

The Politics Of Legitimacy: Analysing Social Assistance Programs In Yogyakarta City 2020-2025

Jen Salafian¹ 

¹ Lecturer in Political Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Yogyakarta State University. Jl. Colombo No.01 Karang Malang, Sleman, Yogyakarta, 55281.

Corresponding Author: jensalafian@uny.ac.id

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Abstract: Political legitimacy practised by the Yogyakarta City Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) is doubly present with the influence of Javanese culture that takes legitimacy for granted. This research aims to find out why the dominance of the Yogyakarta City Government is accepted as legitimate by the Yogyakarta City DPRD towards the community of social assistance recipients in 2020–2025 and describe the political oversight model. The method used is descriptive qualitative with shadowing techniques reinforced by interviews, which will try to find facts and realities in the field. The results showed that a new model was formed, namely double oversight, which constructs power according to Javanese culture carried out by the DPRD from the criteria of police patrol and fire alarm oversight. This is supported by the recognition of the community, which is quite solid against the background of the community's alarming situation. This can be seen from the lack of involvement of DPRD in determining policies to accelerate the realisation of social assistance programs, and the power in making policies is dominated by the executive agency, in this case, the Mayor of Yogyakarta, which is influenced by Javanese power motives. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of oversight theory by integrating cultural dimensions, particularly Javanese political values, into the typology of legislative and executive power relations in local governance.

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to examine the political legitimacy of the Yogyakarta City Government (Pemkot Yogyakarta) as perceived and accepted by an external government institution, namely the Yogyakarta City Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD Kota Yogyakarta), particularly in the context of managing and overseeing the distribution of social assistance (bansos) during the period 2020–2025. Specifically, the research seeks to analyse why the DPRD legitimises the political dominance of the executive branch and how this acceptance is

influenced by Javanese cultural values embedded in local political practices. The study also aims to identify and describe the model of political oversight formed by the DPRD in responding to the executive's control over social assistance policy. This research contributes to the discourse on political legitimacy and legislative oversight by offering a culturally embedded perspective demonstrating how traditional Javanese concepts of power and authority shape the functioning of democratic institutions at the local level.

Based on Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, the position of the DPRD as a representative body of the regional people is equal to and a partner of the regional government. The position of the DPRD in the regional government system is very dynamic, and it is adjusting to changes in the direction of the decentralisation system. (Wasistiono, 2019) Explains two interconnected concepts of decentralisation, the formation of autonomous regions and the legal transfer of power to handle specific government areas. (Hoessein, 2000) The delegation of great authority from the centre to the regions automatically shifts the political focus, because the central government no longer monopolises the centre of power.

Indeed, the relationship between the central government and local governments in Indonesia is built on the principle of a unitary state. Unitary state focuses on the supreme power over all government affairs, with the delegation of power to local governments. Although ultimately, the highest decisions and rights rest with the central government the relationship is unique based on the legislation governing the government. (Hoessein, 2000) When there is a change in legislation on local government, the pattern of relations is also affected. This shows that in special and emergencies, they are still looking for the correct pattern and design of relationships. In the context of the hierarchy, the pattern of power relations is related to the vertical distribution of power is defined as handing over or allowing each local government to fully regulate and manage, both in principle and in the way it is carried out.

The alarming situation of people experiencing poverty has consequences that require adjustments to the pattern of power relations between governments, the Indonesian government takes poverty seriously, has made Law No. 13 of 2011 concerning the handling of the poor which emphasises the fundamental rights of people experiencing poverty such as food, clothing, shelter, health, education, social protection and employment opportunities. An essential point in the law instructs regional heads to allocate and optimise every budget for handling poverty problems. Pemkot Yogyakarta took concrete steps to address poverty issues by refocusing the budget on priority scales by issuing Mayor's Regulation (Perwal) No.21 of 2021 concerning the management of social assistance spending. Responding to this situation, the Social, Manpower and Transmigration Office of Yogyakarta City has been handling poverty through the distribution of cash social assistance with the Social Protection Guarantee Target Family (KSJPS) program for the poor, vulnerable and social welfare groups who have not received aid from the central government. The urgent Covid-19 pandemic crisis in 2020 and 2022 prevented budgeting from going through the discussion mechanism at the DPRD. This makes the legislative political supervision function unoptimal, and the local government has the authority to manage the budget as desired, so there is the potential for budget abuse in handling COVID-19. Then, back through routine procedures starting from the budget proposal by the Social Service and authorised through the APBD, with the discussion of the draft budget and its determination through the plenary meeting of the Yogyakarta City DPRD in 2023 to 2025.

