
THE FALLEN LEADERS: WHAT WENT WRONG WITH INDONESIAN REGIONAL LEADERSHIP?



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Since the year 2018 started corruption has made headlines across Indonesia. This is particularly due to a number of new corruption cases involving public officials. At least seven heads of regions (six regents and a governor) were recently named corruption suspects by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). This is somewhat concerning as at least four of them are contenders in the upcoming regional elections which begs the question regarding the quality of leadership in Indonesian regions.

Historically speaking, since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998 followed by the decentralization reform in 2001, the Indonesian Civil Service had gone through some major changes. For example, with the elimination of strict hierarchical relationship

between central and regional governments, regional heads at provincial and district levels are now answering to regional legislative bodies. However, evidence suggests that the increasing number of elections as a result of the decentralization system had put enormous financial pressure on the competing parties especially during the election time. Any contender who wishes to compete in an election must first gather enough financial resources to fund his campaigns to win votes. Many anti-corruption experts believe that such fierce competition creates pressure for the contenders to unlawfully obtain and use financial resources to secure their victories. For example, as stated in the media, in relation to the recent naming of several heads of regions as corruption suspects by the KPK there have been indications that at least some of the proceeds from their offences will be used in the upcoming regional elections.

Regional elections are a gateway to power. Once elected into office a person will have an access to the region's (and some state's) resources. Also, with his position a head of region can influence his people and in some occasions can even enforce his will over others. Studies suggest that the risk of corruption in a country is largely influenced by the characteristics of the leaders in power. For example, some anti-corruption experts argue that a leader's so-called "misguided entrepreneurial spirit" may cause him to be willing to take the risk of accepting bribes when presented with the opportunity to do so. Based on the KPK's statistics from 2004 to 2017 around 25% of corruption offenders are working in private sector who, in the cases of bribery, for example, are willing to pay the right price to corrupt public officials to get things done or to get things done faster. For morally unstable heads of regions this group of people represents an opportunity to advance their personal goals such as accumulating wealth from their positions.

It is interesting to see that from various studies on corruption it appears that the temptation of power can be so overwhelming that it may change a leader's moral orientation even if he was formerly known to be outwardly honest and accountable. Studies suggest there are numerous factors that may influence a public official's moral orientation among which are the socio-cultural factors.

According to social psychologist Geert Hofstede, an important dimension in a nation's culture is the so called "power distance", essentially related to how people expect and accept the fact that power is distributed unequally in their country. According to a research carried out by Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov and their research teams, with a Power Distance Index (PDI) of 78 Indonesia is considered a high power distance country. This suggests that Indonesians generally accept that some people are just vastly more powerful than others without the need for further justification. The research also concluded that Indonesia, with the individualism score of 14, is a collectivistic society where generally social framework is strongly defined for people to be part of and to behave accordingly. Within a collectivistic society people value loyalty very highly and group members are expected to look after one another.

Being a high power distance collectivistic society presents its own set of challenges for Indonesia and corruption is one them. Many believe that the high power distance is closely associated with cultural endorsement of self-serving local leaders who often behave like "small kings". For example, one of the recently named suspects, the regent of Ngada regency once known for his bold act sending his officials to block the runway and stop a plane from landing just because he could not get a ticket for the flight. Mixed with the existing collectivism people's loyalty to such leadership figures may become problematic as evidenced by, for example, how they still view leaders who have been named corruption suspects as the "chosen ones".

With everything that has been going on in the country in particular related to the rampaging corruption what we really need is to start nurturing ethical leadership that can overcome various cultural roots of corruption. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2018 corruption is still part of major risks faced

by countries all around the world and is generally perceived as reflecting governments' inability to govern a nation. Therefore, according to the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer Report, eradicating corruption is essential in building people's trust in governments. When it comes to eradicating corruption each country has its own set of cultural problems which needs to be properly addressed in order to reduce the risk of corruption. In a collectivistic society like Indonesia just as in many other Asian countries the role of ethical leaders is pivotal in building ethical culture within their societies. An ethical leader must be able and willing to set a good example by always behaving ethically through interpersonal relationships with his followers. This way the high power distance as well as collectivistic natures of Indonesian people can be turned from a liability to an asset for sake corruption eradication.

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“THE OSTRICH, THE AH LONG, THE CON WOMAN, AND THE CREEPY GUY: THE STORY OF CRIME PREVENTION IN SINGAPORE”



AN EXTRACT of an article by Susan Sim, member of the National Crime Prevention Council and Majeed Khader, Chief Psychologist of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Director of the Home Team Behavioural Sciences Centre, and Deputy Director of the Police Psychological Services Division.

If they won't listen, try making them laugh

Drawing on 15 years of educating the public about scams, the National Crime Prevention Council worked with the Singapore Police on an anti-scam publicity blitz in early 2013 when the crime rates came down but the amount of money lost to phone scams remained “high and significant”. PSAs covering Internet love, online purchase, cyber extortion and lucky draw scams blanketed the island – on public transport, in hawker centres, on lift doors and at community roadshows.

Perhaps because the PSAs made more people realise they had been conned, the number of cases reported to the police rose and the monetary value of the losses continued to mount. The NCPC decided to try something different – humour. A local production house was commissioned to create a quirky video called “Criminal Watch”, a comedy skit highlighting the “top 10 criminals in Singapore”, including scammers. It quickly went viral following its launch in November 2013, and has now been seen by more than 2.5 million people.



The success of Criminal Watch – it was viewed more than 1 million times within the first six months – led the NCPC to commission another comedy skit: “Criminal Watch 2: You Got Scammed”. Launched at the NCPC's Annual Appreciation Dinner in July 2014, the video drew on the modus operandi used by six conmen to cheat their victims, featuring cases such as Internet Love, Online Purchase, Kidnap, Impersonation, Lottery and money laundering scams.

It was a bold move for the NCPC, as the skit was somewhat risqué. In a press release, NCPC Chairman Tan Kian Hoon explained: “NCPC's programmes and strategies evolve in tandem with social changes. It is important that our crime prevention messages are current and effectively disseminated. Given the popularity of social media today, we hope to leverage on “Criminal Watch 2 – The Musical” to raise public awareness of the various scams out there, and remind Singaporeans to be vigilant and guard against these common scams.”