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The institutional infusion: The interplay between sultanate traditions and formal institutions in the development of Yogyakarta Province Governance, Indonesia

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Abstract

Research on governance reform in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has shown that combining shared values and informal and formal institutions significantly influences the reform process. This article moves beyond the views of informal and formal institutions as opposing forces driven by rational incentives. Drawing from the sociological institutionalist framework, it argues that governance reform is not merely an effort to replace existing values and rules with new ones. Instead, it highlights the dynamic coexistence and mutual adaptation of formal and informal institutions, forming integrated governance structures. This argument is illustrated by examining governance institutions in the Special Province of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Far from being marginalized by contemporary governance reforms, the Sultanate tradition provides a foundational cultural and institutional framework influencing and integrating governance practices. The fusion of historical customs with contemporary governance structures yields a distinctive institutional arrangement where local traditions are harmoniously incorporated into formal governance systems. The ongoing interaction and mutual adjustment between the Sultanate's deeply rooted traditions and Indonesia's formal governance framework ensures legitimacy, coherence, and effectiveness in Yogyakarta's distinctive governance model.

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Introduction

Big Bang Decentralization and Proliferation of Informal Institutions

The 1999 Indonesian decentralization reform brought a swift and profound shift in the government system. This "big bang" decentralization replaced the centralized authoritarian regime with a new democratic and decentralized system (Crouch, 2003; Hadiz, 2010). At the core of the decentralization reform is the aim to embed good governance values within subnational governments (Holzhacker, 2007; Ramage et al., 2016).

However, integrating good governance principles within subnational institutions does not necessarily supplant the existing shared values and belief systems, commonly called informal institutions (Martin, 1991). Instead, these informal institutions influence policymakers and stakeholders as they work to adopt good governance ideals (Jütting et al., 2007). The coexistence of codified rules of good governance and unwritten norms of prevailing values significantly influences the governance reform process and outcomes at the subnational level (Ayres, 2022).

The Existence of Informal Institutions Within Democratic Local Governance

The Special Province of Yogyakarta is a remarkable case in which the informal institutions' predominant shared values and belief systems influence policymakers and stakeholders in embedding good governance values into their subnational governments. Yogyakarta Province holds Special Region status primarily because of the longstanding Sultanate of Yogyakarta, a traditional monarchy deeply rooted in historical and cultural heritage predating the independence of the Republic of Indonesia (Monfries, 2008).

However, under Suharto's centralized New Order regime, the central government dominated national and regional development, limiting Yogyakarta's authority to cultural preservation. With political stability prioritized, the Sultanate tradition had limited influence. Regional autonomy was restricted, favoring administrative decentralization, and national development goals often conflicted with local needs, resulting in uniform policies. Consequently, the Sultanate tradition was only acknowledged if it aligned with national development priorities. Yet, Yogyakarta Province has consistently been recognized for its outstanding government in regional development planning since the 1999 decentralization reform. It received the best provincial government award from the National Planning and Development Agency (NPDA) from 2017 onwards. In 2023, the Ministry of Administrative Reform acknowledged the governor for exceptional accountability and public service quality since 2016.

This study enhances the understanding of governance reform by moving beyond the formal and informal institution dichotomy, revealing their complex interrelationships in shaping governance. The Yogyakarta case demonstrates how the Sultanate tradition, as a fundamental socio-political identity, shapes and legitimizes modern governance, showcasing the system's adaptive capacity. Utilizing sociological institutionalism, this article emphasizes enduring cultural-cognitive institutions (Jakobsen, 2014, p. 49), challenging the new institutionalist prioritization of formal institutions and rational actors in the governance process, driven by a logic of consequence (Goldmann, 2005). Moreover, the concept of institutional fusion expands on institutional complementarity (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006, p. 13), highlighting the active integration and reciprocal relationships between formal and informal elements and contributing to broader theoretical discussions on institutional dynamics (Restrepo-Mieth, 2021). While the Yogyakarta Sultanate traditions case provides rich detail, it may limit generalizability. Further research should explore formal and informal institutions' interactions in diverse contexts and could also examine the role of other informal institutions, like religious practices and community networks, in shaping governance in Yogyakarta and elsewhere.

