

The role of regionalism in the architecture of santa maria assumpta church by Y. B. Mangunwijaya



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ABSTRACT

Architecture as a science of designing, does not revolve around materials, spaces, and expressing aspirations only. The shape of the building style that changes from time to time shows the response of involvement to the surrounding environment and can be a challenge that may eliminate the characteristics of the place if it is left unnoticed. Regionalism as an approach in architecture becomes a knowledge that can be applied to express the characteristics and values of the region. The Catholic Church in Indonesia is one of the examples that has a connection with the approach, and not just related to the adaptation of local culture so it becomes familiar with the community, but also how it shows the universal church in it. Mangunwijaya, one of the architects in Indonesia, who was also a culturalist, pointed out the use of regionalism in his architectural works. This study aims to determine how far the application of regionalism in one of his works and discover his actions in implementing regionalism. The research used a qualitative approach and collected library data from various sources. The author used descriptive analytic methods in verifying elaborated theories about regionalism in the case study of the Church of Santa Maria Assumpta in Klaten by Y. B. Mangunwijaya. This research shows that the concept of regionalism can also be applied in Indonesia. The research also found the importance of applying regionalism which is not only to display the local characteristics but also to support the needs of the people in church.

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1. Introduction

The arrival of Europeans to Indonesia affected various aspects of the life of Indonesian people, including knowledge, art, beliefs, and architectural styles adapted to the tropical climate in Indonesia. The arrival of Europeans to Indonesia also aimed to spread religion, such as the Portuguese who spread Catholicism in Indonesia. Western architectural styles and Catholic teachings formed a church architectural style that refers to the values of Catholic teachings in Indonesia.

Indonesia as an archipelago country has various ethnicities, cultures, and identities from its respective regions. Culture as a thought, customs, something that becomes a habit and is difficult to change, shows that there is belief in something immense, and religion is a concept that is part of culture [1]. Based on this understanding, works of art which are the result of Indonesian culture and human power cannot be separated from the influence of custom or traditional values in their lives.

Human lives are also inseparable from religious values, in finding the meaning and value of life [2], so that the discovery of sacred buildings as places of worship. Every place of worship has several space requirements that must be applied to its building, and the Catholic Church as one of them has a

spatial arrangement pattern that cannot be separated from the thoughts and processes that are tied to the building of the Catholic faith.

In the course of architecture in Indonesia, there was a symptom of the development of architectural works that have universal characteristics. This gives encouragement to architects to restore the identity or characteristics of their area by using a regionalism approach. [3] regionalism in architecture as a science that encourages the emergence of special characteristics of context into architecture as a sign of the identity of each architectural work that is built there.

This regionalism approach can be related to the idea of Y. B. Mangunwijaya, even though he was not a regionalist architect. The Catholic Church of Santa Maria Assumpta was one of his works in the form of a Catholic church in Indonesia which avoided the impression of "attachment" and still shows the identity of the context (environment and culture). Mangunwijaya as a cultural observer also brought local cultural values that contained ancestral teachings into his architecture. The research was conducted by finding out about the relationship of regionalism in the church architecture building using theories about regionalism in the case study which is the Catholic Church of Santa Maria

Assumpta in Klaten and how the regionalism approach may give meaning to one of the Indonesia's churches. The research method is a qualitative research methodology with a descriptive analytic method. The research will begin by using literature studies of the notion of architecture, religious architecture, church architecture, and regionalism theories, then describing the Church of Santa Maria Assumpta in Klaten by Y. B. Mangunwijaya. Literature studies are carried out by looking for theories collected from several authors along with data and information from research through various media sources to find the meaning of regionalism in architecture as time passes, and how it correlates to one of the buildings in Indonesia which is rich in culture and tied to the religion that they believe in. Then, the results of the collected data were analyzed using descriptive analysis supported by diagrams to strengthen the analysis. At this stage, the analysis carried out is based on theories found from regionalism and analyzes how regionalism works to fulfill its role in local religious buildings in Indonesia, one of which is the church. After analyzing the findings, then the conclusions were made.

However, with the current pandemic, the research process is limited, resulting in a lack of information. Nevertheless, this research is made best possible by the author to present the information found from research.

2. Method

2.1. Human, Architecture, and Religious

The word architecture consists of the words *arche* and *tektoon* in Greek. When the two words are combined, the word *architectoon* is formed, which means a "master builder" [4]. A work of architecture that is experienced is the result of integrated material in realizing spiritual essence and providing a strong and significant experience of human existence [5]. The attachment of architecture to context can connect humans with their environment, gain emotional and aesthetic experiences in an architectural work. As architecture exists to create a physical environment where people live, it has become a part of their life. Therefore, the works of architecture are human-centered.

