

# From Reconstruction to Resilience: The Evolution of Crisis Management in Indonesia's Political Leadership

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## Abstract

This study examines the crisis management strategies employed by Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Yudhoyono) and Joko Widodo (Jokowi) in addressing two significant national crises: the 2004 Aceh tsunami and the COVID-19 pandemic. This research uses qualitative approaches and secondary data analysis to explore how individual leaders navigate crises through decision-making, public engagement, and policy implementation. The findings reveal differences in leadership styles and strategic priorities. Yudhoyono adopted a post-disaster reconstruction model, emphasizing international collaboration, large-scale infrastructure rehabilitation, and institutional reforms to improve disaster preparedness. Instead, Jokowi prioritized rapid response measures, focusing on public health interventions such as mass vaccination programs and social protection policies to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic. A comparative analysis reveals that the effectiveness of crisis leadership is influenced by factors such as policy adaptability, institutional coordination, and resource mobilization. While Yudhoyono's approach is long-term and institutionally structured, Jokowi's crisis management is characterized by real-time policy adjustments and direct public involvement. This study contributes to the discourse on political leadership and crisis governance, demonstrating how different leadership approaches impact national resilience and crisis management outcomes. The findings suggest that future leaders should adopt a balanced strategy that integrates long-term resilience planning with proactive, flexible, and inclusive crisis response mechanisms.

**Keywords:** political leadership, crisis management, governance, disaster response, public policy

## INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is crucial in addressing crises, particularly in a dynamic political context like Indonesia. Crises can appear in various forms, ranging from economic, socio-political, and health crises to natural disasters. In crises, leaders are expected to make the right and quick decisions and communicate policies to the public clearly (Firestone, 2020). For example, when a socio-political crisis arises, leaders must demonstrate the ability to bridge differences and foster dialogue to mitigate tensions. Strong leadership can accelerate post-crisis economic and social recovery, proving that a leader's ability to manage crises has a profound impact on a country's stability. Indonesia, under the political leadership of Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Yudhoyono) and Joko Widodo (Jokowi), has experienced natural disasters and health crises with far-reaching impacts. On December 26, 2004, Aceh Province experienced a magnitude 9.1–9.3 Mw earthquake followed by a devastating tsunami in the Indian Ocean, making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in modern history. This incident claimed around 230,000 lives in various countries, with Indonesia being the worst-affected region, especially Aceh. It was recorded that around 168,000 people died, while hundreds of thousands of others were left homeless. Additionally, material losses are estimated at Rp 48.9 trillion, encompassing damage to infrastructure, housing, and public facilities (Gaussyah et al., 2022; Sufri & Lassa, 2024).

Massive reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts were carried out, including the rebuilding of thousands of homes and the revitalization of the local economy. However, nearly two decades later,

the region still faces socio-economic challenges and vulnerability to similar potential disasters. On the other hand, in 2021, Indonesia experienced the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic wave due to the Delta variant, with the number of daily cases reaching more than 56,000 in July. The pandemic caused more than 144,000 deaths throughout the year, resulting in great pressure on the national health system (Lazuardi et al., 2025; Swarjana et al., 2022). The economic impact is also significant, with a contraction in various business sectors and a decrease in people's purchasing power. The government implemented policies to restrict community activities and accelerate mass vaccination programs in an effort to reduce the rate of virus spread. The government has implemented a policy of limiting community activities (PSBB/PPKM) and accelerating mass vaccination programs to reduce the rate of spread of the virus (Hadi & Gandryani, 2022; Maulida & Noor, 2021).

These two events reflect the enormous challenges faced by political leaders at the time in dealing with natural disasters and health crises. Comparing the political leadership of Presidents Yudhoyono and Jokowi during the crisis in Indonesia is a comparison of the two eras of government that are relevant in this study. Both presidents have completed two terms of office. President Yudhoyono for the period 2004 to 2014, followed by President Jokowi for the leadership period from 2014 to 2024. Yudhoyono, exactly two months after being inaugurated as President, was faced with a large-scale earthquake and tsunami crisis in Aceh, as described. Yudhoyono showed responsive leadership in handling the Aceh crisis by mobilizing humanitarian aid and rapid reconstruction, as well as involving communities in the recovery process (Lassa, 2006; Sinulingga et al., 2020). This approach not only helps physical recovery but also restores public trust in the government (Pongtiku, 2017). 21st-century political leadership demands not only an immediate crisis response but also a strategic capacity to navigate the structural constraints posed by global power shifts and evolving security paradigms. Strategic policymaking, as explained by Mossalanejad (2024), "is a function of internal, regional, and strategic environmental needs" and is closely related to geopolitical formations that influence the role and direction of national policies in times of crisis (Mossalanejad, 2024). This contextual understanding underscores the importance of analyzing leadership dynamics in managing major disruptions, such as the Aceh tsunami and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, in President Jokowi's second term (2019-2024), Jokowi was faced with a health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which began to spread in February 2020. In this situation, Jokowi must make difficult decisions, such as implementing strict social restriction policies to suppress the spread of the virus (Simanjuntak & Fitriana, 2020). However, these policies also have a negative impact on the economy, such as increasing unemployment and business closures (Winurini, 2020). Facing this challenge, Jokowi is running a mass vaccination program launched in 2021 as one of the strategic steps to restore public health and the economy (Astuti et al., 2023; Maulida & Noor, 2021). This vaccination program not only aims to reduce the number of infections but also builds public trust in the government's efforts to overcome the ongoing crisis. Leadership in crisis requires precision in decision-making. In this context, the different approaches taken by Yudhoyono and Jokowi reflect that every leader must be able to adapt to the challenges faced in their time. Yudhoyono relies more on the post-disaster reconstruction approach, while Jokowi focuses more on health and economic recovery amid a pandemic (Suhardono & Raharja, 2023).

