



Javanese Leadership And Migrant Worker Repatriation: A Model For Transformative Crisis Response

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ABSTRAK

Abstract This journal article presents an in-depth analysis of the leadership approach exhibited by Retno Marsudi as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, during the critical process of withdrawing Indonesian migrant workers from multiple countries in the midst of a global health crisis. Marsudi's utilization of both transformational leadership and the Javanese leadership approach played a crucial role in shaping the outcomes of the withdrawal, while also offering broader lessons applicable to leadership, diplomacy, and crisis management. This article delves into Marsudi's integration of the Javanese leadership approach. The utilization of the Hasta Brata Javanese leadership approach by Retno Marsudi, during the process of withdrawing Indonesian migrant workers amid a global health crisis, offers a captivating case study in leadership and crisis management. By examining the fusion of transformational and Javanese leadership approaches, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of effective leadership in the face of complex crises. The lessons drawn have implications for diplomacy, cultural understanding, and crisis management in a broader global context.

Abstrak Artikel ini menyajikan analisis mendalam mengenai pendekatan kepemimpinan yang dilakukan Retno Marsudi sebagai Menteri Luar Negeri Indonesia dalam proses penarikan pekerja migran Indonesia dari berbagai negara di tengah krisis kesehatan global. Studi ini menganalisa bagaimana kepemimpinan transformasional dan pendekatan kepemimpinan Jawa yang dilakukan oleh Retno Marsudi dalam sudut pandang penerapan pembelajaran pada gaya kepemimpinan, diplomasi, dan manajemen krisis beliau. Artikel ini juga mengupas tentang pendekatan integrasi kepemimpinan Jawa yang dilakukan Retno Marsudi. Pemanfaatan pendekatan kepemimpinan Jawa Hasta Brata yang dilakukan Retno Marsudi dalam proses penarikan pekerja migran Indonesia di tengah krisis kesehatan global, menawarkan pola gaya kepemimpinan yang terimplementasi dari Hasta Brata dalam manajemen krisis. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang kepemimpinan yang efektif dalam menghadapi krisis multi dimensi saat ini.

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INTRODUCTION

Migration of migrant workers from various countries has become a global phenomenon that has affected the health of the population both individually and in groups throughout their lives (Vignier & Bouchaud, 2018). Migration is still an international concern because of the existence of special travelers who have a higher risk of health problems, including infectious diseases such as HIV, hepatitis B, tuberculosis, malaria, and so on. The high risks experienced by migrant workers are caused by poor socio-economic conditions due to the lack of rights to health insurance, especially for migrants who are undocumented. While the migration of workers across borders has become a global phenomenon, there's an opportunity to reframe the narrative and address the health concerns associated with it through transformational leadership. These "special travelers," face significant health risks due to poor socio-economic conditions and lack of healthcare access, particularly undocumented migrants. Transformational leaders can foster positive change by advocating for equitable healthcare access, promoting safe and ethical labor practices, and empowering migrant communities to actively participate in shaping solutions. Imagine leadership that prioritizes the long-term well-being of all individuals, regardless of their migratory status, and builds resilient healthcare systems that cater to the diverse needs of mobile populations. By harnessing the collective power of transformational leadership, we can navigate the challenges associated with migrant worker health and transform these movements into positive forces for global health equity.

Migrant workers from Indonesia until 2020 will reach 3.7 million people (Knomad, 2020). This figure shows that Indonesia ranks highest after the Philippines, whose citizens migrate to various countries in the Southeast Asian Region (Anaf et al., 2022). The existence of migrant workers from Indonesia is a form of interconnectivity and dependence on sending and receiving countries for economic growth. However, when the global health crisis caused by COVID-19 occurred, panic and chaos occurred in various countries. Restricting population mobility internationally so as not to have direct contact with migrant workers is one of the government's policies (Guadagno, 2020; Knomad, 2020). Geographic boundaries are increasingly being strengthened as a tactical measure to prevent disease transmission between migrant workers and local residents (Gushulak & MacPherson, 2004). At first glance, the global health crisis at that time shows the different treatment of migrant workers, essentially in health protection, due to poor conditions and injustice in protection. As a result, migrant workers experience deportation at their place of work due to a lack of income and termination of contracts (Reid et al., 2021; Muhammad Maulana Iberahim & Mansurni Abadi, 2022) and live in the territory of other countries without work due to inadequate documents (Liem et al., 2020).