Pemkot Yogyakarta, as the powerful executive, was able to determine the distribution of the poverty reduction budget without the approval of the DPRD, because the crisis made the government's refocusing steps to be accepted as legitimate by the public. The pattern of power that is built becomes interesting to discuss in this study because it is done through an extraordinary response, which is certainly not the same as the standard political oversight made by the DPRD. This is in line with the opinion expressed by Carl Smith through the state of exception, a leader may become a dictator when his territory is experiencing a threatened or dangerous condition, which creates an urgent need to save the territory. However, this dictatorial behaviour must be limited by specific corridors and is only temporary. (Asril, 2020) Thus, it is found that the Pemkot Yogyakarta dominates power over the DPRD and the community.

The political supervision model carried out by the DPRD in the context of being a legislative body is a form of strategic political supervision, not administrative supervision. Undeniably, strengthening the legislative supervisory function is necessary to create a working mechanism that can optimise the performance of local governments. This shows that the supervisory function is the duty of the DPRD at the policy control level to create checks and balances. In this study, using Benedict R. O. G. Anderson's Javanese power theory in his writing entitled *The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture*, divides power according to Javanese culture into four categories namely, power is concrete, power is homogeneous, the amount of power in this universe is fixed, and power does not question validity. Then, to explain the oversight model, McCubbins and Schwartz's theory of oversight of political institutions will be categorised into two models, namely the police patrol and fire alarm models. The fire alarm model, which is not centralised, does not involve active and direct intervention by the legislature, but applies a system of rules, procedures and informal rules that allow citizens and interest groups/organisations to examine or assess government programs or decisions directly. While police patrol involves more active, direct and centralised efforts by institutions, legislators monitor policies to detect problems during policy implementation with their initiative. (McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984)

Empirical research conducted by Ayuni suggests that the state of emergency is a condition in which the government in a country makes extraordinary responses to threats that arise. (Ayuni et al., 2022) This suspends the formal functions of a government and allows government authorities to suspend the civil liberties of citizens and even the fulfilment of human rights. Meanwhile, research conducted by Rustanto explained that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the internal resources of the local government bureaucracy experienced limitations in carrying out their duties according to their functions and could hamper public services to the community. (Yudianto et al., 2019) The distribution of social assistance to people experiencing poverty requires cooperation between the central and local governments, but the local government is the primary focus. The problem is that there are differences in the policy steps. This causes local governments to implement various policies to deal with poverty in their regions. On the other hand, local governments cannot be free and limited in determining policies according to the conditions of their respective areas. Departing from this, the DPRD's political supervision must be carried out.

Approaching the study of political oversight through actors alone will only lead to conflicts of interest within the Yogyakarta City Council. Moreover, it reveals the polarisation of factions of the legislative elite, which leads to a struggle for political legitimacy. In other words, there is an internal struggle within the DPRD itself to gain power, which is influenced by Javanese culture towards the community and regional partners. Thus, it fails to answer the leading cause that diverts the focus of DPRD's obligations in the social assistance distribution phenomenon. So, the legitimacy formed during handling poverty is means that the local government is limited in implementing policies from the central government. Meanwhile, in the City of Yogyakarta, there is a domination by the Pemkot Yogyakarta, which has led to a low role of political supervision by the DPRD. This reality has led to the problem of the DPRD's weak power, which always faces obstacles in exercising its authority and power, resulting in the questioning of the DPRD's political supervision. Therefore, this study examines the political supervision model of the Yogyakarta City DPRD on the distribution of social assistance to people experiencing poverty. One of the main questions to be answered in this study is why the dominance of the Yogyakarta City Government is accepted as legitimate by the Yogyakarta City Council over the poor, vulnerable and social welfare groups.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach as explained by Sugiyono which focuses on understanding the meaning, reality, and social dynamics that occur in the context of political legitimacy played by the Yogyakarta City DPRD through the reflection of social assistance programs during the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022 and after the pandemic from 2023 to 2025. (Quinlan, 2008) This study was conducted directly by researchers in Yogyakarta from 2020 to 2025. The primary focus of this study is to examine how the political

dominance of the Yogyakarta City Government is accepted as a form of legitimacy by the DPRD, and how this legitimacy is reflected in the implementation of social assistance policies for the poor, vulnerable and social welfare groups.

