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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Discursive Construction of *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana*: Cultural Political Communication in Yogyakarta's Infrastructure Development

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**Abstract:** Infrastructure development in Yogyakarta reflects an intersection between traditional authority and modern technocracy. While existing studies largely focus on land acquisition or economic impacts, limited attention has been given to how local philosophies are discursively recontextualized to frame large-scale spatial transformation. This study examines how *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* is articulated as a form of cultural political communication in the legitimation of National Strategic Projects, particularly the Yogyakarta International Airport and its supporting toll roads. Adopting a qualitative-interpretive approach, the research draws on a corpus of 10 documents comprising one gubernatorial speech transcript, three policy documents, and six media texts spanning 2021-2025, analyzed using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis. The study conceptualizes *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* as a discursive resource through which cultural meanings are mobilized in processes of political legitimation. The findings indicate a tendency toward semantic recontextualization, in which the cosmological meaning of *Bawana* is articulated in relation to technocratic-developmental terms such as global markets and investment gateways. Textually, this appears in collocations with growth-oriented vocabulary, euphemisms such as land acquisition for public interest, and passive constructions that background institutional agency. Discursively, the philosophy is circulated by actors holding both bureaucratic and customary authority, contributing to a hybrid discourse that combines administrative legality with Javanese ethical references. Socio-culturally, these formations may reframe potential agrarian tensions in moral-ethical terms, shaping how such issues are publicly articulated. This study suggests that *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* functions as a discursive element within broader processes of development legitimation and highlights the need to examine how local philosophies are mobilized in governance contexts.

### Keywords:

Javanese Philosophy, Discourse Legitimation, Political Communication, Infrastructure Development.

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## 1. Introduction

Infrastructure development is never merely a technical or administrative process. It is also a practice of political communication through which meaning, legitimacy, and social consent are produced. In Indonesia, large-scale infrastructure projects designated as National Strategic Projects (PSN) are typically justified by a developmentalist logic that equates economic growth with political legitimacy (Arifin & Basuki, 2018; Nurhaidah et al., 2025). However, the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) presents a distinctive case. Unlike other provinces, DIY retains a traditional power structure centered on the *Keraton* (palace), whose authority coexists with modern bureaucratic governance (Taylor, 2020). Consequently, the public sphere in Yogyakarta becomes an arena where traditional and modern authorities interact, operating through palace institutions and Javanese cultural symbols. For strategic projects such as the Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA) and its supporting toll roads, the legitimation process does not rely solely on legal procedures or economic arguments. It also proceeds through symbolic communication practices rooted in local values (Endraswara, 2012). Understanding how these practices operate is urgent because they shape public acceptance and influence the resolution of land disputes. This study addresses that urgency by focusing on one specific Javanese philosophy increasingly invoked in development discourse.

Previous studies have examined the role of culture in Indonesian politics, showing how Javanese values or religious symbols are used to mobilize support (Warburton, 2020; Wicoyo, 1991). In the context of development, critical discourse analysis has been applied to media texts, revealing how government discourse reproduces power relations (Fairclough, 2003; Sulaeman & Mustofa, 2022). However, these studies have not specifically positioned a sacred local philosophy, such as Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana, as the primary object of CDA analysis. Moreover, most studies on development in DIY focus on legal aspects of land acquisition or economic impacts, rather than on discursive practices (Dewi & Salim, 2021; Utami et al., 2023). What remains underexplored is how a respected cultural narrative is systematically recontextualized to legitimize projects that generate agrarian conflict and spatial dispossession. No existing research has explicitly integrated this philosophical discourse as an instrument of hegemonic communication in national strategic projects. There is also a lack of focus on how cultural narratives are used as soft legitimation in traditional societies. Therefore, a significant gap exists in understanding the discursive mechanisms behind infrastructure legitimation in DIY.

This study addresses this gap by positioning *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* as the central object of discourse analysis within a cultural political communication framework. Unlike prior research that examines general media reporting or legal-economic aspects, this study focuses on official policy documents, gubernatorial speeches, and regional strategic texts to trace how the philosophy is discursively constructed. The novelty of this study is threefold. First, it elevates a local sacred philosophy to the primary object of discourse analysis, rather than treating it as mere contextual illustration. Second, it empirically identifies and measures the semantic shift of the philosophy from cosmological to technocratic-developmental meanings through systematic collocation analysis. Third, it applies Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA within a hybrid governance setting where bureaucratic and customary authority coexist, thereby extending the analytical scope of cultural political communication theory (Fairclough, 1995). By adopting this approach, the research does not assume a particular political conclusion in advance. Instead, it systematically traces semantic patterns, collocations, and narrative structures as they appear in the data, ensuring that any finding about recontextualization or legitimation emerges from textual evidence rather than from prior ideological commitment.

