

# INTANGIBLE MEANING MAKING BEYOND CONSERVATION: THE INTERESTS IN AND IMPACT OF THE NOMINATION OF THE HISTORIC CITY CENTRE OF YOGYAKARTA AS A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Tular Sudarmadi

Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada

tular\_s@ugm.ac.id

ORCID: 0000-0002-4631-115X

DOI: 10.37935/iha.oan2024.008

## ABSTRACT

From the beginning, Yogyakarta is not only a place where people live. The landscape and spatial arrangement between the mountain, the sea, the spring, and the river are crucial for understanding the way in which this and some other cities serve to create, reinforce and maintain the Ancient Javanese Philosophy concerning both an imaginary axis and a philosophical axis of the cycle of life – being born, childhood, teenage, adulthood, old age, and passing away. The first Sultanate of Yogyakarta created the imaginary axis of Yogyakarta city to legitimize his position as the king; recently, the tenth Sultanate of Yogyakarta and the provincial government of Yogyakarta Special Region have fabricated the philosophical axis of Yogyakarta for the World Heritage Site nomination of Yogya's historical inner city. This article argues that the philosophical axis of Yogyakarta imbues colonialist ideas to restore the authenticity, the notion of masterpiece, and uniqueness of buildings and landscapes of the past, while ignoring the history of the population. As a result, this nomination of the world heritage contributes to the abolition of living cultures and marginalizes people who live around the philosophical axis of the Yogyakarta areas.

## KEYWORDS

Philosophical Axis | Yogyakarta | World Heritage Nomination | Sultanate | Culture and Power

Legenda  
A. ...  
B. ...  
C. ...  
D. ...  
E. ...  
F. ...  
G. ...  
H. ...  
I. ...  
J. ...  
K. ...  
L. ...  
M. ...  
N. ...

## INTRODUCTION

It is partly the richness and diversity of ethnic culture that make the Indonesian nation so interesting and important. Ethnic culture gives identity and provides cultural manifestations, and both the physical and non-physical aspects and the historical legacy are passed down along a chain of owners and bequeathed to individuals or a group of closely related people. While the Indonesian ancestors had their own way of approaching what today we would call cultural heritage management practices, the Dutch imperial colonial project that subjugated the Indonesian archipelago since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century successfully detached, subsumed, formed, packaged and ruled the indigenous people's cultural heritage (Sudarmadi, 2014: 52-55). In a similar way, Architectural structures connected to city planning in urban centres with local rulers, as in our case happened in Yogyakarta, were part of this.

This contribution to this journal's theme issue does not explicitly focus on the ideological instrumentalization of what now is regarded as cultural heritage in Indonesia under colonialism, but argues that the direction and priorities of the Indonesian government project on Indonesian nation-building did not bring a radical break with the previous power dynamics with respect to Dutch colonial cultural agenda's. For this reason, the submission of the Philosophical Axis of Yogyakarta City as a World Cultural Heritage will be used as a discussion in explaining how the Government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, one of the Provinces of the Indonesian State adopted the Dutch colonial cultural heritage management ideas, especially in how cultural heritage was used to position the Dutch Colonial government at the center of the colonizer, while strengthening The Dutch Colonial domination over the Indonesian archipelago's people histories and culture (Sudarmadi, 2014).

## YOGYAKARTA CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT DURING THE DUTCH COLONIAL ERA (1755-1945)

Following the Giyanti treaty in 1755, Prince Mangkubumi ruled the Western part of Kingdom Mataram and was crowned Sultan Hamengku Buwono I. Later, the Sultan built a palace (*Kraton*) in Yogyakarta (Priyono, 2015: 17-19). In response to a Dutch demand following the Giyanti Agreement and an attempt by the Dutch Colonial administration to monitor events in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta in 1760, a fort was constructed, initially consisting of a compound of palm wood structures encircled by an earthen wall. Under Frans Haag's direction, the fort complex was renovated starting in 1767 to fortify the fort into a more durable defense post. The array of fortifications was subsequently dubbed Fort Rustenburg upon its completion. Under the reign of Governor-General Daendels, fort Rustenburg was transformed into a building with a rectangular main configuration. Daendels also changed the name of Fort Rustenburg to Fort Vredeburg in 1811. Further, he renovated this fort with a star configuration, a form of fortification that developed in the early days. (Chusbiantoro and Sulistya, 2012: 35). In 1824, located west of Fort Vredeburg, the Dutch colonial government also built the Yogyakarta supreme colonial ruler while representing the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies (Resident) house. It took six years to complete this building.

In 1840, a decree was launched stating that the East Indies' cultural heritage was Dutch colonial property. Indeed, such a decree authorized the Dutch colonial government's role as the guardian and protector of this cultural heritage (Sudarmadi, 2014: 56). In 1867, an earthquake shook the city of Yogyakarta and its surroundings; the resident office building and Tugu monument were severely damaged. According to the decree of 1840, this building and monument must be renovated. While the resident building was renovated in 1869, the Tugu Monument was restored in 1889<sup>1</sup> (Priyono, 2015: 36). The lengthy completion of the restoration was due to the Tugu Monument's status as a building belonging to the Sultanate of Yogyakarta, so it was not prioritized by the Dutch colonial government. Further, the Dutch government released the "Monuments Ordinances" number 19 and 21 Act on 13 June 1931. This Act officially recognized the colonial Netherlands-Indies government as owning ancient Indies artifacts. It also governed compensation claims for sites on private property designated as monuments, especially if those sites and monuments were included in the official inventory. In short, this act aimed to protect, conserve, restore, and perpetuate the cultural legacy of the native inhabitants across the Indonesian archipelago (Bloembergen and Eickhoff, 2020; Sedyawati and Keurs, 2005: 28; Pott and Sutaarga, 1979: 40). However, this law lacks of articles on the protection and preservation of buildings that have not yet reached the age of hundreds of years and are still maintained by their owners, including mosques, churches, royal palaces, and Chinese temples (The Governor-General of the Netherlands-Indie, 1931: 21). As a result, the Dutch colonial government neglected the protection and preservation of the Yogyakarta Sultanate Palace buildings and its area. It is clearly seen from the poorly maintained and damaged parts of the Kraton complex at the end of Dutch Colonial rule and the efforts of Sultan Hamengku Buwono I to Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX to care for and preserve the Yogyakarta Kraton area (Sekiadi, 2017: 16-18).

## YOGYAKARTA CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT DURING THE PRESIDENT SUKARNO AND THE PRESIDENT SUHARTO PRESIDENCIES (1945-1998)

Sukarno and Hatta, backed by other well-known nationalists, announced the creation of "Negara Republik Indonesia", or "a free state of Indonesian Republic", early on August 17, 1945. The concept of nationalism, which expanded awareness of a shared experience of Dutch colonialism and the ferocious fight for liberation, was the direct cause of the foundation of the Indonesian nation-state. This idea of nationality evolved into a political philosophy to combat the oppressor of Dutch Colonialism while also overcoming its humiliation (Elson, 2008: 111-113; Ricklefs, 2008: 247; Vickers, 2005: 95). As might be expected Sukarno, the first Indonesian President, was deeply concerned with the philosophy guiding the country's development. Essentially, this philosophy elevated the collective memory of Indonesians, reminding them that they were a country on par with any nation in the West (Ali, 1963: 115). Simultaneously, during the 1940s and 1950s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) presented the idea of "intercultural dialogue" as the main method of building peace. This immediately cleared the path for the inclusion of the culture of the newly formed nation state in the political discourse of international cooperation (Logan, 2007: 35-36). For instance, Sukarno's goal to present the Indonesian nation's future to the world for its appreciation was made possible by UNESCO's policy. In order to create the nation-building project and portray the Indonesian nation state as a recently rising force in the international political sphere, the Archaeological Service's restoration and preservation of the Borobudur and Prambanan temples was appropriate.

