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LESSONS LEARNT FOR THE INDONESIAN MILITARY LEADERS FROM GENERAL PERICLES' STRATEGIC-TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

For a nation to be great, such a nation shall have great and professional military leaders which are contextual to the time and social context of their nation. That is why Indonesian military leaders need to take some lesson-learned from historical records of great military leaders, one of them is the strategic and transformative leadership of General Pericles, an Athenian General. Therefore, this article analyzes about Pericles' great leadership, especially in what ways and how to measure it. The data corpus of this study is "The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War" by Thucydides. The research uses qualitative study and critical review on related archival documentation. All data collected is validated by cross-checking with other credible open sources about the life and leadership records of General Pericles. The qualitative analysis uses to examine three main variables that are critical to his strategic-transformative leadership: his grand strategy (strategic mindset); his dedication to the highest level of life for Athenian citizens (altruistic mindset and heart); and his statesmanship, generalship, leadership (his leadership traits). The main International Relations theories used for examining General Pericles's leadership are the theory of realism and institutionalism coupled with personality analysis of General Pericles himself. This article lays out the answer to the two thesis questions. This article proves that as a realist and visionary leader, Pericles's leadership was central to the Athenian greatness in terms of its political, social, demographic, and military affairs, that successfully brought his nation to the global height. Putting in the current Indonesian context, this strategic-transformative leadership is important for any Indonesian military leaders to possess since any great nations shall have great and professional military leaders which are contextual to the time and social context of their nation.

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INTRODUCTION

The main object of this article is the great leadership record of General Pericles during the ancient classical age of Greece: in what ways and how to measure it. In its essence, the leadership within this context is about how General Pericles exercised his influence to successfully bring his nation to the global height. This historical examination of General Pericles' leadership in this article is important for the author and the readers since this examination will provide us with a framework about the role of the individual within his/her social context to shape the destiny of his/her nations.

The ancient classical age of Greece itself spanned from the era of the Persian War (490–479 B.C.) to the era of Alexander the Great that died in 323 B.C. During this era, the role of Greek leaders had determining effects that shaped domestic and international politics of ancient Greece. The importance of leadership and individual roles during this era was portrayed at least by Thucydides in his story of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides, 2008). One of these Greek prominent leaders that had determined roles was Pericles (495–429 B.C.), the Athenian *strategos* (general) whose leadership and influence over the destiny of the Athenian Empire were subject to historical debates.

METHODS

Thesis Questions, Statements, and Theoretical Framework

The data corpus of this article is the literature of General Pericles, particularly from “The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War” (Thucydides, 2008). This research used the qualitative method and critical review of related archival documentation. This article analyzes Pericles' great leadership, in what ways and how to measure it. Correspondingly, this article will lay out the answer to these two thesis questions. All data collected is

validated by cross-checking with other credible open sources about the life and leadership records of General Pericles. The qualitative analysis uses to examine three main variables that are critical to his strategic-transformative leadership, which is his grand strategy (strategic mindset); his dedication to the highest level of life for Athenian citizens (altruistic mindset and heart); and his statesmanship, generalship, leadership (his leadership traits).

The main International Relations theories used for examining General Pericles' leadership are the theory of realism and institutionalism coupled with personality analysis of General Pericles himself. Correspondingly to answer the thesis questions, this article aims to prove the hypothesis that as a realist and visionary leader, Pericles' leadership was central to the Athenian greatness in terms of its political, social, demographic, and military affairs, where we can view his great leadership from realist, institutionalist, and personality perspectives (Waltz, 2008; Wendt, 1999; Little, 2011).

First, although he was not the founder of democracy in Athens, his grand strategy, which was the reflection of his domestic policies, visionary foreign policies, and high-minded vision for Athens and Pan Hellenism has successfully brought Athenian to the height of democratic society and empire. Second, he gave Athenian citizens the fuller power of democracy and better education while inspiring them to live up to the highest level of life values in which he strongly believed: civic virtue; honor; achievement of great ambitions; and daring to risk one's life for the imperial Athens as the worthiest achievement to preserve. Third, his statesmanship, leadership, and generalship were able to bring the wealth and power to the Athenian Empire through his grand strategy in building Athens' mighty naval power along with the expansion of

commerce that in turn led to the rise of the Athenian Empire after the Greco-Persian Wars (499 – 449 B.C.).

