The Ethics of Professional Happiness among Indonesians: Dante Alighieri and Mochtar Lubis on politicians

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ABSTRACT

The political profession is a form of vocation, a livelihood by design. In this regard, observing contemporary Indonesia, one might contend -without intent to disparage- that the nation resembles a "house of disorder" inhabited by individuals -including politicians- driven to madness by power, corruption-collusion-nepotism, and the pursuit of position. This study explores alternative religious ideas concerning the ethics of vocational happiness as applicable to today's political actors. Employing content analysis, it contextualizes two figures: Dante Alighieri and Mochtar Lubis as material objects alongside the ethics of professional happiness as a formal object. Ethical Indonesian politicians may find fulfillment through measured prosperity, aesthetic-poetic living, promotion systems rooted in datacracy, and firm revocation of professional licenses for ethical breaches. Dante's nine infernal circles: limbo, lust, gluttony, greed, wrath, heresy, violence, fraud, and treachery, portray moral descent; while Lubis's depiction of the Indonesian character exposes hypocrisy, irresponsibility, feudalism, symbolic fixation, weak will, extravagance, and one virtue: artistry. Remarkably, both thinkers resonate with critical, religiously grounded visions that may prove transformative for political vocational ethics in Indonesia.

Keywords: religious happiness, professional ethics, Dante Alighieri, Mochtar Lubis, interdisciplinary studies.

I. Introduction

George Bernard Shaw once asserted that all professions constitute a conspiracy against the laity. Shaw even went so far as to accuse professionals of being more concerned with status and wealth, deceiving rather than assisting their clients (Koehn, 2000, hlm. 11). Furthermore, J.E. Sahetapy addressed the issue of professional ethics in Indonesia as follows: "Considering Indonesia today, it is not an exaggeration to say -without intending to disparage- that the country resembles a 'house of disorder,' inhabited by certain individuals -including politicians- who have gone 'mad' (mad for power, corruption, collusion, nepotism, rank, and office)" (Sahetapy, 2007, hlm. 253–254).

What if professional ethics were grounded in the axioms of the philosophy of happiness and oriented toward alternative religious ideas, such as those conceived by Dante Alighieri and Mochtar Lubis, serving as the platform; with human beings as the subjects, religious ideas as the raw material, and professional happiness as the object of religious ethics? Bearing in mind that this research is also interdisciplinary in nature, and that its conclusions may potentially be applied across disciplines, the researcher must first examine prior studies on professional ethics. In this regard, earlier work conducted by the researcher on Susan Crawford Sullivan's theory of professional ethics reform, as well as studies by Nur Alimin Azis, Yenni Mangoting, and Novrida Qudsi Lutfillah on the values of local wisdom, become particularly relevant.

The researcher's study in October 2024 on the reform of professional ethics, based on Sullivan's theory, underscores that poor working mothers, mothers caring for their children, or single mother,s ought to be connected with congregations, labor unions, political organizations, or communities that can support their struggle for better opportunities and working conditions. A living faith within professionals must be embodied in the nation's work ethos, the mission of the Church and religious communities, the ethical code of purification for stakeholders in welfare, the morality of religious elites and ordinary people, as well as in mothers who have embraced vocations and occupations for the sake of present well-being in this world. God is assumed to be accessible and engaged in ordinary daily experiences. Working women encounter God not in lofty places but at fast-food stalls or behind cashier counters. Religion is not an opiate of the masses; rather, in difficult circumstances, poor women of faith find happiness in building productive lives and draw strength to continue enduring (Agus, 2024).

Furthermore the study conducted by Azis, Mangoting, and Lutfillah explores how the independence of public auditors can be understood through the aesthetic impetus of local wisdom values, specifically the Bugis-Makassar worldview of *Siri' na Pacce*. Their elaboration of the professional code of ethics in light of *Siri' na Pacce* indicates that independence is conceived as a sense of shame, dignity, and social solidarity. These values are articulated in five principles (*lima akkatenningeng*),

namely: *ada' tongeng* (speaking the truth), *lempuk* (honesty), *getteng* (steadfastness), *sipakatau* (humanizing others), and *mappesona ri dewata seuae* (submission to God). Public auditors who adhere firmly to *Siri' na Pacce* -embodied in the *lima akkatenningeng*- will uphold the professional code of ethics. Those who possess strong dignity, who are ashamed to act dishonestly, ashamed to prioritize personal (economic) interests, and ashamed to violate the public interest, will establish an ethical foundation for their profession that ultimately leads to the attainment of auditor independence (Azis dkk., 2015).