The main data collection in this study used the shadowing method, as (McDonald, 2005) described, which is an ethnographic approach in which researchers directly follow, observe, and engage in a limited way in the daily activities of the research subjects. Shadowing is used to capture in more depth the perspectives, decisions, and daily dynamics of public policy actors who monitor the distribution of social assistance (bansos) in Yogyakarta City. In this case, the researcher is not only a passive observer, but also actively involved in the ongoing social and institutional context, making it possible to understand how the policy reality is interpreted and carried out by actors contextually and situationally. This shadowing method combines participatory observation with in-depth interviews and reflective discussions, both formally and informally, to explore the meaning and justification of the actions taken by policy actors. The primary focus of observation was members of the Yogyakarta City DPRD, council secretariat staff, and their interactions with social services, social assistance beneficiaries, and local media. In particular, social assistance beneficiaries were also part of the shadowing through open-ended interviews and observations of the dynamics of their responses to the distribution and monitoring processes.

The implementation, researchers documented the entire process with systematic field notes, including descriptions of events, the atmosphere of interaction, body language, and informal conversations that reflect power dynamics and negotiation between the parties concerned. The notes were compiled in the form of daily narratives and weekly reflections to trace shifts in actors' political attitudes and strategies, and to identify critical moments in decision-making related to social assistance. Thus, shadowing serves to uncover the symbolic realities and discursive practices of power, which often escape observation in more structured conventional methods. The advantage of the shadowing method lies in its ability to capture the complexity of social relations, hidden conflicts, and interpersonal dimensions of the policy monitoring process. Shadowing allows researchers to be in a position that is close enough to the reality of the field to see how policies are implemented not only as formal instruments but also as practices that are influenced by organisational culture, patron-client relations, and political pressure. In the context of the Yogyakarta City DPRD, this approach is particularly relevant given the institution's position as both a watchdog and a political actor with direct relationships with local government and constituents. (Quinlan, 2008)

The researcher designed an engagement strategy to overcome these obstacles and build relaxed and non-threatening interpersonal relationships. This was done through informal communication, repeated visits, and engagement in non-formal activities with the interviewees. The researcher also took the time to understand the participants' personal, social and political backgrounds and negotiated flexible interview schedules and observation meeting points that suited their convenience. This ethical and adaptive approach was used to build long-term trust, which was key in gaining in-depth Access to the authentic experiences and perceptions of the interviewees. The research location was focused on the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) of Yogyakarta City, with the consideration that this institution has a strategic role as a local political representation that is also responsible for overseeing the management of APBD refocusing, especially in the context of poverty management and post-pandemic socio-economic recovery. The DPRD is not only a legislative space, but also an arena of power where processes of negotiation, legitimisation, and distribution of public resources occur. Therefore, through the shadowing method, the researcher seeks to critically record how the DPRD performs its oversight function over social assistance, not only normatively, but also within the framework of local political culture and the accompanying power dynamics.

Researcher critically read all collected information, followed by data reduction through abstraction to capture the core meanings. Data were then organised according to the thematic focus of the research. To ensure data validity, triangulation was employed specifically source triangulation, by comparing and cross checking information obtained from key actors the Chairperson of the Yogyakarta City DPRD (as the oversight institution), representatives from the Yogyakarta City Government (as the implementing body of the social assistance program),

and members of the community who received the assistance. The analysis proceeded through several key stages. First, the researcher identified the actors who played significant roles in the distribution of social assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic in Yogyakarta City. Second, the model of political oversight was examined using McCubbins and Schwartz's theoretical framework, supported by data gathered through the shadowing method. Third, the study classified the human resources and political backgrounds of power-holding actors, reflecting Anderson's theory of Javanese political culture. Fourth, the oversight strategies developed by the DPRD of Yogyakarta City were mapped out. Fifth, the data were categorised and interpreted to uncover the underlying meanings of DPRD's political oversight role in social assistance distribution. Following this, the researcher formulated general findings representing a model of oversight practised by the DPRD that is considered socially legitimate within the local political context. Finally, the analysis culminated in mapping out the complete framework of the DPRD's political oversight model revealing how it is shaped by cultural, institutional, and situational factors and functions within the broader dynamic of local governance in Yogyakarta.

