

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285004270>

Syncretism in Architectural Forms of Demak Grand Mosque

Article · September 2015

CITATIONS

0

READS

442

3 authors:



Ashadi Ashadi

Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta

50 PUBLICATIONS 10 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Antarksa Sudikno

Brawijaya University

212 PUBLICATIONS 92 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Purnama Salura

Universitas Katolik Parahyangan

58 PUBLICATIONS 65 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



vernacular architectural form and meaning [View project](#)



Analisis Bentuk Arsitektur Masjid Bersejarah di Jakarta [View project](#)

Syncretism in Architectural Forms of Demak Grand Mosque

Ashadi^{1*}, Antariksa², Purnama Salura³

¹Lecturer of Architecture Department, University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta

²Lecturer of Architecture Department, University of Brawijaya

³Lecturer of Architecture Department, Catholic University of Parahyangan

Received: June 19, 2015

Accepted: September 30, 2015

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to understand the syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque. The architecture of Demak Grand Mosque was influenced by Islam *Kejawen* religion syncretism. This was in line with the compromise method applied by the Walisanga to spread Islam in the Java community. The method used in this research was descriptive, analytical and interpretive, elaborated with the concept of acculturation i.e adoption, synergy, and adaptation, and the concept of Islam *Kejawen* religion syncretism, i.e addition, exchange, and new creation. The results of this research showed that the syncretism in architectural forms of the Demak Grand Mosque, could be traced through the relation of local architecture, i.e Javanese (*Kejawen*) architecture and Hinduism/Buddhism architecture, with foreign architecture, i.e Nabawi Mosque, Pan-Islamism moeques, modern architecture and colonial architecture. This research was expected to contribute knowledge of the theory about the specific methods to read the syncretism in architecture that was global.

KEY WORDS: Syncretism, Architectural Forms, Local Architecture, Foreign Architecture, Islam *Kejawen*

INTRODUCTION

Mosque as sacred building of Islam was born and developed in conjunction with the increasing of Islamic spread to all corners of the earth, which caused the growth of various mosques with local style. Rapid change in the current globalization can not be stopped [1]. Foreign elements that followed globalization was a threat to the preservation of identity and local culture [2]. The flow of information very quickly changed the way of thinking of the people in planning and designing the building of mosques. The new forms of mosques came to bring the foreign elements, with no attention to the local potential.

During its development, the mosque architecture that spread in most parts of Indonesia was the result of the equation with the Islamic form and style from Arab and Middle East culture, which was identical with dome and high minaret. Along with time, the architectural forms of mosques with local style were eroded by other forms of mosques with foreign style. The phenomenon of adoption in the architectural forms of mosque widespread lately. In such condition, the issue of syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque was very important.

Demak Grand Mosque came to absorbing the local forms and elements, which resulted in a form of syncretism, and it continued until now. The uniqueness of Demak Grand Mosque is the dominance of the three layers of *tajug* roof. In countries whose population is majority Muslim such as Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey, dome roof is the main choice in mosque architecture [3,4]. Form of the square building and the *tajug* roof of Demak Grand Mosque took the form of *wantilan*, the cockfighting building in Bali, or it took the *pendopo*, the Javanese (*Kejawen*) building [5,6]. The three layers of *tajug* roof took the form of *meru*, the Hindu sacred buildings in Bali [7]. The form of the mosque plan approaching the square took the form of the temple plan [8,9].

From the above explanation, this research aimed to trace the syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque. This research gave an alternative of the new perspective about the method, which was global, in understanding of syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque, by elaborating the whole relationship of local architecture and foreign architecture.

The benefits of this research are : firstly, to understand syncretism in the architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque; secondly, to give an alternative of the new perspective about method in understanding syncretism in architectural forms; thirdly, to give feedback to users (stakeholders), which is associated with planning and designing the mosques in Indonesia; and fourthly, to position syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque into a global context.

*Corresponding Author: Ashadi, Lecturer of Architecture Department, University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta Ashadi,
Email: ashadihadiwinoto@yahoo.co.id

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Case Study : Demak Grand Mosque

At the end of the 15th century, the first Islamic kingdom established in Java, namely the Islamic kingdom of Demak. The first king was Al-Fatah, which was more popular with Raden Patah. At the same time, in the west of the town square of Demak (*alun-alun*) was also built a large mosque that became known as Demak Grand Mosque. According to the chronicle, the initial establishment of the mosque indicated by *Candra Sengkala* : "*Lawang Trus Gunaning Janma*", which meant in 1399 *Saka* or 1477 AD. Walisanga had a role in the establishment of Demak Grand Mosque. [10,11].