Having said that, this article analyzes Pericles' leadership from three major perspectives: realism, institutionalism, and Machiavelli's concept of *virtu* and *fortuna* (Machiavelli, N., & Marriott, 2019), since these three classical factors: international system, domestic politics, and Pericles' personality (personal attributes/*virtu* and capability to seize social opportunities/*fortuna*) significantly shaped his leadership and grand strategy that in turn shaped the destiny of Athens and wider classical age of Greece. These three perspectives are analog with Kenneth Waltz's three levels of analysis: first, international politics are driven by individuals or psychological forces; second, international politics are driven by the domestic regimes of states; and third, international politics are driven by the state of international anarchy that impacts the behavior of states (Waltz, 2008).

First, realism explains the dynamic relationship of the international system and the high-stake politics of Pericles' leadership and grand strategy (Menaldo, 2010). According to realist, a leader must protect the state from the international environment imposed by the state of anarchy (Waltz, 2008). Based on this argument, a leader has strong incentives to engage with high politics since the state's survival becomes a chief intention for the leader. In this way, a leader's foreign policy is viewed as independent of domestic politics.

Second, institutionalism explains the dynamic relationship between domestic politics and Pericles' leadership and grand strategy. According to the institutionalist, a leader also has personal interests to stay in the power that in turn makes a leader comply with their domestic constituents (Wendt, 1999). Based on this argument, a leader has strong incentives to exert his/her leadership with the realms of low politics, where domestic politics itself

shapes a leader's grand strategy including his/her foreign policies.

Third, Machiavelli's (Machiavelli, N., & Marriott, 2019) concept of *virtu* and *fortuna* serves to explain personality aspects of Pericles' leadership and grand strategy since his leadership and policy are mainly shaped by his idiosyncrasy that may have been mostly developed long before he was involved in politics and came into preeminence. Through his concept of *virtu* and *fortuna*, Machiavelli focused on the role of the individual as an autonomous actor who possesses, creates, and deploys political resources to achieve his or her goals. The individual actor as conceived by Machiavelli offers a promising basis for a theory of action that can help us understand the quality of individual leadership in their era (Machiavelli, N., & Marriott, 2019).

The concept of *virtu* and *fortuna* is often used by political scientists as a foundation to explore the role of political actors within their social context (Liddle, 2011). *Virtu* can be interpreted as cunning, masculinity, gentleness, and good morality. In this article, *virtu* is defined as a set of political resources that can be created, mobilized, and exploited by Pericles as a political actor to achieve his intended purposes. The elaborated examples of *virtu* that was possessed by Pericles consist of various elements such as strategic and tactical courage and wisdom, vision, firmness, tenacity, conscientious, reputation, gentleness, merciful attitude, domestic support, international support, managerial skills, and the strategic ability to see and predict strategic phenomena at the international landscape.

Referring to Machiavelli's characteristics of wise leaders (Machiavelli, N., & Marriott, 2019), it can be concluded that the true leaders should think and act strategically: using the current means for the larger and future ends. The truly strategic (political) leader

whose mindset, vision, tenacity, and action are strategic is totally different from a (political) leader which merely because of his/her political positions, his/her decisions would be strategically impacting the wider society. In other words, the strategic position earned by politicians or individuals does not necessarily make them strategic leaders. By using this framework, it can be seen that in many ways Pericles had the best *virtu* to his contemporaries. Following his death, Athens did not generate any comparable strategic leaders. By exploiting his *virtu*, Pericles could construct the Athenian Empire in a way he believed was both sustainable and fit with the Athenian character.

However, based on Machiavelli's assumption on leadership (Machiavelli, N., & Marriott, 2019), leaders should also have the capability to be devious and to lie while at the same time willing to use coercive power. Nevertheless, the main contribution of Machiavelli for us in understanding politics and grand strategy (policy in execution) is his stressing point on the ability of the political actor that autonomously thinks, decides, and acts. In this measure, I also argue that by his nature Pericles was typical of a commanding leader that during his statesmanship he often acted as an autonomous force in policy and indeed able to influence, shape, and restraint his followers' political aims.

In addition to *virtu*, *fortuna* means chance and luck so that a political actor or leader must know how he/she can take the initiative out of unique opportunities. According to Machiavelli (Machiavelli, N., & Marriott, 2019), "*fortuna* seems to be the arbiter of half our actions, but she does leave us the other half, or almost the other half, so that our free will may prevail. It is better to be impetuous than cautious, because *fortuna* is a woman, and if you wish to dominate her you must beat and batter her".

