

**INDONESIAN ARCHITECTS AND BEING INDONESIAN:
Contemporary Context of Nusantara Architecture
in Architectural Design and Theory**

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Abstract

Architecture has played a central role in the imagining and construction of national identity in many postcolonial nations, including Indonesia. The construction of a certain architectural identity for Indonesia has accompanied the rise of succession of political regimes through the last seven decades. This process, which involves the participation of generations of Indonesian architects, is an unfinished and contested endeavour.

In the 1980s, when the conception of 'Indonesian Architecture' was problematised by Indonesian architects and architecture scholars for its vagueness and unclarity, a new conception of 'Nusantaran Architecture' was launched. It was promoted as an 'alternative' direction in representing the country's national identity. It situates Indonesia's diverse traditional architecture as the 'authentic' source of ideas for contemporary architectural development. However, despite being driven by the aim to locate the nation's unique architectural identity and to free itself from the shadow of colonial hegemony, this imagining of national identity is still governed by the hegemonic binary thinking of the East versus West comparison. The imagining of the nation's architectural identity has instead unfolded as a creation of an 'exotic' architectural maker of the country, an attempt to distinguished the nation as being the non-Western 'Other'.

Many studies have come to investigate the construction and contestation of Indonesia's architectural identity as a field of political practices where power relations are enforced and legitimated, an unfinished internal dispute of dominance among the country's multifaceted society (e.g. Achmadi (2006, 2007); Kusno (2000, 2010a, 2013); Permanasari (2007)). In this case, not only that Nusantaran Architecture has been adopted by the national government as both slogan, conception, and eventually an architectural representation of the country's identity and as jargon for the country's national tourism agenda, but it has also become a narrative to separate and distinguish what is perceived to be the 'authentic' culture from the 'contaminated'. With the inclination to focus solely on 'culture', and with the glorification of a certain distant past as the official state narrative of the country's national history to which the country has to reorient itself, contemporary development of the national identity discussion has put Nusantaran Architecture as the pristine, exotic, pre-existing and apolitical. This becomes a problematic predisposition that calls for debates among different actors and stakeholders in the country. Nusantaran Architecture thus becomes an object of a dispute through which its meaning is both fortified and challenged by its diverse proponents and opponents, between the academic scholars, the architects, and the national government.

This thesis mainly explores the perspective of Indonesia's professional architects and academic scholars in seeing Nusantara Architecture as part of the discussion of architectural identity. Not only that this thesis intends to compare the practical stance to the theoretical perspective of this debate, but it also aims to scrutinise the contrasting views, to see the gap in the knowledge production of this conception. On one side of the groups, some architects and academic scholars support the conception of Nusantara Architecture in a somewhat dogmatic way, by idealising a certain cultural 'other' while incorporating a narrative of Indonesia's certain glorious past to legitimate the standpoint. On the other side, the opposing group questions the definition of Nusantara Architecture and how it would sit in the discussion of Indonesia's national identity, and further problematises the conception amidst the social, political, historical and economic complexities that need beyond formalist and essentialist approach in solving the problem. By analysing both the pros and the cons, this thesis tries to examine the arguments that each group puts forward, to map how the debate develops among different actors with different backgrounds in different cities, and to understand better the conception of Nusantara Architecture from different perspectives.

This thesis further demonstrates how architecture has become a manifestation in maintaining certain assumptions regarding the country's cultural otherness, that helps to perpetuate a specific framing in directing contemporary development of the built environment. Interestingly, the glorified narrative of Nusantara Architecture falls flat in the process of designing contemporary architecture, as the conception, in the end, is merely translated no further than its connection to the local context and remains in the level of metaphor sphere. It hence leaves no particularity in the translation of Nusantara Architecture into built form.

Deconstructing the canonical conceptions of Nusantara Architecture within its continuous social and political challenges provides a space in which the dynamic imagining of the country's architectural identity can be reclaimed. Attempting to transcend the debates on Indonesia's architectural identity construction, this thesis offers a constructive rereading from the perspective of the field of critical studies of architecture in the 21st century postcolonial context. Beyond the claim of being pre-existing, there is power domination plays in orchestrating the construction of Nusantara Architecture that has created a significant distance to the people, as identity representation is crafted to serve a certain group of people with power. The highlight over an officially selected authenticity and the indigeneity represent the legacy of Orientalism in the postcolonial world, paradoxical to the claim of an inherent anti-colonial spirit within the conception of Nusantara Architecture. With an appropriation to conform with the need of the cultural tourism industry, Nusantara Architecture has turned to be an instrument of capitalistic business.

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Declaration

This is to certify that:

- i. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated in the Preface,
- ii. due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used,
- iii. the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

June 2021

Diah Asih Purwaningrum

Preface

Being a Javanese and having an extended family who is tightly bonded to the Javanese tradition of the Kasunanan Palace, I grew up with an immense fascination over the Javanese culture. Although I was raised in a modern family and went to modern school, my day-to-day interaction with Javanese culture led me to a continuous idea of embedding culture to daily life. This idea persisted during my early introduction with architecture in my bachelor study that I was very fond of the idea of merging modern architecture with design elements that were inspired by cultural artefacts. In the later stage of my study, I started to develop questions, especially on what culture and identity were actually about and how these conceptions were supposed to sit together with the ever-changing development of contemporary architecture. These questions became the initial lead for me in shaping my PhD research, and the more I delved into it, the more I became passionate about exploring it.

The boom of Nusantara Architecture at a national level that happened during my early PhD study became a key momentum that I took advantage of in further delving into the topic of architectural identity and culture. Investigating Nusantara Architecture, which has a strong inclination to the Javanese culture, made me feel as if I was probing myself and my hidden fascination over my own tradition. It was an arduous task to question, if not problematise, things that I thought was 'right', as it implied that I had to undo the previous understandings I attained in my previous studies. I did not realise that I was drenched with 'colonised' and 'doctrinised' knowledge about the ideal and pristine culture of the country, and it was intellectually excruciating to deconstruct the binary thinking in me and to accept that what I thought was right was not always right. It became a challenging intellectual journey for me in shifting my view to be a constructivist, to develop a standpoint that everything is socially constructed hence is open for questions and debates.

Discussing Nusantara Architecture is captivating, especially after I did my fieldworks when interviewed people with distinct standpoints in supporting or challenging what I used to perceive as 'monolithic' understanding. I explored the topic not only for the sake of my study, but also for me as a person, a Javanese, an Indonesian, and became part of my personal and intellectual growth. With new understanding I attained from this PhD journey, I intend to engage more extensively with Indonesian academics who share the same passion with me. I understand that my standpoint in seeing Nusantara Architecture does not always conform with the 'mainstream' perspective that is endorsed not only by well-known scholars but also by the government. Yet, I have a firm intention to initiate open discussions, if not debates, to challenge the long-established perspective, that has been fortified

by a long tradition and indoctrination, in seeing architectural identity. It won't be easy, but I know I will enjoy the journey I have ahead.

During my study, I have published several papers in international journals and proceeding, and have become an editor in making a compilation of popular writings related to the topic of Nusantara Architecture. My recent publications arising from this thesis are stated as follow:

- Purwaningrum, D. A., & Ardhyanto, A. (2018). *The Commodification of Nusantara Architecture in Indonesian Tourism: A Pathway to Culture Preservation or Universalism?* Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Indonesian Architecture and Planning (ICIAP), Yogyakarta.
- Purwaningrum, D. A. (2019). Long Road to Identity: Critical Study of Contemporary Nusantara Architecture. *Journal of Comparative Cultural Studies in Architecture*, 12, 12–20.
- Purwaningrum, D. A. (2019). Perplexing Discourse of Indonesian Architectural Identity: An Understanding of Contemporary Nusantara Architecture. *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Studies*, 4(2), 5-17.
- Purwaningrum, D. A. (2020). Nusantara Architecture amidst Global Issues: The Contestation of Identity, Orientalism and Capitalism. In Purwaningrum, D. A (Ed.), *Understanding and Problematising Nusantara Architecture as a Discourse of Identity in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Salaka CREDU.

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I would also like to address my sincere appreciation to the members of this thesis's supervising committee. I thank Prof. Hanna Lewi, who has supported this research from its very embryonic stage and has been very helpful in every milestone of my study. I also thank Prof. Hugh O'Neil, who has given me the critical observation that significantly pushed me to expand my analysis.

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Last but not least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the people who have helped in any manner, who have provided help and shared their knowledge to bring this research project into reality.

Chapter I

Unfolding Indonesian Architecture

I.1. Indonesian Architecture as identity construction: When it all began¹

The representation of Indonesia's architectural identity has been contested for the urge to display both the country's cultural richness and contemporary development. Since the 1980s, the term 'Indonesian Architecture' has become a topic of debate among architects and academics in a national level, that was particularly questioned for the unclarity and vagueness that surrounding the term, from its definition to its translation. The complexity of aspects that encircle this idea of a national architectural identity makes any proposed articulations of such idea fail to provide a comprehensive direction that traverses social, cultural, historical, economic and political aspects of the people, leaving the conception on an unsettling field of interpretation that is continuously under scrutiny.

Contesting the representation of 'who we are' as a country and as a community has been a profound issue among Indonesians, not only in the field of architecture, but also in many other disciplines like art, painting, and design. In those cases, artists and designers grapple with the articulation of 'Indonesia-ness' as part of an attempt to represent the country's identity, not only to capture the under-exposed tension among the unrepresented marginal people but also, in a way, to find a position in a broader context of the global audience. Art and design become media of expressing not only freedom of speech, particularly post-Suharto after 1998, but also an instrument to resist the hegemony of authority. The struggle in amplifying the social-political tensions in the community has been salient in the topic, and Indonesian artists like Jompet Kuswidananto, Akiq Abdul Wahid, FX Harsono, Handiwirman Saputra, Entang Wiharso and Albert Yonathan Setyawan use their works to encapsulate their rendition of what happens in the community and to critique unbalanced power relations either vertically or horizontally.² Contestation of identity is conveyed through a display of political dimensions of real life's daily struggle.

¹ Throughout this thesis, I use the term Indonesian Architecture as an image conception, a mental frame that comes to people's mind when picturing the 'ideal' form of architectural identity construction that represents Indonesia as a country. This term does not pinpoint specific styles, cultural artefacts or any historical accounts or chronologies.

² These artists and designers are mentioned by John McDonald in his review of the exhibition of 'Contemporary Worlds: Indonesia' in the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. See McDonald (2019).

The question of national identity is a global phenomenon, particularly among the global south, postcolonial countries which try to rediscover themselves free from the shadow of colonial hegemony. National identity becomes a profound issue in these countries, mostly in Asia and Africa, that come with 'exotic' definitions of themselves as an answer to the problem; creating a distinct separation with the 'West' that has been associated with the colonists. Thailand, Vietnam, Turkey, Nigeria, Egypt, even Israel and Palestine are some that suffer similar problems in contesting their architectural identity, and interestingly, the problem and the responses offered by these countries create a similar pattern that aligns with Edward Said's seminal critique of Orientalism. Among the postcolonial world, there is a strong sense of differentiation of national identity from the 'West', orchestrated by highlighting their 'otherness' through an essentialist mode and binary approach. In the contemporary context, interestingly, this 'exoticism' has become an instrument not only to define a certain national identity but also to make capital gain by through commodification of these exotic features in the form of cultural tourism industry. Despite having originated in the discipline of literature, Orientalism, and its internal essentialist binary of East versus West, is still the dominating conception of difference and otherness that shape the perception of identity in the postcolonial world. It operates not only through political and social discourses, but also in architectural thinking and design, as it captures a shared burden caused by a shared colonial past among distant countries across the postcolonial region outside Europe. For these reasons, Orientalism becomes the major shaper of my thinking in this thesis writing and becomes the main foundation for my arguments and discussion, to widen the scope of architecture beyond physical and technological layers. One of the key findings of this study reveals that contemporary Orientalism has a shifting position in Indonesia, and probably in most of the global south countries, that the initial thought to 'marginalise' the East has swerved to the other direction, as it now becomes an empowering tool for the people in the country, although this might be an entrapping idea of self-defeating agenda in disguise. Being different from the West is something to be proud of, something to be nationally celebrated as part of the trait of being an Asian country. Moreover, contemporary Orientalism is now exploited in various modes of implementation, but one particularly interesting is how it is used as part of the country's national tourism program to increase the national income. In other words, Orientalism is now employed, and, in a way, manipulated, to adhere to the hegemony of capitalism.

In critiquing and analysing the historical construction of identity in different national and regional contexts, scholars like Chris Abel, Benedict Anderson, David Buckingham, Kenneth Frampton, Abidin Kusno, Amanda Achmadi, Iwan Sudrajat, Johannes Widodo, Setiadi Sopandi and Indah Widiastuti have rigorously pinpointed that 'authenticising' identity is a problematic move, noting mainly that the asserted conceptions are mostly based on partial and stereotyped understandings of the layers of the

identity itself. Buckingham (2008) suggests that there is a trap of 'strategic essentialism' in this view, that is "the tendency to generalise about the members of a particular group and assimilate them to a singular identity,... [or in a way] fixing identity, ... [while] neglecting the fact that people have multiple dimensions to their identities" (Buckingham, 2008, p. 7). He takes account of the claim that essentialism in identity politics may be crucial for particular purposes, but its reductive nature dangerously creates almost infinite factions and subdivisions that might lead to separatism, mainly when the claimed identity is defined in opposition to another. Chris Abel (2000) suggests that a similar view is prevalent in the architectural discipline, as there is a domination of what he calls a 'universalist' view, in contrast to a 'relativist' view, that puts architecture as "a pervasive impression ... whose manipulation of architectural symbolism is an arbitrary affair, ... [although] at the expense of the specificity of language and culture" (p. 147-148). He compares architecture to linguistics, and, agreeing with George Steiner (1975) who mentions that "the underlying structure of language is universal and common to all men" (Steiner, 1975, p. 24). Abel argues that the universalist in architecture poses a similar view to discount the differences and conflicting tensions in the community and believes that there is the same pattern and genetics, hence the same root, to the culture of the people. In this case, Steiner suggests that the universalist emphasises common traits as 'valid general features' within one language, or what Noam Chomsky (1965) calls 'universal deep structures', suggesting that language, or in a way culture, has its universality (Steiner, 1975, pp. 100-101).³

Adding to this, Nelson Goodman critiques the sense of 'finalities' inscribed in architecture. He argues that these political, social, economic, and cultural 'finalities' do not necessarily refer to the condition that brings the architecture to construction. He also problematises the 'absolutism' in understanding architecture, as if there is a single 'right' translation and a right way of how to interpret it, mostly with no alternatives, that dominates how meaning is inserted in architecture (Goodman, 1985, pp. 649-650). Clifford Geertz suggests that it is almost impossible to create a 'single' identity to the diverse people that can equally satisfy and equally take account of each of its members' traits. National identity is a perfect example of how identity is negotiated, that people need to lessen the bond to their smaller group to form a connection with a bigger 'imagined community'. Geertz further asserts that creating national identity means making a dense assemblage of many contrasting cultures, races, languages, each of which might have different, even opposite, values, habits, social characteristics and political struggles. It gets even worse if the representation of the identity is uneven. That creates tension, fraction and conflict, instead of unity, mainly caused by the marginals who refuse to be

³ Noam Chomsky mentions that language has both a 'deep structure' that determines its semantic interpretation, and a 'surface structure' that determines its phonetic interpretation. See Chomsky (1965, p. 15).

subsumed to the dominant power (Geertz, 1973, p. 239). Therefore, claiming authenticity over one layer of identity might have had a counterproductive effect on the initial aim of uniting the community.

Yet, although abundant studies have questioned the problematic claim of authenticity when dealing with identity, this kind of perspective is still salient in the construction of Indonesia's national identity. What repeatedly happened in Indonesia, and most of the world's countries, was that national identity orchestrated by people in power, or in this case, the government, driven by various political agendas. Throughout the history of the country, the conception of Indonesian Architecture, as the country's purportedly architectural identity, has been articulated towards various translations, from the modern style to the traditionally inspired building. The directions, most often than not, comply with the liking of the Presidents in power, following their cultural and political agenda, and many of the selected directions were used in various campaigns and propaganda, whose narrations were mostly about respecting the local culture and promoting the sense of belonging to the country. Abidin Kusno, whose works give fundamental basis in the way I shape my arguments in this thesis, highlights the political intentions behind any architectural identity constructions in Indonesia that, most often than not, become a strategy to serve the interest of authority rather than a fair representation of the actual condition of the country. Since the time of the Dutch colonials, to the reign of Sukarno and Suharto, to the post-reformation and even in today's politics, the incorporation of architecture as part of the national identity construction became a manifestation of the government's political movement. It is, therefore, important to underline that there are always political intentions in identity contestation, regardless of the physical look of the translation, and that this national identity can be seen as a symbol of a top-down power assertion.

In a more contemporary context of Indonesia, Joko Widodo's recent decision to move the capital city from Jakarta to Panajam Paser in the East Kalimantan Province is another display in which the conception of identity is once again exercised. There are three main criteria put forward for the new capital city design, and the requirements of 'reflecting the country's identity' becomes the first to mention on the list.⁴ In his speech, Widodo mentions:

"The new capital city is not only a symbol of national identity but also a representation of national advancement. It is for the embodiment of equalisation and economic fairness. It is for the vision of advanced Indonesia. Indonesia that lives forever" (Kementerian PUPR, 2019b).

⁴ The three criteria of the the new capital city design competition are: (1) reflecting the country's identity; (2) ensuring social, economic and environmental sustainability; and (3) manifesting a city that is smart, modern and internationally standardised. See Kementerian PUPR (2019a).