2.1.1. Religious Man and Architecture

Since ancient times humans have had an understanding, thought, and appreciation of something mystical and cosmic; and this is the basis of human existence and the universe itself [4]. The closeness of humans to their beliefs started to develop and integrate into their own cultures, such as wayang performances in Java and the Kecak dance in Bali as a form of obligation of their belief or religion. As the time passed, the appreciation for this belief grew and developed in the field of architecture.

According to Mangunwijaya [4], architecture that grows out of this appreciation of belief raises a definition of architecture that deepens the "human soul" (p. 54). With the role of human's religiosity which then influences the architectural work, it produces a space with ideas that reflect the psychological nature of humans, spiritually and mentally [6].

2.1.2. Religious Architecture

Religious architecture not only expresses its religious identity, but expands knowledge of religious teachings and deepens faith [7]. During the Renaissance, religious architecture relied on the materials and volume elements as representatives of the intended religious values [8]. Over time, the meaning of religious architecture was not limited to such thoughts. In Indonesian context, the meru-meru built in Bali is based on religious demands [4]. The demands were in the form of values and rules of belief that give the shape of a mountain, which was believed that the higher the place, then the closer it would be to the Above.

According to Verkaaik [7], religious architecture develops in its role to produce religious communities and spaces that are not only a place, but also fill the rituals held. Examples such as the need to pray will require a space of what size and space is made with the calculation of that size. It creates space for the traditions and rituals that are carried out, which are closely related to the routine of these religious rituals.

2.2. Church Architecture in Indonesia

Human's religiosity refers to their awareness of the highest power over the universe and underlies the religion that is owned, explored, and believed by humans. One of the religions in Indonesia that is Catholic, influenced religious architectural buildings known as Catholic church architectural buildings.

2.2.1. Church Architecture

According to Davis [9], the church is a building that acts as a facility for the practice of worship that is centered on human belief in the divine. The church building is a building as a place for Christian community meetings to celebrate liturgies and rituals together such as baptism, teachings, prayers, eucharistic celebrations, praise, hearing readings and sermons that are symbolically bound. The presence of church buildings can bring the involvement of the people to a sacred reality that is getting closer [9].

Church architecture is a manifestation that can express the value, meaning, purpose, and function of the Church for Christians [10]. This can be in the form of spatial planning or the provision of elements as a reflection of the mystery and nature of God's majesty which also provides mystical experiences, by bringing people to feel their closeness to God.

2.2.2. Church in Indonesia

A few years after World War II, after Western nations left their influence in Indonesia, many were researching for values, identity, and in architecture — a style that was based on local values, contained noble teachings and was related to local culture [4]. This was a form of affirming the identity of the Indonesian nation so that its culture did not become extinct. In other words, these efforts were made to avoid the colonization of culture which was considered to obscure the local values [11].

The mission of spreading Christianity carried out by missionaries from the West participated in presenting the church in Indonesia with a Western style. Before the Second Vatican Council, the impression of the Church was limited, making it difficult for the Indonesian people to accept, even though Indonesia is one of the countries with its diverse cultural characteristics that has become Indonesian values or identity.

The church then is open and willing to accept any differences; and to Indonesia, the acceptance had made it easier for local residents to accept as well, such as understanding the gospel in the local cultural context so that it can be understood by local Christians. Some churches in Indonesia have provided Sunday mass at certain times in the local language. Thus, the Catholic Church with regional characteristics emerged in Indonesia.

2.3. Regionalism and its Approach in Architecture

Regionalism is a combination of two words; the word "regional" and "-ism". Regionalism is an understanding or tendency to establish close cooperation between countries in one region. The term regionalism denotes collective action or action at the regional level even though there are differences in the norms, values, strategies, and regulations experienced by those involved. When a problem occurs, it can be negotiated together to achieve a common decision and goal [12].

2.3.1. Regionalism in Architecture

According to Colquhoun [13], regionalism is an architectural approach accompanied by regional practices that are based on geography, climate, as well as accurate local cultural traditions and materials. According to [14], regionalism defines various aspects, namely the culture of life and habits, as well as the natural environment such as climate and topography. The application of regionalism in the field of architecture starts from the problem of social life under industrial capitalism [13]. This makes regionalism a form of rebellion against cultural domination. This approach is a form of rebellion against outside cultures that dominated the indigenous culture.

Architecture with a regionalism approach is expected to display the special characteristics of the place where it stands, not to eliminate its local identity and expression. The special characteristics of a place or the characteristics of the area are related to the climate, local culture, and technology according to the era [14]. Understanding and becoming sensitive to the site such as the use of local materials or materials and their work, response to light and climate, and tectonics respectively, will generate the essence along with the materiality of the site into an architectural work [15].

According to [14], regionalism is divided into two categories, namely vernacularism and modern regionalism (Figure 1). Vernacularism is divided into conservative attitude and interpretative attitude. If a conservative attitude is an approach that maintains the use of local materials and techniques, interpretative attitude is an approach that is more expressing local and cultural forms, giving an impression of imitation. The difference between the two is the construction technology used and the social context such as the number of users and the workforce.

