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The Role of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in Building Public Trust in Elections

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the role of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in the process of taking action against organizers who are considered to have violated the code of ethics in carrying out their duties. The method used in this study is Qualitative with content analysis of secondary data including verdict reports, current news on violations of the code of ethics, and relevant academic literature. The results of this study indicate that the firm action of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in handling violations of the code of ethics such as the imposition of administrative sanctions to dismissal still has a significant impact on increasing public trust in the organizers of the General Election. On the other hand, the results of this study also show that there are still limited resources, political pressure and low public understanding of the importance of the code of ethics are factors that cause high ethical violations committed by organizers. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of training for election organizers, strengthening election regulations, and socialization of the code of ethics to the community as a strategic step in resolving the problem of violations of the code of ethics of election organizers. Because if this can be realized, it is indirectly part of an effort to increase public trust in the organizers of the General Election.

Keywords: General Election; Code of Ethics; Public Trust

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INTRODUCTION

General Elections in Indonesia serve as the main instrument in carrying out the democratic process which provides an opportunity for the people to directly elect leaders and representatives of the people. For the Election to run credibly, integrity and transparency are two important pillars that must be maintained. As expressed by (Norris, 2014), Good election integrity includes honesty, fairness, and openness, all of which determine the legitimacy of election results. Without integrity, election results have the potential to be questioned by the public, which can lead to political instability. This is also emphasized by Molina & Hernández (2020) which states that public trust in elections is highly dependent on the transparency of the election process.

In Indonesia, which has a long history in organizing elections, issues related to integrity and transparency still often occur, especially due to the various challenges faced, ranging from political intervention to violations of the code of ethics by election organizers. In this case, election supervisory institutions such as the Election Organizer Honorary Council have a very important role. The Election Organizer Honorary Council is an institution that is authorized to supervise and

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enforce the code of ethics of election organizers, including the General Election Commission and the Election Supervisory Body. The Election Organizer Honorary Council is tasked with ensuring that the entire election process takes place in accordance with standards of professionalism, integrity, and neutrality, without any intervention that is not in accordance with the rules (Adrianus, 2018).

Based on data from (Election Organizer Honorary Council, 2020), The number of cases of code of ethics violations reported each year shows that despite strict supervision efforts, election organizers are still often involved in various violations. In the 2019 Election, for example, the Election Organizer Honorary Council received more than 100 complaints, most of which were related to administrative issues and allegations of political intervention. This illustrates that efforts to maintain the integrity of the Election still face major challenges, even though there is a supervision system in place. As expressed by (Wall, 2018), Strong supervision from independent institutions such as the Election Organizer Honorary Council is very important to ensure that election organizers comply with existing regulations and carry out their duties responsibly.

Data obtained from the Election Organizer Honorary Council Trial Data Bank (2024) noted several important cases that were processed, such as cases with complaint numbers 174-P/L-DKPP/XII/2023 and 1-PKE-DKPP/I/2024, which were related to alleged violations of the code of ethics by election organizers. In these cases, the Election Organizer Honorary Council has imposed appropriate sanctions, including written warnings to permanent dismissal for violators who are proven to have violated ethical rules. This decision demonstrates the commitment of the Election Organizer Honorary Council to maintaining public trust and ensuring that election organizers act in accordance with the established standards of professionalism. As stated by (Katz, 2020), Sanctions that are given transparently and fairly can be an important tool in rebuilding public trust in election results.

Transparency International (2018) emphasized that when election organizers are involved in ethical violations, the impact on public trust can be very large. If the public feels that the election process is not carried out honestly and fairly, then this distrust can trigger political instability and a legitimate crisis. This is relevant to the role of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in handling various cases of violations of the code of ethics, where each decision issued has major implications for the credibility of the election. For example, in several cases decided by the Election Organizer Honorary Council, serious violations committed by election organizers have a direct impact on public perception of the transparency and fairness of the election process.