The importance of the capital city as a formal representational symbol of national identity is emphasised here. In the Terms of Reference, it is mentioned that the future capital city is expected to have excellent quality, authority and fairness as the central concept, while the national identity is associated with the pillars of the nation, which are: *Pancasila*; the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia; *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*; and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Kementerian PUPR, 2019a).⁵ The winning design titled *Nagara Rimba Nusa*, which was attained from a high prestige design competition demonstrates a utopian idea of having a capital city surrounded by forests and rivers, expressing a 'balance' between artificial infrastructure and mother nature.⁶ The design is also filled with symbolisms that seem to satisfy the President's expectation: the *Pancasila* (The Five Principles) Lake surrounded by buildings with different functions that represent the five philosophies; the National Axis which represents the historical and cultural axis of the country; the *Tri Praja* (The Three Power) Axis on which the three governmental bodies (executive, legislative and judicative) are put in line to each other; the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (The Unity in Diversity) Plaza that provides a place to celebrate people's diversity; and the *Tri Hita Karana* (The Three Causes of Prosperity) Axis where three main elements of life (God, human, and nature) are symbolised to be aligned harmoniously. Metaphorical narration is chosen in conveying the sense of identity, while the chosen name, *Nagara Rimba Nusa*, evokes a nostalgic sense of 'Nusantara', which become the topic of this thesis, that is considered as part of the country's historical and cultural identity.

However, the decision to move the capital city and the chosen design is scrutinised by critics who question the top-down political decision that is deemed to be extending the interest of a few people in power. From the choice of Panajam (East Kalimantan) as the location; the political agenda behind this plan; the budgeting problem that is deemed to be too much for the country to bear for something that is 'unessential'; this grand plan becomes a topic of debate at a national level. Amanda Achmadi (2019) expresses her concern that this new capital city could be "an entirely new and isolated entity, a new urban formation to be imagined, conceived and drawn on an empty landscape with no substantial connection to a specific historical, urban, or cultural context" (Achmadi, 2019). Indonesia

⁵ *Pancasila* (The Five Principles) is the official ideology of Indonesia that comprises the postulation of religiosity; humanity; unity; democracy; and social justice. The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (*Undang-undang Dasar 1945*) is the foundational constitution that becomes the basis for all laws of Indonesia. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which is literary translated as 'although different, yet one' or having a general meaning of 'unity in diversity', is the official national motto of Indonesia that becomes a 'unifying mantra' for Indonesia's diverse people. The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia - NKRI*) is the official name of Indonesia, as a depiction of the unitary form of the archipelagic state whose sovereignty comprises both its lands and waters.

⁶ *Nagara* means government or authority; *Rimba* means forest; and *Nusa* means islands or archipelago. See Al Faqir (2019).

has witnessed the postcolonial nation-building strategies demonstrated by Soekarno and Soeharto that produced a capital city dominated by monumental buildings that are highly symbolic; a national 'brand' that reveals little of the lived social dynamics of the nation. This new capital city, she adds, should escape the postcolonial state narratives of the past, that instead of following the elites' imagining of the nation, it should allow every layer of the population to have equal opportunities to function in the city for whatever roles they have, including the commonly scapegoated informal activities. Nicko Herlambang, a local environmentalist, argues that not only the design might threaten the natural condition of the place, mainly that the site is located close to a mangrove forest, but also it potentially creates social friction to the place, as the design seems only to move Jakarta to Kalimantan. He questions how local people and local tribes will negotiate to fit within the new city since the design does not rigorously incorporate the local context (Masbanjar, 2019). In this case, the new capital city will bear the conception of identity brought by the elites from Jakarta, instead of a place in which the locals could contribute their perception of identity in a place that used to be theirs. It is a display of what Lawrence Vale (2008) problematises in his analyses of the 'capital' and 'capitol' designs in various countries, that "any times capitals [and capitols] are designed as well as designated, political will is underscored by a physical plan, designed according to the priorities of those who hold power", or in other words, the authority (Vale, 2008, p. 42).

It is evident that although there are elements of postcolonial society who challenge the validity of the notion of national identity and consider the discussion of identity to be obsolete, the recent development shows that this topic is still prominent in the construction of nationhood. The issue of architectural identity in Indonesia found its stage in the 1960s when architects and scholars started to feel the urge to 'define' what Indonesian Architecture was. It was started then because of the widespread modern architecture that became prevalent in architectural design, despite being accused of being insensitive of the specific context of Indonesia. There was a euphoric movement to reconsider the local context of the country, mostly focusing on the culture and the climate, as inseparable parts of the design considerations. In the 1980s, the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) responded to it by holding congresses related to this question of identity: the first was titled '*Symposium Arsitektur Tradisional*' (Traditional Architecture Symposium), and the second was titled '*Menuju Arsitektur Indonesia*' (Towards Indonesian Architecture).⁷ The second congress marked the boom of the term

⁷ The first congress, the Traditional Architecture Symposium, was held on 4-5 December 1981 in Jakarta where the idea of Indonesian architecture was loosely discussed and linked to traditional architecture which acted as a reference, example, guide and inspiration for Indonesia's architectural design. The second congress, Towards Indonesian Architecture, was held in Yogyakarta on 2-3 December 1982 with series of seminars that followed. This second congress went with an underlying thought that architecture was an active entity to influence and

‘Indonesian Architecture’ that became a momentum in which architects started to develop a sense of a need to embrace locality, whatever the definition was. It was also when Indonesia’s architecture community started to collectively realise the impossibility of defining the term finitely, unlike the previous congress that suggested the apparent link to traditional architecture as the main inspiration of the country’s architectural identity. The conception of Indonesian Architecture was then treated as a verb, not a noun; then any finite formulation would only lead to simplification of the concept (Sopandi, 2017, pp. 502-506).

I.2. Nusantara Architecture, a confused understanding⁸

Leaving the conception of Indonesian Architecture as an open-ended term created a dissatisfaction for those who demand lucidity. For some, the ‘indeterminate’ Indonesian Architecture was perceived as counterproductive to the development of architecture in Indonesia itself. It was deemed too broad and vague that, with no directions or specifications, it gave architects full arbitrary freedom to interpret the conception according to their preferences and predilections. It resulted in divergent approaches and methods shown as part of a process to create disparate styles and forms of buildings. Amidst this hazy stage, Josef Prijotomo promoted a new term, ‘Nusantaran Architecture’, that was expected to provide a clearer and a more definite direction for architects in exercising their own interpretation of Indonesia-ness in a concrete form of architecture.⁹ Prijotomo’s Nusantara Architecture offers some key principles that are applicable for design while accommodating the urge to convey identity. A credo of ‘architecture as a shelter’, for instance, conveys that a building in a tropical country acts as a place to hide from sun and rain, and, as a consequence, it is the roof that becomes the essential part of the house; not the walls. It strategically embeds a principal of tropical architecture while wrapping it up with narration of culture and tradition. This culture of taking shelter

even to create a better national culture, therefore the IAI invited architects to rethink the scope of architecture, that it should not merely cover the technical aspects of ‘design and build’, but also a wider social cultural context of the place. The congress went with most speakers agreeing that Indonesian Architecture was not a fixed term and was in the state of becoming so it would be a pointless effort to formulate it in a rigid and structured way. See Sopandi (2017, pp. 502-506).

⁸ Similar to the way I use the term ‘Indonesian Architecture’ in this thesis, I use the term ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ more as an image conception and a mental frame, not necessarily referring to any styles, cultural artefacts or any historical accounts or chronologies.

⁹ The word Nusantara was coined in the era of the Majapahit Kingdom (1293-1520), when Prime Minister Gajah Mada swore to conquer the Southeast Asia archipelago, called *Nusantara*, and brought victory to the kingdom. Nusantara itself is literary translated as ‘the archipelago’ that was once united under the sovereignty of Majapahit, despite lack of proofs and evidence of the validity of this story. See Bosch (1956); Phalgunadi (1996); Vlekke (1959); M. Wood (2011).

provides an applicable idea to be translated into design, and it becomes an appeal for some architects when compared to the vagueness of an Indonesian Architecture conception.

Interestingly, many of the narrations of Nusantara Architecture were built on the foundation of East-West binary, a sign of Orientalism. The 'architecture as a shelter' principle not only acts as a direction to which architectural identity of the country is translated but also serves as a comparison with subtropical country's 'architecture as a protection'.¹⁰ Nusantara Architecture, in this sense, provides not only tactical architectural methods, but also the philosophical idea of being different to the rest of the world; that Nusantara Architecture is 'us' and not 'them'. This dichotomy, surprisingly, works incomparably well in engaging Indonesian architects and laypeople in creating a sense of identity of the country, regardless of the controversy on its historical background. The term Nusantara Architecture becomes popular for its capability to comprise both tangible and intangible aspects of architecture. With a massive spread of this terminology and with various campaigns by both government and private agencies, Nusantara Architecture is then claimed to be a new alternative direction in delineating Indonesian architectural identity.

Nusantara itself as a term has a complexity in its nature. It has a tight connection with a part of the history of the country that is still problematised for lacking historical evidence, making it more an imagined distant past, creating an imagined reality based on a representation of a sacred community that was overwhelmingly aural (Anderson, 2006, pp. 22-23). The *Pararaton* and *Negarakertagama* books record that the term Nusantara came from Majapahit Kingdoms, an era considered as the most glorious time of the country in the past. The term was employed multiple times in the time of independence struggles, that it was once even proposed to be the name of the country. In the time of Sukarno, the term Nusantara was redefined by Mohammad Yamin, from initially a supranational terminology to be a national terminology, with an intention to create a utopian rendition of Indonesia's past glorious time to inspire people to unite under one nation and to achieve the national goals (Jusuf, 2013; M. Wood, 2011, pp. 36-37). When Suharto took over the power, the adoration for the term continued and became even stronger as a result of a long indoctrination. Nusantara became

¹⁰ Prijotomo suggests that tropical architecture is an architecture for shelter, while subtropical architecture is architecture for protection. By this, he means that the latter requires building's walls to be completely sealed out due to subtropical climate's extreme weather condition. The former, on the other hand, needs walls only for visual protection, and not from the weather. This becomes one of the arguments Prijotomo puts forward to distance architecture in Indonesia from architecture in the West. In fact, he uses the East versus the West comparison multiple times. See Prijotomo (1996, 2008, 2017).

an alias of Indonesia that represented the whole Indonesian archipelago '*dari Sabang sampai Merauke*' - from Sabang to Merauke'.¹¹

As one of the findings in this thesis, I put forward an argument that there are at least two different conceptions of Nusantara, and these two have been mixed up in the imaging process of the term. The first conception is what I call 'the Pre-colonial Nusantara' that refers to the old history of Majapahit, displaying Nusantara as a supranational terminology that comprises not only the Indonesian archipelago, but also Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, the Philippines, Sulu Archipelago, southern Thailand, and East Timor. This term refers to historical and geographical accounts of the kingdom and its area, but what is strongly apparent is that Pre-colonial Nusantara is ingrained in politics. In this view, Nusantara is a political terminology that came into being as a result of a political oath made by a political leader as part of his political duty to achieve the king's political ambition. The second conception is what I call the 'Post-independence Nusantara', that relies on the definition proposed by Mohammad Yamin in his book *Gajah Mada: The Hero of United Nusantara*. Different to the pre-colonial conception, the post-independence conception only sees Nusantara cover the area inside the national border of Indonesia, and this is why in the recent development, people start to use it interchangeably with the term Indonesia. What is interesting is that this conception proposes to focus on culture and tradition and to detach politics from the discussion; therefore, any term associated with post-independence Nusantara seems to highlight the cultural richness of the country.

Between the pre-colonial and post-independence conceptions, in this thesis, I argue that both terminologies, although they bear the same name, Nusantara, refer to different entities; based on different histories; constructed for different purposes; and focus on different features. For these reasons, a clear separation should be drawn to give specificity to the meaning of the conception. I argue that contemporary discourse of Nusantara Architecture bases its concept on the Post-independence Nusantara, as it draws upon the predilection of valuing identity from the perspective of culture and tradition, while, conscious or unconsciously, pushing aside other factors that intermingle in people's daily life and urban fabric. Detaching politics and social dynamics from architecture is one of the most common narratives used by experts who prefer the term Nusantara Architecture instead of Indonesian Architecture. This reasoning evokes further debates on how to position architecture and politics since the two are primarily deemed to be inseparable. Moreover,

¹¹ Sabang is a small island in Aceh Province located at the Western border of Indonesia, while Merauke is a regency in Papua Province that marks the Eastern border of Indonesia. 'From Sabang to Merauke' indicates the coverage geographical area of Indonesia, but this jargon has been perceived as having stronger meaning of unity, determination, aspiration of a country that carries national, state and ideological entities. See Romdhoni (2017).

the claim to focus on culture can also initiate further questions, since culture might be seen very differently among architects. Architectural design is pragmatic, technical and tends to fixate things in place; thus, the conception of culture as an unstable entity creates a severe difficulty in terms of translating it into design. Referring to what I have discussed in the previous section, there is a potential trap to essentialise culture in this sense, and this, I argue, is one of the potential pitfalls of 'Nusantaran Architecture'.

However problematic, Nusantaran Architecture has captured public attention and the Indonesian professional architectural community's imagination for its association with cultural preservation. Although it is still unclear how Nusantaran Architecture would help to preserve the living culture, yet this narration has been amplified quite extensively through the government's 'Nusantaran Architecture Design Competition' in supporting the Ten New Bali tourism plan. The winning designs are claimed to embrace and represent the local culture, merging tradition with modern ways of living, creating spaces both for the locals and the domestic and international visitors. It is arguable since most, if not all, of the designs are products of intellectual exercises based on partial assumptions, mostly related to tangible and physical aspects, with no room for local participation in the process. Since the architects and the juries possess very little understanding of the local culture, it is difficult to know how the designs will work within the established social fabric of local life. It is concerning to see the social effects brought by this top-down plan when the local people have no choice except to accept the architecture that might be alien to their living tradition and also the pressing challenges they face in dealing with their built environments. In this sense, local people are pushed aside to be spectators rather than active players of the making of their own culture, hence their identity, and it is an act of imposing, instead of nurturing, culture. Although the intention is to spread the development of tourism to the remote areas in Indonesia, yet it is a display of how national identity is orchestrated by people in power who mostly live in Java, revealing the persistent problem of Javacentrism in Indonesia.

I.3. Hurdles in interpreting of Nusantaran Architecture: Problem statements and research questions

Nusantaran Architecture is a vague and perplexing conception; yet it is particularly popular among both laypeople and experts as it is deemed to be the 'authentic' architectural representation of Indonesia's national identity. There are heated debates that separate the groups who agree and disagree with the conception. Yet regardless of the controversy, many architects make an effort to explore how far the conception of Nusantaran Architecture can be expanded and developed. In this

case, the translation of Nusantara Architecture, hence architectural identity for some people, depends on the architects' understanding of what constitutes an identity, as well as their design framings and approaches, as they are the ones who, in the end, translate the conception into built forms. Although multiple forces and actors are surrounding the architects' decisions that influence how the conception would be translated into certain spatial and material configurations of architectural expressions, the architects' subjectivity and agency in imagining this architectural representation for the nation are crucial determinant factor hence essential to be studied.

This thesis as such looks at the perspective of professional architects in seeing Indonesia's architectural identity construction. Firstly, this thesis will scrutinise the architects' predilections in design, including the reasonings that follow, and also the way they convey it in their projects. It helps unfolding their perspectives in responding to the specific context of Indonesia, and revealing architectural choices that might be their way to express of 'being Indonesian'. Secondly, it will also analyse how professional architects respond to the conception of 'contextual design' and 'architectural identity' in Indonesia, as both phrases have been interweavingly used in representing one another. Comparing this practical stance to the theoretical perspective is crucial, as it reveals the intricacy behind the long standing debate in Indonesia between the architectural scholars/academics and professional architects. Some arguments are opposite to each other, and it is essential to take into account both sides and to position each argument in the broader context of established geopolitics of knowledge. There is a big gap in this debate. On one side there is a group, consists of both academics and professional architects, that wholeheartedly supports the conception of Nusantara Architecture, that focuses more on the rather dogmatic narrative of the Indonesian archipelago's certain glorious past and on how this conception is translated into built form with its particular technical development. What it is lacking, I argue, is that this group seems to be reluctant to deal with contemporary real-life tensions that comprise social, political aspects of the people, as they tend to over-glorify the imagined distant architectural past of Nusantara Architecture and, in a way, become fixated with the idea of an 'ideal' translation of the conception. On the other hand, the opposing group questions the need to link contemporary identity with the story that happened six centuries ago, and critiques that there is no specificity in the definition of Nusantara Architecture. Unfortunately, although these are valid critiques, this group is reluctant to bring their argument to the public and to write their standpoints in an academic platform to generate a productive discussion. It is an unproductive situation. Some experts refer to it as an 'unhealthy discourse', as many of the leading figures from each group tend to dominate the discussion yet are unwilling to exercise their arguments against contrasting views.

This thesis finds its significance in the heart of this long standing debate among the scholarly and professional architectural community in Indonesia, as it tries to contribute to narrow the gap by capturing both arguments; analysing and contrasting them; and placing them in a broader context of the country's contemporary situation and the world's contemporary political and historical discussions. It tries to pin down what arguments that each group puts forward, to map how the debate develops in different cities, between academics and professional architects, to better understand the conception of Nusantara Architecture from different perspectives.



Figure 1. The publication posters of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition on homestay (2016) and restaurant (2017) cycles
Source: Propan Raya, 2016/2017 (reprinted with permission)

The key momentum that this thesis will be looking at is the adoption of the term in a recent national tourism program, incorporating a series of architectural design competitions as a way to execute the top-down plan of cultural imposition (Figure 1). This will be considered as another catalyst in the

debate surrounding the question of architectural and national identity. The soaring popularity of the term Nusantara Architecture in the public domain strengthens the urge to question what it is and how it directs the country's architectural development. What is demonstrated here is the commodification of the notion of Nusantara Architecture by the Indonesian government, taking advantage of the ever-increasing trend of travelling and social media addiction, and, ironically, this act has been glorified as an effort to rebrand the fading 'authentic' culture and tradition of Indonesia. The massive publications that follow have become propaganda that, in a way, blinds lay people, through using misleading claims of cultural and financial benefits. This research aims to dissect this political move and its intention to normalise the otherwise imagined architectural past. It scrutinises the claims and design propositions as well as the underlying process unfolding through the national tourism propaganda and design manifesto launched through the competition. In this case, considering the viewpoints of people who are involved in this particular scheme are thus become essential step to take in order to arrive at a balanced view. This study not only expects to come up with a better understanding of this phenomenon but also to bring this controversial popular debate to an academic discussion so that it can be a starting point for further researches.