Sullivan's reform of professional ethics emphasizes the importance of professionals being connected with communities -religious, social, and political- that support the creation of better working environments. God is assumed to be accessible and engaged in everyday work experiences. In contrast, the fulfillment of professional codes of ethics grounded in the local wisdom of Siri' na Pacce highlights religious ideas which, once internalized by professionals, bind them to uphold their ethical commitments. This research therefore integrates the ethical-religious dimension of Sullivan's theory with the cultural dimension of Siri' na Pacce. Therefore the article focuses on examining Dante's and Lubis's conceptions of alternative religious ideas, contextualized as a philosophical orientation for the ethics of professional happiness among politicians in Indonesia.

This study applies content analysis to the relevant literature. The primary focus of the analysis is to examine the messages embedded within the texts, despite differences in objectives and techniques. According to K.H. Krippendorff, content analysis is defined as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Badzinski dkk., 2021, hlm. 109–110).

The primary data employed in this study consist of various works of literature concerning religious ideas about politicians from Dante and Lubis. The core sources are Lubis's Manusia Indonesia and Dante's The Divine Comedy, Vol. I: Inferno. These texts are analyzed by treating them as material objects and contextualizing them through a philosophical inquiry into the ethics of professional happiness as the formal object. This process aims to uncover the relationship

between theory and data, ultimately leading to conclusions about how the ethics of professional happiness operate according to Dante and Lubis.

II. Discussion

The following are the researchers' findings on religious ideas concerning politicians in the thought of Dante and Lubis, as well as the ethics of professional happiness in political life as informed by their religious perspectives.

2.1. Religious Perspectives on Political Figures According to Dante

Dante born in 1265 in Florence, grew up amidst the political conflict between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. Although related by blood to the Ghibellines, he supported the Guelfs and fought in 1289. When the Guelfs later split, Dante aligned himself with the White Guelfs, who opposed the dominance of Pope Boniface VIII, which ultimately led to his exile. During exile, he found protection under Emperor Henry VII, whom he regarded as the ideal ruler in De Monarchia and "The Divine Comedy" (hereafter referred to as DC). Through his works, Dante not only narrated his personal experiences but also offered sharp critiques of corrupt power and articulated a theological vision of political order (Zulkifli M, 2015, hlm. 38–42).

Dante's journey through the three realms -*Inferno* (Hell), *Purgatorio* (Purgatory), and *Paradiso* (Heaven)- in DC constitutes three allegories within a unified whole, narrated from a first-person perspective that recounts Dante's imaginative eschatological voyage (Hazan, 2015, hlm. 2, 4). DC remains relevant to contemporary thought in its capacity to "reconfigure the general structure of knowledge in a poetico-logical manner." His work articulates a "poetic epistemology within the humanities." Theology functions as the cornerstone, a way of life that engages both transcendence and the immanence of secular existence. Such is Dante's pre-modern project and its enduring legacy (Franke, 2021).

DC particularly in *Paradiso*, not only narrates Dante's spiritual journey and his love for Beatrice, but also critiques political power and religious authority through philosophical allegory. By adopting the perspective of Thomas Aquinas, Dante highlights the mystery of the divine will of the Trinity glorified by the Church, while rejecting the Church's narrow moral interpretation that marginalized the

morality of pagans. Through non-Christian figures such as Ripheus and Trajan, as well as the influence of Islamic philosophy from Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina, Dante constructs an inclusive spiritual-political vision that integrates classical heritage, Christian teachings, and cross-cultural wisdom as a response to the spiritual dominance of the medieval era (Zulkifli M, 2015, hlm. 44–46).

Dante's DC is an epic poem that not only records his personal spiritual journey but also serves as a sharp critique of medieval political and religious power. Divided into Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso, the work highlights the moral corruption of leaders, as in Inferno canto 28, which condemns figures who sow division among nations. Through the allegories of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, Dante reconsiders the legitimacy of authority and proclaims that power without justice will be met with retribution. His work bridges spirituality and politics, embodying intellectual courage in confronting institutional dominance (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 325–329).

