

# LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION IMPLICATION IN BOJONEGORO REGENCY

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## ABSTRACT

The election of outstanding regional heads brings hope for the future of leadership in Indonesia. One of the regional heads is the Regent of Bojonegoro for the 2008–2018 period. This study aims to determine the implementation of leadership that can bring changes to public organizations such as the Government of Bojonegoro Regency. By using qualitative methods and case study approaches, this research seeks to reduce Suyoto's leadership experience to the essence of implementing leadership needed by public organizations. Through codification using NVivo, ten themes were found, namely looking for solutions or innovative, pro-people, good characters, not being distant, having a forgiving nature, being caring, visionary, being a public bus driver, listening to feedback, and being a role model. The results show that leaders need to have the right traits and skills, which are based on the drive to serve. This result should be imitated by other regions in choosing their leaders. But the difficulty lies in the urge to serve, because the urge is not obvious from the very beginning of the election of a leader, but will be tested once the leader gains power.

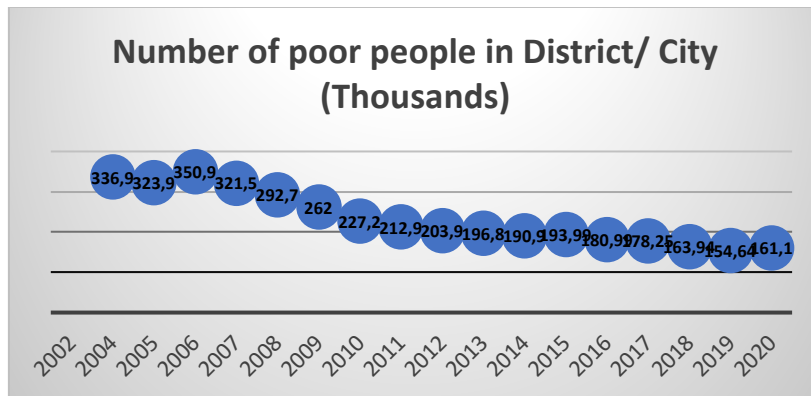
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## INTRODUCTION

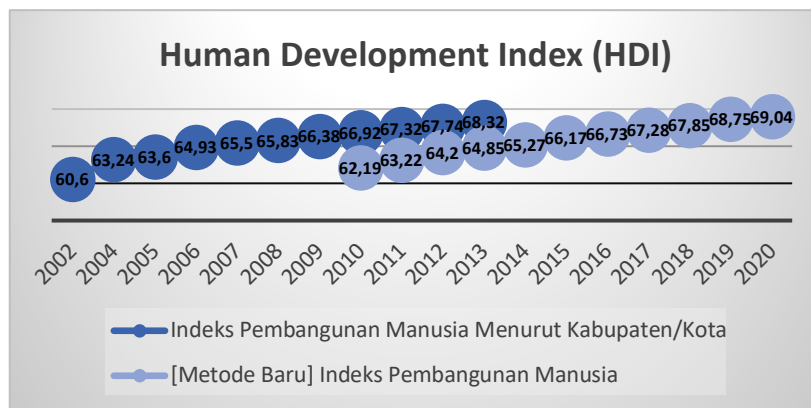
TEMPO Magazine in 2017 wrote a special report on regional heads who were considered high achievers. This is deemed necessary, because since the implementation of regional autonomy, many regional heads have been entangled in corruption cases: 343 regents or mayors and 18 governors (Kurniawan et al., 2017). The ten outstanding regional heads of TEMPO's version were selected through a long selection involving various parties, one of which is the Corruption Eradication Commission. In addition to being free from corruption, another requirement that must be met is that the regional head has made innovations that improve the lives of the people in his area. One of the regional heads who successfully passed this selection was the 2008-2018 Bojonegoro Regent, Suyoto. Because of that success, he was also able to convincingly win the regional head election in 2013 and serve for a second term, paired with the same deputy regent.

Before 2008, not many people knew Bojonegoro. Severe poverty that has occurred since before the independence of the Republic of Indonesia has prevented Bojonegoro's human resources from experiencing significant development (Penders, 1984). This condition is also exacerbated by floods and droughts which alternately complicate the lives of the people of Bojonegoro. Many residents work as housemaids in big cities, such as Surabaya. This shows that even the residents of Bojonegoro themselves are not proud of themselves. Suyoto's

leadership has brought about significant changes, as shown in the chart below for the Number of Poor People and the Human Development Index.



**Figure 1. Number of Poor People in Bojonegoro 2002-2020**



**Figure 2. Human Development Index 2002-2020**

Suyoto's leadership succeeded in making breakthroughs that made this possible. The phenomenon of change that occurred in Bojonegoro Regency in the 2008-2018 period was marked by several breakthroughs that were classified as out of the box.

The first breakthrough is transparency, which is carried out to foster trust in the promises given by public officials, because these promises can be billed and questioned if they are not in accordance with reality. Also a sense of trust that the local government is here to protect the community.

The second breakthrough is public dialogue as a means of learning from the people served, as well as a means of control. The Public Dialogue is held every Friday afternoon by opening the Malowopati Hall. Anyone can come, no need to wear certain attributes, meaning that people with their daily lives—for example, wearing flip-flops—are still allowed to attend. It is based on simple thinking. First, the district pavilion belongs to the community. There should be no prohibition for people to come there. In fact, not only the pavilion, the regent's official residence is also open to the public. Not infrequently Suyoto dined with government employees of Bojonegoro Regency and the community. In addition to the Public Dialogue, another form of open communication is to inform the cell phone numbers of local government officials so that the public can make direct contact and take advantage of the LAPOR! ([www.lapor.go.id](http://www.lapor.go.id)).

The third breakthrough is the Management Review which is a learning tool for every employee of the Bojonegoro Regency Government regardless of position and position. Transparency that is carried out through Management Review is that every OPD can learn and provide input to other OPDs, as well as to maintain synergies with related works. This transparency eliminates the silos created from the sixteen existing agencies, namely: the Department of Agriculture; Department of Manpower, Transmigration and Social Affairs; Department of Population and Civil Registration; Public Works Service; Irrigation Service; Department of Industry and Commerce; Department of Forestry and Plantations; Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries; Department of Revenue, Financial and Asset Management; Education authorities; Department of Transportation; Department of culture and tourism; Public health Office; Office of Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises; Office of Communication and Information Technology; and the Department of Hygiene and Parks.