Literature Review

Understanding Formal and Informal Institutions

Exploring the influence and the interaction between formal and informal institutions in shaping the quality and performance of democratic governance institutions, one should provide an academic definition of institutions. Hall and Taylor (1996, p. 938) define institutions as '…the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy'. The formal institutions can be traced to a wide range of official written rules and structures that govern social, economic, and political interaction (Islam, 2018), including constitutions and the various regulations, laws, codes of conduct, and civil service procedures delineating formal rules, roles, and procedures within a given institutional system (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 347). Formal institutions are deliberately constructed through deliberative processes of regulation and legislation, reflecting

the conscious efforts of societies to establish stable, predictable structures to organize collective life (Redmond, 2008).

In contrast, informal institutions can be considered "unwritten rules," encompassing behavior codes, social conventions, and cultural norms (Licht et al., 2007, p. 661). The influence of the unwritten rules on democratic governance performance can be assessed by revealing how strong they are in enforcing actors to obey the norms of informal institutions, since disobedience might disadvantage them (Portillo, 2012; Mudacumura, 2014; Haque, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how informal institutional mechanisms influence and constrain the behavior of social and political actors to understand the impact of informal institutions on the functioning and outcomes of democratic governance (Helmke & Levitsky 2004, 2006; Kleine, 2018; Raymond et al., 2014).

Hall and Taylor (1996, p. 950–955) and Jakobsen (2014, p. 38–42) conclude that new institutionalism examines the interplay of formal and informal institutions. This approach incorporates rational choice, historical institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism. Each perspective offers valuable insight. Rational choice, which posits that actors strategically maximize self-interest within institutional boundaries, describes the strategic utilization of informal institutions within formal structures; historical institutionalism, emphasizing the enduring influence of past events and path dependence, denotes that institutional evolution has resulted in deeply rooted informal institutions. Yet, sociological institutionalism examines the reciprocal relationship between them, emphasizing the role of social norms and shared understanding over individual self-interest. Further, Jakobsen (2014, p. 149) explains that the cultural-cognitive dimension highlights shared beliefs that influence how individuals and organizations interpret their environment, thus, creating stability and meaning in social life, and enabling individuals to navigate interactions (Arkadie, 1989; Boso et al., 2023; Goodin et al., 1996; Palthe, 2014).

The Influence of Formal and Informal Institutions on Democratic Governance Development

Research on the presence and influence of informal institutions and their interactions with formal institutions has been a critical area of study in understanding the processes and outcomes of democratic governance reform in various countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Chaisty et al., 2012; Pérez-Liñán et al., 2019; Tsai, 2006). In their study of democratic governance reform, Helmke and Levitsky (2004, 2006) found that informal institutions determine the process and the impact of reform, whether the result is positive or negative. Norms and practices of patrimonialism and clientelism as informal institutions in these regions are suspected of causing the low performance and quality of democratic governance institutions (Christiansen & Neuhold, 2012; Jiménez et al., 2012; Ogbaharya, 2008). Nevertheless, researchers have also explored the contribution of informal institutions to strengthening democratic institutions. Azari and Smith (2012) and Bratton (2007) suggest that informal institutions may also play a role in sustaining democratic processes and providing alternative avenues for political participation and representation in contexts where formal institutions are weak or dysfunctional.

Studies on presidential systems in Latin American countries, such as Chile and Ecuador, have shown that informal institutions serve as a crucial platform for dialogue and negotiation beyond the confines of structured political channels (Acosta et al., 2006; Siavelis, 2016). Therefore, Grindle (2007), Hyden (2013), and Kjaer (2014) clearly state that focusing merely on the performance of formal institutions tends to ignore the complexity of social and political contexts that shape the process and outcome of reform. Thus, when socially constructed values intersect with the new values of democracy and governance, they present opportunities to forge a particular path of change and its consequences.

This research offers a sociological institutionalism perspective for revealing the nature of institutions and their role in determining the process and outcome of reform. DiMaggio and Powell (1991, p. 15–16) and March and Olsen (1996) assert that institutions have an influential power in determining preferences, behavior, and decisions of actors by providing the symbol system, cognitive scripts, and moral template. Consequently, institutions function not only to delimit and guide the behaviors of actors within the social sphere but also to sculpt their conceptualization of the social environment (Hall, 2010; Miller & Banaszak-Holl, 2005; Scott, 1987). This dual role facilitates actors' engagement in context-specific activities informed by an institutionally shaped understanding (Jakobsen, 2014, p. 48).

