RECONFIGURING COURT ISLAM AT PURA MANGKUNEGARAN 1757–1944

Nor Huda Ali[1], Moh. Mahbub[1], Moh. Ashif Fuadi[1]
[1] *State Islamic University Raden Mas Said, Surakarta, Indonesia*
Corresponding author: norhuda@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

Abstract

This study examined the reconfiguration of Islamic life at Pura Mangkunegaran from its establishment in 1757 to the end of Mangkunegara VII's reign in 1944. It addressed how religious continuity related to political, cultural, and institutional change across successive reigns. A longitudinal historical approach was applied to court chronicles, religious and literary texts from the Reksa Pustaka Mangkunegaran and Radya Pustaka collections, and relevant historical scholarship. Source criticism distinguished descriptions of religious activities from retrospective representations of rulers' religiosity. The analysis compared religious practices, actors, spaces, institutional functions, and modes of expression. Under Mangkunegara I, the sources documented ritual gatherings, Qur'anic activities, mosque institutions, religious personnel, and charitable practices. Documentation was less extensive for Mangkunegara II–III. Under Mangkunegara IV, ethical and spiritual literature coexisted with religious administration and critical accounts of observance. During the reigns of Mangkunegara V–VII, religious institutions remained identifiable amid economic pressures, administrative modernization, and changes in Surakarta's wider Islamic environment. These findings support the concept of court Islamic reconfiguration: religious continuity could coexist with changes in institutional arrangements and cultural expression. Uneven documentation, however, limits conclusions about the extent of personal observance and prevents a simple inference of either religious decline or uninterrupted consolidation.

Keywords: Pura Mangkunegaran; Javanese Islam; religious continuity; religious transformation; court Islamic reconfiguration

INTRODUCTION

Pura Mangkunegaran was one of the Javanese centers of power that emerged from the political fragmentation of the Mataram polity following the Treaty of Salatiga in 1757. Its establishment not only reshaped the political configuration of Java but also created a historical setting in which Islam, Javanese traditions, and changing forms of colonial power interacted over nearly two centuries. From the reign of Mangkunegara I (MN I), Islam was documented within court life through ritual practices, relationships with ulama and santri, mosque construction, and religious administration. Serat Babad Nitik Mangkunagaran and Babad Ringkesan Padatan Kanjeng Gusti Adipati Mangkunagoro I dumugi VI record Friday prayers, dhikr, religious study, charitable giving, Qur'anic recitation and copying, as well as the appointment of penghulu, khatib, and suranggama.

Ricklefs (2021) likewise documents Qur'anic manuscripts associated with MN I and preserved at Mangadeg Mosque. These records indicate that Islam was not confined to the ruler's religious identity but was embedded in the ritual practices, institutions, spaces, and social life of the early Mangkunegaran court (Ricklefs, 2021; Wasino, 2008, 2014). This early configuration provides an important starting point for examining how Islamic life changed alongside transformations in Mangkunegaran's structures of power.

This configuration, however, did not remain static. During the nineteenth century, Mangkunegaran's relationship with the colonial government became increasingly close, affecting its political, military, administrative, and aristocratic life. Under MN II, political consolidation and the establishment of the Mangkunegaran Legion further strengthened the principality's ties with the colonial structure (Santosa, 2011; Wasino, 2014). During the reigns of MN III and, particularly, MN IV, court sources documented a more complex relationship between formal religious observance and other forms of Islamic expression. Babad Ringkesan refers to a growing distance between the ruler and religion and to limited concern with sharia, while piwulang literature articulated ethical and spiritual concerns. Serat Wedhatama articulated religious and ethical ideas through literary and spiritual language, while Mangkunegaran Mosque remained part of the religious life of the court (Ardani, 1995; Nurjayanti, 2022). These developments coincided with increasing European cultural influence among the Mangkunegaran elite (Susanto, 2023). Political and cultural transformation therefore needs to be examined together with changes in the ways Islam was practiced, represented, and institutionally maintained within the court.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, religious life in Mangkunegaran unfolded within an increasingly complex social environment shaped by administrative, educational, economic, and urban modernization in Surakarta. During the reigns of MN V–VII, the surviving sources provide less detailed information about the rulers' personal religious practices than they do for MN I. This uneven documentation cannot, however, be treated as direct evidence of religious decline. At the same time, religious institutions remained traceable through the continuity of Kabupaten Yogiswara and Al-Wustho Mosque. The rehabilitation of Al-Wustho Mosque and the construction of its minaret in 1926 further indicate continued institutional attention to religious