The fourth breakthrough is infrastructure, in this case the construction of roads to remote areas with paving, which opens access to remote areas. The first reason, the use of asphalt is too expensive. Bojonegoro is often hit by floods so that the road will often be damaged and often repaired, besides the soil structure of Bojonegoro which is a moving ground makes the road often damaged so that asphalt repairs will occur many times. Also, working with asphalt requires the contribution of another party, which results in additional costs. These three things make the use of asphalt and its maintenance too high for Bojonegoro. The second reason is that paving is cheaper because it can be made yourself, moreover some areas are sand producers. In addition, the work can be done in mutual cooperation by the community.

The fifth breakthrough was the political amnesty, which was to resolve the dispute over the ownership of the regional head in 2007 by forgiving district government employees who had previously been opposed to Suyoto. This has a big impact with the emergence of a positive impression of a professional bureaucratic leader, not based on likes and dislikes. The political amnesty eliminates the anxiety of employees who do not vote for Suyoto because generally what happens to supporters of political opponents is that they are removed from office or transferred to other places. With the amnesty, Suyoto promised that his assessment would be the skills needed to perform well as an employee of the Regency Government.

The sixth breakthrough is the Open Government Partnership. This is an international acknowledgment of openness and public participation in an area. Even though the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government and Banda Aceh City Government are also running for this event, it is proven that only Bojonegoro has passed as an example of world-class OGP. Other cities that are also examples of the first regional governments in Asia are Seoul (South Korea) and Tbilisi (Georgia) ([Bojonegoro chosen as pilot local government partnership, 2016](#)).

[Aziz et al. \(2012\)](#) analyze 15 countries including Indonesia, that based on the 2008 Government Effectiveness Score (GES), which indicates leadership effectiveness, Indonesia gets a score of -0.29 which means that leadership in Indonesia is not effective. In Asia alone, this figure is very low, compared to Singapore (2.53—very effective), Malaysia (1.13—moderately effective), and China (0.24—less effective). Of all countries, Indonesia ranks 14th, only better than Egypt. However, public officials in Indonesia consider their bureaucratic performance to be “adequate” ([Hyden et al., 2003](#)).

Another study was conducted on public service organizations in Singapore in relation to the implementation of Public Service for the 21st Century (PS21) ([Yeo et al., 2015](#)). Singapore implements PS21 as a different form of NPM. While NPM emphasizes public sector effectiveness and supports increased leadership engagement such as in the private sector, privatization, and outsourcing, PS21 maintains and strengthens public services as an institution at the forefront of meritocratic excellence. Thus, the implementation is so that the public sector has a culture that

emphasizes high service standards, changes in the mindset of managers, creates a new bureaucratic culture that is client-centered, and service excellence. In PS21, the emphasis is on leadership to encourage the emergence of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB).

Public sector workers also tend to focus more on legislative constraints, particularly compliance with procedures, rather than on agency performance and client needs (Perryer & Jordan, 2005). As a result, modern public sector leaders face the challenge of creating a work climate where commitment to the organization is the norm, and have difficulty making their institutions more responsive to the changing needs of each stakeholder.

Research on New Public Management in Indonesia was conducted by Harun et al. (2017) found three main undesirable impacts in the implementation of New Public Management in Indonesia, namely the increasing dominance of local government by regional elites—namely elected officials (1), the weakening of the role of internal audit at the local government level (2), and corruption at the local government level. local government (3).

In the context of the leader as an actor of change, the term change leader is known. Cawsey et al. (2015) define a change leader as a person who "attracts people to change through the use of a strong vision of change". While Katzenbach (in Gerwing, 2016) states that "True change leaders are individuals who lead initiatives that influence tens to hundreds of other people to do things differently—and better—by applying various leadership and change approaches".

This Open Local Government pilot is just one example of an internationally recognized breakthrough. Suyoto is one of the regional leaders who has received quite a number of national and international awards, and is often asked to speak at international forums regarding the management in Bojonegoro. With a number of innovations that have proven successful, this study aims to determine the implementation of leadership that can bring change to the Bojonegoro Regency Government organization.

## **METHOD**

This is a qualitative study with a phenomenological perspective, where the focus is the experience of changes process in Bojonegoro Regency. The basic assumption of this perspective is the essence of sharing experiences, where the researcher's tasked is describing the essence or basic structure of the experience. Experiences from various sources are collected, analyzed, and compared to identify the essence of the phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this case changes in Bojonegoro Regency. The phenomenon studied is the leadership of Suyoto so that it can bring significant changes to the people of Bojonegoro. The qualitative research method was chosen to find out how the leadership implementation was carried out.

At the initial stage, a grand tour was conducted by holding discussions with several parties, including the former Regent Suyoto. In addition, researchers were also provided with a visit to Bojonegoro in 2015, where researchers saw and recorded the existing conditions in the district. Based on the grand tour, a research plan was made involving Suyoto as the main informant. Meanwhile, the next informant will follow the results of the discussion with Suyoto. This method is known as snowball sampling.

Interviews were conducted with 11 sources who are government employees of Bojonegoro Regency and are closely related to the process of change. Due to the pandemic, interviews are mostly conducted via Zoom application. Other data also includes documents—including transcripts from interviews in 2015 and news about Bojonegoro—as well as photos. Many of the photos contributed by the informants themselves, can also be accessed on Suyoto's social media.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During his ten years in office, it seems that Bojonegoro is still improving. From being left behind as a poor area, Bojonegoro has come out of the 10 poorest areas (Sudarmojo, 2017). Empirically, Suyoto's figure as a leader has a significant influence on the community. His leadership style which tends to be egalitarian—not exclusive like most leaders—can grab people's attention so that they are willing to participate in its development programs. The question about the perception of the leader needed raises several themes as follows.

### a) Looking for solutions or innovative

One of the most prominent forms of leadership implementation in Bojonegoro Regency is the presence of the government as a "solution seeker" for the problems faced by the people in the district. This is evidenced by the findings of the theme which is dominated by the government's efforts to provide solutions and seek breakthroughs for the community, for example in overcoming the problems of flooding and drought.

This theme seems to be a picture of the ideal leader wanted by the people of Bojonegoro. This is understandable because the people of Bojonegoro have been in a bad condition, even Penders (1984) has noted how this area experienced endemic poverty which continued until 2008. Therefore, the community needs leaders who are able to find solutions and find breakthroughs to get out of poverty and difficulties.