There is a view that simply sees architecture as "a fruit that comes from a tree of culture" (Priyotomo, 2008, p. 9), but it is crucial to highlight that culture itself is a very contested subject, as it depends on who claims the privilege to designate the unit and define it as 'culture'. If one considers culture as "the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively" ("Culture," 2018), therefore the existence of architecture is inseparable to the surrounding aspects of human life. Architecture itself is for the betterment of humanity (Buchanan, 2012; Jones, 1981, p. 21), a proof that culture and humanity are two interrelated subjects. Therefore, the contributions of the development of architecture to the surrounding people and places should be intrinsic criteria in assessing whether one building is considered successful, since "there is no physical setting that is not also a social and cultural setting" (Proshansky, 1976, p. 308). In this thesis, I consider architecture not only as a pragmatic and technical product of design but also as a part of a living culture that is continuously being shaped and reshaped by the ever-changing social and political situation of the country and the world. Or, in other words, I consider architecture not only as part of the discipline of Design, as Bruce Archer (1979) suggests, but also as part of the domain of Humanities, hence inside the study of social science. Douglas Jones argues that "architecture ... sits rather strategically between the abstractness of cultural structure and the concreteness of social structure" (Jones, 1981, p. 21). Therefore, in analysing Nusantara Architecture, I will formulate my arguments not only by drawing from architectural theories but also on social theories. Edward Said's Orientalism becomes the main theory I will use in scrutinising architecture as part of a continuing field of translation between 'the

East and the West'. Lawrence Vale's critique on the architectural construction of national identity and Kenneth Frampton's proposition of Critical Regionalism are two other major scholarly positions I will use to explore the conception of national identity and regionalism movement, two prevailing conceptions that are closely related to Nusantara Architecture. With these three theories in mind, I aim to escape from fixating architecture merely as a physical and aesthetic product of representation, as these theories expand the view and focus more on why such representation exists in the first place. Moreover, the works of Abidin Kusno, Roxana Waterson and Amanda Achmadi also significantly shape my view of the arguments, as these three studies comprehensively capture the complexity of social, cultural and political forces particularly in the shaping architecture in Indonesia, both in the past and in the present day. Their analyses of the contestation of Indonesia's architectural identity inform this thesis' attempt in analysing and unpacking the framing and construction of Nusantara Architecture by Indonesian architects and architectural scholars.

This thesis, in particular, extends the work of Abidin Kusno (2000, 2010a, 2013), as it looks at contemporary contestation of identity in a similar historical context yet in a different mode of power. Kusno sets a firm foundation of how political culture in Indonesia shaped the built environment of the country throughout the history of Indonesia, that the Presidents in power have always directed national identity for certain political purposes that, most of the time, benefited their positions in public eyes. His study allows us to understand architectural history in relation to the contestation of power through late colonial era and subsequent postcolonial nation building era under Sukarno and Suharto's regimes across the 20th century. He also discusses the social and political influences in how people appreciate architecture in the country, highlighting the gaps between social classes, particularly in Jakarta, that effects the shape of the city, with its unstoppable sprawling that forms both the lower class's urban kampungs and middle class's gated communities, which became more apparent after the 1998 Reformation movement.

This thesis seeks to expand on Kusno's illuminating analysis of the role of architecture in shaping Indonesia by looking into the most recent political era. I extend his studies by focusing on the conception of identity that is inscribed by Joko Widodo's government, that is built on his *Nawa Cita* (Nine Missions) to "build Indonesia from the periphery by strengthening regions and villages under the unity of the country" ("Nawacita," 2017, p. 2). Widodo's identity politics employs the term Nusantara and Nusantara Architecture as the language to represent the cultural identity of the diverse country, to dissolve a strong Javacentrism that was apparent in the previous governments' political practices. Contemporary development of Nusantara Architecture received full support from the government, particularly from the Ministry of Tourism. Widodo's intention to spread development

has been implemented successfully in terms of infrastructure development, particularly that he “has a convincing track record of implementing large scale infrastructural projects ... beyond Java” (Achmadi, 2019). Yet, with the fact that most crucial decisions are still tailored in Jakarta, including the decision of ‘Nusantaran Architecture Design Competition’, then that decentralised development is still an disputable claim. Moreover, Widodo’s inclination to culture and tradition reminds us of Soeharto, and they both use it for the same purpose: to strengthen their political power. Yet the two show different agendas: Suharto used it to represent himself as a charismatic leader with a ‘divine’ power, and it was particularly successful remembering the thirty-two years he was in power; while Widodo uses it to create a persona as the President of ‘small people’ (*wong cilik*) who has policies that are ‘pro-people’ (*pro-rakyat*), and it seems to work as expected knowing that he got elected for the second time in 2019. Widodo’s policies have shown that the direction of Indonesia’s national identity is, once again, reflecting the predilection of the person in power; a similar pattern shown not only by Indonesia’s previous Presidents, but also political leaders in many other countries in the world.

This thesis as such aims to fill the gap in both architecture theory and praxis in the discussion of Indonesia’s architectural identity, particularly on the conception of Nusantara Architecture. It tries to develop a more comprehensive understanding in both analytical perspective which delves into, and further questions, the meaning of the term; and synthetical perspectives which tries to establish a more stable and definitive meaning of the term by extending it to how it is functioning in the community and is applied in the making of built form. It provides an insight in dismantling the tacit characteristic innate in the discipline, by asking the questions of both of ‘knowing that’ and ‘knowing how’ (Cross, 2006, p. 5; J. W. Robinson, 2001, p. 68). The central question of this thesis is “How does Nusantara Architecture sit as a conceptual category within the long standing scholarly and professional debate on the question of Indonesia’s architectural identity?”. I start with probing both academics and professional architects with a question of ‘what does Nusantara Architecture mean to you?’, as their answers reveal their over-arching framework of thinking in dealing with not only the issue of Nusantara Architecture in particular but also the issue of architectural identity in general. For this purpose, I collate a series of sub-questions and follow up research questions to map the complex responses to this seemingly simple question. Such responses not only underscore the ambiguity of the concept of national architectural identity in the first place when situated against the multifaceted social and built landscape of Indonesia, but also confirm that inserting the notion of a singular definition of what qualifies as national architectural identity is a questionable idea to start with. The sub-questions that drive this study as follows:

1. How do academic scholars in the field of architecture in Indonesia frame and discuss the topic of Nusantara Architecture?
 - What do architecture academics mean by Nusantara Architecture?
 - What is the position of Nusantara Architecture in Indonesia's architectural identity discussion?
 - What is the necessity of choosing Nusantara Architecture instead of Indonesian Architecture?
 - As a Javacentric term, what is the acceptance of Nusantara Architecture outside Java?
2. How do contemporary Indonesian architects frame and discuss the topic of Nusantara Architecture in relation to their understanding of design context?
 - What do professional architects mean by Nusantara Architecture?
 - What part of this context is particularly noted or referred to?
 - How is this noting or reference manifested in their designs?
 - How different is the notion of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture manifested in built form?

I.4. Investigating Nusantara Architecture: The thesis chapters

After understanding the complexities that encircle the conception of Nusantara Architecture as part of the discussion of national architectural identity, especially with an arbitrary intention to link it solely with culture and tradition while concealing the power contestation behind its shaping process, I start to map the topics that I will scrutiny in each chapter in this thesis. The subsequent part of this thesis is organised based on a series of themes that are purposefully collated in a specific order, not only to firmly build up the arguments in this thesis but also to unfold the answers for the research questions posed as the main drive of this thesis.

Chapter I is an introductory chapter, explaining the complexity of the conception of national identity in Indonesia, that becomes a topic of debate not only in architectural scholarship but also in other disciplines in Indonesia. It is also a part of a bigger world phenomena that national identity in most countries is orchestrated by the regime in power, and that most global south countries direct their national identity toward exotic otherness. The term Nusantara Architecture came as a response to this perplexity, yet its emergence only leads to other confusions and debates. The chapter also displays the difficulties in investigating the conception of Nusantara Architecture, and it leads to the collation of research questions that direct the whole thesis research.

In Chapter II, or the Research Methodology chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework on which my arguments are based. Theorisation of Orientalism by Edward Said, theorisation of Power and National Identity by Lawrence Vale, and Critical Regionalism by Kenneth Frampton are three main theories I employ to help me analyse the topic of discussion in this thesis. Orientalism theory informs the predominant binary thinking of East and West that has been, and still is, dominating the way people see Indonesian culture. The contrasting attitude that separates the West as ‘the modern’ and the East as ‘the exotic’ underlays the whole discussion of Nusantara Architecture, although its contemporary usage shows that this exoticism has an empowering effect instead of marginalising. The theory of Power and National Identity demonstrates the close relationship between power and identity translation in a country where the leader of the country decides the direction of national identity, hence representing the regime instead of the people. It also emphasises that despite being considered arbitrary, identity is not a free-floating entity, therefore political and social tensions that are surrounding the conception of identity have to be regarded as pertinent. Critical Regionalism offers ten perspectives to respond to the local context critically and to encourage a challenge to the trend of architecture commodification. The superficial gilts that dominate architecture should be disputed to avoid free-floating banalities in any design translation of locality. Moreover, these three theories are accompanied with some pragmatic theories from the discipline of Design that allow me to position the topic considerably. The three former theories help me scrutinise the academics’ views, while the latter enables me to understand how architects think and translate ideas into a design.

Chapter III, or the Research Methods chapter, explains the epistemological and ontological position I take in analysing the topic, including the paradigm and the thinking process I use in the data collection and analysis process. As an explorative study, a qualitative stance helps to capture the multi-layers of complexity in dealing with the mind-frame of the interviewees in dealing with the conception of Nusantara Architecture, mainly because subjectivity has been salient in how they conceive the term and apply it in design. Since *Geisteswissenschaft* as the nature of this research opens to multiple perceptions in understanding the topic, constructivism is seen to be beneficial in encapsulating these distinct perspectives, as it sees that every social phenomenon is socially constructed. When nothing is pre-given, the position taken in approaching the topic can be pushed towards critical, and even philosophical questions, to challenge not only the practical applications of ‘Nusantaran Architecture’, but also problematise the foundation of how it sits in the historical, social, and political context. In this thesis, I bring together the Research Methodology (Chapter II) and the Research Methods (Chapter III) as guiding frameworks that reciprocally influence each other and shape the entire thinking process in this thesis. The methodology, or the theoretical framework, becomes a basis not only to firm my arguments throughout the thesis, but also to determine the interviewees, the research questions, the

area of the data collections, the analyses methods, and to decide whether the information gathered was 'sufficient' to be analysed. The research methods then provide empirical data that inform back to the theoretical framework, and are used to either confirm, refute, or even expand the theories, based on the fitting of the Indonesian context. Having this guiding framework in mind, I proceed to analyse the complexity of Nusantara Architecture by continuously conversing with both the theories and the interview findings, in order to get to a more critical analysis and is not only trapped in 'reporting' without intention to aligning or contrasting arguments.

Chapter IV articulates the historical account of Indonesia's national identity constructions, which I then thoroughly analyse, to provide historical background for my analysis in a specific context of identity politics in Indonesia. It particularly scrutinises how this identity politics has been initiated, promoted, incorporated, indoctrinated, and sometimes manipulated through out the history of the country, by the government in power for their political gains. The attempts to find the 'appropriate' translation in representing the nation have been done since the Dutch colonial period and is still demonstrated in various national agendas, including Indonesia's recent tourism agenda and the new capital city plan. The conception of national identity has also been articulated in multiple international events in which Indonesia promotes and speaks for itself among other countries globally, despite the constant problematisation of defining Indonesia's national identity in a very simplistic manner. At the end of the chapter, the reproduction and reconstruction process of Indonesia's identity is scrutinised, particularly in regard to the external and internal forces in which the contestation of identity politics of the country is situated. The tensions of 'regional versus global', 'national versus supranational', 'history versus contemporary', 'regional versus subregional', 'elite versus peasant', 'urban versus rural', and 'Indonesia and Java-centrism' are among the vague lines that constantly shape (and reshape) the identity of Indonesia, and these tensions represent the complexity of trying to pin down any single direction of the identity of the country, which is then called Indonesian Architecture. The unsettling debate about this term brought a new terminology, 'Nusantaran Architecture', to be pushed forward.

Before continuing to the detailed outline of following chapter, I need to emphasise that Chapter V to Chapter VII will be where my main arguments in this thesis are discussed. The results of the interview are comprehensively analysed in these chapters, mainly to scrutiny how different actors and stakeholders perceive the conception of Nusantara Architecture. Chapter V discusses how Indonesian academics perceive the conception; Chapter VI is about how the government understands it; and Chapter VII scrutinises how professional architects interpret it and then translate it into designs. These focuses are led by the research questions I posed in the previous section. Besides these main

focuses, each of these three chapters also takes account of other related issues to see how each comprehension by different actors is developed in their professional fields. This is to give a clearer context of how the conception of Nusantara Architecture is concretised in a real-life context, outside the discussions that dwell in the abstract main-frame level.

Chapter V, as the beginning of the core analysis of the thesis, focuses on the discussion of Nusantara Architecture from the scholarly perspective, driven by the first research question of this thesis. However, before touching on how Indonesian academic scholars understand the term, I explore, and further analyse, the terminology of 'Nusantara' and 'Nusantaran Architecture' to give a background understanding of how the term is perceived generally by Indonesian people. The analysis takes account of a brief history of the Majapahit Kingdom as the era in which the term 'Nusantara' was brought about, and discusses the entrenchment of this term in contemporary Indonesia. Looking at various definitions offered in answering 'what Nusantara is' leads me to make a categorisation of the terms. I argue that there are at least two distinct definitions that refer to different entities and are constructed for different purposes, yet are continuously being mixed up in the construction of the term Nusantara Architecture. I then revisit the beginning of the re-emergence of contemporary Nusantara Architecture, started with a preservation project of Wae Rebo that marks the boom of the terminology at a national level. Then, after mapping different definitions of the term, the scholarly perspective is scrutinised as the main discussion in the chapter, unfolding the supporting and the opposing arguments of the term, to situate better where the term sits in the architectural identity discussion in the country. This discussion reveals more comprehensive reasonings of why the term should or should not be treated as a representation of the country's architectural identity according to academics. In the discussion section, I particularly pose three questions: (1) what Nusantara Architecture means; (2) why should it be 'Nusantara'; and (3) how this new term sits among other established knowledge (e.g. world history and politics) and other global phenomena (postcolonial countries, the rise of capitalism, etc.). The 'anti-West' narration and the inclination to 'depoliticise' architecture are among the issues I largely problematise at the end of the chapter.

To continue the discussion about Nusantara Architecture as an identity politics, and to expand the analysis discussed in Chapter V about the appropriation of the conception in the contemporary context, Chapter VI elaborates more about how Indonesia's current government employs this term as part of their cultural and tourism strategies, particularly looking at the incorporation of the term in national design competitions. The political drives behind this choice are questioned, focusing on the President's political standpoint in his nation-building strategy, while discussing the problems entailed with the implementation and some criticisms that follow, including to idealise Bali as an example for

the tourism agenda. I then continue to discuss the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition, looking at the briefs and the juries, before discussing the winning designs. I highlight the perspective of the architects, and critically analyse it by borrowing some views offered by design critics in problematising values and meanings in architecture. The question of the architects' authority in making a design decision is also challenged, highlighting the conflicting tensions between serving the people in power and those marginalised that, most of the time, are requiring opposite solutions.

Chapter VII explores the architects' perspectives in reacting to the term 'Nusantaran Architecture'. I start by highlighting some differences in the way academics and architects convey their understanding, as architects seem to contrast themselves against the theorists. The pragmatism and the 'black box' nature of architecture have effected the way architects express their standpoints in design, including how they translate the conception of identity into architecture, that, in a way, legitimises the arbitrariness and the oversimplification in architectural design. Interestingly, although these architects are polarised in choosing either going with 'Indonesian Architecture' or 'Nusantaran Architecture', yet regardless of their choices, the way they translate it into a design is similar: they focus on the local context of the place. The tropical climate, local materials, traditional culture, contemporary culture, and nature and ecology are five aspects that are repeatedly mentioned when architects translate their 'Indonesia-ness' into the design. In the discussion section, I problematise the potential pitfall of Nusantara Architecture in terms of design translation, and the way Nusantara Architecture is 'peculiarised'. I also question how the term 'local' is understood, as it relies heavily on incomplete assumptions, and how 'meaning' in architecture is embedded in the design, something that mostly leads to a 'gimmickisation' as an effect of capitalism.

Chapter VIII, the last chapter, is the summary and the conclusion of the whole discussions. I highlight three critical reflections I have attempted to present through the thesis as the main conclusion of this thesis; these three emphasise the importance of: contextualisation of the notion of Nusantara and Nusantara Architecture within the long historical process of construction of Indonesia's architectural identity; escaping the colonial mould of Orientalism, including its binary thinking; and recognising place and placelessness in imagining architectural identity. On each point, I elaborate comprehensively on my final thoughts regarding the points I raise, and how it can contribute in expanding the discussion of Indonesia's architectural identity. I close the chapter by pinpointing some limitation of this research, and some potential directions to extend and expand this thesis in the future.