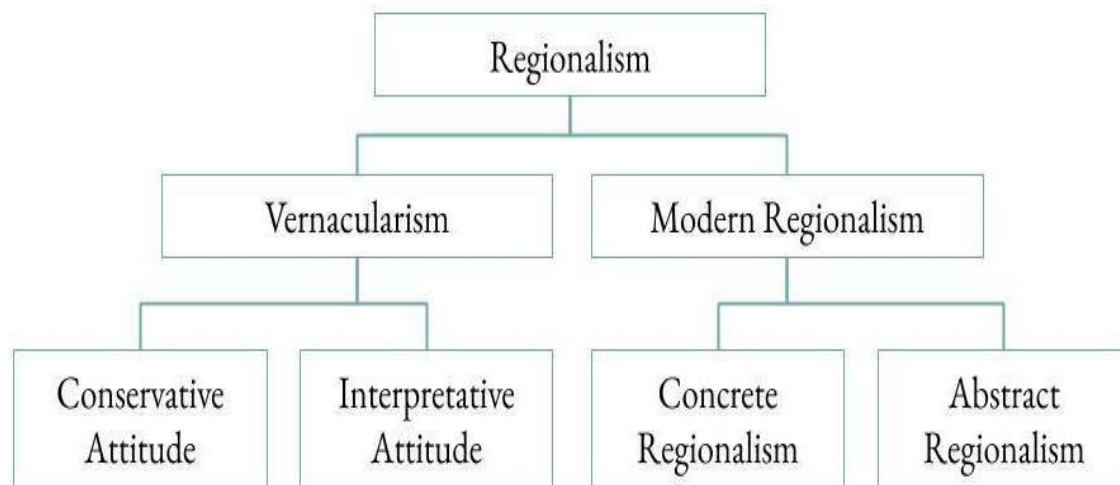


Fig. 1. Regionalisme by Ozkan (1989)

Then for modern regionalism, Ozkan [14] divides it into two, namely concrete regionalism and abstract regionalism. Concrete regionalism is an approach to regional expression by imitating several features or the entirety of a building in the area, causing works that are limited to imitation or mere imitation. Abstract regionalism is an approach towards the quality of the building such as solid-void, proportion, massing, sense of space, use of light and structural principles which are reinterpreted from the local.

Based on what has been described, it can be concluded that regionalism as an architectural approach shows the relationship between architecture and the context it will occupy (site), and its existence or development is based on close ties from its topography, geography, and climate aspects. The regionalism approach is expected to re-present the characteristics of a place, not only in response to topography, light and climate, but also using local materials or materials and their work. In addition, regionalism does not eliminate local identities and expressions, so that it can evoke the essence of the site [15].

2.3.2. Different views on Regionalism Architecture

The approach to regionalism in architecture began to develop from the beginning of its appearance in the 18th century by Keith [16]. Over time, there emerged critical regionalism introduced by Tzonis and Lefaivre followed by Frampton, regarding the acceptance of universal modern forms but still retaining local characteristics (Figure 2). However, Colquhoun stated that the "critical" form of critical regionalism can give the impression of "rejection of the national essence", thus creating a contradiction with its main objective [17].