In many ways, natural conditions cannot be changed. For example, flooding due to overflowing Bengawan Solo River and drought due to soil types that cannot store water. So far, this condition has been accepted by people who tend to surrender. They even use it as a satirical joke: in the dry season they cannot wash (because there is no water), during the rainy season they cannot sit (because of the flood). After Suyoto became regent, this resignation was turned into an effort to have a good standard of living despite unfavorable conditions.

When he was declared the winner of the 2007 Pilkada to be sworn in as Regent in 2008, Suyoto was greeted by a huge flood. In the 2008 flood, no one has taken care of the flood. At that time people did not realize that the flood was coming. The Bojonegoro flood in 2007-2008 was a consignment flood, which meant that there was no rain in Bojonegoro but suddenly the water from Bengawan Solo came in an unusually large amount. Bengawan Solo River water does come from Wonogiri, not Bojonegoro. But if it rains in 14 regencies and 2 cities that the Bengawan Solo River passes, all the water can lead to Bojonegoro.

It was at that time that Suyoto began to map the problem. By inviting various parties, including the Head of Regency and Provincial Irrigation Services, Public Works, National Unity and Political Agency (Bakesbangpol, which was in charge of flooding at that time), Regional Secretary, representatives of the Solo Bengawan Great Hall, as well as sub-district heads whose areas always experience flooding, —as the owner of flood loss data, collected all the data needed to identify floods that have the potential to become a disaster.

The strength of his leadership is the ability to involve other people—both district government employees and the community—to participate in finding solutions. This is in accordance with one of the concepts of Reinventing Government and New Public Management (Andrisani et al., 2002; Osborne & Gaebler, 2003), namely decentralized government, where this government uses participatory management that involves the participation of various parties to run programs and achieve goals.

Another concept in Reinventing Government and New Public Management (Andrisani et al., 2002; Osborne & Gaebler, 2003), which is applied in Suyoto's leadership is results-oriented and customer-oriented government, as well as satisfying the community. Starting with listening to community complaints and mapping out problems, the Bojonegoro Regency

Government can focus its programs and all its resources on producing improvements to alleviate the five problems and provide satisfaction to the community.

This satisfied society in turn does not hesitate to participate in development. This satisfaction was also manifested by Suyoto's victory in the ownership of the 2012 regional head. By getting two terms of leadership, Suyoto managed to make even more improvements. In the second leadership period, Suyoto launched six pillars of development, namely the economy, environment, human resources and education, bureaucratic reform, fiscal, and transformative leadership (Heriyanto, 2017). Thus, the solutions provided to the community become sustainable and can increase community satisfaction (Andrisani et al., 2002).

Understanding the duration of the lead is an important part of planning change in Bojonegoro. Suyoto planned improvements in the first five years, then increased the repairs in the second five years. After that, Suyoto was well aware that his time had ended, so the repair process had to be completely completed when his term of office ended. This refutes the research of Sirkin et al. (2011) which states that hard issues—one of which is about duration—is an aspect of change management that is rarely considered.

#### **b) Pro-people**

The second theme that becomes the most crucial form of leadership implementation in Bojonegoro Regency is "pro the people", which means that leaders must side with the community through programs and activities that improve people's lives. This is mainly because Bojonegoro is in a difficult area: frequent floods and droughts. Both of these conditions lead to various problems and the community needs a government and leaders who side with their interests. This means that the leader must be a person who accommodates the interests of the community (pro-people).

In achieving victory, Suyoto also used an unusual method. By placing himself as a person who does not have much money to spend in an expensive political process, Suyoto uses another method, namely to approach the community directly to ask about the problems they are facing. From the results of months of listening to community complaints, Suyoto then formulated five problems faced by the people of Bojonegoro, namely infrastructure—such as damaged roads, neglected agriculture, low education levels—which resulted in low quality of human resources, poor health services, and a bureaucracy that is not popular and is considered corrupt. During the campaign, Suyoto promised to use his power as regent to solve the problem—a promise that was later made to be collected through open communication.

Furthermore, every policy taken is always made to be pro-people. For example, to ensure that the Village Fund is channeled properly, in the sense of mutually safeguarding against fraud and providing the maximum benefit to the people, the use of the Village Fund is communicated openly at the Village Hall. Thus the public knows and participates in controlling its use.

To move the wheels of the economy, so that people living in villages get jobs, the Bojonegoro Regency Government has made the Rural General Wage (UUP) which is smaller than the UMK (Subdistrict Minimum Wage). This is so that investors are interested in opening up job opportunities in the village so that the village community does not need to go out of their village to look for work. This is because many residents of Bojonegoro end up making a living in nearby big cities, especially Surabaya. With the UPP, entrepreneurs are interested in opening their businesses in the village by employing villagers because the wages are not too high. Another impact, the village's economic turnover is maintained.



Another example, in terms of oil and gas management. Bojonegoro suddenly became "rich" with the discovery of oil and gas reserves in the Cepu Block in 2019 (Arvirianty, 2019). In fact, behind these natural resources, there are many problems that need to be considered. Bojonegoro was not ready for human resources capable of using such high technology. But it also does not mean that all management is left to outsiders and the people of Bojonegoro do not enjoy the results of their land wealth.

Living in an area rich in natural resources such as oil and gas does carry a high risk. As is well known, oil and gas is an attractive big business. But one day, these natural resources will run out and this area will be abandoned because it loses its great charm. If not prepared from the start, when oil and gas exploration is completed, this rich area will become a dead area. Especially if during exploration, the money generated is not used for investment in regional development and human resources in it. That is why Suyoto initiated the Oil and Gas Endowment Fund which can be used for various purposes. The Oil and Gas Endowment Fund is taken from the Oil and Gas Revenue Sharing Fund (DBH), and the interest alone can be used for soft loans for school fees for Bojonegoro children to college or to cover regional budget deficits when oil prices are falling (Agustinus, 2016). The point is that the abundant money from the Oil and Gas Revenue Sharing Fund is not spent at the same time so that future generations cannot enjoy the results of Bojonegoro's natural wealth.

