

## Yogyakarta in Decentralized Indonesia: Integrating Traditional Institution in Democratic Transitions

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### *Abstract*

*Artikel ini membahas tentang kompleksitas desentralisasi di Indonesia. Sebagai sebuah daerah istimewa, proses integrasi Provinsi Yogyakarta dalam sistem pemerintahan daerah tidak pernah tuntas. Kuatnya pengaruh dua kerajaan sebagai manifestasi institusi tradisional dalam struktur pemerintahan provinsi yang berlangsung sejak republik ini berdiri menjadi beban sejarah tak berkesudahan. Terdapat tiga fokus kajian yang penting untuk mendudukan Yogyakarta dalam politik lokal di Indonesia yaitu sejarah Yogyakarta dalam kondisi awal kemerdekaan Indonesia, posisi Sultan dan Pakualam dalam intitusi politik modern dan pengaturan aset-aset keraton.*

### **Keywords:**

*Yogyakarta; decentralization; traditional institution.*

### **Introduction**

For the first time in Indonesian history, the President of Indonesia both as the chief of state and the head of the government, Susilo Bambang

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Yudhoyono (SBY) issued a presidential decree to extend the position of Governor of Yogyakarta Special Region Province (Yogyakarta) on October 2008. Six month before, Yogyakarta's Governor, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X (Sultan HB X) declared that he won't continue his governor position any longer. These two important events marked the peak of inharmonic relations between Jakarta and Yogyakarta and an expression of the 'king's frustration regarding the status of Yogyakarta in post-Soeharto, decentralized Indonesia.

Compared to two other special provinces during the Soeharto period, Jakarta special province and Aceh special province, Yogyakarta is the only province which not attracts Jakarta's attention after decentralization policy has taken its effective form since 2001. Jakarta received its special status as a result of its political position as the capital of Indonesia. The special province of Aceh, after a long and exhausted peace process between GAM and the Government of Indonesia, received its special arrangement in 2001. In spite of issuing special autonomy law for Yogyakarta which has received its special status since 1950 (Law 3/1950), Jakarta has been focusing on Papua. Being neglected, HB X is alarming Jakarta regarding not only the status of Yogyakarta but more importantly his own position as a governor. Without a new regulation, he cannot compete for the next governor election because he already held the position two terms.

The emergence of special region is not new throughout the Indonesia history and a part of the Dutch colonial heritage. During the existence of Mataram, the king gave special status to both *daerah perdikan* (special land) and *mancanegara* (outside land). *Daerah perdikan* was a tax free area, commonly as a result of the loyalty to the king, while the *mancanegara* leaders was directly chosen from Kraton's nobility members and have to come to the Kraton to pay tax three times each year at the *Grebeg* Festivals (Suwarno, 1989: 26).

During this period, the Dutch applied two models for local government. The first is an ordinary region, directly under the Dutch administration which regulated through *Wethoudende Decentralisatie van het Bestuur in Nederlandch Indien* ( *Decentralisatie wet*) in 1903 (Riwukaho, 1982: 25). This regulation allowed local government (*gewest*) to manage their financial matters. Second, the Dutch maintained its relation to the

traditional institutions through the status of *Zelfbesturende Landschappen*/ Special region or *Swapraja* to four *kerajaan*, *Kasunanan Surakarta*, *Kasultanan Yogyakarta*, *Kasultanan Deli* and *Kasultanan Bone* (Riwukaho, 1982: 80). With these territories, the Dutch were making political and economical contract each time the new kings were crowned. The last political contract was made between Sultan HB IX and Governor General Adams just before the Japanese occupied Indonesia (Selosoemardjan, 1962).

