# ETHICAL VALUES AND THE PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION

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**Abstract**: *The purpose of the present study is to assess the ethical standards of Indonesian parliamentarians, how they provides Indonesian MPs with proper cognitive guidance, to identify what factors may be responsible for variation in ethical standards and to assess how Indonesia parliamentarians compare to legislators and policy makers from other countries. The methodological approach, employed in each of these studies, to map the ethical preferences of parliamentarians can also be used to explore how the ethical world of Indonesian parliamentarians has changed over time, in addition to replicating the analyses performed in previous studies with a larger sample, the paper explored three sets of questions that previous studies had not addressed. First, we explored what are some of the correlates or some possible causes of individual attitudes; Second, we assessed how the ethical attitudes and standards of respondents shape the way they perceive corruption; Third, we performed a similar analysis with data collected among Kazakhstani civil servants to test whether the perception of corruption is influenced by ethical attitudes also outside Indonesia or not.*
*Keywords*: Ethical Values, Perception of Corruption.*

## Introduction

The study of ethical values and attitudes, of how they affect the implementation of codes of conduct, of how they influence the performance of civil servants, of how they bias the perception of corruption has a long or a short tradition depending on how broadly or narrowly one defines ethical values and their consequences.

In a broader sense several political outcomes and phenomena have been viewed as the product of ethics, ethical attitudes and ethical values. For Max Weber the rise of capitalism and socio-economic success were the result of the protestant ethics, for Bansfield (1958) ethics, or, to be more precise, the lack of

moral values was socio-economic backwardness, for Lipset (1959) the survival of democracy was due to values and a attitudes, for Almond and Verba (1963) the proper functioning of a democratic system was the result of values and attitudes, for Putnam (1993) again attitudes and values were the main determinant of the functioning of democratic institutions, while for Fukuyama (1995) attitudes and values were the main determinants of prosperity. While some of these studies explicitly mentioned ethic, ethics, morals or morality (Weber, Bansfield) , the political culture tradition from Almond and Verba onward has preferred to speak of 'civic culture' or 'political culture'.

But in so far as political culture one the one hand and ethics on the other hand are the product of attitudes and values, it does not require much 'conceptual stretching' (Sartori, 1970) to understand that the two terms cover the same portion of the semantic field (Hjelmslev, 1953), or, in simpler terms, have the same meaning. So if we take ethics to have a broad meaning, social scientists have extensively explored how it affects various social phenomena from development to democracy, from electoral behavior to institutional performance.

In a narrower sense, however, the literature has attempted on the basis of survey data analysis to map the ethical preferences of parliamentarians and civil servants (Mancuso, 1995; Allen, 2008; Pelizzo and Ang, 2008a and 2008b), to understand how ethical values influence the implementation of a code of conduct (Snape and Skelcher, 2001), to investigate how ethical values affect the performance of the members of an organization (Bruce, 1994), and how the adoption of a code of conduct affects the ethical world of civil servants (Bruce, 1996).

The purpose of the present study is to assess the ethical standards of Indonesian parliamentarians, how they provides Indonesian MPs with proper cognitive guidance, to identify what factors may be responsible for variation in ethical standards and to assess how Indonesia parliamentarians compare to legislators and policy makers from other countries.

Our analyses reveal, as the literature had already acknowledged (Pelizzo and Ang, 2008a, 2008b) that Indonesian MPs have a plurality of ethical standards and that these standards are used in fairly consistent fashion.

Our analyses also reveal that the perception of level of corruption in the country is significantly influenced by the ethical attitudes of the respondent. To further corroborate this claim, we compare the ethical attitudes of Indonesian MPs with those of Kazakhstani civil servants. The comparative analysis reveals that while Kazakhstani civil servants report to have less tolerance for unethical scenarios than Indonesian parliamentarians, the distribution of respondents across the four ethical types that we identify in the course of the paper is virtually the same in both countries, and that in both countries the perception of corruption is to a large extent shaped by the ethical attitudes of the respondent.

The fact that the level of perceived corruption is a function not only of how much corruption there is but also of the ethical values of the respondents means that the same amount of objective corruption would be judged differently in countries that hold different ethical values and attitudes. Hence, to make survey-based estimates of corruption properly comparable across countries, it is essential that the impact of ethical attitudes is properly discounted.

