



Mosques without Dome (as a Tourist Attraction): A Religion Journey

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Abstract

Purpose: This research aims to reveal the recent architectonic design phenomena for Indonesian mosques without dome(s) and minarets. All the mosques have potential uniqueness to be tourist attractions.

Research methods: The research refers to interdisciplinary methods in qualitative research of four mosques structures without a dome and/or minaret.

Findings: Architectonic designs are interpreted as the desire to demonstrate the postmodern architectural spirits (*zeitgeist*) of the respective architects by performing anti-deterministic, self-sustaining and/or multivalent architecture. Architects do it to provoke to interpret the new interpretations of the Islamic spirit in architecture in an emotional and cognitive way.

Implications: The serial of mosques without dome has been potential to be a religion journey. It has also been potential to be tourist attractions.

Keywords: mosque, dome, architectonic design, canon rule, religion journey.

INTRODUCTION

Successful innovation tends to be orientated towards architectural trendsetters in all building typologies, including mosques design. A mosque has the role to facilitate to Moslem prayers five times per day as a concentrated place of prayer for the public. Recently, behind for prayer, the uniqueness of mosque design is potential to be a tourist attraction. In Indonesia, it has really happened to the international tourism destination of Bali which is very popular with its cultural tourism paradigm (Mudana, et al, 2021) where *pura* or temples (holy places of the Hindu religion of the local community) very often become tourist spots in addition to the ritual practices of the community occurred in the temples.

The mosque buildings in Indonesia built before Indonesian Independence are typically located surrounding the *Sultan* and *Sunan (Holy Leader)* palaces, including the *Wali Songo* mosques. The *Wali Songo* are the nine propagators of Islam in Indonesia during the 14th-century, in the surrounds of the Northern coast of Java and West Java. Their heritage mosques are *Masjid Agung Demak*, *Masjid Menara Kudus*, *Masjid Agung Kasepuhan*, etc, by main architectural feature is the *Tajug* roof structure. A modernist-styled mosque without a dome was built on Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), (1960) by Achmad Noe'man (1926-2016). A National Mosque, known as the Independence Mosque, the Istiqlal Mosque (*Masjid Istiqlal*) (1961-1978) was designed by Christian Architect F. Silaban. For more than 50 years after the *Masjid Istiqlal*, Indonesian mosques usually were

designed according to the classical typologies, including a dome roof and minarets. With the exception of *Masjid Saïd Naum* (1976) designed by Adhi Moersid. His innovative mosque design skillfully re-interpreted a hybrid of modern with indigenous architecture design resulted in an Aga Khan Award in Architecture in 1986.

A new phenomena of mosque design occurred, beginning with *Al-Irsyad* (2010) designed by Ridwan Kamil. He reduced the classical symbol of mosque to a cubic design without the dome. After *Al-Irsyad*, many architects were inspired to create a mosque without a dome. In 2011, a Grand Mosque Design Competition of Padang that was won by Rizal Muslimin. Aimed at reducing the dome's height, Muslimin contains the dome as a unique feature within the main roof. By hybridizing Islamic culture and Minangkabau's local patterns, and simplicity form. Meanwhile, in Lampung built a grand mosque of *Baitus Shobur* by Isandra Matin. He presented the mosque's design without a dome, so that it stands as a single monument. On the other hand, due to the relocation of slum settlements in Kalijodo, Jakarta (2015-2016), Yori Antar proposed a Friday mosque in by adopted the traditional *Tajug* roof shape, by cutting the top off a square as a natural opening for the light's rays.

RESEARCH METHODS

Some of the Indonesian Architects changed their design paradigm from the mainstream of classical mosque design. Most of the mosques are designed without domes and/or minarets. Then, the new phenomenon is potentially to be a religion journey and a tourist attraction.

This research aims to reveal the recent architectonic design phenomenon for Indonesian mosques without dome(s) and minarets. All had potential uniqueness to be tourist attraction. By referring to Case Studies and Combined Strategies Method in a case study adopted (Groat, 2002, 118), it is an empirical inquiry to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, firstly by direct investigated to the mosque building as an object. Secondly, by investigation of the uniqueness of the building's form and the quality of the objects, and third, by revealing the meaning based on Derrida's concept of *khora* (Derrida, 1995, 89) by direct investigation of the artisticity of the design process. This research refers to interdisciplinary methods in qualitative research of four mosques structures without a dome and/or minaret; (a) Ridwan Kamil's work at *Al-Irsyad* in Bandung Kota Baru Parahyangan. By adding the cubic form of the *Kaaba*, he successfully instilled the 'Anamnesis Philosophical Design' approach and created new semiotics by placing the natural panoramic of the altar, (b) Yori Antar's design for Masjid Jami in Kalijodo, with the spirit of "Traditional Reinterpretation" using a cut pyramid (*afgeknote*) for the *Tajug*-style roof as the "New Rhetorical Figures" type, (c) Third, Grand Mosque of Padang by Rizal Muslimin. He expressed the theme of "Return to Absent Center", adopting an ancient narrative about a cloth held in the four corners of the Quraysh tribe. The Minangkabau spired roof (*gonjong*). Its design is related to the theme of "New Rhetorical Figures" and "Traditional Reinterpretation", (d) Andra Matin's work in *Baitus Shobur*, Tulang Bawang Barat. He creates the "Harmonious Harmony" type by expressing a simple architectural design, and expressing natural daylight by creating 99 holes on the ceiling surface, thus appealing to "the 99 names of God".