1. Balai Pelestarian, Cagar Budaya, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta – Istana Kepresidenan Yogyakarta (Gedung Agung), 2023.  
In: <https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/bpcbyogyakarta/istana-kepresidenan-yogyakarta-gedung-agung> (Access: 2023).

These magnificent monuments put Indonesia on the map of the globe and provided an opportunity to show the nation state's connections to International cultural institution. No wonder, these temples, which are 20-40 kilometers from the Yogyakarta Sultanate, get greater preservation and restoration efforts than the Sultanate palace and its environment. This was abundantly evident in the 1953 formal declaration of the completion of the restoration of the Civa Temple, the main temple in the Prambanan complex. As a result, the ultimate restoration of the Civa temple was meant to convey to the Indonesian populace and the international community that, despite being a recently formed nation, Indonesia had a rich history and that the Indonesian government was assiduously preserving its cultural legacy. More importantly, in January 1973, the Indonesian government and UNESCO confirmed an agreement to restore the Borobudur temple (Atmosudiro and Nugrahani, 2002: 44). Not until 1978 was the restoration formally launched under the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA). Finally, the renovation of the Borobudur temple was completed in 1983 (Soekmono, 1990: 8).

Although this conservation and restoration aims to highlight Indonesia's rich cultural legacy and glorious history, it also serves to conceal the ideology of former Dutch colonialism. In this instance, the Prambanan and Borobudur temples were elevated to the pinnacle of the highly developed Hindu-Buddhist Indonesian cultural heritage mainstream criteria and designated as World Heritage and Indonesian nation-state assets. Nevertheless, because the Indonesian government did not amend the "Monuments Ordinance" number 19 until 2010 with the Indonesian Cultural Objects Heritage Act Number 10 (Undang-Undang No. 11 Tahun, 2010) the Yogyakarta Sultanate Palace and its surrounding area from the Islamic era were disregarded. This statute states that the preservation, conservation, and restoration of ancient Hindu-Buddhist cultural heritage holds a higher priority than contemporary Islamic cultural heritage.

## YOGYAKARTA CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT UNDER THE CURRENT INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK (1999-2024)

In 1998, after the fall of the New Order era under Suharto, the domination of the national and regional government was reduced by the Indonesian State Law on Regional Autonomy no 22 and 25. As such, the administration and distribution of financial resources were no longer held by the Indonesian central government but shifted to the Regency authority and local constituencies (Booth, 2011: 31; Silver, 2007: 83-84; Erb, 2005: 325-326; Picard, 2003: 8; Undang-Undang No. 25 Tahun, 1999). As decentralization regulation penetrated Indonesian cultural heritage management policy and practices, cultural heritage policies and activities were transferred from the central government to the regional government. Further, various regional administrative councils made and implemented the cultural heritage management policy. However, the implementation of the cultural heritage decentralization policy on control, coordination, and the degree of authority was unclear and ambiguous because the Indonesian nation-state Law No. 11 on the Indonesian Cultural Heritage Management Act of 2010 (Undang-Undang No. 11 Tahun, 2010) was still in force: this legalized the role of the Indonesian central government in dominating cultural heritage management.

Whereas various regional administrative councils made and implemented the cultural heritage management policy, the regency government undertook and endorsed local cultural heritage. In many instances, it reduced them to only local identity image-making to foster local pride, support the Indonesian nation-state's cultural development, and promote Indonesian ethnic culture for the global tourism market (Sudarmadi, 2014: 213-214).

A closer examination of the Yogyakarta Special Province and cultural heritage management regulation Number 6 of 2012 on the preservation of cultural heritage (Pemerintah Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2012) in fact, I argue that it was an implementation of an Indonesian government's derived copy, and top-down regulation of the Indonesian Cultural Heritage Management Act of 2010 (Undang-Undang No. 11 Tahun, 2010). Such as regional regulation No. 6 in Article 1 general provisions, Article 22 cultural heritage criteria, Article 4 sub 2b establishment of a cultural heritage expert team, Article 37 zoning, and Article 70 illicit provisions are derivatives of the Cultural Heritage Law No. 11/2010 Article 1 general provisions, Article 5 cultural heritage criteria, Article 31 sub three establishment of a cultural heritage expert team, Article 73 zoning and Article 101 illicit provisions. Once again it suggested a colonial legacy, particularly an imperial colonial way of thinking, since the Indonesian government still dominated cultural heritage discourse, centralized control of cultural heritage practices, and the ways in which cultural heritage issues were tackled in the service of the state. Indeed, this did not bring about more democratization and grassroots movements in the cultural heritage management of local people.

## THE IMAGINARY, PHILOSOPHICAL AXIS OF YOGYAKARTA CITY AND THE DUTCH COLONIAL KNOWLEDGE

A good case to examine the crucial role of the government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta in inheriting Dutch colonial knowledge regarding the preservation of Yogyakarta's cultural heritage is the submission of a proposal by the government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta for the Yogyakarta City Center, with the Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis and its Historical Landmarks to UNESCO World Heritage. The site was placed on the tentative list in 2017.

As a local cultural heritage project of UNESCO World Heritage, this is, in my view, a case showing evidence of the "top-down" approach to cultural heritage management by the Special Province Yogyakarta (Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta) government. Following my case, I will illustrate in this article the Dutch colonial legacy of top-down cultural heritage management, particularly the way in which official local authorities share a similar concept of authenticity and preservation, which fetishes traditional culture and ignores the history of the people living at the site, even causing forced removals.

Historically, the nomination is rooted in colonial times. When an internal conflict broke out in the Islamic Mataram Kingdom concerning the successor of the royal throne, the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC; Dutch East India Company) had interfered. This led to the signing of the 1755 Giyanti treaty. It divided the Mataram Islamic Kingdom into Yogyakarta Sultanate under Prince Mangkubumi and Surakarta Sunanate under Paku Buwono III. Later Prince Mangkubumi installed a new capital in the city of Yogyakarta and held the title Sultan Hamengkubuwana Senapati ing Alaga Abdurrahman Sayyidin Panatagama Khalifatullah. (Priyono, 2015: 15-21). From the beginning, Yogyakarta was not only a city to live in. The landscape and spatial arrangement between Mount Merapi and the South Sea, close to the spring Umbul Pacethokan in the areas of Beringan forest, flanking symmetrically by the River Codé and Winanga in the first ring, Sungai Gajahwong and Kali Bêdog in the second ring, as well as the Opak River and Sungai Progo in the third ring, are crucial for understanding the way in which the city served and still serves to create, reinforce and maintain Ancient Javanese Philosophy<sup>2</sup> (Suwito, 2016: 6-9; Priyono, 2015: 37-43). While the two axes have tangible and intangible heritage components, their representation differs slightly. In order to get a general description of the differences between the two axes, I will depict them in detail below.

2. Karaton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat *Sumbu Filosofi Yogyakarta, Pengejawantahan Asal dan Tujuan Hidup*, 2022. In: <https://www.kratonjogja.id/tata-rakiting/21-sumbu-filosofi-yogyakarta-pengejawantahan-asal-dan-tujuan-hidup> (Access: 20 December 2022).

