ideas have successfully influenced his developmental effort. This piece of writing attempts to promote and understand better about Soeharto's ruling ideas that was proven to have been successfully implemented in order for him to stay in power and ignite changes in development. It is hoped that a general guideline to generate ruling ideas in managing development can be established and used as lessons in the future, particularly in non-Indonesia context.

Research Questions

The followings are research questions to be answered in this study:

- i. What is the leadership character embraced by Soeharto?
- ii. To what extent, Soeharto's leadership legitimacy and ruling ideas were successfully implemented to make him stay in power and ignite changes for development?

Literature Review

A research carried out from 25 April to May 2011 by an Indonesian survey body discovered some interesting and significant findings. The research, entitled “*Evualuasi 13 Tahun Reformasi dan 18 Bulan Pemerintahan Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono(SBY)-Boediono*” (An Evaluation of 13 Years of Reform and 18 Months of Ruling by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono(SBY)-Boediono” with a sub-topic entitled “*Order Terbaik Dalam Pemerintahan Indonesia*” (The Best Order in the Ruling of Indonesia) produced several important findings:

- a) Suharto is the most popular leader among the people (36.5%), followed by SBY (20.9%) and Sukarno (9.8%) - of the 6 Presidents who have ruled Indonesia.
- b) Suharto is the most succesful leader (40.5%), followed by SBY (21.9%) and Sukarno (8.9%) - of the 6 presidents who have ruled Indonesia.
- c) Majority of the people stated that the New Order era during Suharto's time was better (40.9%) compare to the reform-contemporary era (22.8%) and the Old Order era under Sukarno (3.3%).

(Sumber : Indo Barometer, 2011)

Low (2006) stated that under Suharto, Indonesia gradually recovered from economic doldrums that started during Sukarno's era. Until 1998, Suharto mobilised his people towards one aim which was to bring political stability and economical prosperity to Indonesia. In the context of ruling ideas, this terminology was first coined by Karl Marx in *The German Ideology* (1945). In the book, Karl Marx explained about the dominance of the borgioisie over the minds of the proletariats. Such a 'discrimination' (by the borgioisie) was seeming accepted due to certain rationalities in the Western context. Nevertheless, in the context of Asian Archipelago should be viewed differently. According to Abdul Rahman (2009), ruling ideas should serve as a thinking and action frame taken up by a leader in leading the people in handling daily problems in life and preparing themselves for the future. A hadith by Prophet Muhammad SAW reminds that mankind must be led with full responsibilities.

Abdullah ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the guardian of his family and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband's home and his children and she is responsible for them. The servant of a man is a guardian of the property of his master and he is responsible for it. No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock.”

(Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6719, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1829, quoted from Hamka, 1977)

A Javanese local wisdom said that the truth about leadership is “*Ing Ngarsa Sung Tulada, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani*”. This means, the one in front should set the example, the one in the middle develop the needs, the one at the back guide or influence. This explains the ones who lead are influenced by social class culture that has a higher status than the one being led.

Han (1999) explained that Indonesia is a nation which is made up of Javanese traditional culture, Islamic influence and army-oriented “New Order” of the late President Soeharto. The Indonesian value system is well accepted by its people eventhough it is defined by the elitist. The elements of Pancasila which is largely influenced by the Javanese traditional culture, blended with the basic Islamic values and “New Order” has created a collective spirit, communitarisme, social peacefulness and harmony, respecting the elderlies and honouring the local government who has provided benefits to the state and people. These are all well received by the middle class for the sake of stability and development. Nevertheless, it has been said the the “New Order” has reached its peak.

This is because there have been changes to the values among the people of the middle class and the difficulty for the system to survive globalisation.

Other Asian leaders have also taken various approaches to establish a developmental framework that is suitable for each country. Deng Xiao Peng (1904-1997) was the generation of Chinese leaders who had a pragmatic ruling style. He was called a “capitalist leader” when he successfully blended the elements of capitalist together with the elements of socialist-communist for the prosperity of China. His pragmatic actions had catalyzed the quickest economic growth in the world based on his economic policy and close relationship with the West and Japan Jepun (Gitting, 2005, Carlos Wing, 1998).