Based on the gaps and positioning above, this study asks the following research question: How is the *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* philosophy discursively constructed in official texts to legitimize infrastructure projects in Yogyakarta, and what semantic and discursive consequences does this construction entail? The argument tested in this study is that the philosophy undergoes a detectable semantic shift when recontextualized from cosmological-spiritual domains into technocratic-developmental policy language, and that this shift may serve a legitimizing function. The main objective of this article is to analyze, through CDA,

how *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* is used to legitimize National Strategic Projects (YIA and toll roads) in the DIY. Theoretically, this research contributes to cultural political communication by providing an empirically grounded model of how local philosophical concepts interact with modern development discourse in a dual-authority setting. In practical terms, the findings aim to offer policymakers and the public a clearer understanding of how cultural symbols can be mobilized in policy communication. The study also recommends that future research explore how affected communities interpret and potentially contest official uses of this philosophy.

## 2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative-interpretive paradigm to examine how the *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* philosophy is discursively constructed in official texts. The research is descriptive-analytical, aiming to describe and critically analyze discourse structures used in infrastructure legitimation. The locus is the DIY, focusing on two National Strategic Projects: the Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA) in Kulon Progo and its supporting toll roads. The research was conducted over a three-month period from June to August 2025. This duration represents the time allocated for data collection, analysis, and interpretation, rather than indicating a specific policy phase. The term longitudinal has been removed to avoid confusion, as the study does not track changes over an extended temporal scale. Instead, the research design is cross-sectional, examining a fixed set of documents published within a defined historical window (2021-2025). By narrowing the scope to these two projects, the study provides a focused evaluation of how traditional authority interacts with technocratic governance in the legitimation of development. The temporal scope of document selection is explained separately below.

Primary data consists of textual discourse artifacts produced by key institutional actors. The selection criteria were: (1) official statements or speeches by the Governor of DIY (Sultan Hamengku Buwono X) that explicitly mention the phrase *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana*; (2) regional policy documents that cite the philosophy as a guiding principle; and (3) mass media reports from local and national outlets that discuss the philosophy in relation to YIA or toll road projects. The time frame for document selection is January 2021 to August 2025, covering the period from the issuance of DIY Governor Regulation No. 131/2021 to the end of the data collection period. A total of 10 documents were selected, as detailed in [Table 1](#) below.

**Table 1. Corpus of Analyzed Documents**

| Document Title   | Year | Type                 | Source                    | Selection Rationale  | Texts Units |
|--|------|----------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------|
| Gubernatorial Speech at Public Ceremony                                    | 2022 | Gubernatorial Speech | Official transcript       | Explicit mention of <i>Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana</i> in a ceremonial context touching on regional development | 4           |
| DIY Governor Regulation No. 131/2021 on the Grand Design of Special Status | 2021 | Policy Document      | DIY Provincial Government | The philosophy is stated as the foundational principle for all development planning                          | 8           |
| Regional Regulation No. 2/2023 on the Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) | 2023 | Policy Document      | DIY Provincial Government | The philosophy is integrated into development objectives and infrastructure priorities                       | 12          |
| YIA Project Planning Document (public summary)                             | 2022 | Policy Document      | PT Angkasa Pura I         | The philosophy is invoked to justify airport construction as part of regional awakening                      | 5           |
| Radar Jogja: " <i>Narawandira, manifestasi Hamemayu</i> "                  | 2023 | Media Text           | Radar Jogja (local)       | Reports the philosophy as a living guide for   | 3           |

| <i>Hayuning Bawana kehidupan di<br/>Jogjakarta'</i>  |      |            | newspaper)                         | development   |           |
|--|------|------------|------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Radar Jogja: " <i>Usung Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana, Jogja Planning Gallery tonjolan kearifan lokal</i> "                 | 2022 | Media Text | Radar Jogja                        | Links philosophy to spatial planning and local wisdom                                 | 2         |
| Tribun Jogja: " <i>Keluh kesah warga datangi konsultasi publik jalan tol Jogja-YIA</i> "                               | 2023 | Media Text | Tribun Jogja (local online portal) | Contains citizen grievances; philosophy is used by officials to frame public interest | 4         |
| Tribun Jogja: " <i>Pemilik 7 bidang tanah diidentifikasi, Pemda DIY lanjutkan pelepasan tanah tol Yogyakarta-YIA</i> " | 2023 | Media Text | Tribun Jogja                       | Reports land acquisition process under cultural framing                               | 3         |
| Detik.com: " <i>Tekankan pentingnya kearifan lokal, ini pesan Sri Sultan pada pemimpin daerah</i> "                    | 2024 | Media Text | Detik.com (national outlet)        | Sultan's statement linking philosophy to regional leadership                          | 2         |
| Republika: " <i>Pemkot Yogyakarta diingatkan jaga kawasan Sumbu Filosofi, ini kata Sultar</i> "                        | 2024 | Media Text | Republika (national outlet)        | Links philosophy to UNESCO-recognised Philosophical Axis and development balance      | 4         |
| <b>Total</b>   |      |            |                                    |   | <b>47</b> |

Source: Author's coding based on 47 text units derived from DIY Governor Regulation No. 131/2021, the 2023 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (*RPJMD*) Regulation, and media texts (2021–2025)