facilities during the reign of MN VII (Nurjayanti, 2022; Wasino, 2014). These developments suggest that modernization did not simply remove Islam from the court environment. Rather, religious life continued through changing actors, spaces, institutional arrangements, functions, and modes of expression. Institutional continuity, therefore, should not be understood as the preservation of identical practices, but as the persistence and adaptation of religious functions within changing historical structures.

Previous research has illuminated Sufism, piwulang literature, aristocratic ethics, mosque architecture, and economic or cultural change in Mangkunegaran (Ardani, 1995; Birsyada et al., 2017; Birsyada, 2020; Daryono et al., 2024; Nurjayanti, 2022; Wasino et al., 2019; Susanto, 2023). Read together, these studies provide a substantial basis for a history of court Islam, but their different thematic and chronological emphases leave room for a connected account across successive reigns. The issue addressed here is how religious practices and institutions changed within one court between 1757 and 1944, rather than whether Islam and Javanese culture were inherently compatible.

Despite these contributions, the existing scholarship remains fragmented both thematically and temporally. Religion has often been examined separately from politics, economics, literature, architecture, and modernization, while studies of individual religious expressions have rarely been connected across successive Mangkunegara reigns. Scholarship on colonial knowledge and the historiography of Indonesian Islam also highlights the need to examine inherited categories and colonial perspectives critically (Bertrand, 2006; As'ad et al., 2023; Sakhok & Musadad, 2024). The central problem, therefore, is not the absence of studies on Islam in Mangkunegaran, but the lack of an integrated historical explanation of how Islamic life changed within a single court institution over the long term. This study addresses that gap through a longitudinal examination of Mangkunegaran from MN I to MN VII. Rather than asking whether the rulers became increasingly or decreasingly religious, it examines how the forms, spaces, actors, functions, institutions, and modes of Islamic expression changed as political structures, colonial relations, Javanese culture, and Muslim society were transformed.

On this basis, the study proposes the concept of court Islamic reconfiguration to explain changes in the forms and locations of Islamic presence without presupposing the

disappearance of religion. The concept is used to examine continuity and change simultaneously: formal religious practices may have become less visible in some periods, while Sufi, ethical, literary, cultural, social, and institutional expressions continued or developed in different settings. The longitudinal perspective therefore traces a historical trajectory from the ritual-institutional configuration documented under MN I, through the less extensively documented MN II–III period, to the reorientation of religious expression through literature, spirituality, and institutional arrangements under MN IV, and finally to institutional differentiation and continuity amid broader social transformation under MN V–VII. The study addresses three questions: first, what forms and positions did Islamic religious practices occupy in the life of Pura Mangkunegaran from MN I to MN VII? Second, how did transformations in political power, colonial relations, Javanese culture, and modernity affect the forms of Islamic presence within the court? Third, how did these changes constitute a reconfiguration of Islamic expression across ritual, ethical, cultural, literary, social, and institutional domains? The study argues that the history of Islam in Mangkunegaran between 1757 and 1944 cannot be adequately explained either as continuous Islamization or as linear secularization and decline. Instead, the evidence demonstrates continuity through transformation. Its contributions are threefold: it provides a longitudinal account of Islamic life within a single Javanese court; connects religion with politics, culture, architecture, colonial relations, and social change; and proposes court Islamic reconfiguration as a framework for moving beyond linear and dichotomous interpretations of Islamization, secularization, and relations between Islam and Javanese culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies of Javanese Islam have examined the relationship between religion, politics, culture, and social change from several perspectives. Three broad strands are particularly relevant to this study. The first examines Islamization and the formation of Javanese Islam in relation to political, social, and cultural transformation. The second focuses on Islamic expressions within Javanese culture, including Sufism, ritual practices, literature, ethics, and architecture. The third addresses colonialism, transformations of political power, and modernization, particularly within Javanese courts. Together, these strands provide an

important foundation for understanding the changing relationship between Islam and Javanese society. Yet they have not fully explained how Islamic life was transformed within a single court institution across successive generations. A longitudinal approach is therefore necessary to examine changes in religious practices, authority, literature, architecture, institutions, and cultural expression as interconnected processes rather than as isolated developments within particular reigns.

