

The Dualism of Power Impact in the Kasepuh Palace Cirebon as an Existence of Identity Politics and Legitimacy Orientation

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ABSTRACT

The Cirebon Kasepuhan Palace, that has been operated for centuries and is recognized as a cultural heritage, has not been immune to internal conflicts that increasingly affect well-established political dynamics. This paper highlights tensions surrounding the Cirebon Kasepuhan Palace, which contains a dualism of power that has escalated since 2017. The crisis that occurred relating to physical clashes, struggles for customary legitimacy, competition over cultural assets and tourism, which has triggered public and local government involvement. This paper uses secondary data to constantly highlights that despite its traditional nature, the Cirebon Kasepuhan Palace continues to be misused as an arena for symbolic and material power contest in the modern political system in Indonesia, which directly reflects how even identity, heritage, and cultural heritage can be politicized by local actors. This research is capable of contributing as a reference in a discussion of local government in formulating policy approaches that are more prone to the dynamics of cultural conflict and local context.

Keywords : Cirebon Kasepuhan Palace, Power Dualism, Identity Politic, Legitimacy

INTRODUCTION

The Kasepuhan Palace is one of the most prestigious cultural historical palaces based in Cirebon. This factor comes from the fact that this palace is not just a building, but it is an icon of collective identity that correlates with lineage, religious rituals, and local traditions. The Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon is located at Jalan Keraton Kasepuhan No. 43, Kasepuhan Village, Lemahwungkuk District, and has been standing since 1529. Initially, the Kasepuhan Palace was built by Prince Zainul Arifin to expand the rest house of the Pakungwati Palace, the first palace in Cirebon, built in 1430 (E. Lestari, 2025).

The Kasepuhan Palace occupies 25 hectares of land in Cirebon, comprising a variety of buildings. The Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon, West Java, is also one of the regions in the archipelago with a long history of Islamic culture. These factors could be seen in the six pillars symbolizing the pillars of faith, and the total number of pillars representing the attributes of God. Therefore, the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon has been based on Islamic religious values since its inception (E. Lestari, 2025).

Due to these historical and cultural factors, if the authority structure within it experiences disruption, the impact quickly spreads to the public sphere. This can potentially threaten the image of cultural heritage, disrupt tourism, and divide local communities due to symbolic loyalties. This domino effect demonstrates how what appears to be an internal issue of a noble family can potentially escalate into a public issue, triggering intervention by traditional institutions, mediation by local governments, and debates about customary law versus state law.

It is clear that even centuries-old historical buildings recognized as cultural heritage sites are not immune to internal conflicts that can potentially impact Indonesia's established political system. The division of power and uncertainty surrounding succession since the Cirebon Palace's inception have

also fueled conflicts that prioritize internal interests over the collective interests of the community. As discussed extensively in this article, the conflict over dual rulers often creates confusion within the Kasepuhan Cirebon Palace.

It is clear that the Kasepuhan Cirebon Palace has captured public attention in this decade not because of its cultural splendor and the inheritance of Indonesian values, but because of internal conflicts that threaten social stability and the palace's continued function as a cultural heritage site. Therefore, this article aims to highlight the tensions surrounding the intervention in the continuity of succession rights and customary legitimacy within the Kasepuhan Cirebon Palace, which have increasingly become regional political issues over time. This case involves a struggle for authority, legitimacy, resources, economy, and social influence of the Cirebon community, which positions it clearly as a political issue, especially at the level of local politics and cultural identity politics.

It is undeniable that over time, the pressures of social and economic change have led some segments to view the palace as a key cultural heritage that needs to be preserved. Meanwhile, internal conflicts are increasingly seen as a threat to collective values, making this aspect sensitive and easily politicized. The conflict at the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon is not solely about internal issues within the royal family. This phenomenon reflects how identity politics, claims of lineage, and symbolic power can re-emerge in modern society, potentially impacting collective sustainability and well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Power in Political Science

In political science, power is understood as the ability of an individual or group to influence the behavior of others according to their will. Power is not always present in the form of formal state institutions; it can also operate through collectively recognized social norms, symbols, traditions, and cultural structures. Max Weber defined power as the opportunity for an individual or group to exercise their will within a social relationship, even when facing resistance from others. Thus, power is relational and always closely linked to the social context and the basis of legitimacy that supports.