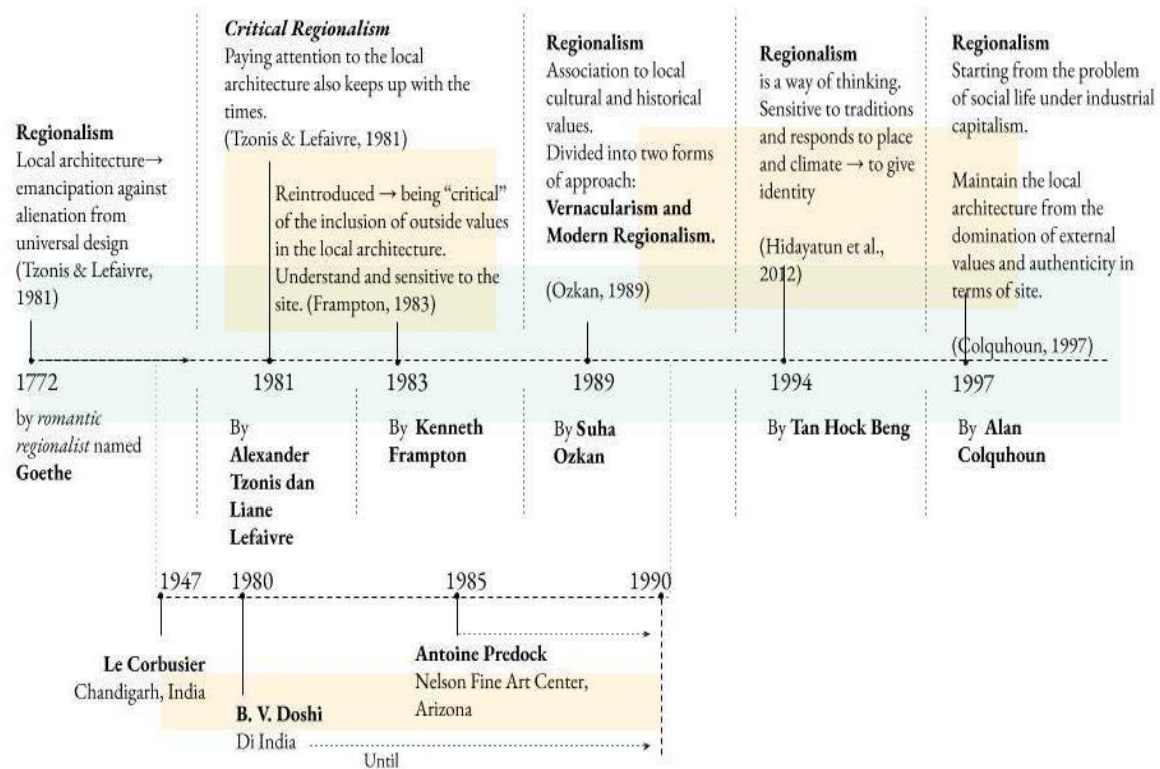


Fig. 2. Opinions Regarding the Regionalism Approach in Architecture Over Time

This contradiction led Colquhoun to ultimately lead to the concept of early regionalism [18], who defined regionalism in 1994, still has the same goals as the early regionalism, representing a view of Eastern regionalism that avoids the impression of rejection of the national essence. Eastern regionalism, especially Asia, will focus more on maintaining and accentuating local or authentic elements in architectural works.

2.4. Church of Santa Maria Assumpta, Klaten

Based on [19], the history of the development of the Church of Santa Maria Assumpta began with the history of the spread of the Gospel in 1880, in Central Java by the Jesuit Father. Then in 1907 a school was built by Father Fransiskus Van Lith S.J. in Muntilan, which at that time was the only school located in Klaten.

The spread of the gospel grew so rapidly that in the end, next to the school, a church was built to accommodate the development of the people there. The increase in Catholics there, finally on December 8, 1968, and Pastor Y. B. Mangunwijaya was appointed to renovate it.

2.5. The Architect, Pastor Y. B. Mangunwijaya

Apart from being a pastor, Mangunwijaya was also a humanist who had dedicated his life to realizing humanism through his works. He also viewed the task of an architect in processing architecture not to forget the situation and environmental conditions that often affected his work [4]. He aimed to create an ecology and spatial structure that is appropriate and humane [4].

In his architectural works, Mangunwijaya exuded simple characteristics with an impression of openness. An "open" design with the natural environment and society shows one of its openness. The

direction of thought in designing architecture with local values has the same direction as the regionalism approach in architecture. Nature and its natural environment are a source of inspiration, ideas, concepts, at the beginning of designing a building to be built in a site location, as well as how culture influences also should be maintained [4].

2.6. Analysis of Santa Maria Assumpta Church

The research will be conducted by examining the knowledge of regionalism from the physical (geography) and nonphysical (cultural) aspects of the context of the Church of Santa Maria Assumpta, Klaten. The physical / geographic aspects will be viewed from the church's response to topography, light, wind, rainfall, local materials used, while the non-physical aspects will be seen from the local cultural traditions that are carried out in the church. Both will be discussed in relation to the church starting from the roof, openings, columns, levelling, and orientation. From the linkages that will be described, we will find the relationship with the church which will fulfil the religious needs of its people.

2.6.1. Roof

On the roof of the church, there is a response to the climate and weather in Indonesia, especially in Klaten, Central Java. There is also the use of local materials and the application of church values such as giving a shape to the roof that makes it resemble the shape of a bird (Figure 3). The bird shape becomes a representation of a dove which according to Catholic beliefs [20], is the presence of the Holy Spirit in baptism. The presence of this form shows an attachment to the Church for trying to apply it to the church building. The roofs of this church vary in size, with only the main worship hall having the "highest" roof compared to the others. These varying sizes are like mountains, with the highest roofs giving closeness to God. The roof is assisted by the main column which has a function close to the soko guru in Javanese traditional buildings, so that it can provide such a roof shape, a gable roof with a wide expanse.