The first strand, concerning Islamization and Javanese Islam, has situated religious change within broader political and cultural transformations. Pigeaud and de Graaf (1976) and Drewes (1968) examined the Islamization of Java in relation to political and cultural development, while Ricklefs (2007, 2012) offered a more complex account of the relationship between Islam and Javanese identity, emphasizing processes of both integration and contestation. This scholarship demonstrates that Islamization cannot be reduced to religious conversion alone but involves political power, aristocratic elites, ulama, and social institutions. More recent studies have similarly emphasized the interaction between Islamic norms and local cultural practices. Nasir (2019), for example, examines the religious, social, and symbolic functions of the slametan, while Suwandi and Setyobudi (2020) explore the relationship between Islamic norms and Javanese culture. These studies provide an important conceptual basis for understanding Islam and Javanese culture as historically interconnected rather than as mutually exclusive categories. However, much of this scholarship operates at a broader geographical or thematic level, leaving the long-term internal transformation of Mangkunegaran insufficiently examined.

The second strand concerns the forms through which Islamic ideas and practices were expressed within Mangkunegaran and Javanese aristocratic culture. Ardani (1995) examined the Qur'an, Sufism, and the piwulang works associated with MN IV; Birsyada et al. (2017) and Birsyada (2020) explored relationships between Sufism, aristocratic ethics, and economic life; Daryono et al. (2024) examined the ethos of religious harmony associated with MN IV; and Nurjayanti (2022) analyzed Al-Wustho Mosque as a space where Islam, Javanese traditions, and Mangkunegaran culture intersected. These studies are important because they demonstrate that Islamic expression within the court extended beyond formal ritual into literature, ethics, spirituality, architecture, and cultural practice.

At the same time, their thematic focus tends to isolate particular dimensions of religious life. As a result, the intergenerational transformation of Islamic practices, institutions, spaces, and modes of expression across successive Mangkunegara reigns remains insufficiently visible.

The third strand examines colonialism, political transformation, and modernization. Bertrand (2006) demonstrates the relationship between colonial knowledge and political approaches to Muslim communities, while As'ad et al. (2023) and Sakhok and Musadad (2024) emphasize the importance of critically examining the historiography of Indonesian Islam in relation to colonial legacies. Within Mangkunegaran studies, Wasino et al. (2019) examine transformations in economic and institutional management under colonialism, while Susanto (2023) highlights the growing influence of European culture on the aristocratic elite. This scholarship is essential for understanding the structural environment in which religious life changed. Nevertheless, it does not specifically explain how political, administrative, economic, and cultural transformations affected the forms, spaces, functions, and institutional expressions of Islam within the court. Religion and structural transformation thus remain insufficiently integrated in the existing literature.

Taken together, these three strands reveal a substantial body of scholarship on Islamization, Islamic expression, colonialism, politics, economics, and modernization. The principal limitation is not a lack of research on Islam or Mangkunegaran, but the fragmentation of these discussions across thematic and temporal boundaries. Few studies have connected changes across successive Mangkunegara reigns to explain how Islamic life was transformed between 1757 and 1944. The central historiographical problem is therefore how to account for changes in religious practices, actors, spaces, institutions, functions, and modes of expression without assuming either continuous Islamization or religious decline.