This is explained in Reinventing Government and New Public Management (Andrisani et al., 2002; Osborne & Gaebler, 2003), where the application of entrepreneurship in government is anticipatory. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, anticipatory means being responsive to something that is (will) happen (in the future). This anticipation can be done if the Regency Government has a far-sighted vision and not only at the present time which is receiving large funds from the results of oil and gas processing.

The example above shows that the Bojonegoro Regency Government strives to always be community-oriented (Osborne & Gaebler, 2003) with the five M principles, namely Protecting, Protecting, Serving, Enlightening, and Empowering. Not only with the ranks of the Regency Government, calls for pro-people are also called out to government partners, namely the Regional People's Representative Council. In the case of obtaining the approval of the DPRD, it is always strived to be carried out quickly and openly, so that it can be directly executed for the community.

Examples of these policies have a common thread, namely pro-people. What the District Government does must start from the problems faced by the community and how to solve them. Pro-people is also in accordance with the concept of Reinventing Government and New Public Management (Andrisani et al., 2002; Osborne & Gaebler, 2003), namely results-oriented and customer-oriented government, thereby increasing the satisfaction of its citizens. In practice, the power of a regent can be used in many ways including for the benefit of the leader himself and his relatives, thus giving rise to the term KKN (corruption, collusion, and nepotism). However, under Suyoto's leadership, it was outlined from the start that the bupati's power would be used to find solutions for the people of Bojonegoro.

Suyoto also established a mechanism so that his campaign promises and programs during his tenure could be held accountable. Not only formally in the form of Position Memory after the end of the term of office, but also informally by the people served. Therefore, Suyoto opened various communication channels, both in the form of Public Dialogue, SMS, LAPOR! application, radio broadcasts, to direct visits to the public. In the concept of Reinventing Government and New Public Management (Andrisani et al., 2002;

[Osborne & Gaebler, 2003](#)), this is known as government orientation where the services provided can be held accountable.

**c) Good characters**

The third most common theme is the characteristics expected of leaders in Bojonegoro. Among the characteristics mentioned are not thinking about yourself, having big dreams for a diverse society, not being authoritarian, motivating, being open, providing solutions, giving certainty, not having low self-esteem, not liking to maintain prestige, being confident, having self-control, having no sense of belonging, revenge, no personal ambition, honest, respect for others, hard worker, does not teach differences, committed, fast work including quick to respond, and has many ideas.

Not easily angered is also one of the attractive characteristics. A number of sources use the term "humorous". This characteristic becomes important when facing many pressures in serving the community with its various interests. Without this humorous characteristic, a person will be more easily depressed and more difficult to find solutions to problems. In a video documenting the Public Dialogue on March 10, 2017, a village head complained about damaged roads in his area. In a high tone, he blamed Regent Suyoto. But those who were blamed laughed and used the complaint as a lesson for all those present by saying that each village received village funds of Rp. 2 billion, but still asked the district government for road repairs, even though the funds were already in their respective villages. Are these funds really not enough to repair village roads? Or perhaps the management is not appropriate so that it does not provide benefits to the village as desired.

This is also related to the characteristics of the Bojonegoro community which was formulated by Suyoto as the Six Devils. This is an unproductive mentality which includes: fear of difficulties, irresponsibility, reluctance to proceed, envy for the success of others, believing rumors to be the truth, and a beggar mentality (*Ragam Prestasi Mentereng Bupati Suyoto, 2016*). This demand mentality is what makes villages with a Village Fund of IDR 2 billion still asking for help from the district government to improve their infrastructure. If this mental request is not eliminated, the community will find it difficult to develop because they always feel lacking and want to be helped by other parties.

This demand mentality is also explained in Reinventing Government, that community-owned government means that the government becomes a facilitator and does not create community dependence on the government ([Osborne & Gaebler, 2003](#)). This means that the community is an entity that is empowered to make changes and improve the quality of life.

In various theories regarding change agents, various leadership characteristics mentioned in this theme are often raised. One of them is mentioned by ([Gilley, 2005](#)) which describes several personality traits of change agents. Change agents must have an above-average risk tolerance that allows them to change the status quo, influence others to achieve goals, show strong enthusiasm and encouragement to organizational members, encourage, and involve others in the change process—which requires a lot of work. confidence, creative in finding new and different ways to solve problems, confident and believe in their skills and abilities, and able to learn from failure by reflecting and analyzing mistakes to be more successful in the future.

To be able to influence others, for example, a change agent should not be quick to anger. He must be creative in finding ways to explain a situation and invite people to think about the condition. Thus, change agents also educate people to be more empowered by encouraging them to jointly find solutions for improving their lives. There are many other characteristics of change agents that match the characteristics of the expected leader in Bojonegoro. Given that no one person can fulfill all the good qualities needed to become a



change agent, the change agent will always be in the form of a group of people whose characteristics complement each other to drive the wheels of change.

In other words, although what is being asked is leadership characteristics, in reality the leader is not based on position. But any person and group capable of letting go of established ideas, practices, and even identities, i.e. all those who are involved in creating change or shaping their future, regardless of their formal position in the institutional structure (Scharmer, 2009).

**d) Not distant**

Leaders are expected to be close, not distant from the community. This means that the public can be directly met, without dealing with protocols such as aides and secretaries. Suyoto gave an example to all district government employees how he should be found by the community, including by opening the Malowopati Pendopo every Friday for Public Dialogue and opening the official house for anyone to visit. It is not uncommon for Bojonegoro Regency Government employees to eat with the community at the Regent's official residence. Gradually, knowing that on Friday they could meet the Regent, people often came to deliver food to be eaten together.

The leadership, which has been like a king being served, needs to be returned to being a state apparatus that serves the people. Therefore, the implementation that needs to be a concern is that leaders relate directly to social reality. Leaders do not live in a place that is not accessible to the people, but must be in the midst of society. Suyoto taught all employees of the Bojonegoro Regency Government to go directly to the people they serve and see for themselves their condition.

To be able to be close and without distance with the community and fellow Regency Government employees, it takes a person who is simple and not arrogant. Since the beginning of his tenure, Suyoto through his actions sent a message about equality. Being a regent or any official should not keep them away from the community. Even the call "Kang" also shows an egalitarian designation for the lower middle class. During his time as regent, for example, Suyoto was known to always try to fulfill invitations from the community. In fact, when he came to people's homes, Suyoto did not hesitate to enter their kitchens.