Chapter II

Beyond the East and West: The Theoretical Framework

II.1. Introduction

In the previous section, I have explained the outline of the research briefly, starting from a series of background events that lead me to choose the research topic, to the questions I pose as a way into scrutinising the problem. In this chapter, I will discuss a series of theories that I employ in analysing the topic. These act as a foundation that underpins my arguments in unravelling the complexity of the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' as part of a more considered discussion of Indonesia's architectural identity. In constructing this theoretical framework, I use one main theory as an 'umbrella' overshadowing the whole thinking process in this research, followed by two other theories that bridge the main theory to the architectural discipline and provide examples of how the problems discussed are invested in built form. Further, as I recognise the architects' pragmatic position, as part of the characteristic of design in general, I thus take account of design theories that capture the solution-based thinking employed by most architects and discuss why they have this approach in the first place.

The first part of this chapter discusses Edward Said's Orientalism that critiques the marginalisation of the 'Orient', in contrast of the 'Occident', that constantly positions the East as subordinates to the West. Exotising the East is one of the ways to differentiate the two poles, framing it as illiterate and backward, hence a complete opposite to the modern and developed West. This perspective is accentuated to legalise imperialisation. In the history of Indonesia, this kind of attempt occurs often in the time of the Dutch colonials, with the expense of destroying indigenous culture to make space for 'modernisation'. What is interesting is that Orientalism, which was used to marginalise and exoticise the East, is now a platform used by the East to 'empower' themselves. Although mostly led by tourism, hence capitalism, exoticising the nation is a way for the country to gain its sense of identity, using the exact same imaging for an opposite purpose. The 'neo-traditionalism' portrayed in the discussion of Nusantara Architecture is thus challenged, as it utilises the Orientalist view, a legacy of colonialism, to spread a campaign of anti-colonialism to resist modernism and universalism. This paradox is what is exercised in the research, not only to problematise the direction led by Orientalism but also to question the necessity to dwell in traditionalism in imagining the country's contemporary identity.

The theory of power and national identity by Lawrence Vale comes next in this chapter, arguing that national identity is constructed by the regime in power to serve their best interests, hence not an objective representation of the country itself. It is a polished image to represent the country among the international world, mostly to gain respect and recognition. Although Vale suggests that it is 'capital' and 'capitol' that become the display for this agenda, yet in the case of contemporary Indonesia that I discuss in this research, this power assertion comes in the form of small-scale traditional-like architecture used for the agenda of tourism. Architecture as a political apparatus is therefore influential in creating a sense of identity for the people, and the direction taken, most of the time, does not conform to the understanding of the fluidity of culture and identity itself. Moreover, this theory also challenges the attempt to depoliticise architecture by promoting the term Nusantara Architecture, to highlight the fact that architecture and politics are inseparable, especially that the attempt to detach politics from architecture is political itself. Therefore, the purpose of creating a rigid box for architecture to be only dealing with culture and not politics is thus a problematic intention that ends as a futile attempt.

Following this, Kenneth Frampton's critical regionalism is discussed next as a way to see the current application in the search for local identity under the idea of regionalism. Frampton critiques the current practice in architecture that is trapped between two main essentialist thinkings, therefore the term 'critical' is accentuated as a challenge for contemporary architects to escape from their pragmatic box and see the architecture, and the profession, beyond merely a commodified product of marketing. The points Frampton suggests give a significant influence in shifting the direction of seeing locality in architecture, posing a resistance towards rigid and banal translation of traditionalism that is commonly seen in Nusantara Architecture. This theory, therefore, is crucial for scrutinising Indonesian architects' works in their translation of architectural identity, to see beyond their claims of being local and beyond the extensive media coverage who usually just extend the architects' arguments without posing any criticism.

To come to a balanced view, I also discuss some of the design theories that explain the nature of architecture as a profession that involves pragmatism, if not essentialism. Nigel Cross's and Bryan Lawson's attempt to explain the attributes of architectural design offers a positive perspective that is a contrast to the previous three analytical theories. What I suggest in incorporating Cross's and Lawson's theories is to recognise that in the 'transfer process' from idea to built form, architects play a pivotal role in perceiving, understanding, iterating, selecting, and deciding on how the end product will be. This whole process relies on the architects' perspectives and understandings, therefore the pragmatism embedded in the way they work should be recognised to come to a fair view in analysing

the design. The problem-solving principles taught in architecture schools have also influenced the way architects approach the idea of Nusantara architecture. I, therefore, discuss the studio culture as an extension to this section and capture some critiques to its unchanging environment.

II.2. Orientalism: The East and the West

The terms 'East' and 'West' have been largely, and even loosely, employed in the discussion of architectural identity in Global-south countries, including Indonesia. These countries thus become contesting spaces in which struggles to define 'identity' rely on the binary comparison between 'the local' and 'the modern', mostly resulted in accentuating their 'otherness', although most of the time it involves the process of stereotyping traditional architecture, creating what Haim Yacobi (2008) calls "Oriental (but not quite)" (Yacobi, 2008, p. 109). This becomes the main reason that draws me to Orientalism, as this theory can lend a lens to critically discuss the phenomenon of identity-making in postcolonial countries. Especially in the current development of the Nusantara Architecture discourse, this dichotomous perspective has become an underpinning idea for exoticising *budaya* (culture) that brings a strong implication of associating *budaya* with traditional customs and built forms. The main problem in this discourse development so far is that the existing supporting studies have not put this discourse in a wider discussion of the world's geopolitical dynamics. Thus it seems to be disconnected from the global phenomena. Without exploring the wider theoretical frameworks in which Nusantara Architecture is situated, it is hard to pin down the position of this discourse among other global studies. Not only that the term Nusantara Architecture itself is problematic, mostly due to its nonconformity to the established knowledge of 'Nusantara', but also that the attempt to bring back traditional design languages into contemporary architecture is not a phenomenon exclusive to Indonesia. This is where my research gains its significance, as it intends to delve into, if not to deconstruct, the idea of Nusantara Architecture using one of the world's most influential theories. Therefore, I choose to employ Orientalism as my main theoretical framework in this research, among other available theories, for at least three specific reasons: (1) because identity-making discourse in Indonesia has a direct linkage to wider Global-south postcolonial studies, including the narration of 'anti-colonial' and 'local identity'; (2) because the East-West dichotomy has been eminent in justifying the direction chosen for identity translation; (3) because there is a strong presence of power relations in the construction of Indonesia's architectural identity.

Orientalism as European political ideology

Edward Said's (1979) *Orientalism* meticulously captures, and further critiques, the East-West polarity as a form of the hegemony of power and politics. He dates this Orientalism to the 18th century, the period when Europe, or the West, did massive and ambitious expansions and conquered about 85 percent of the earth's surface, with Africa and Asia as the most effected (Said, 1979, p. 41). He suggests that the struggle over spaces in the colonial period is not only about physical occupation, as shown in imperialism, but also in the more abstract level of imposition through ideas, images, and imagining. He defines Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said, 1979, p. 2). He highlights the framing done by the Occident, as the West, over the Orient, as the East, mostly in literature, and finds that there is a uniform underlying assumption of putting the Orient as the underdeveloped place that is seen for "its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness" (Said, 1979, p. 205). This marginalisation becomes a platform on which the West gains strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient, creating a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans. In this regards, Said further asserts that the sense of East and West, or European and non-European, is strongly present in Orientalism as an influence from geography, and it can be traced back to Greek philosophers who started the dichotomy of Greek and non-Greek, from Hippocrates to Aristotle. This contrast fulfills the necessity of imagination that elucidates the Occident's relationship of power, domination and hegemony over the Orient, reiterating Western superiority over the backward Orient. The Oriental backwardness 'legitimises' the Western physical and intellectual domination including in academic writings where the West speaks for and represents the Orient, and where some of the writings try to validate and 'scientifically' prove the Orient's ignorance and retardation. Westlake's 'Chapters on the Principles of International Law' (1894), for instance, asserts that there are regions on the earth designated for the 'uncivilised' that ought to be occupied by advanced powers; or Curvier's, Gobineau's and Knox's writings that highlight the 'scientific' validity of racial classification and division that separates into advanced and backward classifications; or Goldziher's, Macdonald's, Becker's and Hurgonje's works that have the same consensus to see Islam as a religion of 'latent inferiority' (Said, 1979, pp. 206-209). In those writings, Orientalists single-handedly use Western value to assess the East, and any incompatibility of the Orient to synchronise with the Western standard puts the former as inferior to the latter. Therefore the narrations like "[Orientals are] lack of sense of law" or "Orientals have never understood the meaning of self-government the way 'we' do" (Said, 1979, pp. 106-107), or what Balfour asserts that "we know the civilisation of Egypt better than we know the civilisation of any other country" (Raj, 2015, p. 26) is common to be found in texts written by the Orientalists. Said

even quotes Karl Marx's assertion of "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented" (Said, 1979, p. xii) in the beginning of his book, creating a powerful illustration of how Orientalists work and operate in developing the thought of the Oriental. The problem of representation, as Said argues, is whether an objective representation is possible, as he states:

"... the real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. If the latter alternative is the correct one (as I believe it is), then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is eo ipso implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the "truth," which is itself a representation. What this must lead us to methodologically is to view representations (or misrepresentations – the distinction is at best a matter of degree) as inhabiting a common field of play defined for them, not by some inherent common subject matter alone, but by some common history, tradition, universe of discourse" (Said, 1979, pp. 272-273).

In this sense, Said positions a representation as 'a matter of degree' in a spectrum that has Friedrich Nietzsche at one end, and the Marxists at the other end.¹² Therefore Orientalism itself becomes a 'deceptive interpretation', a term once used by Nietzsche (Nietzsche, 1914, p. 156), since it is particularly an exercise of European-Atlantic power over the Orient as much as it is as a discourse about the Orient or how its scholars define it to be.

Interestingly, the Orient is always absent in any discussion of the Orient, making citizen of the East become passive objects in their own story. The East has always single-handedly been viewed as exotic, philistine and uncivilised, thus Said suggests that Orientalists are racist, imperialist, and ethnocentric (Said, 1979, p. 204). This depiction of the Orient, therefore, is a collection of European fantasies over the Orient in an attempt to manage and produce the Orient politically, sociologically, ideologically and imaginatively, and that "whatever good or bad values were imputed to the Orient appeared to be functions of some highly specialised Western interest in the Orient" (Said, 1979, p. 206). Orient itself is also seen as a problem to be solved or confined or taken over, and it justifies Western imperialism

¹² Through his exercise over Nihilism in Christianity, Nietzsche argues that any interpretation is problematic as it is based on certain values and morality that are not applied to every human being. He asserts that "there are no moral phenomena, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena. The origin of this interpretation itself lies beyond the pale of morality ... according to what standard shall we then measure? And then of what value would knowledge be, etc. etc.???" (Nietzsche, 1914, p. 215). On the other hand, Marxism recognises the possibility of creating an objective interpretation and a comprehensive explanatory for human beings and their social-related phenomena, as he exercises in his explanation of labour as 'species-being' (M. Rosen, 2005, p. 617).

and colonialism.¹³ The purpose is, of course, to salvage the Orient from a primitive and benighted way of life, and it is shown clearly in Balfour's accolade to Lord Cromer, England's representative in Egypt in the year in which England colonises that African country:

"Everything he has touched he has succeeded in ... Lord Cromer's services during the past quarter of a century have raised Egypt from the lowest pitch of social and economic degradation until it now stands among Oriental nations, I believe, absolutely alone in its prosperity, financial and moral" (as cited in Said, 1979, p. 35).

This not only positions the Occident as a 'saviour' of the Orient but also shows the domination of a hegemonic politics in setting the standard of development that is expected to happen in the Orient. The distinction between 'us' and 'them' determines the power relation in shaping culture, as the Occident leads the development of the Orient hence appoints the standard of what is considered developed or underdeveloped. This paradigm is presented in both 'latent' and 'manifest' Orientalism, both of which are relatively persistent and constant, although the latter has shown more variations and is subject to change compared to the former.¹⁴ Both latent and manifest Orientalism has been asserted in two different ways: 'textualisation' and 'theatricalisation'. Textualisation relates to the process of building latent assumptions about the Orient that is exercised and developed through rigorous textual publications. Theatricalisation, on the other hand, relies on the supposition that the Orientalism is a stage on which the Orient is considered as a close field affixed to Europe, and is characterised as permanently exotic as part of a theatrical performance for Western audiences. Achmadi pinpoints another way of framing the Oriental as 'the Other' by using what Derek Gregory (1999) terms as 'scripting', which is "a process through which an imagined oriental subject is furthermore framed, consumed and inscribed — beyond the space of textual narratives and verbal characterisations — as a distinct place and sight" (Achmadi, 2007, p. 67). These three mechanisms are seen as embodiments of Foucault's 'objectivisation', which gives the object a status of science (e.g. objectifying people as part of an experiment or a research), and 'dividing practice', which provides a sense of separation between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the 'good' and 'bad' (Foucault, 1982, pp. 777-778). These values are maintained to be unchanged, as Orientalism itself, according to Homi Bhabha, "is a static system of 'synchronic essentialism', a knowledge of 'signifiers of stability' ...

¹³ Said defines imperialism as "the practice, theory and attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory", and colonialism as "the implanting of settlements on the distant territory" (Said, 1979, p. 9).

¹⁴ Latent Orientalism is a doctrinal, a quintessential, a core idea of the Orient that has been shaped by cumulative studies done by the authority of the scholars, travelers and poets, whose idea is exercised around a constitutive will-to-power over the Orient. Manifest Orientalism is related to the expression and articulation of Orientalism that is related to the context in which the study is done, or in the other words, manifest Orientalism is the elements that give Orientalism its form at a particular time and place, thus are subjects to change.

[therefore it] is continually under threat from diachronic forms of history and narratives, signs of instability” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 102).

Said’s work has taken account of many distinguished philosophers like Derrida and Deleuze, but it is Foucault that has put a vivid influence in Said’s most prominent work. The Foucauldian paradigm is very much present in the discussion over Orientalism which is based on “the rejection of the Cartesian paradigm for establishing the truth of knowledge in terms of a *Cogito*—an inherent quality of the mind giving humans the capacity for gauging objectively the world” (Racevskis, 2005, p. 84). In the work of ‘Genealogy’, which bows to German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, Foucault explains the changes in social power structure, without any attempt to make it into a unitary scheme, and he further emphasises the essential connection between knowledge and power, that “although a system of knowledge may express objective truth in their own right, they are nonetheless always tied to current regimes of power” (Gutting, 2005, p. 283). Foucault asserts that there is no such thing as objective and neutral knowledge since power has always influenced the way knowledge is constructed, hence “knowledge is not innocent but profoundly connected with the operations of power” (Zhao, 2016, p. 377). Foucault’s works become a repertoire of ideas and arguments that are apparent in Said’s Orientalism especially that Orientalism becomes a comprehensive delineation of extensive knowledge productions in relation to power imposition. Orientalism has flourished using a platform of discourse, which is an institutional rule that allows the signification of certain knowledge to develop at a certain time by certain people, something that becomes central in Foucault’s argument. Said makes the emphasis of Foucault’s discourse, saying that “without examining Orientalism as a discourse, one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient ...” (Said, 1979, p. 3). Yet regardless of the strong influences in the beginning, Said seems to later disengage with Foucault, especially after the late 80’s when Said openly expresses his disappointment over Foucault and further states: “I separated from Foucault at that point” (Racevskis, 2005, p. 85).¹⁵

Said’s Orientalism is presented as a study to explain how a particular body of knowledge contributes to the spread of European colonial rule and why this becomes an impactful ideology that persists and

¹⁵ Said’s disappointment over Foucault started in 1979 when Foucault was seen as avoiding politics. It turned out that he was avoiding a discussion about Palestine, a discourse that not only brought the fatal clash between Foucault, a supporter of Israel, and Deleuze, a supporter of Palestine, but also caused a separation of Said from his initial Foucauldian paradigm. From that point, Said has been detaching himself from Foucault, that in an interview with Imre Saluszky, he even claimed to be anti-Foucault. See further connection between Said’s Orientalism to Foucault’s theories in Achmadi (2007); Bryce (2007); Racevskis (2005); Teti (2014); Zhao (2016).

occupies a prominent place in the modern European study. It becomes one of the pioneers in combining French critical theory with Anglophone textual and cultural tradition and paves a pathway for further study of the Global-south countries and postcolonial studies (Chibber, 2018, pp. 38-39). Notwithstanding the critiques, supporters of Orientalism highlight important points offered by this theory: the relevancy of this theory in the world's modern social-political contestation over a domination in knowledge production; and the immaculate presentation of Said's arguments which distinguish this work from other similar works critiquing Western hegemonies; and the acceptable methodology used in constructing the arguments.¹⁶ The idea of Orientalism has been around for a while and hitherto persists as a basis of identity creation among the Global-south countries, especially the basic idea of putting the East and the West as antithetical to each other. Orientalism has stretched from its initial form of placing the East subordinate to the West, and now this very idea is widely accepted and rigorously used by the East in imagining their own identity. 'Exoticising' themselves, in some if not most cases, becomes an empowering idea, instead of a disenfranchisement, for themselves as a way in standing against the domination of the modern West, although this exoticism remains largely packaged for the consumption of the Occident. This becomes a long-going discourse as to what extent exoticism, which is usually translated as traditionalism, can be taken as a starting point, if not the main and whole idea, in rendering an architectural identity of a Global-south nation. Debates are brought up among scholars and architects since some of them strongly reject the idea of exoticising the country, and further reject the necessity of relying in the imagining process on the dichotomy of the East and the West.

