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The Validity Justice: Immanuel Kant's Perspective in Court Decisions on Judicial Corruption (The Case of Sudrajad Dimyati)

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Abstrak. Judicial corruption within the Indonesian judiciary represents a profound moral crisis that undermines public trust in legal institutions. This study examines the Bandung District Court Decision Number 23/Pid.Sus-TPK/2023/PN.Bdg against Sudrajad Dimyati, a Supreme Court justice convicted of bribery, through the lens of Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy. Rather than employing conventional legal-formal analysis, this research adopts a deontological ethical approach to evaluate whether the court's verdict fulfilled substantive justice principles. The research investigates two primary questions: (1) Whether the judicial decision satisfies Kantian principles of justice regarding universality, respect for dignity, moral autonomy, and procedural fairness; and (2) How Kant's moral philosophy can inform the development of judicial professional ethics codes in Indonesian courts. This qualitative investigation employs document analysis and philosophical content analysis of the case decision and relevant moral philosophy literature. Findings demonstrate that while the verdict adhered to formal positive law requirements, significant tensions emerged regarding consistency of legal precedent when the appellate court reduced sentences based on humanitarian grounds. Most critically, the institutional system has not yet internalized moral autonomy and universal ethical principles as foundational to judicial governance. This research concludes that implementing four Kantian principles—universality, respect for dignity, moral autonomy, and procedural justice—establishes essential foundations for deontological ethics-based institutional reform of the Indonesian judicial system.

Keywords: categorical imperative; culture of judicial integrity; judicial ethics; substantive justice; universal morality.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of corruption in judicial institutions, particularly involving judges, has emerged as a central concern that undermines the integrity and credibility of the legal system in Indonesia. Judicial corruption signifies a transgression that not only contravenes established legal frameworks but also engenders a profound moral crisis, thereby eroding the very foundations of justice and eroding public trust in judicial institutions. The case of Sudrajad Dimyati, a Supreme Court judge who was tried in Bandung District Court Decision Number 23/Pid.Sus-TPK/2023/Pn.Bdg, serves as a salient illustration of the pervasive issue of corruption within the judiciary.(Oktafiani & Munandar, 2024) The recent arrest of Sudrajad Dimyati by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in a sting operation related to bribery in the handling of the Intidana Savings and Loan Cooperative bankruptcy appeal case serves as a critical indicator of the extent to which corruption has permeated the judicial system. This egregious breach of professional integrity not only undermines public confidence in the justice system but also underscores the urgent need for comprehensive and systematic reforms to address and prevent such malfeasance in the future.

This incident is not an isolated occurrence, but rather part of a long-standing systemic pattern. Since the establishment of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), numerous judges have been convicted of corruption, suggesting that this practice is deeply entrenched and has become a persistent issue within the judicial system. Judges, who are entrusted with

the responsibility of serving as guardians of justice and enforcers of the law with unwavering integrity, have, regrettably, succumbed to corrupt practices. These practices include the acceptance of bribes, the manipulation of cases, and the collusion with interested parties. This reality suggests a moral and ethical crisis within the judiciary that cannot be regarded as merely an individual problem. Rather, it is indicative of systemic failure in cultivating a culture of integrity and professional responsibility.(Asrun, 2023)

The repercussions of judicial corruption manifest in a multitude of ways and are deeply entrenched within the legal system. Firstly, judicial corruption undermines substantive justice, which is the right of every citizen. Decisions resulting from corrupt practices no longer reflect the values of justice; rather, they serve to reinforce injustice and social inequality.(Mahmud et al., 2021) Secondly, judicial corruption endangers legal certainty by causing decisions to be made based more on personal or group interests than on objective truth and justice.(Indrastuti, 2025) Thirdly, judicial corruption has been demonstrated to erode public trust in the judiciary, which can ultimately precipitate social unrest, horizontal conflict, and social instability.(Dafiah, 2024) Public trust in the judiciary is a critical asset for social and political stability; when this trust is eroded, the legitimacy of the judiciary declines significantly.

Judicial corruption is regarded as a grave transgression against universal moral principles, as articulated by Immanuel Kant's ethical framework. According to Kant, the imperative for actions to be considered moral is that they be based on moral duty (the categorical imperative), and an action is only moral if it can be universalized. The acceptance of bribes by all judges would result in the loss of legitimacy and function of the judicial system as the guardian of justice.(Klappstein, 2018) Additionally, Kant's philosophy asserts that human beings must be regarded as ends in themselves, rather than as means to achieve personal gain. Judges who accept bribes effectively sacrifice the principle of justice for personal gain. In doing so, they exploit litigants as a means to obtain material benefits.(Kant, 2011) This practice disregards human dignity as an absolute value in the legal system. Consequently, instances of judicial corruption, exemplified by the case of Sudrajad Dimyati, not only constitute violations of the law but also grave moral infractions. These transgressions erode the very foundations of justice and judicial integrity, which serve as the cornerstones of the rule of law.(Danar, 2024)