According to Osborne & Gaebler (2003) increasing cooperation between different hierarchical levels in the organization, by means of which the Bupati can communicate directly with all his employees, is one way to develop participatory management. Although the hierarchy remains, direct communication can "shorten" the organizational hierarchy.

The aides and secretaries also felt the same way, who felt they had never eaten at a table apart from the regent and his guests. In fact, they often eat at the official residence with Suyoto himself preparing the food. When distance is no longer a problem, communication can be established more openly and straightforwardly. Bojonegoro Regency Government employees do not feel that there is a barrier created by the officials. This has an impact on changes in the bureaucracy, where communication is opened freely. Including when to have different opinions and put forward their respective arguments.

This egalitarian attitude underlies every effort made by Bojonegoro Regency Government officials, with Suyoto as an example. Egalitarianism in leadership is also demonstrated in the research of Trevor-Roberts et al. (2003). This study shows that Australia and New Zealand use egalitarian leadership as a manifestation of local leadership, in addition to adopting general dimensions of leadership such as charismatic. Egalitarian leadership represents a leadership style that is generous and compassionate while being group-oriented and focused on building collaborative teams. Egalitarian leaders are selfless, honest, sincere, humble, and can collaborate with colleagues. The emphasis is on team,

integrity and courtesy. In addition, this study also shows that bureaucracy is a leadership dimension that hinders effective leadership.

Thompson (1994) argues that egalitarianism consists of two components: equality and equality. Equality is the belief that people are racially and culturally equal, whereas equality represents equal access for all in legal, political, and economic life. Suyoto brought this concept of equality and equality to make him closer to the community, and thus to communicate more openly.

**e) A kindly forgiving nature**

This category also includes one of the breakthroughs made by Suyoto when he was the Regent of Bojonegoro, namely political amnesty. During the 2007 regent election, most of the bureaucracy did not support him. However, the first step that Suyoto took after being appointed regent was to gather all the employees of the Bojonegoro Regency Government and announce that he no longer had a problem with people who did not vote for him in the regional head election. Thus, he forgave those who did not support him at the time of the regional head election and would not make the past differences a problem during his leadership period.

At that time, the Bojonegoro Regency Government employees who did not vote for Suyoto were indeed worried that they would be transferred and replaced with supporters of Suyoto. With a political amnesty on the first night of his reign, Suyoto showed that as a leader he held no grudges. Suyoto asked all employees of the Bojonegoro Regency Government to help him serve the community better.

This political amnesty also freed employees who did not support him from the burdens of the past. Thus, it is hoped that they can work better on the new page. Suyoto promises that there will be no like and dislike mutations, but he will indeed see the suitability of each person with his workplace, so that he can provide the best service for the community. The suitability is not assessed by individuals, but through an assessment team, and is carried out openly.

Forgiveness seems to have nothing to do with leadership, but in the case of Bojonegoro, the political amnesty that Suyoto carried out early in his administration gave a very strong positive impression. Empirical evidence shows that regional heads who win elections tend to appoint their supporters to certain positions, while supporters of their political opponents tend to be removed from office. Therefore, when Suyoto embraced opposing supporters and defended their position it was considered something extraordinary for the bureaucracy and gave a very strong moral message about Suyoto's leadership.

**f) Have a concern**

To be able to carry out their duties to protect, protect, serve, enlighten, and empower the community, the main requirement is to have concern. Caring means paying attention to others. It is impossible for a person to protect if he does not pay attention to the interests of others, because nurturing requires a person to put others before himself.

However, changing the mindset of district government employees who have been embracing a bureaucratic culture in which they are served—not serving, is not easy. Being an employee and official in the ranks of the local government means being a person who must be considered and get all the conveniences and facilities. Meanwhile in society, the well-known satirical joke about bureaucracy is: if it can be complicated, why make it easier? This shows that the bureaucracy that is widely known so far tends to pay less attention to the community. Many people want to become Civil Servants because they feel they want to get various conveniences and facilities, not to serve the community.

This concern is realized by using the power of the Bupati to make improvements in various possible areas. Eliminating flooding is not possible. But making people still have a decent standard of living even in the midst of a flood, can be done with the power of the Regent. For example, mobilizing local officials to record, record, observe, study, and simulate the arrival of the Bengawan Solo floodwaters so that they can help people evacuate and prepare suitable places during floods to revitalization after the water recedes, to minimize property and life losses.

Concern is shown by the ability to listen to public complaints. By listening a lot, the Bojonegoro Regency Government officials got a lot of input and, above all, gained the trust of the community. Without a sense of care, it is impossible to be able to listen to and accept complaints and—perhaps also tucked away—people's anger. Especially looking for a solution.

Caring is also the foundation for helping people, even in things that don't seem like help. For example, encouraging all officials in Bojonegoro to bring guests or give gifts produced by the people of Bojonegoro. This includes wearing Bojonegoro batik in their daily life. Indirectly, this promotes products made by Bojonegoro.

Caring makes people able to be friendly to others, can think of solutions to other people's problems (Badudu, 2015). In the context of the Bojonegoro Regency Government, the services provided to the community are extra or excellent. To produce excellent service, it is necessary to pay attention to contextual elements of culture so that the service reaches the hearts of customers (Badudu, 2015), therefore the excellent service provided by the Bojonegoro Regency Government must be in accordance with the conditions that exist in the community. Otherwise, it will not be useful, and will not be excellent service. The same thing was conveyed by Tisch and Weber (2007) that excellent service begins with (paying attention to) customers (to be served), not (preparing) goods or services.

#### **g) Visionary**

The people of Bojonegoro who live in poor and difficult conditions, seem to need someone who can show good hope in the future. That's why we need someone who has a vision for the future, a picture of what Bojonegoro and its citizens will look like in a better condition. Then, the vision is translated into stages of improvement involving community participation.

Bojonegoro can be better if the quality of its human resources improves and stays behind to make improvements in Bojonegoro. To be able to improve human resources, funds and supporting conditions are needed. Supportive conditions are created by creating a better life: floods and droughts need to be addressed, health and education services need to be improved, access to remote areas needs to be opened so that equitable development can get there. Meanwhile, in terms of finances, in the beginning the Bojonegoro APBD was very limited, to pay debts and personnel expenditures were still lacking. But this need not be an excuse for not being able to improve, because Bojonegoro has social capital, namely by empowering the community to play an active role in improving their own lives.