The corpus of 10 documents is bounded by stringent selection criteria only texts explicitly invoking *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* by name in relation to infrastructure projects were included, and is appropriate to the scope of the study because the analytical unit is the individual clause or sentence (47 units in total), prioritizing depth over breadth in a manner consistent with CDA studies of localized institutional discourse (Fairclough, 2003). Spanning gubernatorial, regulatory, and media sources, the corpus ensures identified patterns are not artifacts of a single genre, though findings cannot be generalized beyond it. The unit of analysis is the clause or sentence containing the philosophy or its derivatives, plus adjacent sentences for semantic context. A limitation is acknowledged: complete gubernatorial speech transcripts explicitly linking the philosophy to infrastructure are scarce, so policy documents and media texts serve as primary sources; secondary data came from literature studies; no interviews were conducted. Analysis followed Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model, operationalized sequentially: textual analysis examined vocabulary and grammar to identify semantic shifts against classical Javanese glossaries; discursive practice analysis traced production, distribution, and consumption; and socio-cultural practice analysis examined discourse in relation to the dual authority of Keraton and provincial government without assuming predetermined outcomes. Analytical steps proceeded as: (1) codification of all text units containing the philosophy; (2) categorization by document type and speaker; (3) within-dimension analysis; and (4) cross-dimension synthesis to identify recontextualization patterns.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### Text Dimension: Transformation from Philosophical to Political Meaning

Textual analysis at the micro level focuses on the circulation of discourse between 2021 and 2025, covering the stages from strategic planning to land implementation. These include: one gubernatorial speech transcript from a public ceremony; three primary policy documents, namely DIY Governor Regulation No. 131/2021, Regional Regulation No. 2/2023, and YIA project planning documents; and six media texts representing local newspapers, online portals, and national outlets. The unit of analysis was the clause or sentence containing the phrase *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* and adjacent sentences providing semantic

context.

A total of 47 text units (clauses or sentences) containing the philosophy were identified across the corpus. Each unit was systematically coded based on: (a) document type; (b) collocating terms, defined as words appearing within five-word spans before or after the philosophy; (c) grammatical structure; (d) presence of metaphors; and (e) semantic domain. To establish a baseline for original meaning, classical Javanese philosophical sources and standard glossaries were consulted (Endraswara, 2012; Wicoyo, 1991). A methodological limitation is acknowledged: complete gubernatorial speech transcripts explicitly linking the philosophy to infrastructure projects are scarce; therefore, policy documents and media texts serve as the primary data sources for this dimension.

The most consistent finding across the corpus demonstrates that *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* rarely appears as an autonomous spiritual concept. In 42 out of 47 text units (89.4%), the philosophy is directly collocated with terminology from three technocratic-developmental domains: (1) economic growth and competitiveness, including terms such as investment, global competition, and locally-generated revenue (PAD); (2) physical infrastructure and construction, specifically connectivity, airports, and toll roads; and (3) administrative-legal frameworks, such as grand design, development guidelines, and regional medium-term development plans (RPJMD). Conversely, collocations with classical Javanese cosmological terms such as environmental balance or the harmony between microcosm and macrocosm appear in only five text units (10.6%). Notably, these minority instances occur almost exclusively in media articles that explicitly contrast traditional meanings with contemporary policy practices.

The administrative-legal recontextualization is most clearly demonstrated in DIY Governor Regulation No. 131/2021, where the philosophy is framed as the foundational ideal for modern development:

*"DIY development, which is based on the Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana philosophy, is a noble ideal to realize the value system of Yogyakarta society based on cultural values."*

In this construction, "development" is positioned as the primary noun being legitimized by the philosophy: by stating that development is "based on" these noble ideals, the text syntactically subordinates the philosophical concept to a technocratic subject, rather than the reverse. The phrase "noble ideal" elevates the register of the sentence, embedding infrastructure as an expression of moral aspiration rather than a policy choice subject to technical scrutiny. Textually, this framing may function as a form of transcendental legitimation, one that associates technocratic agendas with a spiritual mandate, though whether this linguistic choice effectively constrains public criticism is an empirical question that the textual corpus alone cannot fully resolve. The shift toward physical infrastructure domains is further illustrated by the narrative of "regional awakening" in the same regulation, which links the philosophy directly to construction mandates:

*"Therefore, the existence of Southern Coast Road (JJLS) must be interpreted as the awakening of the southern region, which is expected to align with the construction of Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA) in Kulon Progo and Tanjung Adikarta Port..."*

The phrase "must be interpreted as" is textually notable as a prescriptive marker: unlike descriptive or explanatory language, it instructs the reader toward a specific interpretive frame rather than leaving one open. By grouping JJLS, YIA, and the Port within a single narrative of "awakening," the text fills the abstract concept of *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* with concrete, infrastructural content, presenting physical construction as the fulfillment of a prior moral-philosophical commitment. This syntactic pattern, in which multiple infrastructure projects are unified under a singular moral-developmental formulation, appears in 8 out of the 10 documents analyzed, suggesting it is a consistent rather than incidental feature of this corpus. Whether this consistency constitutes a deliberate discursive strategy or reflects institutionalized genre conventions cannot be determined from textual evidence alone, but the pattern itself warrants analytical attention.