The author endeavors to examine the case of judicial corruption from a Kantian moral philosophy perspective, given that the prevailing positive law approach tends to prioritize legality and criminal sanctions, neglecting to address the underlying moral and ethical concerns. (Syamsudin, 2011) The philosophical approach enables the exploration of the moral underpinnings of corrupt acts, while the ethical approach facilitates the assessment of the ramifications of such acts on the integrity of the judiciary and public trust. Consequently, critical and holistic analysis does not merely address legal violations; it also encompasses the aspects of motivation, values, and moral responsibility of judges as guardians of justice. (Arif, 2021)

A review of extant literature on the subject of corruption among judges in Indonesia reveals a general tendency to prioritize formal legal aspects. The prevailing focus in these studies is twofold: first, the normative construction of judges' decisions, and second, positive legal analysis. These studies have a tendency to disregard the incorporation of a comprehensive philosophical-moral approach, thereby frequently overlooking the dimension

of moral autonomy as the basis for judicial action. Judicial ethical violations do not directly align with the principle of moral universality as articulated by Immanuel Kant. Furthermore, while Kantian ethics have been referenced in the context of corrupt behavior in certain studies, the application of Kant's theory to specific cases of judicial corruption remains quite limited. These studies more often discuss corruption in general without conducting a thorough examination of the categorical imperative, the concept of the "kingdom of ends," or how judicial corruption transforms individuals into instruments for personal gain, which is at the core of Kantian criticism (Dion, 2017).

This study proposes an interdisciplinary analytical framework that has not been widely utilized previously: namely, the integration of moral philosophy with judicial practice to construct a more comprehensive and pertinent model of evaluation and institutional reform. Consequently, this study is anticipated to make a substantial contribution not only to the development of theory but also to the practice of institutional reform and enhancing judicial integrity in Indonesia.

In light of the aforementioned points, the author puts forth two fundamental inquiries to be examined in this study. Initially, it is imperative to ascertain whether the magistrate's ruling in Case No. 23/Pid.Sus-TPK/2023/Pn.Bdg aligns with the principles of justice from a Kantian standpoint. Secondly, the implementation of Kant's moral principle of justice in the formation of a professional code of ethics for judges is examined. The following two inquiries serve as the primary analytical framework for examining the moral and ethical dimensions of the judge's corruption case and evaluating the application of criminal sanctions in fostering a culture of integrity and moral responsibility within the judiciary.

Immanuel Kant developed a theoretical framework for measuring justice in judicial decisions through four fundamental parameters that are interconnected. This framework is predicated on the premise that humans are rational beings with inherent dignity and the capacity for moral autonomy, thereby necessitating that the judicial system reflect universal principles that are morally accountable.

The principle of universality serves as the foundational tenet of Kant's theory, mandating that judicial decisions must be applied with uniformity as precedents for analogous cases in the future. This fundamental principle finds its origins in Kant's categorical imperative, which posits that actions must possess the capacity to be transformed into universal laws without resulting in logical contradictions. (Johnson & Cureton, 2024) Within the context of the judiciary, universality is a principle that ensures justice is not arbitrary or dependent on the subjective preferences of judges. Rather, it is based on principles that are rationally acceptable to all parties.

The principle of respect for dignity constitutes the second formulation of the categorical imperative, emphasizing that humans must be regarded as ends in themselves, rather than as mere means to other ends.(Al-Najjar & Saeed, 2022) In the context of judicial practice, this principle entails that the sanctions imposed must be in accordance with the inherent dignity of all parties involved, including the defendant, the victim, and the community. The fundamental tenet of human dignity, irrespective of any transgressions that may be committed, derives from the inherent capacity of humans as rational and ethical agents.

Moral autonomy recognizes the fundamental capacity of humans to make moral

decisions based on rational reasoning. According to Kant, autonomy is defined as the capacity to establish and adhere to ethical principles that are self-imposed and can be justified by reason. (Johnson & Cureton, 2024) In the context of the administration of justice, respect for moral autonomy is predicated on the recognition that individuals possess the capacity to be responsible for their actions and are capable of understanding the moral consequences of their actions.

Procedural justice is defined as the principle that the judicial process should be objective and publicly accountable, thereby ensuring that moral principles are reflected in legal proceedings. A fair process is defined by its equitable treatment of all parties involved, its reliance on verifiable rational considerations in decision-making, and its commitment to transparency in the due process of law.(Meyerson & Mackenzie, 2018)

