Public Ethics for the Renewal and Improvement of Public Services

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ABSTRACT: Public ethics is needed for the renewal and improvement of public services. A conflict of interest, corruption, and complicated bureaucracy may produce poor public services. The problem is not only a moral quality (honest, fair), but it is also the system which is not conducive. In fact, some dishonest public officials and politicians who are not serious are fighting for the public interest. The weak accountability and transparency cause corruption in all life sectors, from the upper echelons to the lowest levels of public service, from the private sector to non-governmental organization, even religious institution. Thus, corruption does not only infect the political society, but also civil society. The critical reflection of poor public services and public integrity is a major concern for public ethics. Public ethics is very concerned with the modality, which is not only the good intention.

KEYWORDS: public ethics. public services, political society, organization, religious institution

I.   INTRODUCTION

The concept of "ethics" is often used as the synonym of "morals". Behind these two terms, the nuances of two different philosophical thought philosophies are implied. In the book Aristotle Ethique à Nicomaque, besides the word éthos, which means "quality of a trait" the term "ethos" is also used as habit. The meaning of ethos is a way of thinking and feeling, a way of acting and behaving that gives a characteristic of one's ownership of the group. This second term corresponds to the Latin translation "moralist" (mos, moris = adat, habit). The term "moralist" is a technical term that is no longer means as habit, but it contains the meaning of "moral" as used in the current sense.

Moral is always associated with special obligations, associated with norms as a way of acting in the form of demands whether they are relative or absolute. So, "moral" is a normative and imperative discourse expressed in terms of good / bad, right / wrong which is considered as absolute or transcendent value. It contains obligations. Thus, the concept of "moral" refers to all applicable rules and norms, which are accepted by a particular society as a guide in acting, and expressed in terms of good and bad, right and wrong [1].

Ethics is understood as a philosophical reflection of a moral. So, ethics is more a normative discourse (it doesn't always have to be a mandatory order, because it can also be possible to act) that discusses good/bad. Ethics is more viewed as an art of life that leads to happiness and wisdom. Paul Ricoeur's approach on the use of term of "moral" and "ethical" gives a new nuance. He related the two terms to two different philosophical thought traditions [2]. The term "moral" is associated with Immanuel Kant philosophical thought tradition (deontological point of view). Moral refers to obligations, norms, principles of action, imperatives ("categorical" = rules or norms derived from a common sense as necessity), whereas "ethics" is associated with Aristotelian

thought tradition which is "teleological" (telos = finality or purpose). P. Ricoeur defines "ethics" as a goal of life both collective and personal in a just institution.

Usually, ethics is better understood as a reflection of good/bad, right/wrong that had been done or how to do good or right, while moral refers to the obligation to do good or what should be done [3]. Ethical pressure placed on the reflective aspect in finding a decision to act (not only on the issue of compliance with norms) is the main reason why the term "public ethics" is more appropriate than "public morals" or "public morality" [4].

Public ethics is a reflection of standard/norm that determines good/bad, right/wrong behavior, action, and decision to direct public policy in carrying out public service responsibilities. There are three points that concern public ethics: (i) it is different with political ethics, the main concern of public ethics is quality and relevant public services; (ii) it is not only the code of ethics or norms, but especially the reflective dimensions [5]. This means that public ethics functions as an aid in weighing the choice of public policy tools and evaluation tools that take into account the ethical consequences; and political, social, cultural and economic efforts are suitable with the ethical standard if they are able to create more equitable institutions; (iii) focus on ethical modalities, i.e. how to bridge between moral norms ('what should be done') and factual actions [6]. The public ethics concerns of the modality differ from other right or moral teachings. This emphasis on modality is willing to answer complaints and cynicism such as "almost all fields of life already have a code of ethics", "morals have been taught everywhere", "religion has given all the instructions to do good", but corruption keep running rampant. Then, what is the additional value of public ethics or it is perhaps just another teaching of "what should be"? [7]

People often think that "knowing" is the same as "doing". Whereas, there is still a distance between "know" and "action". People can preach well or give good advice, but they could do the opposite [8]. So the direction of public ethics is not only on "what is good or moral", but it focuses on reflection on how to bridge the moral norms into real actions. Public ethics prioritizes institutional ethics, namely how to organize so that responsibilities can be carried out, looking for procedures or modalities that can help. So looking for systems, procedures, facilities, modalities that can facilitate ethical action.

