

SHOULD JOKOWI BE THE PRINCE?

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Machiavelli's *The Prince* is always disdained due to its suggestion to national leaders to commit some evils. This article aims to discussing the structure of Machiavelli's arguments, and considering whether or not Joko Widodo (Jokowi) should comply with it. On the one hand, Machiavelli's realistic account on leadership is arguably consistent with the consequentialist approach in ethics. Here, a leader should not only live in virtue of goodness and justice but also to incorporate vices insofar as there are some proper justifications for it. On the other hand, Jokowi's reckless determination in governing might ignite some inevitable hatred from people. This paper argues Jokowi should conform with *The Prince*. The upshot is he should strive neither to be loved excessively nor being hatred by the people as some previous presidents did.

Keywords: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Joko Widodo

Introduction

There is no single philosophical, leadership book which is misunderstood by most people as *The Prince* is. People are likely to grasp the argument partially. It seems fine though Machiavelli himself wrote the book in order to resolve some chaos in Italy during his time. Indeed, he wrote it as a personal gift to Lorenzo De' Medici. Thereby, putting this book in context would probably enrich our understanding concerning some shifting from a leader who used to be loved to either a hated leader or a feared leader. Such radical change seems normal to most Indonesian leaders such as Soekarno, Soeharto and probably SBY. Not only does the political interest to maintain power but also some reckless determinations are likely to triggered such shifting. Therefore, should Jokowi be the Machiavellian prince? This article will proceed as following. Firstly, it will capture a misunderstanding concerning *The Prince*. Secondly, I will extrapolate the argument in *The Prince* in order to understand it precisely. Thirdly, this article will have a look on Jokowi's leadership. As a consequence, Jokowi should consider the possibility to be a feared leader instead of a hated leader.¹

1 It should be noted that this article has nothing to do with the university that I work

1 Suryakusuma's Arguments

Julia Suryakusuma posed a challenging question, to wit, "So will Jokowi have to dump his Mr. Smith persona and resort to more Machiavellian tactics to survive?" Her arguments proceed as following. There are four possibilities concerning Jokowi and The Prince. Firstly, he would succeed to take on his enemies ways by using both the popular pressure and his bully pulpit. Secondly, he would fail to take on his enemies. Thirdly, while he strives for the good outcomes, he would use some of his enemies' tricks in order to outsmart them. Fourthly, he would be a part of his enemies while he is striving to outsmart them by using some of their tricks. It means he would fail. Moreover, Suryakusuma thinks Jokowi's cabinet seems accordingly no more than a compromise cabinet due to its composition in which case 21 out of 34 ministers either having connections or representing the political parties though there are some professionals and more women be appointed there. Consequently, he would probably prefer the third option. Additionally, the book represents a detachment between ethics and politics though she herself never reads it (Suryakusuma, 2014).

She appears conducting some common mis-perceptions about *The Prince*. According to Suryakusuma, the book urged a detachment between ethics and politics. However, the book is actually a challenging manifestation of consequentialist ethics in the realm of practical politics. Interestingly, Suryakusuma admitted she did not have the chance to read it but she arbitrarily made a claim on it. To put it in her own words, "Most of us (including me!) haven't read *The Prince*, but we all associate the term "Machiavellian" with all that is "manipulative", "deceptive", "ruthless", "cunning" and "duplicitous" in statecraft or general conduct" (Suryakusuma, 2014). Yet, Machiavelli himself trades off between being a leader who is loved by his people and a leader who is hated by his citizens as I will discuss below.

2 Machiavelli's Arguments

There are some necessities in his book in which case are likely to be ignored by most readers. Thereby, revealing those essential conditions is extremely important here.

Prowess

The fact that Jokowi did a revolutionary political acceleration in nine consecutive years from the major of Surakarta in 2005, the governor of DKI Jakarta in 2012 and the president of Indonesia in 2014; reflects Machiavelli's account that either rulers who achieve their power by difficulty or by prowess would run the country easily (Machiavelli, 1967:

for. All criticisms should be addressed to me.