The high impact caused by the global health crisis due to the Corona virus is of concern to state leaders. The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemenlu), under the leadership of Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, or known as Retno Marsudi, implemented Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 11 of 2020 and the mandate of the 1945 Constitution in the fourth paragraph to protect its citizens from the threat of global disease. Transformational diplomacy is a form of cooperative communication that can be carried out persuasively and provides solutions to problems through soft power (Taylor, 2008; Haluga & Kurecic, 2021). With a transformational and Javanese leadership style, Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi carried out transformational diplomacy through social media during the withdrawal of Indonesian migrant workers at the start of COVID-19.

Retno Marsudi is the first woman to serve as a decision-maker in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since Indonesia's independence. As a woman who works in a male-dominated field, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi shows a leadership character that is different from her predecessors. Interestingly, although learning continues to evolve, the thinking behind the

biological approach seems to persist with differences in the innate abilities of male and female leaders (Alnuaimi et al., 2022; Mihai, 2021; Appelbaum et al., 2003). Stereotypes still persist that portray women as less capable leaders than men. The way of thinking of women is considered different from that of men because there are differences in understanding the environment (Nah, 2003), building more relationships (Warren & Cady, 1994), and using cooperative, affective, and cognitive communication styles (De Vries et al., 2009; Merchants, 2012; Jones, 2017). On the other hand, male leadership is task-oriented and hierarchical (Nah, 2003; Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

This paper attempts to deconstruct transformational leadership carried out by a woman as foreign minister based on four indicators: the leader's ideal influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation implemented through public diplomacy. This article is organized into three sections: first, political leadership with a transformational style. The second part is a brief discussion regarding leadership in Javanese culture, followed by an overview of the transformational diplomacy carried out by Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi as persuasive and cooperative communication in the withdrawal of Indonesian migrant workers at the start of the global health crisis in 2020. Based on the conclusions above, the research question that can be drawn is *"How do the specific elements of transformational leadership, such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, manifest in Retno Marsudi's political leadership?"*.

METHOD AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To comprehensively understand the intricacies of Retno Marsudi's leadership and its alignment with the elusive concept of transformational leadership, a multifaceted approach encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies is essential. This strategy not only delves into the subjective perceptions of her leadership but also offers objective insights into its tangible manifestations. The strength of this multifaceted approach lies in its ability to triangulate data. Combining qualitative and quantitative findings leads to a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of Retno Marsudi's leadership. This triangulation helps cross-check information, identify discrepancies, and ultimately paint a more accurate picture of how she embodies the multifaceted concept of transformational leadership.

In Javanese culture, there are leadership values known as *Hasta Brata*. These leadership values assume that a leader should have a character that is just, equitable, and selfless. The *Hasta Brata* leadership concept is symbolized by the noble qualities of the universe, which are worthy of being used as a guide for a leader (Hamim, 2014). *Hasta Brata* comes from Sanskrit, which is the science of natural disposition, which is broken down into eight characteristics: earth, fire, water, space, wind, sun, moon, and stars, or what is known in Javanese as *bumi, geni, banyu, langit, bayu, surya, candra, and kartika*. Anyone who can carry out the eight main paths of the universe from *Hasta Brata* is called a king, but if he cannot carry them out, he is likened to a king without a crown (Azhar, 2017; Kurniawan, 2019).

According to Ahmad Febri Kurniawan (2019), the eight natural characteristics contained in *Hasta Brata* are: first, *Hambeking Kisma* (earth character), who is rich, generous, and strong. Leaders should be tough and ready to devote themselves, care for others, serve, and accommodate the aspirations of the people; secondly, *Hambeking Tirta* (the character of water) should be always flowing, dynamic, and humble. Leaders should distribute power, adapt to the environment, and not show favoritism; third, *Hambeking Samirana* (the wind character), who is everywhere and infiltrates in the gaps of the wind. Leaders must be close to all the people without any partitions, be careful in speaking, not be easily influenced, and not easily trust others by researching and knowing everything themselves. Fourth, *Hambeking Samodra* (ocean character) is broad and soothing. A leader should have an open heart and accept anyone;

fifth, *Hambebing Candra* (the moon character) is a light in the dark. Like the nature of the moon, leaders will act wisely: friendly, gentle, patient, wise, giving a sense of security, and visionary; sixth, *Hambebing Surya* (sun character), giving light and energy to life on earth. A leader who is able to give strength, motivate, and guide; seventh, *Hambebing Dahana* (fire character), hot and burning. A leader who has authority, is firm, upholds justice, has confidence, and has courage in making decisions in any situation; eight, *Hambebing Kartika* (the star character), shines and gives instructions. Like a star, a leader becomes someone who can give direction, be visionary, care, guide, and inspire.