Public ethics regulates, especially political society, all people involved in state institutions. They are both those who get positions because they are elected in elections or local elections, and those who take office because they are appointed or have a career. They must direct their responsibilities, judgments, and decision-making processes based on public ethics. Public integrity requires the public official to have a moral commitment by considering the balance between institutional judgments, personal dimensions, and wisdom in public service.

If the object is public service, public ethics should also be the basis of civil society activities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, non-profit associations as long as they are involved in public service and community empowerment. So, the subject of public ethics is not only government officials or politicians, but all people who hold positions, leadership, or responsibilities related to the public services. Religious leaders, social organizations, NGOs, nonprofit associations and other organizations because they take care of the public interest, namely collective interest, actually it also becomes the subject of public ethics. In this context, public ethics is not different with political ethics, so the responsibility of public ethics is also similar to political ethics which rely on its three dimensions [9].

II.   THREE DIMENSIONS OF PUBLIC ETHICS AND FOCUS ON INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS

When talking about public ethics, it does not only discuss moral norms and moral subjects, but it must take into account its dimensions. Public ethics has three dimensions depicted in triangles that refer to goal, mean, and action.

Public ethics is part of political ethics. Political ethics is defined as "efforts to live well (fighting for the public interest) for and with others in order to expand the scope of freedom and build more equitable institutions". The three dimensions of political ethics are goal (policy), mean (polity), and political action (politics). From this definition, the author translates to

EXCELLENT AND RELEVANT PUBLIC SERVICE

GOAL

PUBLIC ETHICS

MODALITY   **ACTION**
ACCOUNTABILITY   **PUBLIC INTEGRITY**
TRANSPARENCY
NEUTRALITY
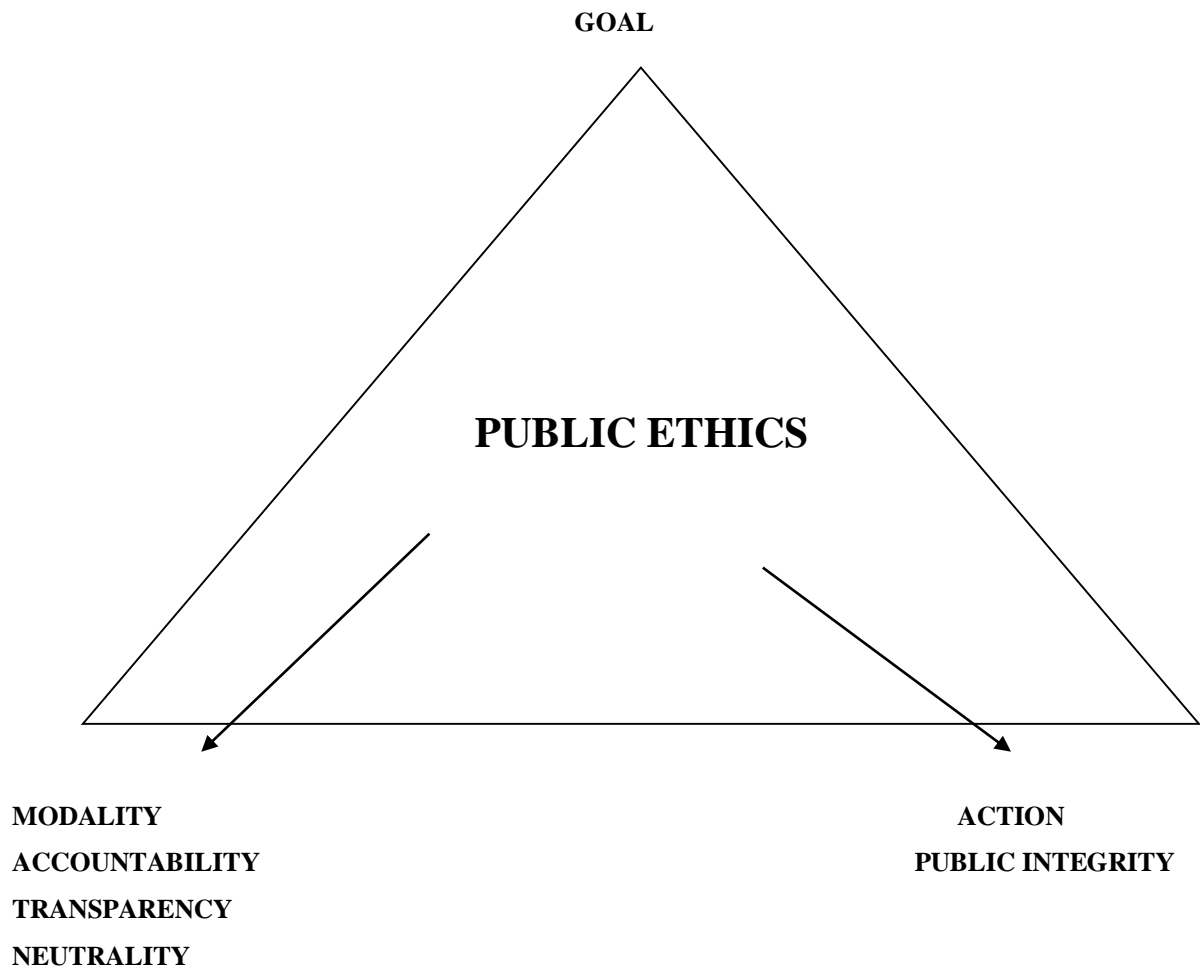
the three-dimensional version of public ethics: (i) the goal of "efforts to live a good life" translates to "seeking public welfare through excellent and relevant public services"; (ii) mean: "building more equitable institutions" formulated as "building ethical infrastructure by creating regulations, laws, rules to ensure accountability, transparency and neutrality of public services"; (iii) action is understood as "public integrity" to ensure excellent and relevant public services [10].