This study addresses that gap through a longitudinal examination of Islamic life in Mangkunegaran from MN I to MN VII. Its distinctive contribution lies in bringing together dimensions that previous scholarship has more often examined separately: religious practices, actors, spaces, institutions, functions, and modes of expression. On this basis, the study proposes court Islamic reconfiguration as an analytical framework

for understanding how the forms and locations of Islamic presence changed while institutional and cultural continuities persisted. The framework emphasizes continuity through transformation, allowing religious change to be examined without reducing it to a linear opposition between Islamization and secularization or between Islam and Javanese culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs the historical method to examine the transformation of Islamic life within Pura Mangkunegaran from 1757 to 1944. A longitudinal historical design is used to trace changes across the reigns of MN I to MN VII, with particular attention to religious practices, actors, spaces, institutional functions, and modes of expression. The study treats Mangkunegaran as a single historical case in order to examine continuity and change across successive generations rather than isolating individual reigns. Such an approach is consistent with historical methodology, which emphasizes the critical examination of sources, interpretation of evidence, and construction of historically grounded narratives (Kuntowijoyo, 2003; Tosh, 2015).

The source base consists of primary and secondary materials. Primary sources include Serat Babad Nitik Mangkunagaran, Babad Ringkesan Padatan Kanjeng Gusti Adipati Mangkunagoro I dumugi VI, Serat Wedhatama Jinarwa, Riwayatipun Sri Mangkunagoro I dumugi VI, and Sumohatmoko's Babad Ringkesan Mangkunegaran I–VII. The manuscript materials are identified in the reference list by their supplied titles and collections; only Serat Babad Nitik Mangkunagaran has a catalogue identifier in the source manuscript (MS MN 754 II). Riwayatipun Sri Mangkunagoro I dumugi VI (n.d.) belongs to the Radya Pustaka collection. These materials are read alongside the later historical account by Wiryosaputra (1977), which is not treated as a contemporary record of MN III's reign. These sources provide evidence concerning religious practices, court institutions, religious personnel, literary expression, and the use of religious spaces. Secondary sources include historical studies of Mangkunegaran, Javanese Islam, Sufism, colonialism, modernization, architecture, and social change. They are used to contextualize the primary evidence and position the findings within existing historiographical debates. The distinction between primary and secondary materials is

important because historical interpretation depends on critically evaluating the provenance, context, purpose, and evidentiary value of sources rather than treating all historical texts as equivalent forms of evidence (Howell & Prevenier, 2001).

The research proceeded through four stages of historical inquiry: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historical writing (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). Heuristics involved identifying and collecting relevant primary and secondary sources. Source criticism examined the provenance, chronology, context, characteristics, limitations, and reliability of the sources. In historical research, source criticism is essential because historical sources are shaped by their contexts of production, purposes, and perspectives; their evidentiary value therefore requires critical assessment rather than simple extraction of factual information (Howell & Prevenier, 2001; Heller, 2023). Particular attention was given to the distinction between descriptions of religious practices and representations of rulers' religiosity, since court narratives and later historical accounts may reflect particular perspectives and purposes. Information from different sources was compared where possible to identify consistency, variation, and gaps in the historical record.

Interpretation involved organizing the evidence chronologically and thematically across the reigns of MN I–VII. The analysis focused on five dimensions: religious practices, actors, spaces, institutional functions, and modes of expression. These dimensions were examined comparatively to identify changes and continuities across periods. Limited documentation of religious practices was not treated automatically as evidence of religious decline; rather, the study distinguished documentary scarcity from demonstrable historical change. Interpretation in historical research involves relating critically examined evidence to broader historical contexts and constructing explanatory relationships without separating interpretation from the evidentiary basis of the sources (Kuntowijoyo, 2003; Tosh, 2015). The final stage involved synthesizing the findings into a longitudinal historical narrative and interpreting them in relation to the historiographical debate. This approach provides the basis for understanding Islamic life in Mangkunegaran as a process of continuity through transformation rather than as a linear trajectory of Islamization or secularization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mangkunegara I: Religious Practices and the Formation of Religious Institutions

The establishment of Mangkunegaran following the Treaty of Salatiga on 17 March 1757 marked the beginning of a court polity in which Islamic practices were documented as part of political and social life. During the reign of MN I, Serat Babad Nitik Mangkunagaran records prayer, dhikr, and collective supplication performed by MN I and his followers. After he became ruler, the documentation of religious activities became more extensive, including Friday selamatan, religious study, charitable giving, and Qur'anic recitation. On the occasion of MN I's weton, observed on Ahad Legi, abdi dalem and santri reportedly recited the Qur'an in turn throughout the night. The activity was followed by collective prayer and the distribution of berkat the following morning (Serat Babad Nitik Mangkunagaran, n.d., MS MN 754 II). These records show that Qur'anic recitation, collective prayer, and charitable activities were associated with particular ceremonial occasions within the court.