FINDINGS

“Canonic Rules” of Postmodern Architecture

In his book related postmodern Charles Jencks defined 11 “Canonic Rules” expressing the contrast with the older notion of classical rules (Jencks, 1977, 312) among others; (1) *Disharmonious Harmony*, as “fragmented unity” instead of “finished totality where no part can be added or subtracted except for the worse” it opposed to “the cosmic harmony” of the past of Renaissance, (2) *Cultural and Political Pluralism*, as if several possible readings are presented simultaneously it is left to the reader to supply a unifying text, (3) *Urban Contextualism*, is “proper balance: between the essential elements”, (4) *Anthropomorphism*, as personification related attribution of the human form and characteristics, (5) *Anamnesis*, as historical continuum and the relation between the past and the present, parody, nostalgia and pastiche (resulting in anamnesis) and narrative without a plot. Then, (6) *A Return to Content*, as the subject matter is extended from autobiography to high and popular culture, and intertextuality. (7) *Double-Coding*, is a use of irony, ambiguity, contradiction that allows us to read the present in the past as much as the past in the present, (8) *Multivalence*, is many different associations of adjacent references (themes, narratives) with unlimited semiosis. Meanwhile, (9) *A Complex Relation to the Past*, without “memories” and “associations” a novel is diminished of meaning, emphasizes on anamnesis (“historical continuum”), re-interpretation of traditions, (10) *New Rhetorical Figures*, by stylistic formulas which they invent or adopt; fashion and function play a role in establishing the “new figure” (paradox, oxymoron, ambiguity, double-coding, contradiction, irony, disharmonious harmony), and the erosion related to the feeling of loss, “presence of an absence”, and (11) *The Return of the “Absent Centre”* as an ambivalence that reflects the double, state of transition were activity moves away from as well-known point, acknowledges the move and yet keeps a view, a trace of that past location (Jencks and Kropf, 1997: 131).

Indonesian Mosque Elements

The origin of mosque is the places referring towards to the *qibla* of Ka’ba of Mecca (Hillenbrand, 1994, 33). The Muslim prayer then perfectly with features; (a) the *mihrab* or the prayer niche, (b) the *minbar* or pulpit, (c) the *maqsura* or royal box, (d) the raised gabled transept, (e) the dome over the *mihrab* bay, (f) the *minaret* is a high tower role to caller to prayer (*muezzin*), (g) an ablution (*al-wuḍū*) is a place of purification before prayer (Mokhtar, 2005, 9). Islamic develop in Indonesia contributed by the nine propagators of Islam known as *Wali Songo* (Nine Saints). They influence the Eastern aesthetics of mosque by elaborated the local culture by innovated the *meru* roof and expressing the greatness of Allah by monumentally, spectacularly and ornamentally.

There are seven classifications of mosque in Indonesia, namely: (1) State Mosque or National Mosque is *Istiqlal Mosque* in Jakarta. Its role symbolizes the Moslem majority in Indonesia, (2) Grand Mosque also has a role as a national mosque, (3) Great Mosque has a provincial status, (4) Great Mosque has a regency or city status, (5) Big Mosque has a district status, (6) Friday Mosque may be a large mosque which is located in an administrative village, and (7) Prayer Room (*musholla*, *langgar* or *surau*) is a prayer space.

After analyzing the four Indonesian mosque buildings by comparative design method by refers to 11 Canon Rules of Postmodern Architecture (Jencks, 1977) reveal an idea of the 'Architectural Stage' in order to express the modernity of Moslem architectural spirit. The four Indonesian architects; Ridwan Kamil, Yori Antar, Rizal Muslimin and Isandra Matin have all contributed to contemporary mosque architecture by reflecting on their own *mentalite* of the agency actors (Lloyd, 1993, 89). According to Jencks (1977), their architectonic design purely reflected the Architect's desire to show off and provoked wholly new interpretations with hybrids of Islamic contemporary idioms, which included icons, design, art, and culture by monumentally and spectacularly by inserting their own dreams and ideologies. All of the mosques without dome are have public appreciation and encourage public to visit. It means, they are potential to be a religion journey.