The Inferno section of DC begins with a symbolic depiction of Dante's moral crisis as he finds himself lost in a dark forest, until he is guided by Virgil - representing reason and classical authority- at Beatrice's request. This journey leads Dante to encounter souls such as Pope Celestine V and figures who divided nations, serving as a critique of leaders who failed to fulfill their public mandate. The presence of great figures in Limbo reflects Dante's critical stance toward systems of power that marginalized wisdom oriented toward Christian values. Inferno thus stands as a sharp allegory of moral deviation and political dysfunction in his time. (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 89–96).

Virgil leads Dante into the deeper circles of Hell, where they encounter Minos, a giant figure who serves as the symbolic judge within the infernal judicial system. By coiling his tail according to the number of layers of sin, Minos assigns punishment to each soul, thereby critiquing a process of judgment driven more by power than by true justice. One of these circles is inhabited by souls overcome by lust, tormented in an eternal whirlwind, an allegorical representation of the instability of human desire. The placement of Minos underscores Dante's condemnation of legal and

political systems that deviate from universal moral principles (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 109–120).

In Inferno, Dante portrays the punishment of the gluttonous through the allegory of foul rain and putrid mud that pour down upon souls enslaved by consumptive desire, overseen by Cerberus, the symbol of brutal appetite. In the fourth circle, he presents two opposing groups: the hoarders and the squanderers, who ceaselessly push massive stones against one another in an endless cycle. This scene satirizes economic inequality and social failure born of greed and inertia, reflecting Dante's critique of systems of power that neglect balance and justice in the distribution of wealth and collective responsibility (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 121–128).

Dante and Virgil arrive at the dark and acrid River Styx, where souls consumed by anger and envy assault one another in an endless cycle of chaos. The envious are even compelled to chant hymns while submerged in mud, symbolizing the obscuring of reason by social jealousy. Crossing the river aboard the boat of Phlegyas -an emblem of uncontrolled rage- they proceed toward the gates of the City of Dis. There Dante witnesses tyrants and despotic rulers burning within the earth, a powerful critique of the abuse of authority. This episode serves as a sharp allegory of moral decay and political dysfunction in medieval society (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 138–146).

In the sixth circle of Hell, Dante witnesses the heretics -particularly the Epicureans- lying in fiery tombs as eternal punishment for their rejection of doctrines sanctioned by the Church's authority. This visualization carries symbolic meaning regarding the unforgivable ideological and spiritual consequences of such denial. Among the souls encountered, the presence of Emperor Frederick II opens a political interpretation of the conflict between secular power and ecclesiastical authority. Through brief dialogue and sharp observation, Dante conveys a critique of doctrinal deviation and the abuse of power, before Virgil guides him onward to the next circle of Hell, laden with moral and political significance (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 158–167).

On the journey into the circle of violence, Dante observes three sub-divisions of punishment. First, perpetrators of violence against others -murderers and robbers- are immersed in a river of blood, guarded by Centaurs as symbols of brutal power. Historical figures such as Alexander the Great and Xerxes appear as reflections of unchecked political domination. In the second circle, a forest of suicides serves as an allegory of the loss of personal and social control. Finally in the barren plain, heretics who deny divinity are tormented by showers of fire, representing spiritual suffering born of rejection. This structure presents Dante's sharp critique of power that deviates from both theological and political principles (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 176–185).

On their journey to Malebolge -the circle of Hell reserved for deceivers- Dante and Virgil cross the River Phlegethon, depicting the infernal order as an allegory of moral-political critique against the abuse of power. Figures such as pimps, flatterers, simoniacs, and misleading leaders suffer punishments commensurate with their sins, reflecting systemic social corruption. Geryon -with a benign face yet a menacing body- embodies the treachery of power cloaked in deception. Furthermore Malacoda and his cohorts illustrate how slander and violence are employed to sustain domination. Dante underscores that institutions founded upon falsehood cannot escape eternal condemnation (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 231–238).

To reach the deepest realm of Hell, Dante and Virgil traverse a colossal city inhabited by monumental souls, symbolizing the divine ambitions of absolute rulers. This city serves as an allegory of power driven by the thirst for adulation. They then enter the ninth circle of Hell -frozen by treachery- divided into four zones: Caina, Antenora, Tolomea, and Judecca, each representing distinct forms of betrayal against the socio-political order. At its center, Lucifer is imprisoned in ice, embodying the moral and spiritual downfall born of pride. Through the cavern of Lucifer's fall, Dante and Virgil ascend once more toward the light, concluding a journey imbued with profound theological and political meaning (Alighieri, 2002, hlm. 362–378).