Through the monitoring mechanism and enforcement of the code of ethics carried out by the Election Organizer Honorary Council, it is hoped that the election implementation process will be more transparent and accountable (Schmitter, 2015) explains that the election supervisory institution has a big responsibility in maintaining the balance of power and preventing abuse of authority. The success of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in carrying out its duties can have direct implications for political stability and public trust in the democratic system in Indonesia. Conversely, distrust of the integrity of election organizers can lead to a political crisis, as has happened in several other countries where election results have been questioned due to allegations of fraud and irregularities.

Public trust is a crucial element in maintaining the legitimacy of democracy, especially in the context of General Elections. In modern political theories, public trust refers to the public's belief that government institutions, including election organizing institutions, carry out their duties and authorities fairly, honestly, and transparently. According to (Norris, 2011), Public trust in democracy is closely linked to political stability and the legitimacy of government. When this trust is eroded, people may doubt election results and the political system.

In line with these issues, this study aims to analyze the role of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in building public trust through handling violations of the code of ethics of election organizers. This study highlights the aspect of ethical supervision, which is often a critical issue but is rarely analyzed in depth in the context of elections in Indonesia. In doing so, this study can provide a new perspective on how the enforcement of the code of ethics by the Election Organizer Honorary Council directly impacts public trust in the election results. In addition to analyzing the role of the Election Organizer Honorary Council, this study also seeks to suggest the development of more effective public policies in increasing transparency and accountability in future elections. By focusing on ethical supervision, the use of current empirical data, and the impact on political stability, this study makes a significant contribution to understanding and improving the election system, especially in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis method to examine the role of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in handling violations of the code of ethics by election organizers and its impact on public trust. The qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of this study is to understand the perception, meaning, and interpretation of social phenomena related to election integrity. According to (Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis is an effective method for exploring patterns, themes, and categories from documented texts and documents,

such as reports, decisions, and news about ethical code violations. This method allows researchers to conduct in-depth analysis of primary and secondary data sources to identify key themes related to the concept of public trust and election integrity. This study uses two types of data sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data comes from the report of the Election Organizer Honorary Council's decision which contains information related to the type of violation, the reported party, and the sanctions imposed. The report of the Election Organizer Honorary Council's decision is an official document that provides a concrete picture of the process of enforcing the code of ethics in elections.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out through document and archive studies. Document studies are one of the techniques commonly used in qualitative research to examine various written sources that are already available (Yin, 2018). The documents analyzed include the decision of the Election Organizer Honorary Council, annual reports, and news archives and publications related to violations of the code of ethics by election organizers. In the data analysis process, this study uses the content analysis method as explained by (Krippendorff, 2018). The first step is coding, which is identifying key elements of the documents analyzed, such as the type of violation, the reported party, and the sanctions imposed. This coding process helps facilitate analysis by organizing data based on certain categories. Next, researchers categorize cases of code of ethics violations based on the type of violation and the sanctions imposed. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) states that categorization in qualitative content analysis helps researchers in finding thematic patterns in data. After coding and categorization is done, the final step is interpretation, where the researcher relates the results of the analysis to relevant theories such as public trust theory (Norris, 2011) and election integrity (Birch, 2008). With this approach, this study can identify general patterns in handling code of ethics violations by the Election Organizer Honorary Council, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of this institution in maintaining public trust in the election process. Content analysis of the Election Organizer Honorary Council's decisions provides in-depth insight into the dynamics of code of ethics violations that occur, the types of sanctions imposed, and their impact on the legitimacy of elections in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Election Organizer Honorary Council is an independent institution established based on Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. The Election Organizer Honorary Council functions as a supervisor and enforcer of the code of ethics for election organizers, namely the General Election Commission and the Election Supervisory Body. This institution is responsible for examining and deciding on alleged violations of the code of ethics by election

organizers, both at the central and regional levels (Adrianus, 2018). Violations of the code of ethics by election organizers in Indonesia are a very important issue because they are closely related to the quality of democracy and the integrity of the election process itself. The existence of the Election Organizer Honorary Council is very important to ensure that the implementation of the election takes place with high integrity, where election organizers must comply with ethical principles such as professionalism, independence, and neutrality.