However, despite offering great depth in data mining, this method has limitations. One of the main challenges is the potential for affective bias, where the personal closeness of the researcher to the interviewee may affect the objectivity of data interpretation. In addition, the physical presence of the researcher in the subject's activities may also alter the natural dynamics of the interaction or create a sense of formality that obscures the authenticity of the behaviour. On the other hand, Access to closed policy spaces, such as internal DPRD meetings or informal meetings between elites, is also an obstacle, especially in a bureaucracy sensitive to external scrutiny. (Ferguson & Brett, 2023)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study found that implementing the political supervision function by the Yogyakarta City DPRD in the context of social assistance distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic cannot be separated from the influence of power rooted in Javanese political culture. In this context, there is an intersection between the formal institutional role of the DPRD as stipulated in Law No. 23/2014 and cultural power practices that emphasise harmony, respect for authority, and patron-client relations. The Yogyakarta City DPRD has three main functions: legislation, budget, and supervision, as mandated in Article 41 of Law No. 23/2014. Then, quoting from *Tribun Jogja.com*, the Chairman of Commission B of the Yogyakarta City DPRD, Susanto Dwi Antoro, stated:

“Through this coordination, we hope that the distribution can be carried out using accurate data, while also complying with health protocols. This activity involves sub-branch administrators, branch administrators, and sub-branch administrators of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI Perjuangan).” (Raharjo, 2021)

In practice, especially during the pandemic and post-pandemic, implementing the supervisory function is often a mere formality. This finding aligns with McCubbins and Schwartz's (1984) theory, which describes two models of legislative oversight, namely police patrol and fire alarm. Within this framework, the Yogyakarta City DPRD implements both models without strong effectiveness due to executive dominance. As revealed by the Head of Commission B of the Yogyakarta City DPRD, coordination in the distribution of social assistance also involves party structures such as branches and twigs of the PDI Perjuangan. This shows a tendency to politicise social assistance, where aid distribution is directed to build a political image, rather than solely for the public interest. (Vedi R. Hadiz and Richard Robison, 2004)

Then, the Chair of Commission B added, when the researcher directed the conversation toward the context of power that is structured hierarchically and coordinated among the relevant actors:

“Two functions we follow the rules hierarchically, and we also act according to the city's conditions. Accelerating tourism services, education, and assistance to the community has become essential. We lost 400 thousand students, which is why our approach is a bit different.” (Mr. Susanto, personal interviews, June 22, 2023)

Field data also shows that the role of the legislature is often reduced to providing input on policies that have been designed by the executive, as revealed by a Bappeda official, SH, who stated that "The mayor is more active in presenting policies, and the council only scrutinises and provides input." This statement confirms the executive's dominance in decision-making, which is in line with (Crouch, 2010) view of political oligarchy in Indonesia's electoral democracy system. Within the framework of Javanese culture, the relationship between the DPRD and the Yogyakarta City Government shows a homogenous and hierarchical pattern of power. Power is not always questioned about its origin or validity, but is accepted as natural.(Geertz, 1980) Power tends to be practised through harmony and symbols of obedience thus making legislative oversight of social assistance programs more symbolic than substantive.(Magnis-Suseno, 1987)

This is reinforced by dual surveillance practices, namely the police patrol model that emphasises direct and continuous monitoring, and the fire alarm model that relies on public reports or media findings.(McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984) In the researcher's observation, these two models are applied simultaneously, but not within a solid accountability framework.(Yin, 2016) This illustration of oversight shows that the political legitimacy built by DPRD's towards the community and local partners is often blurred because oversight is not accompanied by transparency and objectivity.(Wahid, 2014) Crises also show that a high dose of emergency is frequently used as justification to bypass standard procedures. Budget refocusing was carried out quickly, including by the DPRD, which contributed Rp 5 billion in official travel funds to the 2020 social assistance program. However, these actions are not always accompanied by adequate controls. Fifty-three cases of alleged social assistance fraud were recorded in Yogyakarta, four of which occurred in Yogyakarta City. Social assistance politicisation, multiple recipients, and inaccurate targeting are some of the main problems. A report from the NGO IDEA Yogyakarta showed that cases of exclusion and inclusion errors occurred simultaneously, indicating weak verification and supervision.(Pradana, 2020)