Religious life was also associated with the establishment of religious spaces and personnel. Babad Ringkesan Padatan Kanjeng Gusti Adipati Mangkunagoro I dumugi VI (n.d.) records the construction of a mosque east of the Pepe River, behind the western side of Pasar Legi. Construction began in Jumadilawal and was completed in Rajab of the Javanese year Je 1710. Following its completion, Kyai Nuriman was appointed penghulu, together with four khatib and eight suranggama. Friday prayers were subsequently held beginning on 15 Rajab in the Javanese year Je 1710. The same source records lek-lekan every Friday night, attended by sentana, abdi dalem, and soldiers. The kaum performed dhikr accompanied by terbangan, followed by a kenduri in the morning and Friday prayers, charitable giving, and memulen during the day. The source therefore documents not only religious activities but also the personnel and institutional arrangements through which these activities were organized.

MN I's relationship with the Qur'an is further documented through Qur'anic manuscript production. Babad Ringkesan states that MN I was able and willing to write the Qur'an. Ricklefs (2021) records a Qur'anic manuscript associated with MN I that was placed in Mangadeg Mosque. The manuscript consisted of fifteen volumes, each containing two juz, comprising the complete thirty juz. Approximately two hundred

tasbih were also placed with the manuscript. Mangadeg Mosque was completed around August 1789 and was equipped with religious personnel appointed by MN I (Ricklefs, 2021). The sources also record the production of jimat and rajah during Ramadan for the ruler's children and grandchildren. Taken together, the surviving records document religious practices, Qur'anic activity, mosque construction, religious personnel, ritual gatherings, and charitable practices during the early Mangkunegaran period.

Mangkunegara II–III: Religious Documentation amid Political and Cultural Transformation

Following the death of MN I in 1795, MN II assumed rule in a court environment in which documentation of religious life was less extensive than during the preceding reign. Babad Ringkesan Padatan Kanjeng Gusti Adipati Mangkunagoro I dumugi VI does not provide a similarly detailed account of MN II's personal religious observance. Nevertheless, the continued existence of a mosque is documented. Nurjayanti (2022) notes that during MN II's reign, the mosque was relocated to a site west of Pura Mangkunegaran, which later became associated with Al-Wustho Mosque. The mosque was not yet known by the name Al-Wustho at this stage; that designation was adopted only in 1949 through the initiative of Raden Tumenggung K.H. Imam Rosyidi (Nurjayanti, 2022). The court accounts discussed here also concern representations of rulers' personal conduct. These references provide limited evidence concerning religious space and aspects of the ruler's personal conduct, while the surviving court records provide greater detail on other dimensions of political life.

The sources concerning MN II increasingly emphasize political and military developments. From the 1790s, Mangkunegaran's relationship with the colonial government became closer. One significant development was the establishment of the Mangkunegaran Legion. The Legion was formally established through a besluit dated 29 July 1808 during the administration of Governor-General Hermann Willem Daendels, and MN II was appointed its commander with the rank of colonel (Santosa, 2011). Wasino (2014) places this development within the broader transformation of Mangkunegaran's political and institutional structure. Consequently, the surviving sources examined here provide more extensive information on military organization, colonial relations, and political administration than on formal Islamic ritual practices during MN II.

During the reign of MN III, which lasted from 1835 to 1853, documentation of religious practices remained limited. The account reproduced by Sumohatmoko (n.d.) portrays MN III as a friendly and courteous ruler but also refers to his consumption of alcoholic beverages and suggests that attention to Islamic observance was not particularly prominent during his reign (Sumohatmoko, n.d.). This account should be understood as a representation within the source rather than as a comprehensive assessment of the ruler's religiosity. At the same time, court literary and cultural production developed. Panca Mutiara articulated five principles—temen, mantap, gelem nglakoni, aja kagetan, and aja gumunan— while wayang purwa, classical literature, and other forms of court art continued to receive attention (Wiryosaputra, 1977). The surviving evidence thus points to a court undergoing political, military, literary, and cultural transformation, while direct documentation of formal Islamic practices remains comparatively sparse.