## THE IMAGINARY AXIS OF YOGYAKARTA CITY

The imaginary axis of Yogyakarta city stretches from south to north. Actually, the line that crosses each of these natural landmarks and buildings is not entirely straight, however, it is imagined as a straight line. The tip of the south axis lies to the South Sea [fig.01, see a], in the centre of the axis are located the Panggung Krapyak monument [fig.01, see b], The Sultan Palace [fig.01, see c], Tugu monument [fig.01, see d], and at the end of the north axis resides Mount Merapi [fig.01, see e]. This imaginary axis symbolizes the relationship between three characters, two of them mythical, one with earthly power: the Queen of the South Sea Ratu Kidul, the Yogyakarta Sultanate ever since Prince Mangkubumi/Sultan Hamengku Buwono I, and the chiefs of Mount Merapi, Empu Rama and Empu Permadi<sup>3</sup> (Priyono, 2015: 47-50; Murnianto, 2004: 3-9).

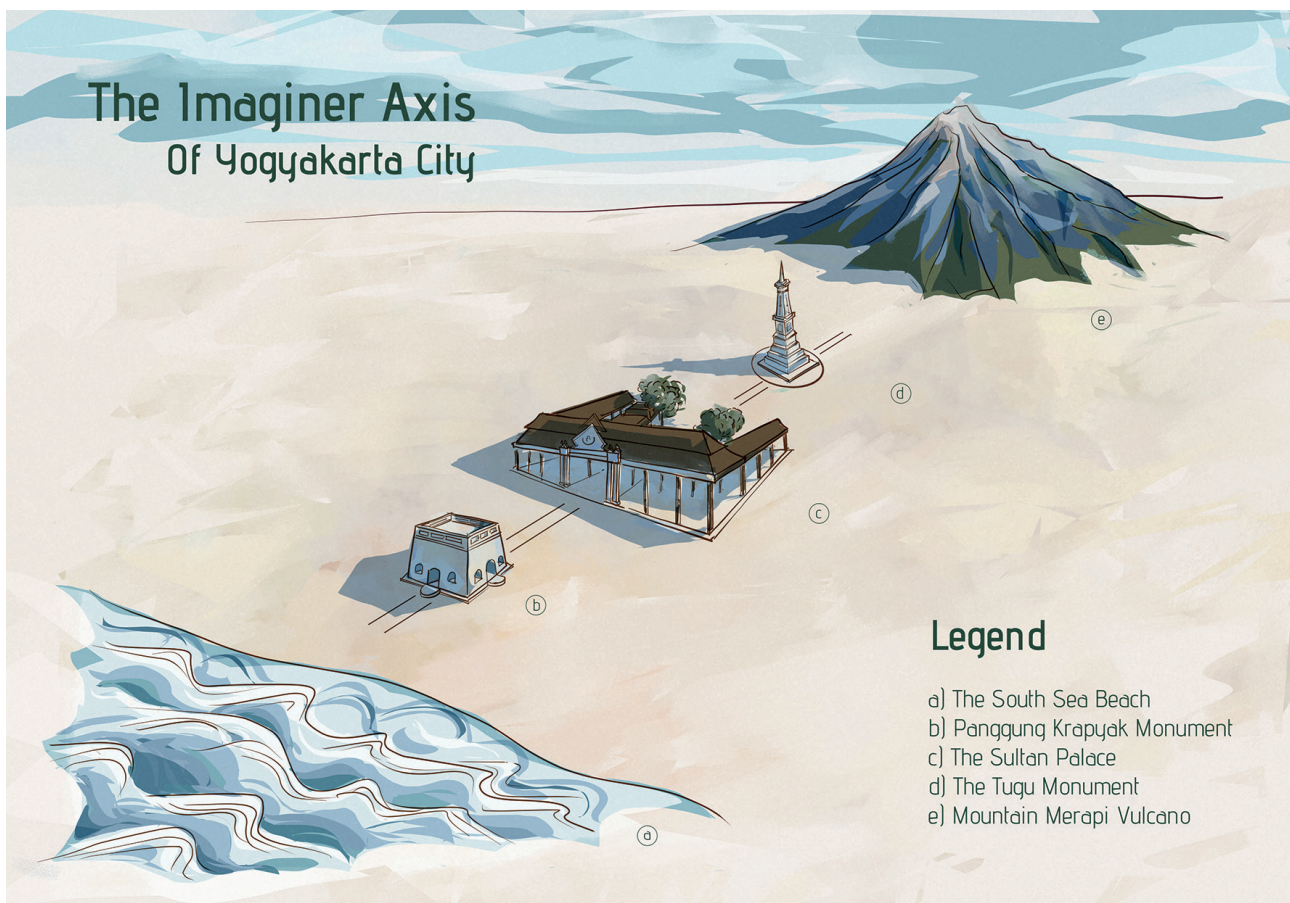


Fig. 01 · The imaginary axis of Yogyakarta city (drawn by Mathilda Candra)

3. Karaton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat *Sumbu Filosofi Yogyakarta, Pengejawantahan Asal dan Tujuan Hidup*, 2022. In: <https://www.kratonjogja.id/tata-rakiting/21-sumbu-filosofi-yogyakarta-pengejawantahan-asal-dan-tujuan-hidup> (Access: 20 December 2022).

## INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF THE IMAGINARY AXIS FOR LEGITIMATING THE AUTHORITY OF THE SULTAN OF YOGYAKARTA

As Mumford stated (Mumford, 1961: 36-37), a new town is mainly a field for delineating the symbolic world, the universe and its gods, people, and social order within a given social and historical context. The imaginary axis of Yogyakarta city reflected such an idea. Historically, the Sultan's palace rested at the centre of the spatial layout and was oriented south-north. It is interesting to note that from my point of view, the central point (*axis mundi*) functioned as the vital orientation element with respect to locating the forces that maintained the order and the mapping of the established social order. In this case, the imaginary axis of Yogyakarta city brought the theme of the sacred and the secular to the fore. While the Sultan's palace represented the seat of secular authority – the king with his people – the South Sea at the edge of the south axis and Mount Merapi at the end of the north axis denoted the hieratic domination of supernatural beings. Such an imaginary axis not only enlarged the boundary of Yogyakarta city but also turned the landscape into a new urban image, particularly as a new symbolic world representing the people, the Sultan, the cosmos, and its gods. Creating and maintaining such a cosmological and social order, the Sultan made an imaginary axis as a means of cultural investments to strengthen the political authority and legitimate his throne.

While cultural policy distributed Yogyakarta's imaginary axis narration and brought commonly accepted value and meaning to a more extensive Yogyakarta citizenry, agencies called courtiers (palace guards), as well as new central places were needed to sustain the historical continuity of the imaginary axis narration. This is clearly seen at the South Sea imaginary axis of Parangkusumo, the sacred location of the wall fence surrounding the boulder relic where Panembahan Senopati, King of the Islamic Mataram kingdom, who is the first ancestor of Sultan I of Yogyakarta, sat when he met the Queen of the South Sea. The courtiers of the Sultan of Yogyakarta officially guard this place. Similarly, at Mount Merapi on the imaginary north axis, the Sultan of Yogyakarta's courtiers guard the sacred boulder at the Sri Manganti location where Kyai Sapu Jagat, the ruler of Mount Merapi, rested. Labuhan rituals are regularly held at Parangkusumo Beach on the imaginary south axis and Mount Merapi on the imaginary north axis<sup>4</sup>. Such a ritual provides a scenario within which the Yogyakarta Sultan's right and authority at the centre of the imaginary axis is demonstrated and reinforced. For instance, the ritual offerings are placed in a large wooden box containing a complete set of traditional Javanese men's and women's clothing. These include batik cloth of various patterns and plain fabric, nail clippings and haircuts of the sultan, flower offerings, incense, betel leaves, fragrant oil, and different food offerings including tumpeng decorated with fruits, vegetables, boiled eggs, and chili<sup>5</sup>. This offering broadcast information on the Yogyakarta Sultan's ownership of ceremonial wealth. By showing his offering in the ritual procession, the Yogyakarta Sultan exhibits his supernatural affiliation, which in turn legitimate, his right, power, and authority toward Yogyakarta's imaginary axis.