Special arrangements for territories are consistently stated in the Indonesian constitutions and regulations since the independence although the structures and the systems of the state have changed dramatically. There are three constitutions in Indonesian history. The 1945 constitution structured Indonesia into a presidential system, a unitary state and two bodies of parliament. The 1949 constitution structured Indonesia into semi presidential system, federal state and two bodies of parliament without a position for vice president. The 1950 constitution structured Indonesia into parliamentary, unitary state and a single parliamentary body (Pringgodigdo, 1966: 11). The Constitution of 1945 applied between August 18, 1945 to December 27, 1949 and July 5, 1959 until today clearly stated the status of *Daerah Istimewa* in article 18. In Indonesia Federalist state constitution (UU RIS) which has been applied during December 27, 1949 to August 17, 1950, in article 64 and 65, stated that none of those special regions (*Daerah Istimewa/Swapraja*) which already effective could be changed or reduced. Moreover, in 1950 constitution, which effective during August 17, 1950 to July 5, 1959, the status of *Swapraja* was acknowledged in article 131-133 (Pringgodigdo, 1966: 50). This constitutional arrangement of special regions is followed by laws of the matter.

In post-Soeharto Indonesia, the demand for special regency status is stronger and often used as political bargaining against Jakarta. The special autonomy for Papua and Aceh are examples. In this situation and debates, the demand for more specific regulation of Yogyakarta as a special province is taking place. This paper is an attempt to discuss the position of Yogyakarta in decentralized Indonesia. I argue that the history of Yogyakarta under Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX (Sultan HB IX), father of Sultan HB X during the period of Indonesian struggle for independence (1945-1949) is the most crucial reasons what kind of *keistimewaan Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta specialty) should be regulated. This paper will be structured

by discussing the history of Yogyakarta in Indonesia divided into: the history of Yogyakarta before 1945, the period of independence revolution (1945-1949), 1950 up to now and the period of post Soeharto Indonesia, especially the demand for *keistimewaan* Yogyakarta.

### **The Dutch: Contracts to Local Rulers**

The history of Yogyakarta is rooted in the history of Mataram state which covered approximately the entire area of Central and East Java in the seventeenth century. To maintain its economic gain from making trades, VOC has been made at least 111 trade agreements with Mataram until 1705 (Selosoemardjan, 1962: 10). The history of the Mataram '*pemekaran*' is important to acknowledge the special status of Yogyakarta and not granted to two other independent states in Surakarta.

Started as an Independent and powerful state, Mataram has been declining from the presences of VOC (*Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie*), a Dutch business company that cleverly use military and especially political forces to maintain its profit from the entire Indonesian archipelago. One of the most important events during its relation to VOC is at the present of Chinese rebellion which made the capital of Mataram moved from Kartasura, which was badly damaged, to Surakarta in 1742. The VOC helped Mataram king, Susuhunan, to suppress the revolt with a reward that Dutch were granted the monopoly in trade and transportation of the kingdom (Selosoemardjan, 1962).

Dissatisfied with Susuhunan decision, one of his nobility members, Raden Mas Said (RM Said), organized a movement to change the ruler. Learning from his previous mistake, Susuhunan publicly promised that anyone who can suppress R.M Said would be given and become a ruler of the Sukowati area. After three year of fight, Prince Mangkubumi, Susuhunan brother, could make RM Said movement to a standstill, although RM Said remained uncaptured. Despite giving Sukowati to his brother, Susuhunan defaulted on his promise to give Sukowati which made Mangkubumi and a group of noblemen secretly leaved the palace to join RM Said revolt against Susuhunan in 1746. Unable to suppress the revolt, Susuhunan asked VOC's support for the second time.

During this civil war, in December 1749, Susuhunan was seriously ill and he took the last fatal action. Under VOC forced, he signed the

declaration nine days before his death in his deathbed, stated that Susuhunan surrendered Mataram to the VOC but with the proviso that only his descendants the right of succession of the throne (Selosoemardjan, 1962).

Prince Mangkubumi signed a peace treaty with VOC on February 1755 with a concession of the half of Mataram which then named Kasultanan Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat (Kasultanan) with the royal name of Hamengkubowono. Another half, Surakarta then divided between Pakubuwono II (Susuhunan's son which thrones by VOC) and Mangkunegaran for RM Said who's ended his rebellion in 1757. During Raffles's period in 1813, a small part of Yogyakarta was given to Prince Natakusumo, son of Sultan Hamengkubowono I and the brother of Sultan Hamengkubuwono II named as Pakualaman with Prince Natakusuma with a royal name Pakualam (Ricklef, 1974).

