

Asymmetric Decentralization in Indonesia: Monarchical Legacy and Sultanate Succession in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

Introduction: This study analyzes the legitimacy of the Crown Princess's appointment in Yogyakarta through the Sabda Raja decree and its alignment with Pugeran Adat, the customary constitutional foundation of the Yogyakarta monarchy.

Purposes of the Research: It also examines the broader implications of this appointment for the gubernatorial position in the Special Region of Yogyakarta and offers recommendations for future succession models.

Methods of the Research: This research employs a normative legal approach, comprising three stages: a literature review of primary and secondary legal materials, conceptual and comparative analysis, and the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

Results of the Research: The findings highlight Yogyakarta's distinctive asymmetric decentralization, particularly its hereditary gubernatorial succession. The Crown Princess's appointment as Heir contravenes Pugeran Adat, which traditionally forbids female Sultans. To override this customary barrier, the Sultan issued the Dawuh Raja (King's Decree), yet this move has generated substantial controversy. Adding to this complexity, the Constitutional Court's ruling affirms the Sultan's prerogative without explicitly adjudicating gender qualifications, thereby leaving a legal vacuum that fuels the ongoing dispute. To address this, the study recommends revising the Special Autonomy Law to align legal provisions with local constitutional customs, ensuring future successions are both legally sound and culturally coherent.

Keywords: *Asymmetrical Decentralization; Yogyakarta Monarchy; Crown Princess; Pugeran Adat; Governor Position.*

Submitted: 2026-01-05

Revised: 2026-06-25

Accepted: 2026-06-26

Published: 2026-06-28

How To Cite: King Faisal Sulaiman, Nasrullah, Ahmad, Muhammad Fathi, and Nurhafilah Musa. "Asymmetric Decentralization in Indonesia: Monarchical Legacy and Sultanate Succession in Yogyakarta." *SASI* 32 no. 2 (2026): 131-147.
<https://doi.org/10.47268/sasi.v32i2.3687>

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INTRODUCTION

A unitary state with regional autonomy is common in modern constitutional systems. The unitary state serves as the foundational boundary for the meaning of autonomy, upon which various regulations are developed to govern the mechanisms that ultimately create a balance between the demands of unity and economic imperatives. In Indonesia, decentralization policies have been strategically designed to incorporate symmetrical and asymmetrical forms, as outlined in Law Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Governance. Symmetrical decentralization introduces a general autonomy model, which serves as the dominant approach across most regions in Indonesia. Conversely, asymmetrical decentralization facilitates the creation of "special autonomy or special regions," governed by *lex specialis*, as exemplified in areas such as Aceh, Yogyakarta, Jakarta (DKI Jakarta), and

Papua.¹ Asymmetrical decentralization within a unitary state represents a new discourse in legal and governmental studies. Van Houten defines asymmetrical decentralization as the legal powers granted to customary law communities that do not possess sovereignty or special territory based on ethnicity. It enables these customary law communities to make fundamental public decisions and independently implement public policies, separate from the authority of the existing state system, while remaining subject to the overarching national Law.²

The Sultanate Monarchy of Yogyakarta predates the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat had already established its administrative territory and a sovereign self-governing system as an independent state entity, along with a constitution (*Paugeran Adat*) passed down over generations. The Yogyakarta Sultanate has played a significant role in preserving and safeguarding the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.³

Issues of legitimacy regarding the appointment of the Governor arose in 2015 when Sultan Hamengku Buwono X (HB X), while serving as the Governor of Yogyakarta, issued the *Sabda Raja* and the *Dawuh Raja*. These were political decrees issued by the Sultanate (as part of the monarchy) that were perceived as having binding legal authority. These decrees sparked debate over their legitimacy and alignment within the democratic framework, particularly given the region's special status.⁴

Through these two political decrees, Sultan Hamengku Buwono X (HB X), who also currently serves as Governor, appointed his daughter, *Gusti Kanjeng Ratu* (GKR) Pembayun, as Crown Princess, with the title GKR Mangkubumi, as the next Heir to the Throne. This decision was made because the Sultan does not have a male heir. The Sultan's political decree was further reinforced by Constitutional Court Decision Number 88/2016, which essentially allows a woman to become Sultan or Heir to the Throne of the Yogyakarta monarchy.⁵

This research will examine the legitimacy of the Crown Princess through the *Sabda Raja*, particularly in terms of adherence to the *Paugeran Adat*, which serves as the Constitution governing the practice of succession for the leadership (Sultan) of the Yogyakarta Palace. Furthermore, this research will explore its implications on the position of Governor as one of the distinctive forms of implementing asymmetrical decentralization policies. In the following section, this research will propose recommendations that include a suggested rule model for appointing the Governor in the Special Region of Yogyakarta.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze: (1) The legitimacy of the appointment of the crown princess through the King's Word and the harmony of the Customary Rules; (2) The implications of the appointment on the position of the Governor of Yogyakarta; and (3) How

¹ Muhammad Mutawalli Mukhlis et al., "Regional Autonomy System: Delegation of Authority and Power of Regional Government in Indonesia in the Study of Fiqh Siyasah," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 9, no. 2 (2024): 2, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v9i2.9709>.

² Sofia Collignon, "Governments, Decentralisation, and the Risk of Electoral Defeat," *West European Politics* 42, no. 1 (2019): 173–200, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2018.1479480>.

³ Catur Nugroho, Wisma Nugraha Christianto, and Sugeng Bayu Wahyono, "History of the Yogyakarta Monarchy: From the Islamic Kingdom to Being Imprisoned in the Indonesian Democratic System," *Historia Madania: Jurnal Ilmu Sejarah* 5, no. 1 (2021): 1, <https://doi.org/10.15575/hm.v5i1.12126>.