Mangkunegara IV: Piwulang, Religious Expression, and Institutional Arrangements

The reign of MN IV represents an important period in the documentation of religious and intellectual life in Mangkunegaran. During this period, Pura Mangkunegaran underwent major renovations between 1856 and 1864 (Susanto, 2023). At the intellectual level, the court produced several piwulang works, including Serat Wedhatama, which addresses inner life, morality, and spiritual practice. Ardani (1995) specifically examines the relationship between the Qur'an, Sufism, and MN IV's piwulang literature. At the institutional level, Mangkunegaran Mosque continued to form part of the religious environment of the court (Nurjayanti, 2022).

Babad Ringkesan Padatan Kanjeng Gusti Adipati Mangkunagoro I dumugi VI (n.d.) presents a critical view of religious observance under MN IV. Its account associates the ruler with growing distance from religious observance and describes some members of the royal family as failing to follow sarak, or Islamic law. This is a source-specific assessment, not a direct measurement of religious commitment across the court.

Serat Wedhatama Jinarwa (n.d., Pupuh II, Sinom) offers a different form of evidence. Its discussion of emulating the Prophet addresses the difficulty of translating an ideal of prophetic conduct into Javanese aristocratic life. Read alongside the critical

account in Babad Ringkesan, it shows that the evaluation of formal observance and the articulation of ethical or spiritual concerns belong to distinct evidentiary registers.

The literary source therefore needs to be read as an articulation of religious and ethical ideals, rather than as proof that those ideals were uniformly practiced. It supports the interpretation that religious concerns could be expressed through literary discourse even where another court narrative criticized observance.

Religious administration was also represented within the court. Wasino (2014) records the establishment of the Kawedanan Yogiswara, headed by a wedana and comprising four kemantren: Ketib, Suragama, Naib, and Ngulama. This institution provided an identifiable administrative structure for religious affairs within Mangkunegaran. The evidence from MN IV therefore includes several forms of religious presence: references to formal observance, literary and spiritual expression, mosque-based religious life, and administrative organization. At the same time, the court was increasingly exposed to European cultural influences in ceremonies, consumption, and aristocratic lifestyles (Susanto, 2023). The surviving sources thus document religious life within a court undergoing simultaneous cultural and institutional change.

Mangkunegara V–VI: Religious Life amid Administrative and Economic Change

After the death of MN IV in 1881, MN V ruled from 1881 to 1896. His reign unfolded under difficult economic conditions and increasing colonial supervision over Mangkunegaran (Wasino et al., 2019). The account by Sumohatmoko (n.d.) describes MN V as paying limited attention to Islamic practices. His interest in intellectual studies and religious writings was likewise described as limited, while matters related to religion and morality were reportedly delegated to his attendants. Unlike the MN I period, the surviving sources do not provide comparable descriptions of regular religious activities such as Qur'anic recitation, dhikr, or Friday gatherings. The available evidence therefore provides more information about representations of the ruler's personal religious orientation than about organized ritual activities within the court.

MN VI, who ascended the throne in 1896, inherited serious financial difficulties resulting from debt and economic decline (Wasino, 2014). His reign was characterized by administrative, educational, and economic reforms. The court environment also reflected increasing European cultural influences. Sumohatmoko (n.d.) portrays MN VI

as a relatively modest ruler who was not known for excessive alcohol consumption, although he occasionally consumed wine. European influence was also visible in aspects of court consumption, including vegetables, potatoes, fruits, and minced meat. These details are significant primarily as evidence of changes in the social and cultural environment of the court rather than as direct evidence of religious policy.

