

Leadership in Minangkabau's Proverbs

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Abstract. This paper discusses a leadership character found in Minangkabau's proverbs. The leadership character is the one built up by each individual person for each one is potential to become a leader. At the Andalas university, all academic staffs are expected to have a pure Andalasian character. The pure character must become an identity of all academic staffs of Andalas University projected to become a leader. An anthropological linguistic approach is applied in order to elaborate the leadership character found in Minangkabau's proverbs. This research is descriptive one. Three types of method are employed to conduct this research one out of which is a strategic step of a research. The three methods are collecting data, analyzing data, and displaying the result of data analysis. The data collection is done under observational method. The analyzing data is done under qualitative method stressing a comprehension over a problem deeply, and the result of the data analysis is presented in an informal method. Based upon the research already done, it is found that the leadership character existing in the Minangkabau's proverbs is the identity covering socialism, humanity, piety, optimism, tolerance, and realism. The presence a charismatic leader in a small or a big community is needed as to materialize tranquility, equality, justice, and life expectancy fitting the cultural value in order realize the harmony in a society.

Keywords: Proverb, Guidance, Wise Character, Leader

1. INTRODUCTION

Are we able to blockade others invasion (foreign nation, business men, culture) if do not unite? What kind of leader do we need in Indonesia in the future in order that as a nation we can go the Great Indonesia? The leader that we are waiting for is the one that could motivate numerous potency available in each individual and group.

In our language we recognize an adagium saying Unite we stand, divide we fall (*bersatu kita teguh bercerai kita runtuh*). In the same sense in Minangkabau such a concept is inscribed in the proverb saying *tuah sakato basilang cilako* 'Unanimosity unity dispute catastrophe'. The adagium or the proverb stated the advantage of unity and the disadvantage division. It teaches that cooperation will take the society to the peak of a common victory. To achieve the victory in the commonness, the cooperative effort is strongly recommended in various aspects beginning from defining what to achieve commonly, to attempt together, to maintain the achievement together, and to enjoy the result together, too, within the concept of proportional justice. Therefore, a leader is needed to organize the individual of the group member in each up-gradating attempt done and to regulate the sharing basis fairly and justly.

It is a reality that there is no one can live individually. The mankind always in group either a small group or a big one. A person is a member of a family, ethnicity, and a nation. S/he has

to cooperate in living his/her life. Each one has to take part according to one's ability. The weak like children and elderly unable to work hard must be supported by the productive adult. By having cooperation, work can be done more easily, energy is combined, and job may be shared so that the result achieved is more. This is stated in a phrase of Minangkabau proverb saying *duduak surang basampik-sampik, duduak basamo balapang-lapang* 'in team everyone achieves more'.

In cultural study, proverb belongs to folklore. In Indonesia, the folklore study already started prior to World War II done by Kern and Hazen. However, it was still limited to the collection and the documentation. A small part of it was scientific and in general was done in the Javanese folklore. Rossers in [1], for instance, used the social structural theory to show that there is an inseparable unity of various ceremonies and Javanese structural society. Furthermore, Bane [2] made use of a solar Mythology in analyzing East Javanese legend. Wessing [3] implemented theory of diffusions in order to compare the character of a liar in a West Javanese legend. In addition, the truth expressed in proverb is usually relative rather than absolute [4].

Folklore is part of a biggest collection and inherited from generation to generation. It exists in the society in different versions either in the form of purely oral followed with gestural movement or *mnemonic device* [5]. Brunvand said that folklore could be divided into three parts those are: firstly, oral folklore, folklore whose form is purely oral. The one belonging to this are (a) folk language such as vernacular dialect, alias, traditional rank, and royal title; (b) traditional expression such as proverb, wise-word, and byword; (c) traditional question such as riddles; (d) popular poetry such as *gurindam*, *pantun*, and *syair* (e) folk story such as myth, legend, and fairy, and (f) folk song. Secondly, half an oral folklore that is the mixed one of both oral and non-oral one. Folk belief, for example, superstition. Oral statement followed with gestural movement considered having the unseen meaning. Moreover, there is also folk game, folk theater, folk dance, and folk festival. Thirdly, a non-oral folklore that is the one also taught orally but in form of material. How to make the cultural objects such as folk architecture, handicrafts, dress and decoration, foods and drinks, and medications taught orally. These are grouped into a non-oral that is material folklore. Therefore, a material non-oral folklore is traditional gesture, gestural sound and folk music.