"Several patterns and vulnerable points of misuse have been highlighted due to their frequent occurrence in the distribution of social assistance. These potential abuses include politicising aid, mistargeting, duplicate recipients, reduced aid value, and illegal levies. Mistargeting cases are divided into two categories: **exclusion error**, which refers to individuals affected by the Covid-19 pandemic who are not listed in the Social Welfare Integrated Data (DTKS) and therefore do not receive assistance; and **inclusion error**, where individuals who are not eligible or are financially capable still receive social assistance. Our monitoring methods included opening complaint channels, conducting media tracking, document analysis, and in-depth interviews with reporters and alleged perpetrators."(Pradana, 2020)

Researchers identified that during the pandemic, the power exercised by the DPRD and the Yogyakarta City Government showed symptoms of concrete power, which is a form of control seen in concrete actions, closeness to the community, and influence mediated by cultural habits (anderson, 2000). Within the Javanese cultural framework, this power does not necessarily require legal or rational legitimacy as understood in the Western political tradition, but rather a "sense of connection" between the ruler and the people.(Geertz, 1980) This practice makes legislative oversight more ceremonial and merely complements the bureaucratic process (Wahid, 2014). More specifically, the police patrol model of supervision is carried out through direct involvement of DPRD members in social assistance distribution activities, but often without clear evaluation reports or public audits. Meanwhile, the fire alarm model can be seen in public reporting and the use of the media as a trigger for legislative response, but the follow-up mechanism is not always precise (McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984).

The researcher then sought confirmation regarding this matter from the Chair of Commission B of the Yogyakarta City DPRD, who explained to the researcher as follows:

"Regarding my duties on the commission, we work closely with our partner regional apparatus organisations (OPDs), primarily with the Social, Manpower, and Transmigration Office (Dinsosnaker) and the Tourism Office. Our oversight is closely tied to the socio-economic and tourism impacts, so the initiatives taken by our colleagues become vital objects of our supervision. Our primary focus is first on social

resilience, second on economic recovery through MSMEs, and then on the impact of tourism, starting from the proposals submitted by the OPDs and task forces. These are all important for the DPRD.” (Mr. Susanto, personal interviews, June 22, 2023)

Based on the explanation from the Chair of Commission B of the DPRD, the author compared it with the perspective of the Yogyakarta City Government, which appears to be broadly aligned, as follows:

“Clearly, the DPRD summons the technical OPDs these are what we call the council's working partners and then requests reports and presentations related to the programs they are implementing. That is where the DPRD intervenes on matters that the City Government needs to improve. In addition, there is involvement in recess activities, directly engaging with the community, holding discussions, gathering constituent aspirations, and each council member ensures their constituents are properly served. If there are inaccuracies, corrections are made, and it's quite reasonable that in unplanned situations, data errors may occur. Therefore, everything must respond quickly based on data, and the discussions are very dynamic. The council is understanding and not obstructive, which leads to a well-maintained balance of power.” (Mr. Sulistiyo, personal interviews, June 25, 2023)

The results of this study show that the legitimacy of DPRD is not wholly obtained through strong and accountable supervisory functions, but also through symbols of power and cultural harmony (Magnis-Suseno, 1987). Javanese culture, which emphasises social balance and wholeness, makes supervisory practices non-confrontational. However, in the context of procedural democracy and the need for public accountability, this pattern of supervision leaves a large gap to the potential politicisation of aid, neglect of community rights, and blurring of boundaries between supervision and the interests of political power. (Crouch, 2010) Double oversight in this study represents political oversight practices that do not fully refer to the two classic models in the oversight literature, namely police patrol and fire alarm. (McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984) In Yogyakarta City, the DPRD is not fully active as a direct supervisor of executive performance or as a facilitator of public complaints; instead, it takes on a dual role mixed with local cultural approaches, especially Javanese political ethics.