In line with this perspective, Jakobsen (2014, p. 46) emphasizes that institutions can be conceptualized as structures and systems of meaning. Institutions constrain and facilitate individuals' behaviors and actions in their capacity as a structure. At the same time, as a system of meaning, they offer a framework for interpreting social reality and coordinating collective actions within specific contexts (March & Olsen, 2006, p. 744). This perspective emphasizes actors shaping institutions through social interaction and shared meaning, unlike historical institutionalism, which focuses on path dependence in institutional evolution. The logic of appropriateness, central to sociological institutionalism, explains decisions based on social roles and identities. It

emphasizes conforming to social norms and cultural expectations, contrasting with the logic of consequences of rational choice, prioritizing rational calculations, and self-interest. Thus, individuals act based on social acceptability, guided by norms, identity, and cultural understanding.

Propose of the Present Study

In conclusion, Scott's perspective provides a comprehensive view of institutions as inherently dynamic, evolving over time. They are influenced by intricate interactions among various factors, reflecting the local social and cultural context (Greenwood et al., 2008). The dynamic nature of institutions shows a continuous adaptation process in response to changes in social norms, values, and external pressures. Furthermore, the characteristics of these institutions account for the diverse processes and outcomes of governance reforms observed in different countries. Taking this standpoint, this article aims to offer a detailed explanation of the intricacies of governance reform in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The analysis delves into how the interplay between formal and informal institutions, incorporating elements of regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive frameworks, shapes the dynamics and effects of governance reforms.

Methodology

This research applies to a qualitative approach and case study method to analyze Yogyakarta's governance reform process and outcomes, focusing on the province's unique shared values and belief systems. According to Gerring (2007), a case study is an intensive examination of a single case to provide insights into a larger class of cases. Yogyakarta was chosen as the case study because it represents societal values and belief systems deeply ingrained in the law. The province's sultanate tradition and status as a Special Autonomous Region, as outlined in Law No. 13 of 2012, make it an ideal subject for this research.

Using a case study approach, the focus is on Yogyakarta's governance reform process and outcome. Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews and documentary studies involving government officials, provincial council members, university scholars, and NGO activists as respondents. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted using an interview guide, allowing both the researcher and respondents the flexibility to delve into new topics that may emerge during the interview process (Galleta, 2013). Further, this research also collects many related documents covering laws, government regulations, regional regulations, and research reports.

Results

Yogyakarta is an Indonesian province with a privileged status established by Law No. 13 of 2012, highlighting its historical significance in Indonesia's struggle for independence. Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, the father of the current Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, played a crucial role in this transformation, and his contributions remain a vital part of Indonesia's collective memory, recognized by both the people of Yogyakarta and the broader Indonesian populace. The constitution and the law, then, acknowledge the remarkable leadership of the Sultan and his struggle for Indonesian independence. Over time, the Sultanate's values, symbols, and traditions were institutionalized into the social-political life of society (Interview with Institute for Research and Empowerment, May 19, 2014).

As a tribute to Sultan IX, the Government of Indonesia mandates Sultan X and Adipati Paku Alam (Duke Paku Alam) as governor and vice-governor of Yogyakarta, as stipulated by the law of 2012. This mandate differs from the direct election procedures prescribed by Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government and Law No. 1 of 2014 on the election of Subnational Government Heads in Indonesia. It can be said that the sound of patrimonialism is installed in democratic governance institutions. Though some observers conclude that patrimonialism does not conform to the value of democratic governance, Yogyakarta's version of democratic governance has shown an outstanding governance performance (Interview with Purwanto, Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Universitas Gadjah Mada, May 20, 2014).

The Yogyakarta Sultanate tradition functions as a strong informal institution, operating through unwritten rules and social norms rooted in local culture. This tradition, as March and Olsen (1996) suggest, provides cognitive scripts and moral templates that shape perceptions of authority and social conduct. Unlike formal institutions relying on legal frameworks, the Sultanate tradition's authority stems from social and historical acceptance, influencing governance as cultural rules (Licht et al., 2007). Notably, this tradition is dynamic, adapting to social changes to remain relevant in contemporary Yogyakarta, as Jakobsen (2014) points out.

