

# **Public Service: The Principle of Equality, Neutrality, and Participation**

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**ABSTRACT:** The definition of public service is "all activities in which the fulfillment must be guaranteed, regulated, and supervised by the government, because it is needed for the realization and development of social interdependence, and in essence, its realization is difficult to be carried out without interference from government forces". In this definition, it contains the idea of wanting to increase social solidarity, combating irrational egoism to ensure the fulfillment of social needs in the context of achieving collective goal. There are three characteristics that characterize public services: (i) there are qualitative differences between activities that are recognized as public services and those that come from private or private initiatives and goals; (ii) this difference public services means that it is more important than other similar activities, so it is specifically regulated; (iii) public service has public legitimacy inherent in state power.

**KEYWORDS:** public services, government, equality, neutrality, participation

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Indeed, public service cannot be reduced only to the collective life in which the administration is regulated by the state. The new management of public administration makes the boundaries between government, the private sector, and the non-profit sectors increasingly blurred so that public services have a broader meaning. The diverse sectors of public service providers, mobility, and changes from service / work providers result in major changes in public services [1]. Then a new understanding of public service needs to take into account the elements below:

(i) Public service is the taking over of responsibility by the collectivity of a number of wealth, activities, or services by avoiding the logic of private or private property because the goal is not to seek profit first [2].

(ii) Public service has various forms of legal organization, both within and outside the public sector. Some are in the form of private companies (BUMN); associations originating from private or private initiative is recognized as having public service functions (religious organizations, non-profit associations) [3].

(iii) Public service is people's institutions that provide services for citizens, fight for collective interests, and accept responsibility in delivering results. So anyone who seeks to advance public welfare and foster trust to pursue shared prosperity is part of public service [4].

(iv) The uniqueness of public services lies on the effort to respond the needs of the public as consumers. Basic needs that cannot always be met by private parties, associations, or individuals. If these basic needs can be met by these parties, public service is still too expensive or difficult to reach by the community [5].

If public service is handed over to non-government parties, it is necessary to define specifically what the form of service is: a) The government needs to tell the private producers or non-profit associations that they want. b) The main foundation for handover to private parties or non-profit associations is for efficiency and effectiveness. c) It should be noted that the transfer of the delivery of public services still considers economic

equality, meaning that people with weaker economies still receive adequate services. d) Public services must continue to guarantee that there is no discrimination against minority groups. Then it must be clear the size of the government regarding the definition of public services [6].

The government must be firm with private parties or non-profit associations who help public services in which they do not respond to what the government expects. To increase the bargaining power, the government must know the availability of productors which means how far can guarantee the availability of competition, so that provide many choices [7]. The choice of partners for the implementation of public services needs to look at the ability to respond to consumers, How far the use of the service finds the profit, and the important thing is to prevent as much as possible the level of fraud. Thus it becomes clearer to the government that not all public services can be transferred to the private sector or other third parties because it depends on the field. If according to Kolthoff's research, transfer to the private sector or other third parties needs to take into account two things, namely the form of service quality and service sector. It is not clear that if handled by the government it becomes cheaper. Because of monopoly and corruption, public services will become more expensive and lower quality.

The strength of the government service quality lies on the stability of public services and the ability to handle major problems, for example, injustice in the field of education or health is impossible for the private sector to be able to overcome it. The community can be very critical if the government provides services but only sides with a community group. While the strength of the private sector lies on the ability to respond quickly to an every changing situation; the ability of innovation to leave behind; courage to take risks; the ability to accumulate capital, recruit professionals; and sensitivity to changes in economies of scale. The strength of non-profit associations or Non-Governmental Organizations lies on the ability to reach various layers of society, the existence of compassion and commitment, more view of the problem as a whole, and the ability to grow community trust.

## **II. PUBLIC SERVICE SECTOR FOR GOVERNMENT**

Which public service sector is more suitable for government? According to Kolthoff, the fields of policy management, regulation, advancing social cohesion and empowering justice are government competencies. The empowerment of justice includes the prevention of discrimination and exploitation. The private sector is better suited for economic, investment, profit-seeking tasks and advancing self-fulfillment efforts. While nonprofit association or non-governmental organization is suitable for the social sphere, volunteering, advancing individual responsibility, advancing the community and building a commitment to shared prosperity.