The role of the DPRD in overseeing the distribution of social assistance (bansos) during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic is more symbolic. It focuses on moral imaging rather than substantive administrative supervision. This can be seen in the statement of the Head of Commission B of the DPRD, who stated that he carried out supervision through two channels at once, the party and the legislative body, by forming a post and task force, which reflects more empathic participation than formal control functions. This reflects symbolic oversight, which gains legitimacy not because of the effectiveness of its control, but because of its emotional and cultural closeness to the community. (Sartori, 1997) In this case, the political supervision efforts of the Yogyakarta DPRD also show a form of preventive and repressive supervision carried out simultaneously. Preventive is when they are involved early in the planning process, and repressive is when they help resolve problems that arise due to the distribution of social assistance that is not on target. (Putnam, 2000) However, it should be noted that this form of political oversight is strongly influenced by Javanese cultural values such as empathy, nobility of mind, and “*manunggaling kawulo gusti*”. These values influence people's perceptions of the legitimacy of power, resulting in minimal criticism of the ineffectiveness of political oversight. People tend to accept the actions of DPRD and the municipal government as legitimate and appropriate because they are based on good intentions and symbolic politeness inherited from local culture. (Anderson, 1976)

The concept of legitimacy in the context of local politics in Yogyakarta cannot be separated from the influence of Javanese culture, which is still dominant. (Magnis-Suseno, 1987) states that power considered legitimate in Javanese culture is not merely based on formal legality, but on its ability to create harmony, welfare, and inner peace in society. Therefore, power does not have to be exercised with strict legal-procedural mechanisms, but it is sufficient if the ruler shows moral quality, empathy, and spiritual harmony. This study found that the Yogyakarta City Council gained legitimacy from the community not because of the effectiveness of its supervision, but because of its involvement in social assistance schemes

that demonstrated empathy and care. The executive's dominance in decision-making is natural because the community sees the mayor as a figure with spiritual and symbolic power. In Javanese culture, power is unified, not separate between the executive and the legislature, but rather fused in a system of power derived from local noble values. (Koentjaraningrat, 1985)

Although political actors in the Yogyakarta City DPRD also seek legitimate recognition in the eyes of the public, this was expressed by Mr. Sulistyo Handoko, S.E:

"The direction of decisions and established programs tends to be dominated by the Mayor, starting from the task force's draft, which is then presented to the council. The council reviews it and provides input, because at that time, many council members were also infected, and almost all the leadership, as well, including myself." (Mr. Sulistyo, personal interviews, June 25, 2023)

After understanding the political legitimacy of the city government (Pemkot) about the Yogyakarta City DPRD, the researcher continued the conversation with Mr. Sulistyo Handoko, S.E., discussing the legitimacy of the city government in the eyes of Yogyakarta's citizens, particularly in the context of social assistance distribution:

"In the end, the local government simply follows the regulations set by the central government, because in Jogja things were relatively aligned. What made the difference was the basic living allowance, as the region's financial capacity couldn't support everything. Moreover, many Jogja residents who had been working outside the region were laid off and returned to Jogja, becoming an additional burden. At that time, not everyone could be covered because the living allowance costs were so high." (Mr. Sulistyo, personal interviews, June 25, 2023)

Here is a statement from a key informant regarding the influence of Javanese culture in gaining power by the Yogyakarta City Government (Pemkot) in implementing social assistance programs for communities affected in Yogyakarta City:

"The direction of decisions and established programs tends to be dominated by the Mayor, starting from the task force's draft which is then presented to the council. The council reviews it and provides input. Empathy arose because many council members were also infected, and at that time, almost all of the leadership were affected as well including myself." (Mr. Sulistyo, personal interviews, June 25, 2023)

Executive dominance in emergencies, such as a pandemic, with budget refocusing that lacks legislative oversight, does not generate significant resistance from the public. On the contrary, people understand this as a noble decision for mutual safety. This proves that political legitimacy in Yogyakarta rests more on cultural beliefs than democratic procedures commonly used in modern liberal states. (Anderson, 2000) The theoretical implication of this double oversight finding is merging two classic oversight models (police patrol and fire alarm) with the Javanese power culture. In (Foucault, 1977) perspective, power is repressive and productive, producing knowledge, creating legitimacy, and shaping new social practices.