⁴ Ratnawati and Purwo Santoso, "Gender Politics of Sultan Hamengkubuwono X in the Succession of Yogyakarta Palace," *Cogent Social Sciences* 7, no. 1 (2021): 1976966, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1976966>.

⁵ Muhammad Siddiq Armia, "Constitutional Practice of ASEAN's Countries: Questioning Judicial Review, Religions and Minority Issues," *Petita: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum Dan Syariah* 7, no. 1 (2022): 41–60, <https://doi.org/10.22373/petita.v5i2.105>.

legal harmonization can be achieved to overcome the tension between national law, customary law, and monarchical traditions in Yogyakarta.

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

The research employs a normative legal research method that systematically and comprehensively examines the substantive aspects of legal regulatory frameworks. To address the research questions, four approaches are utilized: the statutory approach, conceptual approach, analytical approach, and comparative approach. The statutory approach is applied to examine Law Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, Law Number 13 of 2012 on the Special Status of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, and other relevant legislation. The conceptual approach is used to explore and understand key concepts, including asymmetric decentralization, legitimacy, sovereignty, and customary law. The analytical approach is employed to identify and critically assess the contradictions and tensions between the Dawuh Raja, Pugeran Adat, and decisions of the Constitutional Court. Meanwhile, the comparative approach is directed toward an internal comparison between national law and customary law in order to identify areas of convergence and divergence. The research was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved library research through the examination of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials consisted of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, statutes, government regulations, presidential regulations, and other relevant legal instruments. Secondary legal materials included judicial decisions, books, scholarly journal articles, research reports, legal doctrines, expert opinions, and legal theories, while tertiary legal materials comprised encyclopedias, legal dictionaries, and other relevant reference works. The second stage involved data analysis, presentation of findings, and the formulation of conclusions and policy recommendations. Data were collected through library research and subsequently analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method. The collected data and legal facts were identified, classified, and systematically organized according to the research issues, then examined through the aforementioned approaches to generate conclusions and develop policy recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Essence of The Sultan: Leader of the People, Government and Religion

Article 18B of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia affirms that the state recognizes and respects regional government units with exceptional characteristics as regulated by Law. The state also acknowledges and respects customary law communities and their traditional rights as long as they remain viable and align with societal developments and the principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.⁶

Lex specialis regulates the special status of Yogyakarta under Law Number 13/2012 (UUK DIY). The procedures for filling the positions, duties, and authority of the Governor and Deputy Governor constitute a form of special authority. The Yogyakarta Palace, as defined in Law Number 13 of 2012 concerning the Special Region of Yogyakarta, is referred to as a Sultanate. One of the purposes of granting this special status is to institutionalize the

⁶ S Abdulajid, G A Tauda, and M J Achmad, "Reaffirmation of Archipelagic State Principle through the Establishment of Archipelagic Region Law in Indonesia," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 890, no. 1 (2021): 012066, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/890/1/012066>.

Sultanate's role and responsibility in preserving and developing Yogyakarta's culture, which is a national heritage.⁷

King Faisal Sulaiman confirmed that Yogyakarta has been designated a special autonomous region, with special status under the Special Region of Yogyakarta Law. The special legal status of Yogyakarta is based on its history and ancestral rights as outlined in the 1945 Constitution. Article 6 of the Special Region of Yogyakarta Law stipulates that "special" authority rests solely with the Yogyakarta provincial government. Meanwhile, the Yogyakarta City and district governments throughout Yogyakarta apply a normal autonomy status (symmetrical decentralization). However, "special" authorities still involve and require coordination and synergy between districts and cities, with the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) provincial government as the central controller of local governance.⁸

Sri Sultan as Governor and Sri Paku Alam as DIY Province represent the province's special status based on the Charter of Status issued by President Soekarno on August 19, 1945, after receiving the Mandate of September 5, 1945, from Sri Sultan HB IX and Sri Paku Alam VIII, which declared the integration of the two kingdoms into the Republic of Indonesia.⁹

Law Number 13 of 2012 on the Special Status of the Special Region of Yogyakarta accommodates the Sultan's tri-functional role as a provincial ruler, a leader of the people, and a leader of religion. The Sultan, as the highest authority in the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, is responsible for maintaining and preserving traditions and customs from one generation to the next. It is reflected in the Sultanate as a nation's cultural heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation, led by "*Ngarsa Dalem Sampeyan Dalem Ingkang Sinuwun Kanjeng Sultan Hamengku Buwono Senapati Ing Ngalaga Ngabdurrakhman Sayidin Panatagama Kalifatullah*", hereinafter referred to as Sultan Hamengku Buwono.¹⁰

The coronation of the imperial title has a profound and noble philosophical, religious, and socio-historical meaning in the traditional *Pageran* traditions of the Yogyakarta Palace. *Ngarsa Dalem* refers to the one who is made a lord or leader (Dignitary). On the other hand, the word *Sampeyan Dalem* means those whose steps are followed become an example. *Ingkang Sinuwun* means glorified, whose good services are sought. *Kanjeng* is derived from the meaning of a noble or highly respected person.¹¹

Sultan means a king or leader of society and government. The title Hamengku Buwono means "*hamangku, hamengku hamengkoni jagad. Hamangku,*" which means the Sultan prioritizes the interests of others over his own, giving more than asking. *Hamengku* means embracing all parties, including those who dislike him, and being virtuous. "*Hamengkoni, ngemong,*" meaning "Suh" (unifying) all the people. *Gung binathara, ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani.* The title *Senapati Ing Ngalaga* means that the

⁷ Rahmi Agnes Tania and Iwan Satriawan, "Discriminatory Policy of Land Ownership of the Chinese in the Special Region of Yogyakarta in Constitutional and Local Regulation Perspective," *E3S Web of Conferences* 316 (2021): 04019, <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202131604019>.