The eight *Hasta Brata* Javanese leadership values become a means to becoming an ideal leader. For a leader, the eight natural elements can bring him more positive benefits for the people he leads. As a noble teaching, *Hasta Brata* is a guideline for leaders, which can be seen in the leadership style of a leader, including when women are in power. Javanese women's leadership prioritizes the principle of femininity, which is characterized by Javanese values, including affection, kinship, harmony, sincerity, and mutual care for the safety of one another (Famelasari & Prastiwi, 2021).

Javanese women tend to be populist, that is, they respect and side with the people or their subordinates. In directing their followers, Javanese women leaders use words of satire, suggestions, or requests, not direct orders, bully, or use high volumes. This is because a sign of power in Javanese leadership is someone who is able to control other people with gentleness, politeness, and a smile, which means showing authority (Suryadi et al., 2019). This condition is very much in accordance with the character of Javanese women who are patient or *sumarah*, and *sumeleh* namely very calm (*ora grusa-grusu lan kemrungsung*), loyal, relentless, and do not like conflict (Famelasari & Prastiwi, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Political Leadership with a Transformational Style

Leadership is a dyadic relationship between two different entities: the leader and the required partner, the follower. (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). From a structuralist point of view, leaders are meaningless without followers (Hajjaj, 2023). Leadership has more than one definition and views that are constantly evolving (Day & Harrison, 2007). Leadership is also the power or influence that a leader has over his followers, the power to be able to produce the desired effect. Power is not only the cause but also the consequence of action in influencing a group of individuals to achieve common goals (Huang et al., 2021; Ofosu-Anim & Back, 2021b; Ofosu-Anim, 2022). Other arguments support leadership as a product of a relational process between leaders and followers, even though it is followers who sometimes create leaders (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

First and foremost, leadership is a type of interaction between a person or people who uses influence (the leader) and a person or people who are influenced by followers. Second, leadership is a phenomenon that occurs on a personal, societal, and political level (Vroman & Danko, 2020; Dion, 1968). A reasonable standard of living for society is dependent on another facet of leadership (Santha & Das, 2019; Ahlquist & Levi, 2011). Alvarez-Daz and his associates (2010) claim that a group's leadership is derived through the use of each member's position of authority, prestige, and power in relation to other members.

The essential complementarity of a leader's personal attributes is another aspect of leadership that is viewed as a communal process. This idea assumes a clear separation between personal characteristics and contextual elements and emphasizes the leader's personality rather than the leadership process (Dion, 1968; Vroman & Danko, 2020). The ability of great leaders in the past to comprehend and communicate the demands of their followers was a key factor in their success. The organization and culture have an impact on the leadership that takes place,

with the leader being the most influential person in the group, acting morally, and serving as a role model that other members must follow (Bernard M. Bass, 1997; Paramova & Blumberg, 2017; Jain, 2021).

At first look, leadership appears to have changed from earlier ideas about charisma, with leaders being expected to be outstanding characters who can rely on (Yukl, 1989; Mihai, 2021; Mukaram et al., 2021; Allal-Chérif et al., 2021). According to Tucker, M. L., McCarthy, A.M., Jones, (1999), Lau Chin, 2011, Han & Sheng, 2020, there is a trend toward neo-charismatic with transformational as a component, which is concerned with empowering followers to function autonomously. According to Jung et al. (1995; Denhardt and Campbell, 2006), transformational leaders empower and inspire followers and are adaptable, interactive, and team-oriented. In addition to causing the junction of transformation and gender, the idea of leadership can still be linked to stereotypes of how women behave in leadership roles (Kark, 2004; Kark et al., 2016; McCombs & Williams, 2021).

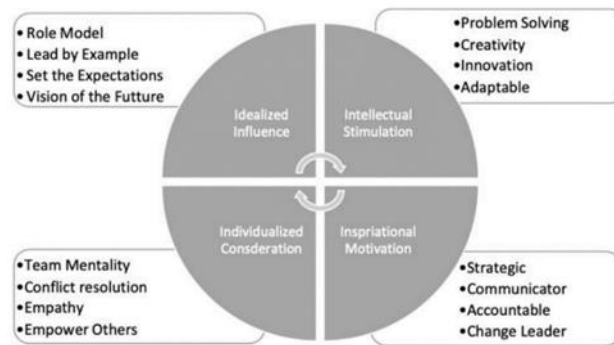
Over the past few decades, transformational leadership has gained significant importance. According to Burns (2007), transformational leadership norms refer to the extent to which a leader can inspire his subordinates to work by identifying as either masculine or feminine. A transformational leader ups performance and productivity in line with culture expectations while exercising his leadership (Jung et al., 1995; Jain, 2021). A leader with a transformational style is typically someone who possesses his traits and can inspire his followers to commit to goals. One of the most successful leadership philosophies is transformational leadership (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Jung et al., 1995; Bass, 2020).