Demak Grand Mosque is the oldest mosque in Java, and becomes a heritage building. The main part of the building is room of the mosque covered by three layers of *tajug* roof. The *tajug* is one of the Javanese (*Kejawen*) building. The Javanese building consists of five types : *panggung-pe*, *kampung*, *tajug*, *limasan*, and *joglo*. The form of Demak Grand Mosque is followed by mosques built thereafter, which later became the archipelago (Nusantara) style mosques. Demak Grand Mosque can be classified into the mosque-cemetery because it becomes a complex with the cemetery. The cemetery is located in the northwest of the mosque building. In the cemetery, there is the tomb of Sultan Trenggono with the *cungkup*, the third king of the Islamic kingdom of Demak. Mosque and cemetery complex is surrounded by the wall. Demak Grand Mosque has a minaret with a dome roof at its peak. Based on the description, Demak Grand Mosque eligible to be used as case study.

Framework and Steps of Analysis

Analytical framework referred to the concept of acculturation and the concept of the Islam *Kejawen* religion syncretism. The concept of mixing architectural forms associated with cultural elements could not be traced only with the approach of architecture, but had to borrow another science, namely anthropology. In anthropology, mixing two or more cultures called acculturation [12].

In the process of acculturation there are four strategies, namely: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization [13]. Local attitudes towards foreign civilizations (outside) in the acculturation process occurs in three conditions, namely : adoption, adaptation, and synergy [14]. This study used the mixing concepts of acculturation strategies and acculturated attitude, namely adoption, adaptation, and synergy, as the concepts of syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque.

Islam *Kejawen* religion syncretism referred to the Walisanga methods in the spread of Islam in Java in the 15th and the 16th century. Walisanga in the face of the old culture used the following ways: keep, addition, modification, devaluation, exchange, substitution, creation of new rituals, and negation [15]. Walisanga ways in the face of the old culture associated with the mixing, i.e addition, exchange and creation of new rituals. The three concepts became the concepts of syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque.

Syncretism in architecture occurred through the mixing of the foreign architectural forms and elements with the local architectural forms and elements. The foreign architecture was derived from the function and form of early Nabawi Mosque architecture, then evolved into a Pan-Islamism mosque architecture with dome roof character. Nabawi Mosque which was established at the beginning of the spread of Islam in Medina, Saudi Arabia, in the 7th century, became the basic reference in the planning and designing the mosques in countries outside the Arabian Peninsula, including in Java. Java, at the beginning of the 20th century showed symptoms of the presence of the identity of Pan-Islamism 'Arabia', presented by the Java scholars (*ulama*) who came from pilgrimage or studying in Saudi Arabia. Architecturally, claimed to show the existence of a Muslim community as part of the world community appeared on the adoption of elements closed to the 'International' Islam. Identity of 'International' Islam was adequately represented by a dome roof and high minaret on mosque buildings. Gradually, dome roof became a symbol of the modern Islamic architecture, that seemed to be mandatory on new mosques in Java. The oldest Islamic architecture which used a dome roof was the Dome of the Rock (Qubbat as-Shakrah), a sacred place in the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, built by Abdul Malik bin Marwan, Umayyad caliph, in 691. Since then, Muslim architects developed a variety of styles on the dome of the mosque. From time to time, the dome roof continuously evolved with changing technology.

The spirit of modernization and globalization (especially in the 18th and 19th century) introduced modern architecture. Modern architecture emphasized on the functionality and usability of space. Building forms tended to cubism, geometric, simple, regular, uniform, clean and without ornaments. Building construction was exposed both fabrication and conventional materials. The exterior and interior of the building consisted of vertical stripes, asymmetry and regular. Modern architecture is not related to past history, but it stands alone in accordance with the development of science and technology. The modern building is universal due to industrialization, science and technology.

Along with the development of modern architecture, colonial architecture presented in Indonesia that had become a trend in the early 20th century. Colonial architecture in Indonesia has four periodization, ie firstly, in

the 16th century until the 1800s, secondly, in the 1800s until 1902, thirdly, 1902 to 1920, and fourthly, 1920 -an until the 1940s. Modern architecture and colonial architecture were grouped into foreign architecture.

