

A Path to Altruistic Leader Based on the Nine Values of Indonesian and India Ramayana

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Abstract

This article is attempt to develop a theory and practices of altruistic leadership, this article is reconstructing the nine values of Indonesian Ramayana as a foundation in formulating a path to the altruistic leader. The authors found that Indonesian Ramayana contains nine leadership elements, encompassing: competency, ethical, charismatic, integrative, collaborative, knowledgeable, transformative, pluralistic and philanthropic. Those elements are divisible into four dimensions: self-dimension includes competency, ethical and charismatic; social dimension includes integrative and collaborative; transformational dimension includes knowledgeable and transformative, and altruistic dimension includes pluralistic and philanthropic. Those dimensions show that altruistic leader is consist of hierarchical and interrelated leadership elements. The path to altruistic leader consequently should start from the bottom side, which is the maturity of self-dimension, social-dimension, and transformative dimension to reach the altruistic dimension.

Keywords: *Leadership, Altruistic Leader, Nine Values of Indonesian Ramayana, Path to Altruistic Leader*

Introduction

Comte (1875) introduced altruism as a term to define sympathetic and benevolent feelings within humans. Altruism provides a paradigm that the main objective of human life is to promote the welfare of others (Scott & Seglow, 2007). It means that altruism prioritizes collective interests rather than self-interests (Jencks, 1990). However, although altruism is not a sacrificial concept, it refers to the willingness to consider the interests of others (Nagel, 1978). On the subject of leadership, altruism accentuates social awareness and selflessness values, which are representing a basic element of an ideal leader (Zaccaro et al., 2004). In the perspective of altruism, an ideal leader is

identical with the altruistic leader. An altruistic leader refers to a leader who emphasizes charity, cooperation, service behavior, and empowering others as his main objectives (Sosik et al., 2009). An altruistic leader takes an important role as a prominent actor in the progress of organization and society (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Researchers began studying theory and practices of altruistic leadership, due to its importance to the progress of organization and society. Some of the researchers believe that altruism associated with the golden rule concept, which is similar to morality element in religious practices (Scott & Seglow, 2007). The concept led researcher in using ancient manuscripts as their focus of research. The researchers believe that religion and tradition

values embedded in the ancient manuscripts could provide insights for expanding the knowledge on altruistic leadership. They found that the ancient manuscript, such as Bhagavad Gita (Sinha & Singh, 2014), eight fold path of Buddhism (Shree & Sharma, 2014), and Ramayana (Pathak et al., 2016), contained altruism values that are useful in constructing altruistic leadership. In that perspective, this article analyzes altruism values of Indonesian Ramayana. The focus of the investigation is to reconstruct the nine values of Indonesian Ramayana as a foundation in constructing a path of the altruistic leader. The reconstruction of the path to the altruistic leader will give a contribution to the development of the leadership theory and practices, particularly as a guiding-principle to maintain contemporary leaders in becoming an altruistic leader.

Nine Values of Indonesian Ramayana

Indonesian Ramayana or known as *Kakawin Ramayana* was written by anonymous author circa 854 BC. The Indonesian Ramayana is similar to Valmiki's Ramayana. The story told about the epic story of Rama, which provides remarkable values, encompassing *Darma Sastra*, *Artha Sastra*, *Niti Sastra* (Fang, 2013). The story also contains values like courage, knowledge, and strong-will, which are relevant to the needs of modern good governance, strategic management, and effective human resource management (Pathak et al., 2016).

The differences between Indonesian Ramayana and Valmiki's Ramayana lies on the simplified and additional part of the stories (Santoso, 1980). One of the additional parts is found in *Caturwingsati Sarggah* (Haryono, 2006). After Ravana's death, Rama gave advice to Wibisana to strengthen his faith and rebuild Lenka. Nine deities symbolize the advice: *Indra*, *Yamabrata*, *bhatara Rawi*, *Sasibrata*, *Hanin*, *Bayubrata*, *Baruna*, *Agni*, and *Prethiwi*. Commendable representations of the

nine deities are as follow:

1. *Indra* is the representation of generosity by giving rain to satisfy the world. In the feudal political system, generosity is the basic value of the kings to conquer the world.
2. *Yamabrata* is the god of death, represents the will to punish evil doers. The king's role is to create safety by punishing and eliminate wrong doers.
3. *Rawi* is the sun god, who slowly absorbs water. The representation of *Rawi* obliges the kings to be gentle and not suppressing people.
4. *Sasibrata* is the moon god who brings happiness to the world. *Sasibrata* represents kindness and tenderness of the kings to all living things.
5. *Hanin* is the wind-god represents the will to investigate the behavior of others in the proper and unobtrusive way.
6. *Bayubrata* represents simplicity of the king. In accordance to *Bayubrata*, the kings are obliged not be too excessive in his amusing and luxuries life.
7. *Baruna* is the God who always holds extremely poisonous weapons. It means that *Baruna* does not give freedom to the wicked people.
8. *Agni* is the fire-god, as representation to alertness and courage in facing the enemy and future challenges.
9. *Prethiwi* is the earth-god represents the king's attempt to assist the world and follow the enthusiasm of the good-hearted people. Furthermore, the kings should equally love his people without exception.

Indonesian Ramayana told that a king is gods' incarnation so as a result he also owns gods' attributes. It means that the nine gods are always surrounding the king. Those nine values are an indivisible unity that must exist within the king. The king must cherish the nine deities until the values are embodied with the king. The king ability to harmonize the values will create unequal power.

Reconstructing Nine Values of Indonesian Ramayana

Indonesian Ramayana was written in the early era of feudalism in Indonesia. In the feudal political system, the nine values of Indonesian Ramayana present a guideline in becoming an ideal king. Moreover, the king also used the values to rule the universe. It means that those values contain the will to dominate and conquer others, which become problems in the modern world. The question arises about how the nine values of Indonesian Ramayana –with its feudal natures– can be relevant for the contemporary leaders. The authors believe that the values must be reconstructed. The reconstruction is not only revivalism, but it also demands processes to produce a new meaning to the nine values, includes deconstruction, reconstruction, and transformation. The processes consist of three analyses: critical reading and interpretation to reveal textual and contextual meanings; disengagement the desire to dominate; and transforming the values into the contemporary world. These processes will diminish the domination and hierarchical element, so the nine values of Indonesian will be more relevant to the contemporary needs.

A Path to Altruistic Leadership

Reconstruction of the nine values of Indonesia Ramayana produced nine leadership elements. The nine elements are as follows:

Competency

Indra is the representation of generosity. In the feudalistic system, generosity is the king's capital to rule a kingdom. Reflecting the nature of *Indra*, the basic capital for a contemporary leader is competency. Competency refers to intelligence, knowledge, attitude, and other valuable skills, which are fundamental, construct the self-ability of leader. The competencies promote the leader as a prominent actor in organization or society. With its importance, the leaders should consider in finding and improve their unique abilities through learning and experiences.

Ethical

Yamabrata is the god of death, represents the will to punish evil doers. *Yamabrata* is referring to the king's role to eliminate wrong doers and secures the kingdom. The representation of *Yamabrata* encourages the contemporary leaders to have an ethical mind, ethical personality, and ethical behavior. Ethics refers to respect for fairness, honesty, the ethical and moral responsibility of a leader. The leader is using ethics in distinguishing between good and evil. Ethics will prevent the leader in becoming an unethical leader who has low self-esteem, pursue self-interest and cause unethical behavior or power abusive. Reflecting from Ramayana, the leader should consider spirituality and religious aspect as a determining factor in the ethics construction.

Charisma

Rawi is the sun god who possesses people by his hospitality and wisdom. The representation of *Rawi* obliges the king to be gentle and not suppressing people. In the contemporary era, *Rawi* encourages the leader to be charismatic. Charisma refers to leader's inspirational ability to influence people. The leader's charisma is not used to gain

personal power or dominate others but to get respects and people's loyalty. Therefore, it is necessary for leaders to give good example and consistent in their daily activity as a way to build charisma.