Architecture, in particular, has been using this dichotomous idea as a basis of categorisation of physical differences in the stylistic display of form and space, mostly relying upon the stereotypical of 'Oriental pastiche' and 'instant identity kits' (Ürey, 2013, p. 110). This leads to a 'kitsch' creation that has been called with many names: the 'cancer of architecture', 'a matchbox topped with headdress' (Horayangkura, 2010, p. 65), the 'disease of our time' (Griffiths, 2018). These phenomena have been found in most, if not all, postcolonial countries following a severe perplexity in defining and putting themselves in a global contestation. Thailand, for instance, suffers over the repetition of having the urge to derive the country's identity from its traditional architecture, putting forward an argument

¹⁶ Critics mostly question the paradoxical position of Orientalism, either in the discourse; in the paradigm used; in the employment of Foucault's theory; even in the author's subject position. One strong opposition comes from Robert Irwin, with his famous assertion over the idea of Orientalism which he deems as "a work of malignant charlatanry in which it is hard to distinguish honest mistakes from wilful misrepresentations" and a work whose discussion "is based on a fantasy version of past history and scholarship is not obvious" (Wollman & Spencer, 2007, p. 8). For further critiques towards Orientalism, see Bhabha (1994); Bryce (2007); Carastathis (2014); Chibber (2018); Racevskis (2005); Raj (2015); L. Rosen (2007); Yacobi (2008).

that Western influence is responsible for the disappearance of Thai architecture, hence preservation is needed (Horayangkura, 2017, p. 21; Svamivastu, 2014). Yet the arbitrary decisions of the Thai architects to employ certain forms and elements taken from traditional architecture, as part of adapting traditional value into a contemporary-style building, cause even more conflicts in the society. It is not only for the banal 'souvenir' approach in design, but also for the 'inappropriate' understanding over the hierarchical social orders, that apparently still be respected and be kept rigidly by some of the local people, as seen in this contention: "it is absolutely inappropriate to apply such elements of palatial and religious architecture to commoners' edifices" (Horayangkura, 2010, p. 64). This disputation might evoke further debates, especially in the context of an egalitarian society, but at least it shows that the impact of stereotypical stylistic choices in architecture might go beyond aesthetic.

Many similar discussions, albeit case variations and different directions offered, happen around Global-south countries in exercising the push and pull of positioning the countries' identity in the hegemony of Westernised modern value in architecture, like in Vietnam, Turkey, Nigeria, Egypt, and many other, mostly postcolonial, countries.¹⁷ The notable presence of modernity and universality in the discussion of architectural identity of the Global-south countries illustrates the eminent influence of Orientalism, and these Western-related values are seen in a 'demonising' way and are treated as threats over the 'originality' of local architecture. What is expected and developed through various discussions is an attempt to escape this binary thinking, especially the modern-traditional and East-West dichotomy, by producing the 'third spaces' as a place for "the creation and expression of local modernities" (Perera, 2010, p. 77), although what and how to achieve this 'utopian' idea, if it is even achievable, is still out of sight.¹⁸

¹⁷ Abundant works have been done in scrutinising the topic of architectural identity in different countries, covering various aspects and issues, but mostly it is rooted in the problematisation of the challenging hegemony of the modern West while at the same time questioning any essentialist approaches in treating traditional architecture as 'the most valuable' source of idea in delving identity. For some of the works looking at Global-south countries, see the works of Achmadi (2007); Bryce (2007); Canan, Sayin, and Korumaz (2015); Ebraheem (2013); Horayangkura (2010, 2017); Ikudayisi and Odeyale (2019); Ozaslan and Akalin (2011); Svamivastu (2014); Yacobi (2008).

¹⁸ Bhabha explains 'third space' as a place where discursive conditions can be developed without making a connection between culture and its primordial fixity; or in other words, it is a place where culture can be appropriated, translated and read anew. He emphasises the capacity of third space to create an "occult instability which presages powerful cultural changes ... [as a] way to conceptualising an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 56). The third space is also understood as "a discursive junction in which the sovereign and the colonial subject are not exclusive alternatives, and the construction of their identities involves 'mutual contamination'" (Yacobi, 2008, p. 97).

As one of the Global-south postcolonial countries, Indonesia is not an exception in experiencing the same 'trap' of Orientalism in imagining identity, as it builds the idea of an identity based on being distant from the West, mostly demonising modernism and universalism. The irony then repeats, that the colonist's Orientalism, with which Indonesia is 'inferiorised', becomes a foundation on which the discourse of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture is constructed. Orientalism sets a platform for Indonesia to 'self-promote' in gaining international recognition, flipping the perspective that used to see traditional culture as the sign of "backwardness and stagnation" (Hasan, 2009, p. 279) to become the 'treasure of the country'. Similar to how Orientalism strengthens Occidental self-identity, the same platform is now used by the government to bolster their sense of significance: accentuating the peculiarity of the traditional attributes as 'the unique feature of Indonesia'. It is interesting to recall that this very peculiarity once used to be a target of the Dutch colonists' revulsion for their failure to conform to European values and meanings. Repugnance and abhorrence are shown openly in the Dutch scholarly writings, which then become a basis of formal interventions to 'fix' this retardation. Forced changes bring destruction of the indigenous culture and drastically shift how the locals live their life, and some changes are forced in a radical and coercive way that causes trauma to the people.

Orientalism is therefore challenged, and even rejected, for its unjust and biased prejudices that are against the universal justice, liberty, equality and humanism. Albeit the 'enlightenment' and emancipation that scholars have fought for, Orientalism is still 'safe and sound' in a contemporary living tradition, including architecture. In Indonesia, the binary platform of Orientalism has been extensively used as a foundation of an identity formation, started as early as the era of Sukarno, the first president, and hitherto persists albeit with variations in shapes and translations. Contemporary discussion of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture is mostly based on the desire to own and accentuate local distinctive features that make Indonesia distinct, that stand out. Challenging this dualism is one of the main purposes of this research and further questioning the necessity of using this dichotomous platform in defining identity, while arguing that "the world has lost its pivot; the subject can no longer even dichotomize, but accedes to a higher unity, of ambivalence or overdetermination, in an always supplementary dimension to that of its object" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 6). In this sense, dichotomous thinking is a trap that essentialises the two ends, creating an 'arborescent' that is based on a hierarchical and binary system.¹⁹ Moreover, in constructing

¹⁹ In philosophy, 'arborescent' is a term used by Deleuze and Guattari to delineate the hierarchical, tree-like concept of knowledge that is considered as the foundation of formal thought, usually working in a totalising principle and that emphasises binary, vertical and linear connections. See Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

Indonesia's architectural identity, the recent 'tourism boom' also fortifies and escalates the need for exoticising the East as a product of consumption for the West, and this can be seen as merely another reiteration, extension, or probably an incarnation, of Orientalism. Indonesia, as I discuss in Chapter VI, recently reproduced the idea of the 'exotic East' for tourism rather massively with an economic development agenda that dominates the national scheme. It is another question that I pose later in this thesis about the 'appropriateness' of defining the country's identity based on, what John Urry (1992) terms as, 'the tourist gaze'. Any direction in translating the identity of Indonesia is selected by the government, mostly expressing the ruling regime's predilections, and this is why in the next section, I discuss the tight connection between architecture and power, and that any decision in expressing identity in architecture is a platform in exercising power domination.

II.3. Architecture and national identity as a power demonstration

The topic of identity is a complicated discourse for its vague, ambiguous, slippery and unstable nature, and can even be seen "as a term with indistinct borders" (Hauge, 2007, p. 2). Its intricacy has made many scholars avoid using this term and choose other possible terms (e.g. lifestyle, values, self, personality, social attribution and social status) for alternatives. 'Identity' comes from the Latin word *idem* or *identitas* and means 'the same', and it emphasises the creation of the sense of sameness; or "quality of being identical" as a group (Qazimi, 2014, p. 306); or "the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is" (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012, p. 69). But this term also carries a paradox that not only it does emphasise 'the sameness' but, also, at the same time, it highlights 'the difference'. David Buckingham (2008) explains not only that identity refers to a broader relationship that regards the collective association within a social group (e.g. national identity or cultural identity), but it also refers to unique and stable traits that each of us uniquely possesses and it is what distinguishes us from other people, just like our own identity written in identity cards. It is imposed by many layers that make identity prone to changes and relative to the context (Buckingham, 2008, p. 1).²⁰

²⁰ The question of identity can be asked in many different ways which leads to different answers. 'Who I am', 'who I think I am', and 'who people think I am' have different answers depending on "who I am with, the social situations in which I find myself, and the motivations I may have at the time, although I am by no means entirely free to choose how I am defined" (Buckingham, 2008, p. 1).

Identity has a privileged position in the history of philosophy, and has been discussed extensively and becomes a discursive topic involving many influential philosophers. Identity is seen as a manifestation of existence and self-knowledge to make sense of the world, requiring a reflection of self-concept as a way a person thinks about himself. The debates between Martin Heidegger and Gilles Deleuze mark the peak discussion over 'difference' standing at opposite ends: Heidegger proposes an idea of 'being', while Deleuze believes in the instability of 'becoming'. In understanding identity, I lean toward Deleuze, and his collaborator Félix Guattari, especially in their concept of 'rhizome' which sees that things in this world are multilayered and are "connected to anything other; ... ceaselessly establishes connection between semiotic chains, organisation of power, and circumstances relative to the art, sciences and social struggles" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). Emphasising the concept of 'assemblage' and 'multiplicity', rhizome, as a genesis, is anti-hierarchical, anti-dichotomy and a-centred, opposing the conception of 'arborescent'. A machinic assemblage, "a space in which different complexes can aggregate together" (O'Sullivan, 2000, p. 85), delineates the characteristics of identity that I use in this research: fluid; multi-layered; temporal; relative and subjective; always open for reconstruction; and never be a stable unified body as the 'aggregates' which form the identity itself are always in the process of changing. Guattari (1995) emphasises that "the important thing here is not only the confrontation with a new material of expression, but the constitution of complexes of subjectivation: multiple exchanges between individual-group-machine" (as cited in O'Sullivan, 2000, p. 85). Identity, therefore, has a chaotic sense that is always in constant motion with all manner of 'becoming'.

The conception of identity itself is embedded in architecture as it carries and displays "the message, concept and characteristics attributed to the community" and becomes a reflection of the civilisation of the period of time that "depends on the geography, traditions, manners, insights and knowledge of the community as well as its history" (Torabi & Brahman, 2013, p. 107). The fluidity of architectural identity is influenced not only by the time and place in which the physical form is constructed, but also by social, cultural, political and economic situations that encircle the people and the place. Architecture's capacity to convey value and meaning makes it one of the strongest and most pronounced representations in conveying identity. Nelson Goodman (1985) argues that architecture "signifies, means, refers, symbolizes in some way", and even further, some buildings do "allude, express, evoke, invoke, comment, quote; that are syntactical, literal, metaphorical, dialectical ... ambiguous or even contradictory" (Goodman, 1985, pp. 643-644). This ability has been employed and choreographed not only to amplify what is perceived as the long-standing tradition of a country, but also to empower its position among worldwide spectators. In most cases, regimes of postcolonial countries use architecture not only for its function to house the governmental activities, specifically

in a building Vale calls a 'capitol', but also to exhibit their newly-presence and claim their advance status as members of global citizen (Vale, 2008, pp. 10-11). It is the urge to attain global recognition that drives the world's countries to construct and curate their faces as a showcase of their symbolic status, especially among Global-south countries that still aim to distinguish themselves from the colonists and fight for an equal position in the global constellation. About this, Geertz (1973) suggests two motives that drive a new country to form their national identity: (1) the need to be recognised and (2) the urge to have progression. The former is where identity-making imparts a distinction that allows a country to be noticed and acknowledged, while the latter is where the multi-aspects of development continuation (e.g. in the aspect of living standard, political order and social justice) is the showcase to position the nation in world politics (Geertz, 1973, p. 258).

The fact that "identity in the eyes of an international audience" (Vale, 2008, p. 54) has been the main reason of gaining significance through national identity, in many cases, it brings consequence that the local people's perception towards the sculptured identity itself is discounted. National identity does have a strong connection with nurturing nationalism, thus active participation of the people is very much expected. Clifford Geertz (1973), however, suggests that although the conception of national identity gives a sense of 'likeness' that unifies people, hence strengthens nationalism, but the forming process to create nationalism requires people to lessen their attachment to their smaller social groups (e.g. ethnicity groups, religious groups) as they need to bond with a bigger imagined community and create a new collective identity. He mentions that:

"... formative stage of nationalism consisted essentially of confronting the dense assemblage of cultural, racial, local, and linguistic categories of self-identification and social loyalty that centuries of uninstructed history had produced with a simple, abstract, deliberately constructed, and almost painfully self-conscious concept of political ethnicity - a proper 'nationality' in the modern manner. The granular images into which individuals' views of who they are and who they aren't are so intensely bound in traditional society, were challenged by the more general, vaguer, but no less charged conceptions of collective identity, based on a diffuse sense of common destiny..." (Geertz, 1973, p. 239).

This is why national bonds sometimes stand on shaky ground, especially when the uneven representations of social and cultural interests create tension and friction in society, and it is prone to conflict if this unequal condition is used by the elitists and their alliances to promulgate their hegemonies that initiates crises and reprisals from the subdued groups. Zygmunt Bauman (1998) even argues that this establishment of national identity can be seen as a "suppression of the formative ambitions of many lesser populations" (as cited in Adam, 2012, p. 196). This is why the attempt to form national identity is somehow "contagious and has to be recognised as an elemental force even

in the shrunken, apparently homogenising, high-tech world of the end of the twentieth century” (Hooson, 1994, pp. 2-3).

The awareness to form a collective sense of unity, especially in the Global-south countries, can be traced down to the anti-imperialism spirit; an inclination of the locals to detest people, mostly who are seen as outsiders who have different physical features (e.g. different skin colour, costume and habits) that they associate with the features of the ‘colonist’. This becomes an interesting paradox that those colonists’ attributes become a signifier that provides a sense of ‘difference’ between the locals and the colonists, hence a sense of ‘likeness’ among the locals, and it becomes the main unifier the country once had. Interestingly, this sense of likeness, created by this dichotomous ‘us’ and ‘them’ basis, is not a stable unity as, in many cases, this sense of ‘native-ness’ becomes a serious divider among the locals, especially when it comes to ethnicity and religion. This was, and still is, the biggest hurdle in creating nationalism, and had been utterly harnessed in the colonist’s ‘divide and rule’ policy to make local people fight each other (Hobsbawm, 2012, pp. 136-138). This divisive potential is what Geertz calls as “the nationalisms within nationalisms that virtually all the new states contain and produced as provincialism or separatism, a direct and ... immediate threat to the new-wrought national identity” (Geertz, 1973, p. 237).

Therefore it is evident that a “nation is invented, rather than simply found” (Permanasari, 2007, p. 34), and so is national identity. Politic and social changes have been the main shaper of national identity, as the nation itself is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 2006, p. 5). Lawrence J. Vale (2008) in his book *Architecture, Power and National Identity* suggests that ideally, national identity should be nurtured internally by each individual and group as part of the new state. However, as it is not something that comes naturally before the establishment of statehood, national identity is something that needs to be cultivated, and most of the time inserted, by the regime who has attained political power. The direction of one country’s national identity becomes heavily affected by the choice of the leader, as, with his political power, this leader can construct, alter, or eliminate images to gain international recognition. The leader also often proclaims a national homogeneity that does not exist by championing one conception above the others regardless of the plurality of the people, similar to creating ‘one face for all’ as the only legitimate representation available, before imposing this rendered image to the people in a top-down decision. It makes national identity a very political rather than natural matter, and it is not surprising that the form of national identity keeps changing depending on who is in power. Vale’s analysis of nation-building in many different countries has proven that capitals and capitols are closer

to a representation of the regime's image rather than a representation of the country itself.²¹ Therefore, the main purpose of having a national identity as a representation of the people is hardly achievable. A parliament building, for instance, despite its purpose to represent a country's national identity, yet its appearance and place are chosen single-handedly by the leader, mostly with no participation, thus the result can hardly be called as a representation of the people (Vale, 2008, pp. 47-51). In many cases, the parliament building creates a separation between 'the ruler' and 'the ruled', as the building becomes exclusively accessible and accommodative for the leader but not for the people, it thus puts people as detached spectators rather than participants. Therefore, Vale argues that although a parliament building is often claimed to showcase a postcolonial country's national identity, yet the design "remains closely tied to political forces that reinforce existing patterns of dominance and submission" (Vale, 2008, pp. 9-10). In a point where the level of coercion raises, identity might be dictated and forced on the people, as Geertz points out that national unity and its identity "is maintained not by calls to blood and land but by a vague, intermittent, and routine allegiance to a civil state, supplemented to a greater or lesser extent by governmental use of police powers and ideological exhortation" (Geertz, 1973, p. 260). The monolithic national identity demands loyalty as it creates a standardisation of social-political values that discipline the national citizen (Adam, 2012, p. 196).

In Southeast Asian countries, the urge to express national identity is mostly driven by the aim of economic development (Hasan, 2009, p. 276). Paradoxically, this very motive is blamed for the recent massive spread of standardised technologies in the built environment, elucidated in the boom of modern architecture. The unification that this development brings creates a sense of placelessness and is demonised for jeopardizing the local character of the nation, and hence deemed as subversive to the idea of national identity. This uniformity of modern architecture pushes regionalists to propose some distinctive traits, which mostly come in the form of culture and tradition, as a source to construct national identity, emphasizing locality and regional character of the nation. Traditional and vernacular culture has been the main object under scrutiny and treated as the 'essence' of the nation's identity, although very often it is trapped in "romanticising the ancient form into present built environment" in an oversimplified model of translation (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2001, p. 5). This too is a problematic approach as focusing on the traditional aspect means zooming in to one partial element of the society amidst all the diversity, thus the notion of 'national' as collective identity is pushed aside and replaced

²¹ Vale suggests that a capital is "a city housing the administration of the state or national government", while a capitol is "the building that houses that government's lawmakers" (Vale, 2008, p. 11). The two become the focus of Vale's discussion as they are believed to be the main locus of power in creating a national identity.

by one particular sub-identity, contradicting the inclusive purpose of national identity. It is also important to note an irony that it is globalisation that brings the urge of presenting identity, as British sociologist Roland Robertson (1992) asserts that “it is crucial to recognize that the contemporary concern with civilizational and societal (as well as ethnic) uniqueness – as expressed via such motifs as identity, tradition and indigenisation – largely rests on globally diffused ideas” (as cited in Adam, 2012, p. 201).