While the literature had generally acknowledged that ethical values, such as the Protestant ethics discussed by Weber or Confucianism, were responsible for the entrepreneurial behavior of individuals and for socio-economic development, much less attention has generally been paid to how the functioning and the performance of (public) organizations is affected by the (ethical) values of its

members. From the early 1990s onward, however, scholars have somehow rediscovered 'ethics' and have started investigating whether, how and to what extent 'ethics' is instrumental in securing the proper functioning of public organizations, the productivity of civil servants and the implementation of regulations such as the codes of ethics and/or the codes of conduct.

Three streams of research can be identified. One stream of research has generally shown that 'ethics matters'. Ethical values affect the functioning and the performance of public administration (Frederickson, 1993) as ethical people are more productive employees (Bruce, 1994).

Scholars working in this line of inquiry have hence argued that 'ethics in government' should be promoted, that teaching ethics to public administrators is important (Bruce, 1998), that the adoption of codes of ethics and codes of conduct can promote ethical behavior in an organization (Bruce, 1996; Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2006) but also that the successful implementation of a virtue-inducing code of conduct depends on the ethical values and attitudes of the individuals for whom it is designed (Skelcher and Snape, 2001).

A second stream of research has focused instead on how 'ethics' in the public administration can be promoted and scholars, in this respect, noted that the promotion of ethical values can be achieved by a adopting codes of ethics and codes of conduct (Bruce, 1996), by teaching ethics to public administrators (Bruce, 1998) or both. Teaching ethics to public administrators is important in itself, but it is also important because it is

instrumental in homogenizing the ethical preferences of the individuals that a code of conduct is expected to regulate.

The literature (Skelcher and Snape, 2001) made clear that a code of conduct can promote ethics within an organization only if the members of that organization have homogeneous ethical preferences, that is whether they have a common understanding of what represents ethical/unethical behavior, of what are the ethical dilemmas that their organizations encounters and of what solutions can be adopted to solve those problems. In the absence of such a common understanding, Skelcher and Snape argued, a code of conduct is going to be somewhat ineffective.

The third stream of inquiry has attempted to map the ethical preferences of public administrators and elected officials. This mapping exercise was conducted to see whether and to what extent ethical preferences were homogeneous, whether and to what extent they displayed considerable cross-country variation and whether and to what extent they changed over time. Specifically.

After Mancuso (1995) presented her methodology to map the ethical preferences of British parliamentarians, Allen (2008) showed that their tolerance for unethical behavior decreased considerably over time, whereas Pelizzo and Ang (2008a, 2008b) showed that Indonesian legislators serving on the ethics committee of the DPD and the DPR had less tolerance for unethical conduct than the British parliamentarians surveyed by Mancuso (1995) in her seminal work. The key findings of this set of studies are that parliamentarians have

indeed different ethical preferences, that ethical preferences change over time and can display significant cross-country variation.

## Methods

The methodological approach, employed in each of these studies, to map the ethical preferences of parliamentarians can also be used to explore how the ethical world of Indonesian parliamentarians has changed over time, to assess how Indonesian legislators employ their ethical standards, and to assess the difference between the ethical values of Indonesian legislators from the ethical values of Kazakhstani civil servants so that even in this study we can map values and their variation across time and space as previous studies had already done.

The present study attempts to build upon the existing literature, not only by breplicating analyses that were already conducted in the past but also, and more importantly, by expanding the boundaries of inquiry. Specifically we wish to show that 'ethics' matters for reasons that, to the best of our knowledge, the literature has so far failed to address. What we plan to show is that the ethical attitudes of respondents do not simply provide cognitive guidance but also affects respondents' perception of corruption—and this finding, as we will argue later on, has significant implications for the comparative study of corruption.

## Result and Discussion

The dataset was constructed by administering to 40 parliamentarians the survey instrument (table 1), originally designed by Mancuso (1995) as amended by Pelizzo and Ang (2008), who used it to generate an ethical map of Indonesian parliamentarians (The 2006 data were collected by the members of the ethics committee of the DPR and the DPD in Jakarta. The 2009 data were collected by them to visiting research fellow in Jakarta). Specifically, respondents were given a list of scenarios (see table 2), they were asked to indicate on a seven point scale (1= very corrupt, 7 = non corrupt) how corrupt/non-corrupt they believed each scenario to be.