4. WICAKSONO, Pribadi – *Peringati Sultan HB X Bertahta, Abdi Dalem Keraton Yogyakarta Gelar Labuhan di Pantai Selatan*, 2023. In: <https://travel.tempo.co/read/1694308/peringati-sultan-hb-x-bertahta-abdi-dalem-keraton-yogyakarta-gelar-labuhan-di-pantai-selatan> (Access:2023);Admin – *Upacara Sakral Labuhan Merapi di Sri Manganti*, 2022. In: <https://kebudayaan.slemankab.go.id/post/upacara-sakral-labuhan-merapi-di-sri-manganti> (Access: 2023).

5. ARIF, Solichan – *Labuhan Merapi, Ritual Persembahan, untuk Kiai Sapu Jagat Demi Redam Gunung Merapi*, 2023. In: <https://news.okezone.com/read/2023/03/13/512/2780300/labuhan-merapi-ritual-persembahan-untuk-kiai-sapu-jagat-demi-redam-gunung-merapi#:~:text=Labuhan%20Merapi%20merupakan%20ritual%20yang,%20Dorang%20Mataram%2C%20utamanya%20kerajaan.&text=Ritual%20ini%20dilakukan%20rutin%20diimajiner%20yang%20melingkari%20gunung%20merapi> (Access: 2023).

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL AXIS OF YOGYAKARTA CITY

The philosophical axis of Yogyakarta stretches horizontally in a straight line from south to north, with two directions to the centre, from south to the centre and north, and from the north back to the centre [fig.02]. The Panggung Krapyak monument [fig.02, see 2] at the southern end of the axis marks the initial human life journey. The monument was erected in 1782. From the philosophical point of view, this monument represents the womb, or yoni (a stylized representation of the female genitalia in Hinduism), and vulva, where human life begins. Next, the line axis goes north, crosses the south square of the *kraton* [fig.02, see 3], the Sultan's palace [fig.02, see 4] and ceases at the Sultan's Palace at the centre. In brief, the philosophical axis that starts from the Panggung Krapyak monument to the south court (*Alun-alun Kidul*) and finishes at the Sultan Palace reflects the journey of human life from birth into childhood, teenage and reaching the adult stage (*Sangkan*). Completing such a stage also leads to the next life cycle from maturity to old age (*Paraning Dumadi*) by moving toward the endpoint of the north axis line where the Tugu monument stands [fig.02, see 6]. As a counterpart of Panggung Krapyak monument as yoni and womb, the Tugu monument delineates *lingga* (a male votary object that indicates the god Siva/phallus) and penis. From the Tugu monument, the journey continues back to the south again, towards the Kepatihan Complex where the secular power resides, and the Beringharjo Market, and terminates via the North square (*Alun-Alun Utara*) [fig.02, see 5] at the Sultan Palace in the centre. During this journey from the north to the south axis, the Kepatihan Complex, and Beringharjo market symbolize two temptations, or hindrances of life. While Kepatihan Complex is associated with the pursuit of authority, Beringharjo market relates to the desire for wealth<sup>6</sup> (Priyono, 2015: 77-102; Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta Management Unit, 2022: 32-35).

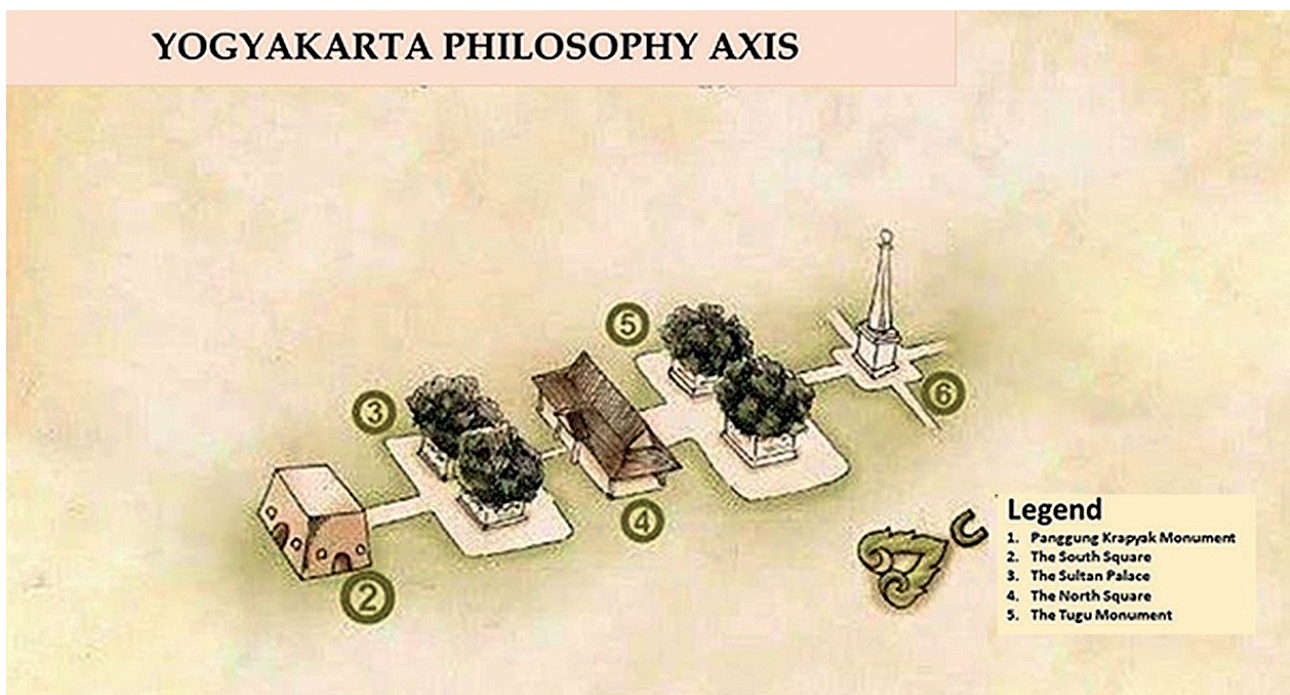


Fig. 02. The Philosophy Axis of Yogyakarta (source: UNESCO, 1992-2023 [modified by Tular Sudarmadi])

6. Karaton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat *Sumbu Filosofi Yogyakarta, Pengejawantahan Asal dan Tujuan Hidup*, 2022.  
In: <https://www.kratonjogja.id/tata-rakiting/21-sumbu-filosofi-yogyakarta-pengejawantahan-asal-dan-tujuan-hidup> (Access: 20 December 2022).