Thus, there is no single, universally applicable approach that political leaders can use in a crisis. Each situation requires a strategy that is tailored to the existing context (Simanjuntak & Fitriana, 2020). Effective leadership, especially in crisis management, is essential to accelerate the emergency response process that all state agencies must immediately implement (Astrizon, 2021). Through proper decision-making, leaders can steer the country out of the crisis and toward a rapid recovery. With the background outlined above, this study aims to map the leadership approaches of Presidents Yudhoyono and Jokowi in the context of handling the crisis that occurred, as well as how Yudhoyono and Jokowi responded to the situation they faced by analyzing the actions and policies taken by the two leaders. Thus, we can understand how their leadership affects the outcome of the crisis that occurs. The study also reflects on the broader transformation of Indonesia's political governance since the Reform era. While centralized military dominance under Suharto limited democratic responses, post-authoritarian Indonesia witnessed increased civil society participation and institutional innovation in responding to crises. Shokheh et al., (2021) emphasized the role of civil society organizations in shaping democratic accountability and strengthening public trust during the transition period, noting that "NGOs play a role as a counterweight to state dominance and contribute significantly to public mobilization and awareness." This shift is reflected in the post-1998 crisis leadership that increasingly involves negotiations between formal institutions, public sentiment, and adaptive governance.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Political leadership during crises has long been the subject of theoretical debate, particularly in the context of decision-making, legitimacy, and governance effectiveness. Scientists have developed a diverse framework for analyzing how leaders respond to crises, from classical leadership theories to contemporary governance models. This section critically examines the theoretical debates surrounding political leadership in crisis, highlighting various perspectives on decision-making, adaptability, and public engagement. One of the main debates centers on the charismatic versus bureaucratic approach to leadership (Weber, 2010). Charismatic leadership emphasizes the leader's personal appeal, vision, and ability to inspire the public during a crisis. This approach implies that in times of emergency, strong and decisive leadership builds public trust and mobilization. However, critics state that over-reliance on charismatic leadership risks authoritarian tendencies and one-sided decision-making, which can undermine democratic accountability (Burns, 1978). Instead, bureaucratic leadership prioritizes institutional decision-making, standard procedures, and expert consultation. Although this approach ensures policy consistency and rule adherence, it can slow down crisis response due to rigid administrative structures (Hood, 2007).

The emphasis on *the role* of leadership agencies in this paper is in line with the neoclassical geopolitical framework, which views foreign policy outcomes as shaped not only by systemic pressures but also by domestic-level variables, particularly the perception and capabilities of geopolitical agents (Morgado, 2022). This model is useful in explaining how different Indonesian leaders interpret and act on crisis conditions in various ways. Morgado's concept of misguidance, which occurs when leaders fail to recognize or act in accordance with spatial geopolitical realities, is also a warning against a crisis response that erroneously fails to harness national power. Another significant debate in crisis leadership relates to top-down versus participatory governance models (Ansell & Gash, 2008). The

top-down approach centers decision-making on executive leadership, allowing for rapid policy action and implementation. This model is particularly relevant in acute crises that require immediate intervention, such as natural disasters or pandemics.

However, critics argue that centralized control can ignore local wisdom, reduce stakeholder engagement, and increase the risk of policy resistance (Boin et al., 2017). In contrast, participatory governance emphasizes collaboration between government agencies, civil society, and local communities. This approach increases transparency, legitimacy, and long-term resilience, but can prolong the decision-making process and result in delayed crisis response (Sørensen & Torfing, 2019). In addition, scientists debate the paradigm of reactive versus proactive leadership (Comfort, 2007). Reactive leadership is characterized by responding to crises as they arise, often resulting in ad hoc policy solutions. This approach may be effective at managing immediate threats but fails to build long-term resilience. In contrast, proactive leadership focuses on anticipatory governance, risk assessment, and pre-emptive policy measures to prevent crises before they escalate (Tierney, 2020). However, proactive measures often require significant investment in preparedness that may be less politically appealing due to uncertain future outcomes (Kapucu & Van Wart, 2006). Debates about crisis *framing* and narrative control also play a crucial role in leadership effectiveness (Lakoff, 2004). Leaders often shape crisis narratives through strategic communication, influencing public perception and the legitimacy of policy. The ability to control the narrative can determine whether policies are accepted or opposed. Scientists argue that effective crisis leadership requires clear, transparent, and evidence-based communication (Boin et al., 2012). However, excessive politicization of crisis narratives can lead to misinformation, loss of public trust, and policy inefficiencies (Rosenthal et al., 2001).