Dante demonstrates that desire can either cast humanity into Hell or elevate it into the celestial "dance and music" of Paradise. In parallel, Augustine in

Confessions writes: "When I love my God, my soul is illuminated by a light that space cannot contain, a sound that time cannot capture, a fragrance that no wind can disperse, a taste that does not diminish after eating, and a bond of union that satisfaction cannot sever. This is what I love when I love my God" (Dyrness, 2011, hlm. 34–35). In DC love emerges as the guiding force that leads the soul toward repentance and glory, whereas politicians who negate the ethics of professional happiness are no longer addressed in Purgatorio and Paradiso.

2.2. **Religious Perspectives on Political Figures According to Lubis**

Atmakusumah Astraadmadja edited a collection of writings from figures who personally knew Mochtar Lubis, compiled in the book Mochtar Lubis: Wartawan Jihad. Contributors include Jakob Oetama, founder of Kompas; Goenawan Mohamad, founder of Tempo; as well as sociologists Arief Budiman and Ignas Kleden, among others. The epithet "*wartawan jihad*" (journalist of moral jihad) attributed to Lubis does not refer to jihad in a sectarian sense, but rather in moral and intellectual terms: his consistency in publishing sensitive news, confronting bans, imprisonment, and political stigma rendered his journalistic activity both religious and ethical. The designation *journalist of moral jihad* elevates Lubis to a symbolic plane, portraying him as a professional warrior of the pen who embraced integrity as a lifelong vocation.

Lubis risked his life to expose injustice, corruption, and the abuse of power, his *jihad* was a struggle against silence, moral decay, and the erosion of public ethics. Achmad Hasyim, in his review of Lubis's journalistic principles within "Mochtar Lubis: Wartawan Jihad" through the lens of Islamic communication ethics, concludes that Lubis's practice aligns with Jalaluddin Rakhmat's theoretical criteria of *qawlan sadidan*, *qawlan baligha*, *qawlan ma'rufan*, and *qawlan maisura*. With his journalistic jihad, Lubis steadfastly defended truth without compromise, opposing corruption, injustice, and the misuse of authority in pursuit of upright and ethical governance (*qawlan sadidan*). He employed direct language, at times perceived as harsh (*qawlan baligha* and *qawlan maisura*). Lubis also criticized corrupt government officials (*qawlan ma'rufan*) (Hasyim, 2017, hlm. x–xi).

Beyond his work as a journalist, Lubis also produced a significant body of literary writings. Kim Jang Gyem in examining the intertextual relationships among Lubis's novels concludes, that Lubis appears to articulate his ideas with striking clarity. By observing the intertextual connections across his works, one can trace recurring themes consistently voiced by Lubis from one text to another, such as humanity's pervasive fear and moral decadence. The same resonance emerges in his essay Manusia Indonesia, originally delivered as a speech at Taman Ismail Marzuki on April 6, 1977 (Gyem, 2005).

Jakob Oetama borrows Walter Lippmann's expression "pictures in our head" to explain the 'traits of the Indonesian people as stereotyped' in Manusia Indonesia. Indonesians are also described as impatient, easily envious, prone to pride, intoxicated by power, imitative, lazy, fairly logical, gentle-hearted, possessing a good sense of humor, and quick to learn. Yet Lubis's more extensive account emphasizes that Indonesians are hypocritical, reluctant to take responsibility, feudal in behavior, superstitious, weak in character, extravagant, and seemingly endowed with only one positive trait: artistry (Lubis, 2008, hlm. vii, 37–42). These characteristics as outlined by Lubis can be contextualized within religiously infused ideas concerning politicians.

One of the most prominent traits of Indonesians is the tendency toward hypocrisy, pretending and concealing genuine intentions in order to avoid harmful consequences. The roots of this disposition can be traced back to the era of feudalism, when systems of power suppressed popular aspirations and compelled outward submission. This pattern gave rise to the culture of "yes-man" (ABS "*Asal Bapak Senang"*), which persists to the present day, wherein individuals feel obliged to wear a "mask of compliance" for self-preservation before authority figures, from traditional elites to modern government officials. Hypocrisy thus becomes a survival strategy under the pressure of oppressive structures of power (Lubis, 2008, hlm. 18–20).