The decision related to public services involve public responsibility, whether those services are made by government, private, or non-profit organizations. Only the acceptance of accountability by the public is measured professional or efficient public service. This measure gives legitimacy for the public services. Then professionalism is measured by three competencies that complement each other: technical ability, ethical integrity, and leadership in the field. The success is measured by how decisions could improve professional performance and it could calculate their impact on society. As quoted in the book *Achieving Competencies in Public Service*, Denhardt defines public service, namely "service to the public - helping those who are in trouble, making the world safer and cleaner, helping children to learn and succeed, it is literally going to a place where others do not want to go is our job and calling ",

There are three principles of public service, namely continuity, equality, and adaptive. Continuity is understood as never get stop despite strikes. So services are still carried out (at least minimum service) even though they have to deal with workers' rights to strike or the company's financial interests. Equality means there is no discrimination in terms of content or filling only on the basis of their identity and universality in defining what is included in the public category and geographical zone [8]. The challenge faced in a country who has plural population is the discrimination tendency. Differentiation of treatment before the law, recruitment of civil servants, admission in state schools or tertiary institutions, placement of positions, and even in matters of licensing are very vulnerable to have discrimination on the basis of religion, ethnicity, or gender. Recruitment by considering the unity of university alumni or religious social organizations is thick with discrimination. This discriminatory attitude is often supported structurally by exclusive local regulations. Public integrity requires officials to treat all citizens equally. Public integrity is built on personal integrity, including behavior in the family and community [9].

Adaptive means always following the development of social needs, it may even have to leave certain activities if it can be guaranteed and socially acceptable to other actors. The new management of public services makes it possible for handovers to private parties or non-profit associations to run public services. The implementation of E-governance is also a form of adjustment to the demands of modern public services. The adaptive principle

basically wants to maintain a balance of public services between collectivism and economic liberalism (market demands) in order to achieve collective goals. In addition to the three principles, one more principle is added, namely neutrality [10].

It is different with the principle of equality, the principle of neutrality is intended to organize the activities and does not emphasize the functioning of public services. The logic is to place public services in such a situation that it is not possible to give priority to just a vision of the world or the interests of a particular group. This neutrality can be in the form of demands related to the whole program in order to meet the obligations of citizens' needs without discrimination, whereas if it is related to the media, there must be an objectivity of information. Neutral means that the service operator is impartial. So the direction encourages to take into account pluralism of opinions and points of view. It is different with political neutrality [11].

Political neutrality is a value that must be respected because it holds a central role between public officials and politicians. Six principles of political neutrality: (i) politics and policy must be separated from administration. Politicians make policy decisions, while public servants carry out these policies. (ii) public servant is appointed and promoted based on the services and achievements instead of their relationship with political parties, their contribution to political parties, religious or ethnic electoral matters. (iii) public servants may not carry out partisan political activities. (iv) public servants may not express their personal ideas or views on government or administrative policies, (v) public servants provide honest and objective input to political leaders personally and in confidentiality. In return, political officials protect the anonymity of public servants by publicly accepting responsibility for the ministry's decisions. (vi) public servants must carry out policy decisions in a loyal and uplifting manner regardless of the philosophy and program of the ruling party and without seeing their personal views. In return, public servant is guaranteed positions because of satisfactory performance [12].

### **III. THE CONTINUITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

The six principles of neutrality guarantee the continuity of public services so that changes in political regimes do not make public servants prioritize certain groups of people or discriminate against others. In the context of neutrality, in certain types of public services (education, health), the government cannot surrender completely to the private sector because if the private sector tends to look for profit, the risk of service discrimination is very real. It is easy, so that public service is not merely trapped in the logic of the market (looking for profit), the government must intervene to enable the weak to get the same treatment [13].

Equality must also be maintained so that the community does not depend on the government. Society's dependence on the state can be interpreted by the government that the people do need regulation. As a result, power tends to be concentrated in public officials. The State Administration then became a kind of public servant who had the role of policy maker, social change agent, crisis manager, social worker, liaison of various interests, public spokesperson, economic regulator. These roles add to the traditional role of government (maintaining order; organizing education and social welfare, health programs, transportation and cultural events). By the principle of subsidiarity, the government does not need to deal with everything. Decentralization in the form of regional autonomy has lightened the task of the central government. Delegations, contracts, outsourcing to the private sector, non-profit associations, and NGOs can increase the effectiveness of public services. Restrictions on the duties of public officials will make public services more efficient [14].

The provision of public service reason, in addition to economic efficiency reasons, must also take into account the distribution of equality. It cannot be for the sake of efficiency, to allow the production of public services to the market. The state is seen not only as a mechanism for the distribution or production of public services, but has its own purpose, namely the fulfillment of public needs. In particular matters relating to social services, education or health, because the market can exert pressure that can destroy the values of public services.

Public services do not have to always be supervised by the state. Public services also rely on the existence of self-supporting activities but still obey to the public control. Conversely, public services must also be limited because it is a social activity that can compete with individual or private initiatives. The limitation is to prevent public services from actually killing initiatives and creativity from the private sector or the community. Actually, there are already those who will restrict it from within, namely the market, which is often called regulation on the basis of public benefits. If public services do not respond to public needs, they will eventually be abandoned or their legitimacy is weak. In this context, it can be questioned whether the implementation of the hajj pilgrimage can be cheaper and more efficient if the private sector can participate in managing and not only monopolized by the Ministry of Religion.