⁸ King Faisal Sulaiman et al., "A Comparison of Decentralization Policy in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Petita: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum Dan Syariah* 10, no. 1 (2025): 297-321, <https://doi.org/10.22373/petita.v10i1.677>.

⁹ Anom Wahyu Asmorajati, Suyadi Suyadi, and King Faisal Sulaiman, "Asymmetric Decentralization in A Unitary State: The Legitimization of The Sultan's Daughter as The Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Hukum Novelty* 13, no. 2 (2022): 2, <https://doi.org/10.26555/novelty.v13i2.a24079>.

¹⁰ Jamaluddin Mahasari, "Agrarian Legal Politics of the Special Region of Yogyakarta in the Indonesian Legal System: A Study on Law No 13 of 2012," *Journal of Law, Politics and Humanities* 5, no. 4 (2025): 2733-45, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jlph.v5i4.1603>.

¹¹ Theresia Octastefani, "The Dynamics of Women and Political Heritage in Yogyakarta: A Critical Reflection in Welcoming the Next Leader," *MUIWAZAH* 10, no. 2 (2018): 116, <https://doi.org/10.28918/muwazah.v10i2.1783>.

Sultan is outwardly a warlord. Inwardly, the Sultan is also a commander for every human being, defeating the enemies within themselves. The title Abdurrahman means that every Sultan/King and human being must realize that he is a servant of Allah SWT and must spread kindness and compassion to everyone.¹²

The title *Sayidin Panatagama* means that every Sultan/King and human being is a role model and bearer of Islamic religious values and must be a just and wise leader. Furthermore, the title *Kalifatullah* means that a Sultan or a King reflects the leader or ruler chosen by the people who received Divine Nur or a mandate from Allah SWT, the Almighty, to rule as a representative of God on earth.¹³ There are 3 (three) philosophical-historical meanings contained in Article 1 paragraph (4): First, there is a special privilege granted by the state, in the form of institutionalizing the roles and responsibilities of the Sultan and the Sultanate to continue to preserve and develop the cultural order of the Sultanate (*Paugaran Adat*) as the nation's cultural heritage for generations, and under the principles and objectives of granting DIY special status, such as the provisions of Article 4 and Article 5 of the Yogyakarta Special Law.¹⁴ Second, the position and title of Sultan reflect the strong influence of Islamic teachings/Islamic cultural values that have been accepted as part of the cultural entity of the Yogyakarta Sultanate/Palace. Third, the granting of the title of Sultan has been hereditary since the First Sultan, the founder of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom/Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate, Sultan Hamengku Buwono I (also known as Prince Mangkubumi), and cannot be changed or replaced by any subsequent heir to the Throne. Fourth, the value system in the Yogyakarta Sultanate/Palace is closely related to culture and leadership in Islamic teachings. Sultan Hamengku Buwono is a king who reflects himself as a community, government, and religious leader.¹⁵

The role of leadership as part of the power mechanism is determined not only by legal regulations but also by the cultural values of a particular place. A society's legal system consists not only of substantive and procedural Law, but also of how the community's legal culture can act as a driving or inhibiting factor in law enforcement. The title held by Sultan Hamengku Buwono has been hereditary, dating back to Sultan Hamengku Buwono I, also known as Prince Mangkubumi. Prince Mangkubumi's official title is *Ngarsa Dalem Sampeyan Dalem Inggang Sinuwun Kanjeng Sultan Hamengku Buwono Senapati Ing Ngalaga Kalifatullah Ngabdurrakhman Sayidin Panatagama Inggang Jumeneng Ing Negari Yogyakarta Hadiningrat Inggang Jumeneng Sepisan*. This title highlights the Sultan's role as a symbol of charismatic leadership, possessing the ability to mediate between two forces and powers, as reflected in his intermediary status and role.¹⁶ The Sultan's status in the Islamic concept of power is that of *Khalifatul fil Ardhi Sayidin Panotogomo* (God's Representative on Earth), who is the guardian of the continuity of religion and symbolizes charismatic Islamic leadership. Normatively, the Sultan must maintain his transcendental function because he is the

¹² Anwar Hidayat, "Women's Rights to Become Leaders of the Yogyakarta Sultanate Perspective of a Modern Democratic State," *Peradaban Journal of Law and Society* 1, no. 2 (2022): 2, <https://doi.org/10.59001/pjls.v1i2.43>.

¹³ Saiful Arifin and Moh Zaki Kahar, "Indigenous Islam and Politics: The Authenticity of Islamic Government of Yogyakarta Palace," *Multidiscipline International Conference* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1.

¹⁴ Ariyanti Luhur Tri Setyarini, Benedictus Hestu Cipto Handoyo, and Vicki Dwi Purnomo, "Legal Politics Legislative Law Number 13 of 2012 Concerning Privileges of the Special Region of Yogyakarta," *International Journal of Scientific Multidisciplinary Research* 1, no. 5 (June 2023): 445-58, <https://doi.org/10.55927/ijsmr.v1i5.4591>.

¹⁵ Imam Muhsin et al., "The Development of Maritime Culture in the Islamic Mataram Kingdom: Social, Economic, and Political Dynamics During the Time of Sultan Agung (1613 - 1645 AD)," *Diakronika* 25, no. 1 (2025): 1, <https://doi.org/10.24036/diakronika/vol25-iss1/467>.

¹⁶ Ria Yuliaty, "Investigating Language Varieties Used by Abdi Dalem at the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Palace: A Sociolinguistic Study," *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences (PJLSS)* 22, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.57239/pjlss-2024-22.2.001447>.