## INSTRUMENTALIZATION CULTURAL POLICY OF YOGYAKARTA PHILOSOPHICAL AXIS FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION

Emphasizing the unique historical background, especially with respect to the status of Special Province in the form of a Sultanate under the territorial unit of the Indonesian Republic and the centre of Javanese culture, brings the notion of maintaining Yogyakarta Special Province as a leading cultural centre in Indonesia. From this perspective, cultural development is a must to preserve, conserve, and protect glorious ancestor values for the welfare and prosperity of the future generation (Priyono, 2015: 2-12). For these reasons, in 2017 Yogyakarta Special Province Cultural Office submitted the Historic City Centre of Yogyakarta proposal as a cultural property, particularly with the philosophical axis as of outstanding universal value. The nomination file refers more precisely concerning to the following Criteria: Criterion (i): The Historic City Centre of Yogyakarta represents a masterpiece of human creative genius reflected in the planning of the city centre as a manifestation of a human life cycle, from the very beginning of life conception to the reunification of the soul with the God; Criterion (ii): Yogyakarta town-planning design is based on Javanese philosophy, a product of long cultural interaction between indigenous culture, and other civilizations, especially Hinduism and Islam; Criterion (vi): The main components of the historic city centre of Yogyakarta tangibly materializes the Javanese cosmology and traditional belief concerning the nature of human life: (a) to know the origin and ultimate destination of human life (*sangkan paraning dumadi*), (b) to maintain harmonious relations between God – Human – Nature (*manunggaling kawula gusti*), and (c) to make the world beautiful and peaceful (*Hamemayu hayuning bawana*). The nomination stresses that this traditional belief is still persistent and is performed through various ceremonies and rituals. As the procedures are completed, this proposal officially contains the philosophical axis of outstanding universal value candidacy for inscription on the World Heritage List<sup>7</sup>.

Regarding the importance of Yogyakarta's philosophical axis cultural heritage that marks Yogyakarta Special Province pride and recognizing the cultural capital of such heritage, the Special Province Yogyakarta government supports the successful nomination of the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis in the List of Cultural Heritage through institutionalisation, education, as well as zoning and revitalisation, as follows:

### ESTABLISHMENT OF YOGYAKARTA PHILOSOPHICAL AXIS INSTITUTION

Under the 2020 Yogyakarta Special Province government Law number 35, article 2 paragraph 1c on the establishment, organizational structure, duties, functions, and work procedures of technical implementation units at the Yogyakarta Special Province agency, the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis management is carried out by Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis Management Centre<sup>8</sup>. Given such a mandate, the official holds management authority in fabricating, shaping, and displaying the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis. In an attempt to preserve, standardize, manage, and inform the unique meaning of Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis, this institution controls, manipulates, dominates, and brings the official version of Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis narration to the Yogyakarta resident through a program of the civilizing mission. From this point of view, such a program uses the meaning of Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis as a means of reference concerning the principle of proper conduct and intellectual advancement, at least for the Yogyakarta citizen.

7. UNESCO World Heritage Centre – *Historical City Centre of Yogyakarta, 1992-2023*.  
In: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentative%20list/06> (Access: 19 July 2023).

8. Berita Daerah Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 2020. *Peraturan Gubernur Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Nomor 35 tahun 2020*.  
In: <https://jdih.go.id/search/daerah/detail/1167880> (Access: 2023).

## EDUCATING YOGYAKARTA PHILOSOPHICAL AXIS TO THE PEOPLE OF YOGYAKARTA

The desire to propose Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis for the World Heritage list is in accordance with the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis Management Centre to educate ordinary people about the meaning and glorious values of tangible and intangible cultural heritage residing in the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis. For this reason, socialization is set up in 11 urban village communities, from Gowongan Village in the Tugu area, Ngupasan village in the Malioboro area to the Panggungharo Village, particularly around Panggung Krapyak Monument. Moreover, Panggungharjo village officials held a traditional ceremony to preserve the ancestral tradition (*merti*) of Panggung Krapyak through the socialization program of Yogyakarta's Philosophical Axis. A large number of residents in this area attended the first ritual performance. Through education, the local government make sure that the Yogyakarta residents remember and understand the meaning of the Yogyakarta Philosophy Axis, especially when the World Heritage committee comes to Yogyakarta and asks residents about it<sup>9</sup>.

## ZONING AND REVITALIZATION OF YOGYAKARTA PHILOSOPHICAL AXIS AREA

As a strategy through which Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis glorifies the past in the present, the local government implements Indonesian nation-state Law number 11, Cultural Objects Heritage Act of 2010, article 1, paragraph 26, and paragraph 31 on zonation and revitalization (Undang-Undang No. 11 Tahun, 2010). Accordingly, a conservation Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis landscape consists of the core zone covering an area of 997.543 ha. This zone is divided into block I & II, stretching from Marga Utama street to Malioboro areas, including several Dutch Colonial architectural style houses, 4-2 star hotels, offices, and shops with tourist activities; block III, Sultan Palace areas represents traditional Javanese house architecture and day to day Javanese people activities; block IV, Panggung Krapyak Monument areas surrounding by commoners Javanese house. In addition, a buffer zone between River Bedog and River Gajah Wong (east-west boundaries) and Yogyakarta Ring Road (north-south boundary) coping a boundary of 451.787 ha. Aligning with the principle of tangible preservation and intangible value on the core zone, regenerating activities and adjusting new spatial functions are necessary. Such revitalization is carried out on the Tugu monument, the Malioboro area, the north square, and the Panggung Krapyak. In the future, the core zone will be converted into a kind of "living museum of Yogyakarta medieval tradition"<sup>10</sup> (Pratiwi, 2016).

9. Jumali – *Sosialisasi Sumbu Filosofi Lewat Upacara Adat Merti Panggung Krapyak*, 2022. In: <https://jogjapolitan.harianjogja.com/read/2022/07/31/510/1107647/sosialisasi-sumbu-filosofi-lewat-upacara-adat-merti-panggung-krapyak> (Access: 2023); Bibin – *Warga Ngupasan Ikuti Sosialisasi "Sumbu Filosofi" Dinas Kebudayaan DIY*, 2021. In: <https://ngupasanke.jogjakota.go.id/detail/index/17307> (Access: 2023); HERAWATI, Maya – *11 Kelurahan dapat Sosialisasi tentang Sumbu Filosofi*, 2021. In: <https://jogjapolitan.harianjogja.com/read/2021/10/04/510/1084602/11-kelurahan-dapat-sosialisasi-tentang-sumbu-filosofi> (Access: 2023).
10. LEON, Yosef – *Tak Hanya Malioboro, Kawasan Tugu Jogja Sampai Panggung Krapyak Juga Akan Ditata Ulang*, 2023. In: <https://jogjapolitan.harianjogja.com/read/2023/02/09/510/1125790/tak-hanya-malioboro-kawasan-tugu-jogja-sampai-panggung-krapyak-juga-akan-ditata-ulang> (Access: 2023); SETIAWAN, Silvy D. – *Revitalisasi Tugu Perkuat Usulan Sumbu Filosofi ke Unesco*, 2020. In: <https://news.republika.co.id/berita/qlj85m399/revitalisasi-tugu-perkuat-usulan-sumbu-filosofi-ke-unesco> (Access: 2023).

## DUTCH COLONIAL LEGACY ON CULTURAL POLICY OF YOGYAKARTA PHILOSOPHICAL AXIS FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION

Actually, Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis is not only an instrumentalization of cultural policy but also part of the historical urban heritage. As such, Rip and Rodwell (Rip and Rodwell, 2016; 82-89) and Turner and Tomer (Turner and Tomer, 2013: 190-192) argue that a historical urban heritage is a product where spatial (landscape and place), cultural, and particular kinds of tangible and intangible expression are given their meaning temporally (developing from time to time) by those who see, appreciate, and live with them. However, Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis as an intangible expression is ahistorical. Based on my research into Yogyakarta's city historical sources, the narrative of a human's journey from birth to death and union with their god, represented in the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis, could not be found.