This study employs an integrated framework to analyze the crisis leadership of Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Yudhoyono) and Joko Widodo (Jokowi), drawing on transformational leadership theory, adaptive governance, and resilience-building frameworks. Transformational Leadership Theory emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve collective goals that go beyond personal interests (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership is crucial during crises because it fosters trust, vision, and resource mobilization. SBY's leadership during the 2004 Aceh tsunami aligned with this model, where he effectively coordinated international aid, engaged various stakeholders, and focused on long-term reconstruction. Similarly, Jokowi's mass vaccination strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic reflects transformational leadership in mobilizing national resources and public participation. Adaptive Management emphasizes flexibility, learning, and institutional coordination in addressing complex crises. This model is particularly relevant in dealing with evolving crises such as pandemics or climate-related disasters (Duit & Galaz, 2008; Folke et al., 2005). Jokowi's leadership style shows elements of adaptive governance through gradual policy adjustments, such as the shift from Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) to more local measures (PPKM).

Meanwhile, SBY's approach to post-tsunami reconstruction also involves adaptive governance by integrating local participation in rebuilding efforts. The Resilience Building Framework focuses on building institutional and community capacity to deal with future crises. The framework highlights the importance of preparedness, decentralized decision-making, and long-term strategic planning (Boin et al., 2012; Comfort, 2007). The study applied this framework to assess the contributions of both leaders to national resilience. Yudhoyono established disaster management through the creation of the BNPB (National Disaster Management Agency) in 2008, a crucial step in building resilience. Jokowi's efforts to expand health infrastructure post-COVID-19 align with this framework, ensuring preparedness to

face future pandemics. The leadership response was also influenced by Indonesia's evolving strategic doctrine, particularly under President Joko Widodo, which positioned crisis management as part of a broader defense modernization and sovereignty affirmation framework. Maksun and Surwandono (2024) argue that the Jokowi administration marked a shift towards securitizing strategic spaces, such as the Natuna Islands, and institutionalizing national resilience as part of defense diplomacy. This development confirms that crisis governance in Indonesia involves not only internal adaptive mechanisms but also the adjustment of external alliances in response to changing geopolitical pressures. The theoretical debates and frameworks analyzed in this section provide a comprehensive lens for understanding political leadership during crises. While transformational leadership theory explains the capacity of leaders to inspire action, adaptive governance emphasizes the need for flexibility and policy learning.

Additionally, the resilience-building framework emphasizes the importance of long-term preparedness. The comparative analysis of SBY and Jokowi illustrates that effective crisis leadership requires a balance between centralized decision-making and participatory governance, as well as proactive measures and adaptive responses. Future research should further investigate how these frameworks interact in diverse political and institutional contexts to enhance crisis management strategies globally. In addition, adaptive capacity in crisis leadership is often tested in turbulent geopolitical contexts where regional identities, ideologies, and alliances shape the space of possible actions. Mossalanejad (2024) asserts that an effective crisis response today must integrate "tactical flexibility" and "multilateral mechanisms" to manage the threat of destabilization. Such integration is crucial for a country like Indonesia, which simultaneously faces domestic vulnerabilities and external geopolitical shifts.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research employs a qualitative approach, a highly effective method for understanding the nuances and complexities of social phenomena. This approach allows researchers to dig deeper into the context, policies, and impacts of the actions taken by both leaders. In this context, the qualitative approach serves as a window that provides a broader view of the dynamics that occur in public policy, as well as how the decisions taken can affect society (Yanow, 2017). The data sources in this study comprise secondary data, including various official documents, media reports, and relevant academic studies. The use of these secondary data sources is very important because it provides researchers with access to analyze existing information and compare various perspectives. Relevant academic studies can also provide a strong theoretical framework for understanding the broader context, as well as aid in identifying patterns that may not be visible if they rely on only one type of data source (Yan et al., 2014). By combining these various data sources, researchers can build a comprehensive and in-depth analysis. This shows that every policy has not only one side, but also complex consequences to consider. Thus, this qualitative approach not only allows researchers to understand policies in depth but also provides more appropriate recommendations based on a thorough analysis (Wibisono, 2022). Research that uses a qualitative approach with secondary data sources offers in-depth and holistic insights into the context, policies, and impacts of leaders' actions. Through a comprehensive analysis of various data sources, researchers can identify patterns, challenges, and opportunities that exist in public policy (Urlick, 2018). This approach not only enriches our understanding of social phenomena but also provides a solid foundation for better decision-making in the future.