In Java, before the influence of forms and elements of Nabawi Mosque, mosques of Pan-Islamism, modern architecture and colonial architecture presented, there was forms and elements of Javanese (*Kejawen*) architecture and Hindu / Buddhist architecture. Javanese architecture was the Javanese buildings, and Hindu / Buddhist architecture was the temples. Javanese architecture and Hindu / Buddhist architecture were grouped into local architecture.

Based on the above, the steps of analysis were as follows [Figure 1].

The first step, was analyzing the mixture on the architecture of the Demak Grand Mosque between functions and forms of early Nabawi Mosque architecture with Javanese architecture and Hindu / Buddhist architecture (relationship of A-H-F or G and relationships of B-H-F or G), to find the syncretism in architecture with the concept of synergy and adaptation.

The second step, was analyzing the mixture on the architecture of the Demak Grand Mosque between mosques of Pan-Islamism architecture with Javanese architecture and Hindu / Buddhist architecture (relationship of C-H-F or G), to find the syncretism in architecture with the concept of adoption.

The third step, was analyzing the mixture on the architecture of the Demak Grand Mosque between modern architecture with Javanese architecture and Hindu / Buddhist architecture (relationship of D-H-F or G), to find the syncretism in architecture with the concept of adoption.

The fourth step, was analyzing the mixture on the architecture of the Demak Grand Mosque between colonial architecture with Javanese architecture and Hindu / Buddhist architecture (relationship of E-H-F or G), to find the syncretism in architecture with the concept of adoption.

The fifth step, was analyzing the mixture on the architecture of the Demak Grand Mosque between forms and elements of early Nabawi Mosque architecture, mosques of Pan-Islamism architecture, modern architecture, and colonial architecture with forms and elements of Javanese architecture and Hindu / Buddhist architecture, to find the syncretism in architecture with the concept of addition, exchange, and new creation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the 15th and 16th century, Walisanga offered functions of mosque, then the Java community provided container functionality in the form of a mosque, ie the form of Demak Grand Mosque, the building with a square floor plan and the three layers of *tajug* roof. Mosque functions as foreign factors mixed with container of functions as local factors. There had been a synergy [Relation A-H-F]. According to the Javanese people, *tajug* roof was used for sacred buildings. It was suitable for mosque building.

Spatial of Demak Grand Mosque could be referred to the early of Nabawi Mosque. The early form of Nabawi Mosque was open space surrounded by the wall. At the front there was a prayer room. At the rear there was a veranda. In the middle there was a place of purification (*wudlu*). Spatial of Demak Grand Mosque was the result of adaptation between the early spatial of Nabawi Mosque with traditional Javanese house [Relation B-H-F). Veranda of Demak Grand Mosque placed outside the main room, referred to the *pendopo* were placed outside *ndalem* [16]. Place of purification of Demak Grand Mosque which was located separately from the main room, referred to the bathroom in a traditional Javanese house which was located separately from *ndalem* [17]. In this case there was a syncretism in architectural form of Demak Grand Mosque with the concept of exchange. Location of purification place in the early of Nabawi Mosque exchanged outside the main room in the spatial of Demak Grand Mosque.

Demak Grand Mosque has a minaret height of 12 meters, with the construction of a steel frame [Figure 2]. In the middle of the minaret there is a *tajug* roof without peaks. At the top of the minaret there is a dome roof. Form of the minaret was the result of the adoption [Relation C-H-F and D-H-C]. The minaret was built later, in response to the rise of Pan-Islamism architecture. *Tajug* roof was a product of Javanese architecture. Dome roof was a product of Pan-Islamism architecture. Construction of the steel frame was a product of modern architecture.

The main room of Demak Grand Mosque has a square floor plan and three layers of *tajug* roof. Floor plan with square form referred to the form of a square floor plan of the temple. Three layers of *tajug* roof referred to *meru*, the Hindu sacred building. At the peak of the roof of the mosque building is *memolo*. This element referred to the form of the *stupa* of temple Buddhist. These forms and elements showed a syncretism in architecture with the concept of new creation. From the description, it was concluded that the main building of Demak Grand Mosque had occurred syncretism with the concept of synergy-new creation.