"representative of God," and can also play a worldly, "profane" role in realizing a prosperous society socially and economically.¹⁷

B. *Paugeran Adat*: Internal Constitution of the Yogyakarta Monarchy

The Giyanti Agreement is the *Paugeran Adat* (Customary Law) that serves as the "constitution of the Yogyakarta monarchy, as well as the "proclamation text" of the establishment and recognition of the sovereignty of the Islamic Mataram kingdom by the Dutch East Indies government or VOC. It continued to exist until the Yogyakarta monarchy declared its full support for Indonesian independence and joined the government of the Republic of Indonesia through the "Edict of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX" and Pakubuwono III on September 5, 1945." As a constitution, the legitimacy of the *Paugeran Adat* is strong and cannot be challenged by the heirs to the Yogyakarta monarchy from one generation to the next.¹⁸

Customary Law comprises some fundamental values of the Yogyakarta Sultanate's way of life, both written and unwritten. One such text is in the form of "*Serat*" (written texts) that demonstrate the interaction between the leadership traditions of the Yogyakarta Sultanate and Islamic teachings, including: *Serat Cebolek*, *Serat Warna-Warni*, and *Serat Tajussalatin*. The teachings in *Serat Cibolek* were written in 1850 AD and tell the story of a cleric named Haji Ahmad Mutamangkir from Cibolek Village, Tuban, who lived during the reign of Sunan Amangkurat IV (1719-1726 AD) and his son, Paku Buwana II (1726 AD). The *Serat Cebolek* manuscript is stored in the Yogyakarta Palace with codes W.292 and C.15.¹⁹ The function and position of the *Paugeran Adat* for the Yogyakarta monarchy itself can be mapped as follows: 1) The ideology/primary basis for the establishment of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom/Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate since the Giyanti Agreement on February 13, 1755; 2) The main philosophy (Philosophy of *Grondslahcht*) of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate since the Giyanti Agreement on February 13, 1755; 3) The way of life or the central guiding principles/values in government within the Islamic Mataram Kingdom/Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate; and 4) The source of all legal sources for the Islamic Mataram Kingdom/Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate since the Giyanti Agreement.

Pancasila ideology has the same function and position as the *Paugeran Adat* in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia's government system. By using the Pyramid of Values Theory, *Paugeran Adat* is the Peak of the Highest Value Pyramid, which is in the Abstract area; full of philosophical meaning; and spiritual values of Islamic/transcendental teachings that are acculturated with the authentic Mataram/Javanese culture and institutionalized in the governance of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate.²⁰

C. The Restriction of Women as Successors to the Crown

Paugeran Adat rules prohibited a woman from being crowned Crown Prince. Islamic governance within the Yogyakarta Sultanate has existed for hundreds of years, extending

¹⁷ Anjar Nugroho, "Indigenous Islam and Politics: The Authenticity of Islamic Government of Yogyakarta Palace," *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews* 7, no. 4 (2019): 1372-77, <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2019.74191>.

¹⁸ Nur Aini Setiawati, "Land Regulations in the Yogyakarta Sultanate Rijksblad In the Second Decade of the 20th Century," *Paramita: Historical Studies Journal* 31, no. 1 (2021): 83-92, <https://doi.org/10.15294/paramita.v31i1.27500>.

¹⁹ Surjanti Surjanti et al., "Customary Law In Indonesia: A Legacy for a Sustainable Future," *Journal Evidence Of Law* 4, no. 1 (2025): 310-15, <https://doi.org/10.59066/jel.v4i1.1173>.

²⁰ Palmawati Taher, "Pancasila as the Basis of the State Unity of the Republic of Indonesia," *Pancasila and Law Review* 2, no. 2 (2021): 2, <https://doi.org/10.25041/plr.v2i2.2449>.

beyond the formation of the Indonesian state, from the Giyanti Agreement of 1755 to the present day. It can be traced back to the guidelines written in the book "*Serat Warna-Warni*," dated April 7, 1847, during the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwono V, under the Yogyakarta monarchy. *Serat Warna-Warni* teachings are based on the Quran, Ijma', and Qiyas, Islamic teachings, and provide advice for kings and officials in exercising power. The book "*Serat Warna Warni*" mentions 10 (ten) requirements for becoming a King or Sultan in the Islamic Mataram kingdom: 1) Reaching puberty so that one can distinguish between good and evil; 2) Alim, meaning knowledgeable; 3) Able to read and write, and know stories that can serve as role models; 4) Able to choose courtiers who are virtuous and articulate; 5) Civilized and handsome so that people will love them; 6) Generous or not stingy; always doing good and constantly reminding others to do good; 7) Courageous in war; 8) Eating and sleeping sufficiently; 9) Not talking too much, and 10) Male, because the King is primarily a man, not a woman.

The prohibition of the "*Serat Warna Warni*" teachings on the consecration or enthronement of a "woman" as King/Leader is based more on the spirit of implementing Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) or Islamic Law than on Javanese tradition or culture. Philosophically, as a King or Sultan, he must lead Friday prayers as an Imam and deliver the Friday sermon.²¹ The title Sultan in Islamic power refers to *Khalifatul Filaadhi Sayidin Panotogomo*, or "God's representative on earth," whose function is to maintain the continuity of Islamic teachings and serve as a symbol of charismatic leadership in Islam. Philosophically, the figure of a Sultan in the Islamic Mataram kingdom must maintain his divine function by embracing, obeying, and submitting to the complete transcendental values of Islamic Law.²² *The Serat Tajussalatin* book, which means "Crown of All Kings," is a translation of a Malay book commissioned by Sultan Hamengku Buwono V from September 9, 1851, to April 10, 1852, following the Diponegoro War. Bukhari al-Jauharu wrote the *Tajussalatin* book at the Palace of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam in 1012 Hijriah or 1603 AD.²³