From the sub-division of the folklore, it is obvious that the oral proverb is an oral folklore whose form purely oral. As a folklore, it is assumed that the proverb contains a value or a teaching. Among others, the riches of Minangkabau's proverb carry the teaching of leadership. As traditional knowledge [6], Minangkabau proverbs is one of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world, developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, and transmitted orally from generation to generation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach and this is used for to things. Firstly, to reconstruct the value available in the proverb related to the leadership. The value concerned could be the one should be avoided or obeyed. Other than that, this approach was also used to retrace the relationship of the cultural value contained in the Minangkabau's proverb and the teachings of both *adat* and Islam. The data of this research is all figurative languages under leadership themes acquired from both oral and written sources.

There are three methods used in this research. All of them are research strategic steps. They are data collection, data analysis, and display of the analysis results methods. Method used in collecting data is survey one. The researcher also made a deep interview with the *adat* and the

religious figures. The questionnaires are distributed in order to know the level comprehension of people to numerous proverbs dealing with leadership as well as interview with the informants representing the various social class and group.

The theory of semantic field is used in data analysis aimed at elaborating the figurative meaning such as expression used. The basic consideration in semantic field theory is that the lexicon (vocabulary) or expression and proverb found in a language is not only a collection of lexical bits. The lexicon is systematic and builds a system [7]. The links of lexical bit build up lexical order. The meaning of lexical bit is limited by the meaning of relation of the one lexical bit and the other. In the theory of this semantic field, it is considered that there are some groups of inter-meaning relation of lexicon. The group of meaning relations are (1) relation of *congruence* and (2) relation of *oppositeness*. Later on, the proverb found in the leadership domain may be related to the proverb expressing the spirit of unity, cooperation, honesty, sincerity, and justice [8].

Therefore, this analysis follows such operational procedures: (1) collecting all forms of Minangkabau's proverb utterance related to the domain of leadership, (2) the utterance is grouped into similarity of meaning or value and the identity method is used as to define the similarity. By doing so, the utterance containing norms related to the leadership will be found. The result of the analysis is informally presented. It means, the finding result is described in a narration using words. [8]

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It cannot be denied, that the main purpose of mankind as an individual is for the sake of self-kindness and benefit. In the Minangkabau's culture, the happiness a man to achieve is for both now and the day after. The physical happiness is related to physical satisfaction. This may be felt as the need of living is fulfilled such as food, clothe, and shelter, as well as health. Psychological satisfaction such as senses of security, comfort, psychological satisfaction, acceptability, and acknowledgment. Nasroen [9] said that a condition to reach physical and psychological happiness are the presence of balance in one's self. Such a balance covers four aspects as follows:

- Balance in one's self between thoughts, feelings, and beliefs;
- Balance with others seen in individual interaction among the society;
- Balance with nature in the sense than one has to be able to adapt one's self with the nature, not only to conquered it;
- Balance with the unseen nature, such a belief in the day-after life, one has to do a good deed in the world for the day after.

In order to achieve both physical and psychological happiness in a balanced condition, the Minangkabau people need to unite based upon a single how and purpose that is *saino samalu* 'one for all'. The base: *saino samalu*, how: *saino samalu*, purpose: *saino samalu*.