In classical Javanese cosmology, *Bawana* refers to the cosmic order encompassing three interconnected realms: the natural environment (*alam*), the social world (*pawongan*), and the spiritual dimension (*gusti*). It implies reciprocity between the microcosm (human) and the macrocosm (universe) (Surjono et al., 2023). The analysis finds that in policy texts, *Bawana* undergoes a systematic narrowing. Table 2 below presents the coding scheme used to classify each occurrence. A term was coded as “original meaning” when it appeared in contexts referencing nature, cosmic balance, spiritual virtue, or ethical conduct. It was coded as “new meaning (political/developmental)” when it appeared in contexts referencing physical construction, economic indicators, markets, or logistics. Inter-coder reliability was not formally calculated, but the coding scheme is transparent and replicable.

**Table 2. Semantic Shifts in Official Texts: Coding Scheme and Frequency**

| Philosoph Element | Original Meaning (Cosmological/Cultural)   | Textual Example (Original)   | New Meaning in Development Texts (Political)  | Textual Example (New)   | Frequency (Original/New) |
|-------------------|--|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| <i>Hamemayu</i>   | Maintaining preservation, keeping the balance of nature, and caring for the existing order (verbs of care, protection, non-intervention) | “ <i>Memayu hayuning bawana</i> means to preserve and care for the beauty and harmony of the world” (Endraswara, 2012, as cited in media contrast article, Radar Jogja 2023)                       | Building physically, intervening in space (construction), and accelerating infrastructure modernization (verbs of construction, intervention, acceleration) | “DIY development... is a noble ideal to realize the value system of Yogyakarta society” where <i>Hamemayu</i> frames active physical development as an act of care (Governor Regulation No. 131/2021) | 3/19                     |
| <i>Hayu</i>       | Safety, spiritual beauty, and moral goodness/virtue (qualities of inner state, ethical conduct)  | Philosophy is described as guiding “safety and spiritual wellbeing of the community” (Radar Jogja, 2023)   | Material welfare, increasing locally generated revenue ( <i>PAD</i> ), and economic competitiveness (quantifiable economic indicators)                      | <i>Hayu</i> articulated as “improving community welfare” through airport-driven economic growth and investment (RPJMD No. 2/2023)   | 2/18                     |
| <i>Bawana</i>     | The universe, the environment, and the unity of microcosm-macrocosm (holistic, non-economic)   | <i>Bawana</i> is “cosmic totality encompassing <i>alam, pawongan, and gusti</i> ,” the natural, social, and spiritual realms in reciprocal balance (Surjono et al., 2023, cited in contrast texts) | International market/global market, investment zones, and inter-regional connectivity gateways (spatial units defined by capital flow)                      | <i>Bawana</i> is reframed as “global gateway” and “international market connectivity” in reference to YIA’s logistical role (Governor Regulation No. 131/2021)  | 4/21                     |

**Note:** Frequency figures reflect element-level occurrences across 47 text units. A single text unit may contain more than one philosophical element and therefore contribute to multiple rows. Row totals are not mutually exclusive and do not sum to 47.

Source: Author's coding based on 47 text units derived from DIY Governor Regulation No. 131/2021, the 2023 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (*RPJMD*) Regulation, and media texts (2021–2025)

Beyond collocation patterns, the corpus exhibits a consistent narrative of developmental urgency in which infrastructure construction is framed as a necessary response to stagnation or underdevelopment. In 6 of the 10 documents, the absence or delay of infrastructure is implicitly positioned as a condition to be overcome, using language that conveys momentum, awakening, and forward movement for instance, the “awakening of the southern region” cited above, or descriptions of the philosophy as a principle that “is so fitting to be embodied” for contemporary development (Radar Jogja, 2023). It should be noted that explicit biological metaphors such as “clogging” or “sickness” were not directly identified in the analyzed texts; what the corpus does consistently demonstrate is a crisis-of-progress framing in which development is presented as imperative rather than optional. This pattern is interpreted here not as a discrete set of biological metaphors, but as a broader discursive construction of urgency that narrows the rhetorical space for alternatives to infrastructure acceleration.

Furthermore, across the corpus, terms that directly name conflict or coercion are systematically avoided. The word eviction does not appear in any policy document and appears only twice in media texts, both times in direct quotes from affected citizens. Instead, official discourse uses “land acquisition for public interest” or reframes displacement through participatory-sounding narratives such as citizen support for development. Passive sentence structures typical of bureaucratic language also occur, which tend to obscure the actor responsible for decisions (Senay, 2018). For example, Regional Regulation No. 2/2023: “Citizen support for development is expected to be realized through participatory communication.” In this passive construction, the agent responsible for creating conditions for support is absent.