Veranda of Demak Grand Mosque has a *limasan* roof, the building construction of Javanese architecture. At the bottom of the column of Veranda there is *umpak*, and at the top of the column there is a construction beam of *blandar-pengeret*. On the surface of the column and beam are ornaments, namely *mirong*, *praba*, *saton*, and so on. There had been a syncretism in architecture with the concept of new creation. From the description, it

was concluded that the veranda of Demak Grand Mosque had occurred syncretism with the concept of adaptation - new creation.

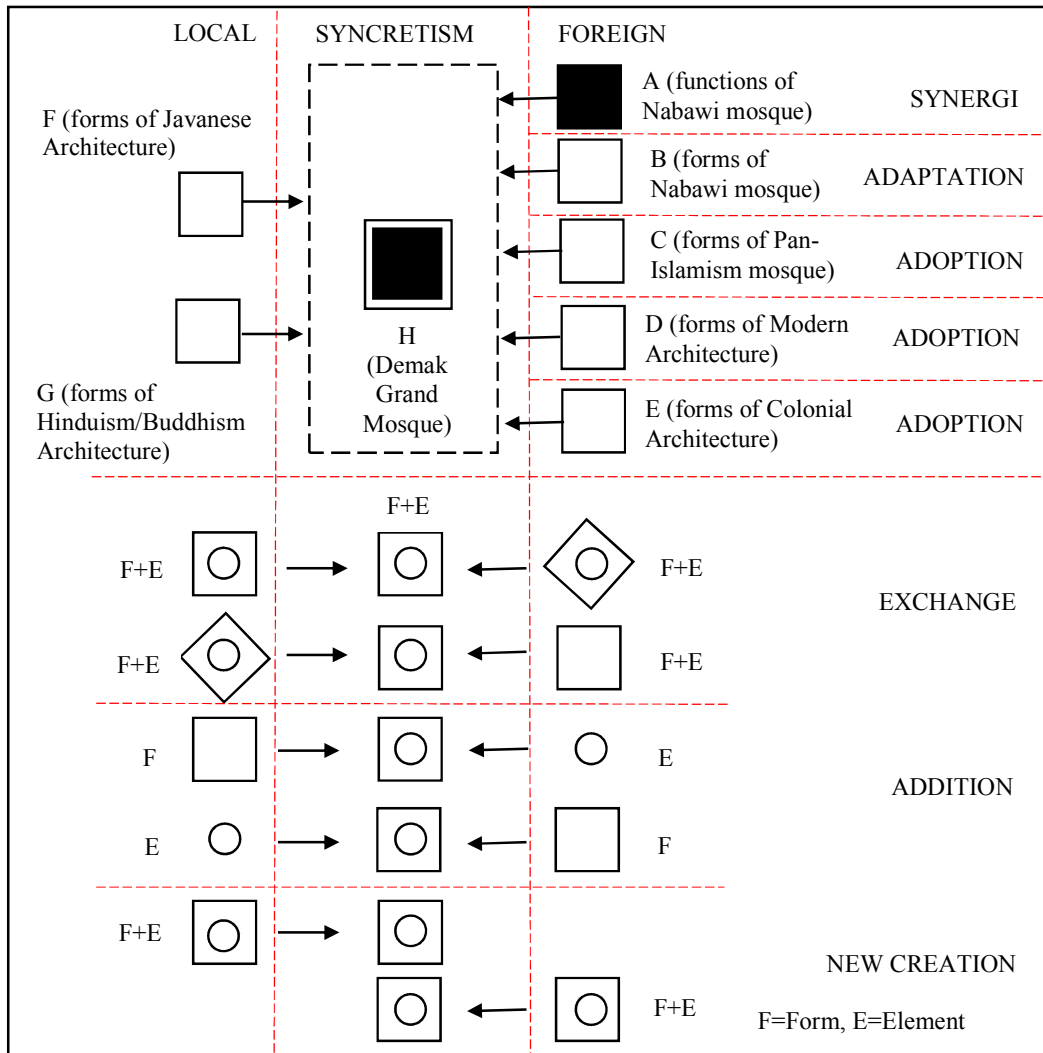


Figure 1 : Schematic diagram of method

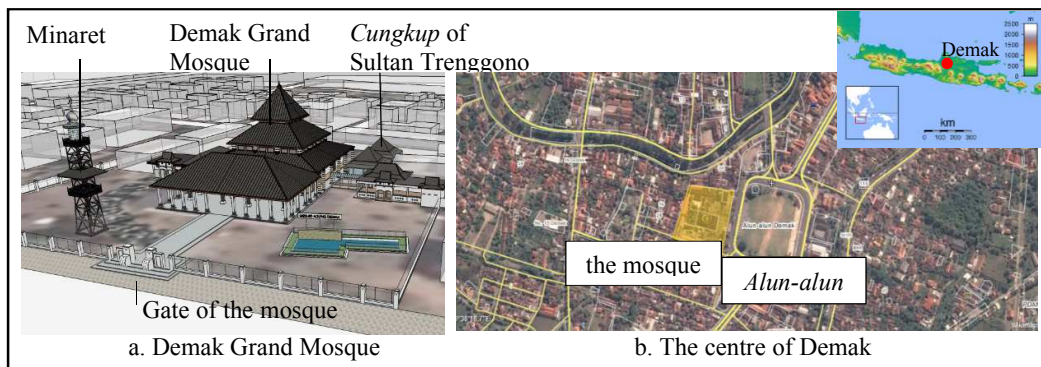


Figure 2 : Demak Grand Mosque (a) and the centre of Demak town (b)

CONCLUSION

The study gave understanding of syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque through the framework and analysis steps that had been built. In the main room of the mosque occurred syncretism with the concept of synergy-new creation. On the veranda of the mosque occurred syncretism with the concept of adaptation-new creation.

This study had been able to formulate a new method and its operation in finding out the syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque. The new method was used for elaborating the concepts of syncretism in architecture, which referred to the concept of acculturation and the concept of Islam *Kejawen* religion syncretism.

A new perspective in understanding the syncretism in architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque was particularly important for planning and designing the architecture of mosques in Indonesia. It was also important for the scientific development of architecture in general because this was a global issue.

Depth understanding through the search syncretism in the architectural forms of Demak Grand Mosque was very useful in positioning the dynamics of syncretism in architectural forms in the development of mosques architecture in the global era.

