

Analysis of the Honorary Council's Role in Enforcing Political Ethics in the Semarang City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) for the 2024–2029 Period

Original Article

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Abstract

Despite the presence of established ethical guidelines, disparities in ethical standards and their practical application persist among DPRD members, presenting an ongoing obstacle. This study examines the role of the Ethics Committee in enforcing the code of ethics in the Semarang City Council for the 2024-2029 period. The study aims to identify the Ethics Committee's efforts to improve effectiveness and to determine the supporting and inhibiting factors. The method used is a case study with a descriptive qualitative approach through field data collection. The results indicate that in its implementation, several violations related to political ethics are still found. This study provides an overview of the challenges faced by the Ethics Committee as the highest authority in the oversight mechanism to improve compliance with regulations among members of the Semarang City Council. Hopefully, the results of this study will serve as a basis for efforts to enhance the effectiveness of enforcing the code of ethics in the coming period.

Keywords: Code of Ethics, Ethics Committee, Political Ethics, Semarang City Council.

1. Introduction

In the legislative context, political ethics are crucial to ensuring the integrity and accountability of council members in carrying out their duties. As part of the people's representative body, DPRD members are required to not only carry out their duties in accordance with legal regulations, but also based on high ethical standards. Therefore, the existence and performance of the Ethics Council (BK) is important in maintaining the dignity and integrity of the legislative body through the enforcement of a code of ethics.

Basically, politics cannot be separated from ethical principles (Apdillah et al., 2022). Political ethics is a set of moral principles that form the basis for assessing the good and bad of an action or behaviour in the political sphere (Nurdiarti & Nastain, 2021). In the context of modern society, social groups, political classes, and individuals with diverse moral backgrounds can still connect with each other within the framework of political interaction. The boundary between ethics and politics is dynamic and flexible; in certain situations, this relationship can be controlled by moral mechanisms, while in other conditions it is determined by mechanisms of power and political interests (Marsuki et al., 2022). This is a specific view that political ethics treats the moral foundations of each individual differently (Alim et al., 2021).

Political ethics plays a role in guiding how power is used legitimately, fairly, and responsibly in political decision-making (Kurniawan, 2021; Nurdiarti & Nastain, 2021). The



Ethics Council, as the enforcer of the code of ethics in the regional legislative environment/DPRD, should uphold the values of honesty, integrity, and procedural justice as the basic principles of political ethics. In other words, ethics is not merely an additional aspect of legislative governance, but a fundamental element in shaping public trust in democratic institutions (Yuliarta, 2019).

Table 1. Functions of the Honour Council in Overseeing Political Ethics

No.	Functions of the Honour Council Related to Political Ethics:	Examples of Implementation:
1.	Monitoring the behaviour of council members	Assessing the attendance of DPRD members in plenary sessions
2.	Addressing violations of the code of ethics	Investigating members who have abused their authority
3.	Safeguarding the image and dignity of the institution	Issuing public clarifications regarding statements or actions by members who have violated political ethics

Legally, regulations regarding the code of ethics for DPRD members are stipulated in various laws and regulations that provide the legal basis for the formation and implementation of the duties of the Ethics Council. One of the main regulations is Law Number 17 of 2014 concerning the MPR, DPR, DPD, and DPRD (MD3 Law), which emphasises that the DPRD, as a regional representative body, has the authority to form organs, including the Ethics Council, to uphold discipline and ethics within the legislative body. Article 122 of the MD3 Law explains that the Ethics Council is tasked with enforcing the code of ethics and maintaining the dignity and honour of the DPRD institution.

In addition, Government Regulation No. 12 of 2018 concerning Guidelines for the Preparation of Rules of Procedure for Provincial, Regency and City DPRD further strengthens the legal position of the Ethics Council within the DPRD. The regulation stipulates that every DPRD must have rules of procedure that include provisions on the code of ethics and sanctions for violations committed by DPRD members. This means that any action or violation by a council member that undermines the dignity and integrity of the institution must be formally addressed in accordance with the mechanisms outlined in the DPRD's internal rules of procedure (Budiardjo, 2008).

The code of ethics of the Semarang City DPRD contains prohibitions, obligations, and norms of behaviour that must be obeyed by all council members in carrying out their functions and duties. In its implementation, this code of ethics becomes the basis for assessment in the ethical supervision process by the Ethics Council. The legal function of the code of ethics is not only repressive when violations occur, but also preventive as a guideline for moral and legislative professionalism (Sunarjo, 2013).