This study applied a comparative case study design that focused on two major crises (the 2004 Aceh tsunami and the COVID-19 pandemic) as separate case studies. Secondary data collected (e.g., government reports, media articles, and scientific publications) are systematically reviewed and qualitatively analyzed using document analysis techniques. The researcher conducted *thematic coding* of the documents to identify key themes related to leadership responses and the results achieved in each crisis. Data source triangulation is employed to enhance the validity of findings by comparing information across government documents, independent reports, and academic analyses (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 2015). This approach is methodologically justifiable because secondary data analysis allows the utilization of existing rich data to generate new insights, if systematic procedures are followed (Johnston, 2014). Although primary data collection (e.g., in-person interviews) can provide additional insights, the scope of this study leverages available records given the retrospective nature of the crisis being studied. All data are critically evaluated for credibility and relevance, and conclusions are drawn through an iterative synthesis process that aligns with the research's theoretical framework. This approach to comparative qualitative case studies ensures that the analysis has contextual depth while allowing for the identification of similarities and differences in leadership patterns across two distinct crisis cases.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Yudhoyono and Jokowi's Leadership in Various Approaches to Political Leadership. Political leadership is a crucial topic of study that is widely discussed in academic literature, particularly in relation to its role in addressing complex crises. The concept of democratic political leadership emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and community participation in the decision-making process. Weber (2010) emphasizes that democratic leaders must be able to encourage public deliberation and ensure that decisions reflect the aspirations of the majority without neglecting the rights of minority groups. This approach was particularly relevant during the Yudhoyono administration, notably in response to the 2004 Aceh tsunami disaster. SBY's responsive and community-based actions demonstrate the importance of effective communication in building public trust during disaster crises. Additionally, transformational leadership offers a perspective on how leaders can inspire positive change through a strong vision and the enhancement of public morality. Burns (1977) described transformational leadership as the leader's attempt to raise the morale and motivation of his followers to a higher level. This is evident in Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) policy regarding the mass vaccination program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clear public communication and consistent communication about the benefits of vaccination are an important part of efforts to build public trust and strengthen responses to health crises (Enria et al., 2021).

The concept of interactive leadership was introduced by Sørensen and Torfing (2019), who emphasized the importance of community engagement and cross-border collaboration between governments and other stakeholders. In this context, leaders are expected to be not only key decision-makers, but also facilitators of dialogue that encourages the creation of innovative and participatory policy solutions. Jokowi's strategy in engaging the public through social distancing policies and expanding vaccination coverage shows an element of interactive leadership, where the government works with various levels of society to achieve better results. For example, the participation of civil

society organizations in aid distribution during the pandemic helped ensure that aid reached more than 10 million families across Indonesia, an achievement that demonstrates the advantages of this interactive approach in increasing policy reach. In relation to the distribution of power, the approach to moral realism developed by Xuetong (2016) emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between power and ethical responsibility. In this view, political leaders must act in accordance with universally accepted moral principles, such as justice and social responsibility, to maintain the legitimacy of their government. This approach is particularly relevant in critiquing policies implemented during times of crisis, especially those related to the enforcement of public accountability. Meanwhile, Edinger (1975) emphasized that political leaders need to adapt to the dynamics of *multilevel governance* that involves interaction between the central government, local governments, and non-governmental actors. This coordination challenge is evident during the pandemic, when the central government must ensure policy synchronization with local governments to ensure effective crisis management. These dynamics demonstrate that the effectiveness of political leadership is highly dependent on leaders' ability to manage cross-level relationships harmoniously. The literature on political leadership in crisis reveals that a leader's success is determined not only by the strength of their authority but also by their ability to adapt to the situation's context, convey a clear vision, and build public trust. Various approaches, ranging from democratic to transformational and interactive, suggest that there is no single, universal approach to addressing crises. Each situation requires a strategy tailored to the specific challenges it presents. This confirms that effective political leadership is the result of dynamic interactions between leaders, society, and developing socio-political conditions.