**Table 1**
**Mancuso's Corruption Scenarios.**

| Name | Text |
| --- | --- |
| CAMPAIGN | A cabinet minister promises an appointed position in exchange for campaign contribution |
| SCHOOL | An MP uses his position to get a friend or relative admitted to Oxford or Cambridge, or some other prestigious institution |
| DRIVEWAY | The driveway of the Chairman of the City Council's private home is paved by the council's District Works Department |
| CONTRACT | A cabinet minister uses his influence to obtain a contract for a firm in his constituency |
| RETAINER | MP arrange for meetings between private corporation executives and parliamentarians |
| PLANNING | A local councillor, while chairman of the planning committee, |

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|  |  |
|---|---|
|  | authorizes a planning permission for property owned by him |
| LORRY | A Ministry of Transport heavy good vehicle examiners obtains £10 from the owner of a lorry to pass the vehicle |
| SECRETARY | MP hires wife or family member to serve as his secretary |
| GIFT | MP accepts a crate of wine from influential constituent |
| KNIGHT |  |
| TRAVEL | MP exchange 1st class ticket allocated for economy class, pockets the difference |
| ALL PARTY | An all-party group on the aged secures the services of a full-time research assistant at the expense of the Age-Concern. |
| ORDER PAPER | A member on retainer to a PR company representing a foreign government submits several written questions for the Order paper on British industrial development in that country |
| PASS | MP gets house pass for lobbyist to act as research assistant whose services paid for by external source |

*Source: adapted from Mancuso (1995:34)*

**Table 2**
**Corruption scenarios used in this study**

| Name | Text |
|---|---|
| Company donation | A company makes a big donation to the government party and eventually won a major contract |
| Campaign | Cabinet minister promises appointment position in exchange for campaign contribution |
| School | MP using influence to get friend/relative admitted to prestigious institution |
| Pass | MP gets house pass for lobbyist to act as research assistant whose services paid for by external source |
| Influence job | MP using influence to get friend/relative a job |
| Contract | Cabinet minister use influence to obtain contract for firm in his constituency |
| Travel | MP exchange 1st class ticket allocated for economy class, pockets the difference |
| Secretary | MP hires wife or family member to serve as his secretary |
| Retainer | MP arrange for meetings between private corporation executives and parliamentarians |
| Gift | MP accepts a box of cigars from influential constituent |

*Source: adapted from Mancuso (1995:34)*

Since responses were recorded on a 7-point scale, we can recode the answer from 1 to 3 as 'corrupt' and the answers from 5 to 7 as 'non-corrupt', while respondents assigning to a scenario the score of 4 (neither corrupt nor uncorrupt) were treated as system missing. By doing so we are able to assess how Indonesian MPs assessed the various scenarios and how this assessment varied over time, that is depending on whether MPs served on the ethics committee (as all the respondents surveyed in 2006) or not. See table 3.

**Table 3**
**Scenario Responses and Statistics**

| Name | Scenario | 2006 (N=27) | | 2009 (N=13) | | Total (N=40) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *% corrupt* | *% non-corrupt* | *% corrupt* | *% non-corrupt* | *% corrupt* | *% non-corrupt* |
| Company donation | A company makes a big donation to the government party and eventually won a major contract | 96.3 | 3.7 | 83.3 | 16.7 | 92.3 | 7.7 |
| Campaign | Cabinet minister promises appointment position in exchange for campaign contribution | 91.7 | 8.3 | 54.5 | 45.5 | 80 | 20 |
| School | MP using influence to get friend/relative admitted to prestigious institution | 91.7 | 8.3 | 54.5 | 45.5 | 80 | 20 |
| Pass | MP gets house pass for lobbyist to act as research assistant whose services paid for by external source | 90 | 10 | 81.8 | 18.2 | 87.1 | 12.9 |
| Influence job | MP using influence to get friend/relative a job | 88.5 | 11.5 | 50 | 50 | 77.8 | 22.2 |
| Contract | Cabinet minister use influence to obtain contract for firm in his constituency | 87.5 | 12.5 | 80 | 20 | 85.3 | 14.7 |
| Travel | MP exchange 1st class ticket allocated for economy class, pockets the difference | 77.3 | 22.7 | 50 | 50 | 68.8 | 31.3 |
| Secretary | MP hires wife or family member to serve as his secretary | 76 | 24 | 66.7 | 33.3 | 73 | 27 |
| Retainer | MP arrange for meetings between private corporation executives and parliamentarians | 47.8 | 52.2 | 36.4 | 63.6 | 44.1 | 55.9 |
| Gift | MP accepts a box of cigars from influential constituent | 36.8 | 63.2 | 61.5 | 38.5 | 46.9 | 53.1 |