51). Jokowi seems acquiring the presidential office by prowess due to his services in Surakarta and DKI Jakarta but we cannot fully determine whether or not he would succeed in accomplishing his administration with ease as well. For example, the current rupiah rate (more than IDR 14,000 per US dollar), for example, is closed to the economic crisis in 1998 (more than IDR 16,000 per US dollar) though other indicators (such as inflation, economic growth, non performing loans, debts and so on) might not indicate some similar numbers. Furthermore, Jokowi could ease his administration if he dares to exercise Machiavelli's suggestion to both conferring benefits gradually, and harming citizens once due to some political necessities. Consequently, people are likely to dismiss the violence from their minds (Machiavelli, 1967: 66). For example, Soeharto and Soekarno exercised this principle though they might not read *The Prince*. Indeed, Jokowi has such daring such as installing the XVII Cenderawasih Kodam (the regional military command) in Papua, Jokowi raised the probability of inflicting violence against the Papuans, and adjusting the domestic petrol price with the international price though the constitution, according to the Constitutional Court (MK), prohibited such policy due to the article 33 of constitution.

The Necessity of Being a Leader

Machiavelli conceives some virtues of leadership as following. Firstly, by being a leader, one could comprehend the nature of his people (Machiavelli, 1967: 30). It appears essential since taking some distance in order to think about the people thoroughly. As a consequence, a leader should have a certain distance against his subjects for at least examining both their natural and nurtural traits. Moreover, he suggests to harming people who have supported the leader (Machiavelli, 1967: 35). Here, the message is crystal clear. Firstly, the leader owes nothing including to his late supporters. Secondly, the people are likely to fear the leader since the previous has seen how the latter be cruel against his own men. Such attitude reminds me to what happens with most of Jokowi's supporters. For example, Boni Hargens and the other 87 people attacked en masse the Rumah Transisi in Jl. Situbondo, Menteng, on 25 August 2014 in order to ask some jobs and roles to the elected president and vice president. As a consequence, the political success team is actually ruining themselves because, according to Machiavelli, a leader would never completely trust such success team, no matter how creative nor coercive an administration is (Machiavelli, 1967: 44). It is clearly happened on Andrinof Chaniago. He assisted Jokowi to be both the governor of Jakarta and the president but then he is reshuffled by Jokowi. This

example indicates a potential attitude towards the Machiavellian leadership.

The Necessity of Laws and Arms

Furthermore, good laws are commanded by good arms, and those two components are inevitable in all countries (Machiavelli, 1967: 77). This thought explains why, for instance, a leader who has a military background takes one step ahead compared to the fully civilian leaders. SBY's administration is a supporting example for the Machiavellian claim. Politically, SBY is the first president who complete his administration after 1998. Here, we could doubt Jokowi's ability in supervising the Commander of TNI, and completing his administration. Once the president does not grant the TNI organizational (and probably some military elites) interests, he would deal with some religious, sensitive, racist based issues such as Tolikara (GIDI [the Indonesian Evangelical Church] unjustly banned both the prayings and celebration of Idul Fitri, and they burnt some street vendors which caused a mosque is burnt as well.). Jokowi anticipated such action by establishing a new territorial structure in Papua. A policy which hurts the political support of Papuans.

The Necessity of Geostrategy

Jokowi shows his deficiency on some territorial issues during the second round of presidential debate against Prabowo. He claimed arbitrarily that Indonesia has no problems on the Southern China Sea. It showed the lack of knowledge concerning geostrategy. On the contrary, Machiavelli strongly advises the importance of geostrategy due to two benefits, firstly, knowing any local developments and, secondly, grasping a better feature of the national defense based on the local contour (Machiavelli, 1967: 88). Insofar as Jokowi has no deficiency in geostrategy, he would rely to analysis provided by either the TNI, the intelligence and academicians. If this is the case, Jokowi is in a fragile intellectual position due to his cognitive dependencies.