Furthermore, the aspects of time and space were also ignored. For example, the Panggung Krapyak monument was built in 1782, and the Sultan Palace was erected in 1755. Logically, the process of life's journey should have started from the younger to the older. Given such reasons, the life cycle of birth from the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis must start from the Sultan Palace to the Krapyak Stage, and not the other way around. In this case, they projected the Yogyakarta people with a colonial ideology of a "People without history", a traditional society isolated from modernism that the government must educate (Wolf, 1982:4). Similarly, the shops [fig.03, see h], the Tugu Hotel [fig.03, see j], the Vredenburg fortress [fig.03, see f], the Residential Palace [fig.03, see e]. Historical evidence of the building space was erased to omit the memory of colonization by the Dutch.

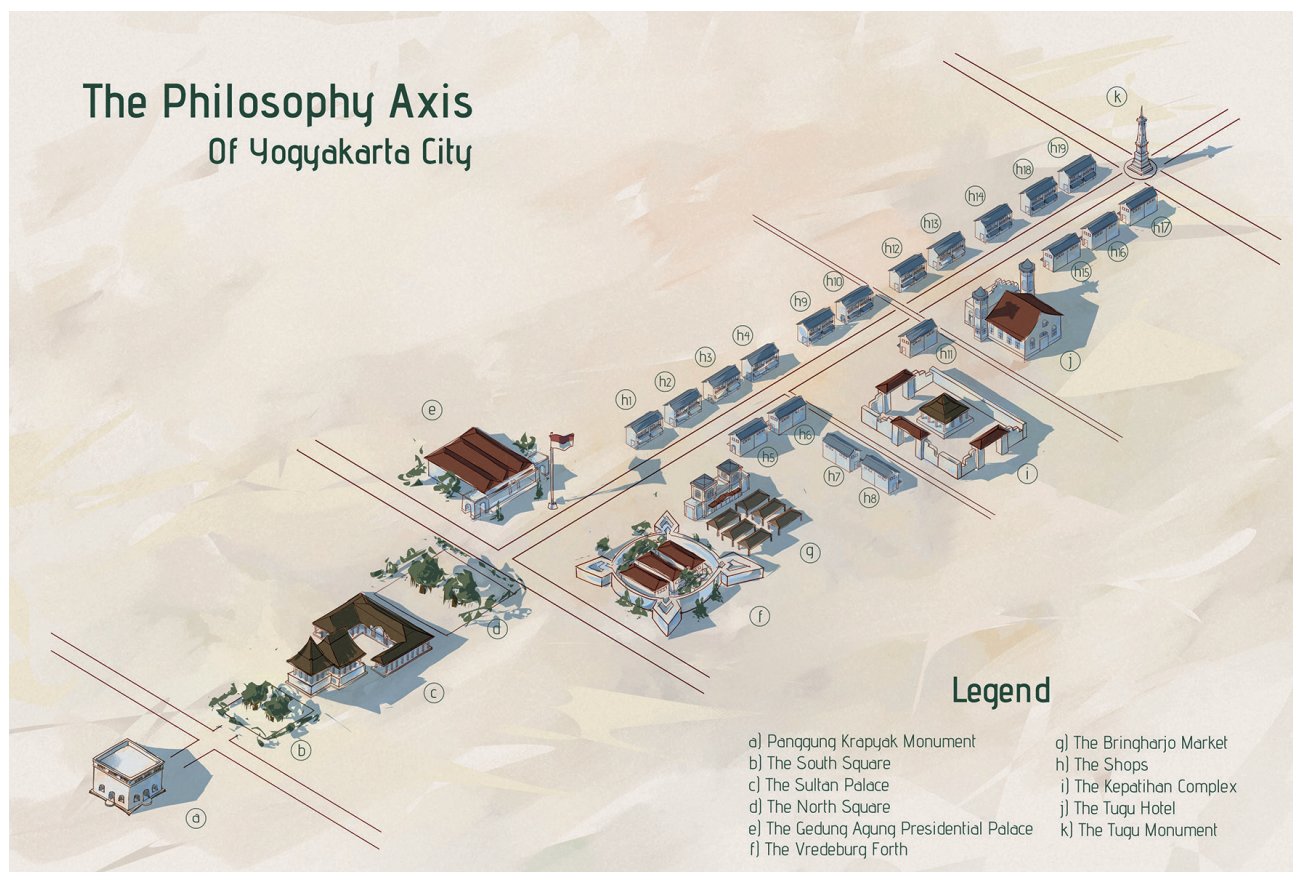


Fig. 03 · The Philosophical Axis of Yogyakarta City (drawn by Mathilda Candra)