The Dutch maintain its relation to the kings of the splitting Mataram, by establishing political and contracts, which renewed each time the new throne was ascend. However, this political contracts reduced the role of rulers significantly both military and economically. The kings cannot have their own armed forces and police and authority in mining, monetary, postal service, salt and teak forest were controlled by the Dutch. The kings and the Dutch appointed an administrative person, Patih/*Pepatih Dalem*, which give his service to both masters. By the presence of Patih, the Sultan authorities has been limited to the 'inner Kraton business', while Patih dealt with administration of the people, the outer layer. During this time, the presence of Sultan to the public only limited to three times a year at the *Gerebeg* /offering festivals.

The three and a half years of Japanese occupation has made significant changes in returning the power of Sultan which important in the next coming years. After the death of Patih Dhanoeredjo VII on August 1, 1945, instead of appointing a new Patih, Sultan HB IX asked the Japanese Military Governor to be given Patih's responsibilities on his own. The Japanese Governor, who did not understand the role of Patih and believed that this is the Kraton business, did agree (Anderson, 1972).

It made a dramatic change in Yogyakarta's politics. Although Sultan HB IX has to travel to Patih's office (Kepatihan), a kilometer north of his Palace, he could make a direct contact with the people of Yogyakarta.

His regular visits to Kabupaten (Regencies) in Yogyakarta were highly appreciated by the mass, bolding people's trust and loyalty to their king.

### **Sultan's Survival in the New Republic (1945-1949)**

Since the Indonesian proclamation for independence on August 17th, 1945, the politics of Yogyakarta has dramatically changed. There were the growing confidence of the new educated political elites which suddenly gained popular support on the on hand, and the politics of survival done by traditional elites on the other. Despite his enormous political contribution to the Republic, political movement by Sultan HB IX should also be seen at this point of view, the view of survival.

On August 18th, 1945, the day after the Indonesian independence proclaimed by Soekarno-Hatta in Jakarta and the day 1945 constitution established, both kings in Yogyakarta, Sultan HB IX and Pakualam VIII, sent telegrams to greeting the proclamations. Jakarta took an immediate action by securing four major sources of traditional authority into Republic of Indonesia or *Republik*. On the next day, Soekarno, the man behind proclamation, establish '*piagam penetapan*' (establishing charter) that Sunanate (*Kraton Solo*), Mangkunegaran, Kasultanan (*Kraton Yogyakarta*) and Pakualaman will devote their service to the Republic (Anderson, 1972: 115).

Responding to this action, on September 1st, 1945, both rulers in Surakarta (Susuhunan and Mangkunegoro) proclaimed that their respective territories are part of the *Republik*. Four days later, on September 5th, 1945 both kings in Yogyakarta (Sultan and Pakualam) have made further proclaims on the presence of '*maklumat*' which contains three important issues. First, the territory of Kraton Ngajogjakarta Hadiningrat (Yogyakarta) and Pakualaman are special regions of Indonesia. Second, both traditional rulers hold all the power within their areas. Third, both traditional rulers would made a special arrangement with the General Government of Indonesia and responsible directly to the President of Indonesia (Sujamto, 1988). This declaration was proclaimed after the Central Government established and appointed eight provinces and eight governors on September 2nd, 1945 and Yogyakarta was part of Central Java Province (Suprpto, 1985: 19). This declaration clearly showed the survival that Sultan HB IX took to keep the power in place. A note should

be taken that during the establishment of Indonesian Federal States in 1950, only Yogyakarta was a part of Republic of Indonesia (JIP UGM, 2007).