The goal dimension is formulated in an effort to achieve public welfare, which means the availability of excellent and relevant public services. The main concern is the transparent public policies application in public management. In a democratic country, the government has a commitment toward the administration of state and they are responsible for the commitment of creating the society welfare and the peaceful life. Facing public service demands, general government policies must be clearly defined in terms of priority, program, method, and goal of public fund which are transparent. The moral dimension lies on the ability to set clear directions for public policy and accountability [11].

The second dimension is modality (means, polity) that enables the goal achievement. This dimension includes the systems and basic principles of organizing public service practice which has special attention in building more equitable social institutions. This determines the regulation of people's behavior in dealing with basic problems. This dimension of means (polity) contains two normative patterns: first, the political order (law and institution) must follow the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, acceptance of plurality; social structure arranged by following the principles of justice and equality before the law. Therefore, the principle of equality and the one who is benefited or the one who is disadvantaged by certain laws or institutions is relevant to be discussed. So, accountability as a means to achieve excellent public services and maintain public integrity

becomes the main means; second, political forces are arranged according to the mutual principle . Justice, neutrality or impartiality, and fair treatment contribute in increasing transparency [12].

The moral dimension at the level of this means lies on (i) the role of public ethics in testing and criticizing the legitimacy of political decisions, institutions, and practices. (ii) attitudes in dealing with structures, namely, agreeing or rejecting the arrangement of social, economic, and political of living together; (iii) the principle of subsidiarity in public services, which means that if the community, associations, NGOs or non-profit organizations are able to organize or solve problems or affairs with their capabilities and facilities, the state does not need to intervene. This principle fosters initiative and courage to take personal responsibility [13].

The third dimension, the actions of politicians and public officials are demanded to have public integrity. In this third dimension of public ethics, actors play a role in determining political rationality. Political rationality consists of the rationality of action and virtue (moral quality). Political action is rational if the actor has a situation orientation and understands the problem. This illustrates the technical competence, leadership, and ethics. Public official or politician is required to have public integrity by avoiding violence and being a moral imperative (expression of respect for human dignity), then mastery of conflict management is a condition of ethical political action. Public policy has meaning because it takes into account the public interest and it is responsive to hopes, complaints, protests, criticisms, approvals, and rejection. The ethical meaning is even more explicit when the action is based on compassion and partiality for the weak, poor, or marginalized. The partiality is only meaningful when translated in institutions [14].