Integrative

Sasibrata is the moon god who illuminates the kingdom through his tenderly light. The light of *Sasibrata* is reflecting compassion, tenderness, and forgiveness of the kings in uniting Kingdom. For a contemporary leader, *Sasibrata* refers to an ability of the leader to integrate people into one collective vision. The integration of visions will cultivate a consensus in organization or society that will become a basic aspect of people collaboration. The leader's integrative ability is developed by a clear vision, recognition of other's visions and shared commitment.

Collaborative

Hanin has a nature to investigate people behavior in a proper and unobtrusive way. The *Hanin* investigation makes the kingdom's elements work properly and stable the kingdom. Reflecting from *Hanin*, the contemporary leader should be able to collaborate with peoples interests. The collaborative ability refers to hospitality, transparency, and diplomacy of the leader. Collaborations grow from the leader's ability to acknowledge the different interest within organization and society. The role of the leader is to find the resemblances of people interests and then binding them into a mutual collaboration. It has a function to provide equality and justice by giving mutual benefits to peoples. Thus, peoples will reach their interest collectively.

Knowledgeable

Baruna is the God who always holds extremely

poisonous weapons. The weapons used to punish wicked people and defend the prosperity of the kingdom, as well as to strengthen the position of the king. It means that the kings dominate people using his weapons. Opposite with this perspective, the contemporary leader's weapons is knowledge. Knowledge refers to leader's theoretical and practical understanding of subjects, which acquired through learning and experience. Knowledge will develop the personal skill of the leader and on the other side will empower collective endurance, in accordance with future challenges and transformational purposes. Therefore, it is important for a leader to be knowledgeable.

Transformative

Agni is the representation of fire element, which means a courage and determination in facing enemies. The nature of *Agni* hints that the king should be brave in facing future challenges. In the contemporary era, being brave in facing challenges is a representation of transformative ability. Transformative ability refers to the leader's will and skill to generate progress in organization or society. The leader could generate the transformative ability by persuasiveness, motivation, and intellectual stimulation.

Pluralistic

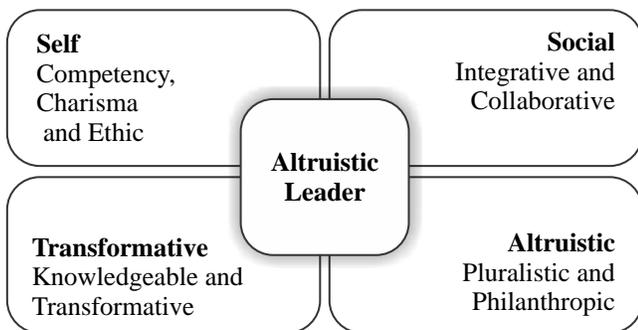
Prethiwi is the earth-god, represents the king's attempt to assist the world and follow the enthusiasm of the good-hearted people. Furthermore, the Indonesian Ramayana explains that the king should equally love people without exception. In the contemporary era, the representation of *Prethiwi* reflects pluralism values. Pluralism refers to leader's awareness to acknowledge the diversity within organization and society. Pluralism contains tolerance and respects that creates coexistence.

Philanthropic

According to the nature of *Bayubrata*, the king is forbidden to pursue pleasure and luxurious things. *Bayubrata* obliges the king to share the wealth of the kingdom to fulfill people's needs. The sharing mechanism provides people's loyalty to the king that is used to sustain the unity of the kingdom. In the contemporary era, the sharing mechanism associated with the philanthropic concept. In this concept, the leader should fulfill people's needs without asking for compensation. The leader should realize that the welfare of other is the leadership responsibility. Thus, the leader will have an altruistic leadership.

Henceforth, the path to altruistic leader based on the nine values of Indonesian Ramayana is shown on figure 1:

Fig. 1: The construction of altruistic leader based on the Indonesian Ramayana values



Based on figure 1, the path to the altruistic leader is built from self-dimension, social dimension, transformative dimension and altruistic dimensions. Self-dimension is a leader's self-ability, which consists of competence, charisma, and ethics. The social dimension is a leader's ability to utilize his self-dimension for the social aspect, comprise of integrative and collaborative abilities. Transformative dimension is a leader's ability to make changes in society based on the knowledge and transformative ability. Meanwhile, the

altruistic dimension is the peak of leadership elements; consist of the pluralistic and philanthropic. The four dimensions are interrelated and complement each other in constructing a path to the altruistic leader.