The fulfillment of universality, respect for dignity, moral autonomy, and procedural justice simultaneously ensures that a judge's decision is not only technically correct but also morally accountable. This Kantian framework establishes a high yet attainable standard for measuring justice, as it is predicated on rational principles that can be comprehended and implemented universally while respecting the dignity and moral autonomy of each individual in the judicial process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology employed in the preparation of this paper was designed to be qualitative and interdisciplinary in order to address the complexity of the phenomenon of judicial corruption from the perspective of Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy, specifically through a case study of Decision 23/Pid.Sus-TPK/2023/Pn.Bdg. The research commenced with a document study, which entailed an exhaustive analysis of court decisions, associated legal documents, and pertinent literature concerning the case of Sudrajad Dimyati, a Supreme Court judge who was found to have accepted bribes. The objective of this document study was to comprehend the construction of the decision, the legal basis, and the juridical implications of criminal acts of corruption in the judicial environment. By employing this approach, researchers can meticulously trace the judicial process, identify underlying motives, and examine the legal arguments employed in the verdict. This comprehensive approach enables the acquisition of a nuanced understanding of how corruption manifests and is addressed by the legal system.(Rositawati, 2022)

Moreover, this study utilizes content analysis of court decisions and other pertinent documents to identify moral and ethical dimensions relevant to Kantian theory. Content analysis is a methodological framework that enables researchers to explore the application of Kant's principles of universality of action, the concept of humans as ends rather than means, and moral autonomy in measuring the value of justice within the context of judicial corruption. Consequently, the research extends beyond the normative-legal dimension, encompassing philosophical and ethical analyses of the underlying causes of judicial corruption and its repercussions on the integrity of the judiciary. Furthermore, descriptive-analytical methods are employed to evaluate the systems of supervision, remuneration, and moral education of judges through the lens of Kant's moral philosophy. This approach unveils the paradox between formal legality and substantive morality that has historically obscured judicial practice.(Craig, 2017)

This research also utilizes comparative studies of legal and philosophical literature to strengthen the interdisciplinary analytical framework. Through a comparative analysis of diverse theoretical frameworks and practical applications, researchers aspire to formulate a more comprehensive Kantian deontological ethics-based institutional reform model that is pertinent to the prevailing needs of the Indonesian judicial system.(Valentyna, 2023) This interdisciplinary approach establishes law, philosophy, and ethics as the foundation of analysis, thereby ensuring that the research results not only identify systemic weaknesses but also provide concrete solutions to enhance integrity and justice within the judicial system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the author undertakes a critical examination of the legal aspects of the case of Sudrajad Dimyati, as outlined in the Bandung District Court Decision Number 23/Pid.Sus-TPK/2023/PN.Bdg. The study aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics of the judicial process, the construction of legal arguments, and the broader legal implications for the judicial system in Indonesia. This case establishes a significant legal precedent in the annals of Indonesian justice, as a supreme court judge has been convicted of corruption and sentenced to imprisonment, signifying a pivotal shift in the enforcement of law and the eradication of corruption within the judiciary.(Saputra, 2023)

This ruling is rooted in a clandestine investigation conducted by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in September 2022. The investigation implicated Sudrajad Dimyati, in addition to several Supreme Court officials and external parties involved in handling the bankruptcy appeal case of the Intidana Savings and Loan Cooperative. The trial revealed that Sudrajad Dimyati accepted bribes through an intermediary, Elly Tri Pangestuti, a civil servant at the Supreme Court, who acted as a conduit for funds from interested parties to ensure that the cassation decision went in their favor. The total sum of the bribes received amounted to 80,000 Singapore dollars. The primary motive for this criminal act was to influence the decision of the Supreme Court panel in the bankruptcy case, thereby benefiting the bribe givers.(Oktafiani & Munandar, 2024)

The construction of the verdict is based on the alternative charges filed by the Public Prosecutor, with reference to Article 12 letter c in conjunction with Article 18 of Law Number 31 of 1999 concerning Eradication of Corruption Crimes as amended by Law Number 20 of 2001, as well as Article 55 paragraph (1) of the Criminal Code. Article 12, clause c, stipulates the prohibition for judges or state officials from accepting gifts or promises related to their positions, while Article 18 governs the confiscation and seizure of assets derived from acts of corruption. Article 55 paragraph (1) of the Criminal Code is utilized for the prosecution of perpetrators who commit, order, or participate in such criminal acts.(Farisa, 2023)

The panel of judges ruled that the elements of corruption had been legally and convincingly fulfilled. This determination was supported by a comprehensive array of evidence, including witness statements, fund transfer documents, and the confessions of the implicated parties. In its legal deliberations, the panel of judges underscored that Sudrajad Dimyati, in his capacity as a supreme court judge, occupied a pivotal position and wielded significant authority in determining the trajectory of cassation decisions. Consequently, any act of acceptance of gifts or promises from the parties involved in the case was deemed a grave infringement on the integrity and autonomy of the judiciary. The judges further

determined that the defendant's actions were not commensurate with the government's program to eradicate corruption and had adversely impacted public trust in the Supreme Court as the final bastion of justice. (Farisa, 2023)