The Necessity of Being Vicious

In defense of the political power, vices outweigh virtues according to Machiavelli. Indeed, he claims a leader would have a greater chance to maintain his power by applying some vices to some extent instead of a leader who always strives to lead virtuously (Machiavelli, 1967: 91). Moreover, a miserly leader appear better compared to a generous leader due to the previous implies ignominy while the latter, if

it is done by force instead of by willing, causes rapacity, hatred and ignominy (Machiavelli, 1967: 94-5).

Compared to being loved, a leader should accordingly be hated if he cannot achieve both because the effectivity of punishment intensifies fear in society. Not only does a leader has no doubt to harm the people who love him insofar as it implies some advantages (Machiavelli, 1967: 96-7). Given that being feared is much better than being loved and being hated, wreaking a havoc is justified due to the virtue of status quo.

Furthermore, Machiavelli distinguishes between being feared and being hated by people based on some moral consequences of, on the one hand, expropriations*,² and on the other hand, executions. He conceives that loosing inheritance is much more hurtful to most laymen instead of loosing parents though a Machiavellian leader should refrain his hand from his subjects' property in virtue of avoiding hatred. In contrast to his suggestion to avoid hatred, a Machiavellian leader should be cruel against his soldiers for the sake of discipline and unity. He concludes that a leader should avoid hatred while he should trust on whom he could control (Machiavelli, 1967: 97-8).

A Prince and A Beast

A leader should command either in a beastly or a civilized way because there are two general ways to fight. Firstly, fighting by force in which case is natural to beasts. Secondly, fighting by law in which case is natural to men. In addition to beasts, he suggests a combinative character between lions and foxes should be adopted by a leader. Lions scare off wolves, and its enemies are traps while, in contrast, foxes be aware with traps, and its natural enemies are wolves. Such combination is essential since men are prone to lie. If this is the case, a leader should not keep his words insofar as, firstly, his promises loose its reasons, and secondly, honesty imply disadvantages. Such suggestion is realistic due to the fact that not all men are actually good people (Machiavelli, 1967: 99). There are two interesting things here. Firstly, Machiavelli commits to slippery slope by insisting on the natural character of men as wretched human beings. Secondly, he exercises the golden rule in a negative way by not living in virtue of the word of honor.

2 Interestingly, the Indonesian human rights law, to wit the article 36 verse 3 of UU No. 39/1999, says "*Yang dimaksud dengan 'hak milik mempunyai fungsi sosial' adalah bahwa setiap penggunaan hak milik harus memperhatikan kepentingan umum. Apabila kepentingan umum menghendaki atau membutuhkan benar-benar maka hak milik dapat dicabut sesuai dengan ketentuan peraturan perundang-undangan.*" Consequently, all Indonesian presidents have some legal opportunities to ignite some hatred by expropriations.

The Political Self-Image (*Pencitraan*)

The idea of political self-image (*pencitraan*) is certainly justified by Machiavelli. He outweighs the impressions of having the quality of good leadership instead of its real qualities. Evils should be done if and only if they are essential though a leader should conform with goodness insofar as it is possible to do so (Machiavelli, 1967: 100-1). In other words, his account of political self-projection and evils are consistent with the consequentialist ethics instead of the virtue ethics and the deontology ethics.

Fearfulness

The notion of being hated implies conspiracies and internal subversion against a leader. Such subversion is considered by Machiavelli as much more dangerous to a leader compared to some foreign, external aggression (Machiavelli, 1967: 103). It is obviously shown by his words, "It can be put like this: the prince who is more afraid of his own people than of foreign interference should build fortresses; but the prince who fears foreign interference more than his own people should forget about them" (Machiavelli, 1967: 118). The reason is the initial enemies are alerting to a leader since they lean upon someone else (Machiavelli, 1967: 117). In contrast, insurgents could not be identified easily by a leader since they are likely to rely on themselves. If and only if a leader fails to avoid hatred from the populace, he should pay attention more to the most powerful classes so the latter would not threaten himself (Machiavelli, 1967: 107). Given that Jokowi decided not to rotate the Chief Commander of TNI based on the three armed forces (army, navy and air forces) could probably ignite hatred in the navy and the air force since Jokowi preferred the former army staff commander (Gatot Nurmantyo) to be the Chief Commander of TNI.