Another deeply rooted characteristic of Indonesians is the tendency to evade responsibility, particularly in the context of wrongdoing. The culture of "not me" creates a chain of responsibility-shifting from superiors to subordinates, and so

forth, thereby obscuring accountability. Ironically, when success is achieved, influential figures step forward to claim praise and recognition, even when their contributions are not always substantial. The reward system is likewise biased toward bureaucratic elites, while lower-level employees who labor diligently in remote areas are often overlooked, reflecting an institutionalized symbolic political inequality (Lubis, 2008, hlm. 21–22).

The feudalistic traits of Indonesians remain deeply entrenched, even though independence was intended to liberate the nation from the shackles of feudalism; in practice however, hierarchical structures of power have endured in new forms. The symbolic inheritance of office without meritocracy -for instance, the automatic appointment of a government official's wife as head of an organization- serves as evidence of such inequality. The legacy of reverence for kings once deemed sacred has now shifted to modern officials who resist criticism. This pattern of patronage and structural veneration perpetuates a culture of fear in correcting superiors, thereby consolidating power that is nearly untouchable and closing off the space for genuine democratic participation (Lubis, 2008, hlm. 23–26).

Another striking characteristic of Indonesians is the tendency to preserve superstitious beliefs (symbolic culture) -even among the educated- as reflected in the use of talismans, incantations, and symbolic slogans as substitutes for concrete action. Figures such as President Sukarno popularized "political mantras," which were later inherited in the form of various development slogans. Yet this practice fosters an illusion of progress, as if merely uttering slogans were sufficient to realize national aspirations. Such symbolic culture signifies stagnation in political praxis, wherein rhetoric is exalted over concrete implementation that brings substantive change (Lubis, 2008, hlm. 27–32).

One of the most distinctive traits of Indonesians is their artistry, born of a profound closeness to nature and a strong instinctive and affective attachment to surrounding objects, which are perceived as imbued with spiritual meaning and power. This sensitivity has given rise to extraordinary aesthetic creativity, reflected in music, dance, and folklore rich in imagination. For centuries these artistic works have been recognized globally and collected in museums abroad, rendering them

both a symbolic and cultural asset crucial as a foundation of hope for Indonesia's future revival and the expression of its national identity (Lubis, 2008, hlm. 33).

Another salient characteristic of Indonesians that shapes their political dynamics is the weakness of character in upholding principles. In order to survive or to avoid the pressures of authority, individuals tend to readily alter their convictions, thereby opening space for the practice of intellectual prostitution legitimized by feudal social structures. This fragile disposition is often cloaked in normative expressions such as tepaselira (permissiveness), yet in essence it reflects a moral compromise from both directions: those in power demand obedience, while the subjugated choose safety through conformity. The result is a political ecosystem vulnerable to the manipulation of values (Lubis, 2008, hlm. 34–35).

Another defining characteristic of Indonesians is their consumerist tendency and financial imprudence, often spending income not yet secured. A luxurious lifestyle is adopted as a symbol of status, reinforcing an orientation toward outward appearances rather than social integrity. The civil service profession is perceived as a shortcut to prestige rather than as a form of public service. This phenomenon is reflected in the reluctance of state officials -both high-ranking and lower-level- to accept assignments outside the centers of power, revealing a status-quo mentality that prioritizes personal comfort over equitable distribution and regional development. Such a social structure reinforces an exclusive bias of power (Lubis, 2008, hlm. 36).

2.3. **Dante, Lubis, and the Ethics of Professional Happiness**

Etymologically professional ethics consists of the terms ethics and profession. In this context, ethics refers to "a moral philosophy grounded in societal values, examined systematically and methodically." Profession denotes both "occupation" - the daily work that engages an individual- and "vocation" -the pursuit of livelihood (Bertens, 2024, hlm. 2, 6). Profession also acquires a vertical dimension when interpreted through religiosity. Therefore professional ethics signifies the systematic and methodical study of moral values and religious ideas within society as they pertain to both occupation and vocation. Politics is a vocation; however, every politician simultaneously occupies roles at least as an individual within a

family. Thus, each politician embodies multiple roles and reciprocal benefits of significance for their spirituality, family, community, and nation, with their primary sphere situated in the vocational domain.