According to (Molina & Hernández, 2020), The existence of a strong supervisory institution such as the Election Organizer Honorary Council can help strengthen public trust in the election process. The Election Organizer Honorary Council not only plays a role in imposing sanctions on violations, but also plays a role in maintaining justice and transparency through the mechanism of enforcing the code of ethics. Any violations found by the Election Organizer Honorary Council can have a direct impact on the legitimacy of the election results, because the integrity of the organizers is one of the important factors in maintaining the credibility of democracy.

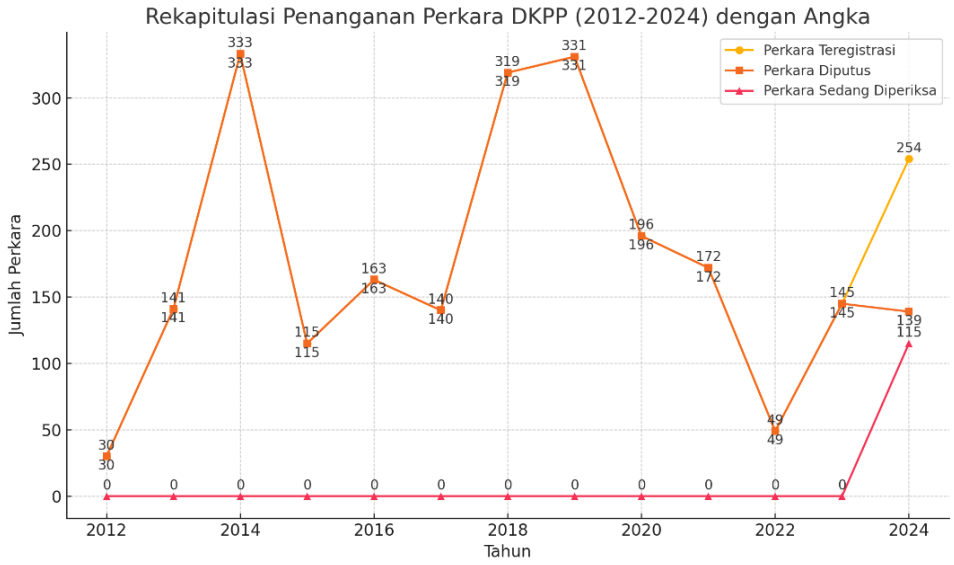


Figure 1. Recapitulation of DKPP Case Handling (2012-2024)

Source: Honorary Council of Election Organizers of the Republic of Indonesia (2024)

Since its formation, the Election Organizer Honorary Council has handled thousands of cases of alleged violations of the code of ethics. Based on data from the Election Organizer Honorary Council from 2012 to 2024, there has been a significant increase in the number of cases registered, from only 30 cases in 2012 to 254 cases in 2024. This increase reflects the increasingly intense supervision of election organizers and the high public awareness of reportinging violations that occur. In addition, a significant upward trend occurs during the

momentum of simultaneous elections, especially during the presidential election along with the legislative council and regional head elections. In 2014, for example, the Election Organizer Honorary Council recorded 333 cases, with 627 people being rehabilitated and 336 people receiving written warnings. Then in 2018, there was another increase in the number of cases, more than doubling from the previous year to reach 319 cases. This figure increased further in 2019, reaching 331 cases.