The Sultan is often referred to as "God's Representative" or *Khalifat al-Ardh*. Therefore, a Sultan of the Islamic Mataram kingdom must be a good role model or example for his people. The values of *Paugeran Adat*, Sartika Intaning Pradhani, and Alam Surya Anggara must be implemented in everyday life. The Sultan is required to play a worldly role, "profane" in order to realize a prosperous society socially and economically.²⁴ This reluctance of the Yogyakarta Special Region Sultanate's legal culture to accept women as kings is based more on the spirit of implementing Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) than on Javanese tradition itself, as the King is obligated to lead Friday prayers as imam and deliver the Friday sermon. If the King were a woman, she could not serve as imam and preacher; therefore, the need for *pisowanan* (public gatherings) or meetings could not be fulfilled by a female king, as she could only reveal her face and palms.²⁵

²¹ Abur Hamdi Usman and Azwar Iskandar, "Analysis of Friday Sermon Duration: Intellectual Reflection of Classical and Contemporary Islamic Scholars," *Journal of Religious & Theological Information* 21, nos. 1-2 (2022): 68-81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10477845.2021.1928349>.

²² Hidayat, "Women's Rights to Become Leaders of the Yogyakarta Sultanate Perspective of a Modern Democratic State."

²³ Khairul Azman Suhaimy et al., "The Concept of Leadership and Constitution from The Islamic and Malay Archipelago Perspectives According to Taj Al-Salatin Manuscript," *International Journal of Engineering & Technology* 7, no. 4.9 (October 2018): 158-62, <https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i4.9.20642>.

²⁴ Ahmad Arrozy et al., "The Cosmology of Menoreh Customary Tradition in Indigenous People's Perspective," *Sodality: Journal of Sosiologi Pedesaan* 11, no. 3 (2023): 3, <https://doi.org/10.22500/11202344083>.

²⁵ Angger Budiadji, Hari Purwadi, and Widodo Tresno Novianto, "The Kasultanan and Kadipaten Land (SG/PAG) After the YSL Enactment: Strengthening of the Patrimonial Culture and Counter Agrarian Reform," *Journal of Social Research* 2, no. 9 (2023): 3169-82, <https://doi.org/10.55324/josr.v2i9.1375>.

D. The Prospect of the Crown Princess Becoming Governor

The constitutional violation of the 2012 Special Region Law also contravened the spirit of Article 18B, Paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. In local government or the Yogyakarta monarchy, this Article implies the mandate of "Recognition and Respect of the State for the' Islamic Mataram Kingdom or the Ngayogyakarta Sultanate Hadiningrat" as a Special Region/Private Area along with Pugeran Adat as the Customary Constitution of the Yogyakarta Monarchy.²⁶

The authority of the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Special Region) as Head of an Autonomous Region (Representative of the Central Government) has its special characteristics. It cannot be equated with the authority of Governors in other regions. Article 7, Paragraph (1) of the quo Law emphasizes that the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Sultan Hamengku Buwono I) has two models of autonomous regional authority. First, the Governor's authority in the affairs of the DIY Regional Government requires compliance with the regime of the Regional Government Law. Second, the Governor's authority in carrying out Special Affairs.²⁷ The model for filling the positions of Governor and Deputy Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta is one of the special authorities as referred to in Article 7, Paragraph (2): 1) Procedures for filling the positions, duties, and authority of the Governor and Deputy Governor; 2) Institutions of the DIY Regional Government; 3) Culture; 4) Land; and 5) Spatial planning.²⁸

Consequently, the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, ex officio acting as the reigning Sultan, in exercising the five special powers mentioned above, including the procedures for filling the office, position, duties, and authority of the Governor and Deputy Governor, must not ignore or deviate from the *Pugeran Adat* (Customary Rules) as the Constitution rules of the Yogyakarta monarchy and must side with the public interest/community.²⁹

GKR Pembayun, as Crown Princess, has the potential to become Heir to the Throne, precluding the opportunity for Hamengku Buwono X's brother to become Sultan of Yogyakarta. Strictly speaking, King HB X's decree certainly opened a constitutional controversy because it allows a woman to become Sultan of Yogyakarta and, therefore, Governor of Yogyakarta in the future. It drew protests from some of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX's sons or heirs. This action became controversial because it was deemed to violate the *Pugeran Adat* of the Yogyakarta Palace. As explained, *Pugeran Adat* law prohibits a woman from becoming Sultan or Heir to the Throne of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom. The Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate has been in power since the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwono I.³⁰

²⁶ Ni Putu Rai Yuliantini, Dewa Gede Sudika Mangku, and Ni Ketut Sari Adnyani, "Recognition of Society Rights in Tradition, Especially in Tourism Regulation Based on Article 18b Paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia," *Journal Equity of Law and Governance* 1, no. 1 (2021): 25–36, <https://doi.org/10.55637/elg.1.1.3242.25-36>.

²⁷ Hariyanto et al., "The Communal Democracy of Yogyakarta Special Region's Government on the Islamic Law Eclecticism Perspective," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 18, no. 1 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v18i1.7403>.

²⁸ Kelik Endro Suryono and Vicki Dwi Purnomo, "Juridical Review of the Mechanism of Election of Heads of Area in Area Special Yogyakarta (Perspective Democracy and Historical)," *Formosa Journal of Social Sciences (FJSS)* 2, no. 2 (2023): 185–200, <https://doi.org/10.55927/fjss.v2i2.4573>.