Contrast to Javanese political harmony, the *Minangkabau* culture in West Sumatra encourages a more *deliberative* and *communal decision-making process* influenced by the *nagari* structure. (Suardi et al., 2019) found that local legislatures in Padang often openly contest executive decisions, showing a stronger separation of powers. This reveals that *cultural-political traditions* significantly influence how oversight mechanisms are internalised. However, unlike in Yogyakarta, such symbolic legitimacy often becomes a tool for transactional politics rather than cultural consensus. Thailand offers a comparable case, where *symbolic legitimacy* derived from cultural norms such as *Kreng Jai* deference and avoidance of confrontation shapes political relationships. The bureaucracy and local legislatures, though formally democratic, often defer to executive authority during crises, especially under the framework of royal or military legitimacy (Phongpaichit, 2009). In Japanese local governance, especially during post-disaster recovery (e.g., after the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake), studies such as those by (Aldrich, 2012) show that oversight tends to be informal and culturally grounded in *trust networks* and *consensus-building*, rather than adversarial checks and balances. Like Yogyakarta, legitimacy is maintained more through relational ethics than procedural scrutiny.

The dual oversight exercised by the Yogyakarta City Council reflects this productive power because it has created new practices in political oversight based on culture and social relations, not merely formal procedures. Epistemologically, double oversight can be considered a form of adaptation of the Western model to local power structures that are culturally based. In this context, power cannot be understood universally, but must be considered in the cultural context in which it is exercised. Double oversight is a synthesis between McCubbins and Schwartz's political oversight and Anderson and Magnis-Suseno's local power structure. Thus, double oversight can be used as a new model of political oversight in crises in areas that are thick with local culture. This model explains that power can be legitimate and accepted without the need to fulfil all modern rational-legal criteria if cultural values can replace the role of the formal system in providing legitimacy.

In particular, the *double oversight model* observed in Yogyakarta integrates the police patrol model (direct engagement in policy processes) with the fire alarm model (responsive action based on community signals) without a firm accountability framework. The ceremonial nature of oversight and the collaborative alignment with the executive branch reflect what (Magnis-Suseno, 1987) and Franz Magnis-Suseno (1997) call *concrete power and moral legitimacy* in Javanese culture. In this context, power is not derived from legal-rational norms, but from symbolic closeness, empathy, and ethical representation. Our research contributes a culturally grounded theory of double oversight, a fusion of formal Western models of legislative control (McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984) with local legitimacy frameworks rooted in Anderson's theory of Javanese power and Magnis-Suseno's ethics of harmony. This hybrid form challenges the universal application of rational-legal oversight mechanisms in democratic theory by demonstrating that cultural legitimacy can substitute procedural legitimacy under specific socio-political conditions. Theoretical implication from Foucault (1979) supports this argument, where power is repressive and productive; it generates knowledge, institutional behaviour, and normalised practices. In Yogyakarta, the DPRD's involvement in bansos distribution is productive of a *new political normal*, where being present, empathetic, and morally aligned with the people is more politically valuable than enforcing strict accountability.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the political oversight function of the Yogyakarta City DPRD during and after the COVID-19 pandemic is best understood through the concept of double oversight. This model blends formal legal mechanisms with informal cultural practices rooted in Javanese political values. Legislative supervision, while formally mandated by Indonesian law, was often symbolic, adaptive, and non-confrontational due to the influence of hierarchical power relations, cultural deference to authority, and a collective preference for harmony. Rather than serving as a strict check and balance body, the DPRD operated as both a political actor and a cultural mediator, negotiating legitimacy through empathy and presence rather than rigorous accountability procedures.

Theoretically, this study expands our understanding of legislative oversight in non-Western political cultures, showing how traditional values can shape, modify, or even replace procedural norms. It challenges the universality of classic oversight models like police patrol and fire alarm by introducing a hybrid form that is more culturally contextual and symbolically charged. Drawing from Anderson and Magnis-Suseno interpretations of Javanese power, the study proposes that legitimacy in governance can emerge from formal mechanisms and moral authority, emotional closeness, and cultural continuity. This "double oversight" model illustrates how power and accountability are produced through law and local tradition, offering a relevant lens for regions with similar political cultures. From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest strengthening formal oversight mechanisms through better documentation, transparency, and public reporting. At the same time, reforms should embrace cultural values such as empathy, community ties, and symbolic leadership, integrating them into institutional practices rather than treating them as barriers. Capacity-building for legislators and external monitoring bodies such as civil society, media, and academia is essential to ensure that oversight becomes more effective and responsive. By combining formal accountability with cultural legitimacy, political institutions like the DPRD can fulfil their

role more meaningfully, especially in times of crisis when trust, empathy, and swift coordination are paramount.

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