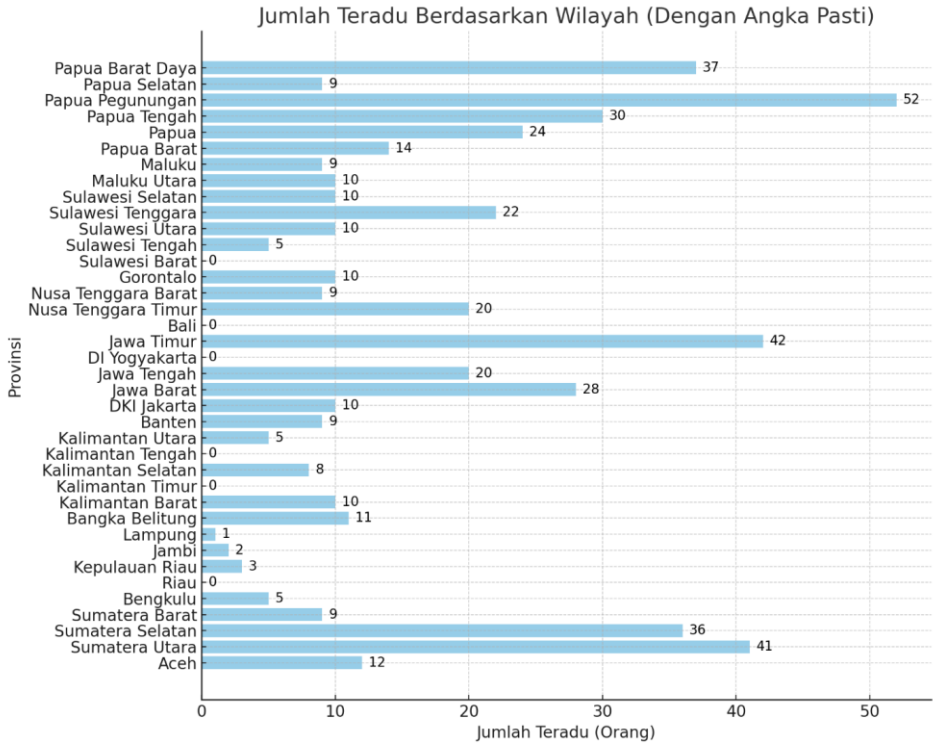


Figure 2. Map of Distribution of Cases of Ethical Violations by Election Organizers
Source: Honorary Council of Election Organizers of the Republic of Indonesia (2024)

Violations of the code of ethics do not only occur in the center but are also spread across various regions in Indonesia. Data from 2024 shows that the Papua Mountains Province recorded the highest number of complaints with 52 people, followed by the Center (83 people) and Southwest Papua (37 people). This shows that violations of the code of ethics are a national problem that not only occurs in the center of power, but also in regions with complex political dynamics.

Cases of violations of the code of ethics by election organizers vary widely, but some common violations include lack of neutrality of organizers, conflicts of interest, and abuse of authority. Lack of neutrality in carrying out duties is often the main cause of violations, especially during the campaign period where election organizers are required to be impartial. In 2019, for example, the Election Organizer Honorary Council decided on 319 cases and

issued written warnings to 632 people, while 16 people were temporarily dismissed and 101 people were permanently dismissed from their positions. Lack of neutrality can occur in the form of siding with certain candidates, misuse of state facilities, or ignoring reports of election violations. This certainly has a negative impact on the legitimacy of the election and can reduce public trust in the democratic process.

Of the cases involving election organizers from the central to regional levels, there are several prominent cases that include abuse of authority and acts of bias (Trial Data Bank, 2024). One example of a significant violation is the case involving the Chairperson of the Provincial General Election Commission who allegedly made a non-neutral decision. The firm decision taken by the Election Organizer Honorary Council in this case included administrative sanctions, which had a positive impact on controlling similar violations in the future (Rahmawati, 2023). Another violation that also often occurs is related to money politics, with eight cases investigated by the Election Organizer Honorary Council during 2024. The Election Organizer Honorary Council's decision to take firm steps against this bribery action contributes to efforts to maintain the integrity of the election (Election Organizer Honorary Council Trial Data Bank, 2024).