In addition, there is an Oil and Gas Revenue Sharing Fund that needs to be managed properly so that it can provide benefits for the present and the future. Good financial management seems to be an important lesson for the people of Bojonegoro. If managed properly, even limited funds still have many benefits. But if it is mismanaged, no amount of funds can be enjoyed by the people of Bojonegoro. The challenge becomes even more complicated because the indicators of success for local governments are mainly still based on budget absorption, so it is not uncommon for local governments to compete to spend budgets without considering the impact on society, especially those that are sustainable and long-term.

[Almog-Bareket \(2012\)](#) in his research explains that initially he is a leader who is driven by a personal vision and tries to promote an organizational vision that will produce a new organizational identity. For this reason, these leaders will integrate a strong vision with a strategic focus and transformational spirit ([Neumann & Neumann, 1999](#)), and strategic planning begins with the formulation of the organization's vision. The formulation of the vision must be able to answer the question: "What is our dream?" and "Why do we exist?", by evaluating the leader's own personal values ([Almog-Bareket, 2012](#)).

In the context of leadership in Bojonegoro, Suyoto's vision as a leader is driven by the values he adheres to as a Muslim, academic, and activist, which can generally be formulated in the sentence "using the knowledge he has for the good of the people". These values encourage Suyoto to have a vision to make the lives of the people of Bojonegoro better. One way he knew he had enough power to do this was by using the post of regent. When he assumed the position as regent, these personal values and visions were then translated into an organizational vision, which transformed the Bojonegoro Regency Government organization from a genuine bureaucracy into entrepreneurship.

This shows that the vision and personal values of a leader have a significant role in determining the vision of the organization, and in applying it to the program and behavior of the organization. Successful leaders are not determined by intelligence, experience, education, and a series of achievements. To be able to benefit the community he leads, a leader absolutely has values and a vision to serve. Today's leaders need to rethink this: are their personal values and visions appropriate as a leader?

With a forward-looking perspective, the Regency Government can anticipate, prevent problems from occurring, and not only extinguish problems that have arisen. An example is the issue of oil and gas revenue-sharing for education and human resource development. This is also stated in the concept of Reinventing Government ([Osborne & Gaebler, 2003](#)).

#### **h) Become a "public bus driver".**

It is important for a leader in the public sector to embrace all groups in society. In Suyoto's terms, the regent is a "public bus driver" who must accept all classes of society. At the beginning of his leadership, Suyoto, who is a Muhammadiyah cadre, was worried that he did not care about his community, most of whom were from the Nahdlatul Ulama group. However, during his leadership, Suyoto succeeded in proving that he protects all groups of people and ensures that these values are understood and implemented by all employees of the Bojonegoro Regency Government. Despite his Islamic background, Suyoto also does not hesitate to study the holy books of other religions, so he can discuss with various groups.

The leader must be able to mediate, bridging all community groups. In the case of Bojonegoro, inter-religious life is also colored by conflict, so Suyoto emphasizes that to develop maturity in terms of religion, it is necessary to start with leaders, especially political leaders. Suyoto did not hesitate to appoint the head of a non-Muslim religious service to take care of matters that the majority (at the time) were dealing with the needs of Muslims.

Suyoto's neutrality towards various interests is the key to his success in gaining sympathy and trust from the community and district government employees. This neutral position is rarely encountered by regional leaders, especially if it is promoted by various different political parties, so that it ends with the creation of camps such as Cebong and Kampret in the 2019 Presidential Election ([Galih, 2019](#)). That's why in the 2012 regional head election, Suyoto was reluctant to collaborate with too many parties, even though it had a big chance of increasing his vote.

This neutrality also shows that anyone can advance Bojonegoro, regardless of the group. Thus, in choosing a leader, one should look at his track record and vision and

mission, not from which group he belongs to. This step is a manifestation of one of the pillars of New Public Management, namely restoring civil society (Andrisani et al., 2002). With communities that are harmonious and not in conflict, society as a whole becomes more empowered.

**i) Listening to feedback**

A leader must be willing to listen. This is quite difficult for most leaders because they want to be heard. In the ranks of the Bojonegoro Regency Government, Suyoto taught that the most important thing was to listen to the complaints of the community. He had practiced this himself when he was running for regent, where Suyoto went around to find things that became problems for the people on a daily basis. This shows that a leader must also be able to formulate problems. And, if you have formulated something, it is necessary to re-examine the community whether it is true that the five problems are the main problems for the community. Even after becoming regent, Suyoto continued to regularly visit the community. One of them is by riding a dirt bike because the area that is reached has difficult access.

The ranks of the Bojonegoro Regency Government can listen to the community, Suyoto gives an example where he himself is willing to listen to input from employees. Thus, Bojonegoro Regency Government employees are more open to listening to community input. In the case of MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), for example. In fact, they no longer make activities where the community is only the object of development. Before carrying out the activities, deliberation was held at the hamlet, village, sub-district, and then district levels. Thus, the community also feels they have the activity or program, and becomes more responsible so that its implementation can run well.

This is in line with one of the important points in Reinventing Government, namely mission-driven government (Osborne & Gaebler, 2003). According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, a mission is a duty that is felt as an obligation to do it for the sake of religion, ideology, patriotism, and so on. As Regent Suyoto often emphasized that the mission or task of the Regency Government is to Protect, Protect, Serve, Enlighten, and Empower, his staff must be willing to listen to community input in order to find the most appropriate solution. This requires Public Dialogue and other direct communications.

**j) Be a role model**

Leaders in Bojonegoro need to "educate" the people to do something, and this is also done by direct example. For example, repairing damaged roads and opening access to remote areas is done by making and installing paving yourself. Suyoto and officials from the Bojonegoro Regency Government gave an example of how to install paving. In contrast to the community, changes in the government employees of Bojonegoro Regency, obviously occurred because of the leadership factor. Policies taken in implementing governance will shape the behavior of the organization and the people in it. Bureaucracy in Indonesia does not allow a person to be "different" from his environment, let alone his superiors.

When Suyoto leads a meeting by laying out a mat in the courtyard of the official residence, or visiting his people who are in remote areas, or listening to the complaints of his people without being awkward, or placing himself no better or higher than others, all of these are clear examples of how all government employees Bojonegoro Regency must act. Without examples like this, a formal and binding bureaucratic culture will remain deeply rooted.