According to Basaffar (2023), there are four elements of transformational leadership: charisma/ideal influence, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. The ability of the leader to favorably influence others' conduct by fostering a culture of high morale and respect as well as fostering a sense of devotion to the organization is referred to as the first component, or idealized influence (Madi Odeh et al., 2021). In other words, leaders should serve as examples so that followers would start to imitate those who conduct morally and honestly (Bass, 1990). According to Eggly and Johnson (1990), inspirational motivation refers to the actions of leaders that raise the motivation of their followers. Leaders that are upbeat and passionate about sharing and putting into action a common vision exhibit inspirational motivation in their behavior. Leaders motivate followers.

The third element is intellectual stimulation, in which leaders question conventional wisdom to promote healthy conduct and offer members guidance. According to Bass (1985; 1990), intellectual stimulation refers to a leader's behaviors that inspire followers to solve issues, challenge assumptions, and be creative and productive. By participating in resolving organizational issues, members are given the chance to make decisions, fostering a sense of ownership. The leader's individual judgment, which takes into account the members' diverse skills and requirements, is the final element. When leaders are able to listen well and assign responsibilities appropriately, individual consideration is developed (Bass & Avolio, 2004). This type of conduct can create a conflict-free environment, appreciate individual diversity, and foster personal growth (Fletcher, 2004).

The following figure illustrates the four elements described above.

Image 1. Transformational leadership components and behaviors



(Basaffar, 2023)

B. Social Media-Based Transformational Diplomacy

The causes of change, such as technological advancements, changes in values, goals, and methods of foreign policy, including peacekeeping, an increase in the number of participants in international relations, and new challenges in foreign relations countries, are two issues that Haluga & Kurecic (2021) argue require attention along with changes in civilization. The second has to do with the scope and size of international contacts as a result of growing domestic specialization. process of making decisions. In order for information to be widely accessible to the public, this condition necessitates a process of transformation in diplomacy and a movement from classical to contemporary through the use of technology and the global rise of new media. In this setting, diplomacy goes through a significant transition, and international public relations develops as a sub field that supports.

Information has displaced military might as a means of pressure in the twenty-first century, which in turn affects changes in the job of diplomats themselves. Through private worldwide media, particularly social media, his activities are becoming more widely known. By talking and coming to an agreement, technology can help resolve disputes (Copeland, 2009; Vroman & Danko, 2020; Quinn et al., 2021). The public sphere in international relations—the interaction between the public, the media, and the state—is being rethought as a result of globalization and new media (Copeland, 2009). Volkmer (2003) claims that due of the impact of new media, the internet It became simpler than ever to use the communication methods once represented by word of mouth, which entailed talking about a particular subject and sharing opinions.

Additionally, traditional notions of sovereignty have changed as a result of technological advancements and scientific advances in fields like biotechnology, pandemic disease, and climate change, which have been the focus of government diplomatic efforts, including those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Copeland, 2009).

C. Leadership in Javanese Culture

The Javanese leadership approach draws from traditional Javanese values and culture, emphasizing collectivism, harmony, and consensus-building. Applying this approach to the role of a women's minister of foreign affairs in a crisis situation adds another layer of complexity. Balancing the need for assertive decision-making with the Javanese values of mutual respect and harmony requires skillful navigation. This approach can also empower women leaders to leverage their unique perspectives and communication styles to bridge gaps and foster understanding among diverse stakeholders.

Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi's political leadership with a transformational style is still influenced by Javanese culture. This phenomenon is interesting because, from the perspective of Javanese culture, the power possessed by leaders is not limited to literal social phenomena such as the authority to govern others, but there is also a processing of feelings as energy from the Divine (Suseno, 1985). So a leader in Javanese culture should be pragmatic (through tirakat, simple, and knowledgeable) and ethical (high morals, able to distinguish between good and bad) (Sunarni, 2016). Power is not only a distinctive social symptom but is also attached to spiritual and cultural aspects of people's lives. Power is intuitive and is acquired through a process of taste processing.

D. Lessons from Withdrawing Indonesian Migrant Workers

Hasta Brata, a Javanese ethical philosophy, embodies principles of righteousness, harmony, and balance. Its core tenets emphasize the cultivation of virtuous character and ethical conduct. The Javanese leadership approach derived from *Hasta Brata* integrates these principles into leadership strategies, fostering a blend of wisdom, empathy, and ethical decision-making.