*Source: adapted from Mancuso (1995:34)*

The data presented in table 3 suggest some immediate conclusions: first, that some scenarios are nearly unanimously perceived to be 'corrupt' as

in the case of the 'company donation' while on some others scenarios there is some disagreement as to how they should be regarded; second, that on some scenarios there is more disagreement among respondents as to whether they should be regarded as corrupt or not (as in the case of both the retainer and the gift scenario) than on others scenarios; third, that the members of ethics committee in 2006 had remarkably more stricter ethical standards than the MPs surveyed in 2009; and fourth, that while the way in which a scenario is assessed is fairly consistent over time in some cases (company donation, pass, contract, secretary), it is not in the others. By aggregating the responses collected in 2006 with the responses collected in 2009, and by computing then the average response for each of the ethics scenarios, we are able to rank the various scenarios on the basis of how 'corrupt' they were perceived to be (See Table 4).

**Table 4**
**Scenario Responses and Statistics**

| Scenario | mean | Standard deviation | Median | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Company donation | 1.83 | 1.583 | 1.0 | 40 |
| House pass | 2.46 | 1.742 | 2.0 | 37 |
| Contract | 2.53 | 1.679 | 2.0 | 40 |
| School | 2.68 | 1.774 | 2.0 | 40 |
| Influence job | 2.90 | 1.809 | 2.5 | 40 |
| Secretary | 2.95 | 2.253 | 2.0 | 40 |
| Campaign | 3.05 | 2.064 | 3.0 | 39 |
| Travel | 3.18 | 2.151 | 3.0 | 39 |
| Gift | 4.23 | 2.270 | 4.0 | 40 |
| Retainer | 4.60 | 2.170 | 4.0 | 40 |

*Source: adapted from Mancuso (1995:34)*

Mancuso (1995) suggested that some of the scenarios she had identified should be regarded as 'conflict of interest' scenario, while the other should be regarded as 'service' scenarios. Specifically, school, contract and influence job are considered as 'service', while travel, pass, gift, retainer and secretary as considered as 'conflict of interest' scenarios. By computing the average across the 'service' scenarios provided by each respondent, we assess the respondent's tolerance for service. Similarly by computing the average across 'conflict of interest' scenario, we assess each respondent's tolerance for conflict of interest scenarios. The data presented in table 5 suggest that, consistently over time, Indonesian MPs have higher tolerance for conflict of interest scenarios than for service scenarios.

**Table 5**
**Descriptive Statistics on Conflict and Service**

|  |  | 2006 (N = 27) | 2009 (N = 13) | Total(N = 40) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service |  |  |  |  |
|  | Mean | 2.37 | 3.38 | 2.7 |
|  | Standard deviation | 1.19 | 1.48 | 1.36 |
| Conflict |  |  |  |  |
|  | Mean | 3.25 | 3.74 | 3.52 |
|  | Standard Deviation | 1.18 | 1.79 | 1.48 |

*Source: adapted from Mancuso (1995:34)*

These additive scales can be used to create a two-dimensional mapping of Indonesian legislators. But before we do so, we want to assess the validity of these scales. In order to do so, we perform a factor analysis using the responses to 'service' and the 'conflict of interest' scenarios and we then proceed to correlate the scores generated by the factor analysis with the scores in the additive scale. Both correlations yield a strong, positive, and statistically Pearson coefficient (r = 1.0; sig. = .000) which means that the scores generated by the additive scales are cross validated by the estimates of factor analysis. And, from a substantive point of view, they support the claim that the ethical world of Indonesian.