Similarly, citizens who refuse compensation are not described as exercising rights but as lacking “support,” a term that implies moral failure rather than political disagreement. In this framing, compliance with development plans is discursively associated with collective moral responsibility. For example, the Governor/Sultan's statement linking the philosophy to UNESCO's recognition of Yogyakarta's Philosophical Axis, describing it as “the first non-physical aspect decision in the world” (Republika, 2024), elevates participation in development from a transactional matter to an act of cultural and historical significance. While the term dharma does not appear explicitly in the analyzed corpus, the invocation of the Philosophy as a world-recognized heritage obligation can be read as implicitly transforming acceptance of displacement into a normative expectation rooted in Javanese ethical tradition. Conversely, those who refuse risk being positioned, by implication, as acting outside this collective moral framework. This possible effect was identified in 3 of the 10 documents, suggesting it is a recurring but not universal feature of the discourse. However, because the corpus does not contain explicit moral vocabulary sanctioning refusal, this interpretation is offered as an analytically grounded inference rather than as a directly evidenced finding.

Based on the empirical patterns described above, three interpretive observations can be offered, each grounded in textual evidence. First, the consistent collocation of *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* with economic and infrastructure terminology indicates that the philosophy is being recontextualized from a spiritual-ethical framework into a developmental-technocratic one (Istiadji et al., 2024; Rachmadi et al., 2025). This recontextualization does not necessarily erase the original meaning, but it subordinates it: the philosophy becomes a justification for pre-determined policy goals rather than a starting point for ethical deliberation. Second, the recontextualization of Bawana from a cosmic order to a global market significantly constrains the parameters of legitimate public deliberation. By redefining traditional philosophical vocabulary to align with technocratic connectivity, the discourse preemptively delegitimizes dissent, as the very language of resistance is co-opted to serve market-driven agendas (Sumarmi et al., 2024). This semantic narrowing is empirically substantiated by Table 2, in which developmentalist interpretations overwhelmingly dominate the corpus. Third, the absence of terms such as eviction (*penggusuran*) and the strategic deployment of agentless passive constructions facilitate the discursive erasure of the socioeconomic costs inherent in infrastructure development, including displacement and the loss of livelihoods. Consequently, dissenting actors are disenfranchised of their status as legitimate rights-bearing subjects and are instead marginalized through a deficit narrative that characterizes their resistance as a lack of support or comprehension, effectively depoliticizing their grievances.

While these patterns do not necessarily imply intentional manipulation, they reflect a systematic tendency to represent development as consensual, effectively marginalizing socio-political conflict. This study acknowledges specific limitations: the small corpus (10 documents), the scarcity of verbatim gubernatorial speech transcripts, and potential journalistic framing biases in media texts. Additionally, while the coding scheme is transparent, it lacks formal inter-coder reliability testing. Consequently, these findings represent distinct discursive patterns within this specific corpus rather than generalizable claims across all infrastructure discourse in Yogyakarta.

**Discursive Practice Dimension: Production, Consumption, and Intertextuality**

In the dimension of discursive practice, meso-analysis reveals that the production, distribution, and consumption of the *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* narrative do not occur neutrally. This discourse moves through networks of power that blend modern political authority with the cultural authority of the *Keraton*, such that every message regarding infrastructure development is understood not only as administrative policy but as part of a larger cosmological mandate (Widodo et al., 2022).

The production of discourse shows a distinct character because it is controlled by a figure possessing dual legitimacy as both Sultan and Governor. This position allows development narratives to be conveyed with both legal force and symbolic force. In official speeches, socialization documents, and policy formulation, there is a mixing of genres between administrative language and Javanese cultural cosmetics that creates interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 1995). Formal state language is combined with Javanese *unggah-ungguh* (etiquette) and philosophical expressions, making the development message appear sacred and not easily contested. This pattern resembles Bouchier (2015) finding that Indonesian political elites often use Javanese culture as a tool for contemporary political legitimacy. Table 3 below illustrates how bureaucratic and cultural elements are fused to form a hegemonic discourse that is difficult to refute.

| Table 3. Hybridity of Beraucratic and Cultural Discourse |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Text Dimension   | Administrative Genre (Modern Bureaucracy)     | Cultural Genre (Javanese Philosophy)  | Result of Discourse Hybridity  |
| Source of Authority                                      | Laws, Regional Regulations, Governor's Decree | <i>Paugeran</i> (Palace Rules), <i>Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana</i> Philosophy      | Dual Legitimacy: State policy is viewed as a cultural/sacred mandate.                                |
| Language Style   | Technical, legalistic, rigid, instructive     | <i>Unggah-ungguh</i> (polite), metaphorical, refined, <i>sanepan</i> (allusive) | Development Euphemism: Eviction is interpreted as "ordering harmony"                                 |
| Subject Position   | Regional Government vs Citizens               | <i>Ngarso Dalem</i> (King) vs <i>Kawula</i> (Subjects)                          | Patron-Client Relation: Citizen criticism is framed as impoliteness ( <i>ora ilok</i> ).             |
| Discourse Goal   | Economic growth, infrastructure connectivity  | Maintaining cosmic balance, <i>memayu hayuning bawana</i>                       | Sacralization of Projects: Airport/Toll roads are not just concrete, but "monuments of civilization" |

**Note:** This table presents an interpretive synthesis of genre-hybridity patterns observed in the analyzed corpus. The "Result of Discourse Hybridity" column reflects analytically constructed characterizations; empirical grounding varies across rows and should not be read as a direct description of social reality.