Meanwhile, Park Chung Hee through the “*Saemaul Undong*” approach, successfully changed the ‘village outlook’ of the whole of South Korea by enhancing capability and inculcating cooperative values for the sake of development (Sanusi, 2007, Vivek, 2002, Zainuddin, 1981). “*Saemaul Undong*” which was originally meant for agricultural sector, was expanded to various other aspects of civic life and culture in South Korea. Such approach, which emphasized on the aspects of social and economic changes that are achieved through changes in values and attitude, is the catalyst for the modernization and economic development of Korea. Up till now, Koreans perceived *Saemaul Undong* as one of the important achievements in the modern history (Korea Saemaul Undong Centre, 2009).

All these prove that towering leaders with a strong leadership boldly introduce framework of ideas and the best approach in various audacious attempts. A strong leadership inclines towards having its own leadership framework. This is done by identifying main problem and proposing strengths of local wisdom and positive values to act upon the problem. For an instance, Mao Tse Tung realized that farmers, who were the backbone behind the success of the communist revolution, began to have the tendency towards material incentive and experiencing dwindling spirit of revolution (William, 2005). Consequently, such realization has inspired a leadership style which purpose was achieve the ultimate goal of development by catalyzing changes in his country.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed the qualitative approach. Thus, *Computer Analysis Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS)*, *Archive for Technology, the Life World and Everyday Language. Text Interpretation (ATLAS)*.ti version 7 was used for data analysis and collection.

The following is a list of Soeharto’s Speech Text Documents

Table 1: Soeharto’s Speech Text Documents

No	Code	Speech Text Document/Title	Type of Text	Date/Venue
1.	S1	Republic of Indonesia Presidential’s Mandate Speech at Mesyuarah Kerja Nasional ke II with Golongan Karya	Party Speech(GOLKAR/ PNI/PNU)	2 November 1967 / Djibogo Jakarta
2	S2	Republic of Indonesia Presidential’s Mandate Speech at Mesyuarah Kerja Kordinasi Pemuda Sekreteriat Bersama (SEKBER) Golongan Karya		28 September 1968 / Jakarta
3	S3	Republic of Indonesia Presidential’s Mandate Speech at the opening of Sidang Majelis Pemesyuaratan Parti Nasional Indonesia (PNI) ke IV		03 April 1969 / Jakarta

4	S4	Republic of Indonesia Presidential's Mandate Speech at the opening of Kongress ke XII Parti Nasional Indonesia (PNI)		11 April 1970/ Semarang
5	S5	Republic of Indonesia Presidential's Mandate Speech at the opening of Mukatamar Parti Nahdatul Ulama (PNU) ke XXV		20 December 1971/ Surabaya
6	S6	Republic of Indonesia Presidential's Mandate Speech at the 45 th Anniversary of Parti Nasional Indonesia (PNI)		17 July 1972 / Jakarta
7	S7	Hari Raya Idul Fitri 1387 Hijri and New Year 1968 :Mandate from the Presidential Office	New Year Speech (End of the Year Speech)	31 December 1967 / Jakarta
8	S8	End of the Year Report 1968 to the People of Indonesia : President of the Republic of Indonesia		31 December 1968 / Jakarta
9	S9	End of the Year Speech 1969: President of the Republic of Indonesia		31 December 1969 / Jakarta
10	S10	End of the Year Speech 1970: President of the Republic of Indonesia		31 December 1970 / Jakarta
11	S11	End of the Year Celebration Speech 1971: President of the Republic of Indonesia		31 December 1971 / Jakarta
12	S12	End of the Year Speech 1972: President of the Republic of Indonesia		31 December 1972 / Jakarta
13	S13	Nationhood Speech 1967 President of the Republic of Indonesia: At Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Royong (DPR-GR) Assembly	Independent Day Speech (Nationhood Speech)	16 August 1967 / Jakarta
14	S14	President of the Republic of Indonesia's Nationhood Speech 1968: At Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Royong (DPR-GR) Assembly		16 August 1968 / Jakarta
15	S15	President of the Republic of Indonesia's Nationhood Speech 1969: At Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Royong (DPR-GR) Assembly		16 August 1969 / Jakarta