During this critical period, traditional rulers acknowledged that there was a growing demand for the establishment of democracy principal through elected rulers. The supporters for this demand came from the *Komite Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian National Committee/KNI) leaders, a local executive branch which later turned into legislative assembly and new educated Indonesian political elites. The actions taken by the kings were attempts to maintain their power in the new 'democratic' political situation. In this situation, both kings in Yogyakarta have made successful attempts compared to their relatives in Surakarta because both kings in Yogyakarta, especially Sultan HB IX. Although both location in Yogyakarta and Surakarta were granted special region in 1945, only Yogyakarta persists. The special status of Surakarta was abolished in 1946 as a result of poor Susuhunan leaderships, demand from PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia/ Indonesian Nationalist Party*) Surakarta and the forcing by PNI's troop, *Barisan Banteng* which surrounded the palace for this demand (Kahin, 1952: 186).

In late 1945, Sultan HB IX offered Yogyakarta as a capital of Indonesia after the Dutch failed attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister Soetan Sjahrir. The central government, because of Yogyakarta's stability and its position in the central of Java Island, accepted the invitation. The capital moved to Yogyakarta on January 4th, 1946 for three years. During this period, Sultan HB IX and the people of Yogyakarta made enormous contribution to the new republic. He action to take Patih's responsibilities was proved to be beneficiary for him because he could meet anybody, including ordinary people, without Kraton's traditional procedures that placing Sultan at the higher position and status than ordinary people. The steps taken by Sultan HB IX were as follows.

First, Sultan HB IX and the people of Yogyakarta facilitated the establishment of the capital of Indonesia. Soon after the capital was moving to Yogyakarta, there were flows of people to Yogyakarta which filling the 18 ministries. Selo Soemardjan (1962) described that that there was dramatic social changing in Yogyakarta during this period. Despite material contributions, Sultan HB IX made a significant effort when he

gave the Kota Yogyakarta, the capital, to be managed directly by the central government. Central government in Yogyakarta then appointed a non Javanese regent for Yogyakarta.

Second, the special region of Yogyakarta was a 'pilot project' of the new republic. There is no doubt that the homogeny people of Yogyakarta (Javanese) with a single loyalty to Sultan HB IX and practicing homogeny Javanese culture (Hawkin, 1996), were giving a perfect condition for the pilot project of government's policy (Kahin, 1952: 194). Some of these examples were the successfully establishments of KNI at the district levels (Adikarto (Kota Yogyakarta), Kulonprogo, Bantul, Gunungkidul). Another was the first local election in Indonesian history in 1951, four years before national election in 1955 to elect local legislatures representatives (Suwarno, 1994: 287).

Third, Sultan HB IX and the people of Yogyakarta have been showed an uncompromised position to the Dutch. When the Dutch military forces occupied Yogyakarta, the capital, Sultan HB IX was offered to be the *Wali Negara* which gave him an area of Central Java, Yogyakarta and East Java. He refused and shut himself at the palace (Kahin, 1952: 398). Moreover, uncompromised action showed by Yogyakarta's civil servants that only followed Sultan Hb IX's order.

Fourth, the roles of Sultan HB IX in preparing and managing *Serangan Oemoem 1 Maret* (March 1st, 1949 general attack) in Yogyakarta. For six hours, TNI attacked the Dutch military and controlled the capital. This action, which was masterminded by Sultan HB IX, was very important to show Indonesian military performance at the international level (Chidmad et all 2001). The preparation of this attack can be traced backed to October 26th, 1945 when Sultan issued Maklumat No. 5 about the establishment of *Lasykar Rakjat*/LR (people's army). The purpose of this army was especially 'protecting' Yogyakarta. *Lasykar Rakjat* was organized based on Yogyakarta's bureaucratic structured which under direct command of Sultan and Pakualam (Suwarno, 1994). Anderson argued that LR was tightly link with, indeed formed a completely loyal appendage of the administrative apparatus of the Sultanane (Anderson, 1972: 268). This LR was used to 'protect' Yogyakarta, including its traditional heritage.