In traditional societies, power is often institutionalized through customary institutions passed down through generations, one of which is the palace. The palace serves not only as a cultural center and historical symbol, but also as a traditional political institution with social and symbolic authority. The palace's power stems from customary legitimacy, lineage, and community recognition, which foster formal, uncoerced obedience. Therefore, the palace's position within the social structure cannot be separated from the practice of political power, even though it exists outside the modern state system.

Several studies have shown that the palace institution continues to wield significant political influence in contemporary society. A study of the power of the King of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate confirms that the palace king still plays a significant role through charisma, cultural symbols, and publicly recognized historical legitimacy (Rahmansyah et al., 2022). This power is not realized through state administrative authority, but rather through symbolic control and cultural authority. Thus, the palace can be understood as a non-state political actor with the capacity to influence power relations and social identities at both the local and national levels.

Building upon these findings, it is important to situate this study within the broader landscape of previous research by clarifying its distinct analytical contribution. While earlier studies on palace dynamics particularly in Yogyakarta and other Javanese courts tend to emphasize conflicts over succession, legitimacy disputes, or the contestation of royal authority, the pattern of dualism observed in the Kasepuhan Palace presents a substantively different configuration. Unlike conventional elite conflicts that are often centered on formal claims to power or lineage-based disputes, the dualism in Kasepuhan reflects a more complex interplay between symbolic legitimacy, fragmented authority, and

competing interpretations of tradition itself.

This study therefore highlights that dualism in Kasepuhan is not merely a conflict between rival elites, but a negotiated and evolving structure of authority in which multiple actors claim cultural authenticity and social recognition simultaneously. In this sense, the findings extend existing literature by demonstrating that palace conflicts cannot always be reduced to linear struggles for dominance, but may instead produce hybrid forms of authority that coexist and reshape local power relations. By emphasizing this distinction, the research offers a clearer analytical contribution, positioning Kasepuhan as a unique case that enriches the understanding of palace institutions as dynamic and adaptive non-state political actors.

Identity Politics

Identity politics refers to political practices that utilize social, cultural, religious, ethnic, or lineage identities as the primary basis for mobilizing support and legitimizing power. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that identity is not merely a fixed social attribute, but a dynamic political construct shaped through discourse, historical memory, and institutional practices. Mietzner (2020) argues that identity politics operates through social boundary-making processes that intensify political polarization by transforming cultural and symbolic affiliations into politically salient “ingroup” and “outgroup” categories.

In practice, identity politics emerges not only in modern electoral contests but also in localized power struggles rooted in tradition, heritage, and cultural authority. In the Indonesian context, Mietzner (2020) demonstrates that identity-based mobilization functions as a key mechanism for legitimizing authority and narrowing democratic space, particularly where historical symbolism and religious-cultural narratives are embedded within formal political institutions. Therefore, identity politics tends to operate most effectively in societies with strong symbolic ties and historically grounded systems of legitimacy.

The main characteristics of identity politics are an emphasis on group differences, the use of sacred symbols, historical narratives, and claims of authentic identity as a basis for legitimacy. Identity politics often operates through the articulation of cultural symbols deemed to have higher moral and historical value than formal rules or legal rationality. In this context, identity is not merely a social marker but also a political instrument capable of fostering group loyalty and solidarity. As a result, identity politics often produces social polarization because it places the interests of certain groups above broader collective interests (Apriando et al., 2023)

In the context of local politics, identity politics operates through cultural hegemony, namely the dominance of meanings and symbols widely accepted by society. Traditional institutions such as the palace can become a primary source of cultural identity, which is then politicized by elites to gain recognition and power. When cultural symbols, lineages, and traditional rituals are used as tools of political legitimacy, cultural spaces transform into arenas for power contestation. Thus, conflicts within the palace are no longer purely cultural, but rather reflect the practice of identity politics operating on a local and traditional scale.

Theory of Power Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a key concept in understanding why power is accepted, obeyed, and recognized by society. Weber defines legitimacy as the belief of social actors in the validity of an authority, such that domination is exercised not merely through coercion, but through voluntary compliance grounded in perceived rightfulness. Power, therefore, becomes sustainable when it is internalized as legitimate by those who are governed, rather than imposed solely through force (Weber, 1968/2019). Thus, legitimacy constitutes the primary foundation for the endurance of authority within a political system;

without it, power is vulnerable to rejection, contestation, and social delegitimization.

