



# Social Media Sentiment on the Female Ruler Polemic in Yogyakarta

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**Abstract.** The issue regarding the succession process at the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, about who will succeed Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, has been a topic of discussion since mid-2015. This eventually led to the controversy surrounding the idea of a female ruler. The controversy began with the issuance of the Sabda Raja (Sabda Jejering Raja) and Dhawuh Raja, which caused divisions within the royal family. These proclamations became controversial because they were considered to violate the existing rules or paugeran of the Keraton. To this day, the controversy continues, and the succession process for the first female ruler in Yogyakarta is still ongoing, receiving both support and opposition. This situation forms the basis of this study, which aims to analyze public sentiment regarding the issue of a female ruler in the Yogyakarta Keraton. The research focuses on analyzing sentiment on social media using a web-based application for social media analysis. As is well known, social media has a significant impact in today's world and serves as a powerful force for driving change. The study employs a mixed-method approach, where quantitative data is interpreted qualitatively. The data was collected using the social media analysis tool Brand24 throughout 2024. The research findings indicate that social media sentiment regarding the “female ruler” issue in Yogyakarta is predominantly neutral in emotional tone, with a total of 8,348 mentions. The highest number of mentions occurred in November 2024, coinciding with the 2024 regional elections in Yogyakarta.

**Keywords:** Female Ruler, Social Media Monitoring, Sentiment Analysis, Brand24.

## 1 Introduction

The issue regarding the succession process at the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, about who will succeed Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, has been a topic of discussion since mid-2015, eventually sparking the controversy surrounding the idea of a female ruler. This controversy began with the issuance of the Sabda Raja

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(Sabda Jejeran Raja) and Dhawuh Raja, which led to divisions within the royal family. The Sabda Raja included changes such as renaming “Hamengku Buwono” to “Hamengku Buwana”, removing the title “Khalifatullah” from the Sultan’s designation, and replacing the term “Kaping Sedasa” with “Kasepuluh”. Following the announcement of the Sabda Raja, Sultan Hamengku Buwono X issued the Dhawuh Raja, in which he appointed one of his daughters as the crown princess, granting her the title GKR Mangkubumi Hamemayu Hayuning Bawono Langgeng Ing Mataram [1], [2], [3].

The title "Khalifatullah" means representative of God, signifying that a king is not only the head of government but also the head of religion. According to Islamic law, religious leaders are traditionally male. The title "Khalifatullah" had been used since the reign of Hamengku Buwono I, and with this change, Sultan Hamengku Buwono ended a centuries-old tradition. The removal of this title also paved the way for the idea that a successor to the throne does not necessarily have to be male [4], [5].

Meanwhile, the change from the title Hamengku "Buwono" to Hamengku "Buwana" carries a symbolic meaning. "Buwono" represents a smaller universe, while "Buwana" signifies a larger one. In other words, "Buwono" can be interpreted as having a national scope, whereas "Buwana" suggests an international scale. The change from "Kaping Sedasa" to "Kasepuluh" was made to clarify numerical order. This was followed by granting the title "Mangkubumi" to GKR Pembayun, the eldest daughter of Sultan Hamengku Buwono X. The title "Mangkubumi" literally means holder of the earth and is traditionally given to the Sultan’s designated successor. Bestowing this title upon GKR Pembayun signified that she was the heir to the throne and held power equivalent to that of a prime minister [6], [7], [8].

The Sabda Raja was issued in April 2015, while the Dhawuh Raja was announced in December 2015, just before the turn of the year. In terms of hierarchy, the Sabda Raja holds a higher position than the Dhawuh Raja. These two became the root of the controversy surrounding the succession process at the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, marked by the absence of Sultan Hamengku Buwono X’s siblings from both events [2], [9].

This event continued with the replacement of positions previously held by Sultan’s younger brothers, GBPH Prabukusumo and GBPH Yudhaningrat, who were succeeded by the Sultan’s daughters, GKR Mangkubumi and GKR Bendara. This change was formalized in the Dhawuh Raja at the end of 2020. The Keraton stated that the replacements were made because the Sultan’s younger brothers had been inactive in carrying out their duties for the past five years, not due to any disputes related to the Sabda Raja issued in 2015 [2], [10], [11].