In an era where privatization, partnerships and outsourcing are increasingly widespread, public services rely on both services provided by citizens and professional services. Absolutely, this kind of service providers can be

from professional groups, but a comfortable policy will seriously consider the decision to privatize or contract public services because it challenges professional values and norms of implementation. In this era of globalization, public official is also required to oversee financial fraud in various banking institutions, private companies or state companies, in addition to be able to face increasingly critical public demands. The skills required include technical competencies, ethical competencies, and leadership competencies. Mastery of the three competencies is very necessary for public officials because it can prevent the abuse of power in a conflict of interest and corruption.

#### **IV. NEW ORIENTATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT**

The demands of the three competencies for public services above give a new orientation in public administration. New government management is defined as a government that takes a business pattern by taking over its ideas, instruments, methods, institutions, and products. There are at least seven important elements in the new management of public services: (i) streamlining and entrepreneurial spirit; (ii) decentralization; (iii) use of planning and control circles; (iv) a more flexible work organization is different with the rigidity of the old model bureaucratic hierarchy; (v) priority to the community served and to public satisfaction, not to organizational procedures; (vi) it is marked by an orientation in which the main measure is result/performance and accountability, no longer emphasizing method or procedure; (vii) devolving increasingly greater responsibilities to public servants in order to achieve the ethical ideal of public service, namely effectiveness, efficiency, and savings [15].

By the new management, it is actually willing to push the initiatives from the subordinate instead of waiting for the boss instructions. Then it does not only obey to wait, but they are dare to take responsibility and they do not easily blame the other party. The reason that having followed the procedure or having obeyed the rules or instructions is not enough, it still has to prove that it gives results which means that the work is effective and efficient. The delegation of greater responsibility to workers makes the concept of "values" more instrumental in public ethics strategies because the recognition of basic values offers a basis for acting in public service. According to Florence Piron, value is defined as "the basic belief that specific way of acting or certain way of life is personally or socially preferred or considered better than others". Absolutely, understanding this value within the framework of belief is debatable. Whereas Kolthoff understands value as a consideration of what is valuable or appropriate whether in the form of principles or standards of behavior in which if it is associated with certain element, it will reveal qualities even though they cannot be objectified. Then the value has weight in a choice of actions and acts as a directing behavior or actions in certain situations. The concept of values becomes very important because values and norms become a guideline in choosing actions and moral basis of justification and evaluation of human behavior [16].

The value is associated with integrity in a moral framework, so the main task of public ethics is to define and live the values that guide the organization. The importance of value and integrity is in line with the renewal of public administration that more appreciate the ability of public servants to analyze the values that must be applied and makes excellent ethical considerations to bring public service to life, rather than the old bureaucratic model. Then the competence and creativity of public servants is more emphasized than compliance and application of regulations. The ability to normalize values through analysis, understanding, and application is the start to improve the public service and combat corruption. Thus, the delegation of responsibility becomes a form of empowering public servants, especially for those who are directly dealing with the community.

The empowerment of public servants must be followed by a regulation reduction which is limiting so that public servants have more free maneuvers because of more emphasis on results than methods so that their creativity and entrepreneurial spirit grow. Then the pressure on values implies the consequence of increasingly avoiding some rules and controls to increase a sense of responsibility and encourage work orientation. The process of increasing this sense of responsibility is expected to make public servants more accountable and attentive to develop the public service practices, the importance of adding knowledge and experience, to continual changes in working conditions and organizations. So value-centered reflexes can be a dynamic factor changes of public service, it is not as a public ethics model that emphasizes deontology. The administrative model which is oriented towards protraction deontology is considered to overemphasize rules and procedures. The efforts of public servants and organizations that rely more on results must dare to abandon the deontological model.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

The demand of results and performance or efficiency can encourage public servants to choose all means in order to meet the demands of the new organizational model. Especially if outside supervision is increasingly loosened.

In addition, the demand to take into account ethical reflection can be ignored because it is considered to slow down the process of achieving results because additional time is needed to check whether the action is in accordance with the moral values of the community and organization.

The performance and result demand can disregard the principle of respect for the public service and its ability for ethical judgment because the need of time for ethical reflection can be defeated by consideration of achieving the result. Is it possible to talk about the problem of creativity when faced with reality that must follow the standard rules or if the boss wants something that is contrary to the direction of creativity? Is there still a place for subordinates to say no to the boss? Integrity in this context cannot be limited to loyalty to the organization, its rules, and its leaders, but it must include the possibility of differences of opinion that can be ethically justified and the possibility of opposing the logic of hierarchy in public service (ibid., 41). Ethical culture in organizations carries the consequences of dilemmas because the main measure is the results / performance and accountability; it is no longer emphasizing the method or procedure. Then it tends to give the greater responsibilities to public servants. But managers and supervisors are responsible of subordinates if they fail to meet the demand of ethical standard. Then the role of institutional ethics is needed because it could organize responsibilities through sanctions and rewards. The main concern of institutional ethics is to build equitable institutions.

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