A similar pattern appears in Indonesia since the very beginning of the attempt to define its national identity, as the presence of political power has been dominant in this construction process. Indonesia’s first two presidents, Sukarno and Suharto, clearly show their authority in directing how the country is represented in the built form, even some of the designs are sketched by the president himself.²² Sukarno’s and Suharto’s dominance is explicitly shown, yet manifested very differently, in deciding the direction of Indonesia’s national identity: Sukarto inclines to a modern international style architecture as a statement of Indonesia being a modern new postcolonial country; while Suharto prefers to go back to Javanese tradition as part of his attempt to accentuate his noble position as the ‘king’ among the people (I discuss further the attempt to construct Indonesia’s national identity in Chapter IV). Albeit the political differences, both Presidents still employ ‘culture’ as the main anchor to ‘localise’ their architecture, not very different from earlier phenomena of other postcolonial countries. Seeing “culture-as-political-struggle” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 52), this thus highlights the commonality of the Global-south countries in which national identity has been a subject that is determined not only by the characteristics of the people, but also by the geopolitical and social order in the region. Architecture, therefore, became a “discipline of a new political aspect which accentuates the state as an organization that enforces territorial, social, political, and cognitive order, which molds norms and rules by means of domination, exclusion, and inclusion mechanisms” (Yacobi, 2008, p. 95). Particularly in contemporary Indonesia, architectural identity has become a medium that offers an imaginative getaway, escaping the complex social-political problems (e.g. unemployment, informality, recession, free market, social tension and mobility, the welfare decline) which contribute to a sense of fragmentation and uncertainty, that have been overshadowing the utopian conception of the ‘glorious Indonesia’. This illustrates the fluidity and plasticity of the conception of identity that is somewhat infinitely negotiable, and this becomes the framework I use in discussing Indonesia’s

²² Sukarno was an architect, and he hand-sketched the preliminary design of *Monumen Nasional (Monas)* in Jakarta in 1961 after holding design competitions twice for the same project but none of the entries could satisfy the President’s expectations, hence no winners were announced. See chapter IV for a more detailed account of *Monas*.

national identity in this thesis. My standpoint emphasises the strong influence of power in the process of identity construction, as I have elaborated in the previous section, and it is not only the power of the government, but also the power of knowledgeable people that dominate the discussion of Indonesia's architectural identity. The discussion throughout this text, therefore, is not only analysing the physical form of architecture as a manifestation of identity, but also investigating the power behind it that directs and shapes the identity itself. The political discussion thus persists throughout the chapters, and this is to accentuate the fact that architecture is undetachable from politics, something that has been many times 'denied' by many of Indonesian architects.

II.4. Re-interpreting regionalism: Translation of locality in architecture

After discussing Orientalism as a platform of exercising identity representation especially for the Global-south countries and how political power defines the direction of national identity, I now move to a conception of 'critical regionalism' whose position can be dragged closer to architecture. This conception grounds the discussion to architecture, as it is not only employed as a theoretical discussion but also has been extensively used in the discussion of architectural design over the past decade.

'Critical regionalism' is proposed as a response to oppose the two dominant streams in architecture in the '70s (i.e. 'historical eclecticism' and 'formal autonomy') to arrive at the middle ground between these opposing ends and provide a critical foundation of building an 'architecture of resistance' against stylistic convention and reductionism in architecture. Kenneth Frampton (1987), as a scholar who popularises critical regionalism, opens his writing *Ten Points on an Architecture of Regionalism* with quoting Aldo van Eyck mentioning the two factions that have dominated the translation of architecture in that time:

"I dislike a sentimental antiquarian attitude towards the past as much as I dislike a sentimental technocratic one towards the future. Both are founded on a static clockwork notion of time (what antiquarians and technocrats have in common), so let's start with the past for a change and discover the unchanging condition of man" (as cited in Frampton, 1987, p. 375).

He argues that both sides, which he terms as 'Neo-Avant-Gardists' and 'New-Historicists', are trapped in the hegemony of economic power that only has one end-goal: profit.²³ Either promoting the value-

²³ Frampton understands 'Neo-Avant-Gardists' as a stream that emphasises the ever-changing technology development which is believed to contribute to shaping better architecture for the future, while 'New-

free universalism or the tradition-modernism mixture that leads to kitsch, both are influenced, if not directed, by strong domination of capital that operates in marketing architecture. Both the 'enlightenment' and the 'romanticism', in Colquhoun (1997) terms, are pivoting in the bigger context of global capitalism, accelerated by tourism and technology and social media development that ends up creating privatised, placeless and flattened urban realms that eradicate value and meaning, even people, from architecture.²⁴ Moreover, Frampton emphasises that critical regionalism is about anchoring architecture to the locality, and not about sentimentalism over particular stylistic architectural elements hence not about visual aesthetic and decorative architecture. He underscores 'sensitivity', 'critical relevance' and 'liberative regionalism' as key points in approaching region and locality with its multi-faceted complexity, something that he emphasises to be much more than climate, topography or any other physical traits of the site. Frampton's regionalism can be seen as a journey, not only to challenge the duality of national culture and civilisation, but also to search for an alternative approach to architecture that offers deeper and rather new values and meanings, not imprisoned in the older systems of belief.

Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis, even before Frampton's proposal, also highlight the importance of critical regionalism, although how they perceive the term is understood differently and tends to change over time. According to Alan Colquhoun (1997), Lefaivre and Tzonis's 'critical' means two things: "resistance against the appropriation of a way of life and a bond of human relations by alien economic and power interests"; and "resistance against the merely nostalgic return of the past by removing regional elements from their natural contexts so as to defamiliarise them and create an effect of estrangement" (Colquhoun, 1997, p. 18). Colquhoun's understanding aligns Lefaivre's and Tzonis's assertion with Frampton's points, hence strengthening the essence of critical regionalism itself. Gevork Hartoonian (2006), however, sees it from a different angle that Lefaivre and Tzonis once put critical regionalism as "a group of architects whose work sought to formulate an alternative to the postmodernist simulation of historical forms" before moving to a more thematic approach of the term

Historicists' as a more conservative stream whose aim is to 'traditionalise' contemporary architecture by accentuating the exoticism of culture.

²⁴ Alan Colquhoun, while critiquing Frampton, explains the binary opposition between the 'enlightenment', which is rationalism and universalism using a scientific method in architecture, and 'romanticism', which is empiricism, institution and differences, incorporating a hermeneutic approach in creating representation. These two categories are comparable to the binary categorisation in German post-romantic theory: *Zivilization*, which is about materialism and superficiality as it represents the rational, the intellect, the universal; and *Kultur*, which is more profound as it represents the instinctual, the feeling, the autochthonous, the particular. Moreover, the two terms also have a resemblance to Ferdinand Tönnies' *Gesellschaft*, which means an association as the result of rational deliberation (e.g. factory, corporation), and *Gemeinschaft*, which is a connection as a result of an organic process (e.g. family, friendship, clan). See Colquhoun (1997).

defined by “the universalism deployed through globalization of information and western cultural values” (Hartoonian, 2006, p. 123). This is, however, changed in their more recent book *Introducing an Architecture of the Present: Critical Regionalism and the Design of Identity*, where the word ‘critical’ no longer delineates any opposition or resistance against internal or external forces that surround architecture. Although having similarity with Kenneth Frampton’s, and also with Lewis Mumford’s and Sigfried Giedion’s, discourse of regionalism that accentuates the importance of associating architecture with ‘place’, they pose critiques towards Frampton’s conception that the term has been ‘misused’, as they argue that “in reality, it came to mean the opposite ... [as] rather than being used critically – even when it was used together with that term [critical] – it was transported back to its obsolete, chauvinistic outlook” (as cited in Hartoonian, 2006, p. 125). They then continue to suggest that the word ‘critical’ should be shifted into ‘realism’ if the only purpose of the term is merely to confront the hegemonic discourses in architecture (i.e. 1930’s international style and 1970’s postmodernism). Mumford’s (1990) discourse, to an extent, agrees with Lefaivre’s and Tzonis’s conception that ‘critical’ does not always mean posing an opposition, but in this extent, Mumford adds a more self-reflective layer in approaching architecture, so that “the beholder aware of the artificiality of her or his way of looking at the world” (as cited in Hartoonian, 2006, p. 124).

These debates portray the unsettling position of the discourse of critical regionalism among scholars, but for Hartoonian, Frampton’s critical regionalism can be considered as the most useful for the critique of architecture, especially in the situation where capitalism, hence commodification, is involved. This is the reason why I refer to Frampton’s ten points in discussing the topic of this thesis, as the attempt to construct architectural identity through the conception of Nusantara Architecture can be seen as part of ‘New-Historicists’ stream that Frampton criticises. The main conception of Nusantara Architecture itself is bound to the idea of positioning Indonesia as having a ‘glorious past’ and blessed with abundance of cultural richness, hence accentuating it is necessary not only to distinguish Indonesia from other countries, especially the West, but also to cultivate, and further sell, the local traditions with the justification of cultural preservation. This accords with at least two of Frampton’s critiques: the hegemony of capitalism in shaping architecture, including the translation of identity into built form and its commodification for tourism; and also the “culturally schizophrenic and politically retrogressive” direction (Frampton, 1987, p. 385) in approaching architecture, dwelling and championing over-sentimentality over culture and tradition. Frampton’s critiques become a way for me to analyse the physical attributes of architecture, as Frampton’s critical regionalism not only hinges on the platform of Edward Said’s Orientalism, which becomes the main theory I employ for this research, but also it is positioned very close to architecture as the built form itself, seen in how he incorporates some selected buildings as illustrations.

Critical regionalism itself has become a platform in which international architects exercise their attempts to determine identity, finding the 'authentic' local to be incorporated in architectural design. Different from the common approach in postcolonial countries that puts culture and tradition as a dominant influence in identity construction, critical regionalism offers an alternative direction to break free from this restrictive view. What has been commonly perceived as part of critical regionalism is the local climatic and physical condition that provides 'objective' and given contexts in which the building sits, something that is outside the tension between modernism and traditionalism. This term also transcends the physical elements of architecture and reaches to a wider social-political aspect of the context. Kusno, while discussing the 1984 first Asian Congress of Architects, argues that there are at least three immediate reasons for Global-south countries, particularly in South-east Asia, to attain architectural regionalism:

"In the first place the insistence on the importance of local cultures and environments coincided with the patriotic claims of nationalism. Second, the display and management of cultural differences, once properly represented, would reduce the potential threat of social and political disintegration. Third, the quest for visual difference and unique sense of place converged with the accommodation of cultural tourism that was to provide the state with a 'hard cash' cultural currency. In this combination, regionalism found its place in the architectural culture of Southeast Asia" (Kusno, 2010b, p. 62).

Kusno sees the Congress as an attempt to find a 'regional' cultural setting, instead of a nationalist subjectivity, that focuses on finding the commonality rather than the distinguishing attributes. He sees that this communality can be in the form of "transnational cultural heritage based on common historical traits and topography of the region as a whole" (Kusno, 2010b, p. 63). He elaborates on how tropicity is accentuated in this discourse, offering a commonality among South-east Asian countries that later is accepted as an 'ideal' representation of regionalism itself, something that offers a reference to a "translocal pan-Asian environment" (Kusno, 2010b, pp. 69-70). This natural condition, for some scholars, is seen as a determinant factor that differs one country from another, as illustrated by Norberg-Schulz (1974) that the "the differences between Egyptian, Greek and Roman architecture were based in very different ideas about the nature and function of buildings and cities and, in turn, that these different ideas were rooted in differences of geography and topography (or place) and local materials" (Missingham, 2017, p. 8); and by Rapoport that "people's responses to the climate is cultural; it is built upon the choices they make within the possibilities they see, and this is a significant process that shapes buildings, their internal spaces, appearance, and uses" (Perera, 2010, p. 76). This perspective also brings us back to Vitruvius who argues that architecture is an imitation of nature, therefore the natural condition of the sites defines the locality of architecture:

"I have now set forth the peculiar characteristics of localities, so far as I could note them, in the most summary way, and have stated how we ought to make our houses conform to the physical qualities of nations, with due regard to the courage of the sun and to climate" (Vitruvius, 1914, p. 174).

Climate is somehow seen as the ultimate shaper of people's character and living culture, and in many cases, it becomes the basis of Orientalist prejudice, as seen in how Greek philosophers, like Hippocrates, Herodotus, and Aristotle, argue that it is the tropicality that makes Asian people 'lazy' hence 'backward'. Putting tropicality as a driving point for regionalism is seen as an attempt in: (1) un-universalising modernism; (2) going beyond the colonial forms of dominance; (3) transcending ethnic sectarianism; (4) dismissing the discourse of visual-based cultural identity; and (5) answering the demand for stability of 'local' conditions. Therefore, this tropical regionalism has "its prime interest in transcending national territory and integrating regional networks ... to suppress all other levels of difference to make way for the distinctiveness of climate as 'culture'" (Kusno, 2010b).

For those reasons, the idea to go with tropical regionalism, therefore, makes sense, especially with the contemporary issue of global warming. But seeing it as the sole determining feature is very much simplistic, as Frampton asserts that "it would be foolishly restrictive if we conceived of region only in terms of locality and climate, etc., although these factors are surely critical" (Frampton, 1987, p. 380). Focusing on tangible aspects like tropicality, not only restricts the architects from accessing the intangible aspects of the society, but also leads to very technical solutions for the architecture, as Kusno (2010b) elaborates when he discusses the approaches of Ken Yeang (Malaysia) and Tay Kheng Soon (Singapore) in design. Although Kusno recognises the position of tropicality in providing the commonalities for South-east Asian countries, he pinpoints problems in Yeang's 'bioclimatic architecture' that localising architecture becomes essentially dependent on 'climatic devices' covering the otherwise modern structure. This puts architecture as merely a mechanistic and technological system that is largely objective and non-political. This is somehow contradictory to the fact that the term 'tropical' was invented by the British Empire for its colonies to "legitimize control over the environment of the conquest region", hence a form of "the legacy of colonialism in the attempts to 'modernize' the colony" (Kusno, 2010b, p. 74). Kusno further asserts that:

"...architectural discourses of regionalism offered a subtler form of power for the colonizer to subjugate the colonized under the assumption of modernization from below. Today, the ideology of 'regionalism' that was originally 'a colonial cover for exploitation' has been turned into a resource for postcolonial subjects to reinvent themselves after decolonization. Dislodged from its colonial roots, 'tropical architecture' becomes a space of possibility affiliated with members

of the decolonized nations in their attempt to find a starting point for self-recovery” (Kusno, 2010b, p. 74).

Tropical architecture is a political articulation that also promotes capitalism, as by employing this relatively new supranational architectural ideology, architects like Tay and Yeang respond to the national economies’ liberalisation that forces them to secure a broader market in free trade competition. These architects reinvent themselves and, instead of resisting modern discourse, they utilise it and find a local parallel. This, for Kusno, is another form of identity construction based on the Orientalism chain, as “the construction of cultural difference is enabled by the imagined structure of Western materials and re-articulation of Orientalist codes” (Kusno, 2010b, p. 75). In this form of Orientalism, climate is treated as a tool to concretise identity, as this ‘climatic other’ is a subtle objectification of the impersonal, material, and scientific subjects, compared to the ‘cultural other’ that explicitly refers to culture and the belief system (Perera, 2010, p. 76).

In the context of contemporary Indonesia, although the presence of traditionalism in identity construction is still very much apparent especially in the term of Nusantara Architecture, some famous architects have shown their resistance to this idea and instead, they prefer to lean towards tropical architecture as an apolitical and non-visual approach. Tackling the issues brought by Indonesia’s tropical characteristics becomes a way to localise the design, although it is mostly approached from a pragmatic standpoint, thus the wider social-political condition of the people is not included in the discussion. The discussion remains with the physical aspects of the building (e.g. passive design, natural lighting and ventilation, thermal comfort, rainwater system), some of which require tools and standardisation to validate the proposed design. The people’s social condition is not a significant variable to be discussed, and this is a challenge in the conception of regionalism itself (hence important to add ‘critical’ as part of the term). Finding a middle ground between the scientific-mechanistic side and the social-political side of architecture is critical, especially that “space is socially constructed, the social is spatially constructed” (Dovey, 2010, p. 6), and it is all bounded with people and their culture. This is why I use Frampton’s critical regionalism to challenge the architects’ arbitrariness, some of which is followed by narrow pragmatism, and to critique the hegemonic power of global capitalism. In the next section, I discuss more of how architects’ pragmatism works in design, especially why they are very much into practicality and focus too much on ‘problem-solving’. By taking this direction, I recognise the position of the architects as an important agency in the design thinking process, therefore discussing some design theories is needed to find a balance in my perspectives and biases as a researcher.

II.5. Designing contextual architecture: Challenging pragmatism in architecture

It has become a common understanding among architects that context and locality are indivisible parts of design consideration, that some even alter Sullivan's 'form follows functions' phrase to become 'form follows context' (Budihardjo, 1997, p. 87). Context should become a starting point for any architectural design generation as a frame to understand what Rittel and Webber (1973) term as a 'wicked problem' (Figure 2).²⁵ Dealing with such severe complexity requires analytical thinking to not only record and pragmatically analyse what is seen on the surface level but also to unravel the deeper layers that are part of the context. This, however, might be a difficult task to comply with as architectural education is, most of the time, rendered with practical matters that lead to stereotyping and oversimplification which brings a misled design decision, something that Frampton's critical regionalism tries to resist.