While the national system is structured hierarchically, leaders in Minangkabau culture are viewed as only one step above the people below them. A well-known proverbial expression states that a leader should be "raised one twig higher, advanced one step ahead" of others. This slight difference in status accounts for the traditional pattern of decision-making that places a strong emphasis on consensus and agreement from all members of the group. This is the way extended families function in the traditional context. There is also a corresponding idea that quarreling and differences of opinion support better outcomes. This idea is contained in the proverb "When the sticks are crossed in the stove, only then will

the fire catch". The crossed sticks refer to different views that should be argued out. The expectation that every person at a meeting or discussion will have a chance to speak and that quarrelling is not negative likely contributes to the difficulty the hospital directors quoted above have in managing meetings and getting staff to accept their decisions. Traditional forms of interaction do not fit with the tight schedules and rigid procedures of the health-care environment that do not allow adjustment [10]

The purpose of someone to reach happiness is for one's self and its realization among the society based upon the common principle of from the community, by the community, and for the community, in Minangkabau it is expressed *lamak dek awak, katuju dek urang* 'good for us, pleasant to others' and *sakik dek awak sakik dek urang* 'farmful for others, farmful for us. Thus, according to the Minangkabau's *adat*, there is necessary a balance of the individual interest and the social one [11].

Dealing with social order, the Minangkabau culture has certain basis and principles, too, that is common principle [9]. The common principle does not always the same. The Minangkabau society admit the hierarchy and the difference. The presence difference in the Minangkabau society is stated in *luhak nan bapangulu* 'luhak has the head', *rantau nan barajo* 'rantau has the king', *kampung nan batuo* 'kampung has the chair', *rumah nan batungganai* 'house has the head' *kamanakan barajo ka mamak* 'niece and nephew are subject to the uncle', *mamak barajo ka pangulu* 'the uncle is subject to the *penghulu*'.

The proverbs above stated that in each stratified social group there is a leader. The stratification defines the rights and responsibility of somebody in a given group. The stratification in the society is the *adat* norm as stated in the Minangkabau expression: *bajanjang naiak* 'rule to obey' *batanggo turun* 'norm to follow'. Therefore, there is a Minangkabau social order from a small group to the big one *kaum*, family, *berkorong*, *kampung*, *hindun*, *suku*, *dusun*, *negeri*, *laras*, *luhak*, and *alam*. On that stratification, rights, obligation, duty, and responsibility of each person is set up based upon familiarity, one for all, from, by, and for all [9].

To live in such a stratification, one has to defend the closest stratification to him. However, at the same time he has to defend the bigger interest. The phrase of *adat* said: *adat ba dunsanak, dunsanak patahankan*, 'the *adat* of brotherhood, the brother is defended', *adat ba kampung, kampung patahankan*, 'adat of having *kampung*, the *kampung* is defended', *adat ba nagari, nagari patahankan* 'the *adat* of having *nagari*, *nagari* is defended' *sanda ba sanda, ba kua jo tabiang* 'depending on one another like bamboos lands'. In the phrase above, there is also a principle that in defending the interest must be done in combination and unity like bamboos and lands. The bamboo may grow due to the lands but lands is solid due to the bamboo growing on it. Such a principle may be implemented based upon the principle of willingness and sincerity [12]. In addition, there is a Javanese advice of *rukun agawe santosa*, and *sing sapa ora seneng tetanggan kalebu wong kang ora becik* (whoever is not a lot like his or her neighbor is not a good person). Javanese live under concomitant or coexistent norms in relating to their neighbors. Individuals as well as families strive to live in harmony with their neighbors [13].

The Minangkabau *adat* wants a common basis; not equality. The require the sameness is an impossibility for the natural reality diverse. The togetherness among the different persons may be practiced if the social members hold up tightly to the teaching saying: *nan tuo dimuliakan* 'respect the elder'. *nan mudo dikasihi* 'love the young'. *Samo gadang hormat manghormati*. 'mutual respect among the peer'.

Each individual of the stratification is viewed of the same position. It is stated in the expression saying: *duduak samo randah, tagak samo tinggi*. 'sitting is equally low, standing is equally high'. Each different individual is expected to take part according to his respective capacity. This is stated in a phrase of *adat* saying: *gadang kayu, gadang bahannyo* 'Big tree, big

bough'; *ketek kayu, ketek bahannyo* 'little tree, little bough'. It could be caught on from the phrase that what expected is common sacrifice and dedication, not equality. Each individual dedicates according to his ability. The togetherness within the Minangkabau society is built up on the sense of a common shame owned by the group members. This is stated in an adat phrase saying: *kok tanah nan sabungkah alah bapunyo* 'a parcel of land is already owned'. *Kok rumpuik nan saalai alah bapunyo* 'a leaf of grass is already owed' *malu nan alun babagi* 'a shame is not shared yet either'. In comparison, Chinese proverb quotations proved that in contemporary China proverbs are employed in both inter-personal and international communication [14], [15].