16	S16	President of the Republic of Indonesia's Nationhood Speech 1970: At Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Royong (DPR-GR) Assembly	16 August 1970 / Jakarta
17	S17	President of the Republic of Indonesia's Nationhood Speech 1971: At Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Royong (DPR-GR) Assembly	16 August 1971 / Jakarta
18	S18	President of the Republic of Indonesia's Nationhood Speech 1972: At Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Royong (DPR-GR) Assembly	16 August 1972 / Jakarta

Speech texts that were the focus of this research comprised of i) Party Speech ii) New Year Speech iii) Independent Day Speech. These speech texts were chosen because they have the characteristics of various perspectives to complete the research. The texts of these three speeches also reached out to wider audience in the society. The speeches were also consistently delivered every year. Their content was about the expectations of the leader and his national development agenda. These three speeches are also related to the policies and approaches that Soeharto, as the head of the executive body and party, attempted to deliver.

The speeches were initially recited by the researcher in order to familiarize himself with Soeharto's language style and delivery method. It was also aimed to understand what Soeharto actually wanted to deliver in his speeches. The texts were then recited for the second time to identify paragraphs in the texts that contained "development values" that were related to "Asian Values" and "Local Wisdom". The most important thing to do at this stage was to classify the values based on the Value Dimension specified. The third recital was carried out to classify the paragraphs into their Value Dimension and "Development Value". The texts were recited repeatedly in order to ensure the classifications of the paragraphs into their Value Dimension were accurate and matched the real intention of the speeches.

"Nationhood Speech" As The Main Series of Speech Texts

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the analysis on Soeharto's inclination towards Value Dimension (D_E , D_P , D_E dan D_K) in his speeches Soeharto (S1 to S18). There were eighteen Soeharto's speech texts that comprised of three series of speeches.

Table 2: Distribution of Speeches in Soeharto’s Speech Texts that were Inclined towards Value Dimension

GOLKAR/PNI/PNU						End of Year Speech						Nationhood Speech					
Text						Text						Text					
Kod	D _B	D _P	D _E	D _K	Jum	Kod	D _B	D _P	D _E	D _K	Jum	Kod	D _B	D _P	D _E	D _K	Jum
S1	3	3	8	1	15	S7	24	15	22	9	70	S13	62	41	30	23	156
S2	2	3	5	0	10	S8	13	13	7	6	39	S14	44	10	16	6	76
S3	6	5	3	1	15	S9	6	7	8	1	22	S15	19	15	14	5	53
S4	15	14	13	2	44	S10	13	8	10	7	38	S16	24	17	19	6	66
S5	5	2	3	1	11	S11	15	10	25	6	56	S17	16	13	26	3	58
S6	1	2	0	1	4	S12	34	22	28	11	95	S18	18	11	9	5	43
Ttl	32	29	32	6	99	Ttl	105	75	100	40	320	Ttl	183	107	114	48	452
%	11%					37%					52%						
871																	

Guide :

D_B= Power-oriented Dimension

D_E= **Work Ethic Dimension**

D_P= Communalism/ Communitarianism Dimension

D_K= Familism Dimension

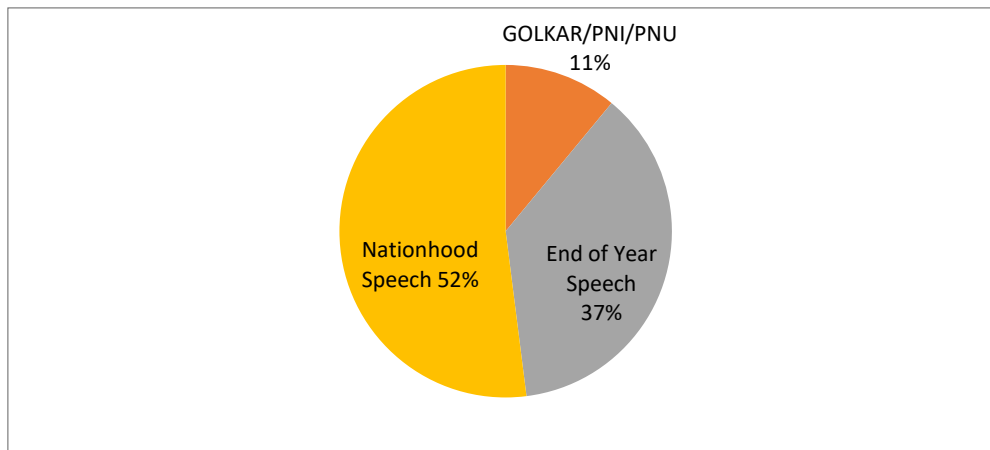


Figure 1. Percentage of Inclination and Priority on Value Dimension on Soeharto’s Speech Texts