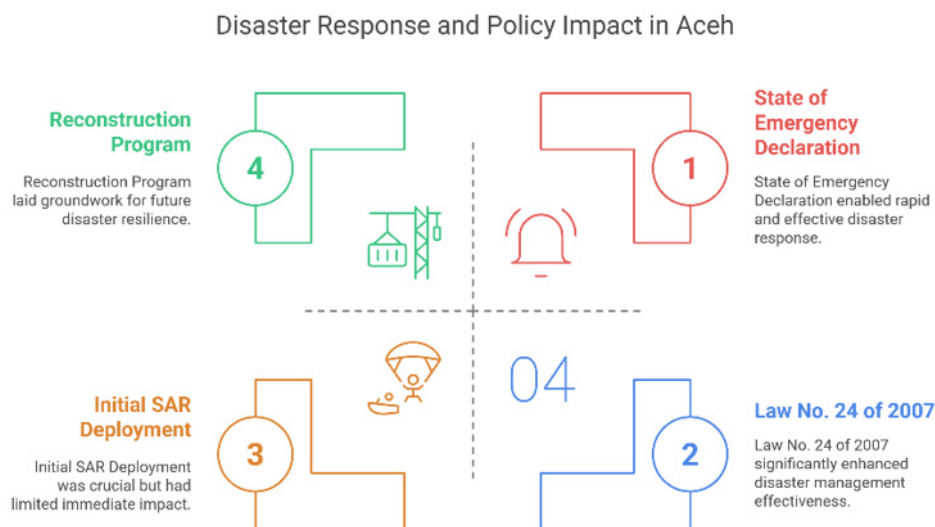
The political leadership of Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo (Jokowi) demonstrated significant differences in their approach to decision-making during times of crisis. Yudhoyono, who served from 2004 to 2014, prioritized a top-down approach in decision-making. In the 2008 global economic crisis, for example, Yudhoyono relied on a financial team of experts to formulate policies, which were then delivered to the public without much public participation. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Indonesia's economic growth in 2009 was recorded at 4.5% despite the global crisis, showing that the policies taken are quite effective in maintaining financial stability (Pattinama, 2009). Instead, Jokowi, who took office in 2014, prioritized public participation in decision-making. In response to the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Jokowi utilized digital platforms to solicit input from the public through social media and applications. This can be seen from the policy of Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM), which involves input from various levels of society. According to a survey by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC), around 70% of people feel involved in the decision-making process related to handling COVID-19 (SMRC, 2017). This approach demonstrates that Jokowi is striving to foster transparency and accountability in his leadership.

This difference in approach is also seen in the way the two leaders communicate with the public. Yudhoyono tends to use mass media to convey information, while Jokowi is more active on social media. This makes Jokowi closer to young people who have more access to information through digital platforms (Sari et al., 2022). A study by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics shows that Jokowi's use of social media during the pandemic has increased public trust in the government (Doni, 2022). Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. Yudhoyono's more centralized approach may be faster in decision-making, but it is less community-engaged. Meanwhile, Jokowi's more inclusive

approach takes longer to formulate policies, but can increase public trust and participation. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of each strategy in the context of the crisis at hand (Fealy, 2020). In this context, external factors that influence decision-making must also be taken into account. The crises faced by Yudhoyono and Jokowi differ in their nature and impact, thus affecting the way each leader responds.

## Yudhoyono's Policies and Crisis Management in Handling Earthquakes and Tsunami Waves in Aceh

The earthquake, followed by a tsunami wave that hit the westernmost region of Indonesia at the tip of the island of Sumatra, specifically Aceh (Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam), is one of the most devastating disasters to have occurred on earth. The 9.1 Mw earthquake, followed by the tsunami, claimed hundreds of thousands of lives with severe infrastructure damage. In this context, President Yudhoyono's leadership is significantly put to the test, especially in terms of disaster emergency response. Yudhoyono's government immediately issued a decision to declare a state of emergency in Aceh. The SAR (Search and Rescue) team was deployed, and international assistance began to arrive (Danugroho, 2021).



**Figure 1.** Disaster Response and Policy Impacts in Aceh

According to an Oxfam report (2005), more than 1,000 volunteers were deployed to assist with the evacuation and rescue process. Additionally, the government deployed the military to assist in handling the disaster. After passing through the emergency response phase, where all components must work not only quickly but also precisely, the next stage moves on to the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase. In 2005, the Yudhoyono government launched the Aceh and Nias Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program with a budget of 7 trillion rupiah. Nias Island is included in the administrative area of North Sumatra Province, which was also affected by the disaster (Boen, 2014).

The project involves the redevelopment of infrastructure, housing, and other public facilities. According to a report by the International Organization for Migration (2008) About 90% of destroyed

homes have been rebuilt within two years of the disaster. Reflecting on the 2004 Aceh disaster, Yudhoyono strengthened the disaster mitigation policy by issuing Law No. 24 of 2007 on Disaster Management, which aims to build a more effective disaster management system. This law regulates efforts for prevention, handling, and rehabilitation after disasters (Danugroho, 2021). The involvement of international communities and organizations in the disaster management process is also a focus of President Yudhoyono. Through collaboration with international institutions such as UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and WHO (World Health Organization), the government has succeeded in attracting global attention to Aceh's recovery efforts (Gaussyah et al., 2022). Training programs for local communities in terms of disaster mitigation were also introduced, which aimed to increase community awareness and the ability to deal with future disasters (Fanany, 2014; Herningtyas, 2014).