The togetherness of a leader and the people he leads are very important. The smallest and the main unit in the Minangkabau culture is between uncle and nephew/niece (*mamak jo kamanakan*). This is inscribed in a proverb saying Unanimity in unity *saciok bak anak ayam, sadancıang bak basi not saciok bak ayam sadancıang bak basi*. The proverb *saciok bak anak ayam, sadancıang bak basi* describes a unity of uncle and nephew/niece (leader and the ones led in facing various problems either severe or mild one [16].

With the stratified order of the Minangkabau society there appears stratified leaders, too, it the scope of their power. The leader is appointed by glorifying of the group members collectively. In the philosophy of *adat*, the idea of leader is available at the rank of a *penghulu* [9]. This applies to *penghulu* as well as the other leaders in general. According to the Minangkabau *adat*, the leader is glorified therefore he is glorified. This is exposed in a proverb saying: *tumbuhnyo ditanam* 'planted to grow', *tingginyo dianjuang* 'he is supported to stand up right', *gadangnya diamba* 'he is raised up cared of.' For this reason, the distinction between the public, formal environment and the traditional, informal context is often blurred. All the individuals interviewed here, for example, spoke Indonesian fluently, as is required for success in formal education leading to a professional qualification. However, as occurs all over Indonesia, many feel more comfortable with Minang, which also reinforces ethnic identity and group membership [10].

The leadership constitution in such a way does not permit the presence of a leadership based upon power and obligation. There is place of dictatorship in Minangkabau culture. The one appointed a leader is selected few. One has to fulfill a certain requirement to become a leader. According to the Minangkabau *adat*, that he must think globally *beralam lapang*, broad minded, for a leader is *pusat jala timbunan kapal* 'primus inter-paris. It means that many and numerous problems he should face and all of them must be settled and surmounted.

The main point expected from a leader is not his sharp decision but the one clarifying and settling. This is due to the Minangkabau's belief that whatever the problem no matter how complicated it is nothing is unaccomplished. Such a Minangkabau's belief is inscribed in an expression saying: *tak ado kusuik nan tak salasai* 'no problem is unsolved', *tak ado karuah nan tak janiah* 'no mystery is unsolved'.

The leader is the one who is broad minded and has a broad knowledge. Such a type of leader is stated in an expression saying: *lubuak aka, lautan budi* 'knowledge is akin to morality'. In seeking for solution of a problem faced by the people he presides, the leader sets a policy and take care of the feelings of the people he leads. Such a leader's attitude is stated in an *adat* expression saying: *Tapuang ndak taserak, abuak ndak putuih*. 'win - win solution'. The decision making must be done under a *sakato* 'common consent' or *sapakat* 'accord' not by majority. This is also an implementation of common principle for each person is involved in the decision making. No matter how the person is smart, stupid, disabled, etc. all get involved within the common principle that is to stay together within place and time. A leader has to have a clear

mind and is easy to understand. This exposed in an *adat* expression saying *aie nan janiah, sayak nan landai* ‘men sana in corpore sano.