The importance of reflection demands aims in order that the public ethics is not only formulated as deontology, but it also takes into account the ethical theories. By considering the contribution of ethical theory in the decision making process, public official is invited to study the reasons or "why" a norm or code of ethics needs to be obeyed. Behind an ethical reasoning, there is a reason for the choice of values that underlies a commitment. When a district head decides to choose a free program for school instead of allocating funds for the construction of the regent's office complex, employee housing, and regional soccer teams, the public official prioritizes the value of justice. Tens of thousands of families are relieved from the burden of education costs and at the same time the local government is investing in cultural and social capital. The distribution of wealth is not interpreted literally as a way of distributing money, but building institutions that open equal opportunities for all citizens. Free schooling is one form of a just institution. Institutional ethics cares of this modalities of justice.

Although public ethics emphasizes its modality or institutional ethics, it does not neglect virtue ethics. Institutions and virtues are two dimensions of ethics that support one another. Virtue is a stabilizing factor for actions from the actors so that actions can be predicted and goodness can be relied upon: whereas good institutions will guarantee the stability of actions from outside the actors themselves. The virtue develops along with a person's characteristics as habits through education and habit of doing good. Therefore, the social environment of the family, education, or place of activity/work also determines the characters. Experience is increasingly convincing that virtue does not only gained from knowledge, though it is also necessary, but it is mainly from the habit of doing good and responsible.

Public ethics aims to ensure the official integrity in public services, then they are dealing with the practice of social institutions, law, community, social, political, and economic structures. All these affairs are similar to the object of political ethics. Only public ethics prioritizes the ways in which "good intentions" carry practical implications, which means "good intentions" must be supported by equitable institutions. Good intentions, which serve to sharpen the meaning of responsibility, must be translated into institutions (laws, rules, habits, social institutions) so that they can more effectively organize one's responsibilities through sanctions or rewards. Promises or good intentions can be meaningful if it kept or carried out. Therefore, it is necessary to have sanctions if they are not met, or will receive compensation if the implementation is satisfactory. Sanctions or rewards motivate actions or function as a means of stabilizing actions from outside. In the context of institutional ethical elaboration, sanctions and rewards are one means of bridging between "knowing and" acting ", between" what should be "and" what is factually done ".

The problem is that most applicable moral norms rely more on doctrine, ignore institutional ethics or care less about seeking modalities for its application. Is public ethics just a new form of discourse? Can public ethics be the bridge between good intentions and public service practices, or will public ethics also suffer the same as other pious discourses? The focus of bridging between good intentions and public service practices is a major concern of public ethics as institutional ethics.

III.   MODALITIES OF PUBLIC ETHICS AND BETTING

Modality (Latin capitalist from the root mode = mode) is understood as a special method or procedure, it can also mean a way or means. The best modality meaning that suits the context of public ethics is the procedure or conditions that allow ethical norms to be implemented or respected. In A. Giddens' structuration theory, modality has a very important role, because it determines the quality of the structure that is formed (meaning, dominance, and legitimacy). Structuration is a condition that directs changes in structures that allow reproduction of social systems [1]. So, a fundamental change must take into account this structuration theory.

According to this British sociologist, modality plays an important role, because it determines social interaction, especially modality being a requirement or procedure for every fundamental change. So, to change the ban on corruption and poor public services must take into account the change in the three modalities of social interaction, namely the interpretation framework, norms, and facilities [2]. Changes in the framework of interpretation (interpretation) and norms (morality) require public ethics, especially institutional ethics which are considered capable of organizing responsibilities through sanctions or rewards. With this change, references, ways of thinking, ways of evaluating are based on a new framework of thought, namely public ethical values.

Changes in the three modalities are in line with the moral concerns of the community, namely that moral teaching is not enough, they still need ways / efforts to be able to implement modalities. By concerning, it means that public official is invited to read maps of the strengths and aspirations of the people to direct changes in public institutions. Understanding the power relation map will provide realism in making programs. So, building an ethical culture requires an organizational management method that takes into account two modalities of power: (i) people's expectations or approvals; (ii) power facilities that can support or hinder change. Facilities of power can be in the form of influence (symbolic capital), networks, mass and organization (social capital), financial power (economic capital), or management, institutional knowledge and knowledge (cultural capital). Taking into account "who has the kind of power facilities" will be more realistic in choosing the means for change in order to improve public services. For example, the formation of an Ethics Commission becomes unrealistic if it takes an honest person, but it has no ethical education background at all; or a whistle-blowing mechanism is established, but it is not accompanied by certain legal protections, it will also not work.