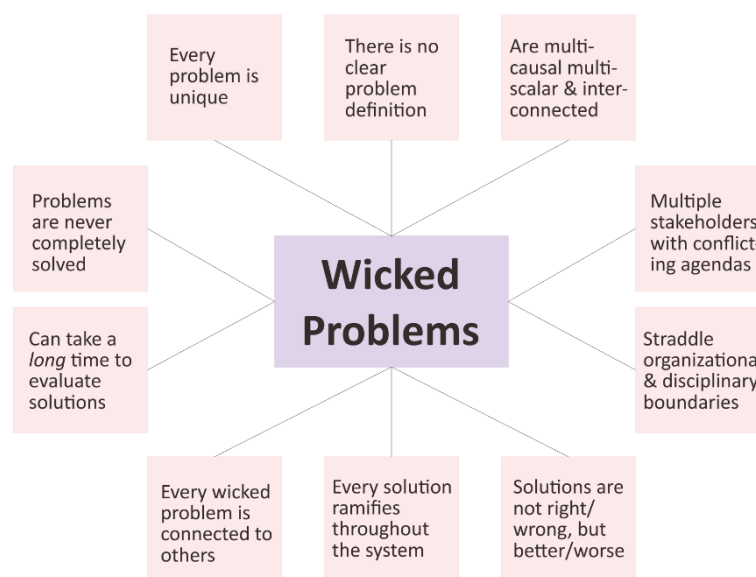


Figure 2. Characteristic of the wicked problem according to Rittel and Webber (1973)

Redrawn from: Daniel Christian Wahl, 2017

²⁵ Rittel and Webber refer to a 'wicked problem' as a complex, ill-defined problem that is usually found in planning, and it is almost impossible to be fully solved for its severe complication. A wicked problem is a social problem, as opposed to what they term as 'tame' or 'benign' scientific problem that has an exact solution. See Rittel and Webber (1973).

What is problematized here is the arbitrariness of architecture as it depends heavily, if not solely, on the architect's perspective hence is biased and subjective, and it might not be acceptable, let alone perceivable, for everyone, including the users. With the practical approach given by the architects, an approach that Nigel Cross (2006) terms as a 'designerly way of thinking', which is related to a "concrete, constructive, synthetic kind of reasoning" (Cross, 2006, p. 11), any decisions can be questioned and criticised as 'problematic', if not 'shallow and over-simplistic'. Contextualism is then deemed as 'declining'. Compare Schumacher (1971):

"After the so-called Postmodern revolution the term 'contextualism' began to attach itself to stylistic manifestations - as do most co-opted ideas in architecture. It referred to red brick buildings being built in red brick neighbourhoods and gingerbread matching gingerbread" (as cited in Nesbitt, 1996, p. 54).

It becomes a problem that architecture as a profession itself is intrinsically pragmatic, therefore critical exploration, which is demanded by the theorists and critics, might not be fully addressed in the design process. The tension between 'theoretical' and 'practical' dualism, in this case, is an interesting issue to delve into as both are needed, to some extent, in the design process, yet the latter seems to be more dominant than the former. The requirement for the architects to come with a finished and documented design for construction in a usually tight schedule, most of the time, 'forced' them to be pragmatic. Recognising this obstacle is crucial to develop a balanced view.

The pragmatism in architectural practice is shown in Bryan Lawson's (1979) experiment comparing the way scientists and architects solve problems. The result shows that scientists tend to develop a 'problem focusing strategy' in which finding the structure of the problem and make systematic exploration is important; while in contrast, architects tend to generate a 'solution focusing strategy' in which a series of solutions are proposed until one proved to be most appropriate to the problem (Lawson, 1979, p. 66). This underscores what Nigel Cross (1982) suggests that architects tend to develop the 'knowing how' instead of 'knowing that', an idea extension of Gilbert Ryle's (1949) differentiation between the 'practical' and the 'theoretical' reasoning and Richard Peters's categorisation of being 'trained' and being 'educated' (Cross, 1982, p. 223). In an addition to this, Reyner Banham (1996) suggests that architectural design is a one 'black box'; it can only be recognised by its output while the content and process inside that black box is unknown. The vagueness of the design process is considered part of the nature of architecture itself, as it is seen as a conspiracy of secrets whose process is concealed hence no scrutiny and clarification is required (Banham, 1996, pp. 293-299). This perception is then justified by Margaret Grose (2017) who comes up with the concept of 'inverse problem', a terminology that validates the way architects jump to a design idea, even in the early stage of the process, as she suggests that designers should be thinking backward because

“we know what our solution is, because our solution is fundamentally an ambition ... we know the answer, ... but need to work out how to construct it” (Grose, 2017, p. 160). It elucidates the common practice in architecture that design output is what matters, regardless of the thinking process behind it. It also legitimises, conscious or unconsciously, the presence of ‘genius’ architects whose superior knowledge makes their decision undisputed, and whose ambition drives whatever comes as a built form of architecture. Moreover, architectural practice is also seen as solutive in nature, mostly based on a habitual process of seeing precedents, hence ‘look and copy (or learn)’ from the existing past projects is a common method in design (Cross, 2006, pp. 8-9). This portrays the ‘positive’ character inherent in the architectural design process, and it might not be perceived as ‘ideal’ by architectural theorists and critics, becoming a sign of the distance between the theory and the practice itself in the discipline.

Some scholars embrace the positivity of the nature of design as a ‘self-correcting process’, as one idea complements the previous idea, as explained by Manjula Waldron and Kenneth Waldron (1988) in their study of mechanical system design:

“The premises that were used in initial concept generation often proved, on subsequent investigation, to be wholly or partly fallacious. Nevertheless, they provided a necessary starting point. The process can be viewed as inherently self-correcting, since later work tends to clarify and correct earlier work” (Waldron & Waldron, 1988, p. 104).

That starting point is depicted as something that architects can work with in the design process, is very important in design discipline. I argue that it is this reason why the idea of Nusantara Architecture becomes very appealing to architects as they find something that they connect with, aside from its extravagant story of a glorious past. This is also one of the reasons the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition gains tremendous response from architects all around Indonesia, aside from the prize offered, and even breaks the record for the design competition with most participants. Moreover, Darke (1979) explains the nature of design process in its early stage:

“The greatest variety reduction or narrowing down of the range of solutions occurs early on in the design process, with a conjecture or conceptualisation of a possible solution. Further understanding of the problem is gained by testing this conjectured solution” (as cited in Cross, 2006, p. 17).

It illustrates the importance of the early stage creative process in design for the architects to create an initial mindframe in approaching the discourse. In this case, the architects’ predilections on any stylistic preferences and the available past precedents play significant role in directing how the building would be visualised and designed at the end, particularly since design is “actually making variation on previous design” (Cross, 2006, p. 16).

Studio culture as the shaper of architects

Interestingly, architects' pragmatism and their considerably distant position from the complexity of a real-life context can be traced back to the education in which all architects train and learn: the studio. Le Corbusier strongly criticises how current studio culture is heavily influenced by Paris's l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts where architecture is merely about instruction: "... [it] is dull, flat, dreary, academic, so academic!" (Corbusier, 1947, p. 119). The Beaux-Arts is seen as a 'cancer in architectural education', as students learn under the authority of the masters whose throne is undisputed and whose teaching is infrangible truths. Corbusier highlights his dissent to this studio culture as it despises the essence of life:

"They have brought about immense progress in the domain of the exact sciences; they have warped activities dependent on imagination, for they have fixed 'canons', the 'true' and 'right' rules, which are recognized, officially stamped, legally accepted. ... thus they are against life ... they have killed architecture by operating in a vacuum, far away from the weight of materials, the resistances of matter, the tremendous progress in the field of machinery" (Corbusier, 1947, p. 115).

This vacuum that Corbu mentions is the 'sterile' condition in the studio, isolated space for designing that is detached from real people and places. This separation brings an incoherence between 'ideas' and 'realisations', and this kind of teaching leads Corbu to argue that design has killed architecture. No matter how today's studio has evolved from the original Beaux-Arts, its culture of study is still similar to the traditional education system where, as Paulo Freire (2005) points out, students are treated as empty containers that need to be filled by the teachers' knowledge and wisdom: "the more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is ... the more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are" (Freire, 2005, p. 72). This hierarchical relationship is maintained by preserving the teachers' authority, something that only works in a closed and static environment, thus the studio is kept fixed and motionless to somewhat give the teachers significance. This detachment takes away the concreteness of the studio, leaving a hollow and alienated understanding of the world. Moreover, it is a common understanding that individuals cannot be truly human unless they create a connection with the social mores of the surrounding world, as "world and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction" (Freire, 2005, p. 50). This social interaction, however, is not promoted by the culture of design studio that is accused of 'de-humanising humans' for its exclusivity, especially that it "establishes attitudes and values that are then played out in the black box of the profession" while rejecting outside intrusions, and these traits profoundly shape the character of the architects (Till, 2009, p. 8). The studio's radical pressure changes the way students value their social life, as their workloads require

them to be more individual or socialise only with students from the same studio. The detachment from the larger student community is even more obvious as architecture students signal their difference from other students: wearing their tired, messy and worn look with smudged eyes and bad hair as their badge of honour. "The idea of learning has become synonymous with suffering" (Corbusier, 1947, p. 119), and architecture students are proud of it. This social value embedded in the studio "produces a socially and mentally homogenous set of individuals" (Stevens, 1998, p. 200), similar to "a tribal long-house; the place and the rituals pursued there are almost unique in the annals of western education" (Banham, 1996, p. 295). This exclusive 'tribe' is known for its members to be rather 'abnormal' or even 'delusional': they speak the language of their own and communicate in the way only they understand, worshiping false idols and tempted by a 'deferred nirvana'; creating a sense of identity in a closed system. Their position in an exclusive group making it hard for them to grasp the 'actual' real-life context, especially that the studio teachers frame the reality as if it is fixed and foreseeable. The confidence to interpret the current reality and to predict the future becomes a strong characteristic of the profession, creating a sense that architects have a 'higher' position for, quoting Magali Sarfatti Larson, "possessing a special and superior knowledge, which should, therefore, be free of lay evaluation and protected from inexpert interference" (Till, 2009, pp. 17-18). Architects are sometimes 'playing God' as (they think) they have the right and capability to "manipulate and mould an ideal version of 'how [things] should be'" (Knott, 2011).

This superiority puts architects on a different level away from laypeople, distinguishing Architecture with capital A from architecture with small a, although Till argues that the Architecture with capital A is not really an architecture. The real architecture, for him, is the everyday architecture whose physical entities are inseparable from environmental, social, political, and economic conditions; the architecture whose story is scarcely told. Banham also strongly questions what makes architecture an architecture; and what differs it from the 'not architecture'. He questions Ernesto Roger's statement saying that "there is no such thing as bad architecture; only good architecture and non-architecture", and also Nikolaus Pevsner's claim that "Lincoln Cathedral is architecture and a bicycle shed is not" (Banham, 1996, pp. 293-296). Banham accuses that those claims are no more than academic snobbery, even almost racist, that the judgment is only based on the exercise of an arcane aesthetic code.

Interestingly, even among the inner circle of architecture peers, the conception of 'what is architecture' is very divergent, as when Le Corbusier thinks that "Gothic cathedrals were 'not very beautiful', not architecture even, because they were not made of the pure geometrical forms that he found in the buildings of classical Greece and imperial Rome" (Banham, 1996, p. 297). The vagueness

in architecture is justified by emphasising its subjectivity. Thus any unclear, or even unknown, terminology is expected as it is considered as part of the 'black box' characteristic of the architecture itself. Therefore, architecture can be seen as "a conspiracy of secrecy, [that is] immune from scrutiny, but perpetually open to the suspicion, among the general public, that there may be nothing at all inside the black box except a mystery for its own sake" (Banham, 1996, p. 299).

The unclarity of the design process and the legitimization of the superiority of 'starchitects' brings questions to the significance of contextual understanding in the design process. When design is mostly driven by the architects' personal ambition (Grose, 2017, p. 160), any contextual claims made by the architects thus need to be scrutinised further. Understanding context is largely done by doing site analysis that, unfortunately, becomes merely a part of a prescribed design routine, framed solely to align with the architects' biases and preferences. The common problem in architectural design is that site analysis does not bring any contribution to the design itself, as architects sometimes stick with describing it instead of critically analysing it. This is what Grose terms as 'analysis paralysis' (Grose, 2017, p. 155) which leads to 'death by site analysis' (Grose, 2019), and these two phrases indicate that, more often than not, there is a big gap between the analysis and the synthesis process of design. The claim that one building is a contextual building, or that a building is responding to a specific context either culturally, socially, politically or environmentally, need to be really probed to understand if the context really influences the design, or it is the other way around. This understanding posits an urgency in this research to be suspicious of any claims made by the architects, especially that in the discourse of Nusantara Architecture, Indonesian architects have made various claims of being 'local' and 'contextual' with their designs. Their perceived 'contextuality' needs to be put under scrutiny in understanding how the two-way interaction between the design and its surrounding places operates in the broader context of social, political and cultural layers of society. Especially with a strong influence of pragmatism in the profession itself, making sense of these claims has to be done by widening the scope of discussion, to go beyond the built form and escape the trap of aesthetics.

II.6. Summary

This theoretical framework chapter discusses a range of theories that are crucial in leading and shaping the arguments I pose throughout this Thesis, as it lends some lenses in the way I investigate and analyse the identity construction in Indonesia, namely using the term 'Nusantaran Architecture'. These theories are selected for their capability to respond to, and further problematise, some fundamental aspects of identity construction in Indonesia, argued especially by scholars, architects

and the government. The dichotomies used in the discourse, including the East-West and the traditional-modern, are strongly challenged in this research as they are deemed to dwell in the colonial way of thinking. As a response to this, Edward Said's Orientalism becomes the main shaper of the argument throughout this thesis, questioning the problematic platform that is hitherto used by the Indonesian government in developing their so-called national identity. The anti-colonial temperament, which is purportedly raised and nurtured, turns out to create a bubble in which the discussion of identity is stuck in the attempt to distinguish the country from the colonial, making use of the image of 'the Other'. The direction to underscore exoticism, I argue, creates a counter-productive result, not only that it denies the progressive nature of identity, but also that it merely focuses on serving the hegemony of capitalism. The government's decision to 'sell' the constructed identity for tourism validates not only the influence of an Orientalist platform in the identity construction but also that this identity is constructed to satisfy the need of 'modern' foreigners who crave experiencing 'Otherness'.

This research also intends to challenge the common understanding among Indonesian people, including some of the architects, that traditional architecture is 'pre-existing' and 'given' instead of seeing this as a palimpsest of many historical events, a result of a long-time constant construction. Deleuze's idea of identity resonates in this perspective, emphasising that traditional architecture is an assemblage: an accumulation of influences from many cultures, traditions, religions from many different times and places that are combined with the climatic and geographical condition of the place, and has experienced a never-ending construction and deconstruction process done by the local people. Borrowing this lens, championing traditional architecture as an 'ideal' form of culture is problematic, as the 'time' factor that is very apparent in Deleuze's conception of identity is overlooked, creating a stable narration instead of a moving entity. As Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, once said, 'no man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man' (Moslemi, 2015, p. 48). It shows that there is a strong temporal aspect of reality that should be treated as one determinant factor of the moving reality, hence important to consider. If we consider closely this temporality, then there is no way to freeze identity or to champion one as 'better' compared to the other, and the move to bring traditionalism into the discussion of identity can be seen as a fallacy. Moreover, Lawrence Vale elucidates very comprehensively how the regime of power plays a significant role in directing and constructing national identity, and this is a strong eye-opener that even something that might be perceived as the 'true' and 'authentic' characteristic of a country is somehow socially constructed. This provides an argument to challenge the idea orchestrated by the Indonesian government to perceive identity as an extension of *budaya* (culture) and *kearifan lokal* (local wisdom), where, in one of the studies carried out by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and

Culture, it is stated that “local wisdom ... is a knowledge developed by the ancestors in dealing with the surrounding environment ... [and it is] part of the culture. This [culture] is a social potency ... and important for the construction of image and identity of the place” (Kemdikbud, 2016, pp. 14-15). Referring back to what the ancestors have made and appropriating it in the contemporary context is what I question in this research, as not only does it disregard the time-related characteristic of culture, but also it overlooks the complexity of power in the culture-making process. The intermingled position between power and national identity, as Vale suggests, needs to be accentuated in this research as a way to neutralise the strong perception that Indonesia is inherently attached to traditionalism.

The theory of critical regionalism poses critiques of existing attempts in displaying identity and can be a platform on which I base my arguments in critiquing the works of Indonesian architects in expressing Indonesia’s so-called architectural identity. Kenneth Frampton’s ‘Neo-Avant-Gardists’ and ‘New-Historicists’ terms echo in the discourse of Nusantara Architecture, as I argue that the inclination of translating Nusantara Architecture has been trapped in the cyclic attempt to ‘modernise the traditional’, as oppose to ‘traditionalise the modern’, as suggested by Josef Prijotomo. It creates an unseen boundary for the architects to exercise only with some limited traditional architectural elements that are treated as a signifier of ‘being local’, and this is translated quite apparently in many ‘local-oriented’ designs. This is something that I intend to challenge in this research, and further see how other forms of translation are posed by the architects in expressing the ‘Indonesia-ness’. Tropicality, as one of the strong local features accentuated in the idea of regionalism, is also a subject of discussion, as to how tropicality is understood by the architects, and how they concretise the idea into built form. Using critical regionalism, I pose some critiques to the profession of architect for losing its ability to think critically in dealing with the local context and use Frampton’s ten points to analyse if the architects’ work manages to avoid some pitfall in oversimplifying the inter-weaved layers of the context itself.