Outside the palace, religious practices continued within the wider social environment. Nasir (2019) examines slametan and tahlilan in Javanese Muslim social life. This later study helps interpret the relationship between ritual and local culture, but does not by itself establish the prevalence of these practices during the reign of MN VI. Toward the end of MN VI's reign, Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah also developed in Surakarta. The sources used in this study do not establish a direct institutional relationship between these organizations and Mangkunegaran. Their development is therefore treated as part of the broader socio-religious context of Surakarta rather than as institutions established or directly controlled by the court. The evidence from MN V–VI thus shows a changing administrative, economic, cultural, and social environment in which documentation of personal court religiosity became less extensive, while religious practices and organizations remained visible in wider society.

Mangkunegara VII: Religious Administration and Al-Wustho Mosque

MN VII began his reign in 1916, by which time Mangkunegaran had developed a substantially different administrative, educational, economic, and urban environment from that of the eighteenth century. Modern education and administrative reform developed alongside the expansion of Islamic organizations in Surakarta. Kauman and Laweyan remained important spaces of activity for ulama and santri, while Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah developed in the wider urban society. The available sources, however, do not establish a direct institutional relationship between MN VII and these organizations. Their presence is therefore considered here as part of the broader socio-religious context in which Mangkunegaran operated.

Within the internal structure of the court, religious administration continued through Kabupaten Yogiswara. According to Wasino (2014), this institution developed from the religious administrative structure established during the MN IV period. As the Mangkunegaran bureaucracy changed, several kawedanan developed into kabupaten

headed by bupati. Kabupaten Yogiswara continued to handle religious affairs, indicating that the administrative organization of religion remained identifiable within the changing bureaucratic structure of the principality.

Religious facilities were also maintained and developed. Nurjayanti (2022) records the rehabilitation of Al-Wustho Mosque in Banjarsari during the MN VII period, while its minaret was constructed in 1926. The mosque therefore remained an identifiable religious facility within the Mangkunegaran environment during a period of administrative and urban modernization. At the same time, Muslim religious practices continued within the wider society alongside modern education and Islamic organizational development.

The evidence from MN VII thus reveals the coexistence of continuing court-based religious administration and an increasingly differentiated Islamic social environment in Surakarta. Within Mangkunegaran, Kabupaten Yogiswara and Al-Wustho Mosque remained identifiable religious institutions and spaces. Beyond the court, Islamic life developed through urban communities, ulama, santri, education, and organizations such as Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah. The available evidence does not demonstrate that these organizations were extensions of Mangkunegaran policy. Rather, the sources point to the simultaneous persistence of court-based religious institutions and the expansion of autonomous Islamic networks in wider Surakarta.

Interpreting continuity through transformation

The longitudinal evidence indicates that Islamic life in Mangkunegaran cannot be adequately characterized either as continuous religious strengthening or as linear decline. Under MN I, Islam was visibly embedded in ritual practices, mosque institutions, religious personnel, Qur'anic activity, and charitable practices. During MN II–III, documentation of formal religious observance became less extensive, while political, military, and cultural transformations received greater attention in the surviving sources. MN IV represents a particularly significant phase because religious concerns became visible through several forms at once: court literary works, ethical and spiritual discourse, religious administration, and mosque-based practices. Under MN V–VII, documentation of personal court religiosity remained uneven, yet religious institutions and practices continued within both court and wider urban society. This trajectory complicates

interpretations of Javanese Islam that rely on a linear movement from Islamization toward secularization. Ricklefs (2007, 2012) similarly demonstrates that Islam in Java must be understood through changing relationships among Islamic identity, Javanese culture, political authority, and competing forms of religious expression. The Mangkunegaran evidence extends this perspective by showing how such transformations unfolded within a single court institution across successive generations. The historical trajectory is therefore better understood as continuity through transformation rather than simple religious persistence or decline.