The quality of a leader is identified to a big banyan tree whose nature and behavior stated in an expression as follows: *baringin di tengah padang, ureknyo tampek baselo, batangnya tampek basanda, dahannyo tampek bagantuang, rantingnyo ka kayu api, daunnyo tampek balinduang, balinduang dari hujan jo paneh, ka pai tampek batanyo, ka pulang tampek babarito, digantuang tinggi-dibuang jauh. nan capek kaki ringan tangan, capek kaki nan indak panaruang, capek tangan nan indak pamacah tubo, mahukum adia bakato bana, nan mahukum indak sarupo mambalah batuang, mahukum sarupo mambalah galamai, tibo di mato nan indak dipiciangkan, tibo diparuik nan indak di kampihkan, tatilantang samo minum ambun, tatilungkuik samo makan tanah. Ka buki samo mandaki, ka lurah samo manurun, tarapuang hanyuik tarandam basah, indak tinggi ruok dari boto, bakato indak sarupo balalai gajah, mangecek indak sarupo katiak ula, takuruang makanan kunci, tapawik makanan lantak, gapuak indak mambuang lamak, manilantang maetong kasau, manungkuik mambilah lantai, pandangan jauh dilayangkan pandang dakek ditukiakkan, tagang bajelo-jelo, kandua badantiang-dantiang, tau dibarieh jo balabeh, manggangam hadih jo kiasan, nan tau halal jo haram, maminteh ka hulu mangaja ka balakang. Baurek tunggang ka bumi, bapucuak cewang ka langik [17].*

The banyan tree in the middle of the field, its roots is to sit on crossing leg, the tree is to lean against. The bough is to hang on, the branch is for firewood, the leaf is to shade the rain and the sunshine, asking question before going, delivering news as coming home, hanging high, throwing away, easy to work, walking quickly without collusion, quick handy not harmful, just to punish, tell the truth and punish impartially, to punish like to cut *gelamai*. Up to eyes not winked, up to stomach deflated, lying up to drink dew, lying down to eat ash, going up to the hill, going down to the valley, floating drown, sinking wet, foam is not higher than bottle, telling something not beating about the bush, not penny wise pound foolish, not a lazy bone, understanding the regulations of religion and *adat*, knowing dos and don'ts, quick learning, and tap rooted to the earth and sprout to sky-high.

Expression in metaphorical forms in a leadership with the banyan tree above states numerous things. Firstly, dealing with the deed of the leader that all of which result in kindness and wisdom for the surrounding people. The leader is the one that anytime whose idea may be asked for at the moment the people are doing something. The leader is subject to the rule already defined. In implementation of the legal system s/he must act justly. S/he is ready to take part in facing the risk of the decision and the action done by the group s/he leads. It means a leader must be a responsible one.

In line to the Minangkabau's philosophy, the wise leader is the one implementing the regulation agreed resourced from Islamic teaching becoming the baseline of the Minangkabau's *adat*. In the implementation of rule, a leader keeps considering both situation and condition so that there is always available a tolerance in each rule no matter how strict is. The one becoming a leader must be public figure, consistent, and has a cut. The public figure means the one already well-known for s/he gets used to settle the problem within the society even though s/he is not yet appointed a leader. Consistent (*tageh*) in Minangkabau means quickly responsive and quickly acting, and has a cut (*takah*) means ‘to deserve’ and ‘interesting appearing’, primarily physical appearance.

The wise leader involves many parties in a consultation in setting a program to be executed and post some personnel proportionally so that all social components may be involved maximally based upon one's own respective quality. No party is looked down, or no party is considered unimportant. To lead in such a way may direct s/his society into a harmony. This is stated in a proverb saying: *nan lorong tanami tabu, nan tunggang tanami pariang* ‘the flat

grown with sugar cane, the steep grown with bamboo'; *nan gurun buek ka parak, nan munggu ka pandan pakuburan* 'dry land for dry paddy, the *munggu* for burial'; *nan rawang ranangan itiak, nan kubang ka kubangan kabau* 'the swamp for duck, the muddy for buffalo'; *nan bancah jadikan sawah*, 'wet land for wet paddy *jadikan sawah nan gauang ka tabekikan*, for fish pond'.

As one is already appointed, it does not mean that s/he free to anything s/he likes. The position of a leader does not mean immune to a criticism. This is in line with an adat metaphor saying: *kamanakan barajo ka mamak* 'the nephew is subject to uncle'; *mamak barajo ka pangulu* 'the uncle subject to *penghulu*'; *pangulu barajo ka alua jo patuik* '*penghulu* subject to the common sense'.