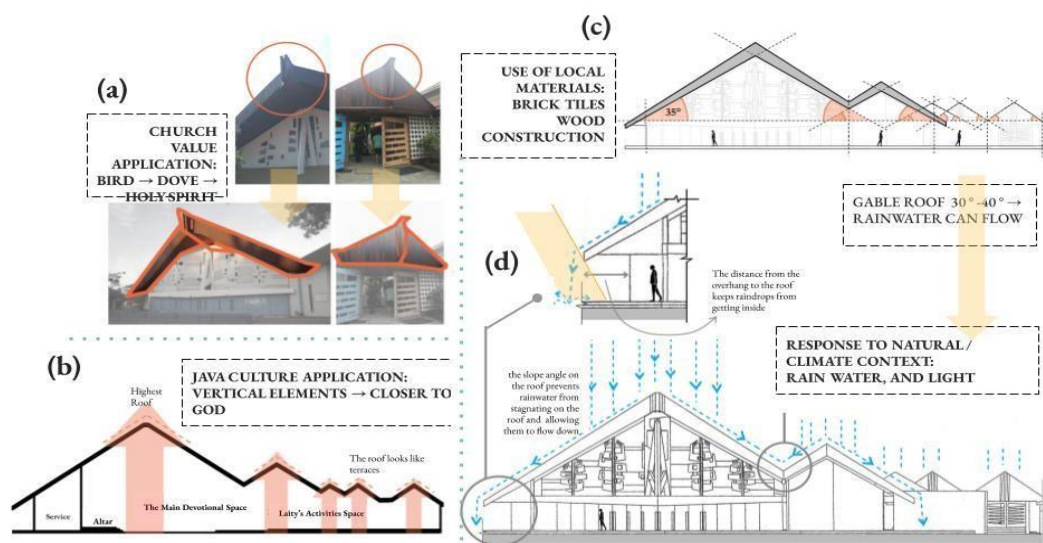


Fig. 3. (a) Dove Form of Gable Roof, (b) Vertical Elements of Church, (c) Used Material, (d) Climate Responses

2.6.2. Columns

This church has two large supports that rise up to the end of the roof, resembling the function of a soko guru (Figure 4). Other columns that can be seen spread around the main devotional hall and the people's activity room. Some of the columns are decorated with ornaments on the head. Although it does not affect its work as a support structure, it can still show a connection with the teachings of the Church, using Javanese cultural principles that often add ornaments to its columns [20], making it not just plain. The shape of the leaves that refers to Palm Sunday, then the circular column have ornaments such as humans and other nature (fish, birds, water, sun), those are referring to the works of the Almighty, as a form of appreciation of the religious values of the Church.

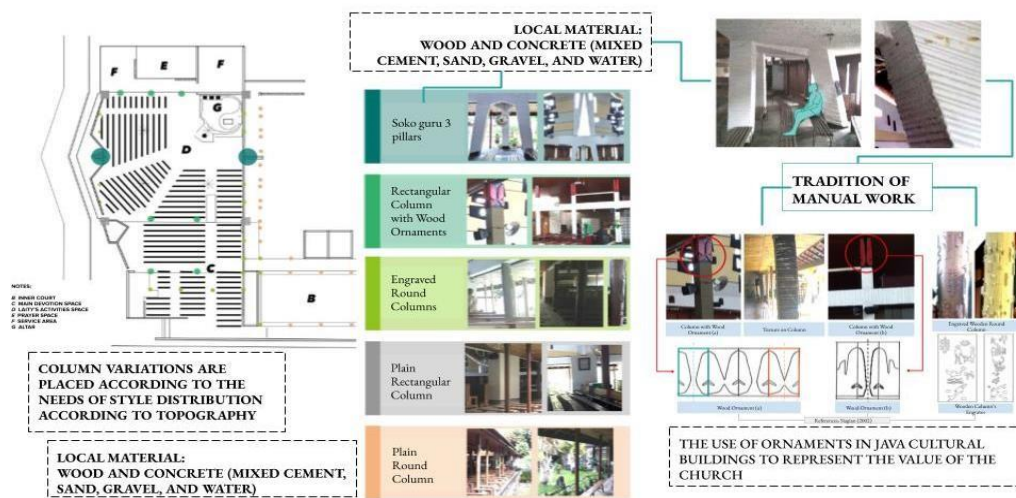


Fig. 4. The Analysis of Santa Maria Assumpta Church's Columns

2.6.3. Walls

Besides being a barrier, the walls also function as ventilation. The hollow wall of the rooster does not obstruct the visual from outside and inside, it also functions as a vent that channels natural air. Another partition is a wooden wall on the east side of the church. From Figure 5, the wooden wall appears as a wall, it can be opened / removed like a door when the church is full. This concept resembles a typical Javanese *gebyok* wall [20], which is deliberately made to be dismantled and installed to provide more space. This is done during big celebrations as well, especially when holding celebrations, to provide a wide space for free movement, and the transition from a narrow and private space to being broad and open.