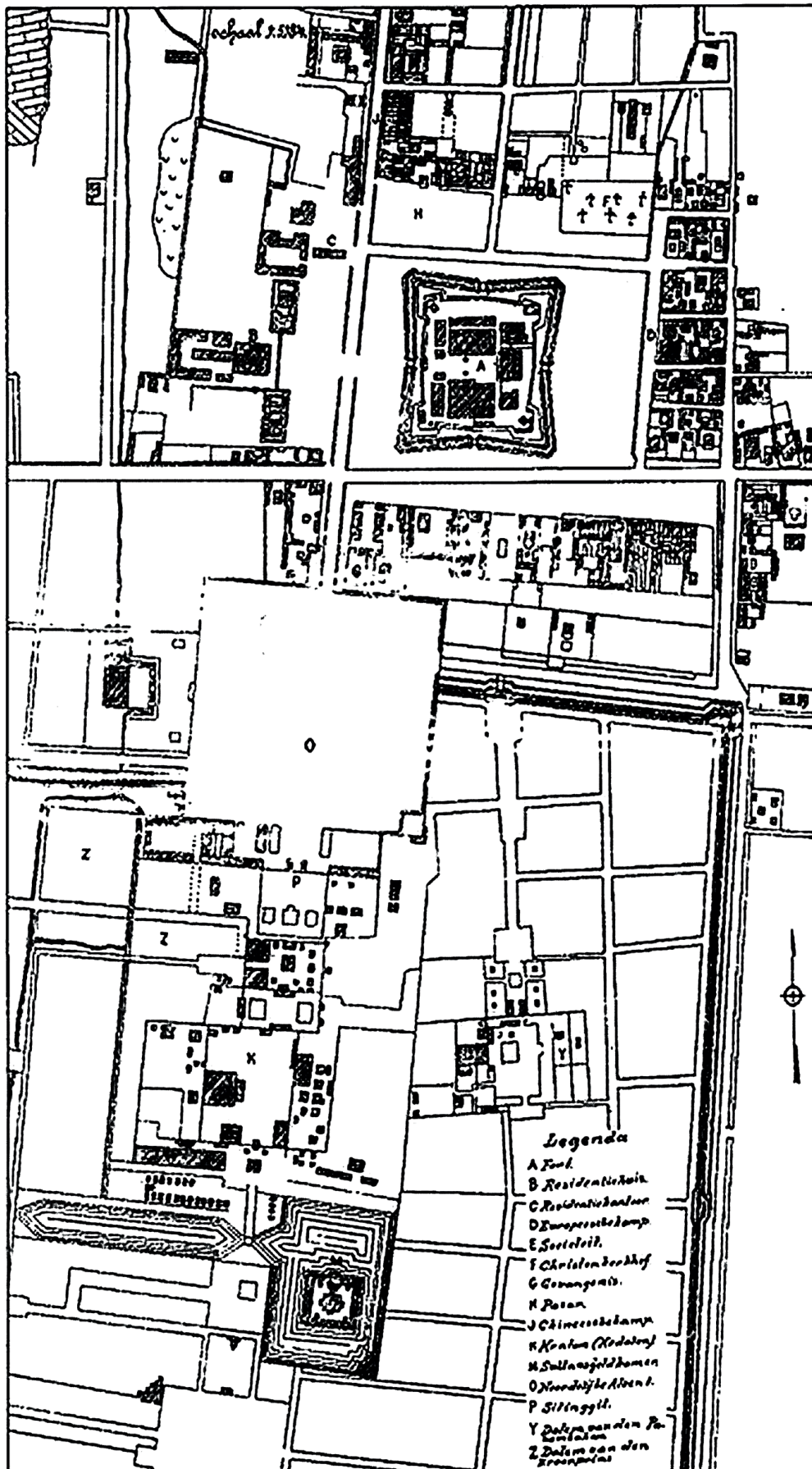


Fig. 04. Yogyakarta city centre as mapped in colonial times, starting from the colonial structures of Fort Vredenburg (A) and Residential Palace (B) (source: Van Bruggen et al, p. 26)



Fig. 05 · The house demolition along the Eastern Yogyakarta Palace fortress (source: Bintarto, 2023)

That very presence of this philosophical axis was acknowledged as well in colonial times, as also speaks from a Dutch publication, richly illustrated with historical photographs and maps on Yogyakarta and Surakarta, from 1998. In this narrative, the philosophical dimension of the axis is invoked in different terms. The Sultan's palace is labelled the magical-religious centre of the universe; it is rooted on the earth in the direction of the sea, and reaches to higher spiritual values in the north with the elevated Sitinggil near the northern aloon-aloon as the start of the elevation (Van Bruggen et al, 1998: 145). However, this historical narrative and visual history of Yogyakarta does not place the Sultan's Palace at the heart of the axis. Rather its maps start from the two main Dutch colonial constructions adjacent to the axis: Fort Vredenburg and the Residential Palace, today called the Kepatihan Complex (Van Bruggen et al, 1998: 26) [fig.04].

Whereas the former Residential Palace in the nomination file now is representing one of the temptations of life (seeking for worldly authority), the colonial Fort Vredenburg is not part of the narrative. One might wonder whether in the nomination file, the highest authority – the Sultan of Yogyakarta city – provides this new interpretation of the imaginary axis as part of a cultural policy to strengthen a narrative that side-lines the colonial aspects of the current Historical City Centre of Yogyakarta, or is mainly instrumental for achieving purposes other than cultural aspects (Vestheim 1994: 65; McGuigan 2004: 61-62; Makarychev, Pyykkönen, and Sokka 2020: 81-82).

While the Sultanate and the Government are trying to ensure that the narrative of Yogyakarta's Philosophical Axis and its iconic buildings are transformed as it was in the past to fabricate the illusion of unique static, authentic heritage, public outcry emerged over the policy to remove residential houses around the Philosophical Axis area [fig.05]. No wonder, The Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute, from 2022 to early 2023, assisted cases related to the elimination and eviction of approximately 2,000 street vendors along Malioboro Street in the name of project Yogyakarta Philosophy Axis for World Heritage nomination<sup>11</sup>.

11. RAMADHAN, Raka – Sumbu Filosofi di Tanah Istimewa: Pembangunan Kawasan dan Penyingkiran Rakyat, 2023. In: <https://lbhyogyakarta.org/2023/03/08/sumbu-filosofi-di-tanah-istimewa-pembangunan-kawasan-dan-penyingkiran-rakyat> (Access: 2023).

Moreover, residents were instructed take down their houses in the Panembahan area, Mergangsan, Yogyakarta, with the argument that revitalization was required of the authenticity of the Eastern Yogyakarta Palace fortress<sup>12</sup>. Reviewing Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969) in which, she identified a broad spectrum of participation ranging from manipulation to citizen control, Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis for World Heritage nomination neglected and manipulated public participation. The Yogyakarta Special Province government never consulted, dialogue, and took part in the discussion on heritage, but only socialized and educated in a one-way heritage meaning of the Yogyakarta Philosophical Axis. In a stunning effort of Yogyakarta government authorities to apply an "authorized heritage discourse" they expressed a desire to assert control over the continuity in meanings of place, mainly to impress the world with its static concept of culture and tutelage responsibility, in order to glorify a time-less Sultanate's Javanese kingdom identity. The nomination of the historic city centre of Yogyakarta thus is instrumental to the concept of world heritage as it has evolved since the 1970s, and has transformed vibrant local cultures into tourist attractions for, in this case both an Indonesian and a global tourism industry (Shaw, 2017: 359-360).

However, I also borrow a strategy from the heritage urban landscape, viewing the city as "a location, a site, a territory, and a hub through which networks and flows of cultural, natural, social, economic, political, and ideological circulate among the citizens", all at once (Ingram, 2015: 5). Further, I add Nara Document 8, which states that all cultures and societies are based on the unique tangible and intangible expression methods that make up their legacy and should be honoured. It also states that the stakeholder who created the cultural heritage should be the first to manage it, followed by the person who looks after it<sup>13</sup>. Only once we acknowledge the complex ownership relationships surrounding the material legacy of the past can we begin to address whether our humanity or the tourism sector unethically contributes to eradicating living cultures that have also been imposed due to maintaining the world heritage site. In fact, if the living present is not sacrificed, the past only has significance for the future.

## CONCLUSION

Since 1755, the city of Yogyakarta has been the capital of the Ngayogyakarta Sultanate. Formerly, Sultan Hamengku Buwono I – the first Yogyakarta Sultanate – created the imaginary axis of Yogyakarta city to legitimize his position as the ruler of the city, sea, and mountain. Recently, the Sultanate of Yogyakarta and the provincial government of Yogyakarta Special Region have fabricated the Philosophical Axis of Yogyakarta for the World Heritage Site nomination.

In order to achieve this goal, all means were taken to reach the success of the World Heritage nomination. As a result, the Philosophical Axis of Yogyakarta imbued the colonialism ideas, including the narrative that eliminates the history of current residents' occupation, the dismantling of their houses and businesses in the Philosophy Axis area solely for the sake of "restoring" (and reconstructing) the so-called authenticity, masterpiece, and uniqueness of buildings and landscapes in the past. In this case, the provincial government of Yogyakarta Special Region and the Sultanate of Yogyakarta wrote their Philosophy Axis of Yogyakarta just as the Dutch colonialists wrote their history, eliminating the indigenous history – people without history – and fabricating the indigenous history from the Dutch perspective.

12. BINTARTO, Agus – *Revitalisasi Benteng Timur Keraton Yogya, Puluhan Rumah Dibongkar, Kembalikan Bentuk 200 Tahun Lalu*, 2023. In: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_MlcV2m\\_HM4&t=19s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MlcV2m_HM4&t=19s) (Access: 2023); HIDAYAT, Wihdan, ARGHI, Yogi – *Revitalisasi Benteng Timur Keraton Yogya Puluhan Rumah Dibongkar*, 2023. In: <https://visual.republika.co.id/berita/rxiufe314/revitalisasi-benteng-timur-keraton-yogya-puluhan-rumah-dibongkar> (Access: 2023).