The issuance of the Sabda Raja and Dhawuh Raja became controversial, as they were considered to violate the existing rules or paugeran of the Keraton. To this day, the controversy continues, and the succession process for Yogyakarta’s first female ruler is still ongoing, receiving both support and opposition. A previous study showed that the debate over a female ruler also exists within the Abdi Dalem (royal servants) of the Keraton, where the older generation tends to oppose the idea, while the younger generation is more supportive of it [12].

A historical review of the succession process at the Yogyakarta Keraton has also revealed power struggles among the elite regarding the throne. The current controversy arises because Sultan Hamengku Buwono X has no male heir, leading to the political discourse surrounding a female ruler. This ongoing conflict has sparked various responses from the public and undoubtedly requires proper handling as part of conflict management. [13], [14]

The existence of the Yogyakarta Keraton itself is a significant part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. The Keraton serves as both a symbol and a major attraction, especially for cultural tourism in Indonesia. As a cultural artifact, it must be preserved, making internal conflicts and potential divisions a serious concern. History has shown that internal conflicts can lead to the destruction of cultural artifacts. [14], [15], [16]

This situation serves as the foundation for this study, which aims to analyze public sentiment regarding the controversy surrounding the idea of a female ruler in the Yogyakarta Keraton. The research was conducted by analyzing social media sentiment using a web-based application for social media analysis. As is widely known, social media has a significant impact in today's world and possesses the power to drive change [17], [18], [19]. Based on the explanation above the purpose of this study is to describe and explain social media sentiment related to the female ruler polemic in Yogyakarta.

## 2 Research Method

This study employs a mixed methods approach or a combination method. There are two major types of research designs using mixed methods. The first one is fixed mixed methods design, where the decision to use both quantitative and qualitative methods is determined and planned from the beginning of the study. The second one is emergent mixed methods design, where the use of mixed methods arises due to unexpected issues or developments that emerge during the research process. [20]

This study employs a fixed mixed methods design, where from the outset, the phenomenon of the female ruler discourse is examined by collecting quantitative data, which is then processed using qualitative descriptive analysis. Quantitative data collection is conducted through social media analytics using the web-based tool Brand24. Social media analytics is an approach used to measure social media performance in real-time. The quantitative data obtained from Brand24 is then analyzed using sentiment analysis, producing interpretative qualitative data.

The data in this study was collected using Social Media Analytics (SMA) tools, specifically Brand24. Brand24 is a social media analysis tool that measures posts/comments on social media based on specific keywords. It tracks metrics such as likes, comments, mentions, shares, and more. The keywords used in this study are #wacanarajaperempuan, #polemiksuksesikeratonyogyakarta, and #suksesikeratonyogyakarta. Social media monitoring with Brand24 is planned to be conducted over the past year. Additionally, secondary data for this study was obtained

through interviews and direct observations with the people of Yogyakarta and history experts.

The data analysis technique used in this study is sentiment analysis. The measurement results from Brand24 will serve as the basis for sentiment analysis. The researcher examines public opinions from social media regarding the discourse on a female ruler in the Yogyakarta Keraton. The sentiment identified can be either positive or negative.

### **3 Results and Discussions**

The Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat can be analogized as a state within a state. Currently, the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat is led by Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X as the highest ruler. This study was conducted amid an ongoing succession dispute regarding the successor to Sultan Hamengku Buwono X. The controversy began in mid-2015, following the issuance of Sabda Raja (Sabda Jejering Raja) and Dhawuh Raja. Since these proclamations in 2015, the royal family has become divided, leading to an ongoing succession controversy.

This study aims to describe and explain social media sentiment regarding the controversy over the female ruler in Yogyakarta. Examining social media sentiment on this issue provides insight into public opinion regarding the topic. The research data was collected using Brand24, by searching for keywords related to the female ruler discourse in Yogyakarta over a period of one year (2024). The following section presents several graphs illustrating the collected data.