The fundamental reason for this research is the inconsistency between the principles of the Code of Ethics and the reality of the working mechanisms of the members of the Semarang City DPRD. Based on this background, the researcher examines to what extent the Ethics Committee enforces the code of ethics in the Semarang City DPRD for the 2024-2029 period. Additionally, this research will identify the efforts of the Ethics Committee in enhancing the effectiveness of enforcing the code of ethics among members, and the researcher aims to identify the supporting and hindering factors in enforcing the code of ethics at the Semarang City DPRD during the 2024-2029 period. The results of this study are expected to provide appropriate references and recommendations for institutional codes of ethics.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Political Ethics

Miriam Budiardjo said that political ethics are norms or rules and values that ultimately become the basis for political activities and the exercise of power (Budiardjo, 2008). This is because it concerns the procedures for political action. Miriam states that political ethics are needed so that their presence does not become merely an arena for power struggles, but ultimately political activities remain based on justice and responsibility.

In practice, the application of political ethics cannot be separated from the actors of ethics, namely humans (Aji, 2024). Therefore, political ethics is closely related to morality. This is proven by the fact that the concept of morality always refers to humans as the subject of ethics. Thus, moral obligations are distinguished from other types of obligations, because what is meant is the obligations of humans as humans (Kurniawan, 2021).

2.2. The Concept of Political Ethics According to Dennis F. Thompson

From the perspective of political ethics theory, as stated by Dennis F. Thompson (2018), political ethics not only regulates individual behaviour, but also reflects the moral responsibility of institutions towards the public (Kurniawan, 2021). Political ethics play a role in guiding how power is used legitimately, fairly, and responsibly in political decision-making.

3. Methods

This study uses qualitative methods to examine the role of political ethics in upholding the code of ethics in the Semarang City Council for the 2024-2029 period.

3.1. Data Collection Techniques

This study utilised three data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly at the Semarang City Council. Interviews were conducted with several sources at the Semarang City Council to obtain in-depth information related to the code of ethics and ethical violations found by the ethics committee. In addition, documentation was used as a supplement and to strengthen the validity of the data in the form of written data and photographs in the field.

3.2. Data Validity Techniques

In this study, data validity testing was carried out using the data triangulation method, which included technique triangulation and data source triangulation. Technical triangulation was carried out by combining the results of interviews, observations, and documentation that had been conducted. Meanwhile, source triangulation was a data validity technique by collecting and comparing the findings of information from various informants or sources with the aim of strengthening the findings so that the results of this study could be accounted for.

3.3. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used in this study was carried out in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and verification or conclusion drawing, as stated by Sugiyono (2017). Data reduction includes the process of selecting, filtering, and organising information. Further, the data is presented in a structured form to make it easier for researchers to understand the findings and draw conclusions. The final stage is verification, which involves evaluating the validity of the data and drawing conclusions based on the descriptive analysis that has been carried out, to ensure the validity and depth of understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Pureklolon, 2020).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Implementation

From the perspective of political ethics theory, as stated by Dennis F. Thompson, political ethics not only regulates individual behaviour but also reflects the moral responsibility of institutions towards the public (Kurniawan, 2021). Political ethics plays a role in directing how power is used legitimately, fairly, and responsibly in political decision-making.

The Ethics Council, as the enforcer of the code of ethics in the regional legislative/DPRD environment, should uphold the values of honesty, integrity, and procedural justice as the basic principles of political ethics. In other words, ethics is not merely an additional aspect of legislative governance, but a fundamental element in shaping public trust in democratic institutions.

Legally, regulations regarding the code of ethics for DPRD members are stipulated in various laws and regulations that provide the legal basis for the formation and implementation of the Ethics Committee's duties. One of the main regulations is Law Number 17 of 2014 concerning the MPR, DPR, DPD, and DPRD (MD3 Law), which emphasises that the DPRD, as a regional representative body, has the authority to form organs, including the Ethics Council, to uphold discipline and ethics within the legislature. Article 122 of the MD3 Law explains that the Ethics Council is tasked with enforcing the code of ethics and maintaining the dignity and honour of the DPRD institution.