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Pericles' Leadership and Grand Strategy

According to James MacGregor Burns (Burns, 1979), the leadership lies in the power (since power is the foundation of any leadership), and power itself is the mutual relationship between leaders and followers forming the leadership-followership concept in which leadership is not exercised with the coercion or merely transactional, but leadership itself is exercised within the context of transformation where leaders are able to transform the view, want, need, resource and standard of life of their followers. Corresponding with the transformative leadership framework of James MacGregor Burns (Burns, 1979), the strategic leadership itself is identical with transformative leadership since strategic leadership is also about how to make strategic impacts to the object of one's leadership to bring (transform) one's object of leadership from one state to another new and better state as compared to other comparative conditions or objects.

In other words, there is no such strategic leadership if it is not transformative within the leadership-followership context since the concept of leadership is to create betterment for others with the final aim of a perfect or ideal condition. The continuous efforts of betterment and perfection in this unperfected world must become the ideal of virtuous leadership that will continue until the eternal, resurrected and perfect world to come. This is elaborated within Judeo-Christian and Islamic theology, as well as by renowned philosophers such as Plato, and corresponding to the very purpose of statesmanship and strategic leadership, which is about how to relentlessly pursue national interests defined by the successful transformation of potential national power (demography, territory, and natural resources) into national real power (ideology, politics,

economics, society, psychology, cyber and technology). Realization of strong national power will produce strong instruments of national power, such as military, intelligence, diplomacy, law enforcement, information, finance, and economy to transform potential national power into a real national power that determines the status of a nation as a winning nation at the global level.

It is within this measurement we can view how Pericles within his lifetime was able to exercise a strategic-transformative leadership within his capacity as a military and political leader in his era where Pericles was successful to transform the military power and socio-economic-political life of his nation. That said, by looking at the leadership model of Pericles, the Indonesian military can apply a series of leadership development models that can prepare the Indonesian military officers throughout their professional and academic military exposures with both strategic and transformative mindset since their military academy years going up to their senior, generalship level.

Born to a politically prominent and wealthy family, Pericles had the best education available in his era that made the young Pericles grew up to become a first-class citizen of Athens which had the commanding mastery over public opinion, integrity, and character sustained by his upper economic, social, and political status. This social construction shaped Pericles' personality that eventually made him ambitious and highly confident to lead Athens in upholding and expanding its values, power, and glory. Pericles' personalities were shaped in such a way that made him more as an agent who shaped his social structures rather than as an agent who was more constrained by his surrounding social structures. The possession of such characters indicated that he was a strong, creative, cunning, and decisive figure with a serious devotion to abstract values such as honor and glory that made him altruistically daring to take

risks for Athens and walking in the solitary path of a soaring leader.

He already showed his leadership idiosyncrasy since before he rose as the sole leader of Athens where he demonstrated his boldness and decisiveness when he was confronted by domestic and international challenges. He showed this, first, by ostracizing Cimon, an Athenian politician, and general that he perceived as his prominent conservative contender. Moreover, when Cimon and his army were away to help Sparta in dealing with the uprising, with the strong support from people Pericles along with his close friend, Ephialtes they conducted revolutionary-democratic reforms by robbing the most of Areopagus Council's jurisdiction that allowed the Assembly and the Heliaea (people's courts) to have absolute powers. This article argues that it was Pericles' *virtu* and ability to seize the *fortuna* that allowed him to exploit this decisive political moment which eventually reformed fundamental elements of Athens's domestic society. In addition to his revolutionary domestic movement, at the international level, Pericles as Ephialtes' deputy had the role in boldly grasping an opportunity to make alliances with Argos (Sparta's enemies for centuries) and Thessaly (a powerful state in the north) in 461 B.C. Later in the same year, Ephialtes was killed and eventually, Pericles became a sole leader of Athens until his death in 429 B.C.

After becoming an incontestable leader of Athens, he demonstrated his strong concern over domestic politics and local Athenians that in turn shaped his leadership and grand strategy at the international level. It shows that Pericles' grand strategy and foreign policies had a close relationship with his domestic policies.

First, he was a strong promoter of democracy that made him imperialistically spearheaded Athens's democratic values and ideals over the region. In this way, Pericles demonstrated his commanding

leadership and charisma by changing the Delian League into one unified Athenian Empire. After forming the Athenian Empire, Pericles collected annual payments from the member states to raise and maintain a naval power. Moreover, as he was a strong supporter of democracy, he also used these collected payments to improve Athens and its citizens.