### Jokowi's Policies and Crisis Management in Handling the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic was first detected in Indonesia in early March 2020, with the first case announced by President Joko Widodo on March 2, 2020. Since then, the number of COVID-19 cases has continued to increase rapidly (Retaduari, 2022). Faced with this situation, the Indonesian government is taking measures to control the spread of the virus and protect public health. The Jokowi government implemented various health policies to address the pandemic. One of the initial steps taken was the establishment of the Task Force for the Acceleration of COVID-19 Handling on March 13, 2020 (Hadi & Gandryani, 2022). This policy aims to coordinate all efforts to handle COVID-19 throughout Indonesia. Additionally, the government implements Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) (Winurini, 2020). Data from the WHO show that PSBB is one of the effective steps to reduce the spread of the virus in the community, proving that the strict restrictive measures taken by the Jokowi government at the beginning of the pandemic had a real impact on containing the rate of COVID-19 transmission (Wati et al., 2021).



**Figure 2.** Jokowi's Response to COVID-19

In addition to health policies, the government also launched social assistance programs to support people economically affected by the pandemic. In 2020, the government allocated a budget of Rp 110 trillion for various social assistance programs, including direct cash assistance (BLT) and the Family Hope (PKH) program. According to data from BPS, this program has successfully reached more than 10 million families throughout Indonesia, providing much-needed assistance during crises (Muthiah, 2021; Wahyuni, 2020). The Jokowi government and its team implemented an intensive public communication strategy during the pandemic. Through regular press conferences and the use of social media, the government seeks to provide accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19. Clear and consistent communication is essential in establishing public trust and encouraging people to follow health protocols. However, challenges remain, especially in the face of fake news and disinformation circulating on social media (Astuti et al., 2023; Mali et al., 2021). Community and private sector engagement has also been key in crisis management during the pandemic. The government encourages the active participation of local communities and non-governmental organizations in distributing social assistance and promoting health education. In addition, the private sector also plays an important role in supporting government efforts, such as the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and vaccines (Hadi & Gandryani, 2022; Maulida & Noor, 2021).

## **DISASTER RESPONSE**

Disaster response is one of the important indicators in assessing political leadership. During Yudhoyono's leadership, one of the major disasters that occurred was the 2004 earthquake and tsunami in Aceh. Yudhoyono's quick action in responding to this disaster received praise from various parties. The Yudhoyono government immediately sent aid and coordinated with multiple international institutions (Gaussyah et al., 2022). According to a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Indonesia receives more than 7 billion US dollars in international assistance for disaster management (Bradt et al., 2001). The speed and precision of these measures helped speed up the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in Aceh. On the contrary, in dealing with natural disasters such as the 2020 floods in Jakarta, Jokowi showed a different response. Although Jokowi has mobilized considerable resources to deal with the floods, numerous criticisms have arisen regarding the government's slow initial response. According to data from the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), the floods that hit Jakarta in early 2020 caused economic losses of 1.1 trillion rupiah and impacted more than 30,000 residents (BNPB, 2014).

Criticism of Jokowi arose because he was perceived as not agile enough in responding to emergencies, despite the government's efforts to improve infrastructure and prevent future floods. The inter-agency coordination system has a significant impact on the speed and accuracy of responses to disasters. Yudhoyono has a well-organized disaster management team, enabling a swift response to emergencies. On the other hand, Jokowi is attempting to establish a more integrated system; however, the challenge of coordinating between institutions remains an obstacle. A study by the Center for Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR) shows that a lack of coordination between agencies often hinders the effectiveness of disaster response (Naheed, 2021). A comparison between these two leaders reveals that, while both are committed to addressing disasters, the manner and effectiveness of their responses are heavily influenced by the organizational structure and systems in place. The success of disaster

management depends not only on the individual actions of the leader but also on the system's ability to adapt and respond quickly. In this context, it is essential to consider how the experiences of dealing with disasters by Yudhoyono and Jokowi can be utilized to enhance the disaster management system in the future.

## **INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION**

Inter-agency coordination is a crucial aspect in responding to disasters. Yudhoyono faces challenges in terms of coordination, especially when various government agencies are involved in disaster management. However, the establishment of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), formed in 2008, is a positive step in improving coordination. BNPB functions as an institution that coordinates all disaster management efforts, from the pre-disaster to post-disaster stages. Data from BNPB indicate that during Yudhoyono's leadership, there was a significant improvement in the effectiveness of disaster response, with faster response times compared to before (Djalante & Garschagen, 2017). On the other hand, Jokowi faces new challenges in terms of inter-agency coordination, especially when dealing with more complex disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Although Jokowi established the COVID-19 Handling Task Force, criticism of inter-agency coordination continued to emerge. Many parties consider that communication between the Ministry of Health and other institutions does not always run smoothly, which has an impact on the effectiveness of handling (LSI, 2023). Yudhoyono is more focused on building a clear organizational structure, while Jokowi seeks to optimize the use of technology and digital communication. Both leaders also recognize that the success of disaster management depends not only on government actions but also on community participation. In Yudhoyono's case, the people of Aceh are actively engaged in the post-tsunami rehabilitation process, while Jokowi seeks to encourage community participation in efforts to handle COVID-19. This demonstrates that collaboration between governments and communities is crucial in developing an effective response to disasters.