Weber distinguishes three ideal types of legitimate domination: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. Traditional legitimacy derives from long-established customs and inherited authority; charismatic legitimacy rests on devotion to the exceptional personal qualities of a leader; and rational-legal legitimacy is grounded in belief in formal rules, laws, and bureaucratic procedures. In the context of traditional institutions such as palaces, traditional and charismatic forms of legitimacy tend to prevail over rational-legal authority, as obedience is more strongly tied to heritage, symbolism, and personal allegiance than to codified legal norms (Weber, 1968/2019).

In local political practices, traditional legitimacy often intersects with identity politics, particularly when lineage, cultural symbols, and customary rituals are used as the basis for claims to power. A shift in legitimacy from a focus on collective well-being to strengthening group identity can trigger protracted contests over authority. Several studies of local politics indicate that identity-based legitimacy conflicts tend to be difficult to resolve due to the lack of mutually agreed-upon written rules. Therefore, the issue of legitimacy within customary institutions is not only related to who holds power, but also how that power is exercised and for whose benefit.

To further strengthen this discussion, it is important to expand the comparison with previous studies that examine similar patterns of dualism and legitimacy conflict. For example, studies on the Juridical Analysis of the Position of the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace as a Cultural Heritage Area (Fernanda et al., 2024) have documented prolonged internal divisions marked by competing royal claims and fragmented authority, where legitimacy is contested not only through lineage but also through recognition by social and political actors. Unlike more consolidated systems of succession, these conflicts often persist due to overlapping sources of authority and the absence of a single, universally accepted mechanism for resolving disputes.

However, the findings in this study suggest a somewhat different pattern. While the Surakarta case still shows a strong anchoring in dynastic legitimacy and elite contestation, the dualism identified here appears to be more deeply shaped by the politicization of cultural identity and the reinterpretation of tradition by multiple actors. This indicates that legitimacy is not only inherited or formally claimed, but also actively constructed and negotiated in the public sphere.

By placing this study in comparison with such cases, its analytical position becomes clearer within the existing body of literature. This research does not merely reaffirm that legitimacy conflicts are inherent in customary institutions, but demonstrates that their dynamics can vary significantly depending on how identity, culture, and authority are mobilized. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of palace dualism as a spectrum of contestation ranging from structured dynastic disputes to more fluid and identity driven configurations of power.

METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in social phenomenology, which aims to interpret and systematically describe social phenomena as they are experienced, constructed, and represented in their contemporary context. This method emphasizes the analysis of meaning, discourse, and social interpretation derived from both lived experiences and mediated narratives. Accordingly, this study is based on a structured literature review of peer-reviewed articles and digital news outlets discussing the Cirebon Palace, focusing on issues of legitimacy and the dualism of power as articulated in cultural and political representations (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

To enhance methodological clarity, the structured literature review in this study applies explicit temporal and selection criteria. The data sources are limited to publications from the previous five years, ensuring both relevance and contemporaneity of the analysis. The inclusion criteria consist of

peer-reviewed journal articles and credible digital news reports, sources that explicitly discuss the Cirebon Palace or related customary institutions, and materials addressing themes of legitimacy, authority, conflict, or dualism of power. Sources that do not directly engage with these themes or lack sufficient analytical depth are excluded. In total, this study analyzes 21 selected articles and news reports, which are systematically reviewed to identify recurring patterns, narratives, and interpretative frameworks. By specifying the time frame and selection criteria, this research ensures greater transparency, replicability, and inflexibility in the process of data collection and analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Background of the Cirebon Palace Conflict

Cirebon City, which covers an area of approximately 37,358 km² with a population of around 450,000 inhabitants, functions as a strategic transit and cultural node connecting the national capital with other regions on the island of Java. The city is widely recognized through various cultural and socio-economic designations, such as the City of Saints, Port City, Commercial City, Transit City, and Cultural City, reflecting its historical role as a center of trade, religious dissemination, and cultural production (Aspinall & Warburton, 2018). These designations are rooted in the city's historical development as a coastal polity that integrated local traditions, Islamic authority, and regional political networks.

In this context, Cirebon's identity as a Cultural City is particularly significant, as it is the only urban center in West Java that hosts three palaces: the Kasepuhan Palace, the Kanoman Palace, and the Kacirebonan Palace. These palaces function as interconnected historical institutions that preserve royal artifacts, architectural heritage, and cultural memory, positioning them as both symbolic and political centers within the broader socio-historical landscape of Cirebon (Ricklefs, 2020).