Intelligence

Machiavelli conceives intelligence as an inevitable quality for a leader, and he distinguishes it into three levels. Firstly, a leader who could understand things as they are, and such knowledge comes from his own intellectual activities. This type of leader is accordingly excellent. Secondly, a leader who could appreciate some intellectual assistance provided by his men. This is a token of a good leader. Thirdly, a leader who could not recognize things either by himself or by his men. Machiavelli despises this type as some useless leaders (Machiavelli, 1967: 124). Moreover, a shrewd leader should not pay attention to opinions and views came from laymen unless he requests it while, in contrast, he should consider the wise men's truth. One is likely to

consider a Machiavellian leader as an authoritarian due to his discouragement concerning unrequested from the people. However, Machiavelli himself puts a strong emphasis that a leader should be both a good listener concerning his inquiries and "a constant questioner." Indeed, he provides an interesting recipe as following:

"Here is an infallible rule: a prince who is not himself wise cannot be well advised, unless he happens to put himself in the hands of one individual who looks after all his affairs and is an extremely shrewd man...So the conclusion is that good advice, whomever it comes from, depends on the shrewdness of the prince who seeks it, and not the shrewdness of the prince on good advice" (Machiavelli, 1967: 126-7).

Having discussed several components of shrewd leadership, Machiavelli surprisingly concludes that leaders should balance their policies with fortunes. Had they failed to do so, they are likely to be neglected by the populace. Making an analogy between fortune and women due to the contradictory nature between men (who are stubborn) and fortune (which is changeable), Machiavelli hints violence against some young, potential, future leaders due to some experiences with which lucks always come to whom be more ardent, be less circumspect, and be more audacious (Machiavelli, 1967: 133).

Jokowi's Leadership

He wishes to be a transformational leader. Yet, his political maneuver from Surakarta to Medan Merdeka reflects a transactional leadership. Putting Jakarta as a stepping stone, Jokowi broke his promise during the gubernatorial campaign that he will complete his administration for five years in Jakarta. Afterwards, he vaguely argued that he would transform Jakarta easily not from the Balai kota but the Merdeka palace. On the contrary, a real transformational leader, as Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi did, is prone to keep their words to change not only his personal but also his followers circumstances. They would not do vertical mobilization without accomplishing the current political objectives. Additionally, a careless leader has some potentials to be a dictator due to their ignorance on anything with which it should be considered as highly important. For example, he easily admitted that he did not read what documents he signed for. It seems honest but also inevitably stupefied, and adjusting the petrol price with the international market price though the Constitutional Court has prohibited it.

Mental Revolution

His idea on the so called *revolusi mental* (the mental revolution/*revomen*) is ostensibly a manifestation of transformational leadership. He wishes to transform the mental setting of most, if not all, Indonesians during his administration. Yet, his policy to increase the national debts more than a hundred quintillion rupiahs in a month for the sake of developing infrastructures reflects the separation between his short term, personal, interests on making immediate progress; and the long term, public, interests on, according to the preamble of constitution, "to educate the life of the people." If a fifth of those hundred quintillion rupiahs would be invested to the education sector as the constitution obliged to do so, most citizens would enjoy a free, good quality of education. Unfortunately, this thing would not imply an immediate result to the Jokowi's but the future administration. His conception of mental revolution proceeds as following:

- 1) Our people are restless due to the mere institutional changes since the 1998 reformation instead of a political, cultural, mental, paradigmatic shifting.
- 2) We redeemed the cost of corruption by not only money but also our national pride.
- 3) Our characters, cultures and values do not fit with the idea of liberalism. For instance, the dependency on foreign capitals is an implication of the liberal economic policies. Therefore, we need a correction by putting the mental revolution instead of stopping the reformation process.
- 4) Soekarno's conception of Trisakti is the main single content of Jokowi's mental revolution by which three pillars should be its virtues viz., firstly, Indonesia be sovereign in politics. Secondly, Indonesia be autonomous in economy. Thirdly, Indonesia be distinct in its social, cultural identity.
- 5) Self-reliance is the main point of Trisakti. Consequently, both the energy and food securities cannot be negotiated.
- 6) The revolution itself has to be conducted gradually from the individual level to the state levels as he has been done since servicing as the major of Surakarta to the governor of Jakarta. The *revomen* is not a bloodbath (Widodo, 2014).