Emotional analysis of social media sentiment allows researchers to understand the affective dynamics underlying user interactions, public perceptions, and the intended messages conveyed about an issue [21], [22], [23]. Figure 1. below presents an emotional analysis depicting public reactions to the "female ruler" discourse during the 2024 period, with 88.1% classified as neutral. This indicates that the controversy and discourse surrounding the female ruler do not elicit strongly negative or positive sentiments. Public opinion on social media tends to be neutral regarding this issue. This neutrality may stem from the cultural value constructs associated with this topic, which are deeply ingrained in Javanese and Yogyakarta society. As a result, the heterogeneity of digital communities on social media generates a neutral construct or neutral sentiment, as there are no provocative elements triggering strong emotional responses.

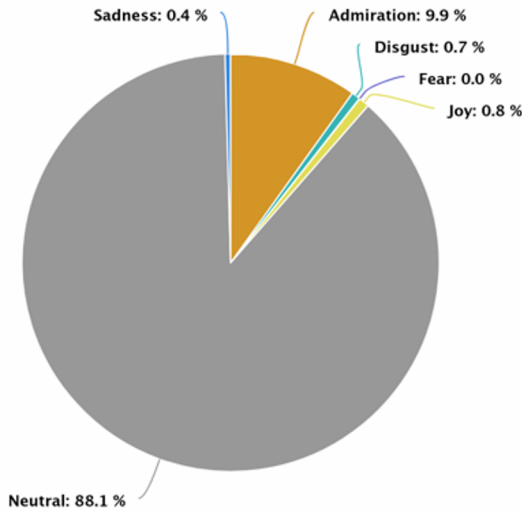


Fig. 1. Emotional analysis

Next is the discussion on the infographic regarding the female ruler discourse can be seen in Figure 2. below, which visually presents information on the issue. Based on Figure 2., the total mentions of the female ruler issue on social media amount to 8,348 with the following distributions: 41% from news portals, 19% from Instagram, 14% from video content, 13% from blogs, 8% from forums, and 5% from Facebook. These percentages highlight the dominant role of mainstream media and visual-based social media in shaping public opinion. [24], [25]

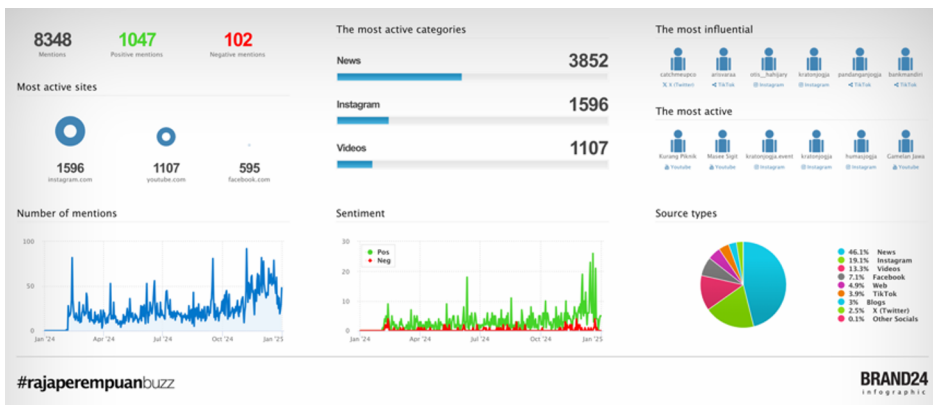
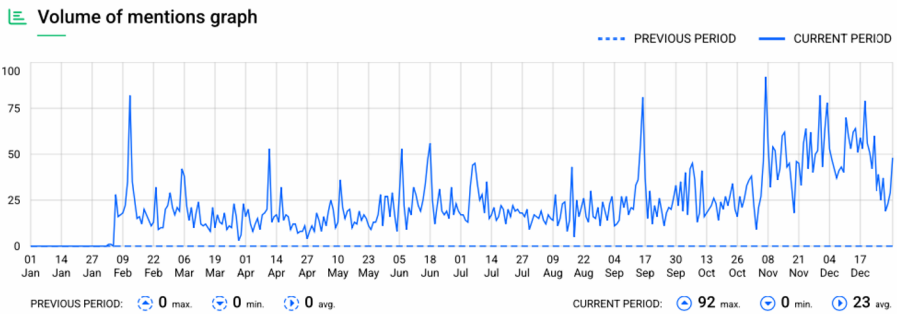