The panel of judges considered both aggravating and mitigating factors in determining the sentence. A particularly aggravating factor in this case was the defendant's position as a supreme court judge, a position that demands moral exemplification and the safeguarding of judicial integrity. Instead of adhering to these principles, the defendant engaged in bribery, a practice that undermined the very foundation of justice. Furthermore, the actions of the defendant have been determined to have exacerbated the existing challenges faced by the judicial system, which has been grappling with the pervasive stigma of corruption and the presence of judicial mafia elements. Conversely, mitigating factors that were taken into consideration included the defendant's courteous demeanor during the trial proceedings, his familial responsibilities, and the absence of any prior criminal convictions. Nevertheless, the panel of judges underscored that these mitigating factors could not nullify the gravity of the ethical and legal infractions perpetrated by the defendant. (Saputra, 2023)

The Bandung District Court imposed a sentence of eight years' imprisonment and a fine of one billion rupiahs on Sudrajad Dimyati, with an additional subsidiary penalty of three months' imprisonment. However, during the judicial process, the Bandung High Court reduced the sentence to seven years of imprisonment, taking into consideration the defendant's 38 years of service as a civil servant and judge. This consideration has provoked a discourse among the public and legal academics, as it is regarded as both a humane gesture, acknowledging the length of service, and a grave offense, given the corruption associated with a supreme court judge, which undermines public trust.(Sulistyo, 2023)

At the cassation level, the Supreme Court rejected the cassation petitions from both the Public Prosecutor and the defendant, thereby maintaining the original criminal sentence of seven years of imprisonment and a fine of one billion rupiahs. This rejection of the cassation serves to confirm that the Supreme Court acknowledges the veracity of the facts and legal considerations that have been previously decided by the court of first instance and the court of appeal. Consequently, this case has established a precedent in the enforcement of criminal law concerning corruption in the judicial environment, particularly those involving supreme court judges as the primary perpetrators.(*Putusan MA No. 5779 K/Pid.Sus/2023*, 2023)

The main motive in this case was the desire of the parties involved to win the Intidana Savings and Loan Cooperative bankruptcy appeal at the Supreme Court. The bribes were given through a network of intermediaries involving civil servants within the Supreme Court, thereby forming a pattern of systemic collusion and conspiracy. The modus operandi used was to exploit loopholes in the Supreme Court's internal oversight system and the weak external control over the behavior of supreme court judges. This shows that corruption in the judiciary is not only caused by individual factors but also by systemic weaknesses in the governance of judicial institutions.(Hijriah & Silaban, 2025)

The legal arguments used in this ruling strongly emphasize the basic principles of corruption eradication, namely the need to maintain the integrity, independence, and accountability of judges as key actors in the judicial system. The panel of judges explicitly stated that any form of acceptance of gifts or promises by judges, either directly or indirectly, constitutes a violation of the Corruption Eradication Law. In addition, the judges also

emphasized that criminal liability applies not only to the main perpetrator, but also to parties who participated in or assisted in the commission of the crime, in accordance with the provisions of Article 55 paragraph (1) of the Criminal Code. (Oktafiani & Munandar, 2024)

The legal implications of this ruling are extensive, both in terms of law enforcement and the reform of the national judicial system. First, this ruling proves that the principle of equality before the law is truly applied, whereby even a supreme court judge can be sentenced to criminal punishment if proven guilty of corruption. This is expected to increase public trust in the judicial system and strengthen the legitimacy of the judiciary as a key pillar of the rule of law. Second, this ruling serves as a stern warning to all judicial officials not to abuse their authority and position for personal or group interests. Third, this case highlights the need for reform of the internal and external oversight systems within the Supreme Court to prevent similar cases from recurring in the future. (Kabes et al., 2024)

A thorough examination of this ruling reveals deficiencies in the sentencing system and the mechanisms that oversee judicial processes. Judges possess significant discretion in determining sentences, with the authority to impose penalties in accordance with the established criminal sanctions outlined in legislation. However, the application of the law is subject to potential disparities, particularly when humanitarian considerations or length of service are utilized as reasons to reduce the sentences of perpetrators of corruption. Conversely, oversight mechanisms through the Judicial Commission, the Supreme Court, and public control remain reactive and have yet to demonstrate full effectiveness in preventing judicial abuse of authority. Consequently, there is an imperative for comprehensive reform of the oversight system and the development of structured sentencing guidelines. Such measures are essential to ensure consistency, proportionality, and integrity in judges' decisions regarding corruption cases. (Elawati et al., 2025)

From a judicial perspective, this case demonstrates that the Indonesian judicial system has been effective in addressing corruption within the judiciary, despite significant challenges and obstacles. The judicial proceedings were characterized by transparency and accountability, with the presentation of various pieces of evidence and the testimony of relevant witnesses. The public prosecutor submitted an alternative set of charges, ensuring that all legal aspects were taken into consideration in the defendant's case. Concurrently, the panel of judges conducted an in-depth analysis of the facts of the trial before delivering their verdict. However, this ruling also underscores the necessity for judicial reform to extend beyond law enforcement measures. It is imperative to incorporate systemic enhancements in the governance of judicial institutions, the integration of moral and ethical education for judges, and the fortification of oversight mechanisms.(Kabes et al., 2024)