Throughout their historical development, the cultural continuity maintained within the palace environment has been closely intertwined with internal political dynamics that shaped the governance structure of the Cirebon Sultanate. The transformation of authority within the palaces illustrates how cultural heritage and systems of rule evolved in parallel, producing recurring tensions over leadership, territorial jurisdiction, and symbolic legitimacy.

The death of the fifth Sultan of Cirebon, Panembahan Girilaya, in 1667 marked a critical turning point that led to the division of the sultanate into the Kasepuhan Sultanate under Samsudin Martawijaya, the Kanoman Sultanate under Badrudin Kartawijaya, and the Kacirebonan Sultanate under Prince Wangsakerta. This fragmentation reconfigured the political and territorial structure of Cirebon's royal authority and laid the historical foundation for enduring disputes over leadership, legitimacy, and symbolic power that continue to shape intra-palace relations to the present day (Ricklefs, 2020).

The Impact of Dualism of Power in the Kasepuhan Palace

In the context of the power of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon, it can be seen that there are values that contradict the principle of the division and control of power firmly held by the Indonesian state, namely the concept of *Trias politica* by Montesquieu (Hamja, 2020). In his book entitled *The Spirit of the Law*, this principle of the division of power divides the executive, judicial, and legislative powers that are currently applied in Indonesia. In its application, all parts still balance and complement each other, thus creating a pluralistic and decentralized leadership. Meanwhile, the concept of dualism of power theoretically refers to two centers of power that tend to compete for absolute power and are not oriented towards situations that prioritize synergy, also potentially creating overlapping policies of a leader in leading (Aristy, 2025).

Examining the leadership of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon, an ambiguous dualism of power exists, not precisely centered on one party positioned as sultan, but rather on another party intervening and claiming to be the legitimate sultan. In this case, the parties competing for the throne are PRA Luqman Zulkaedin, who was crowned Sultan Sepuh XV on August 30, 2020, through an official *jumenengan* (tribunal), and Raden Rahardjo Djali, who declared himself Sultan Aloeda II in a rival coronation on August 18, 2021. This coronation triggered a social movement in the form of factions within society, a move that is in stark contrast to the highly respected ideology of Indonesian society, namely Pancasila. The emphasis on unity and collectivity of a complete society could be immediately eroded if there is no mediation in this increasingly protracted conflict, even potentially causing division within society.

In this protracted and unresolved conflict, both sides sought to reinforce their customary legitimacy through the *Jumenengan* (traditional ceremony) a traditional ceremony commemorating the accession of a king or queen to the throne, or perhaps even referring to their own coronation ceremony (Setyawan, 2025). Luqman and Rahardjo each asserted their claim to the title of sultan and established their own palace official structures. This competitive struggle between leaders inevitably sparked collective action among the opposing factions, even culminating in immoral acts and violence in the Kasepuhan complex on August 25, 2021 (Rohman, 2021), involving a rock-throwing riot aimed at intervening and even injuring the opposition. Rahardjo, however, opposed Luqman's coronation and filed a lawsuit with the Cirebon District Court in November 2021, initiating a battle for legitimacy within the state.

This power struggle not only harms the Kasepuhan community, but also often affects the credibility and values of Indonesian society as stipulated in Pancasila, namely the priority of unity, togetherness, and deliberation to reach agreement. In this case, the ruler of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon himself does not position himself as a figure that is used as a reference by his community. Therefore, the community of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon increasingly reflects and validates the anarchic actions based on the intervention of their identity and how the division of sources of authority, both symbolic and administrative, triggers confusion and even causes unrest among the community who demand the replacement of a single leader. This is found to be detrimental not only to the palace, which faces obstacles in its reign, but also to the community in its survival (Tendi, 2023).

This conflict is also rooted in the absence of written rules and agreements between the royal family and their line of heirs, which results in all family components feeling entitled to the throne of the Kasepuhan Cirebon Palace. If there is an imbalance in the internal system of the palace itself, how can the community reach an agreement? In addition to internal conflict, this dualism of power conflict can also affect traditional activities, tourism, asset management, and cultural symbols of the palace. It has the potential to create stagnation and governance that does not run conductively, therefore this can be studied as a reflective material for the government & political system in Indonesia, how the government only has the authority to mediate, not to intervene in cultural power.

The Face of Identity Politics in Indonesia

The concept of an identity politics system theoretically refers to a system that prioritizes group identity or specific symbols to gain political influence. In today's practical and modern political systems, identity politics is often used for purposes that are not oriented towards unity and solidarity. Rather, its use is intended as a political tool to garner votes in elections and gain mass support to give a party power. Essentially, identity politics is a political phenomenon that emphasizes differences in identity (Wingarta et al., 2021).