In Yogyakarta's governance, the Sultanate tradition shapes formal institutions, influencing policymaking and reforms. This aligns with the view that informal institutions influence how

stakeholders adopt governance ideals. The tradition's socio-political legitimacy fosters public acceptance of governance by linking it to cultural relevance and historical continuity. Furthermore, these traditions shape political behavior, defining actors' roles and responsibilities. A deeply embedded Sultanate tradition influences actors' decisions and reflects what March and Olsen (1996) call the logic of appropriateness, where actions are guided by adherence to established cultural norms and expectations.

As a result, numerous accolades acknowledging development achievements, governance quality, and excellence in public services underscore the positive impact of the synergy between formal and informal institutions within Yogyakarta Province. The National Planning and Development Agency granted Yogyakarta Province for the outstanding achievement of SDGs action in 2023 (Nugroho & Hidayah, 2023). The award also reflects a successful effort of the governor in coordinating and integrating the planning and development system in a multi-layered government within the province, while many provinces face the issue of overlapping planning and budgetary allocation, since the governors must deal with conflicts with the regents/mayors.

The governor's success in integrating the planning and development system within the province cannot be separated from his status and role as the Sultan of Yogyakarta. Regents'/mayors' disobedience to governors' authority in coordinating and supervising the lower level of government is ubiquitously occurring around the nation. However, such an issue does not emerge in Yogyakarta Province since all the regents/mayors within the province show their reverence to the governor in the first place, meaning that they are obeying the Sultan (Interview with Head of Government Program Division Bappeda, May 21, 2014).

In 2023, the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia awarded the Governor for outstanding accountability performance since 2016 and excellent investment service (Hakim & Badar, 2023). Moreover, the Ministry of Administrative Reform granted the best public service quality award for Yogyakarta Province (Yogyakarta Province, 2023).

Discussions

The interplay of formal and informal institutions in Yogyakarta's governance highlights the importance of local identity, cultural preservation, and traditional leadership. Researchers have noted that this unique system reflects a broader trend in Indonesia where historical and cultural factors shape regional autonomy. The Sultanate's tradition emphasizes the Sultan's desire to connect with the people and bridge the social-political gap (Dwiyansany & Wardhani, 2019; Monfries, 2008). The Sultan was widely opening a public sphere where he and the people could interact directly. This public sphere served not only as a platform for the Sultan to engage with the people, listen to their needs, but also spread the Sultanate tradition effectively (Interview with Institute for Research and Empowerment, May 19, 2014). Such a dialogue process, in turn, has enhanced the trust and loyalty of the people to the Sultan and the Sultanate tradition. As a result, the external or new values are filtered by their Sultanate values, symbols, and traditions and are translated according to the embedded traditions.

Moreover, the strong influence of the Sultanate tradition affects not only the Yogyakarta natives but also the new inhabitants. Many of the new settlers are students of Universitas Gadjah Mada, one of Indonesia's best universities. Though they come from different ethnicities, traditions, and religions, they express their tribute to the Sultan and the Sultanate tradition without reserve (Interview with Pramusinto, Professor of Public Administration Universitas Gadjah Mada, May 20, 2014). The trust and loyalty that people had for the Sultan and the Sultanate traditions eventually translated into political support for the Sultan as the Governor of Yogyakarta.

Informal cultural and traditional practices rooted in the region's rich Javanese heritage have also played a pivotal role in shaping the province's governance. The Sultanate's engagement in the government and the active involvement of local communities have been instrumental in upholding the stability and continuity of Yogyakarta's political and cultural traditions (Suryanti et al., 2014). This has resulted in harmonizing local customs with national governance standards, ensuring that governance is legally sound and culturally relevant.

In a democratic governance process, the Governor plays a central and dominant role. Bureaucratic reform to install transparency, participation, and accountability principles is led directly by the Governor (Dwiyansany & Wardhani, 2019). The dual authority of the Sultan represents a balancing act that seeks to respect the region's historical traditions while simultaneously meeting the demands of modern democratic practices, thus fostering a governance model that promotes both stability and progress in Yogyakarta. In every activity, the Governor images himself as a humble leader who rejects the formality of government practices that, to some degree, cost government resources. Such a good, exemplary attitude is a message for all public officials and politicians to utilize government resources wisely and appropriately (Interview with Pramusinto, Professor of Public Administration Universitas Gadjah Mada, May 20, 2014).