The nine values of Indonesian Ramayana are similar with another ancient manuscript. The similarity shows in the leadership elements, the hierarchical pattern and the leader's main objectives. In the context of leadership element, the nine values of Indonesian Ramayana are identical with *Bhagavad Gita* values. *Bhagavad Gita* also emphasize the self, social, transformational values, such as *abhayam* or fearlessness; *sattva-samsudhhi* or purity of one's existence; *Jnana yoga vyavastithi* or established in knowledge; *dana* or service with love; *yagna* or collectivism; *svadhaya* or self study; *arjava* or simplicity; *satyam* or truthfulness; *daya* or empathy; and *natimanita* or non-egoist (Sinha & Singh, 2014).

Meanwhile, the hierarchical pattern of the nine values of Indonesian Ramayana is similar with *Jnana* view of modern management and Yoga's concept. Bhattacharjee (2011) described six hierarchical levels of *Jnana*: knowledge creation (*jnana sristi*), knowledge acquisition (*jnana prapti*), knowledge transfer (*jnana parivahana*), knowledge sharing (*jnana sahabhajana*), open innovation (*mukta navaracana*) and spiritual congruence (*adhyatmika samanajaysa*). The six levels of *Jnana* start from the self-management level and transform gradually to the universal SELF-level.

Furthermore, Taware et al. (2017) offered same argumentation. They describe four Yoga's dimension: *Jnana Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga* and *Raja Yoga*, which constructed by self, purification, emotional culture and will power elements. In this concept, the existence of *Jana Yoga* dimension is reflecting the self-management

level. Those two ancient manuscripts reflect the hierarchical pattern of leadership development, starting from self-management to social-management of the leader.

On the subject of leader's objectives, the path to the altruistic leader is similar with *Arthashastra* and *Bhagavad Gita*. The resemblances are found in leader's objectives to reach the welfare of other. Based on the Manrai and Goel (2017) research, *Arthashastra*'s values ensure the welfare of the stakeholders. Meanwhile, Satija (2011) depicted the leadership lesson of *Bhagavad Gita* encompassing: leadership challenges, maintaining one's proper role and duties, proactive, self-sacrifice and the greater good, maintain follower to attain a higher level and commitment to work. It means that those ancient manuscripts put the other welfare as the main objectives of the leader.

The resemblances between the nine leadership element of Indonesian Ramayana and others manuscripts give a clear vision about the construction of altruistic leader. The basic elements of an altruistic leader are self-dimension, consisting of valuable skills and moral aspect. The further element is a social dimension. In the social dimension, the leader must integrate the vision of people and collaborate people's interests into mutual collaboration. After that, the leader has a responsibility to lead the progress of organization and society. Furthermore, the leader should acknowledge the diversity in organization and society by giving love to people without exception. The leader also has a responsibility to fulfill people's needs without asking for compensation to promote the welfare of others. It means that the leaders reach philanthropic dimension that provoke the leader to give priority to others. Thus, the leaders will be an altruistic leadership.

Conclusion

The reconstruction of the nine values of Indonesian Ramayana generated nine leadership elements divisible into four dimensions: self-dimension includes competency, ethics, and charisma; social dimension includes integrative and collaborative; transformational dimension includes knowledgeable and transformative, and altruistic dimension includes pluralistic and philanthropic. The nine leadership elements reflect that theoretically the altruistic leadership is constructed by hierarchical elements, from self-dimension, social dimension, and transformational dimension. This confirmed other research finding that the main objective of the leaders is not only to pursue self-interest but also to create the welfare of others. In a practical aspect, the nine values can be used as a guiding-principle to maintain the contemporary leader in becoming an altruistic leader. The authors recommend that the development of altruistic leader should start the self-dimension development than to social dimension and transformative dimension development. Thus, the future work should be to present a leadership development model based on the altruism values of an ancient manuscript.

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