In addition, Government Regulation No. 12 of 2018 concerning Guidelines for the Preparation of Rules of Procedure for Provincial, Regency and City DPRD further strengthens the legal position of the Ethics Council within the DPRD. The regulation stipulates that every DPRD must have rules of procedure that include provisions on the code of ethics and sanctions for violations committed by DPRD members. This means that any actions or violations by council members that undermine the dignity and integrity of the institution must be formally addressed in accordance with the mechanisms outlined in the DPRD's internal rules of procedure.

Furthermore, the existence of the DPRD code of ethics as a normative instrument at the regional level is a derivative of national regulations (Wibawa, 2018). The code of ethics of the Semarang City DPRD, for example, contains prohibitions, obligations, and norms of behaviour that must be obeyed by all council members in carrying out their functions and duties. In its implementation, this code of ethics becomes the basis for assessment in the ethical supervision process by the Ethics Council. The juridical function of the code of ethics is not only repressive when violations occur, but also preventive as a guideline for moral and legislative professionalism.

The Ethics Council (BK) emerged during the reform era. The Ethics Council is a permanent body tasked with enforcing the code of ethics for council members. The BK is one manifestation of the moral responsibility of council members to the people, and its formation is a response to public criticism of the poor performance of some council members (Wibawa, 2018). However, in practice, the implementation of the code of ethics still faces various challenges, particularly in dealing with the complex realities of politics.

One clear example is the phenomenon of pledging Letters of Appointment (SK) by several members of the Semarang City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), which took place after the inauguration of the 2024–2029 DPRD members (Halosemarang.id). Although this action does not directly breach the law, it raises ethical concerns as it blurs the boundary between personal interests and public responsibilities. This behaviour reflects both the high

cost of political participation and the weak internalisation of ethical values within the legislative institutional culture.

In this context, the role of the Honour Council (*Badan Kehormatan*) is particularly important, not only as an enforcer of formal rules but also as a guardian of the integrity of the legislative institution. The Honour Council is expected to act not only after violations occur but also to take preventive and educational approaches, helping each council member to understand the ethical consequences of their actions. The SK pledging incident should serve as a wake-up call for the DPRD to reinforce its mechanisms for ethical oversight, particularly those that address personal integrity and collective responsibility as public representatives.

According to an interview with the Chair of the Semarang City DPRD, Mr Nunung Sriyanto, S.H., the public, especially in Semarang, has not yet played an active role in reporting ethical violations committed by DPRD members. This is unfortunate, considering that DPRD members are not only representatives of the people but are also expected to act as role models. Another concern is that the DPRD has not yet provided a clear and transparent system for the public to report such violations.

As Chair of the Honour Council, he stated that five council members are not sufficient to effectively monitor 50 DPRD members. Therefore, support from external parties, including the media and the public, would greatly assist the Council in carrying out sanctions when necessary. However, any reports must be accompanied by solid evidence, not merely based on rumours or assumptions.

Overall, the Honour Council of the Semarang City DPRD has carried out its ethical oversight duties based on legal foundations. Nevertheless, due to the members' limited capacity and workload, several shortcomings remain, even if the problems are eventually resolved. Like perfume that gradually fades, the slow handling of reported issues leads to a diminished sense of urgency. For this reason, there is a clear need to strengthen both communication and procedures to ensure that ethical violations are addressed properly and efficiently.

4.2. Preventive and Repressive Measures of the Honour Council

The Honour Council (*Badan Kehormatan* or BK) of the Semarang City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) holds a strategic role in safeguarding the integrity and dignity of the legislative institution. In carrying out its primary task of upholding the code of ethics for DPRD members, the Honour Council undertakes several measures to address various ethical violations. These efforts take the form of both preventive and repressive actions.

Preventive measures are the initial approach adopted by the Honour Council to avert ethical breaches by council members. In Semarang, the Honour Council actively promotes awareness of the code of ethics among all members through internal meetings, legislative ethics training, and the publication of a code of ethics handbook. These activities aim to enhance the moral awareness and understanding of DPRD members so that they refrain from actions that could tarnish the reputation of the institution.

In addition to these socialisation efforts, the Honour Council also undertakes ethical guidance by providing education on the values of honesty, transparency, and public responsibility. This ongoing guidance is a form of preventive implementation intended to create a healthy and professional working climate within the DPRD of Semarang. Through sustained mentoring, it is hoped that members will eventually internalise ethical values in all their conduct.