Based on the table and figures above, a total of 871 quotations in his speeches have been identified as relating to the specified Value Dimension. Nationhood Speech Series (S13 to S18) had the highest number of such quotations (452). This was 52% of the overall speeches and made it the most dominant of other speech texts. Text S13 has been identified as the text that contained the highest number of quotations related to Value Dimension (156 quotations). Overall, all Soeharto’s Nationhood Speech had the highest number of Value Dimension compared to End of the Year Speech (S7 to S12) and Mandate Speech GOLKAR/PNI/PNU (S1 to S6).

“Power-Oriented” Speech As Soeharto’s Main Value

By classifying the characteristics and values of leaders (in speech texts), the development of the Asian communities very much depends on several dimensions. This article refers to a research by So Young Kim entitled *Do Asian Values Exist? Empirical Tests of the Four Dimension of Asian Values in Journal of East Asian Studies 10 (2010)*. According to him, Asian values that remain strong among communities in Asia are i) Familism, ii) Communalism pr Communitarianism, iii) Authority and iv) Work Ethic and Education

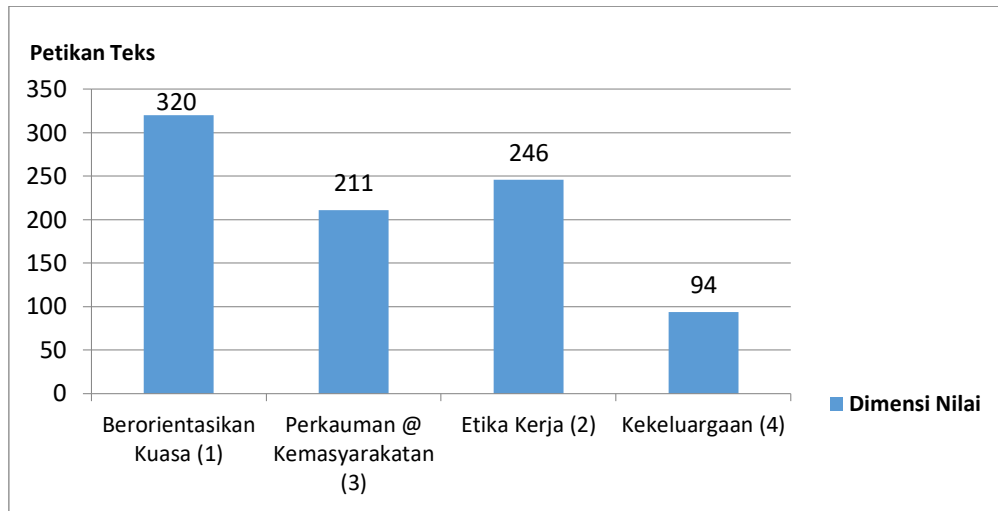


Figure 2. Inclination towards values dimension in Soeharto’s text speech.

Based on Figure 2, it was discovered that Soeharto’s speech texts were mostly dominated by “Power-oriented” values. 320 texts were identified as having these values. This represented 37% of the total 871 speech texts.

Derived values that inclined towards “power-orientation” are listed in Table 3 below:

Power Orientation							
Bil No	Derived Values	Total	%	Bil No	Derived Values	Total	%
1.	Administration (ABRI) Dwi-function	25	7	8.	(Call/Invitation/Statement)	15	4
2.	National Development (politic/economy/social)	31	8	9.	(Effective Leadership & New Order Movement)	36	10
3.	National Stability (politic / economy / social)	46	12	10.	Role of Media (Freedom & Control)	11	3
4.	National Resilience	23	6	11.	Upholding Constitution	24	6
5.	National Ideology (Pancasila)	12	3	12.	Foreign Affairs	5	1
6.	National Sovereignty (Aware/Warn/Threat)	53	14	13.	(Rules of Law) Pancasila & UUD45	68	18

7.	Ego	12	3	14.	Others	10	3
Jumlah						371	100.00

In general, power-oriented refers to the emphasis by a ruling regime to give command, control and make decision. A developing government inclines towards inculcating “authoritarianism”, a principle that prioritise loyalty to the authority. This is to enable developmental work could be carried out. Furthermore, with the huge geographical and population size of Indonesia, a united ruling is badly needed. As such, it was unsurprising that “Power-oriented” became the most dominant values in Soeharto’s speech texts.