²⁹ Ratih Listyana Chandra, "Local Governments' Head Election in Indonesia: A Proposal for an Asymmetric Model," *Jurnal Kajian Pembaruan Hukum* 3, no. 1 (2023): 27, <https://doi.org/10.19184/jkph.v3i1.31190>.

³⁰ Sigit Surahman et al., "Sabda and Dawuh Sri Sultan HBX about Crown Princess Max Weber's Studies Power, Authority, Legitimacy," *International Journal of Social Science* 3, no. 2 (2023): 2, <https://doi.org/10.53625/ijss.v3i2.6298>.

E. The Controversy between the King's Decree and the Constitutional Court's Decision

The King's decree, which removed the title *Ing Ngalaga Abdurrahman Sayidin Panatagama Khalifatullah*, not only addressed the question of whether female leaders would be possible in the future within the Yogyakarta monarchy, but also eliminated the Sultan's role and function as the religious leader, which was the basis for his election to lead the Yogyakarta monarchy. It also eliminated the Islamic value system and customs that were organically linked to the culture of the Yogyakarta Special Region Sultanate.³¹ The appointment of Sultan Hamengku Buwono X's eldest daughter as Crown Princess through a royal decree in 2015 generated considerable constitutional and customary debate within the Yogyakarta Sultanate. Critics argued that the decision departed from the Paugeran Adat, the palace convention that has historically guided governance and succession practices in the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate since its establishment in 1755. Traditionally, succession within the Sultanate has followed a patrilineal pattern in which male descendants were regarded as the primary candidates for the throne. Furthermore, matters concerning succession have conventionally involved deliberations among members of the *Sentono Dalem*, a body composed of the descendants of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX that plays an important role in preserving palace traditions and providing input on issues affecting the Sultanate. Several members of the royal family subsequently expressed opposition to the appointment, arguing that it departed from established succession customs and longstanding palace conventions.³²

Sentono Dalem is the highest mandate holder in the customary deliberation agreement of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate based on kinship/lineage/descent relationships that adhere to the Paugeran Adat. *Sentono Dalem* has absolute authority: 1) Elect and appoint the Crown Prince/Heir to the Sultanate Throne. Typically, if the Sultan has no son, the Sultan's younger brother/sibling has the right to succeed him based on the patrilineal kinship of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX; 2) Revoke the Sultan's mandate and/or title and dismiss the Sultan if he violates the Customary Laws; 3) Maintain, safeguard, and preserve the values of the Customary Laws as the noble *cultural heritage of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate, ensuring their continuity* from generation to generation.³³ As is known, the Sabda Raja issued by Sultan Hamengku Buwono X (HB X) on April 30, 2015, effectively changed the name and title of the Sultan. Initially, the title was "Ngarso Dalem Sampeyan Dalem Inkgang Sinuwun Kangjeng Sultan Hamengku Buwono Senopati Ing Ngalogo Ngabdurrahman Sayidin Panotogomo Khalifatullah Inkgang Jumeneng Kaping X Ing Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat". This title was then amended to "Ngarso Dalem Sampeyan Dalem Inkgang Sinuhun Sri Sultan Hamengku Bawono Inkgang Jumeneng Kasepuluh Suryaning Mataram Senopati Ing Ngalogo, Langgeng Bawono Langgeng, Langgeng Ing Toto Panotogomo".³⁴

Sultan HB X issued another decree. On May 5, 2015, the Sultan proclaimed the *Dhawuh Raja*, which appointed G.K.R. Pembayun as the Crown Princess. As a marker of her

³¹ Nada Ismita Hawa et al., "Improvement of Environmental, Social, and Cultural Attributes in the Slum Settlements on the Riverbanks of Yogyakarta City under the Sultan's Rule," *Sustainability* 15, no. 11 (2023): 11, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15118974>.

³² Purnawan Basundoro and Linggar Rama Dian Putra, "Contesting Urban Space between the Dutch and the Sultanate of Yogyakarta in Nineteenth-Century Indonesia," *Canadian Journal of History* 54, nos. 1-2 (2019): 46-83, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjh.ach.2018-0044>.

³³ Hery Prisantono et al., "Spatial Planning of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Location and the Spatial Meanings of the Keputren Kedaton Plered- the Palace of the Princesses," *ISVS E-Journal* 11, no. 10 (2024): 23-41, <https://doi.org/10.61275/isvsej-2024-11-10-02>.

³⁴ Kharisma Nasionalita and Catur Nugroho, "Media Agenda on Yogyakarta Sultanate Succession," *Kajian Jurnalisme* 4, no. 1 (2020): 61-74, <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkj.v4i1.24071>.

appointment, G.K.R. Pembayun received a new title—Gusti Kanjeng Ratu Mangkubumi Hamemayu Hayuning Bawono Langgeng Ing Mataram. The *Dhawuh Raja* or *Sabda Raja* quickly sparked internal political turmoil within the royal Court. G.B.P.H. Yudhaningrat, who had previously maintained calm during the Sabdatama, suddenly opposed the decrees. Similarly, Sultan HB X's younger siblings, such as G.B.P.H. Prabukusumo and K.G.P.H. Hadiwinoto, criticized the Sultan's decrees, arguing that they violated the *paugeran* (traditional rules) of the Yogyakarta Palace. The issuance of Sabda Raja and Dawuh Raja by Sultan Hamengku Buwono X was based on the Sultan's traditional prerogative authority as the ruler of the Kasultanan Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat. These decrees were justified as part of the Sultan's power to regulate internal palace affairs, including matters of succession, royal titles, and palace governance under the *paugeran* (customary palace conventions). However, their issuance generated considerable legal and political debate because they were not grounded in formal Indonesian legislation and were treated by the state as internal palace affairs.