13. ICOMOS – *The Nara Document on Authenticity*, 2012. In: <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/386-the-nara-document-on-authenticity-1994> (Access: 2023).

Overall, the Philosophical Axis of Yogyakarta contradicts the concept of Historic Urban Landscape, which suggests democratizing heritage for the sake of the people by involving stakeholder participation in narrating historical formations, dialogue, and decision-making. Moreover, the nomination of the Philosophy Axis of Yogyakarta to the world heritage by the Yogyakarta Provincial government needs to provide opportunities, space, and time in the future for the sustainability of life and social transformation for residents who live around the Philosophical Axis area, instead of destructing their houses in order to construct a timeless present.

## REFERENCES

- ALI, Mohammad – *Pengantar Ilmu Sedjarah Indonesia*. Jakarta: Bhratara, 1963.
- ARNSTEIN, Sherry R. – “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35 - 4 (1969): 216-224.
- ATMOSUDIRO, Sumijati, NUGRAHANI, Djaliati Sri – *Menapak Jejak Arkeologi Indonesia*. Jakarta: MU 3 Books, 2002.
- BLOEMBERGEN, Marieke, EICKHOFF, Martijn – *The Politics of Heritage in Indonesia: A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- BOOTH, Anne – “Splitting, Splitting and Splitting Again: A Brief History of the Development of Regional Government in Indonesia since Independence”. *Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 167 - 1 (2011): 31-59.
- CHUSBIANTORO, Jauhari, SULISTYA, Vincensius Agus – *Buku Panduan Museum Benteng Vredenburg Yogyakarta*. Yogyakarta: Kementerian Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Direktorat Sejarah dan Purbakala, 2012.
- Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta Management Unit – *The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historical Landmark*. Yogyakarta: Balai Pengelolaan Kawasan Sumbu Filosofis Yogyakarta, 2022.
- ELSON, Robert Edward – *The Idea of Indonesia: A History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- ERB, Maribeth – “Shaping a ‘new Manggarai’: Struggles over Culture and Tradition in an Eastern Indonesia Regency”. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 46 - 3 (2005): 323-334.
- INGRAM, Mark – “Emplacement and the Politics of Heritage in Low-Income Neighbourhoods of Marseille”. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22 - 2 (2015): 117-130.
- LOGAN, William S. – “Closing Pandora’s Box: Human Rights Conundrums in Cultural Heritage Protection”. SILVERMAN, Helaine, RUGGLES, D. Fairchild (eds.) – *Cultural Heritage and Human Rights*. New York: Springer, 2007, pp. 33-52.
- MAKARYCHEV, Andrey, PYYKKÖNEN, Miikka, SOKKA, Sakarias – “Culture as an Instrument”. *Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidsskrift*, 23 - 2 (2020): 81-85.
- MCGREGOR, Katherine E. – “Indonesia: A Case Study of Indonesian National Museum, Formerly the Batavia Museum”. KERLOGUE, Fiona (ed.) – *Performing Objects: Museums, Material Culture and Performance in Southeast Asia*. London: The Horniman Museum and Gardens, 2004, pp. 15-29.
- MCGUIGAN, Jim – *Rethinking Cultural Policy*. Berkshire England: Open University Press, 2004.
- MUMFORD, Lewis – *The city in history*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1961.
- MURNIANTO, Gatot – “Legenda Ratu Kidul, Merapi, Krapyak”. *Media Wisata*, 2 - 2 (2004): 1-12.
- Pemerintah Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta – *Peraturan Daerah Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Nomor 6 Tahun 2012 tentang Pelestarian Warisan Budaya dan Cagar Budaya*. Lembaran Daerah Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta tahun 2012 Nomor 6. Yogyakarta: Sekretaris Daerah Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2012.
- PICARD, Michel – “Touristification and Balinization in a time of Reformasi”. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 31 - 89 (2003): 108-118.
- POTT, Peter H., SUTAARGA, Amir – “Arrangements Concluded or in Progress for the Return of Objects: the Netherlands-Indonesia”. *Museum*, 31 - 1 (1979): 38-42.

- PRATIWI, Dian L. – “Pemerintah Daerah DIY dalam Mewujudkan Yogyakarta sebagai Warisan Budaya Dunia”. *Buletin Mayangkara*, 2 (2016): 10-13.
- PRİYONO, Umar – *Buku Profil Yogyakarta City of Philosophy*. Yogyakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2015.
- Republik Indonesia – “Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945”. Jakarta: Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sekretariat Jenderal, 1945.
- Republik Indonesia – “Undang-Undang Nomor 5 Tahun 1992 tentang Benda Cagar Budaya”. *Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia*, 3470 (1992).
- Republik Indonesia – “Undang-Undang Nomor 22 Tahun 1999 tentang Pemerintahan Daerah”. *Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia*, 60 (1999).
- Republik Indonesia – “Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2010 tentang Cagar Budaya”. *Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia*, 5168 (2010).
- RICKLEFS, Merle Calvin – *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- SEDYAWATI, Edi, KEURS, Pieter ter – “Scholarship, Curiosity and Politics”. HARDIATI, Endang Sri, KEURS, Pieter ter (eds.) – *Indonesia the Discovery of the Past*. Leiden: KIT Publishers, 2005, pp. 20-32.
- SEKTIADI, Sekti S. – “Perkembangan Bangunan di Lingkungan Keraton Yogyakarta”. *Buletin Mayangkara*, 5 (2017): 16-19.
- SHAW, Wendy M.K. – “In Situ: The Contraindications of World Heritage”. *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, 6 - 2 (2017): 339-365.
- SILVER, Christopher – “Tourism, Cultural Heritage, and Human Rights in Indonesia: The Challenges of an Emerging Democratic Society”. SILVERMAN, Helaine, RUGGLES, D. Fairchild (eds.) – *Cultural Heritage and Human Rights*. New York: Springer, 2007, pp. 78-91.
- SOEKMONO, Roostrianawahiti – *Langkah Pemerintah Tahun 1948 dalam Bidang Kepurbakalaan: Landasan untuk Pengembangan Arkeologi Indonesia*. Jakarta: Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Indonesia, 1990.
- SUDARMADI, Tular – *Between Colonial Legacies and Grassroots Movements: Exploring Cultural Heritage Practice in the Ngadha and Manggarai Region of Flores*. Amsterdam: Vrije University, 2014 (PhD thesis), In: <https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/42127420/title+page.pdf> (Access: 2024).
- SUWITO, Yuwono Sri – “Mengenal Sumbu Imajiner dan Sumbu Filosofi Kraton Yogyakarta”. *Buletin Mayangkara*, 2 (2016): 6-9.
- The Governor-General of the Netherlands-Indies*. Monuments ordinance. Batavia: State Gazette, 1931.
- TURNER, Michael, TOMER, Tal – “Community Participation and the Tangible and Intangible Values of Urban Heritage”. *Heritage & Society*, 6 - 2 (2013): 185-198.
- VAN BRUGGEN, Mariska Heijmans, HERING, Bob Berthy, VOSKUIL, Robert, WASSING, René S. – *Djokja en Solo: Beeld van de Vorsteden*. Purmerend: Asia Maior, 1998.
- VESTHEIM, Geir – “Instrumental cultural policy in Scandinavian countries: A critical historical perspective”. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 1 - 1 (1994): 57-71.
- VICKERS, Adrian – *A History of Modern Indonesia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- WOLF, Eric – *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.