When viewed from the perspective of the dual power conflict of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon, this conflict explicitly demonstrates the existence of a culture of identity politics that

continues to exist in Indonesia to this day. This system is in stark contrast to the political system championed in Indonesia, namely based on Pancasila, which emphasizes a democratic, inclusive system, and a ruler's interest orientation centered on the people, not merely their position of power. The dual power conflict of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon illustrates all the dynamics, symbols, and methods of mobilizing support similar to national political contestation, only on a cultural scale. For example, each Sultan's camp uses narratives of cultural identity such as emphasizing Sunan Gunung Jati's lineage, echoing the lineage of the lineage, and utilizing the sacredness of the jumenengan to seek public validation and claim truth over power.

The societal factors that ultimately form separate factions are also one of the impacts of a system based on identity. Communities have a sense of togetherness and loyalty to existing culture, genealogical solidarity, namely bonds of brotherhood formed based on shared ancestry and blood relations (Jafar & Hakim, 2020), shared social group principles, and the existence of symbolic beliefs. In the case of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon, the community used social movement tactics based on shared responsibility and fate to face difficult times, namely by taking collective action against previous unrest (Noer, 2021). Community members are based on a sense of togetherness that requires them to strengthen their group's collectivity.

Indonesia currently has a modern political system that prioritizes written rules for problem solving, as stated in the principle of legality (due process of law) that all government actions must be based on valid and written laws (Kabat et al., 2024). However, in the context of the dualism of power in the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon, the legitimacy of the struggle through identity dominates state law because it is considered a cultural conflict that is difficult to intervene. This relates to how this dualism of power conflict limits state authority through customary autonomy, namely the authority granted to indigenous legal communities to govern themselves based on the laws and traditions applicable in their customary territories (Hasanah, 2021). The fact that this conflict is rooted in the identity of the leader who deserves the throne, and not a violation of legality, also factors in the limited ability of the state's basic law to intervene and provide a middle ground to address the dualism of power conflict in the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon (Prasetyo et al., 2024).

The Problem of Legitimacy without Prioritizing Collective Welfare

In theory, the form of welfare is the goal of satisfying human needs, which thus also implies an orientation toward one's desires and passions. Meanwhile, collective welfare refers to an attribute or action that provides benefits to the individual and society at large. This is often based on principles of justice, environmental sustainability, and social welfare that are agreed upon and beneficial to the broader community (Hehanussa, 2023). Therefore, an orientation toward collective welfare plays a vital and essential role for legitimacy, in order to maintain the continuity and collective well-being of society.

Meanwhile, the pattern described by the existence of identity politics in the Kasepuhan Cirebon Palace discussed in this paper emphasizes hereditary identity, rather than performance or written rules as the basis for legitimacy. According to Max Weber's theory, he explains that he refers to the definition of legitimacy based on the belief of a subject who chooses to grant another subject authority and power (Nikolakakis, 2024). Therefore, legitimacy is a social belief that makes a power accepted and obeyed not by coercion, but by shared values. When the ruler of the Kasepuhan Cirebon Palace uses the basis of his legitimacy to achieve power, cultural symbols are indirectly used for politics, thus transforming the throne of customary power into an arena for identity contestation.

Furthermore according to Max Weber, traditional legitimacy works by internalizing values also normatively idealized in Pancasila, such as social unity and harmony, but through cultural, not procedural. Belief in lineage and sacred symbols leads people to voluntarily grant recognition and

loyalty, creating social order without the need for formal legal intervention. However, at the same time, because this legitimacy does not proceed through inclusive deliberation mechanisms, its practice can shift from the democratic principles of Pancasila to the reinforcement of exclusive, identity-based claims.

Thus, Weber's traditional legitimacy not only explains why power remains recognized but also demonstrates how Pancasila values are practiced in a filtered manner at the local level, where on the one hand strengthening social cohesion, but on the other hand potentially limiting the principles of appropriateness and context that should be at the core of the Indonesian political system.

The dualistic power conflict within the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon clearly illustrates the rulers' priorities, which are not focused on the people. This is because the struggle for the throne does not pursue collective well-being and benefits for the well-being of society, but instead sacrifices social, cultural, and economic sustainability to satisfy group interests. For example, each faction is preoccupied with proving their worthiness to occupy the throne based on lineage and succession through culturally oriented activities, rather than focusing on ensuring cultural preservation, maintaining the palace's image, and managing heritage assets for the benefit of the community. In this case, when legitimacy tends to be centered on the ego of power, collective well-being is gradually marginalized and even deprioritized.