**Figure 1**
**Service: Additive scale v Service_factor**
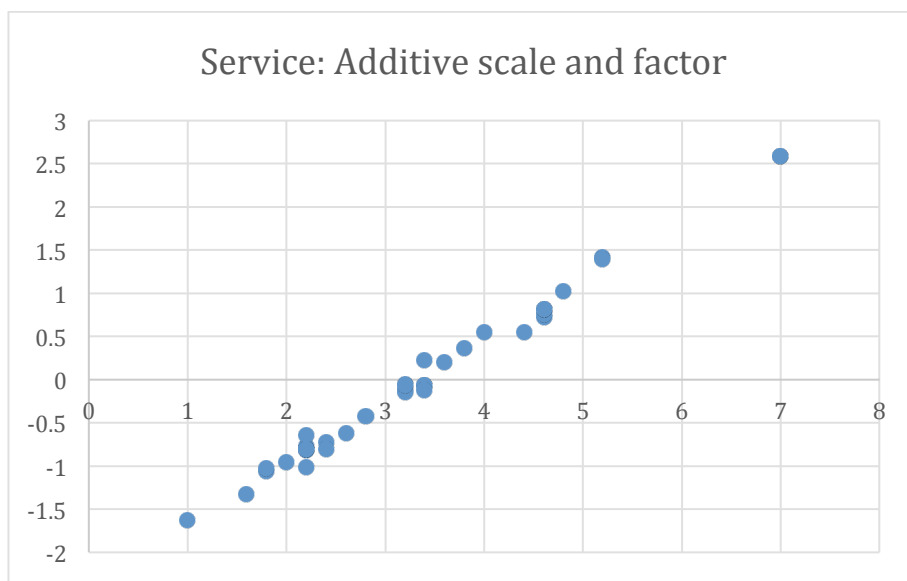
**Figure 2**
**Conflict of Interest: Additive scale v Conflict_factor**
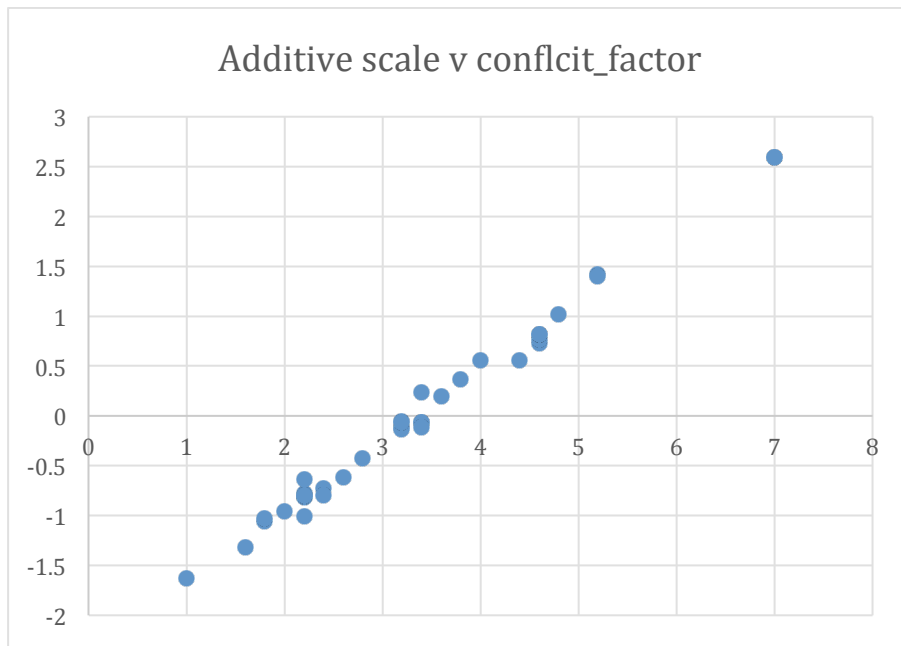


By combining these two dimensions we generate a map of the ethical preferences and ethical types in the Indonesia Parliament. Before doing so we need to say a few words about how this mapping was done in the past and about how we think it'd instead be done.

When Mancuso (1995) developed the typology that was later employed by Pelizzo and Ang (2008), she identified four types of individuals:

1.  The Puritans who have low tolerance for both constituency service and conflict of interest;
2.  The Entrepreneurs who have high tolerance on both dimensions
3.  The Servants who have high tolerance for constituency service, but not for conflict of interest
4.  The Muddlers who have high tolerance for conflict of interest, but not for constituency service

When Mancuso (1995) performed her analysis she found that some members of parliaments were puritans, some were entrepreneurs, some were servant and some were muddlers (Allen: 2008). A similar finding was presented by Pelizzo and Ang (2008).

The finding, to some extent, was the result of the methodology employed to segment the sample. Both studies used the sample mean as the cut off point on each dimension, and since a mean cannot be computed in the absence of below average and above average observations, it is not at all surprising that those early studies found that there are some observations in each of the four categories generated by using the dimensional means as cut off points.

We believe instead that instead of following Mancuso's approach is better to take the neutral position on each dimension as the cut off point because in this way we do not create categories that a priori will be filled by at least one case and we can actually generated a more

precise and efficient categorization and mapping of the ethical world of Indonesian MPs.