The validity of these decrees is limited by Law Number 13 of 2012 on the Special Status of Yogyakarta. While the law recognizes the Sultanate as a special institution, royal decrees do not possess the authority to amend or override statutory provisions. Consequently, any provision contained in Sabda Raja or Dawuh Raja that conflicts with national law lacks formal legal effect.³⁵ Sultan HB X's decree on May 5, 2015, which changed the name and title of GKR Pembayun (the eldest daughter of Governor/Sultan HB X) to GKR Mangkubumi, still poses constitutional problems. It is strongly suspected that the decree was taken as a preparation for the succession of the Crown Princess of the Yogyakarta Sultanate, Sultan HB X, who is currently also serving as Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Sultan HB X's decree on May 5, 2015, which changed the name and title of GKR Pembayun (the eldest daughter of Governor/Sultan HB X) to GKR Mangkubumi, still poses constitutional problems. It is strongly suspected that the decree was taken as a preparation for the succession of the Crown Princess of the Yogyakarta Sultanate, Sultan HB X, who is currently also serving as Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The conferment of the title GKR Mangkubumi upon the eldest daughter of Sultan Hamengku Buwono X carries implications that extend beyond the internal succession of the Yogyakarta Sultanate, as it also intersects with the constitutional structure of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). Within the royal institution, the title is widely regarded as a symbol of succession and places GKR Mangkubumi in a strategic position as a potential heir to the throne. However, her position acquires broader constitutional significance because Article 26 and Article 18 Law Number 13 of 2012 on the Special Status of Yogyakarta provides that the Governor of DIY shall be the reigning Sultan. Consequently, the issue of royal succession is not merely a matter of customary law but is directly connected to the continuity of regional executive leadership. In this context, GKR Mangkubumi occupies a unique position as both a prospective successor within the Sultanate and a figure who may potentially assume the governorship should she ultimately ascend the throne³⁶

Sultan HB X had to overcome two major obstacles within the palace before crowning his daughter as crown princess. First, Sultan HB X had to retire the "Ki Ageng Kopek" and "Joko

³⁵ Iwan Satriawan and Faishal Aji Prakosa, "Institutional Disputes Settlement Mechanism of Succession in Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate," *Petita: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum Dan Syariah* 5, no. 1 (2020): 70–82, <https://doi.org/10.22373/petita.v5i1.94>.

³⁶ Fachri Aidulsyah and Hakimul Ikhwan, "The Rise and Fall of Sultanate Authorities in Post-Colonial Indonesia," *Suvannabhumi* 15, no. 1 (2023): 61–89, <https://doi.org/10.22801/svn.2023.15.1.61>.

Piturun" keris. In the Javanese concept of power, the keris is not merely a weapon of the King, but a concrete manifestation of power itself. It also represents a personal identity (*ageman*) for men and is certainly not intended for women. Second, the issue of eliminating the title "*Khalifatullah*" (Khalifah) is not without significance. This title signifies the King's responsibility before Allah SWT during his earthly reign. Furthermore, this title embodies the identity of a king who is deeply rooted in Islam. Therefore, according to Islamic leadership, a leader or King is a man.³⁷ The King's decree, which abolished the title of *Khalifatullah*, was a norm intended to erase the symbol of Islamic values deeply embedded in the Sultanate of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. *Paugeran Adat* has the same status as Pancasila ideology. Without *Paugeran Adat*, as the state foundation, there would be no Yogyakarta Monarchy.³⁸

The Constitutional Court's decision number 88/2016, which essentially allows the position of the Heir to the Sultan Hamengku Buwono throne to be held by a woman, must be declared unconstitutional because it has deviated from/violated the "Customary Law" of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate. The legal considerations used by the Court are still rooted in the liberal perspective of Human Rights. Based on Gender in the Western-Liberal Perspective, which does not reflect the values of Pancasila ideology and contradicts the "Customary Law" as the Constitution that underlies the long history of the succession/replacement of Sultans by the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate from the time of Sultan Hamengku Buwono I to the current Sultan Hamengku Buwono X.³⁹

F. Customary Law (*Paugeran Adat*) as a Model Rule for Filling the Position of Governor

Paugeran Adat serves as a fundamental rule/foundation (*staat fundamentalnorm*), which arises and is maintained in the practice of the governance system of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom/ Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate to this day. The prevailing customary institutions, summarized in the *Paugeran Adat*, serve not only as the Main Constitution of the Yogyakarta Palace but also as the Official Document of the Declaration of Independence/Preamble to the Constitution for the "Establishment of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom/ Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate," which was confirmed through the Giyanti Agreement of 1755.⁴⁰ The importance of the *Paugeran Adat* as the Constitution for leadership succession within the Sultanate was reaffirmed during the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, beginning in 1932. The *Paugeran Adat* are the internal laws of the palace that must be obeyed and adhered to by all heirs to the Sultanate's Throne. They reflect the customary Law, culture, and customs within the Yogyakarta palace. They constitute the Yogyakarta Palace's constitutional values and are permanent. In other words, the *Paconstitutest* constitute the practice of constitutional conservancies and serve as the primary source of Law within the Sultanate's governance and must be upheld by every heir to the Throne (*Dawuh Dalem Angka 01/DD/HBIX/EHE-1932*).⁴¹ The requirements for Governor and

³⁷ Norashikin Salleh, "Reflections on the Contributions of the Palace, the Sultanate Palace and the Kings of the Archipelago," paper presented at 9th Asbam International Conference (Archeology, History, & Culture Like Malay) (ASBAM 2021), Makassar, Indonesia, *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, Atlantis Press, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220408.068>.

³⁸ Asmorojati, Suyadi, and Sulaiman, "Asymmetric Decentralization in A Unitary State."