The utilization of the *Hasta Brata* Javanese leadership approach by Retno Marsudi, the Women Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, during the process of withdrawing Indonesian migrant workers amid a global health crisis, offers a captivating case study in leadership and crisis management. This description delves into the intricacies of the *Hasta Brata* approach and extracts valuable lessons from its application in the context of a critical national endeavor.

The withdrawal of Indonesian migrant workers during a global health crisis was a multifaceted challenge demanding leadership qualities aligned with *Hasta Brata*. Marsudi's leadership approach resonated with the philosophy's values, which emphasize humility, compassion, and service to others. Her decisions and actions showcased a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between people, emphasizing harmony and empathy in addressing their needs.

From Marsudi's leadership journey, several key lessons emerge:

1. **Virtuous Leadership:** The application of ethical virtues in leadership, promoting moral integrity and responsible decision-making.
2. **Harmonious Diplomacy:** Navigating diplomatic complexities through balanced, respectful, and empathetic engagement with diverse stakeholders.
3. **Collective Welfare:** Prioritizing the well-being of citizens and fostering a sense of collective responsibility in leadership actions.
4. **Humility and Emotional Intelligence:** Demonstrating humility in leadership and displaying emotional intelligence in understanding and addressing citizens' concerns.
5. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Applying cultural understanding and respect in diplomatic interactions, bridging cultural differences.
6. **Ethical Decision-Making:** Integrating ethical considerations into crisis management, aligning actions with broader ethical principles.
7. **Adaptability and Balance:** Striking a balance between assertiveness and cultural harmony, adapting strategies as situations evolve.

The lessons derived from Marsudi's leadership journey reflect the enduring relevance of the *Hasta Brata* Javanese leadership approach. By applying ethical virtues to crisis management, Marsudi exemplified the potential of this approach in navigating complex challenges with empathy and wisdom. The insights drawn offer a blueprint for leaders seeking

to integrate cultural values into their leadership styles and elevate the well-being of their constituents.

Retno Marsudi's leadership, rooted in the Hasta Brata Javanese leadership approach, provided a compelling example of how ethical values can shape effective crisis management. Her alignment with virtues of humility, harmony, and ethical decision-making underscores the potential for cultural philosophies to guide leadership actions during critical moments. Marsudi's leadership journey stands as a testament to the timeless wisdom of the Hasta Brata approach, offering profound insights for leaders committed to navigating crises with grace, empathy, and principled leadership.

CONCLUSION

The leadership approach exhibited by Retno Marsudi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, during the withdrawal of Indonesian migrant workers amid a global health crisis, provides a remarkable case study in effective crisis management, diplomacy, and leadership. Marsudi's utilization of both the transformational leadership style and the Javanese leadership approach has yielded invaluable lessons that transcend the immediate context and offer insights for leaders, diplomats, and policymakers worldwide.

Retno Marsudi's transformational leadership style was evident in her ability to inspire and motivate various stakeholders towards a shared vision of ensuring the safe repatriation of Indonesian citizens. Her emphasis on empathy, active listening, and collaborative decision-making was instrumental in garnering support from different government agencies, international partners, and host countries. This approach fostered an atmosphere of trust and unity, enabling efficient coordination and swift action even in the face of unprecedented challenges.

Moreover, the incorporation of the Javanese leadership approach added a cultural dimension to her leadership strategy. Balancing assertiveness with respect for harmony and consensus, Marsudi showcased her understanding of cultural nuances in both domestic and international interactions. Her ability to communicate diplomatically and bridge cultural gaps further solidified Indonesia's position as a respected and responsible global player.

The lessons learned from the withdrawal of Indonesian migrant workers underscore the significance of prioritizing citizen welfare, effective collaboration, crisis preparedness, and transparent communication. Marsudi's leadership exemplified the importance of embracing innovation and technology to address complex problems, while maintaining a strong focus on the human element through empathy and emotional support.

In the broader context of sustainable development, Marsudi's leadership approach aligns well with the ideals of fostering social cohesion, inclusivity, and resilience. By placing citizen well-being at the forefront, incorporating cultural values, and exhibiting flexibility in the face of uncertainty, her approach underscores the potential for leadership to drive positive change while remaining sensitive to cultural and social contexts.

As leaders and policymakers worldwide navigate future crises, the experiences and lessons from Retno Marsudi's leadership journey offer a template for effective crisis management and diplomacy. Her integration of transformational and Javanese leadership approaches serves as a reminder that successful leadership is a dynamic blend of empathy, strategic thinking, adaptability, and cultural understanding. Ultimately, Marsudi's leadership during the withdrawal of Indonesian migrant workers serves as a beacon of inspiration for leaders who strive to make a lasting impact in times of challenge and uncertainty, contributing not only to the well-being of their citizens but also to the global community at large.

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