What he had done up to this point demonstrated how his conviction and adherence to a set of abstract values were successfully translated to preserve national interests and redefine the national character that in turn shaped beliefs, values, and daily habits of its citizens. As an addition, Pericles' leadership and statesmanship were also marked by various events where he successfully convinced his fellow Athenians to accept and follow his ideas and policies (e.g. his Funeral Oration throughout the city). As a strong leader that was highly respected at the domestic and international level, one of his significant geopolitical approaches and security policies was by taking seriously any potential uprising in the Athenian Empire. He managed this by taking suppressive measures and engaging in the show of force that in turn made Sparta felt that Athens' growing accumulated power would threaten Sparta's ways of life.

This study argues that Pericles' generalship, leadership, and statesmanship in using the realms of low politics and high politics in the domestic and international arena have realistically and psychologically undermined Sparta's ability to cope with Athens' growing soft (economy, commerce, democratic values, and national ideals) and hard (military and diplomatic) power. First, Athens' democracy, commerce, and rule of the sea encircled and threatened Spartans that were more conservative, less learned, austere, land oriented, and less innovative as compared to Athens.

Therefore, this study argues that Pericles' leadership successfully made Sparta think and believe that they were

inferior and insecure to the Athenian Empire. Looking from the neorealist perspective of hegemonic theory, Sparta should have balanced against the growing power of Athens not by engaging in the war but by investing in a fleet, and improved expeditionary force, and in its empire. Although the later war between the Athenian Empire and Sparta were driven by enmity, mistrust, Spartan envy, insecurity, honor, and self-interest; Sparta's declaration of war was a proof that Sparta's citizens did not necessarily fear the Athenians but rather underestimated their power and determination to cope with the Athenian growing power. It proves that this can be seen as one success of Pericles' leadership in generating psychological victory over Spartans.

Second, he wisely led Athens in such a way to manage the expanding imperialistic nature of Athens. He invigorated domestic politics by engaging in art and philosophical works, beautifying the cities, building public places (e.g. Parthenon), having more political participation, and encouraging public works. It was mainly through his efforts that Athens holds the reputation of being the educational and cultural center of the ancient Greek world. Specifically, in 445 B.C. Pericles diverted a disaster by making a thirty-year peace with Sparta where both sides gained what they aimed. Athens yielded its political power over the states on the Greek mainland and Sparta recognized the Athenian Empire as a legitimate political entity. I see all these policies as Pericles' ways to improve the lives of his fellow citizens while diverting their attention from the expansive nature of Athens that might trigger the war in the region.

However, Pericles' foreign policies to maintain the Athenian Empire, suppress any potential revolts and resist Sparta's influence in the Athenian Empire, which was coupled with a series of following incidents inevitably caused the war with Sparta and its allies to erupt in 431 B.C.

This study argues that the Peloponnesian War was also driven by leaders' miscalculations during the crisis that eventually contributed to the eruption of the war.

First, it can be seen as a partial failure of Pericles to prevent the war while he should have been able to exploit Athenian relative superiority to manage its relationship with Sparta without being dragged into the war. Second, once he decided to make Athenian become a growing empire, he should have been well-prepared with any possible war scenarios with another hegemonic power, Sparta. In this way, he should have been ready with better-prepared strategies and well-prepared national resources in dealing with the contingency of Sparta's attack of Athenian territory.

His funeral oration that convinced his Athenian fellows to stay in the city's wall turned into a fiasco. His wartime strategy which was an offensive by the sea, avoidance of battle on the land, and control of the empire were stained by the absence of *fortuna* were inside the walls of Athens, a plague struck a third of Athens's armed forces in which two sons of Pericles were also among them. After that, the people of Athens began to turn against him. He defended his war strategy and was fined but reelected strategy (general) in 429 B.C. before he died due to the plague later in the same year.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATION, AND LIMITATION

For a nation to be great, such a nation shall have great and professional military leaders which are contextual to the time and social context of their nation. That is why Indonesian military leaders need to take some lesson-learned from historical records of great military leaders, one of which is the strategic and transformative leadership of General Pericles. The variables that determine the strategic-transformative leadership of General

Pericles is his grand strategy (strategic mindset); his dedication to the highest level of life for Athenian citizens (altruistic mindset and heart); and his statesmanship, generalship, leadership (his leadership traits). Correspondingly, this article is to prove that as a realist and visionary leader, Pericles's leadership - within his best effort as a limited human being- was central to the Athenian greatness in terms of its political, social, demographic, and military affairs, that successfully brought his nation to the global height.

