

Function-Form Relation of Neo-Vernacular Architecture of Salib Suci Church, Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

Acculturation of foreign cultures in the era of advances in communication technology is very quickly accepted by society. In order to maintain the identity, then the issue of Neo-Vernacular in the architecture design of Catholic churches is very interesting to study. This problem is the relation between sacred function and the form. The method in this study is descriptive-analytical and interpretative-qualitative by relating sacred function to Neo-Vernacular form; a) The ritual function of this church can accommodate the form of Neo-Vernacular architecture; b) Interior can express sacredness; c) Exterior can express sacredness. The findings in this study are, on Neo-Vernacular architecture in the narthex and nave regions, there is an imaginary boundary in the form of the baptismal vessel, which distinguishes the boundary between the sacred and profane regions. The conclusion in this study is that the Salib Suci church with its Neo-Vernacular form cannot fully accommodate sacredness. There are some things that cannot fulfill sacredness, namely ideograms especially in the sanctuary area where the height of the building is higher than nave and narthex, both on the exterior and interior. Circulation should flow from the main door leading to the altar, but the form of Neo-Vernacular architecture of the Salib Suci church with a *Pendopo* (Hall) cannot accommodate this because the form of the hall is four- squared. So that circulation to the altar on the parallel side of the main axis is not possible. All ornaments in the form of symbols on the Neo-vernacular Salib Suci church on the exterior and interior provide sacred expression.

Keywords: Function-form relations, Neo-Vernacular Architecture, Catholic church, Salib Suci church

1. Introduction

The progress of communication technology is able to absorb foreign elements, and to be able to strengthen local culture and develop the identity from the acculturation of foreign cultures, local identity is very necessary. Likewise, in the design of a Catholic church in Indonesia which is dominated by foreign building styles such as the Roman style, Renaissance style and Gothic style, it would be wiser to design a building by adapting a local identity rather than an acculturation of foreign cultures. With the release of the Second Vatican Council in 1962-65, the Catholic church made major changes in the field of teaching and life of the people, so the architectural forms of the Catholic church are diverse (Trisno, 2017: xx).

Religion that respects culture will gain broad support and be able to unite humanity throughout the world, so that it exceeds all differences (Gakkai, 2018: 7). This direct relationship with the advancement of technology grows new civilizations and also brings new styles. This new

civilization can break through community agreement, because it has its own way and point of view in relation to time, space and logic (Tofler, 1990: 23-26).

So vernacular architecture can be used as an effective change to achieve architectural evolution which still maintains a national identity to keep up with the times. Innovative creativity will provide input to postmodern architecture in a new face called Neo-Vernacular, whose appearance does not thoroughly follow the vernacular rules, but tries to express it like a vernacular building. Neo-vernacular architecture is a postmodern manifestation characterized by the deliberate return of local traditional models and also the details, but without its construction method (Peel, 1989: 125).

The phenomenon of the Neo-Vernacular form in the architecture of Catholic churches with the ritual function loaded with sacred values raises a question whether it can be fulfilled in both its exterior, and interior. Hence, the issue of function following the Neo-vernacular form is very interesting to study.

2. Material and Methods

The Salib Suci church represents the Neo-Vernacular style. The Salib Suci church was designed in 1982 as a forum for community fellowship in the Cilincing area, North Jakarta. In 1982 a priest who was also an expert in architecture, Jusuf Bilyarta Mangunwijaya Pr. together with Han Awal were concerned to design the shape of the Salib Suci church. In contrast to the churches in Gothic style, which tend to be massive with a vertical impression dominating their appearance, The Salib Suci church, Mangunwijaya presents the concept of a building that is open, unpretentious, and familiar with the environment, both social and natural. The shape of the building that is in line with the concept, is the form of a *Pendopo* (Hall), which is generally present without walls. In addition to being inspired by the design of the *Pendopo*, the design of buildings without walls is also intended to address the hot natural conditions and its adjacent position to the beach. The outer and inside parts of the church are separated by only a folding door. The intention of the designer to make a building similar to a pavilion is also manifested by the four columns supporting the building as an icon of the *Soko-Guru* (middle pole).