### **Special Arrangement for Yogyakarta: 1950 up to now**

Special arrangement for Yogyakarta was granted through Law 3, 1950 about the formation of special region of Yogyakarta (*Pembentukan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*), which has had the same level as a province (article 1). Although this law mentions term 'special region', there was no difference, in terms of power sharing, revenue sharing, resource allocation and so forth, between Yogyakarta and other provinces in Indonesia.

This trend continues up until today. The regulation before Soeharto (Law 32/1956 and Law 18/1965) the position of Yogyakarta has been equal to other provinces (Riwukaho, 1982: 124). During the Soeharto period, through Law 5, 1974 there has been almost no difference among Yogyakarta and other provinces. This condition applied to two other special regions DKI (*Daerah Khusus Ibukota/Capital Special Region*) and DIA (*Daerah Istimewa Aceh/Aceh Special Region*).

The only significant different in Yogyakarta is that the position of Governor and Vice Governor is always held by Sultan and/or Pakualam although Sultan HB IX has another position at the central government. Sultan HB IX was the first minister of War and Internal Security (Kershaw, 2001: 76) and during Syahrir III cabinet (1946-1947), Sultan HB IX has been, not only appointed as one of the ministers, but also kept his position as Governor of Yogyakarta (Suprpto, 1983). The daily politics of Yogyakarta was handled by Pakualam, the vice Governor. This condition continues when Sultan HB IX appointed as a vice president of Soeharto (1973-1978).

The dilemma happened when the Governor of Yogyakarta, Sultan HB IX, died in 1988. Based on Law 5, 1974, the position of governor should be chosen by local legislative (DPRD), but that was not the case. The position of Governor of Yogyakarta was given to Pakualam VIII, the vice Governor for ten years, until Soeharto departed in 1998. In 1998 and 2003, Sultan HB X, the eldest son of Sultan HB IX, easily won the parliamentary local election for the position of Governor.

### **The Demand for *Keistimewaan*: History that matters**

Similar to other provinces in Indonesia which found the momentum of the weak state, the demand for *Keistimewaan* has been stronger since the *reformasi*. The Yogyakarta government, DPRD Yogyakarta and

especially Sultan and Pakualam, have demanded a special arrangement for Yogyakarta regarding its status through creating a bill of *Keistimewaan* Yogyakarta. The first bill was finished in 2001 drafted by Prof. Afan Gaffar and his colleagues at the Department of Government Gadjah Mada University (JIP-UGM), the oldest university located in Yogyakarta, under the auspices of Yogyakarta's government. This bill did not attract Jakarta's attention. Since then, there are six other alternative drafts on *Keistimewaan*. The latest draft, prepared by JIP-UGM under the auspices of *Partnerships* (Partnership for Governance Reform Indonesia/PGRI) and the ministry of Internal Affairs in 2007 is being discussed at the national parliament.

The case of Yogyakarta is quite unique. It is not easy to find comparative lessons regarding the issue of traditional monarchy exist at the provincial level, while on the national level adopt modern democracy. Compared to the existing monarchy in South-East Asia, which embedded at the national level, Indonesian case is an exception (Kershaw, 2001).

There are three reasons why *Keistimewaan* should be regulated, which absorb attention in the discussion relating to it. Firstly is issue about the position of Sultan and Pakualam both as traditional leaders of Yogyakarta and in daily modern administration. Pro-Sultan side argues that the position of Governor and Vice Governor in Yogyakarta is inherited to Sultan and Pakualam and their descendants. On the contrary, Pro-Democracy side argues that Yogyakarta should have local direct election for Governor and Vice Governor like any other provinces in Indonesia.

Secondly is the issues related to Kraton's assets. Since the integration of Kraton into Indonesia, the legalization of Kraton's assets has not been clear. Sultan HB X, inherited from his father, owned a huge area of land in Yogyakarta and other areas in Central Java Province. It is estimated that Sultan HB X owned more than 500,000 hectares of land. Sultan HB X and his Kraton's institution managed the land which mostly located in the strategic areas of Yogyakarta. Kraton issues '*kekancingan*', a letter for person or institution to used Kraton's land for a certain period of time. Sultan HB X also has given away thousands of hectares of his land after the integration with Indonesia. The area of Gadjah Mada University (UGM) and Yogyakarta National University (UNY), *Malioboro* areas and *Kotagede* areas are some of the examples.