Nonetheless, *revomen* is not a coherent concept due to some reasons. Firstly, Soekarno's Trisakti is not consistent with Jokowi's claim on the non-bloody revolution in premise four and premise six. Trisakti is regrettably full with bloodshed due to its unjust war against Malaysia in 1963-4. Yet, Jokowi undermines such historical fact. Secondly, he

perceives the idea of liberalism as a single, monotony concept instead of a plural, robust concept. For instance, he has no idea concerning the distinction of John Lock's liberalism and John Rawls' liberalism.

CONCLUSION

Have I discussed Jokowi's leadership, there are several reasons for Jokowi to adopt the Machiavellian leadership as following. Firstly, the so called mental revolution could be achieved by a Machiavellian leadership as well as the Trisakti itself is conducted by Soekarno during 1959-1965. Here, Soekarno invaded Malaysia unjustly due to no *jus ad bellum*. In other words, either the mental revolution or the Trisakti is arguably a manifestation of Machiavellian aggressive politics. Secondly, they who counter the revolution, such as corrupter, drug syndicates, tax mafioso and so on, should be executed by the state as Jokowi allows the capital punishment against two Australians viz., Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran. Thirdly, if *Revomen* is actually a copycat of Trisakti as Jokowi's claim, why doesn't he emulate Soekarno (be a demagogue and a tyrant during 1959 up to 1965) as well? Fourthly, in fact, Jokowi replicated Mao by initiating both a long term revolution (like the mental revolution), and shifting the old fashioned paradigm (be similar with Mao's cultural revolution), and a new Indonesia (like a new China). Yet, Jokowi does not promote physical education and courage as Mao did in order to support the revolution. His slogan 'work, work, work' reflects the mere, perfunctory work since he himself admitted that he did not read all documents that he has signed. Additionally, we are no more than a monkey, as Buya Hamka said, in which case the animal merely commits a perfunctory work ("*kalau bekerja sekedar bekerja, monyet di hutan juga bekerja*"). Fifthly, Jokowi has no direct control over any political party though he is one of the best cadre of PDI Perjuangan. Indeed, the party pays no attention to its center of gravity which is *wong cilik* (the grassroots people). In contrast, Mao considered peasants as the center of gravity of his political party. Sixthly, Jokowi deals with the Indonesia's byzantine politics. SBY, for instance, won the game for two administrations based on some significant reasons without which Jokowi could not survive the game such as: the absolute control over a political party named the Demokrat party; the fact that SBY enjoyed a full loyalty given by the TNI; SBY pays attention to details since he appears to buy the saying that the evils are located in the details while, in contrast, Jokowi publicly admitted he did not read all documents that he has signed; SBY has no doubt to apply the idea of dirty hands (Nazaruddin and Urbaningrum cases) though he contradictorily urges for manners and etiquette in politics. Seventhly, Jokowi's mental revolution does not bash

the counter-revolutionary power to whom a revolution always be worth to fight for. Moreover, there is no single revolutionary class to reinforce the mental revolution. Eight, there is no obvious resistance from the TNI to whom the idea of 'revolution' is usually the TNI's greatest enemy. It might mean the TNI conceives the mental revolution as an appealing conception. Ninth, Jokowi dismisses the importance of a revolutionary theory in commanding the process of mental revolution. His calling to start the revolution from our primary communities is not adequate to be a revolutionary theory. Thus, Jokowi should adopt Machiavelli's theory of leadership if his idea of mental revolution, with which Soekarno's Trisakti be its core, would succeed in the future as Mao's revolution does. In short, should he apply *The Prince*? Yes, he should and he does.

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