Source: Author's analysis based on theoretical synthesis and primary data (2026)

To substantiate the characterization of local media as a discursive echo chamber, this subsection identifies three empirical patterns across the six media texts analyzed. First, source dominance: across all six media texts, government officials (particularly the Governor/Sultan and regional agency heads) account for 84% of all direct quotations. This figure was calculated by tallying every instance of direct speech defined as verbatim quoted text marked by quotation marks or attributed speech verbs (stated, emphasized, explained)

across all six media texts, then dividing the number of instances attributed to government or institutional actors by the total number of direct quotation instances (32 out of 38 total instances). This calculation is based on quoted speech instances, not quoted actors or paragraph counts; one actor may be quoted multiple times and each instance is counted separately. Conversely, affected citizens (farmers, displaced residents) are quoted in only three of the six texts, and in each case their statements appear in the final two paragraphs. For example, a local newspaper report on the YIA project dedicated seven paragraphs to official statements about the philosophy before a single sentence from a resident appeared in the eighth paragraph, framed as the community is expected to understand (Radar Jogja, 2023). This pattern matches Azhar (2017) characterization of talking heads journalism, where elite statements dominate without critical verification.

Second, a marked absence of counter-framing is observed in five of the six media texts the *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* philosophy serves as an uncontested justification for infrastructure acceleration. None of the sampled media consulted experts or civil society representatives to challenge this recontextualization. For instance, a *Republika* report on the philosophy's link to UNESCO's Philosophical Axis failed to solicit alternative interpretations from cultural observers or affected communities (Republika, 2024). Third, the consistent reproduction of euphemistic language indicates that media texts mirror official policy terminology. The term eviction is entirely absent, replaced by sanitized phrases such as land procurement. Notably, a 2023 portal report reframed a resident's grievance overcompensation as a cognitive deficit, stating they "do not yet understand," thereby shifting a material conflict into a matter of educational lack (Tribun Jogja, 2023).

These patterns, observed within the six sampled media texts, suggest a tendency toward alignment between journalistic framing and elite interests in this particular corpus. The consistent source dominance, absence of counter-framing, and reproduction of euphemistic language across these texts are consistent with what the concept of *ewuh pakewuh* (cultural reluctance to criticize authority) might produce in practice, though whether this dynamic is operative across Yogyakarta media more broadly cannot be concluded from this sample alone. These findings are therefore bounded by the specific six-text corpus and should not be read as a general characterization of local media as a whole.

Audience reception is empirically difficult to trace without ethnographic or interview data, and the following discussion should therefore be read as a theoretically informed inference rather than a demonstrated finding. Drawing on indirect textual indicators specifically, how citizen responses are framed within the six sampled media texts, two tentative patterns can be observed. Among groups with strong affinity for *Keistimewaan* symbolism, the developmental narrative appears to be absorbed as common sense: in none of the sampled media texts does culturally grounded opposition to the philosophy itself appear, suggesting that the recontextualization of *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* within development discourse has achieved a degree of discursive naturalization within this segment. Among directly affected groups, however, the sampled texts reveal a different pattern: citizen grievances appear in only three of the six media texts, consistently relegated to final paragraphs and framed as misunderstanding rather than legitimate dissent. For instance, residents are described as not yet understanding rather than as rights-bearing actors in dispute. The Sajogyo Institute (2024) further documents profound livelihood losses among farmers that are largely absent from official and mainstream media framing. Taken together, these textual patterns suggest a gap between the official narrative of consensual harmony and the material experiences of displacement, though the nature and extent of this gap cannot be established without direct engagement with affected communities.

Following Scott (1990), it is theoretically plausible that this gap produces what he terms a "hidden transcript" critical discourse that circulates outside the public stage, questioning the coherence between the promise of cosmic harmony and the reality of dispossession. This remains, however, an interpretive hypothesis rather than an empirical finding of this study: without interview or ethnographic data, claims about private skepticism, ambivalent compliance, or non-public resistance cannot be substantiated beyond

inference. Future research engaging directly with affected communities is needed to test whether such counter-narratives exist, in what forms they circulate, and how they relate to the public discourse analyzed here. What the present corpus does support is the observation that dissent, where it appears at all, is rarely framed in direct opposition to the philosophy itself a pattern consistent with theoretical accounts of how symbolic hegemony functions to narrow the terms of legitimate public contestation, but one that requires further empirical investigation before stronger conclusions can be drawn (Parlak & Islam, 2022; Tohar et al., 2017).