The Honour Council of Semarang also monitors the behaviour of DPRD members through daily oversight and performance evaluations. This supervision serves to detect early signs of potential violations and to deliver informal warnings when indications of misconduct

arise. These non-formal warnings function as an initial step before any formal reporting, and form part of the internal prevention strategy.

However, when preventive efforts are unsuccessful and a breach of the code of ethics occurs, the Honour Council holds the authority to undertake repressive action. This occurs when reports are received from the public, media, or fellow council members regarding unethical behaviour. In such cases, the Honour Council will follow up by conducting verification and clarification procedures.

Repressive action begins with summoning the reported member, along with the presence of relevant witnesses who are asked to provide statements. Once supporting data and facts are gathered, the Honour Council holds a plenary meeting to discuss the findings and determine an appropriate sanction. Sanctions may include a written warning, a public apology, dismissal from council committees, or, in the most serious cases, a recommendation for permanent dismissal in accordance with DPRD regulations.

According to Hariantati (2003), preventive action in the context of legislative institutions may be undertaken through various means such as education, guidance, and the strengthening of ethical awareness. The Honour Council bears the responsibility of ensuring that every DPRD member understands and abides by the established code of ethics.

Table 2. Preventive Measures of the Honour Council of Semarang City DPRD

Types of Efforts:	Description:
Socialisation and education on the Code of Ethics	Carried out through technical guidance activities, workshops, or regular ethical discussions.
Ethical and professional development	Fosters an ethical culture through dialogue among members and training to strengthen moral values and integrity.
Informal warnings	Provides internal warnings when early indications of violations arise, prior to formal complaints.
Behavioural monitoring and supervision	Monitors the activities of DPRD members to anticipate deviations from ethical norms.

Based on Law Number 17 of 2014 concerning the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR), the House of Representatives (DPR), the Regional Representative Council (DPD), and Regional Legislative Councils (DPRD), commonly known as the MD3 Law, the Honour Council (Badan Kehormatan or BK) holds the authority to conduct investigations, examinations, and also make decisions regarding violations of the code of ethics committed by members of the regional legislative council.

Table 3. Repressive Measures of the Honour Council of Semarang City DPRD

Repressive Measures:	Description:
Receiving and clarifying complaint reports	Receiving reports from the public, media, or DPRD internal sources, followed by verification of their validity.
Summoning and examining the reported member	Conducting clarification with the reported DPRD member and summoning relevant witnesses.
Deliberation in the Honour Council’s plenary meeting	Examination results are discussed in the Honour Council forum to determine the type of violation and appropriate sanction.

Repressive Measures:	Description:
Imposing sanctions	Sanctions may include a written warning, public apology, temporary dismissal from DPRD committees, or a recommendation for permanent dismissal.
Publishing the outcome of the decision	The decision is made public to demonstrate transparency and maintain public trust.

In carrying out repressive actions, the Honour Council of the Semarang City DPRD refers to the internal regulations of the Semarang City DPRD, specifically the Rules of Procedure, which govern the mechanisms for the examination process and the imposition of sanctions on council members. This is done to ensure procedural justice and accountability throughout every stage of handling ethical violations. All stages of the process are conducted transparently and are accountable before the public.

Transparency in repressive efforts is also a crucial element in the ethical enforcement process. The Honour Council of Semarang City announces the outcomes of its ethical hearings to the public through mass media or the official website of the DPRD. This is intended not only to build public trust in the institution's commitment to upholding ethical standards but also to create a deterrent effect for members found to have violated the code of ethics.

In preserving the image of the institution, a combination of preventive and repressive approaches is key to success. Preventive measures ensure that every member understands and adheres to established norms and rules, while repressive actions serve to demonstrate that violations will not be tolerated without consequences. This aligns with the spirit of bureaucratic reform, which demands transparency, accountability, and integrity within public institutions.

By applying both approaches in a balanced manner, the Honour Council of the Semarang City DPRD acts not only as a disciplinary body but also as a moral educator in political life. This dual role makes the presence of the Honour Council essential in fostering a political culture that is clean and dignified, which in turn contributes to improving the quality of local democracy and strengthening public trust in the legislative institution.