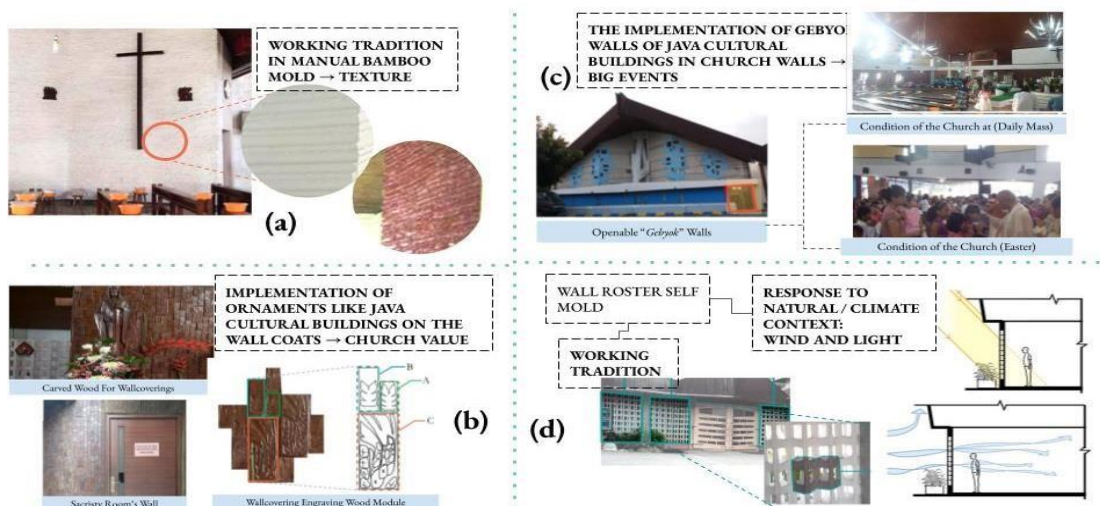


Fig. 5. Wall's Texture (a), Wall's Ornaments (b), The "Gebyok" Wall (c), The Roster Wall (d)

2.6.4. Openings

This church has many openings, some of which serve as access to natural light, some also for air circulation, so as to save energy. The light that enters the church serves to give religious appreciation to people who pray from the light in the midst of darkness, where the light acts as an image of God, a concept called *diafan* [4]. The openings also provide the connection between human and nature, showing the relation with Javanese culture. According to Sari [21], Javanese culture has characteristics regarding the relationship between humans and the environment that can be presented in structure and materials, and using natural materials indicate the existence of a religious approach between humans

and nature created by God. Some openings have ornaments that resemble a tree (Figure 6), possibly referring to the parable about the fig tree which tells how Jesus was the "tree of life", making the fig tree (the people) able to "bear fruit".

The consideration of giving openings to the east and west is carried out to distinguish which is the right and left side of the building. With the position of the opening that does not face directly to the east and west, the hot and scorching sunlight does not enter directly into the church and the church also gets wind flow from at least the north and south.

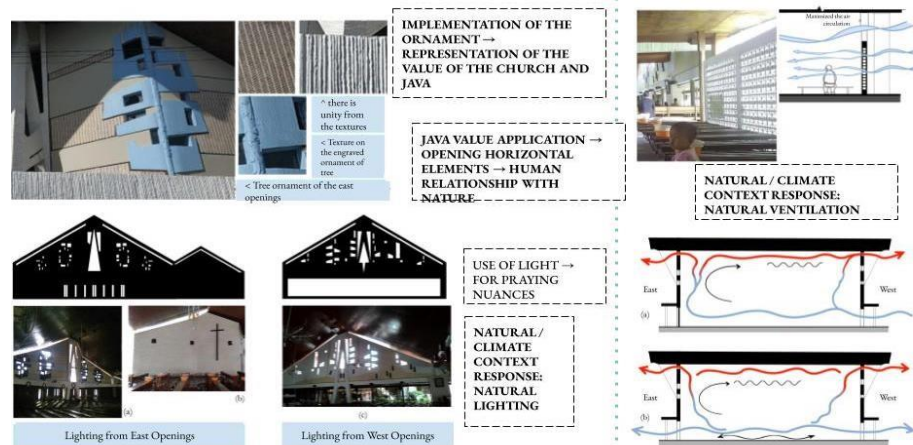


Fig. 6. Types of the Church's Openings with their Functions and Effects to The Inside

2.6.5. Floor (Levelling)

This church has a high level that shows its relationship with Javanese cultural values regarding the principle of relationship with God, humans, and nature. The relationship between humans and nature is presented in the inner court and church openings as previously described. From Figure 7, the relationship between humans and others can be seen in the Laity's Activities' Space which is not higher than the altar area, while the human relationship with God lies in the Main Devotional Space which is lower in level and in the higher ceiling. The height of the altar area also indicates a sacred space, and an area that resembles a *pendapa* can be said to be a transitional space from profane.