**Figure 3**
**A New Map of Indonesian MPs**
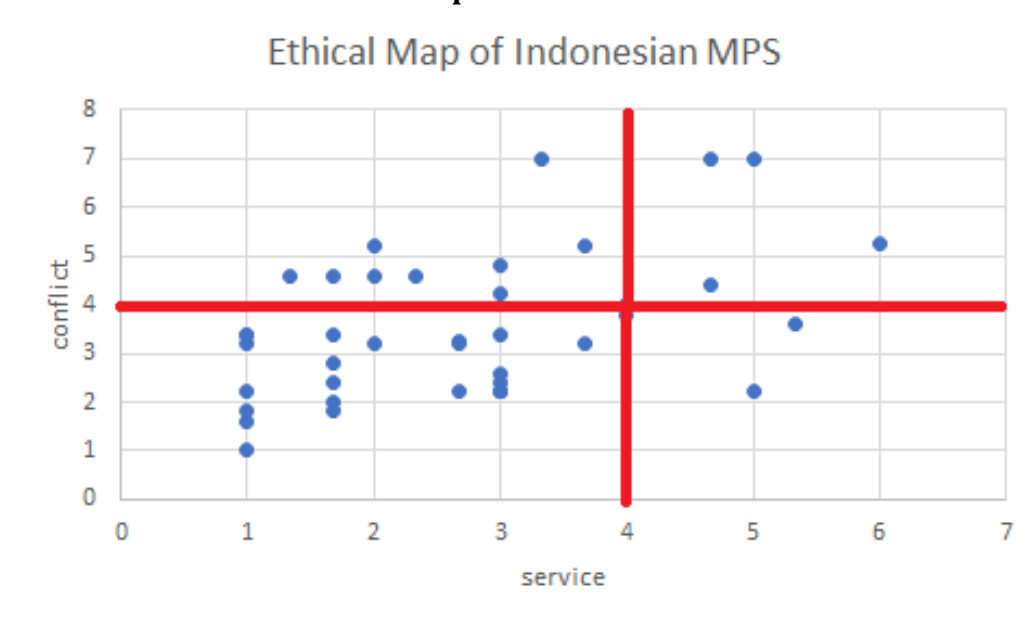


What this mapping illustrates is the fact that among Indonesian Legislators there are some Puritans and Muddlers, some Entrepreneurs and very few Servants. Specifically, there were 2 borderline cases in the sense that they occupied the neutral position on one axis or both and could not, henceforth, be properly assigned to any category. There were then 2 servants, 4 entrepreneurs, 9 muddlers and 23 puritans (Orazbekova and Shegirbayev: 2017).

**Ethical attitudes: the correlates**

The data presented so far have shown that respondents in 2009 had on average more tolerance for both service and conflict of interest scenarios than the respondents surveyed in 2006. As we noted before there is a difference between these two sets of respondents. While they were all elected in the same legislature, there are some differences between the 2006 and the 2009 respondents. The 2006 respondents were serving on the ethics committee of the DPD or the DPR, while all the respondents in 2009 were from the DPR and none of them served on the ethics committee.

Does membership in the ethics committee matter? To answer this question we perform some gamma correlation between membership in the ethics committee and whether respondents regarded a scenario as corrupt or not.

In two cases (school, influence job) out of 8, membership in the ethics committee does make a difference and increased the probability that these scenarios are regarded as corrupt ones. In the other cases, membership in the ethics committee does not make a difference. (See table 6 and 7).

**Table 6**
**Gamma correlation. Affiliation, Conflict and Service Scenarios**

|  | Retainer | School | Influence job | Contract | Secretary | Gift | Travel | Pass |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Affiliation in Ethics Committee | .232 | .803* | .769* | .273 | .226 | -.466 | .545 | .333 |
| Affiliation in the DPD | -.01 | .78* | .32 | .17 | -.19 | -.51 | .70 | 1.0 |
| N | 34 | 35 | 36 | 34 | 37 | 32 | 32 | 31 |

Legend: ** significant at the 0.5 level

**Table 7**
**Logit Models (sig.)**

| Logit | constant | Affiliation in the ethics committee |
|---|---|---|
| School | .182 (.763) | 2.216 (.020) |
| Influence job | .000 (1.0) | 2.037 (.021) |

Do members of the DPD have a lower/higher tolerance for corruption than the members of the DPR?.

The evidence in this regard is mixed because on some scenarios members of the DPR (retainer, secretary, gift) were more inclined than the members of the DPD to consider the scenarios as corrupt, while they were less inclined to do so on other scenarios (school, influence job, contract, travel, pass) as evidenced by the fact that the gamma correlations yield negative coefficients with regard to the retainer, secretary and gift scenarios, while the they yield positive coefficients otherwise. But, more importantly, the evidence is mixed because with one exception -the gamma correlation between school and membership in the DPD – all the other coefficients are statistically insignificant, which means that, from a statistical point

of view, there is no significant difference in whether is treated as corrupt or not depending on whether the respondent is a member of the DPD or the DPR.