The Governor aims to combat government inefficiency and the poor performance of civil servants, a significant issue in Yogyakarta and other provinces throughout Indonesia (Interview with Secretary of Region, May 21, 2014). The governor's role model has encouraged provincial government officials to improve the quality of human resource performance in Yogyakarta Province. As a result, in 2023, the Head of the National Civil Service Agency awarded the Civil Servant Award to Yogyakarta Province for the best Civil Servant Management in Indonesia (Regional Office of the State Civil Service Agency, 2023).

The pivotal role of the Governor in strengthening democratic governance institutions can be seen in his initiative to collaborate with prominent universities, such as Universitas Gadjah Mada and the Islamic University of Indonesia (Interview with Purwanto, Dean of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Universitas Gadjah Mada, May 20, 2014). The synergy of local customs and national legislation led to the establishment of the Yogyakarta Ombudsman, the first ombudsman agency in the state, as the national government has yet to create one. The Governor issued Edict No. 134 of 2004 to establish this agency. The Yogyakarta Ombudsman has significant authority, such as recommending the Governor and the council to amend or establish regulations to address mismanagement issues. The governor's support for the agency is evident through allocating the government budget for operational purposes (Yogyakarta Province, 2023).

Despite the agency's support, challenges remain due to silent resistance from public officials. A notable case involved an Ombudsman report on a mismanaged telecommunication project, implicating the Secretary of the Region and the Head of Regional Financial Management, with suggestions of the Sultan's involvement. Recommended actions to address the mismanagement were poorly implemented, leading to turmoil, and many believe that implicating the Governor hindered his bureaucratic reform efforts. Furthermore, the report was disregarded as the stakeholders prioritized their allegiance to the Sultan above all else (Interview with Purwanto, Dean of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Universitas Gadjah Mada, May 20, 2014).

After a long-drawn debate over the ombudsman, in 2008, the Governor enacted a new regulation, namely, Governor Regulation No. 21 of 2008. The rationale behind the revision was to strengthen the role and authority of the Yogyakarta Ombudsman and to pursue Law No. 37 of 2008 on the National Ombudsman. Nevertheless, several academics and pro-democracy activists disagreed with the revision since it had reduced the agency's authority. Yet, the governor expressed his endorsement when the agency appealed for a judicial review to the Constitutional Court concerning Article 46, which did not acknowledge the existence of an independent regional ombudsman such as the one in Yogyakarta. The article clearly stated that the regional Ombudsman should be part of the national Ombudsman. Nevertheless, the Constitutional Court revoked Article 46 and legally established the Yogyakarta Ombudsman. Thus, Yogyakarta now has two public service oversight agencies: one is the independent Yogyakarta Ombudsman, and the other is the regional Ombudsman agency that works together to support each other (Constitutional Court Edict No. 62 of 2010).

Issues regarding supervision and accountability within the provincial government have heightened awareness of the Sultan's privileges as both the Sultan and the Governor. While traditional values have led to unquestioned acknowledgment of the Sultan's accountability, public demand for better services has prompted the establishment of the new Yogyakarta Ombudsman to oversee public bureaucracy. The council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah/DPRD) must balance political oversight of the Governor with respect for Sultanate privileges, ensuring performance monitoring while honoring local customs (Interview with Member of the Council, May 20, 2014).

In this sense, the council and the stakeholders would not directly criticize the Governor when they found out the provincial government was misbehaving or delivering poor public services. They believed such a problem was caused by the incompetence and incapability of the public bureaucracy in executing the Governor's commitments and orders. Yogyakarta people firmly believe that the Sultan cannot do wrong, but the Governor can; thus, when the Governor takes an inappropriate action, it is an indication that the public bureaucracy is not correctly performing their duty since it is disrespectful to blame the Sultan (Interview with Purwanto, Dean of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Universitas Gadjah Mada, May 20, 2014).