In 2007 a plan for the renovation of the Salib Suci church was made with the expert architect Yori Antar as the designer. In the renovation process, he chose to maintain the structure of the building, the form, and the layout of the space. The figure below shows the architectural display with the *Pendopo* concept (Fig. 1).

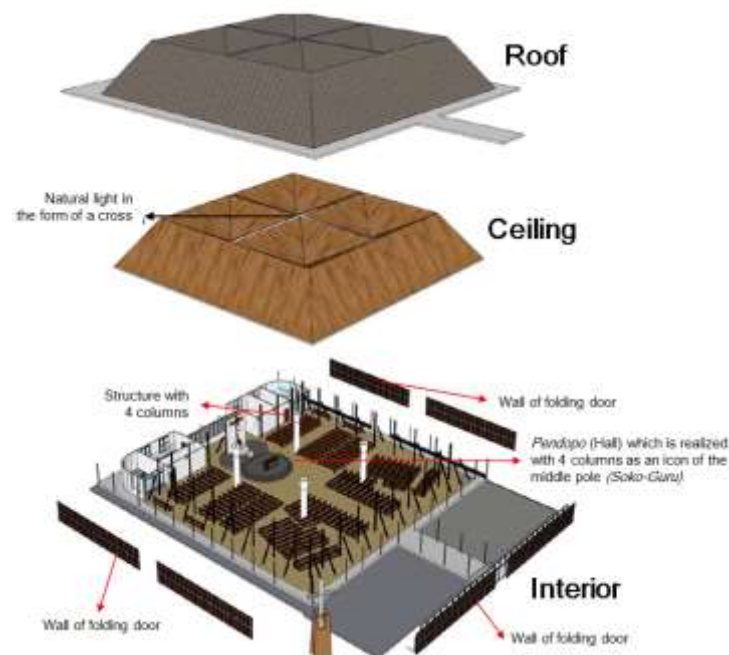


Fig. 1: Three dimension of Salib Suci Church

It is seen in the design of the Salib Suci church that the function follows the shape of the *Pendopo* to create a Neo-Vernacular form of Java architecture (Fig. 2). Eisenman said that the form of modern architecture does not always follow function, but function can follow form (Eisenman, 2006: 27). Robert Venturi in the book of *Complexity and Contradiction* Chapter 6 (1966) said form is a reflection and expression of the creativity of the architect (Venturi, 1966). In the postmodern era of architectural creation, functions can be assumed to follow form by paying attention to material structure and technology (Hendrix, 2013).



Fig. 2: *Pendopo* (Hall) is Vernacular from Java, Indonesia

Human understanding of axis-mundi (Eliade, 2002) is generally realized through forms that tend to be in line with the principle of structuring things in nature. One of the principles that govern things in nature is the principle of balance, where this is generally realized through compositions that tend to be symmetrical. In religious buildings, this symmetrical composition is not only applied to the layout of the space, but also to the appearance of the form of each building element (Jones, 2000). It is believed that geometric form and balanced proportion are often used in designing sacred buildings (Barrie, 2010, pp. 176-177). Barrie continues that the principles of geometry and this proportion stem from the understanding that the architecture considered by the community as a sacred building, is often believed to be the replication of the cosmos with the architectural order based on natural laws.

Because it is based on this natural law, the building also holds a similar quality of sacredness. The sacredness in the Catholic Church can be expressed with symbols (on Exterior and Interior) and the ideogram, which is a three-dimensional manifestation of the liturgical process (Fig. 3) (Trisno & Lianto, 2018).