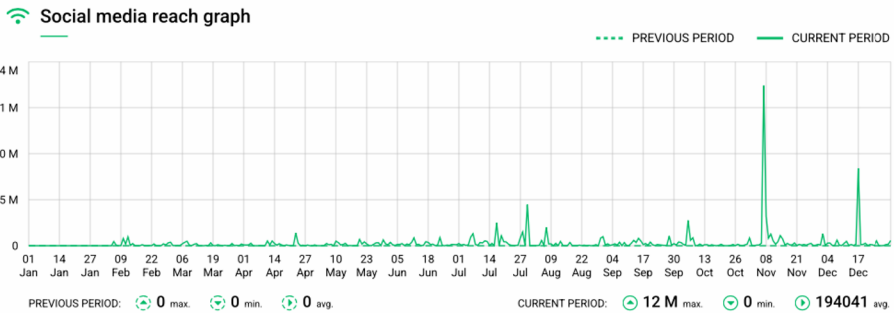
Fig. 2. Infographic

A deeper discussion regarding the mentions of the female ruler issue can be seen in Figure 3. below, which illustrates the volume of mentions related to the issue

throughout 2024. The mention volume reflects how frequently a particular issue is discussed across various platforms. The highest recorded volume reached 92 mentions within a single daily observation period, indicating that the issue successfully drew more attention from users at certain times. The lowest recorded volume was 0 mentions, meaning that on some occasions, no discussions or conversations were recorded. The average mention volume is around 23 mentions, serving as a benchmark to assess whether spikes or declines at specific points are considered significant.



**Fig. 3.** Volume of mentions graph



**Fig. 4.** Social media reach graph

Figure 4. above presents data on the reach of the female ruler issue on social media. The graph shows variations in the number of users reached from the beginning to the end of 2024, with most periods falling within the low to medium range. There were several significant spikes in certain months, with reach peaking at 12 million users in November, while in other months, the numbers tended to remain below 3.5 million. These significant spikes indicate key moments that successfully captured mass public attention. In the field of communication studies, social media reach is a crucial indicator for assessing how widely a message can spread to its audience. [26]

Based on the research data presented above, it can be observed that social media opinions regarding the female ruler issue have not gained significant reach and tend to

remain neutral. The highest social media reach for this issue occurred in November 2024, coinciding with the regional elections in Yogyakarta. The political campaign activities during this period triggered discussions not only about the 2024 regional elections, but also about the controversy surrounding the female ruler discourse. Social media has been extensively used as a tool for political communication, both to shape negative and positive opinions. [27], [28]

## 4 Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the research findings explained in the previous section, the sentiment analysis on social media regarding the female ruler issue in Yogyakarta shows a neutral emotional reach, with a total mention volume of 8,348. The highest mention volume was recorded in November 2024, coinciding with the 2024 regional elections in Yogyakarta. Overall, social media sentiment indicates that public opinion in the digital sphere remains relatively low. This may be due to the fact that the meaning construction of the female ruler issue in Yogyakarta holds significance only for certain communities. The Brand24 results also show that mainstream media still plays a crucial role, as evidenced by the sources of mentions that shape public opinion.

The provided recommendations can be implemented for further development or future research. Follow-up research can be conducted using qualitative methods by collecting data through interviews with Key Opinion Leaders regarding the female ruler issue. Alternatively, research can be expanded by employing framing analysis, focusing on mainstream media in Yogyakarta.

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