The ethical tendency of government which is reduced to deontology (code of ethics) only emphasizes in regulating the behavior of public officials in bureaucratic logic. Then they are easily satisfied with this form of surveillance as a new technique for controlling the body and mind to direct the behavior of public officials. Thus, people are not invited to look for a rationale or reason for the application of a norm. Even though, public ethics must be strong in the reflexive dimension which functions to take distance so that it is critical or able to make moral considerations before acting or making decision [15].

Public ethical pressure directed to reflexive dimension will open up new horizons: (i) enable people to think critically about their responsibilities in decision making and action; (ii) giving legitimacy in a moral consideration because it takes into account the cultural horizons of the people who contribute in finalizing a decision process; (iii) reflexive aspects complete the judicial weaknesses (which overemphasize compliance) by linking norms and how they are applied in action systems. So, ethics is not only seen as a virtue ethic that helps sharpen the meaning of responsibility, but the focus is more directed at institutional ethics in organizing responsibilities based on the sanctions and rewards.

The institutional aspect drives the dynamics of public services because it demands organizational and managerial renewal following the pattern of modernization in the private sector. So, it is not surprising that in the renewal of the public service sector, it is possible to develop new instruments such as consultative commissions, ethical commissions, supervisors whose duty is to follow the movement of public services in terms of ethics or values that must be taken into account by public officials. So the supervisory or advocacy institutions established from civil society initiatives must be interpreted as a warning against the deterioration of the public service sector. So the rise of Coruption Watch, Police Watch, Judicial Watch, and control institutions proves the need for public ethics. Society is increasingly critical, so it tries to organize itself so that it can demand public officials to commit to ethical values in the administration of public interests.

There are four things at stake in upholding public ethics (i) dealing with issues of corruption and conflicts of interest, but also (ii) helping public officials who often have to deal with ethical dilemmas between the principles they believe in, personal values, and professional demands, (iii) how to integrate ethical values in the decision making process. This integration is increasingly difficult because of the plurality of values and advances in science and technology. Moreover, the structure of economic meaning (market logic) largely determines how to think in all fields: (iv) how to deal with market logic which has a great influence in directing public services. The result is the influence of advertising logic, namely, imaging is part of a public policy strategy to attract consumers (citizens). Political communication is similar with the public relations in a

company. Then, ethics gives the impression only to be a kind of tool to get public legitimacy. Public ethics can indeed be used to compensate for the weakening of public ethical values and the crisis of trust in public officials.

IV.   CONCLUSION

Why do people start turning to public ethics? Because by emphasizing a set of values and norms, and moral principles, public ethics wants to form the basis of the integrity of public services. The moral nature of public ethics demands more than technical competence because it must be able to identify problems and ethical concepts that are unique in public service. More concretely, public official is required to be able to establish relevant codes of conduct, professional behavior and guidelines in implementing organizational accreditation. Thus, ethical integrity is more than just stopping corruption or cheating. Integrity requires a reflection ability to build ethical consensus. So, integrity cannot be separated from an ethical culture in which individual or organizational behavior is directed at the values, standards and moral rules accepted by members of the organization and society.

Public ethics directs social, cultural, and political analysis at the perspective in finding a systematic forms of public service by taking into account the interaction between the values of society and values upheld by public institutions. Then the elaboration of public ethics cannot be separated from its two tasks, namely (i) taking into account the values of the developing community in directing the decisions of public officials and understanding the social, political, and moral impacts of those decisions; (ii) reflecting value, principles, norms, and forms of regulation, because these four things underpin the organization, structuring and management of collective life, especially the problem of the distribution of power and responsibilities. This second task presupposes that norms are not just rules, but they are equipped with the infrastructure to do.

One infrastructure of public ethics is personal integrity. Various forms of violations can undermine personal integrity such as sexual harassment, domestic violence, drinking, gambling, drugs. The vulnerability of private life reminds that ethical value is translated concretely so that they are not only relevant in public service, but the private life should not interfere with public duties. Then when faced with a more severe ethical dilemma, public official will be better prepared. Especially the stakes are more severe because they involve the values of public services (efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, neutrality, and responsiveness to community needs or complaints). So public ethics must be able to help public official when facing a dilemma between accountability to superiors or better answering public needs, speaking right or maintaining confidentiality, the interests of political parties or public interests, reporting violations or silence. Absolutely, public ethics must prioritize meeting public needs. Thus, public officials carry out public service duties.

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