The Bandung District Court's Decision Number 23/Pid.Sus-TPK/2023/PN.Bdg, handed down in the case of Sudrajad Dimyati, serves as a salient exemplar of the significance of integrity and accountability within the judicial system. This case exposes the corrupt practices within the judiciary and serves as a significant catalyst for strengthening the collective commitment to establishing a legal system that is both clean and fair, and that is capable of providing authoritative guidance. Through meticulous analysis of this particular case, researchers can delve into the intricate workings of the judicial process, unearth the underlying motivations and methodologies of corruption, and scrutinize the legal arguments employed in the verdict.

Discussion

The phenomenon of corruption in the judicial system, particularly involving judges, represents not only a failure to enforce the law, but also a moral crisis within an institution that should be the final bastion of justice. The case of Sudrajad Dimyati, a Supreme Court judge who was sentenced to criminal punishment in a corruption case as outlined in the Bandung District Court Decision Number 23/Pid.Sus-TPK/2023/Pn.Bdg, is a clear reflection of the complexity of the issue of integrity among judicial officials in Indonesia. The author endeavors to analyze the verdict through the lens of Immanuel Kant's ethical moral theory, with four main criteria of justice: universality, respect for dignity, moral autonomy, and procedural justice. This approach aims to facilitate a critical understanding of the substantive moral dimensions of the judge's decision, beyond merely the formal legal aspects.

Universality: Consistency and Precedent in the Kantian Perspective

The principle of universality constitutes the primary foundation of the Kantian ethical framework. This framework is predicated on the categorical imperative, which posits that every action can only be regarded as moral if it can be transformed into a universal law that is not in contradiction with itself. (Biscontini, 2024) The decision rendered by the judge is regarded as having fulfilled the element of justice if it can be utilized as a consistent precedent for analogous cases in the future. The legal decision rendered against Sudrajad Dimyati underscores the fundamental principle of equality before the law, which is applicable to all individuals irrespective of their position or status. (Cahyani & Wardoyo, 2020) The panel of judges affirmed that the acceptance of gifts or promises by a judge in connection with a case being tried constitutes a grave offense that must be addressed with the utmost seriousness in accordance with the Corruption Eradication Law. In this ruling, the main perpetrator and the parties involved were held criminally liable under Article 55 paragraph (1) of the Criminal Code. This reinforces the principle that individuals involved in a corruption scheme will be found guilty without discrimination based on status or position.

The legal precedent established by this ruling is of significant importance, as it demonstrates the implementation of the principle of universality beyond mere discourse. This principle is illustrated by the fact that even supreme court judges can be subject to criminal prosecution in cases of proven corruption. This initiative represents a concerted effort to bolster the legitimacy of the judiciary and ensure the consistent enforcement of the principle of substantive justice. However, it is important to note that the application of universality in this case was examined during the appeal process when the Bandung High Court reduced the sentence from eight to seven years in prison on humanitarian grounds, specifically the defendant's decades of service as a judge. While this consideration is ethically and humanistically valid, a tension exists between the principle of universal precedent and individual considerations. This tension has the potential to lead to inconsistencies in the sentencing of judicial corruption cases in the future. In the Kantian framework, absolute consistency is a prerequisite for justice. Compromises made in the name of subjective considerations have the potential to weaken the power of precedent and the universalization of decisions. (Biscontini, 2024)

Respect for Dignity: Treatment of Human Dignity in Judgments

Immanuel Kant placed significant emphasis on the second principle of the categorical imperative, which stipulates that human beings must be regarded as ends in themselves, rather

than as means to other ends. (Jesus, 2023) In the context of this ruling, it is imperative to undertake a thorough and critical examination of the extent to which the dignity of all parties is upheld by the judge through the sanctions imposed. (Kant, 2011)

The court's decision in the case of Sudrajad Dimyati serves as a testament to the judge's commitment to upholding this fundamental principle. The presiding judge articulated that the defendant's actions constituted not merely a transgression of the law, but also an infringement of ethical and integrity principles. This transgression inflicted harm upon the judicial institution's dignity and eroded public confidence.(Hendra, 2025) The criminal sanction of seven years' imprisonment and a fine of one billion rupiahs conveys a moral message that the state respects and protects the dignity of society from actions that demean the values of justice and social norms.