### **Social-Cultural Practice Dimension: Cultural Hegemony and the Depoliticization of the Public Sphere**

At the macro level, the *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* discourse can be interpreted as more than a linguistic strategy. Building cumulatively on the textual evidence (semantic narrowing, collocation with infrastructure terms) and discursive findings (media echo chamber, marginalization of citizen voices), three analytical layers are distinguished. First, directly evidenced that the philosophy appears in policy documents primarily to legitimize physical infrastructure, not ecological balance. Second, inferred through theory, these patterns are consistent with hegemonic discourse (Gramsci, 1992), suggesting depoliticization of the public sphere. Third, critical interpretation, one may further argue that this reflects neoliberal penetration or symbolic subjugation, but these claims are normative readings, not empirical demonstrations. The manuscript acknowledges that the macro section below advances the latter as interpretive possibilities rather than findings strictly proven by the textual corpus alone.

First, the *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* discourse functions to naturalize the penetration of global capitalism into the agrarian structure of rural DIY. Infrastructure projects like YIA and the supporting toll roads are consistently framed in the analyzed corpus as necessary for market connectivity, logistical efficiency, and investment growth (Banerjee, 2022; Edita, 2025). At the textual level, this is substantiated by the systematic recontextualization of *Bawana* from a cosmological concept encompassing nature, social life, and spiritual balance into spatial-economic terms such as “international gateway” and “growth center,” as documented in Table 2. A critical reading of this pattern suggests that such recontextualization may function to discursively downplay the spatial and social consequences of infrastructure development, including agricultural land loss and ecological change: when the philosophical vocabulary of harmony and cosmic balance is applied to these projects, material disruptions are less likely to be represented as negative impacts and more likely to appear as necessary conditions for fulfilling a noble cultural mandate (Holtslag-Broekhof et al., 2016; Vel & Makambombu, 2019). Whether this discursive effect translates into measurable shifts in public perception cannot be established from textual evidence alone and would require reception data beyond the scope of this study. From a Gramscian perspective, this pattern is consistent with what hegemony theory describes as the securing of moral consent, where compliance is produced not through force but through the alignment of policy goals with widely shared values. This interpretation should be read as a theoretically informed reading of the corpus rather than as a conclusion fully demonstrated by it (Gramsci, 1992).

To provide historical context for the discursive patterns analyzed in this study, Picture 1 documents the land measurement and acquisition mapping conducted by PT Angkasa Pura I in 2015, well before the period of textual analysis (2021-2025). The image is presented as an illustrative background rather than as part of the analyzed corpus. Second, the attachment of sacred cultural symbols to public policy can be read as potentially constraining the terms of public debate. In a democratic ideal, infrastructure policy should be an object of rational deliberation involving environmental impact analysis (AMDAL) and economic cost-benefit calculations (Mouter, 2021). When the development narrative is discursively linked to the philosophy of *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* and the cultural authority of the *Keraton*, however, the space for negotiating technical and distributional aspects of the project may be narrowed: criticism of technical dimensions risks being discursively reframed as culturally unethical, and the cultural notion of *kualat* (cursed) for opposing ancestral mandates may further inhibit open dissent. Whether this discursive narrowing actually

silences citizens in practice cannot be demonstrated by textual evidence alone. What the corpus does show is that agrarian disputes are consistently reframed in official and media discourse not as political-administrative conflicts over land and livelihood but as matters of collective moral-cultural obligation, a pattern that, from a critical perspective, can be read as contributing to a discursive environment in which open rejection becomes more difficult to articulate without risking the label of cultural dissidence. This interpretation, however, remains a theoretically informed reading of the documented discursive patterns rather than an empirical demonstration of their social effects.

**Picture 1. Land Measurement and Acquisition Mapping for the YIA Project**



Source: PT Angkasa Pura I, 2015

Table 4 is an interpretive heuristic model: the “Democratic Arena Logic” column represents an ideal type; the “Cultural Hegemony Arena Logic” column reflects a theoretically informed reading of this study’s textual patterns, with the “Evidentiary Basis” column distinguishing corpus-supported elements from theoretical extrapolations.

**Table 4. Transformation of the Conflict Arena**

| Conflict Dimension  | Democratic Arena Logic (Ideal/Rational)   | Cultural Hegemony Arena Logic (Reality in DIY)   | Evidential Status   |
|---------------------|---|--|---|
| Basis of Debate     | Technocratic & Legal: Cost-Benefit Analysis, AMDAL, Technical Feasibility         | Moral & Symbolic: Invocation of ancestral mandate, cosmic harmony, and <i>Njawani</i> ethical register in policy and media texts | *Supported by textual evidence: consistent collocation of philosophy with moral-developmental framing across 8 of 10 documents  |
| Status of Criticism | Citizen Right: Criticism is a form of participation and public control            | Criticism framed as culturally inappropriate ( <i>ora ilok</i> ) or as implicitly contesting traditional authority               | *Partially supported: citizen grievances reframed as “misunderstanding” in 3 of 6 media texts; broader stigmatization of dissent as cultural disobedience is inferred, not directly evidenced                           |
| Dispute Resolution  | Transactional Negotiation: Fair compensation, relocation, or project cancellation | Land surrender is narratively aligned with devotion and communal obligation ( <i>glondong pengareng-areng</i> )                  | **Theoretical extrapolation: framing of compliance as moral virtue is interpretively inferred from dharma-adjacent language; no direct textual instance of <i>glondong pengareng-areng</i> was identified in the corpus |

|                  |   |  |  |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| Citizen Position | Political Subject: Possessing veto or bargaining rights | Citizen positioned as cultural subject ( <i>kawula</i> ) with implied obligation toward collective harmony | **Theoretical extrapolation: patron-client and <i>kawula-ngarso dalem</i> framing is consistent with theoretical literature on Javanese political culture but not directly instantiated in the analyzed texts (Tohar et al., 2017) |
|------------------|---|--|--|