All arguments developed and articulated in this article however have proved that a great leader who shaped the good fate of his nation through his *virtu* and *fortuna*, eventually failed to achieve the preferred ends (the eventual loss of the Athenian Empire in the Peloponnesian War and never regained its preceding power) since there were many other factors beyond his control as a limited mortal being that took part in determining the fate of Athenian Empire. As Pericles' leadership has been subject to continuous debates, the proponents of his leadership argue that during his life Pericles already performed his best to exert his leadership and grand strategy for the best interests of Athenian Empire, while he should not be entirely responsible for any factors beyond his control that affected the fate of the Athenian Empire. These factors consisted of Spartan perceptions and decisions, the alliance roles and behaviors in stimulating the hegemonic war between Sparta and Athenian, and preceding historical events. On top of everything, the theistic aspect reigns absolutely. It is still Lord God the Almighty who is the superlative strategist since He is Omni-Potent, Omni-Present, and Omni-Scient One. General Pericles is like any other mortal being. They are a limited human being and do not know everything.

On the other hand, the critics of Pericles' leadership argue that Pericles personality and ambition coupled with his

miscalculated geopolitical assessment and defense strategy in the peace and wartime contributed significantly to the loss of Athenian Empire where the Athenian Empire eventually loss to Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.) and never regained the preceding power it enjoyed before the war erupted. Based on Thucydides' explanation of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides, 2008), we can conclude that his ambition and adherence to a set of such abstract values as Athenian great leadership, transformative vision, and global-reaching diplomatic decisions brought the Athenian Empire into its height, as well as being responsible for the precipitation of war conduct against Sparta.

Nevertheless, this study still argues that as an individual, Pericles was still a great leader that could exploit his set of *virtu* and grasping the *fortuna* for the interests, security, and honor of his nation both in the domestic and international realms. He had almost everything as an ideal leader: he was rich, well-educated, populist, patriotic, great orator, statesman, art lover, and highly respected leader at national and international levels. He was a product of Athenian societal regime that in such a way fostered environments where superior qualities of individuals could flourish.

Pericles' works and achievements were concrete. During his time as an Athenian leader, Pericles introduced new political ideas and practices that eventually changed the established principles and customs that had governed Athenian domestic politics and the structure of international affairs (e.g. Pericles' military strategy transformed the conduct of ancient Greek warfare). This study sees all these as another set of proofs that he was superb in going through the rough politics of his days. Even after he died, he inherited the society with his long-lasting ideas: pride of one's nation (a love of Athens), liberty (a belief in the freedom for Athenians), and human dignity (a belief in the human ability).

Finally, it is strategically imperative to instill the strategic and transformative mindset in the academic and professional setting of Indonesian military officers culture since leadership itself is closely connected to strategy, which is related to strategic thinking or the capability of someone to think and act strategically and make decisions to benefit others. There are at least six thinking attributes that shall be instilled in the mind of Indonesian military officers since their youth time as cadets and junior officers up when they become senior, general officers: critical thinking; thinking in time; synthesis thinking; system thinking; creative thinking and future thinking (Nugroho, 2018; Nugroho, 2018b).

Such a set of capabilities, built upon self-introspection and self-awareness, is also a prerequisite of a leader, as leadership is also about serving, followership, and others' interests. Creating transformed, better conditions and followers shall become the goal of any strategic-transformative leader. Regardless of who they are, any leaders including General Pericles are still limited human beings, thus any great leaders or want-to-be great leaders must become the continuous learners, and the officeholders or politicians are not necessarily great leaders themselves. Strategic leadership is about how to think and how to act in the strategic, visionary, and executable sense. Such mindset is the determining factor to how leaders view the global strategic environment and how they make and implement strategic decisions to shape the global environment for the benefit of one's nation (Tobing, V., & Muradi, 2015). All these recommendations are important since the globally winning mindset of the nation's leaders and citizens is the most fundamental ingredient to bring such a nation as a winning nation at the global level. General Pericles has proved it during his lifetime, and we shall learn from this great leader of ancient Greece that once became a world's superpower itself.

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