However, from a Kantian perspective, respect for dignity entails more than merely imposing sanctions; it involves ensuring that punishment does not devolve into an act of revenge but rather serves to restore public moral order and acknowledge the defendant's rational capacity as a human being. In this particular instance, the mitigating factors enumerated by the presiding judge, which encompass the defendant's courteous demeanor, familial obligations, and duration of service, serve to underscore an acknowledgement of the defendant's inherent human qualities. However, the panel of judges underscored that these mitigating factors "cannot erase the severity of the ethical and legal violations" committed by the defendant. This indicates that respect for dignity is not used as a reason for impunity but as a balancer for the proportionality of sanctions. (Biscontini, 2024)

From a Kantian perspective, respect for the dignity of all parties has been sufficiently accommodated. However, it must be remembered that the psychosocial impact on society due to judicial corruption is far greater than that of conventional criminal cases.(McCrudden, 2008) Consequently, the responsibility to fortify collective sanctions and revive trust falls upon the state and judicial institutions, as a shared endeavor, to forestall the devaluation of dignity engendered by verdicts that are regarded as unduly lenient or devoid of a deterrent effect.

Moral Autonomy: Recognition and Respect for Moral Capacity

The foundational principle of moral autonomy in Kant's system is predicated on the recognition that humans possess the rational capacity to establish their own moral laws and are accountable for their actions.(Kant, 2002) In the context of this case, the judge's decision is expected to be not only a formal legal reaction, but also a space for moral reflection, both for the perpetrator, other judicial officials, and the community.

The judicial proceedings against Sudrajad Dimyati involved a series of appeals and cassation proceedings, representing a standard series of legal actions. The presiding judge determined that the defendant's actions not only constituted a violation of the law but also represented a betrayal of his moral responsibility as a guardian of justice. By underscoring that any judicial official who accepts bribes is regarded as having transgressed the threshold of integrity, the judge endeavored to enlighten officials on the fact that corrupt practices invalidate the moral autonomy of individuals and institutions. The ruling also mentioned the importance of re-instilling collective moral responsibility in order to build a culture of integrity within the judiciary, rather than merely imposing formalistic external sanctions. (*Putusan MA No. 5779 K/Pid.Sus/2023*, 2023)

From a Kantian moral perspective, humans should not be regarded as instruments to be utilized for the accomplishment of others' objectives. In such instances, judges must refrain from leveraging their position and authority for personal gain. Moreover, institutions are obligated to ensure that individuals are not exploited as a means to conceal systemic shortcomings.(Kant, 2011) The systemic critique that has emerged is that judicial corruption is not only a personal moral issue, but also a systemic weakness that fails to foster and maintain moral autonomy as the foundation of substantive justice.(Rositawati, 2025) Consequently, in addition to criminal sanctions, institutional reconstruction and reform are imperative to ensure that judicial decisions genuinely reflect integrity and respect for human moral capacity, rather than merely serving as formal punitive measures.

Procedural Justice: Objectivity and Accountability in the Judicial Process

Within the framework of Kantian philosophy, procedural justice is defined as the objective, transparent, and accountable conduct of all judicial processes. (Kant, 1999) The principle of objectivity is reflected in the utilization of evidence, witness testimony, document transfers, and the defendant's confession, which serve as the foundation for the judge's deliberation in determining the defendant's guilt or innocence. The court has ensured that all parties have the opportunity to present their defenses and arguments, thereby guaranteeing a fair judicial process and the protection of the principle of audi et alteram partem (the right to be heard fairly). (Yuliartha et al., 2018)

The public's capacity to oversee these proceedings was facilitated by several factors. First, the proceedings were extensively covered by the mass media. Second, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) exercised external control over the proceedings. Third, the Supreme Court and the Judicial Commission conducted internal oversight, thereby supporting the integrity of the judicial process. The transparency and accountability of the legal process serve to strengthen the legitimacy of the verdict. However, the effectiveness of the oversight mechanism and the enforcement of ethical standards remain significant challenges. The appellate court's affirmation of the initial judgment, albeit with a mitigated sentence, signifies the court's commitment to an impartial and transparent adjudication process, while also acknowledging the authority of prevailing legal frameworks.

Nevertheless, there are critical notes from a Kantian perspective regarding the consistency of procedural justice, especially in the formulation of sentencing guidelines and oversight mechanisms. Subjective considerations, such as the consideration of length of service to reduce sentences, must be monitored to ensure they do not become a standard practice, as this could potentially erode the principles of universal justice and objectivity. A pressing necessity exists for the reform of the oversight system and the formulation of structured sentencing guidelines. These measures are imperative to address the prevailing subjectivity and to enhance public trust in judicial institutions. (Duindam, 2020)

From a Kantian perspective, the judicial process and verdict against Sudrajad Dimyati have attempted to fulfill four criteria of moral justice. First, in terms of universality, this verdict can be used as a precedent (despite being overshadowed by inconsistencies due to mitigating considerations at the appeal level). Second, respect for dignity is relatively well maintained for both the defendant and the community as victims, with recognition of the rational capacity of all parties. Third, recognition of moral autonomy can be seen from the judicial argumentation and the message of the verdict, although it is not yet fully supported

by structural institutional reform. Fourth, the judicial process was objective and transparent, even though challenges of subjectivity and weaknesses in the supervision of the judiciary remain.