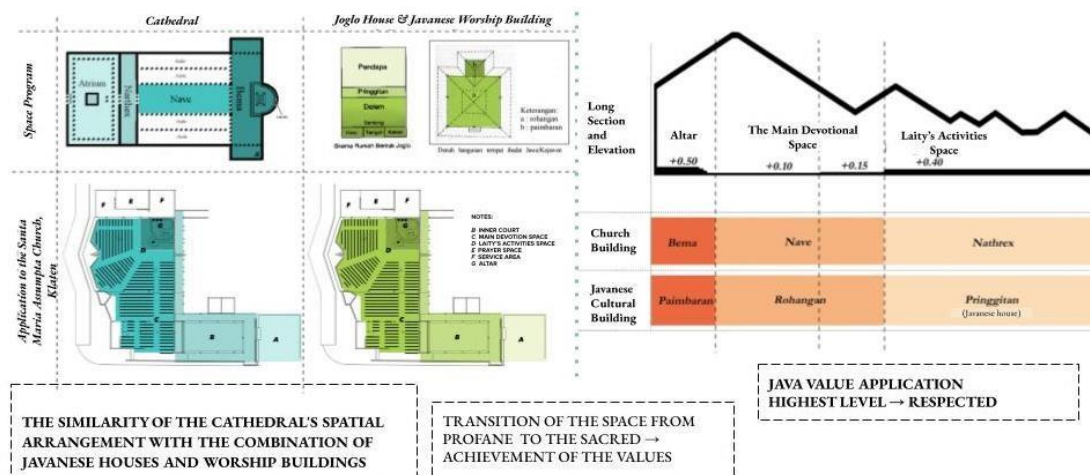


Fig. 7. The Similarity of Church and Javanese Houses and Worship Buildings with Santa Maria Assumpta Church

2.6.6. Facade (Orientation)

For the orientation of the church in general, such as going to the east of the rising sun, referring to the term Sol Christi, the spiritual Christ the Sun for Christians [4]. However, in this church, it seems

that Mangunwijaya implemented Javanese cultural values which in the building have the character of not having a facade (*kiblat papat*) because it has many openings to the north, east, west, and south, although it has an appearance that resembles a facade (Figure 8). In contrast to the orientation of the church in general, which faces one direction and provides one access, the Church of Santa Maria Assumpta with an orientation that does not only face one direction has more than one access.

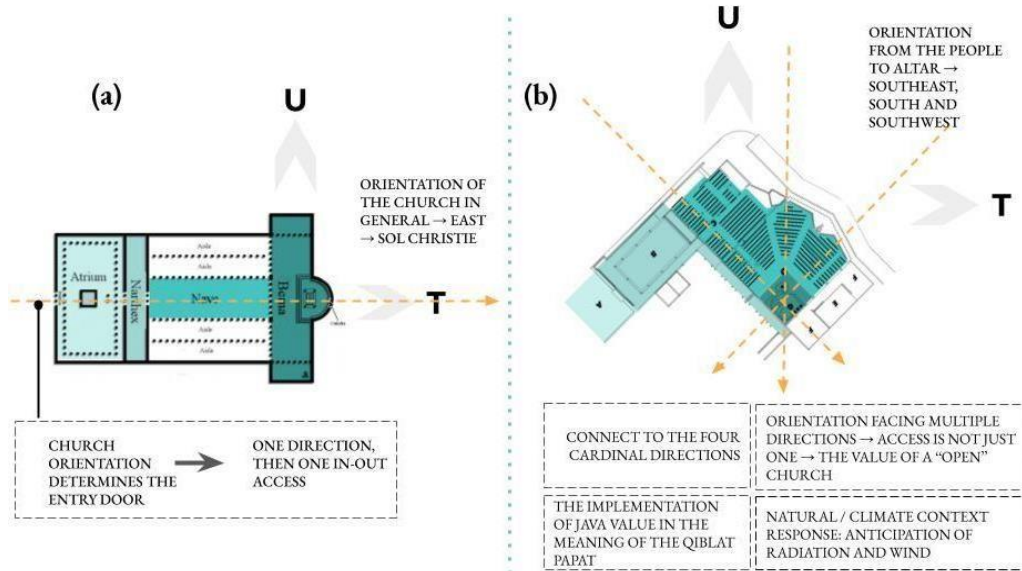


Fig. 8. The Difference Between General Church Plan and Santa Maria Assumpta Church

3. Results and Discussion

From the research results (Table 1), the principle of regionalism that appears in Mangunwijaya's work fulfills the physical and nonphysical aspects of the regionalism approach which is taken from a combination of Colquhoun and Frampton's theory regarding regionalism itself, but also has a close relationship with Ozkan's understanding of regionalism, which is in line with Mangunwijaya's thinking through his work of church. This approach of modern vernacularism and regionalism is quite balanced, although it is more inclined towards vernacularism (Figure 9).