**Cognitive Guidance**

Previous studies (Mancuso, 1995; Pelizzo and Ang 2008a; Pelizzo and Ang, 2008b) reported that ethical attitudes provided some kind of cognitive guidance in the sense that the position a respondent took on a given issue provided an indication of where that respondent would stand with regard to a different issue.

This conclusion was supported by the fact that respondents' attitudes or positions on certain issues (scenarios) were strongly, positively and significantly correlated with their position on other issues/scenarios. Our findings, presented in table 8, sustain a similar conclusion.

Respondents use consistently their ethical standards, so that their stances on an issue are strongly related to their stances on a different issue. For instance, the responses on the retainer scenario are a strong and significant predictor of a respondent's assessment of the influence job, secretary, gift and pass scenario.

A respondent's position on the school scenario is a strong predictor of her position on the influence job, contract, travel and pass scenario.

The responses on the influence job scenario are good predictors of respondents' position on the contract, secretary and pass scenario. Responses on the secretary scenario are good predictors of the responses on the gift and the travel scenario, while responses on contract provide a good prediction of respondents' attitudes towards the pass scenario. For additional details see table 8.

**Table 8**
**Correlations for Conflict and Service Scenarios (sig.)**

| Scenario | Retainer | School | Influence job | Contract | Secretary | Gift | Travel | Pass |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Retainer | 1 | .179 (.270) | .336* (.034) | .158 (.331) | .557** (.000) | .388* (.013) | .266 (.102) | .358* (.030) |
| School | | 1 | .549** (.000) | .381* (.015) | .227 (.159) | .019 (.909) | .492** (.001) | .471** (.003) |
| Influence job | | | 1 | .381* (.015) | .395* (.012) | .218 (.177) | .158 (.336) | .484** (.002) |
| Contract | | | | 1 | .122 (.452) | -.052 (.750) | .277 (.088) | .334* (.044) |
| Secretary | | | | | 1 | .343* (.030) | .318* (.048) | .292 (.080) |
| Gift | | | | | | 1 | .087 (.598) | .220 (.190) |
| Travel | | | | | | | 1 | |

The data we have collected on the ethical attitudes of Indonesian MPs allow us to perform another set of analyses and test whether and to what extent ethical attitudes are responsible for how a respondent perceives the level of corruption in the country.

Since all respondents are Indonesian MPs and since the (real) level of corruption in the country (Indonesia) is the same, differences in the perceived level of corruption may be a function of what could be regarded as the subjective factors such as respondents' values,

attitudes, expectations, worldview, ideology and so on. The data at our disposal allow us to test a specific relationship, namely that between the perceived level of corruption on the one hand and respondents' positions on the service and the conflict of interest dimensions.

Interestingly, the regression analysis reveals that attitudes towards service are a reasonably strong, positive and significant predictor of the level of perceived corruption and explain about 11 per cent of the variance in the level of

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perceived corruption, whereas attitudes towards conflict of interest scenarios have an insignificant influence on how

much corruption one perceives (Orazbekova and Shegirbayev: 2017). See table 9.

**Table 9**
**Regression model: service, conflict of interest and perceived corruption (sig.)**

|  | Intercept | Service | Conflict of interest | R-squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived corruption | 1.94 (.009) | .50 (.040) |  | .11 |
| Perceived corruption | 2.29 (.010) |  | .28 (.218) | .04 |

How does the ethical world of Indonesian parliamentarians compare to the ethical world of legislators and policy makers from other jurisdictions? To answer this question we will compare

the responses of civil servants from the Kazakhstani Ministry of Investments and Development who participated in a survey conducted by Orazbekova and Shegirbayev (2017).

**Table 10**
**Descriptive statistics. Indonesia MPs v Kazakhstani civil servants**

|  | Civil servants from MID-Kazakshtan | Indonesian MPs |
|---|---|---|
|  | Mean |  |
| School | 1.85 | 2.68 |
| Contract | 1.70 | 2.53 |
| Influence Job | 1.88 | 2.90 |
| Travel | 3.29 | 4.23 |
| Pass | 3.08 | 2.46 |
| Gift | 2.73 | 4.23 |
| Retainer | 3.76 | 4.60 |
| Secretary | 2.76 | 2.95 |

The comparison of the responses provided by the Kazakhstani civil servants and the Indonesian MPs suggests three considerations. First, that generally speaking Indonesian MPs have higher tolerance for unethical behavior than Kazakhstani civil servants.