It is not surprising that quite a number of informants stated that they had learned a lot from Suyoto. Among them are learning to map problems, analyze problems, find alternative solutions, deal with various problems that arise during the execution of activities, and so on.

This should have become part of the life of the Indonesian people. Ki Hajar Dewantara has taught it through the motto *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha* or in front of setting an example. If the teacher sets an example for his students, of course the leader also sets an example for the people he leads. Exemplary means something that should be imitated or good to be imitated (about deeds, behavior, traits, and so on). Therefore, the behavior shown must also be positive behavior, so that the example is also positive. If what is displayed is negative behavior, the tendency of the community or subordinates to imitate the negative behavior.

In the context of bureaucracy, being an example or model seems very appropriate because subordinates will tend to follow their superiors. This was also conveyed by one of the informants who is still active in the ranks of the Bojonegoro Regency Government, that - as a state civil apparatus - whoever the leader is, the subordinates will automatically follow, there is no need to bother looking for disloyal subordinates because this does not apply in the bureaucracy.

A direct example is also a hard issue that has not received the attention of most change management experts (Sirkin et al., 2011). In the case of change in Bojonegoro, Suyoto has proven that as a change leader, he pays a balanced attention to soft issues—culture, leadership, and motivation; and hard issues—duration, integrity, commitment, and effort.

## Discussion

For an effective learning organization as described above, support from superiors or leaders is needed. The themes that emerged from the respondents' answers were the following ten implementations: able to find solutions or breakthroughs, pro-people, have certain characteristics, not distant, have a forgiving nature, have concern, have vision, able to become a "public bus driver", willing to listen to input, and can be an example or a model.

As Suyoto often said, the leader came because there was a problem. The people of Bojonegoro have experienced the leadership of many regents, but poverty and hardship still accompany their daily life. They are so used to it that they don't think of a way to improve their lives.

Since the first meeting with the community, the method used by Suyoto has been different. Before the campaign took place, Suyoto had "blusukan" to find out the problems that existed in the community. Currently blusukan is not a new thing. President Jokowi while serving as Mayor of Solo (2005-2012) and Governor of Jakarta (2012-2014) also made blusukan. But in 2008, it seems that not many leaders are using this method.

During the campaign, Suyoto did not attract the public's attention with the efforts often made by regent candidates, namely distributing goods such as t-shirts and basic food ingredients. The reason is simple, because Suyoto is not exaggerating. As a lecturer at a university, Suyoto promised to do his best for the community, not promising prizes for his voters. An interesting thing happened when the supporters turned from ordinary people into volunteers, and they were the ones who sporadically helped by making t-shirts and other campaign needs. Suyoto also taught something new: the improvement of their lives was in the hands of the Bupati, with the power to manage the budget and make regulations. This is an attractive offer for people who are used to adversity. After being elected as regent, Suyoto showed his seriousness in fulfilling his campaign promises. Suyoto stepped down directly when the floods hit Bojonegoro in 2008, he also strengthened the ranks of the bureaucracy with political amnesty, namely forgiving people who did not support him during the campaign until the election, creating a communication system where the regent and his staff could be "billed"



by the public. From these various characteristics, it can be concluded that the people of Bojonegoro need a regent who can embrace all groups/groups/interests and is not authoritarian.

Suyoto's non-authoritarian attitude led him to be pro-people, not distant from the community, to have a forgiving and caring nature, to listen to input from other parties, and to be an example or model. Meanwhile, the ability to embrace all groups led Suyoto to become a general driver who brought the interests of all parties and was impartial. To be able to embrace all groups and not be authoritarian, a leader needs to have a spirit of service. When someone is running for leadership, especially in the public sector, it is important to look back at his intentions. Do you want to be a leader to gain power? Is it a foothold for a higher position? Or to get better financially? This motive needs to be questioned again considering that public leaders, in accordance with the character of their work to serve the community, need to have the nature of serving—not being served like most of today's public leaders.

This research shows that this straightness of service intention becomes important in the public sector. Intelligence and leadership skills and talents become less useful when they are not based on the nature of serving. This character needs to be judged when someone is running for public office. In addition to character, leadership points also talk about the ability to influence to make changes. In various literatures, this condition is known as change leader. [Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols \(2015\)](#) define a change leader as a person who "attracts people to change through the use of a strong vision of change". While Katzenbach (in Gerwing, 2016) states that "True change leaders are individuals who lead initiatives that influence tens to hundreds of other people to do things differently—and better—by applying various leadership and change approaches".

The leadership approach that clearly differs from previous leaders is its closeness to the community. From the beginning Suyoto positioned himself as part of the community, only that he had the authority as regent that was used to help the community. This seems to be encouraged by the fact that the 2007 regional head election was Bojonegoro's first direct election. And, Suyoto seemed ready to take the opportunity to introduce and get closer to the community with a number of interesting innovations. However, what really matters is not the closeness at the start, but the ability to remain close to the community after and during being a regent. This is difficult to do because it requires consistency. Approaching the public during the campaign and elections is a common practice, but once elected, the leader is no longer close to the people. Suyoto's ability to remain consistently close to his community is one of the important values in spreading the idea of change.

Suyoto's leadership also shows differences with the findings of [Aziz et al. \(2012\)](#) that in countries with low to ineffective bureaucratic effectiveness—Indonesia is one of them, Contingency theory in leadership tends to be dominant, where leadership effectiveness is determined by the variables that must be faced by a leader, such as performance, followers, and impact. cultural and structural. Meanwhile, countries with good bureaucratic effectiveness tend to adhere to Traits theory, where leaders are selected based on the right traits and skills.

Suyoto's leadership shows that the bureaucracy in Bojonegoro is quite effective in choosing leaders based on the right traits and skills, meaning that they are in accordance with the needs of the people of Bojonegoro. On the other hand, this was also possible because Suyoto was able to show that he had "something" that the people of Bojonegoro needed, both in the form of ideas and approaches, which allowed the people to choose him because they felt it was appropriate. That is, people choose not blindly or based on mere popularity, but really according to what is needed.

In the case of Bojonegoro, it can be concluded that the implementation of leadership needed in dealing with various existing problems are as follows: leaders who can find solutions or breakthroughs to the problems at hand; pro-people from all groups (in the sense of not discriminating, “public bus driver”); not distant from the community so that they can show concern, listen to input, and become an example or model for the community; have a clear vision of the community and the district they lead; accompanied by certain characteristics such as not getting angry easily, not asking to be served, forgiving, and willing to serve the community he leads. Thus, it is clear that the expected behavior of a leader is to find solutions to existing problems. This requires the ability—or more accurately called ingenuity—to find gaps that are opportunities to get out of trouble. In the book *Cracking Zone*, [Rhenald Kasali \(2013\)](#) refers to these people as crackers, namely people who make faults or breakthroughs to get out of trouble.