Table 1. Application of Regionalism to Elements of the Church of Santa Maria Assumpta, Klaten

| Element | Regionalism Approach | | | | | | | Function of Church |
|---------|----------------------|-------|---------|------|-----------|------|----------------|--------------------|
| | Topography | Light | Climate | | Tradition | | Local Material | |
| | | | Wind | Rain | Culture | Work | | |
| Roofs | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Columns | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Walls | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Opeings | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Floors | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Facade | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |

Regionalism with the vernacular approach can be seen from the conservative attitude which indicates the use of local materials and techniques. From the interpretative attitude, there is an expression of local and cultural forms seen in the gable roofs close to vernacular, ornament columns like in the Javanese traditional building that can also represent the Catholic beliefs assisted by the diligent handwork of the local craftsmen, columns that have function as pillars (*soko guru*) but also represents the principles of the Indonesian Catholic church, the application of *gebyok* walls, the use of natural materials such as stone and sand which are then used as cement or floors to show the spatial transitions, and consideration of openings through building orientation that does not only face one direction, following the orientation of the Javanese traditional building.

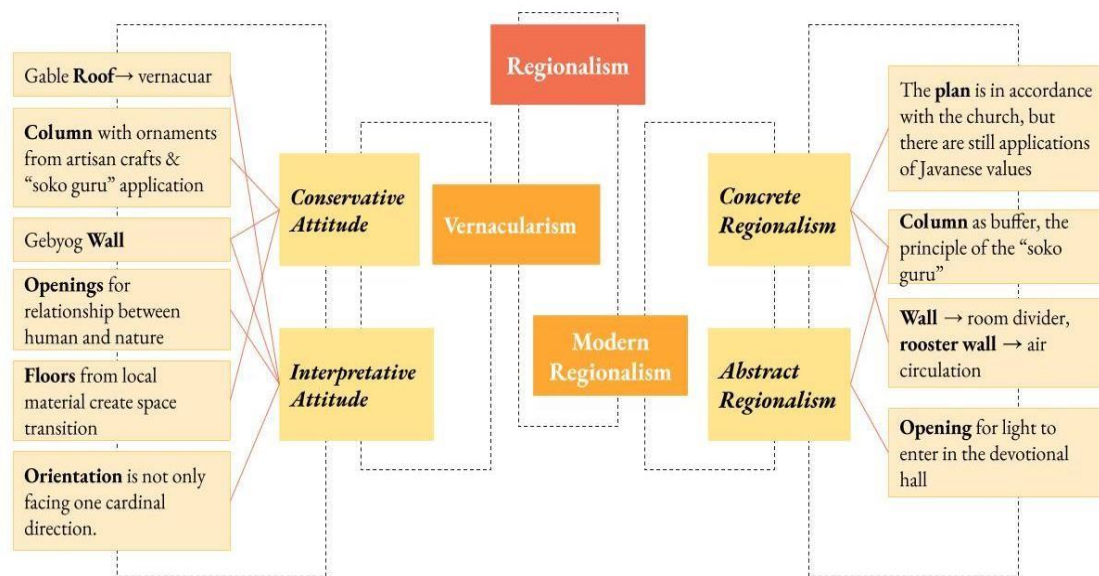


Fig. 9. Application of Ozkan's Regionalism in the Church of Santa Maria Assumpta

In terms of modern regionalism, it can also be seen from the plan that follows the church typology but still applies Javanese cultural values, and several wall elements that are functional as dividers and rooster walls that not only act as boundaries but also help the air circulation. Modern regionalism, which is seen from the abstract regionalism side, shows the quality of the building from the use of light in the church or structures that are interpreted locally, such as the main column which acts as a “soko guru”.

The results show how an approach through cultural and work traditions can highlight local identity, attention to light that can provide an atmosphere to meet human needs that is the fulfillment of spiritual needs for worship, and the needs to have shelter, to be protected from solar thermal radiation, wind strong, and high rainfall that are also met from the response of buildings to climate and topography.

4. Conclusion

Regionalism as a form of architectural approach that demands authenticity from its architecture, by emphasizing context as a source of ideas / concepts from its design, such as local geography, topography, climate, habits (culture), techniques in processing local native natural materials to produce regional characteristics that are not present as just a decoration. The main purpose of this approach is not to lose the identity and expression of the local area.

The research results show that Mangunwijaya's attention is in line with the regionalism approach, such as the column structures that are used as a response to site conditions, roofs that respond to rainfall, openings that allow air circulation and natural light penetration. He also applied the local work traditions in processing the local materials he used. The openings also show the connection with nature, and the light gives insight in prayer. Levelling on the floor and the use of ornaments in building elements are related to Javanese cultural principles, which function as a mediator for Church teachings. In this way, the elements in his work of church did not only have a function as a place of prayer but also provide some meanings; for whom and for what reason do people pray.

The characteristics or identity of the local area are not only shown from the design response to the site context but also culture, such as traditions of work, principles, and local materials of the place. Not only the nature or character, identity, or regionality, but the function or meaning of the church as a case study can be achieved with a visible regionalism approach. The approach of regionalism seen in Mangunwijaya's thinking was an action to not imitate forms, but to pay attention to local values that give meaning and identity to Indonesia, protecting the local traditional and cultural values of communities.

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