Thirdly, and I argue that this is the most important, is relating to the role of Sultan HB IX during the period of revolution discussed above. The supporter of keistimewaan Yogyakarta based on the assumption that Sultan HB IX and people of Yogyakarta have sacrificed for the existence of Indonesia. The central government has to value those loyalties to the *Republik* by maintaining special region status to Yogyakarta and regulating it different from other provinces. I draw this argument based on evidence as follow.

First, the two parliamentary Governor elections in 1998 and 2003 have shown that Yogyakarta has moved from traditional monarch to democracy. These events are the evidence that people of Yogyakarta have changed their mindset regarding the source of power, from Kraton to the people, from top down to bottom up. Dhal's (1956) argue that democracy concerned with the capacity of individuals to control their leaders. Culturally, Javanese believes that the Sultan has a monopoly of power. Power is embedded in the figure of Sultan which, may or may not, transferred to the people. The name of Sultan: *Hamengkubuwono* literary means as encircle the universe. Moreover it is clearly shown from the royal name of Sultan: *Sampeyandalem Inkgang Sinuwun Kandjeng Sultan Hamengkubuwono, Senopati ing Ngalogo, Abdurrahman Sayidin Panoto Gomo, Kalifatullah Inkgang Kaping X*, which endows the monarch with absolute political, military and religious authority (Selosoemardjan, 1952: 17).

In line with this point of view, creating a direct local election in Yogyakarta will create no controversy. Moreover, both Sultan HB IX and Sultan HB X present themselves as defender of democracy. There is no doubt that Sultan HB IX, during the revolution, has proven this. Moreover, when Andi Mallarangeng, SBY spokesman, said Yogyakarta is moving from absolute monarch to constitutional monarch, Sultan HB X strongly opposed by argue that neither absolute monarch nor constitutional monarch have ever been practiced in Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta, he said, is practicing democracy with his election as a governor (Mawar, Kompas 2008). Andi kept silence. This moment express how Jakarta misinterpretation on Yogyakarta. Thus, placing Sultan as a governor without election processes will not only against popular support, but also Sultan's will.

Second, the regulation regarding Kraton's asset isn't necessary. The most important for managing Kraton's assets is the implementation

of rule of law. After 1962 when the land law was established, Kraton's asset could be managed. There is no rational explanation why Kraton's assets are excluded from the implementation of this law. The possible answer is that all Indonesian presidents choose to play save and leave the burdens to Kraton's administration. Moreover, as long as there is no dispute regarding Kraton's asset, the governments is better dealing with other issues.

Third, Yogyakarta, like Sultan said, has always been practicing liberal democracy. Since the integration, Sultan HB IX has already showed its democratic movement by taking Patih's responsibilities. The dual political position that Sultan HB IX has had, was not breaking any rules at that time. Thus, demand for *keistimewaan* by integrating monarch at the provincial level cannot find its justifications.

The only possible answer in regard to the increasing demand for *Keistimewaan* related to the history of Yogyakarta during the Indonesian independence. The roles of Sultan HB IX and the people of Yogyakarta need to be graded.

## Conclusion

Since the post Soeharto, Indonesia has been characterized by the increasing demand from the local government and community to central government in various degrees. Yogyakarta, as a special region for more than fifty years, demands for a better regulation regarding the meaning of specialty. The arguments are built based on three reasons, the position of Sultan and Pakualam in provincial government, regulation regarding Kraton's asset and the history of Yogyakarta during the Indonesian revolution. The historical reason seems to be the most prominent argument. Although regulation is a mean to face the future, Yogyakarta used the past to justify what would the future be. \*\*\*\*\*

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