It is clear that from the definition that the leader must be subject to the common sense and it is prohibited to lead abusively. It is obvious that the *adat* claim that: the just King to follow *rajo adie rajo disambah*, the unjust king is to defy '*rajo lalim rajo disanggah*'. It clear that the leader already appointed may be authorized, be defied, be legally sued. Based upon the Minangkabau's *adat* that there is no place for dictatorship, absolute king in Minangkabau. However, the leader is planted (appointed) 'elected and appointed by people, s/he must be subject to and obey the appropriateness outlined by the people. It means the power by the people. That is the real democracy. Truly, such a leadership system is good for there is nothing to be taken for granted the leader who at the beginning is good could be always good. The leader to be followed is the one that could be expected by the people s/he leads to fulfill what instructed is heartily.

The people of Minangkabau recognize a leadership structure. Culturally they consist of four components namely: *pangulu*, *manti*, *malin*, and *dubalang*. Each of them preserves a position and a duty respectively. The position of a leader is stated in a proverb: (a) *Penghulu* functions as earth, on which everything stands, (b) *Manti* functions as wind to deliver everything, (c) *Malin* function as water to wash away anything dirty, (d) *Dubalang* function as fire to act severely. The respectif job of a leader is: *penghulu* is to punish along with *adat*, *manti* is to punish along the Islamic law, *malin* is to judge the dispute, and *dubalang* punishes *katiko ado batuhak jo baparang* 'when there is a conflict or a war.'

The four leadership components also serve: *pangulu manyuruah babuek baiek* '*penghulu* is to instruct people to do a good deed', *malin managah babuek jaek* '*malin* is to prohibit people wrong doing wrong', *manti mambesokan hala jo aram* '*manti* membedakan yang halal dengan yang haram', *dubalang manjago kajahatan* '*dubalang* is to keep the crime away'. *Pangulu taguah di adat* '*penghulu* is strict to *adat*', *malin agamo* '*malin* is strict to religion', *manti taguah di buek* '*manti* is strict to governance', *dubalang taguah di nagari* '*dubalang* is strict to nagari.

Both individual and common aspiration of the Minangkabau is to achieve both physical and psychological welfare under the common principle of the leader and the people s/he leads as stated in a phrase: *barek sapikua, ringan sajinjang, nan tidak samo dicari, sasakik sasanang, ka bukik samo mandaki, ka lurah samo manurun, sahayun salangkah*. 'in team, everyone achieves more'[18] [19].

4. CONCLUSIONS

In order to dig out the local cultural value for a shield to blockade individualism in order to achieve public and common security, harmony and welfare of living, the understanding of the local culture is necessary to put into account. The philosophical understanding the local culture related to a leadership is badly needed to be made basis in order to raise the cooperative spirit, solidarity, and human resource development in relation to a leadership.

It seems nowadays, it often occurs demoralization followed with the personality crisis. Such crises bring about worries that could threat national unity and integrity and the enforcement of

the local cultural and national defenses. These crises have made conscious all social components how important the cultural defense in a social life is, including the one of how to develop the sense of oneness and unity and to develop human resources based upon the local wisdom. The want of uniting must be developing upon the account to realize tranquility, equality, justice, and expectancy of life in line with the cultural value. Cultural behavior such as good ethic and morality in social interaction in sympathy and empathy to the other people, to maintain the sense of justice as well as the balance of rights and obligations as the essential values that are essential to the important values to possessed by all, chiefly, a leader.

The value of honored culture is necessary to be inherited to the younger generation in order that they as the heirs and successors of both the culture and the civilization have a guidance in carrying on the development of the Minangkabau civilization in the framework of NKRI harmoniously. Therefore, it is utterly necessary to re-document and to re-study the local value regulating the cooperation spirit by the people of Minangkabau. The positive thing in Minangkabau culture mainly related to the leader and the leadership is necessary to socialize to the younger generation in various levels of formal education. the technological advancement in the field of communication should be taken advantage of to spread the honored value widely the one available in Indonesian cultural repertoires.

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