This conflict also triggered a domino effect, or ongoing impact, on the sustainability of the community and the position of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon itself. The Kasepuhan Palace should serve as a place for the preservation and development of culture in the Cirebon region through traditional ceremonies, art performances, and cultural events, which directly protect and promote regional cultural life (D. Lestari et al., 2021). The novelty of this research lies in the shift in focus from historical symbolic studies to a critical analysis of the role of the Kasepuhan Palace in dealing with conflict and encouraging the sustainability of local culture and society.

Furthermore, the palace should contribute to the introduction and development of cultural tourism, which provides benefits in the form of economic stability for the local community. As an essential function, the Kasepuhan Palace also serves as a cultural education institution that encourages active community participation, especially among the younger generation, in cultural activities. By teaching these cultural values, the palace should strive to preserve cultural heritage and build a strong cultural awareness among the community.

Overall, the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon is a cultural center that plays a vital role in preserving, promoting, and developing Cirebon's regional culture (Hasanah, 2021). However, the conflict, which has even sparked collective unrest and division within the community, increases the potential for hindering the cultural education agenda for the wider community. This indicates an unfavorable environment and does not reflect the values of Indonesian society that are promoted to tourists. There are also immediate impacts, such as the loss of access to stable incomes and the difficulty of carrying out traditional activities.

In this case, the issue of legitimacy should be resolved through collective customary deliberation to maintain the conduciveness and values of Indonesian society. Mediation through this deliberation can be carried out through the actions of the extended family, customary leaders, and affected indigenous communities. However, in reality, due to a lack of power, each faction carries out its own *jumenengan* activities, appointing rulers according to its own beliefs and desires, and even suing each other in court. This lack of collective and open deliberation demonstrates a priority on victory and power over the throne, rather than the stability, continuity of customary law and the well-being of the community.

CONCLUSION

The overall chronology and impact of the dual power conflict within the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon demonstrate that this struggle is not merely a matter of customary succession, but a broader reflection of how identity politics and legitimacy contestation continue to shape political dynamics in Indonesia. As outlined in the objectives of this study, which seek to analyze the patterns of legitimacy and identify possible interventions to maintain the continuity of succession rights, the findings reveal that hereditary identity and cultural symbolism have become the dominant basis for authority, often overriding considerations of collective welfare. This indicates that identity-based legitimacy, when left unchecked, can transform customary succession into prolonged conflict.

Furthermore, the persistence of this dualism shows that the absence of clear, collectively accepted mechanisms for succession has allowed competing claims to coexist without resolution. In this context, intervention becomes essential not necessarily through direct state imposition, but through the strengthening of internal governance within the palace. This includes the need to institutionalize clearer succession guidelines, encourage inclusive deliberation among stakeholders, and reorient leadership practices toward shared cultural and social responsibilities. Such measures are crucial to ensure that succession remains a unifying process rather than a source of fragmentation.

The impacts of the conflict also extend beyond the internal structure of the palace. The weakening of its collective function as a cultural center, ritual space, and local economy demonstrates how unresolved legitimacy disputes can disrupt broader social stability. Communities become divided along identity lines, reinforcing factionalism and limiting social cohesion. This condition directly contradicts the principles of Pancasila, which emphasize unity, deliberation, and collective welfare. The gap in the rulers' understanding and application of these values further exacerbates the conflict, allowing personal or group interests to dominate over public-oriented leadership.

From this perspective, the Kasepuhan case illustrates that the sustainability of customary institutions depends not only on preserving tradition, but also on aligning legitimacy with broader national values and governance principles. The resilience of Indonesia's political system, therefore, is tested in its ability to accommodate customary autonomy while ensuring that conflicts do not undermine social harmony and institutional continuity.

In conclusion, this study finds that the dual power conflict in the Kasepuhan Palace is a manifestation of the complex interaction between identity, legitimacy, and power. Addressing this issue requires targeted interventions that bridge tradition and governance, particularly by reinforcing transparent succession mechanisms, strengthening deliberative processes, and ensuring that legitimacy is grounded not only in heritage but also in collective benefit. Through this lens, the conflict is not simply an internal royal dispute, but a critical reflection of how legitimacy is constructed and contested within Indonesia's contemporary political landscape.

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