## **LONG-TERM IMPACT**

After facing various crises, both Yudhoyono and Jokowi implemented policy changes that had an impact on society. Yudhoyono, after the 2008 global economic crisis, strengthened fiscal and monetary policies to maintain financial stability. One of the steps taken is to increase the budget for the infrastructure sector, which aims to boost economic growth and create jobs. Data from the Ministry of Public Works shows that infrastructure investment increased from 90 trillion rupiah in 2008 to 200 trillion rupiah in 2014 (Suraji et al., 2005). This policy not only helps economic recovery but also has a long-term impact on infrastructure development in Indonesia. Jokowi took significant steps to improve the health system after facing the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the main policies implemented is a substantial increase in the health budget, from around 121 trillion rupiah in 2020 to 169 trillion rupiah in 2021 (Wati et al., 2021). Additionally, Jokowi encouraged health system reform, focusing on increasing hospital capacity and improving health services. This policy is expected to increase the resilience of Indonesia's health system in the future. Yudhoyono has faced criticism over a lack of

transparency in budget management. Jokowi was also highlighted for the effective use of the health budget. Therefore, both need to ensure that policy changes can be implemented properly and benefit the community. After facing the economic crisis, Yudhoyono realized the importance of diversifying the economy and strengthening the real sector. Policies aimed at increasing investment and creating jobs are part of this learning.

According to the World Bank report, Indonesia's post-crisis economic growth showed a positive trend, with an average increase of 5.6% per year during the period 2009-2014 (Bank, 2020). Jokowi, on the other hand, learned from the experience of handling COVID-19 to strengthen the health system and food security. One of the steps taken is to enhance agricultural and food security programs, aiming to reduce dependence on imports. Data from the Ministry of Agriculture shows that rice production increased by 3% in 2021, which shows success in improving national food security (Rachman et al., 2022). However, learning from experience is not limited to policy, but also to aspects of communication and coordination. Both Yudhoyono and Jokowi are aware of the importance of effective communication with the public to build trust. Experience during a crisis can be the cornerstone for developing more effective communication strategies in the future. In this regard, community involvement in decision-making and disaster response is becoming increasingly important.

## DISCUSSION

The social and political context of Indonesia during the leadership of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jokowi was very different. Yudhoyono led the period from 2004 to 2014, during which Indonesia was in a post-reform transition phase. At this time, the main challenges faced are economic recovery after the 1998 crisis and political stability. According to BPS data, Indonesia's economic growth averaged 5.8% per year during Yudhoyono's leadership, which indicates relatively good economic stability (Pattinama, 2009). Meanwhile, Jokowi, who served from 2014 to 2024, faces different challenges, including social issues such as economic inequality and political polarization. The health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in 2020, became a significant test for his leadership. According to a World Bank report, Indonesia's economic growth in 2020 contracted by -2.07%, the worst since the monetary crisis (Bank, 2020). This difference in socio-political context also influenced the leadership style of the two presidents. Yudhoyono tends to take a more diplomatic approach and prioritize consensus, while Jokowi is more proactive and risk-taking, as in the controversial policy of moving the capital. This illustrates how the socio-political context can influence a leader's strategy and decisions. Explicitly, Yudhoyono's diplomatic and consensus-oriented leadership style can be attributed to his participatory leadership approach, in which he seeks to embrace a wide range of stakeholders in decision-making. This participatory approach is reflected in efforts to resolve the Aceh conflict through dialogue and consensus, as exemplified by the success of the 2005 Helsinki MoU, which led to the end of the Aceh conflict through inclusive negotiations. On the contrary, Jokowi's courage in making risky decisions reflects a more transformational and assertive leadership style, as seen in innovative and rapid pandemic handling policies. Jokowi dared to take unpopular steps in the long-term interest, such as accelerating the national vaccination program and reallocating large budgets for economic recovery, which affirmed his proactive approach.

The personal experience and background of Yudhoyono and Jokowi also play an important role in shaping their leadership styles. Yudhoyono was a general with a military background and experience in government. Before becoming President, he served as the coordinating minister for Politics and Security and Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces. This experience provided him with a profound understanding of the importance of political security and stability. During his leadership, Yudhoyono successfully resolved several horizontal conflicts, such as those in Poso and Aceh, through a dialogue and reconciliation approach. On the contrary, Jokowi comes from among businesspeople and entrepreneurs. Before serving as President, he was the Governor of DKI Jakarta. His experience in local government gave him insight into the daily challenges faced by the community. Jokowi is known as a leader who is *a blusukan*, or one who goes directly into the field to listen to the people's complaints. This approach reflects his more pragmatic and popular leadership style, which has proven effective in several infrastructure development programs in Jakarta (Sari et al., 2022). Both leaders emphasize that their personal backgrounds and experiences can influence the decisions they make. Yudhoyono tends to take a cautious and planned approach, while Jokowi is more courageous in making quick and direct decisions. These differences create different dynamics in their leadership, especially in the face of crises.