The Ombudsman case reveals a dynamic institutional realm, where the Ombudsman's formal mandate to ensure accountability collides with the Sultanate tradition's emphasis on deference. This creates competing logic, as articulated by March and Olsen (1996), pitting the logic of appropriateness against the logic of consequences. The council's effort to balance formal oversight duties with informal pressures underscores how informal institutions shape the interpretation and implementation of formal rules. The Sultanate tradition profoundly shapes perceptions of policymakers over the Governor's actions, creating a belief that the Sultan is beyond reproach, thus encouraging them to change their approach to assessing accountability. The case illustrates the explanation of the logic of appropriateness in the fusion of formal and informal institutions, as actors operate within a framework where

adherence to traditions and cultural norms ensures legitimacy and social acceptance.

In Yogyakarta, where the Sultanate tradition profoundly influences socio-cultural dynamics, the logic of appropriateness is especially pertinent. Not only is the Sultan a symbol of the Sultanate tradition, but he also represents the identity and cognitive script of the Yogyakarta people. Nonetheless, the embedded Sultanate tradition has placed the Sultan and the Sultanate as the central part of the social-political development of Yogyakarta, including democratic governance reform (Interview with Institute for Research and Empowerment, May 19, 2014). The shared values and traditions of the Yogyakarta Sultanate have influenced the process of adopting the values of democratic governance, which is treated as an exogenous force of change.

This paper has revealed how the coexistence of democratic governance principles and the Sultanate tradition created a unique and infused institutional configuration. Following Scott's postulate, the coexistence of formal and informal institutions establishes a framework where legitimacy is derived from compliance with written laws and adherence to cultural norms, values, and practices that define Yogyakarta governance. This infused institutional model has enabled a deliberative process where the Sultan's role as both the head of the Sultanate and the provincial governor allows for integrating cultural values into governance, albeit at the potential cost of fully embracing modern bureaucratic accountability standards.

The analysis emphasizes the significant role of the Sultan, who serves as the Governor of Yogyakarta Province and a central cultural figure. It probes the complexities that arise when traditional cultural authority intersects with government accountability mechanisms. This interplay has led to developing a governance framework that prioritizes community values and identity, symbolized by the Sultan's rule. Stakeholders' reverence for the sacred nature of the sultanate has spurred efforts to establish a modern governance system that upholds principles of good governance while safeguarding the sanctity of Yogyakarta's tradition. This intricate dynamic presents challenges in fostering democratic governance while upholding the revered traditions of the Sultanate.

The study of Yogyakarta's governance reveals the coexistence between formal and informal institutions, with the Sultanate tradition shaping formal institutional values within a democratic framework. This interaction fosters a symbiotic relationship, demonstrating how shared values and beliefs support governance and democracy in Yogyakarta. While studies often view informal institutions negatively, this research concludes that the Sultanate tradition serves as a template for integrating democratic values with local identity, thus harmonizing with formal governance. Yet, this intricate dynamic presents challenges in fostering democratic governance while upholding the revered traditions of the Sultanate.

Conclusion

The examination of democratic governance reform in the Special Province of Yogyakarta illustrates that the coexistence of informal and formal institutions does not result in a diametrical interaction, where one becomes more robust at the expense of the other. Instead, these institutions are intertwined with the Sultanate tradition of Yogyakarta, shaping the values of formal institutions within the democratic governance framework. This symbiotic relationship between informal and formal institutions demonstrates how shared values and belief systems influence democratic governance, providing a foundation for its development within the social and political landscape.

Numerous studies on democratic governance in Asia, Africa, and Latin America often view informal institutions with disdain, perceiving them as outdated entities that formal institutions will eventually supplant. These studies suggest that informal institutions must align with the values of democratic governance to avoid undermining formal democratic institutions. However, this research reveals that the reciprocal relationship between Sultanate traditions and formal institutions has led to distinct patterns of interaction and outcomes. The coexistence of formal and informal institutions has given rise to a blend of informal and formal practices, with the Sultanate tradition of Yogyakarta becoming institutionalized in official written rules.

The laws of Yogyakarta, as outlined in Law No. 13 of 2012 on The Privilege of Special Autonomous of Yogyakarta, recognize the Sultan and Sultanate traditions. These rules state that the Sultan holds the position of the Governor of the Special Autonomous Region of Yogyakarta, effectively leading the governorship office. Integrating Sultanate tradition with democratic governance institutions does not always result in a seamless coexistence, as the social-political context can create competing values among them. Nevertheless, Yogyakarta's shared values and belief systems have their own mechanisms for addressing critical issues, leading to the establishment of dynamic and adaptive governance.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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