CONCLUSION: RULING IDEAS AND POWER ORIENTATION IN INDONESIA

Soeharto took over the helm during the period when Indonesia was in the political and economical turmoil. This was due to bad developmental planning and loosening control over the economical and political fundamental structure. Indonesia was under tremendous economic pressure, with price of goods skyrocketed and inflation rate was at 650 percent (in 1960s). The government then failed to ‘secure’ food supplies in the country especially rice.

The peak of the chaos was when ‘Gerakan 30 September’ or G-30S/PKI or also known as Gestapu (Gerakan September Tigapuluh or *Thirteenth September Movement*). The black incident saw six officers of the Indonesian army killed in a rebellion by the Partai Komunis Indonesia or Indonesian Communist Party. As a consequence of the upheaval, Soekarno handed over his power to Soeharto through a directive letter known as Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret or ‘Supersemar’. The letter that was signed on 11 March 1966 empowered Soeharto to be the Commander of the Armed Forces that allowed him to take all necessary actions in order take control of the unruly situation.

As an early effort to bring peace, stability and achieve the power-orientation in Indonesia, Soeharto, after gaining the consent from the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara (MPRS), dissolved the Indonesian Communist Party. This took place on 12 March 1966 and the Communist party was deemed as an illegal organization in Indonesia. A year later on 12 March 1967, Soeharto was officially appointed as the Second Indonesian President by the Majelis Musyawarah Rakyat. This marked the beginning of the New Order (1968-1999) during the Soeharto era that replace the Old Order (1945-1965) during the Soekarno era.

Soeharto made a great effort to achieve national stability by practicing moderate politics among his people. A massive national consensus was carried out by assembling all political organizations and grouped them into only 3 major parties namely Golongan Karyawan (GOLKAR), Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI) and Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP). These groupings were not done based on ideology. Instead it was based on inclination in conducting programmes. These political efforts are seen as Soeharto’s initial shrewdness in moulding a more systematic ‘power-oriented’ culture. They were recognized and legal among local leaders and communities that were moving towards development.

Furthermore, the armed forces or Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (ABRI) was put into order and expanded. ABRI, which is a combination between the national army or Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) and police force or Kepolisian Negera Republik Indonesia (Polri) played dual functions doctrine. The dual functions were keeping the country to remain in peace and orderly. They were also officially given the power to administer the nation. Such doctrine enabled military elements to exist at all levels of the society and administration in Indonesia. GOLKAR itself was a close political ally to ABRI. This doctrine is very practical as ABRI, particularly TNI or the armed forces, was directly involved in implementation of all activities in the community during the Old Order including ideological, political, economical and socio cultural programmes. Soeharto’s shrewdness in implementing the dual roles of ABRI had directly ensured strength and continuity of the New Order as well as the ‘power-orientation’ values among the communities and leaders.

In any Soeharto's speeches, he would emphasize the importance of practicing political living and democratic nationhood that were based on law and regulation. In this aspect, the Democratic Pancasila, which had the *Undang-Undang Dasar* 1945 (UUD45) or the Fundamental Laws as its basis, was strongly embraced as the National Ideology and widely practiced by all Indonesians. The term '*Bangsa Indonesia*' or "Indonesian Race" was inculcated and repeatedly reminded to the public at large. This was done in accordance to the character of Indonesia as a sovereign and united country.

The strength of Soeharto in his leadership was also due to his administration that valued and embraced constitutionalism. This is a philosophy in which an administration principle or system was carried out based on a strong constitution. The President took developmental steps that abided by the *Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara (GBHN)* that was stipulated by the MPR. As such, all of his administration strategies and action were constitutionalism in nature.

The New Order that revolved around the military, technocracy and bureaucracy managed to form strong, comprehensive and formal elements in managing development and created the dependency upon 'power-orientation'. Such maverick acts were seen to have successfully created loyalty of the society to the leader through the 'power-oriented' values.

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