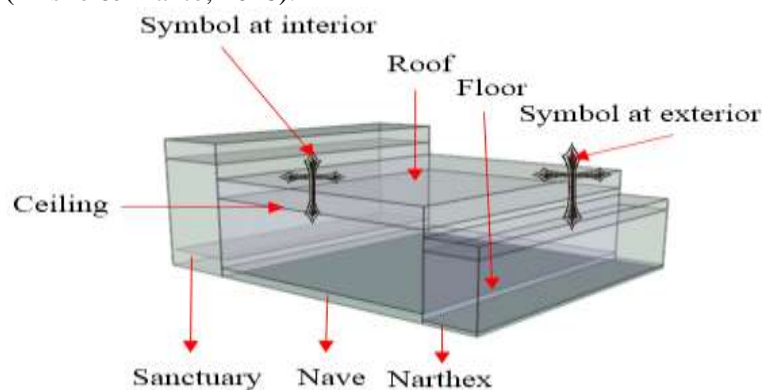


Fig. 3: Symbol and Ideogram Catholic Church

Based on the relationship between the sacred function (ritual) and the form of the Neo-Vernacular architecture of the Salib Suci church, the methodology for analyzing the Salib Suci church is as follows; a) The ritual function of this church can accommodate the form of Neo-Vernacular architecture; b) Interior can express sacredness; c) Exterior can express sacredness.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the research methodology for the Salib Suci church, it is analyzed as follows:

- a) The ritual function of this Church can accommodate the form of Neo-Vernacular architecture.

To analyze the ritual function, a floor plan and section of the Salib Suci church are needed (Fig. 4).

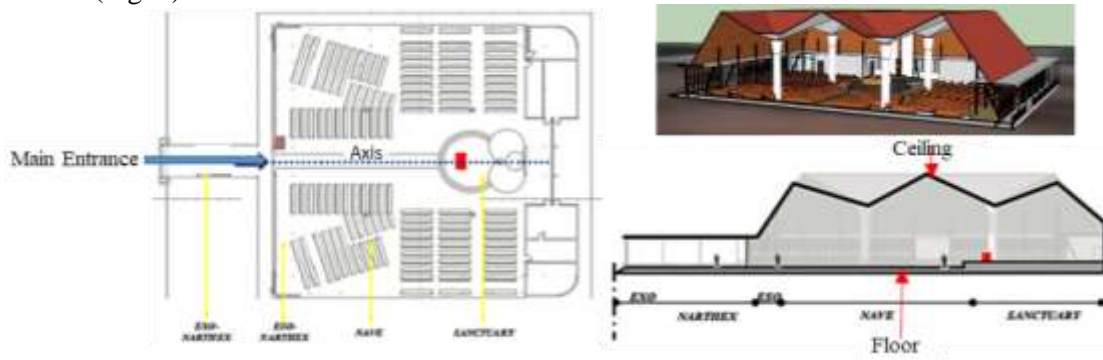


Fig. 4: Floor Plan and Section

Based on the floor plan and the section in Fig. 4, the expansion of the main entrance causes the path from the altar to the sanctuary to be longer so that it expresses the sacredness, while the position of the seats in the nave parallel to the axis expresses the sacredness less, because the circulation flow must turn direction. On a parallel axis, the position of the sanctuary is not higher than nave, which makes the sanctuary incompatible with ideograms (Fig. 3), The sanctuary must be in the highest position to fit with the ideogram.

- b) Interior can express sacredness.

Ornaments in the form of symbols in the interior are in accordance to the ideogram, so that the atmosphere of sacredness in the building can be expressed (Fig. 5). Thus, the interior of the Salib Suci church expresses its sacredness because there are ornaments in the form of symbols.



Fig. 5: Interior View of Salib Suci Church

c) Exterior can express sacredness.

On the exterior of the Salib Suci church there is an ornament symbol in the form of a cross, and with the expansion of the main entrance, the front door can direct the people so that the procession of the journey from profane to sacral has a longer distance, thus it can be felt to be sacred. Also, in front of the main door there was a baptism vessel as a symbol of self-washing. Symmetrical shape and cut cone are part of the *Pendopo* roof, because this form can express the sacred impression on the exterior.