The significance of MN IV lies particularly in the coexistence of apparently contradictory evidence. Babad Ringkesan represents a growing distance between the ruler and Islamic observance, while Serat Wedhatama Jinarwa articulates religious, ethical, and spiritual concerns through literary discourse. At the same time, the continuation of religious administration through the Kawedanan Yogiswara indicates that religious affairs retained an identifiable institutional structure. These sources should not be read as evidence of either straightforward religious decline or uninterrupted religious vitality. Rather, they reveal different dimensions of Islamic life operating within the same historical setting. This distinction is consistent with the broader historiography of Javanese Islam, which has increasingly questioned interpretations that reduce religious change to a binary opposition between “Islamic” and “Javanese” identities (Ricklefs, 2007, 2012). The sources from MN IV instead suggest that Islamic meanings could be articulated through literary, ethical, spiritual, and administrative forms even when particular representations of formal observance appeared less prominent. The significance of this period therefore lies not simply in whether MN IV was more or less observant, but in the changing forms through which religious meanings were produced, communicated, and institutionalized within the court.

The evidence from MN V–VII further demonstrates that institutional continuity did not require organizational stability. As Mangkunegaran underwent administrative reform, economic difficulty, colonial supervision, and increasing urban modernization, religious institutions adapted to changing structures. Kabupaten Yogiswara continued to perform religious functions, while Al-Wustho Mosque remained an identifiable religious facility. At the same time, Islamic life expanded beyond the court through ulama, santri, Kauman,

Laweyan, education, and organizations such as Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah. This development should not be interpreted as a simple transfer of Islam from the palace to society. Rather, it indicates the emergence of multiple and overlapping religious spaces. Such a pattern corresponds with broader scholarship showing that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Javanese Islam developed through increasingly differentiated religious identities, institutions, and social networks (Ricklefs, 2007, 2012). At the same time, the available evidence does not establish direct institutional control or organizational dependence between these movements and Mangkunegaran. Their significance for this study lies instead in demonstrating the broader social environment within which court-based religious institutions continued to operate. Religious life consequently became more differentiated without necessarily becoming detached from the court.

These findings support the concept of court Islamic reconfiguration as an analytical framework for explaining religious continuity amid institutional and social transformation. Reconfiguration refers not to the replacement of one religious order by another, but to changes in the forms, locations, functions, actors, and institutional settings through which Islamic life was sustained. The concept is compatible with scholarship that treats Islamization in Java as a historically uneven process involving adaptation, contestation, cultural interaction, and changing institutional forms rather than a single linear trajectory (Pigeaud & de Graaf, 1976; Ricklefs, 2007, 2012). The Mangkunegaran case adds a court-centered and longitudinal dimension to this discussion. It demonstrates that religious continuity could persist even when particular ritual practices became less visible in the historical record, court structures changed, and new social actors and organizations emerged. This perspective also moves beyond a simple Islamization-secularization binary. Colonial relations, administrative modernization, aristocratic culture, literary production, and urban social change did not simply displace Islam; they altered the contexts in which Islamic meanings and practices were articulated. Mangkunegaran therefore provides a historical case in which institutional transformation and religious, intellectual, and cultural continuity developed simultaneously rather than sequentially.

CONCLUSIONS

Islamic life at Pura Mangkunegaran between 1757 and 1944 changed through the coexistence of religious continuity and institutional transformation. The sources document a concentration of ritual activities, Qur'anic engagement, religious personnel, and mosque institutions under MN I. Documentation is less extensive for MN II–III. Under MN IV, literary and ethical expressions of Islam coexisted with religious administration and with court criticism of observance. Under MN V–VII, religious institutions remained identifiable amid economic pressures, administrative reform, colonial relations, and urban change.

These findings answer the study's central questions by distinguishing changes in religious practice from changes in how religion was represented and recorded. Political and cultural transformation altered the settings in which Islamic life operated, but the evidence does not support a uniform progression toward secularization. Court Islamic reconfiguration describes this changing relationship among practices, actors, spaces, institutional functions, and modes of expression. It also allows court institutions and wider Islamic networks to be considered together without assuming that the latter were controlled by Mangkunegaran.

The contribution is a connected history across successive reigns rather than a ranking of rulers by personal piety. Its limits arise from uneven documentation, retrospective representations, and incomplete manuscript metadata. Institutional survival cannot establish unchanged ritual participation, and the absence of detailed descriptions cannot establish religious disappearance. Further research using dated administrative records, mosque documentation, and fully identified manuscript witnesses would help test the proposed relationships more precisely.

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