Only in one case (secretary) the Indonesian responses are nearly identical to the ones provided by Kazakhstani respondents and only in one case (pass) Indonesian MPs displayed less tolerance than Kazakhstani civil servants. Second, that respondents in both countries tend

to have slightly more tolerance for conflict of interest scenarios than for service scenarios. Third, that the attitudes towards service scenarios affect the perception of corruption of both Indonesian and Kazakhstani elites (Orazbekova and Shegirbayev, 2017), while the attitudes toward conflict of interest scenarios do not influence the level of perceived corruption in either country. Or, to turn this issue around, one could say that in Indonesia and Kazakhstan the level of perceived corruption depends to a large extent on

the tolerance respondents have for unethical service scenarios.

The regression analyses, presented in table 9, revealed that a little more than 11 per cent in the variance in the level of perceived corruption in Indonesia is explained by respondents' ethical attitudes. When we regressed the level of perceived corruption against respondents' attitudes towards service scenarios, we find (see table 11) that in Kazakhstan roughly 45 per cent of the variance in the level of perceived corruption is explained by respondents' ethical attitudes.

**Table 11**
**Ethical attitudes and perception of Corruption in Kazakhstan**

|  | Intercept | Service | Conflict of interest | R-squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived corruption | 1.29 (.004) | .93 (.000) |  | .45 |

The results of the regression analyses, presented in tables 9 and 11, show that ethical values do not provide simply cognitive (and possibly behavioral) guidance, as we have shown above, but they also provide respondents with what could be regarded as 'perceptual filters' through which respondents look at reality. The perception of reality, the perception of how much corruption there is in the country, does not reflect just the objective or real amount of corruption but it also reflects the biases, the 'perceptual filters', the expectations, the ethical attitudes, the dispositions of the respondent. This is why, as our data analysis has revealed, Indonesian (or Kazakhstani) respondents with different ethical attitudes and standards provide a very different indication of how much corruption there is in their own country. Ethical values in other words account for a portion of the variance in the level of perceived corruption. But, as our data have revealed, elites from different countries also have different ethical attitudes and standards. The fact that ethical standards vary across countries, that is the fact that the citizens/respondents from one country have higher (or lower) tolerance for unethical behavior than the citizens of another country means that the analysis of survey data (on corruption) could generated very different estimates of how much corruption there is in each country, even if, hypothetically, both countries had exactly the same amount of corruption.

We believe, hence, that in order to estimate more properly the level of perceived corruption on the basis of survey data, it is essential to discount the ethical standards of the respondent which, as we have argued, vary both within countries as well as across countries.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the ethical standards of Indonesian MPs to validate the findings reported in previous studies by assessing the ethical attitudes of Indonesian MPs, by mapping the ethical preferences of Indonesian MPs, and by understanding whether and to what extent these ethical

attitudes provide Indonesian parliamentarians with some kind of cognitive guidance. But in addition to replicating the analyses performed in previous studies with a larger sample, the paper explored three sets of questions that previous studies had not addressed.

First, we explored what are some of the correlates or some possible causes of individual attitudes; Second, we assessed how the ethical attitudes and standards of respondents shape the way they perceive corruption; Third, we performed a similar analysis with data collected among Kazakhstani civil servants to test whether the perception of corruption is influenced by ethical attitudes also outside Indonesia or not.

In the first respect we found that while there is no real, detectable difference between the ethical standards of the members of the DPR and those of the members of the DPD, the fact that a parliamentarian serves on the ethics committee affects her tolerance towards some ethics scenarios. In the second respect, we found that the ethical standards of the Indonesian MPs have a considerable influence on how they (individually) perceive the level of corruption in the country.

In the third respect, we found that ethical attitudes of Kazakhstani respondents shape how they perceive corruption and we actually found that, in the Kazakhstani case, ethical attitudes are an even stronger and more significant determinant of the perceived level of corruption than they are in Indonesia.

The evidence presented here sustains the claim that ethical values matter (as they provide unequivocal cognitive guidance and they shape the

way in which reality is looked at) and that in order to make a better use of survey data to estimate how much (perceived) corruption there is in one country, it is necessary to necessary to discount the impact of ethical attitudes and values.

One of the most interesting, puzzling, results of this investigation is that perception of corruption is influenced by attitudes towards service scenarios but not by those towards conflict of interest. The data at our disposal do not allow to investigate why that may be the case, but this is a question that scholars may wish explore in an effort to expand the boundaries of inquiry.

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