³⁹ Tonye Clinton Jaja and Zaka Firma Aditya, "Promoting Good Governance by Advancing the Role of Parliamentarians and the Term Offices Limitation (Comparing Nigeria and Indonesia)," *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 7, no. 1 (2022): 1, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jils.v7i1.54776>.

⁴⁰ Sukiyat Sukiyat and Abdul Munip, "Integrating Mataraman Culture into Islamic Manner Education in MI Ma'arif Plampang Kulonprogo Special Province of Yogyakarta," *Sunan Kalijaga International Journal on Islamic Educational Research* 2, no. 2 (2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.14421/skijier.2018.2018.22.04>.

⁴¹ Febriansyah Ramadhan and Luthfi Marfungah, "Singgasana Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat dalam Dialektika Universalisme Vs. Partikularisme HAM," *Jurnal Hukum Lex Generalis* 1, no. 5 (2020): 5, <https://doi.org/10.56370/jhlg.v1i5.209>.

Deputy Governor Candidates, as stipulated in Article 18, paragraph (1), letter c, are: to be enthroned as Sultan Hamengku Buwono for Governor candidates and to be enthroned as Adipati Paku Alam for Deputy Governor candidates. The normative clause of the requirements of Article 18 paragraph (1) letter c above indicates that, although holding political positions, the Governor and Deputy Governor Candidates constitute a single entity, holistically united in meaning, with the meaning of the Sultanate entity led by Sultan Hamengku Buwono, Heir to the Throne.⁴²

In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, the spirit contained in the provisions of Article 18B Paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, implies the mandate of "State Recognition and Respect for the Islamic Mataram Kingdom/ Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate" as a Special/Private Region along with the Customary Law as the Constitution of the Yogyakarta Palace which is based on Islamic teachings, namely the Quran/Hadith/Sunnah, while still not forgetting the value of local wisdom or customs as the primary source of values contained in the palace constitution, called the Customary Law.⁴³ The Customary Law Constitution should be the primary source of reference for values that guide all formulation/drafting/decision-making related to policies and/or the formation of legal norms, including in the creation of the King's Word and the King's *Dawuh*, which must not violate the central values in the Customary Law Constitution.⁴⁴

The exercise of authority in a specific region is grounded in local wisdom and a commitment to the people. Consequently, the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (the Sultan on the Throne) in exercising the five special powers mentioned above, including the procedures for filling the positions, positions, duties, and authorities of the Governor and Deputy Governor, must not ignore or deviate from the *Paugeran Adat* as the Constitution/fundamental principle of the *Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* Sultanate, and must side with the public or community interest.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

The monarchical system of the Yogyakarta Sultanate represents a distinctive variant of asymmetric decentralization in Indonesia, particularly in the mechanism for filling the Governor position, where the reigning Sultan automatically assumes the office without undergoing a general election. The primary contribution of this research lies in its critical examination of the constitutional tension between the Sultan's political decree (Sabda Raja HB X) appointing a Crown Princess and the *Paugeran Adat*—the internal customary constitution of the Yogyakarta Palace—which traditionally prohibits female succession to the throne. This study demonstrates that while the state recognizes Yogyakarta's special status and respects customary law communities under Article 18B of the 1945 Constitution, the unilateral issuance of the Sabda Raja risks engendering an ahistorical-sociological interpretation of the monarchy's customary laws, potentially undermining the very foundations of Yogyakarta's special status. This research recommends a revision to the

⁴² Wisnu Nugraha, "Legal Protection of Candidate Head of Regions in the General Election Process Based on Supreme Court Decision Number 1 P/PAP/2021," *Journal of Social Research* 2, no. 9 (2023): 3275–90, <https://doi.org/10.55324/josr.v2i9.1389>.

⁴³ Triwahyuningsih Triwahyuningsih, "The Legal History Analysis of Filling the Position of Asymmetric Regional Head in the Special Region of Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Daulat Hukum* 5, no. 3 (2022): 3, <https://doi.org/10.30659/jdh.v5i3.24289>.

⁴⁴ Herman Hidayat et al., "Forests, Law and Customary Rights in Indonesia: Implications of a Decision of the Indonesian Constitutional Court in 2012," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 59, no. 3 (2018): 293–308, doi: 10.1111/apv.12207.

⁴⁵ Yenny Febrianty, Joko Sriwidodo, and Priyaldi Priyaldi, "Establishing Regional Regulations for the Protection of Local Wisdom," *Fiat Justitia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 17, no. 3 (2023): 3, <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustitia.v17no3.2708>.

Yogyakarta Special Autonomy Law (Law Number 13/2012) by incorporating a provision that explicitly harmonizes the legal framework for gubernatorial succession with the Paugeran Adat. Specifically, the revision should: (1) affirm the Paugeran Adat as the primary constitutional reference for determining succession to the Sultanate throne, thereby ensuring that any appointment of a Crown Princess or Governor candidate adheres to the customary norms that have governed the monarchy since the Giyanti Agreement of 1755; (2) establish a formal consultative mechanism involving the Sentono Dalem (the highest customary deliberation forum) in any decision regarding succession or alteration of palace titles and traditions; and (3) require that any future amendments to the procedures for filling the Governor position must receive prior approval from the Sentono Dalem to ensure cultural and constitutional legitimacy. Such revisions would prevent unilateral political decrees from overriding customary constitutional values while simultaneously accommodating democratic principles within Yogyakarta's unique asymmetric decentralization framework. Without these amendments, the Sabda Raja could be construed as effectively revoking or diminishing Yogyakarta's special status, as it contravenes the customary legal order that forms the historical and sociological basis for the region's exceptional recognition within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The author(s) declares that research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationship that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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