However, if the verdict is subjected to a critical examination in the Kantian sense, the primary question is not only whether the four criteria have been implemented, but also whether the system, through judicial culture reform, the transformation of the supervisory system, and the internalization of Kant's deontological ethics, has genuinely become the foundation for the governance of the Indonesian judicial institution. In essence, a single moral decision is insufficient to substantiate the notion of judicial justice in its entirety, provided that the judicial system has not yet demonstrated moral autonomy, respect for dignity, and universality in all aspects of its policy-making processes.(Wulandari, 2020)

The Bandung District Court's decision No. 23/Pid.Sus-TPK/2023/Pn.Bdg can be regarded as an initial step towards the implementation of Kantian moral principles. However, it is imperative that this decision be integrated into a broader internal reform movement. In the context of judicial decision-making, the categorical imperative and the "kingdom of ends" are not merely abstract principles; rather, they serve as ethical foundations that must be operationalized in daily judicial practice. This approach is expected to enhance the legitimacy and public trust in the judiciary, thereby ensuring the integrity of the legal system. Consequently, the pursuit of substantive justice rooted in universal morality within the Indonesian legal framework is likely to be realized.

The Implementation of Kantian Morality in the Formation of Judicial Professional Ethics

The implementation of Kant's moral principle of justice in the formation of professional ethics for judges represents a complex challenge that necessitates a profound comprehension of the philosophical, moral, and practical dimensions of the judicial system. In the Sudrajad Dimyati case, it is evident that the failure to adhere to Kantian moral principles resulted in the erosion of the judicial system's integrity. In accordance with the four criteria of Kantian justice that have been stipulated, the implementation of professional ethics for judges necessitates a holistic and systematic approach to ensure that each judicial decision not only meets formal legal standards, but also reflects universal moral values that can be justified rationally.

The foundational principle of universality in the implementation of professional ethics for judges necessitates the establishment of a consistent precedent for analogous cases in the future. (Biscontini, 2024) This fundamental principle finds its origins in Kant's categorical imperative, which posits that actions must possess the capacity to be instated as universal laws without giving rise to logical contradictions. In the context of judicial practice, the principle of universality ensures that justice is not arbitrary or dependent on the subjective preferences of judges. Rather, it is based on principles that are rationally acceptable to all parties. (Werner & De Wilde, 2001) The implementation of the principle of universality in the professional ethics of judges necessitates the establishment of clear and structured guidelines that enable judges to assess whether the decisions to be made can be applied consistently in similar situations. This necessitates the establishment of a comprehensive training system that emphasizes not only the technical aspects of law, but also the cultivation of moral and ethical reflection skills. These skills enable judges to evaluate the universal implications of every

decision made.(Šimonis, 2017)

In the establishment of professional ethics for judges, the principle of universality necessitates the standardization of the decision-making process. This standardization must encompass not only the facts of the case, but also consistency with universally accepted moral principles. It is incumbent upon the judicial system to develop mechanisms that enable judges to critically evaluate their decisions by questioning whether the reasons underlying those decisions can be applied consistently in cases with similar characteristics. (Lewis, 2021) The principle of universality also demands transparency in the decision-making process, whereby judges must be able to rationally explain why the decisions taken can and should be applied in similar situations, thereby creating legal certainty that is not only formal but also substantial. (Gageler & Lim, 2014)

The principle of respect for human dignity, which is second in line in the implementation of judicial professional ethics, is reflective of the second formulation of Kant's categorical imperative. This imperative underscores the necessity of treating humans as ends in themselves, rather than merely as means.(StudyCorgi, 2023) In the context of judicial practice, this principle entails that the sanctions imposed must be in accordance with the inherent dignity of all parties involved, including the defendant, the victim, and the community. The fundamental tenet of human dignity, irrespective of external circumstances, is inextricably linked to the inherent capacity of humans as rational and ethical agents.(Hill, 2015) The implementation of the principle of respect for dignity in the professional ethics of judges necessitates a profound comprehension of the concept of human dignity as an absolute value that cannot be compromised by utilitarian or pragmatic considerations.(Pele, 2016) Judges must acknowledge that each individual involved in the judicial process possesses inherent value that cannot be diminished to a mere object within the legal system. Instead, each individual is to be regarded as a subject endowed with rights and dignity that must be honored and protected.

In the context of developing professional ethics for judges, respect for human dignity entails the cultivation of moral sensitivity, thereby enabling judges to comprehend and acknowledge the intricacies inherent in each case. This necessitates training that emphasizes not only the technical aspects of law but also the cultivation of empathy and an understanding of the psychological, social, and economic conditions of the parties involved in the judicial process. (Lumopa & Arifin, 2024) The principle of respect for dignity is predicated on the establishment of mechanisms to ensure the protection of fundamental rights for each individual within the judicial process. Such mechanisms include the right to fair treatment, the right to be heard, and the right to be treated with respect and dignity. (Alfons et al., 2024) The implementation of this principle necessitates the establishment of an effective oversight system that ensures that the judicial process not only meets procedural standards, but also reflects respect for human dignity as a fundamental value in the legal system.