According to (Pramono, 2021) The efforts of the Election Organizer Honorary Council to consistently enforce the code of ethics are an important part of a transparent and credible election process. This is reinforced by research results showing that violations of the code of ethics have a long-term impact on the quality of democracy in Indonesia. To prevent more serious violations, the Election Organizer Honorary Council not only acts as a judicial institution but also plays a role in providing education and increasing the capacity of election organizers. Strict enforcement of the code of ethics is expected to create professional and integrity-based election organizers. One of the preventive measures taken by the Election Organizer Honorary Council is through increasing the socialization of the code of ethics and training for organizers at various levels, from the center to the regions.

The decision taken by the Election Organizer Honorary Council not only has an impact on the internal organization of the election organizers but also affects public trust. According to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute (2023), 72% of respondents reported increased trust in the election administration after the Election Organizer Honorary Council strictly enforced ethical standards. The survey shows that transparency and fairness in the election process play an important role in building public trust (Indonesian Survey Institute, 2023). Indonesian Survey Institute (Birch, 2011) emphasizes that perceptions of election

integrity are greatly influenced by the actions of the organizers. Ethical violations, even minor ones, can lower public perceptions of election results and the legitimacy of the elected government.

In the context of elections, factors that influence public trust include several main aspects. First, the integrity of the election organizing institution, which refers to the professionalism and neutrality of institutions such as the General Election Commission and the Election Supervisory Body. Newton (2001) explains that a neutral election organizing institution will strengthen public trust in the election results, while even a small deviation can trigger a widespread crisis of trust. Second, transparency in every stage of the election is also a major factor. According to Birch (2008), openness in decision-making and public access to clear election information can reduce the potential for manipulation, so that public trust in the integrity of the election will increase.

Fukuyama (1995) also emphasizes the importance of social norms and formal institutions in influencing the level of trust. In the context of elections, the public will trust the election results more if the applicable ethical norms are properly enforced, and sanctions for violations of the code of ethics are imposed firmly. Ethical violations that are not responded to adequately by authorized institutions have the potential to greatly reduce public trust. The existence of institutions such as the Election Organizer Honorary Council in Indonesia, which is tasked with enforcing the code of ethics for election organizers, is an important element in maintaining public trust through strict supervision of election organizers (Adrianus, 2018).

Anugrah & Setiawan (2022) noted that although the Election Organizer Honorary Council's decision succeeded in increasing public trust, there were still elements of complexity in maintaining that trust on an ongoing basis. They underlined the importance of transparency in every decision-making process as the key to maintaining public support (Anugrah & Setiawan, 2022). However, the socialization of the Election Organizer Honorary Council's decision to the public still needs to be improved. According to data, 25% of respondents in the Indonesian Survey Institute survey did not fully understand the role of the Election Organizer Honorary Council, indicating that there is a need to improve public education about the function and mandate of this institution (Indonesian Survey Institute, 2023)

The enforcement of the code of ethics by the Election Organizer Honorary Council is not without challenges. One of the biggest obstacles is limited resources, both in the form of experts and funding. According to Pramono (2021), Investigations of complex cases often require special expertise in the fields of law and ethics, which are not always available. This

limitation can hinder the efficiency of investigations carried out by the Election Organizer Honorary Council, especially in cases that require in-depth examination (Pramono, 2021).

In addition, political pressure is also a significant factor that influences the work of the Election Organizer Honorary Council. In some cases, pressure from certain political actors can influence the investigation process which should be neutral. (Hendarto, 2020) stressed the importance of maintaining the independence of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in facing this pressure to ensure that every decision taken is fair and impartial. According to him, strengthening internal regulations and protection for members of the Election Organizer Honorary Council is very necessary (Hendarto, 2020). In addition, another obstacle faced by the Election Organizer Honorary Council is the lack of public understanding of the importance of election ethics. According to research conducted by Rahmawati (2023), Some people consider ethical violations to be less serious than criminal law violations. He suggested the need for a broader educational campaign about the negative impacts of ethical violations on the democratic process (Rahmawati, 2023).