The Friday Mosque of Al Irsyad at Kota Baru Parahiyangan Bandung

The Al Irsyad in Kota Baru Parahiyangan Bandung is a mosque building typologies without a dome. It is identified by simple, yet iconic, kufic-styled Arabic calligraphy on the building façades (Ardhiati, 2013). The cubic form of recalls the simulacra of *Ka'ba* in Mecca. Kamil has continued the traditional discourse in an innovative way as shown (Figure 1). His innovations design as follows; a) a reductive the dome; b) re-interpretation the minaret, c) a natural panoramic at the *mihrab* for the *Imam's* space. Usually, the *Imam's* space is located in front of the *qibla*, in a niche in a massive wall. A natural panoramic is created in front of *mihrab* as an open air space, so all Moslems can directly perform their prayers in the direction of the *Kaa'ba* and also see the natural landscape beyond, especially from sunrise until noon (Figure 2).



Figure 1 and 2. The natural panoramic is created at the *mihrab* as an open air space

[Source: Ridwan Kamil, 2013]

The Friday Mosque (Masjid Jami') of Kalijodo, Jakarta

The *Masjid Jami'* of Kalijodo designed by Yori Antar is a mosque without a dome as shown (Figure 3). He created a distinctive shape (*afgeknot*) based on the truncated pyramid of a *Tajug* roof. The *Tajug* roof is an Indonesian traditional roof. His split-level truncated pyramid to allow the sunlight to flood the mosque interior, resulting in architectural innovation, reveals the

formula of '*Traditional Re-interpretation*' (Jencks, 1977, 313).



Figure.3 The natural lighting is created at the *mihrab* as an open air space
[Source: Yori Antar, 2016]

The Grand Mosque (Masjid Raya) of Padang, West Sumatera

The uniqueness of The Grand Mosque its roof shape. Rizal Muslimin successfully created a hybrid roof shape with a contemporary interpretation of vernacular house, and a symbolic hanging shape of the 'cloth' used when the four leaders of the Quraysh tribe lifted the *al-Hajar al-Aswad* inside the Kaa'ba. He covered the building with the calligraphy the Great Name of *Allah*. His spirit was revealed as being characteristic of the formula '*Traditional Re-interpretation*' (Jencks, 1977, 132) as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Muslimin adopted the narrative story of the Quraysh tribe as a metaphor to shape the roof

[Source: Rizal Muslimin, 2016].

The Great Mosque (Masjid Agung) of Baitus Shobur Lampung

In the 2014-s, a great mosque of *Baitus Shobur* in Lampung design by Isandra Matin. It looks a singular tall building as a prism without a dome, which looks like a single monument in the center of a pond. All of the mosque is covered with stone, so its scale looks massive in a 30-meter high building. Because of it, the mosque to be a city landmark, which majestically reflects the sunlight. His choreography of light illuminates the 99 holes on the interior surfaces to allude to the ninety-nine Names of Allah as shown in Figure 5.



Figure. 5 The new wave of postmodern mosques in Indonesia
[Source: Isandra Matin, 2018]

His simple cubic of Al Irsyad mosque with its 'open air' *mihrab* features a natural panoramic view, as Ridwan Kamil contributed to Indonesian contemporary architecture. Isandra Matin's works at *Baitus Shobur Lampung* is also a new wave Postmodern to glory in the Name of Allah. On the other hand, the Grand Mosque of Padang by Rizal Muslimin is an absolutely different approach in comparison with Kamil and Matin. Muslimin absolutely explored the Minangkabau cultural patterns, forms, and shaped from traditional elements into building façade. He accommodated '*Traditional Re-interpretation*'. Lastly, for the Friday Mosque of Kalijodo Jakarta, Yori Antar has adopted a new approach of '*Tradition Re-interpretation*' with a soft touch by a truncated pyramid (*afgeknot*) to recall the traditional roof *Tajug*'s in an avant-garde way.

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CONCLUSION

Postmodern mosques in Indonesia are driven by four prominent architects who are successfully exploring their desire to express modernity in the Moslem spirit. Their architectonic design also reflected their *mentalite* of various architects. Jencks' Postmodern Architecture formula has inspired them to express anti-deterministic, self-sustaining, and the multi-valent acts as the catalyst for the architect's mindset, and also provokes a new interpretation of contemporary idioms, icons, art, culture, and ideologies.

Finally, the freedom to visualize their ideas successfully in the form of hybrid ideas for mosques, monuments and other architectural processes is well evident on postmodern mosque in Indonesia. By creating mosques without dome then there will be public appreciation because the mosques are potential to be a religion journey.

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