REFERENCES

1. Stiglitz, Joseph E., 2007. Making Globalization Work, [39].
2. Mubah, A. Safril, 2011. Revitalisasi Identitas Kultural Indonesia di Tengah Upaya Homogenisasi Global, in Jurnal Global & Strategis, [251-260].
3. Rochym, Abdul, 1983. Sejarah Arsitektur Islam, Sebuah Tinjauan, [50-84]
4. Israr, C., 1978. Sejarah Kesenian Islam 1, [104-106]
5. Stutterheim, 1927. Moskee-Onderzoek in den Archipel in Djawa, [114-116]
6. Ismudiyanto dan Atmadi, Parmono, 1987. Demak-Kudus-Jepara Mosque:A Study of Architectural Syncretism in Research Report, [87-94]
7. Pijper, G.F., 1947. The Minaret in Java, in Tudjimah, 1992. Empat Penelitian tentang Agama Islam di Indonesia 1930-1950, [24-25]
8. Soekmono, 1973. Pengantar Sejarah Kebudayaan 3, [76].
9. Tjandrasmita, Uka, 2000. Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan Kota-Kota Muslim di Indonesia dari Abad XIII sampai XVIII Masehi, [165-166]
10. Graaf, H.J. de dan Pigeaud, Th. G. Th., 1985. Kerajaan-Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa, [32-36]
11. Atmodarminto, R., 2000. Babad Demak, Dalam Tafsir Sosial Politik, [59]
12. Haviland, William A., 1993. Antropologi Jilid 2, [263]
13. Berry, John W., 2005. Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures, in International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 29 : 697–712
14. Salura, 2015. Sebuah Kritik : Arsitektur yang Membodohkan, [146-149].
15. Santosa, Iman Budhi, 2012. Spiritualisme Jawa, [169].
16. Fauzy, Bachtiar; Sudikno, Antariksa; Salura, Purnama, 2012. The Resilience of Javanese Meaning in the Architectural Acculturation of Javanese with Chinese Ethnic Houses in the Kampong of *Sumber Girang* and *Babagan* in Lasem.
17. Salura, Purnama and Fauzy, Bachtiar, 2012. The Architectural Adaptation of Javanese Ethnic Houses to the Architectural Influence of Arab Ethnic Houses in Gresik.