Moral autonomy, as the third principle in the implementation of professional ethics for judges, recognizes the fundamental capacity of humans to make moral decisions based on rational reasoning.(Kleingeld & Willaschek, 2019) According to Kant, autonomy is defined as the capacity to establish moral principles for one's own conduct and to act in accordance with these principles in a way that can be rationalized. Within the judicial system, respect for moral autonomy signifies the acknowledgement that individuals possess the capacity to

assume responsibility for their actions and comprehend the ethical ramifications of their decisions. (Kleingeld, 2017) The implementation of the principle of moral autonomy in the professional ethics of judges necessitates an understanding of the concepts of freedom and moral responsibility. These concepts apply not only to the parties involved in the judicial process, but also to the judges themselves as moral agents who have a responsibility to make decisions that are morally and rationally accountable.

Moral autonomy also implies the need to develop critical reflection skills that enable judges to objectively evaluate not only the facts of a case, but also the moral implications of the decisions to be made. This necessitates the establishment of an educational and training framework that prioritizes the cultivation of philosophical and moral analysis competencies. These competencies are essential for judges to comprehend and implement universal moral principles within the specific framework of individual cases.(Eldred, 2024) The principle of moral autonomy also demands judicial independence that is not only institutional but also moral, where judges have the freedom to make decisions based on moral and rational considerations without pressure from external parties.(Waldron, 2008) The implementation of this principle necessitates the establishment of mechanisms that empower judges to cultivate and uphold their moral integrity through a process of self-reflection and continuous ethical evaluation.

The principle of procedural justice, which is the fourth tenet in the implementation of judicial professional ethics, ensures that the court process is reflective of objective and publicly accountable moral principles.(Kotecha, 2020) A fair process is defined by its equitable treatment of all parties involved, its reliance on verifiable rational considerations in decision-making, and its commitment to transparency in the decision-making process. The implementation of the principle of procedural justice in the professional ethics of judges necessitates the development of systems and procedures that not only meet formal standards but also reflect universally accepted moral values. The aforementioned situation necessitates the implementation of mechanisms that facilitate the active involvement of all relevant parties in the judicial process. Such mechanisms are essential for ensuring that decisions are made on the basis of objective considerations and are subject to public scrutiny and accountability.

Procedural justice also implies the need to develop clear standards and guidelines that enable judges to evaluate whether the process has met universally accepted moral principles. This necessitates the establishment of a comprehensive training system that emphasizes not only the technical aspects of legal procedures but also the cultivation of an understanding of the moral principles underlying the judicial process.(Hamdan et al., 2022) The principle of procedural justice also necessitates the establishment of oversight and evaluation mechanisms that facilitate objective assessment of the quality of the judicial process. This evaluation should encompass not only efficiency and effectiveness, but also fairness and morality.(Arif, 2021) The implementation of this principle necessitates a system that enables the public to engage in the evaluation and oversight of the judicial process as a form of public accountability.

The fulfillment of the four Kantian principles of universality, respect for dignity, moral autonomy, and procedural justice in the implementation of judicial professional ethics is demonstrably associated with judicial decisions that are not only technically correct but also morally accountable. This Kantian framework establishes a high yet attainable standard for

measuring justice, as it is predicated on rational principles that can be comprehended and implemented universally while respecting the dignity and moral autonomy of each individual in the judicial process. The effective implementation of these four principles necessitates a holistic and systematic approach that encompasses not only the modification of procedures and regulations but also the transformation of the culture and mindset that permeates the judicial system.

CONCLUSION

The Kantian deontological ethical approach is instrumental in evaluating the integrity of judges, not only as lawbreakers, but also as moral beings who have disregarded their ethical obligations. This study demonstrates that the formal legality aspect in court decisions is inadequate in addressing the crisis of public trust in the judiciary. The root cause of corruption lies in the collapse of moral character within the institutional system. The author employs Kantian principles, including universality, human dignity, moral autonomy, and procedural justice, as analytical tools to evaluate the moral legitimacy of the verdict, as opposed to its mere legal validity. The study's findings indicate that, despite the fulfillment of formal elements such as compliance with the articles of the Corruption Crime Law and the existence of valid evidence procedures, the implementation of the principle of universality has been compromised through sentence reductions in the appeal process. This suggests a tension between universal precedent and individual humanistic considerations. Moreover, the dimension of moral autonomy in law enforcement has not yet been institutionally internalized, as evidenced by the weak oversight mechanisms, the absence of ethics education, and the lack of reflective standardization in judicial decision-making. This study makes the case for a comprehensive reformulation of the professional ethics of judges. The basis for this reformulation should be Kant's theory, which would serve as a new foundation for designing a more moral, rational, and substantively just judicial system. The study also demands the integration of universal moral principles into the Indonesian judicial culture. This would serve to bridge the gap between positive law and public morality.

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