Regarding the importance of adaptability in dealing with crises, Yudhoyono emphasized that in uncertain situations, an approach that prioritizes dialogue and consensus can help ease social tensions. This is evident from its success in resolving the conflict in Aceh through the 2005 Helsinki MoU, which has become a model for conflict resolution in Indonesia (Ambardi et al., 2018). Meanwhile, Jokowi gave a lesson about the importance of courage in making decisions. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, Jokowi took swift steps in implementing health and economic policies, such as the National Economic Recovery Program (PEN), which was launched in 2020. According to a report by the Ministry of Finance, this program has succeeded in saving millions of jobs and supporting affected sectors (Laucereno, 2022). In addition, the two leaders also emphasized that transparency and good communication with the public are key to building trust. Yudhoyono often holds press conferences and open dialogues with the public, while Jokowi uses social media to convey policies and answer public questions. It is important to ensure that the public feels involved and has a voice in the decision-making process.

Public involvement has proven to be a crucial factor in the effectiveness of the crisis response of the two leaders. Yudhoyono's leadership demonstrated a strategy of embracing local communities in Aceh's post-tsunami rehabilitation, for example, by absorbing local aspirations in reconstruction programs and involving communities in disaster mitigation training that not only accelerated recovery but also empowered citizens to play a role in reconstruction. This participatory approach has been proven to increase public trust, as evidenced by the recovery of public confidence in the government after the disaster (Pongtiku, 2017). Similarly, Jokowi leveraged public involvement by utilizing social media and digital feedback channels to engage citizens in managing the pandemic. Survey data show that around 70% of the public feels involved in decision-making on handling COVID-19 under Jokowi's leadership (SMRC, 2017), which indicates that Jokowi's participatory communication style has increased *public buy-in*. Research in crisis management confirms that high public trust correlates with better adherence to public health measures. This implies that Jokowi's open communication and transparency are likely to increase citizens' compliance with policies such as social distancing

and vaccination. Thus, participatory and interactive leadership elements in both governments have a profoundly positive impact on the outcome of crisis management, ranging from increased public trust to enhanced policy compliance.

Based on the analysis of the leadership of Yudhoyono and Jokowi, several recommendations are proposed for future Indonesian leaders. First, leaders need to have the ability to adapt quickly to changing situations. In an increasingly complex and dynamic world, the ability to think critically and make the right decisions in a short period of time will be invaluable. Second, leaders need to build effective communication with the community. Leaders who can listen and respond to the needs of the people will be more appreciated and trusted. The use of information technology and social media can be leveraged to reach a broader audience and foster more intimate interactions. Third, leaders must be able to create inclusive and sustainable policies. One notable difference observed was the direct impact of each leadership style on the outcome of the emergency response. Yudhoyono, who was agile in responding to the Aceh crisis, supported by a well-organized team, was able to mobilize aid quickly. For example, the United Nations reported that more than US\$7 billion in international assistance was effectively channeled to Aceh, allowing the reconstruction of 90% of destroyed homes within two years.

These results demonstrate how Yudhoyono's more structured and coordinated leadership has facilitated faster physical recovery after the disaster. In contrast, Jokowi's response to the 2020 Jakarta floods drew criticism for its early delays, reflecting coordination challenges in a more decentralized approach; the floods caused losses of Rp 1.1 trillion and impacted more than 30,000 residents, highlighting the consequences when early action and coordination are less than optimal. This comparison highlights that leadership approaches – both centralized and participatory – significantly impact the outcome of crises in terms of the speed of aid and the magnitude of impact that can be prevented.

## CONCLUSION

The study highlights the differences in leadership strategies applied by Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo in managing the national crisis that occurred during their reigns. Yudhoyono tends to employ a systematic approach based on international coordination and reconstruction policies, as evident in the post-disaster response to the 2004 Aceh tsunami. On the contrary, Jokowi prioritizes policies based on rapid response and adaptation to changes in field conditions, especially in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. These differences demonstrate that no single approach is entirely superior in addressing crises. However, the strategies applied must be tailored to the specific situation and challenges faced. The results of this study provide insight into the factors that determine the effectiveness of political leadership in crisis, including speed and precision in decision-making, policy flexibility, cross-sector coordination, and active community involvement. Future leaders are expected to combine a long-term reconstruction approach with more responsive and innovative policies in the face of crises. The study also emphasizes that *evidence-based policymaking* and transparency in communication with the public are important aspects in building trust and ensuring the effectiveness of implemented policies. By considering these factors, it is hoped that Indonesia can develop a more resilient system of government to face the challenges of future crises.

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