**Note:**

\*Directly evidenced within the analyzed textual corpus

\*\*Theory-based extrapolation consistent with observed discursive patterns necessitates empirical verification via interviews or ethnographic study.

Source: Author's interpretive analytical model based on theoretical synthesis and primary data (2021-2025). This table represents analytically constructed ideal types rather than a direct description of social reality.

Third, while the discursive patterns documented in this study indicate that the official deployment of *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* is dominant in the public transcript, this dominance need not be read as total or monolithic. At the grassroots level, particularly among directly affected communities, it is theoretically plausible that a phenomenon resembling what Gramsci calls contradictory consciousness may emerge: on one hand, citizens internalize respect for *Keraton* symbols, yet on the other, their material experience of lost livelihoods and environmental damage may generate cognitive dissonance. Following Scott (1990) Such conditions could, hypothetically, give rise to hidden transcript forms of resistance expressed not through frontal open opposition but through grumbling, private cynicism, and counter-narratives questioning the coherence between the promise to beautify the world (*Hayuning Bawana*) and the reality of dispossession. Whether such hidden transcripts actually exist among affected communities in DIY is beyond what the present textual corpus can establish and remains a question for future ethnographic research.

If they do exist, this tension would suggest one possible trajectory: that cultural discourse, while effective as a short-term legitimation tool, may carry a latent fragility if the promised welfare fails to materialize over time. This reading is offered as a theoretically grounded interpretive possibility, not as an empirically demonstrated finding. Overall, the dimension of social practice confirms that *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana*, in the context of DIY infrastructure development, is not merely a revitalization of traditional values. Furthermore, it is a political practice through which cultural capital is mobilized in the service of technocratic governance a process that, based on the discursive patterns identified in this corpus, may contribute to the narrowing of the terms through which social conflict over development can be publicly articulated.

**4. Conclusion**

This study provides evidence, through systematic analysis of 10 documents (policy texts, a gubernatorial speech, and media reports) spanning 2021–2025, that the *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* philosophy undergoes a detectable semantic shift in the context of Yogyakarta's infrastructure development. Of 47 text units containing the philosophy, 89.4% are collocated with technocratic-developmental terminology (economic growth, infrastructure connectivity, administrative frameworks), while only 10.6% retain original cosmological meanings (ecological balance, spiritual virtue). Policy documents formally redefine *Bawana* from cosmic order to global market and *Hayu* from spiritual beauty to material welfare. Across the six sampled media texts, official framing is reproduced without counter-framing, and citizen grievances are consistently relegated to the final paragraphs or reframed as misunderstandings rather than legitimate dissent. Taken together, these patterns indicate a systematic tendency toward the recontextualization of a sacred local philosophy within the legitimation of National Strategic Projects, a tendency substantiated at the level of discourse within this corpus, while its broader social effects remain a question for further empirical investigation.

These findings contribute to cultural political communication theory in three ways. First, the corpus suggests that tradition and modernity need not be treated as binary opposites in Indonesian local politics; rather, the analyzed texts indicate that philosophical tradition can be actively mobilized as a discursive resource within developmentalist governance. Second, the application of Fairclough's three-dimensional model reveals how discourse hybridity blending administrative-legal genres with Javanese philosophical language produces a dual legitimacy structure with observable consequences for how citizen dissent is framed in official and media texts. Third, by grounding these observations in a transparent corpus and replicable coding scheme, the study offers a methodological model for analyzing how locally embedded philosophical concepts are discursively recontextualized in governance settings characterized by strong traditional authority structures.

This study has significant methodological limitations. The corpus is small (10 documents), complete gubernatorial speech transcripts are scarce, and no interviews or ethnographic data were collected. Consequently, claims about hidden transcripts (private citizen resistance) remain interpretive implications, not empirical findings. Future research should: (1) conduct in-depth interviews with affected communities to explore non-public resistance directly; (2) expand the corpus to include longer-term material impact assessments; and (3) test whether similar discursive patterns occur in other Indonesian regions with strong traditional authority. Practically, the discursive patterns identified in this corpus, particularly the consistent subordination of ecological and ethical dimensions of *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* to technocratic-developmental framing, suggest that policy communication may benefit from more explicit acknowledgment of the philosophy's cosmological foundations alongside development objectives, so that its mobilization in governance contexts remains legible to the communities whose cultural heritage it represents.

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