Indonesian politicians may attain ethical happiness when they live in measured prosperity. Dante's Inferno and Lubis's observations both underscore the ethical consequences of greed, which is often concealed within habits and social structures. In the circle of Hell where hoarders and wasters are punished, Dante not only critiques material excess but also depicts a stagnant cycle of suffering born of humanity's failure to uphold justice and social responsibility. For Dante, greed is not merely an individual sin but a reflection of systemic decay that undermines collective morality. The imagery of Cerberus and the foul mire serves as a metaphor for societies suffocated by consumerist culture, much like the Indonesian society described by Lubis, which pursues pragmatic stability while neglecting the ethics of public service.

Lubis critiques how Indonesian politicians prioritize illusory happiness derived from status and material stability rather than substantive happiness born of integrity and public responsibility. This idea resonates with Dante's allegory of the spiritual emptiness experienced by the gluttonous: they lose direction and become trapped in an endless cycle of destructive routine. When political office is positioned as a goal for personal welfare rather than as a form of service, the state becomes populated by elites unwilling to move beyond the comfort of centralized power. Within this framework, both Dante and Lubis highlight an ethical crisis: how greed and egoism erode a just social order and generate fragile structures of power from within.

Indonesian politicians may attain ethical happiness when their daily lives are cultivated in aesthetic and poetic ways. Dante's DC provides an ethical framework that parallels Lubis's view of professional values nurtured through the beauty of everyday life and the depth of aesthetic existence. In Purgatorio and Paradiso, Dante elevates love -not merely desire, but amor intellectualis Dei- as a transformative force guiding the soul toward glory. Heaven in DC is filled with song and light beyond language, where beauty is not ornament but the manifestation of ultimate truth. This

vision runs parallel to Lubis's perspective that professional happiness, born of spiritual depth and aesthetic attachment to daily reality, constitutes the highest form of humane ethics: not merely a career, but an existential calling.

Indonesia's cultural sensitivity to harmony with nature and the symbolic meaning of life reflects a profound ethical potential in professional practice. When politicians choose service not for the lure of power but for the poetic experience of fulfilling social responsibility, they approach a contemplative mode of being akin to Dante's vision of heavenly experience. Lubis emphasizes that this poetic ethic of professional happiness is not utopian, but rather a regenerative foundation for the nation, wherein beauty becomes the embodiment of responsibility and love serves as the principle of leadership. Both Dante and Lubis move beyond mere critique of greed, offering instead an ethical imagination of meaningful life born from the integrity of the soul bound to beauty, responsibility, and the pursuit of the transcendent.

Indonesian politicians may attain ethical happiness when promotion systems are governed by datacracy. Dante's Inferno presents a sharp critique of the distortions of power and moral degradation resulting from structural hypocrisy. In the sixth through eighth circles, perpetrators of ideological sin, violence, and fraud are punished not only for individual transgressions but also for reinforcing corrupt and deceitful systems. Figures such as Frederick II and Geryon embody the deceptive face of power, projecting an image of truth while concealing perverse intent. This aligns with the phenomenon of *yes-man culture* in Indonesian society, as criticized by Lubis: politicians and bureaucrats maintain masks of loyalty to preserve themselves rather than to serve the public good. Professional happiness collapses when moral values are sacrificed for the illusion of stability within an unaccountable system of power.

Within the framework of datacracy-based promotion, the ideal meritocratic system should displace symbolic dominance and patronage politics. In practice, the culture of *yes-man* and *not me* continues to prevail, as data mechanisms are often manipulated to serve entrenched elites. Dante reminds us in Malebolge that institutions ensnared in deceit -those that reward false obedience and promote

individuals adorned with moral pretense- ultimately create a social order akin to hell. Lubis underscores that professional happiness grounded in integrity can only emerge when systems of recognition strengthen accountability rather than hypocrisy. Such ethics demand transparency in performance evaluation, not the appropriation of achievements derived from the labor of others.

Dante and Lubis both reject systems of power that lead individuals into habits of deceiving themselves and others. Within a healthy system, politicians would find happiness not in symbolic authority or ceremonial promotion, but in structural honesty that enables self-actualization through service. Just as Dante ultimately ascends toward the light by adhering to principles of truth and reflection, Indonesia's future leaders will only be "happy" when their profession becomes an ethical vocation within a system that fosters sincerity rather than deception. A genuine datacratic system can succeed only when accompanied by moral reform, as emphasized by Dante in his heavenly poetry and by Lubis in his cultural-political critique.