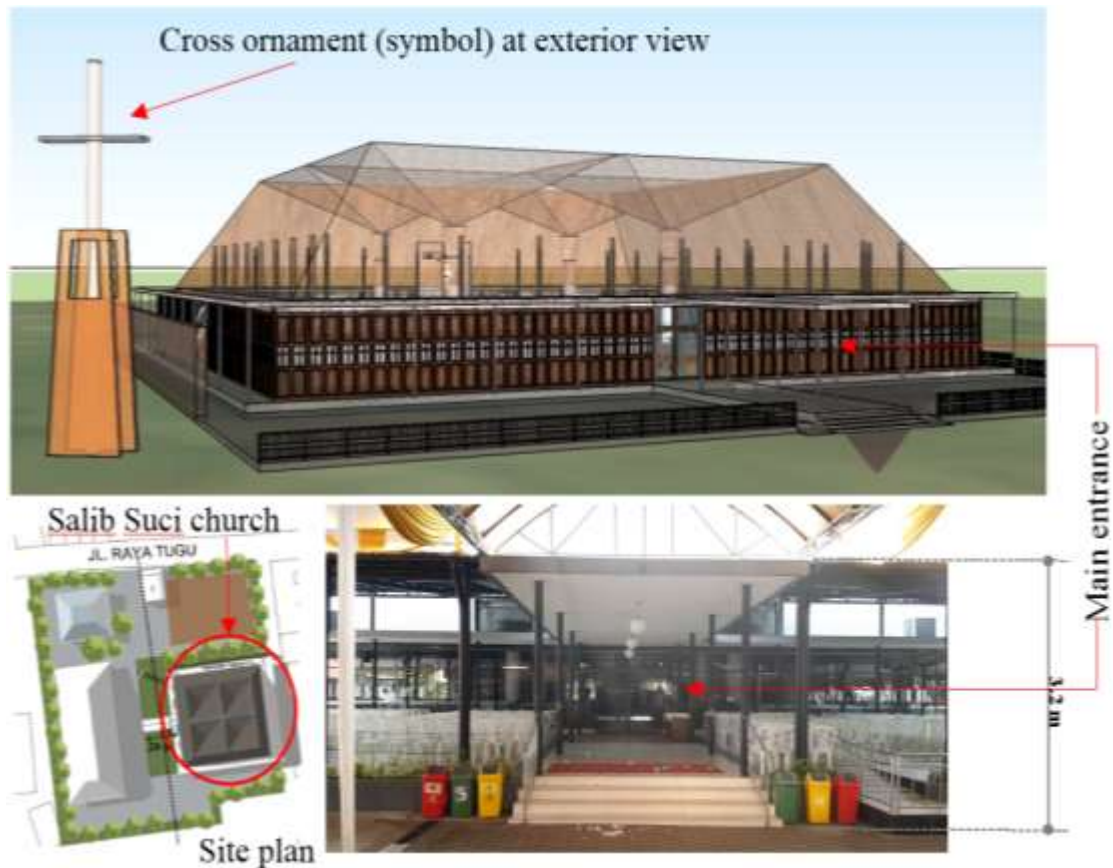


Fig. 6: Exterior View of Salib Suci Church

Conclusions

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that, the function follows the form of Neo-Vernacular architecture and can still reflect sacredness even though there are some things that are not fulfilled. This is shown especially in exterior and interior ideograms, because the ideogram in the sanctuary should be higher. The circulation pattern in the Salib Suci church building parallel to the main axis does not support sacredness, which is due to the ritual process of the Catholic church starting from the main door and directly leading to the altar. Ornaments in the form of symbols on the interior and exterior greatly affect the sacredness of the Salib Suci church. Folding doors which follow the vernacular concept should be opened when the ritual of the Catholic church begins. Because there are problems regarding dust, noise, outdoor lighting, and also uncomfortable airing, the folding door has to be closed. So this vernacular concept is not fully used but adapted to technological developments. The findings in this study show that the boundary that confirms the differences in the quality of the three narthex-nave-sanctuary areas is always there. But besides being present in physical form, boundaries can also be presented in the form of ornamentation or liturgical equipment, like a baptismal vessel. The baptismal vessel becomes a virtual or imaginary boundary that separates the narthex and nave areas, because

Catholics regard the vessel as a symbol of self-purification which enables people to “move” from the profane area to a more sacred area.

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