However, in its implementation, the Honour Council faces several limitations that may hinder its effectiveness. One major weakness is the limited scope of the Council's authority, which only covers ethical violations. Cases involving legal or administrative aspects often fall beyond its jurisdiction. Additionally, since the Council is composed of DPRD members themselves, there is a potential for conflicts of interest (Syarifuddin & Novario, 2019). As a result, decisions made by the Honour Council may be perceived as lacking objectivity and being overly conciliatory (Wibawa & Alfirdaus, 2018).

Another shortcoming lies in the weak system of socialisation and internalisation of ethical values among DPRD members (Nugroho, 2016). Ethical training and development activities remain limited and are not carried out consistently, leading to uneven levels of understanding and awareness regarding the importance of maintaining integrity. Furthermore, the Honour Council is often seen as insufficiently responsive in following up on reports from the public. Budgetary constraints and the lack of experts in ethics also pose serious challenges in efforts to enhance the professionalism and independence of the Council itself.

Table 4. Several Weaknesses in the Function of the Honour Council of Semarang City DPRD

Aspects:	Weaknesses:
Authority	The authority of the Honour Council is limited solely to ethical violations, excluding criminal offences or serious administrative breaches.
Independence	The Honour Council is composed of DPRD members themselves, making it vulnerable to conflicts of interest and internal political pressure.
Socialisation of the Code of Ethics	There is a lack of regular education and ethical guidance provided to all DPRD members.
Transparency	The processes and outcomes of the Honour Council's decisions are not always publicly disclosed.
Responsiveness	Public complaints are often handled slowly and tend to be reactive rather than proactive.
Effectiveness of Sanctions	Sanctions imposed are considered insufficiently deterrent, as they are generally light and administrative in nature.
Resources	Limited budget and lack of professional personnel hinder the optimal performance of the Honour Council.

In light of the various shortcomings, there are several steps the Honour Council (Badan Kehormatan or BK) of the Semarang City DPRD can take to strengthen the institution comprehensively. One possible solution is to revise internal regulations so that the Honour Council is granted broader authority to handle a wider range of violations, including those related to legal and administrative matters. It is also crucial for the Honour Council to promote the formation of a more independent membership structure. This could be achieved by involving external figures such as academics, community leaders, or legal practitioners who would serve as ethical advisers. The aim is to minimise conflicts of interest and enhance the objectivity of decision-making.

In addition to institutional restructuring, capacity building for both the Honour Council members and the entire legislative body is necessary. This can be done through regular legislative ethics training, workshops, and technical guidance sessions. The Honour Council is also expected to strengthen its system of monitoring members of the council in a more active and transparent manner. Furthermore, it is essential to establish a public complaints channel that is easily accessible to all (Akib & Sapruni, 2022; Yahya & Setiyono, 2022). Clear, firm, and proportionate sanctions must also be prioritised to ensure that the enforcement of disciplinary measures has a deterrent effect (Sabeni & Setiamandani, 2020).

To optimise the role of the Honour Council, adequate budgetary support and the allocation of professional resources in the fields of ethics, law, and public communication are key to safeguarding the integrity of the legislative institution in a sustainable manner.

5. Conclusion

Based on research on the Analysis of the Role of Political Ethics of the Honour Council in Enforcing the Code of Ethics in the Semarang City DPRD for the 2024–2029 Period, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Honour Council's functions in applying legislative ethics has not yet been fully optimised. Although the regulations are in place, their enforcement remains relatively ineffective, particularly in relation to the monitoring of council members, the imposition of sanctions, transparency, and public participation. Cases such as the pledging of appointment letters (SK) still occur, which violate political ethics and reflect the weak internalisation of ethical values within the legislative institutional culture. The role of the Honour Council in addressing such issues has yet to reach its full potential. One of the main reasons for this is that the Council's authority is limited to ethical violations, and does not extend to legal or administrative breaches.

One contributing factor behind some members pledging their SK is the high cost of campaigning and other financial obligations associated with holding a council position. Although both preventive and repressive efforts have been implemented, these measures still require further improvement to ensure that all forms of ethical violations by council members are properly addressed. Transparency and ease of access for the public to report such violations must also be enhanced in order to strengthen the Honour Council of the Semarang City DPRD as a credible and trustworthy institution.

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