The decision of the Election Organizer Honorary Council is not only measured in terms of legality, but also from its impact on public perception. According to data from "Rekap Data Angka," there was a 15% increase in the number of complaints in 2024 compared to the previous year. This indicates an increase in public awareness in participating in monitoring election violations, which is directly related to the firm action taken by the Election Organizer Honorary Council (Data Bank of Election Organizer Honorary Council Trials, 2024). However, as stated by (Suryadi, 2022), Consistency in the application of sanctions is a key factor in maintaining public trust. When the public witnesses that violations of the code of ethics are always dealt with fairly and consistently regardless of the perpetrator's background, the level of trust in the election organizing institution increases significantly (Suryadi, 2022).

Transparency in the trial process is also an important element. Suryadi (2022) menambahkan bahwa publik lebih cenderung mendukung keputusan The Election Organizer Honorary Council if the trial process is carried out openly, with easy access to information. This underlines the importance of openness in decision-making to build the credibility of the Election Organizer Honorary Council in the eyes of the public. To improve the effectiveness of code of ethics enforcement and maintain public trust, several strategic steps need to be taken. First, the Election Organizer Honorary Council must strengthen its internal capacity, especially in terms of legal and ethics experts, as well as the supporting infrastructure needed in the investigation process. This is important so that each case can be handled quickly, accurately,

and in accordance with applicable procedures. Pramono (2021) suggested that the Election Organizer Honorary Council requires a more adequate budget allocation to support its duties, considering the complexity faced in each process of enforcing the code of ethics.

Second, transparency in every stage of the investigation and decision-making needs to be improved. This transparency is important to eliminate public suspicion of intervention or other interests that can influence the results of the investigation. Anugrah & Setiawan (2022) recommends that the Election Organizer Honorary Council not only act transparently but also be more active in socializing the importance of the code of ethics through mass media and educational campaigns involving public participation. That way, the public will better understand the role of the Election Organizer Honorary Council and the importance of enforcing the code of ethics in maintaining a fair and integrity-based election process. Third, to maintain the independence of the Election Organizer Honorary Council from external influences, especially political pressure, this institution must strengthen regulations that protect its autonomy. Hendarto (2020) underlined that the neutrality of the Election Organizer Honorary Council is very important in facing various political challenges that may arise, especially during the election period. By having a strong regulatory framework, the Election Organizer Honorary Council can more freely carry out its duties without worrying about pressure from interested parties.

CONCLUSION

The Election Organizer Honorary Council plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the general election process in Indonesia by enforcing the code of ethics for election organizers, namely the General Election Commission and the Election Supervisory Body. Enforcement of this code of ethics is very important because any violations that occur, such as non-neutrality, conflict of interest, and abuse of authority, can have a direct impact on public trust in the election results. Through various cases of violations of the code of ethics that have been handled, the Election Organizer Honorary Council has demonstrated its commitment to maintaining the integrity and transparency of the election process. Various firm actions taken by the Election Organizer Honorary Council, such as administrative sanctions to permanent dismissal, have become the main instrument to ensure that election organizers carry out their duties in accordance with applicable ethical standards. Therefore, the supervision carried out by the Election Organizer Honorary Council has proven effective in strengthening public trust in the election results, which in turn contributes to political stability in Indonesia.

This study also highlights several challenges faced by the Election Organizer Honorary Council, such as political pressure, limited resources, and lack of public understanding of the importance of election ethics. Nevertheless, the Election Organizer Honorary Council has succeeded in demonstrating the importance of enforcing the code of ethics to maintain transparency, neutrality, and professionalism of election organizers. In this way, the enforcement of the code of ethics by the Election Organizer Honorary Council not only has an impact on increasing the credibility of election organizers, but also on increasing public participation in election supervision. In order to continue to maintain and increase public trust, strategic steps are needed, such as increasing internal capacity, transparency in the enforcement process, and protecting the independence of the Election Organizer Honorary Council from external influences. Through consistent efforts, the Election Organizer Honorary Council can play a role as the main bulwark in ensuring fair and integrity-based elections in Indonesia.

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