Another implementation that is considered important is related to the community's desire to have leaders who pay attention to their needs—not to their personal or cronies' needs, such as not being distant, forgiving, caring, listening to input, as well as other traits such as not getting angry easily, having no personal ambition, have no grudges, and respect others. Although these answers tend to vary, the common thread is very clear. Communities need leaders who are close to them, can be talked to without protocol restrictions, also do not feel that their position is higher/better than the community. The expression of joy in the community with this leadership style can be seen from the interesting things expressed by the informants. For example, that what the community complains about is not only the problem of damaged roads or digging holes that have not been properly completed, but also the missing goats and even husbands who have not returned home. This is an innocent expression from the villagers who suddenly find their leader can be talked to like other people.

Another interesting concept is that leaders are expected to become “public bus drivers”. Unlike private drivers who only drive for their employers, public bus drivers must be willing to transport everyone regardless of their differences and backgrounds. In other words, the implementation of the leaders needed for the emergence of a learning organization and make changes are people who do not teach differences as something negative. Leaders must set an example that differences must be embraced and taken into account. That's why a Christian employee can be placed as a leader in a field that requires a lot of interaction with the Islamic community, for example.

This is not done without examples, such as other leadership implementations mentioned by the informants, namely the leader being an example or model. One of the examples given by Suyoto is related to the construction of houses of worship, namely by prioritizing finding solutions for the construction of churches and temples, rather than renovating mosques in their environment which are clearly already in a badly damaged condition. Suyoto also did not hesitate to join the tayub dance and study the scriptures of other religions so that he could “connect” when discussing with different communities. For information, the art of tayuban, which is known as abangan culture, is colored by drinking alcohol ([Gumilang, 2015](#)).

The implementation of leadership that is also important for a region rich in natural resources like Bojonegoro is having a vision for the future. The future that needs to be prepared is not the five or ten year term of office of the regional head, but decades into the future, when the natural resources that Bojonegoro currently relies on are exhausted. In order not to become a “dead area” after its natural resources run out, Suyoto designed Bojonegoro to have an endowment fund from oil and gas mining, which can be used to send Bojonegoro's children to higher education. Thus, the profits obtained from oil and gas are not used for the present, but also invest in the future.

The leadership implementation that took place in Bojonegoro was originally Suyoto's tacit knowledge. However, in his journey to lead Bojonegoro, his knowledge and values have been disseminated to the ranks of the Bojonegoro Regency Government so that it becomes their way of working and managing the Bojonegoro district government and community organizations. The shared values and shared knowledge that have been received by the ranks of the Bojonegoro Regency Government have changed the organization of the district government which was previously very bureaucratic to become more flexible, enabling the organization to become a learning organization. Without supportive leadership, it is difficult to form an effective learning organization within the bureaucracy, and this results in a lack of opportunity to create agents of change.

## **CONCLUSION**

The people of Bojonegoro have experienced many regents, but poverty and hardship still accompany their daily life. Since the first meeting with the community, the method used by Suyoto has been different. Before the campaign took place, Suyoto had "blusukan" to find out the problems that existed in the community. Suyoto also taught something new: the improvement of their lives was in the hands of the Bupati, with the power to manage the budget and make regulations. This is an attractive offer for people who are used to adversity.

During the campaign, Suyoto did not attract the public's attention with the efforts often made by regent candidates, namely distributing goods such as t-shirts and basic food ingredients. The reason is simple, because Suyoto is not exaggerating. As a lecturer at a university, Suyoto promised to do his best for the community, not promising prizes for his voters. An interesting thing happened when the supporters turned from ordinary people into volunteers, and they were the ones who sporadically helped by making t-shirts and other campaign needs.

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Suyoto's non-authoritarian attitude led him to be pro-people, not distant from the community, to have a forgiving and caring nature, to listen to input from other parties, and to be an example or model. Meanwhile, the ability to embrace all groups led Suyoto to become a general driver who brought the interests of all parties and was impartial.

To be able to embrace all groups and not be authoritarian, a leader needs to have a spirit of service. When someone is running for leadership, especially in the public sector, it is important to look back at his intentions. Do you want to be a leader to gain power? Is it a foothold for a higher position? Or to get better financially? This motive needs to be questioned again considering that public leaders, in accordance with the character of their work to serve the community, need to have the nature of serving—not being served like most of today's public leaders.

This research shows that this straightness of service intention becomes important in the public sector. Intelligence and leadership skills and talents become less useful when they are not based on the nature of serving. This character needs to be judged when someone is running for public office. In addition to character, leadership points also talk about the ability to influence to make changes. In various literatures, this condition is known as change leader.

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The former district head, Suyoto, has shown that leaders do have an important role in influencing the people they lead to do something, even in a very different way than before. Suyoto is able to provide a vision that attracts people's attention to have a better life, he also has the right initiatives and breakthroughs to make life better.

The leadership approach that clearly differs from previous leaders is its closeness to the community. From the beginning Suyoto positioned himself as part of the community, only that he had the authority as regent that was used to help the community. This seems to be encouraged by the fact that the 2007 regional head election was Bojonegoro's first direct election. And, Suyoto seemed ready to take the opportunity to introduce and get closer to the community with a number of interesting innovations.

However, what really matters is not the closeness at the start, but the ability to remain close to the community after and during being a regent. This is difficult to do because it requires consistency. Approaching the public during the campaign and elections is a common practice, but once elected, the leader is no longer close to the people. Suyoto's ability to remain consistently close to his community is one of the important values in spreading the idea of change.

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Suyoto's leadership shows that the bureaucracy in Bojonegoro is quite effective in choosing leaders based on the right traits and skills, meaning that they are in accordance with the needs of the people of Bojonegoro. On the other hand, this was also possible because Suyoto was able to show that he had "something" that the people of Bojonegoro needed, both in the form of ideas and approaches, which allowed the people to choose him because they felt it was appropriate. That is, people choose not blindly or based on mere popularity, but really according to what is needed.

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