Indonesian politicians may attain ethical happiness when they accept the certainty of professional license revocation as a sanction for misconduct. Dante's Inferno vividly articulates the structural and spiritual consequences of power that deviates and compromises moral values. In the order of Hell he depicts, those who abuse their positions -whether through violence, deceit, or ideological betrayal- receive punishments that are not merely symbolic but also expose the uncontrollable distortions of power. Patterns of patronage and hereditary office in modern Indonesia, as criticized by Lubis, represent a freezing of morality in the form of authority without ethical legitimacy. This parallels Dante's portrayal of Lucifer at the center of Hell, frozen in his own betrayal, a symbol of absolute power stripped of human warmth through arrogance and disregard for principle.

In his study of hellish punishment, Scott Aikin develops a framework of theological retributivism that emphasizes only individuals who consciously and philosophically reject God deserve eternal punishment, since sin constitutes a rejection of the highest good. This view has provoked moral objections, as eternal torment is deemed disproportionate to human cognitive capacity. Only those who

deeply comprehend the moral and theological significance of their rejection are considered truly accountable. In a secular context, the revocation of professional licenses -or the 'freezing of political power'- represents a form of 'temporal hell' for violations of professional ethics, resonating with the religious ideas articulated by both Dante and Lubis (Aikin & Aleksander, 2014).

According to Lubis, professional happiness in politics can only be realized when the system ensures justice through firm sanctions against moral violations, including the revocation of rights or professional licenses. Such a system stands as the antithesis of *the permissiveness culture*, which has devolved into a legitimization of compromise with injustice. Dante affirms that sin cannot be concealed behind masks of honor or social ritual, for the moral structure of the universe will inevitably demand accountability. When a leader or politician abandons principle for the comfort of power, he embarks on the path Dante describes as descending into the freezing of the soul: losing direction, estranged from the light of reason and conscience.

Dante and Lubis both demand the establishment of ethical structures that align with truth rather than with symbols or pretenses. In the Inferno, punishment is not merely individual but also collective, reflecting systemic decay caused by repeated concessions to corrupt power. Similarly, if Lubis is understood to support the revocation of professional licenses for politicians or officials who betray public responsibility, such a stance embodies the spirit of moral and institutional reconstruction. Lubis maintains that the certainty of sanctions fosters integrity as a prerequisite for professional happiness, situating responsibility and service not as burdens but as sources of existential pride -much like Dante's journey- which directs the soul toward enlightenment through confession, purification, and moral courage.

III. Conclusion

The dialogue between Dante and Lubis reveals that professional happiness in politics cannot be reduced to material stability or symbolic authority, but must be grounded in integrity, responsibility, and a poetic sensibility toward life. Dante's politico-philosophical allegories in dialogue with Lubis's socio-cultural critiques,

converge in affirming that greed, hypocrisy, and permissiveness corrode the ethical foundations of society, while truth, beauty, and accountability regenerate them. Within this framework, Indonesian politicians are called to embrace their vocation not as a pursuit of position, but as an ethical journey of service, where sanctions against misconduct, datacratic transparency, and spiritual depth form the pillars of a just and humane order. Thus, the synthesis of Dante's religious imagination and Lubis's moral vision offers a transformative paradigm: professional happiness as an existential calling that binds politics to responsibility, love, and the pursuit of transcendent meaning.

Dante's nine circles of Hell address limbo, lust, gluttony, greed, wrath, heresy, violence, fraud, and treachery, moral consequences that intensify with each descent. Lubis's stereotypes of Indonesians highlight hypocrisy, avoidance of responsibility, feudal behavior, reliance on symbolic culture, weakness of character, extravagance, and one positive trait: artistry. Yet both Dante and Lubis resonate in their religiously infused ideas, offering insights valuable for shaping an ethics of professional happiness among Indonesian politicians. Within this framework, Indonesian politicians may attain ethical happiness when they live in measured prosperity, cultivate an aesthetic and poetic daily life, governed by a promotion system grounded in datacracy, and accept the certainty of professional license revocation as a sanction for misconduct.

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