Said’s, Vale’s and Frampton’s theories, above, are proposed to challenge the architects to get out of their comfort zone and expand their otherwise restrictive perspective in seeing architecture and design. Their predominantly pragmatic view delimits the option for the solution offered, as the architectural practice is still bounded to the idea of design and aesthetics in producing buildings or space, regardless of the projects of briefs. This is why most architects find it difficult to deal with complex unstructured problems like informality or gender issues, as no formula can be used to guide the design solution. Since arbitrariness is regarded as part of the traits of the profession, therefore any claims of ‘objectiveness’ in design, including about how the project deals with Nusantara Architecture, need to be probed further, especially how architects navigate around the possible

pitfalls, the left-out issues, the further problems caused, or the overlooked social, political and historical aspects of society. The way they label their designs (e.g. using the jargon of *berwawasan Nusantara* – embracing Nusantara insight, or *berjiwa Nusantara* – embedding Nusantara soul), is thus very much arguable and can be seen as part of essentialism and a marketing strategy. The architects' pragmatism works very differently compared to the nature of the three previous theories I use, therefore although recognising this difference is important, posing critique to it is even more crucial to expanding the discussion of architecture to a deeper level.

In the next chapter, I delineate the methodology and methods employed in this research. I explain the perspective I use in seeing this phenomena; the position of theories in the research; the data collection process; and the potential issues and pitfalls. This is the way to validate otherwise a subjective opinion, a common challenge for a qualitative study. From there, I go to the substance of the discussion, combining fieldwork findings, my arguments, and my critiques, organised by themes on each chapter, in which the theories I have selected influence the whole conversation in this research discussion.

Chapter III

Research Methodology

III.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I portray the methodological framework I use in shaping the research. In the first section, I start with briefly revisiting the purpose of this research and delineating how I position the selected theories in responding to the research topic. In the next section, I explain the thinking approach including the epistemology, ontology and research design I use in looking at the topic that greatly directs the discussion of this research. I illustrate the reasons I make these choices and how these further shape my biases as a researcher in analysing and interpreting data. I then move to explain more detail about the data collection and analysis method and further recognise the potential pitfalls in employing qualitative study, before conveying some strategies in reducing, or even eliminating, errors. By delineating all of these processes, I try to justify the way I shape this research, especially related to the complexity of the multi-faced topic of Nusantara Architecture, to legitimise the findings that come up as results of this research.

III.2. Research methodology

With the complexity of the topic of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture as part of the discussion of identity-making in architecture, any scrutiny and assessment attempt requires rigorous discussions to unfold the underlying aspects on which this terminology stands and is developed. As the term of 'Nusantaran Architecture' is currently treated as a canonical credo that represents the 'soul' of the country, it needs to be dissected into its formative layers to understand not only a single definition of it, but also its other expositions which are mostly invisible or simply just taken for granted. Therefore in designing this research, I need to take account of a methodology that does not see the term as a given term, but a method that can capture the ongoing contestation that is shaped by constant construction.

III.2.1. The purpose of the study

‘Nusantaran Architecture’ is the actual main focus of this study, together with building an understanding of how the idea of architectural identity is approached by academics and professional architects. I put ‘Indonesian Architecture’ together with Nusantaran Architecture because not everyone, including the interviewees, agrees to the term ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ and some prefer to use the term ‘Indonesian Architecture’. Putting the two terms together, instead of restricting one, opens a wider possibility to capture the complexity and possible interchangeable perceptions between the two terms offered by the interviewees, given that both terms do not have clear definitions. I start questioning these terms, especially ‘Nusantaran Architecture’, as I found the gap in which the definition of this terminology has been taken for granted, especially after the recent adoption in the government’s national-level plans. From the literature review I have done, I have not encountered any studies that take a contrasting position and challenge the conception of Nusantaran Architecture as if it is a given idea whose validity is uncontested. With no dispute offered, the discussion of Nusantaran Architecture is ending to the pragmatic and technical direction without any sign of touching on the philosophical or historical background that tightly encircles it. The definition is far oversimplified, and it is dangerous if this definition is seen as the only option for this term. This is where this research intends to fill the gap, to capture a wide range of opinions hence a more comprehensive understanding of the term, and to situate it in the broader discussion of other fields of studies.

The central research question is “How does Nusantaran Architecture sit as a conceptual category within the long standing scholarly and professional debate on the question of Indonesia’s architectural identity?”. This question becomes the main lead of this research that then directs me to develop more detailed research questions which touch scholarly debates, the professional debates, and the architectural representations of this idea. The two sub-questions are as followed:

- How is Nusantaran Architecture understood in architectural scholarship in Indonesia?
- To what extent is Indonesia’s context internalised in the process of designing contemporary architecture in Indonesia?

Asking the question of how this term is understood from different perspectives is crucial to open up to a broader construction, not only to get a sense of understanding from the supporting perspective but also to make sense of how the opposing perspectives construct their arguments and how this opposition enriches the construction of knowledge about this terminology.

Although the definition of Nusantaran Architecture is what I mainly problematise as a starting point of this research, yet it is crucial to note that this study does not aim to come to any finite definition of this term as part of the findings. This study intends to magnify the complexity that has long been put

aside by the pragmatic view of the term and to accentuate the interweaving layers and aspects that have been flattened in creating a stable 'grand narrative' of Nusantara Architecture. Moreover, although I look rather closely at how Indonesian architects define and translate the idea of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture in built form, I do not intend to come with a single prescriptive version of 'the most appropriate' way to translate an idea of Indonesian identity into architecture. I tease out the key points offered by the architects, yet I do not aim to suggest that one method is better than the others. Keeping it as open findings is part of embracing the idea that identity, and any translation of it, is a 'becoming' process, as opposed to a finite 'being', thus it is constantly under construction and widely open to any dispute and disagreement. Instead of making a stable theory out of it, I expect that this study can be treated as a stepping stone that provokes and stimulates further researches in delving into the conception of Nusantara Architecture in the future.

III.2.2. Research approach

In shaping this explorative research, I see a qualitative approach an appropriate approach to be employed for having an ability in "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 4) and in "seeking to probe beneath the surface appearances" (Bryman, 2012, p. 400). Especially to investigate a multi-faceted topic which encompasses academic and professional distinctions and even rivalry, and to explore arguments that are heavily interconnected with personal values and preferences, the qualitative study then finds its significance. John Creswell (2014) and Robert Yin (2015) explain that qualitative research has features that help researchers capture the rather vague and unclear phenomena under real-world conditions that cannot be recorded with more objective methods, including topics related to meanings, people's perspectives and behaviours, and contextual condition within which people live (Creswell, 2014, pp. 185-186; Yin, 2015, pp. 7-8). Delving into academic and professional perspectives means I have to take account of what, why and how the perspectives are shaped, as both streams have different thinking paradigms that lead to different arguments. Capturing their distinctive viewpoints thus needs an approach that allows variations and recognises the speakers' biases and values instead of seeing them as objective and given entity. The features embedded in the qualitative approach thus making it appropriate to be chosen as a lead driver for this research. This choice brings further implications in how I incorporate and use the theories, the epistemological and ontological considerations, the research methods and data analysis, and also how I justify the trustworthiness and credibility of this research.

As I have elaborated in Chapter II about theories I use in shaping my theoretical framework, instead of using grand theories, I choose to exert middle-range theories to have a closer, more concrete and narrower scope in looking at the research topic. Introduced by Robert Merton in 1967, the middle-range theory can be described as “a means of bridging what he saw as a growing gulf between theory (in a sense of grand theory) and empirical findings”, therefore it “operates in a limited domain” (Bryman, 2012, p. 22). These theories play a significant role not only to give a broad explanation of a phenomena, but also to provide an orientating lens with which researcher can design the research, including how the questions asked and the data collected and analysed (Creswell, 2014, p. 64). The theories I choose act as existing thinking that becomes a background for the whole discussion of this research. However, I need to state that my aim here is not to confirm or test those theories through the empirical data that I got from the fieldwork. The theories I use act as a foundation on which I build my arguments in critically analysing the empirical data, with the endgoal of coming to a general conclusion that offers a new insight within the framework.

III.2.3. Epistemological and ontological possition

Having a topic that needs deep exploration requires me to see with an interpretive view as my epistemological position. German philosopher, Wilhem Dilthey (1883) argues that as opposed to *Naturwissenschaft*, *Geisteswissenschaft* is a type of science that bases its exploration on “empathetic understanding ... of the everyday lived experience of people in specific historical settings” (Neuman, 2006, p. 87). This empathetic approach, called *Verstehen*, is also promoted by Max Weber (1981) who asserts that social study is related to “human action [that] is subjectively related in meaning to the behaviour of others ... is the primary object of an ‘interpretive sociology’” (as cited in Neuman, 2006, p. 87). Reality is also more like a text that is open to multiple interpretations, multiple readings and multiple uses. The interpretation process itself is not a single-layer straightforward process, instead, the interpretation is multilayered, as “the researcher is providing an interpretation of others’ interpretations” and then “the researcher’s interpretations have to be further interpreted in terms of the concepts, theories, literature of a discipline” (Bryman, 2012, p. 31). Therefore after making interpretations, I need to position them in a social-scientific frame, which I accomplish by relating them to the existing concepts and discussions of the theories I have noted above. This stage is where I can make sense of the phenomena I find in the topic of study and position the findings among other bigger discourses.

For my ontological approach, I use constructivism, also called constructionism, which puts forward the main thinking that nothing in social phenomena, including culture and organisation, is pre-given and in a finished form, as everything is socially constructed and in the state of, borrowing De Leuze's term, a 'becoming' process. As antithetical to objectivism or essentialism, this ontology asserts that "social phenomena and their meaning are continually being accomplished by social actors" and they are "not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). These phenomena are continually being established and terminated, then being renewed, reviewed and revised, and this sequential process thus opens a room for critiques. Bryman (2012) also emphasises that constructivism sees that "social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them and that totally constrains them" and also sees that "the categories that people employ in helping them to understand the natural and social world are in fact social product" (Bryman, 2012, p. 34). Moreover, this concept of constructivism intersects with postmodernism, although some researchers mention that the latter is hard to pin down. Postmodernism not only tries to capture the nature of modern society and culture, but it also puts a constant suspicion on everything that implies to arrive at a definitive, hence mostly exclusive, explanation of any real-life phenomena. Keith Punch (2005) describes it as contemporary thinking that offers critiques of an oppressive 'grand narratives', thus confuting and debunking it is the aim of this thinking (Punch, 2005, pp. 138-139).

In terms of discussing the topic of this research, I am aware that employing a constructivist view brings a striking contrast to the established conception of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture as these terms, in my opinion, have been built on a pragmatic, if not essentialist, foundation. The founder and the supporters of the term of Nusantara Architecture tend to see it, especially its definitions and characteristics, as simply an 'obvious fact' that does not need to be argued, while I argue that this term has long been taken for granted, and has been overly sterilised from any external aspects encircling this discussion. Without any opposition that problematises this conception, the idea of Nusantara Architecture has started to be treated as a 'grand narrative' representing an 'objective truth', whose validity, for some people, is incontestable. This kind of master narrative has been strongly challenged by postmodernists, as it tends to create a rigid box with exclusive boundaries while disregarding other pluralities that might see this conception differently and discounting the agonism that might appear as a response. It, therefore, becomes comprehensible to question the idea of Nusantara Architecture: has it been built with an 'accurate' account of history from which the name of the term is derived? Does using this term make architecture less political than when using other terms e.g. Indonesian Architecture? Is associating this term with traditionalism an

‘appropriate’ direction to go with? And is using this term as a way to ‘exotise’ the country considered acceptable?

In developing my arguments and seeing the connection between this conception with culture, I employ a standpoint to see culture as a process, hence a verb, rather than a product and a noun (Purwaningrum, 2019, p. 18). I second to Bhabha’s assertion that “cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 52), and this also aligns with Becker’s (1982) argument that says:

“People create culture continuously ... No set of cultural understanding ... provides a perfectly applicable solution to any problem people have to solve in the course of their days, and they therefore must remake those solutions, adapt their understandings to the new situation in the light of what is different about it” (Becker, 1982, p. 521 as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 34).

Seeing this research topic using a constructivist lens entirely changes the perception of an established culture from which Indonesia as a country derives its national identity. When this standpoint is employed, then the government’s attempts to construct a new idea of identity by referring to traditionalism is problematic and needs to be challenged. Not only that it discounts the fact that culture cannot be stopped and frozen, but it also disregards the position of the local people as active actors in their culture making process. Moreover, the constructivist view also highlights the relativity owned by every social actor, as each of them has a different social, political, historical and intellectual predilection in perceiving culture. Similar to a phrase of ‘beauty is in the eyes of the beholder’, so is identity and culture. Using everyday interaction, including people’s lives and works, as a platform on which these ideas are exercised, developed and negotiated, constructivism captures the complexity of the subjective meaning of people’s experiences. This perspective becomes my entry point in understanding and further unpacking the topic of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture, and in a way putting my critique in the identity-making process that somehow disregards this subjectivity.

Having these questions, this is where the theories I choose demonstrate significance in creating a foundation to problematise the research topic. Questioning the establishment of Nusantara Architecture is one of the main aims of this research, although it means I challenge the most celebrated term in current architectural discourse in Indonesia that has been loosely yet deliberately and massively adopted and imposed on the country’s architectural identity languages. I take account of distinctive perspectives offered by academics and professional architects in discussing the term and I try to understand their standpoints by recognising different paradigms and approaches taken that lead them to come to a certain opinion. What I do is discussing their arguments and analysing if it sits

with the established historical, cultural and political studies. Instead of aiming to conclude if the term is right or wrong, I intend to unpack it under the discourse to see the gap and the 'weak points' in the arguments, with the purpose to invoke further discussion and possibly to reveal the gaps which can be filled with future researches.

III.3. Research methods

In this section, I discuss in detail the methods I use in the data collection and analysis process. This includes the selection method, both for the contexts and the participants, the selection criteria, the list of questions I ask in the interview, the analysis process and the potential errors that might be entailed as part of employing qualitative study. I also explain some details of my fieldwork plans and some difficulties I encountered in the field.

III.3.1. Research design

Since this study aims to understand the scholarly and professional perspectives in perceiving the identity of being 'Indonesian' in architecture, this qualitative research employs extended interviews as the main data collection method. Academics and professional architects are interviewed with semi-structured questions to allow on-site development that is crucial to capture the interviewees' point of argument during the conversation. The interview is done in Bahasa Indonesia as I, as the interviewer, and also all the interviewees are Indonesian and use Bahasa Indonesia as a mother language. Maintaining it to be conducted in Bahasa allows smoother conversation and avoids the unexpected misinterpretation that might present due to the language barrier. Using Bahasa also maintains a relaxed atmosphere that can allow the interviewees to feel comfortable, and to make sure that they put all of their attention in answering the question rather than thinking about the translation. Aside from the interview, I use written documents including academics' writings (books, journals, conference proceedings, etc) and popular writings (newspapers, electronic articles, influential people's blogs, etc) as sources of information in this research. Although the topic is mainly about architecture and architectural identity, yet since the topic of identity itself overlaps with many fields of knowledge, like philosophy, history, politics, economics, and social studies, I visit theories and arguments offered by various other fields of studies and interview some people from other disciplines that directly or indirectly relate to the topic.

In choosing the interviewees, I use a non-probability or non-random selection, and this choice aligns with Uwe Flick's (1998) argument that says "it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which the people to be studied are selected" (as cited in Neuman, 2006, p. 220).²⁶ I particularly choose with a purposive approach which means that in selecting the interviewees, particular criteria are considered and constructed to get the 'most appropriate' list of people for the topic and the discussion. This kind of selection "is conducted with reference to the goals of the research, so that units of analysis are selected in terms of criteria that will allow the research questions to be answered" (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). This method helps to select 'the context', which in this research applies to the cities in which I do the interviews, and 'the participant', which is the list of people whom I interview. With this purposive selection, I lean towards the 'maximum variation' that emphasises finding informants with wide variations (Patton, 1980, p. 105), meaning that people I select have contrasting opinions with each other to take account of both sides of the arguments.²⁷ Having this method in mind, I collate names of academics, architects and government people to be interviewed, but I keep opening the possibility to develop the list if there is an unpredicted development of the topic when I conduct the fieldwork; or if I get recommendations from some of the interviewees for a valuable source; or if there is a notable occurrence in a real-life situation, as this research is basically based on novelty. This stretch can be considered as a snow-ball selection, which means that the researchers "get cases using referrals from one or a few cases, and then a referral from those cases, and so forth" (Neuman, 2006, p. 220). These two methods are deemed to have the limitation that "it is very unlikely that the sample will be representative of the population"; but it is justified especially if the aim is "to select unique cases that are especially informative" (Neuman, 2006, p. 222) for exploratory research in a specialised topic that aims to get in-depth understanding.

²⁶ Many scholars use the term 'sampling' (i.e. non-probability sampling; snow-ball sampling) instead of 'selection' which I use in this passage, to refer to the selection method for the unit of analysis (i.e. the interviewees). I choose to avoid using the word 'sampling' as not only that it is largely associated with a quantitative study, but it also, albeit accurate, gives a sense of 'objectifying', rather than humanising, the participants. I, however, still use this term in some direct quotes thus I use the terms sampling and selection rather interchangeably.

²⁷ I pre-determine the interviewees' positions on the topic of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture based on what they convey in various public talks, academic or popular writings, design narrations, teaching topics, or involvement in related events and related agencies. Despite its potential inaccuracy, as this is my subjective interpretation, this grouping is needed prior to the fieldwork as an initial guide to ensure that contrasting views are widely captured and to map the potential finding for the research. The potential errors would be corrected once the interview is conducted, when the interviewees have a chance to speak for themselves.

I did two fieldwork trips for this research, the first was to focus on Java Island where the development of the topic of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture has been concentrated, and the second one was to see what happened in other islands in Indonesia. Before I conducted the fieldwork, the documents I brought to the field, including plain language statement and interview questions list, have passed an ethics assessment and have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, the University of Melbourne (See Appendix A for plain language statements and informed consent forms – both in English and Bahasa Indonesia – used for this research). Before the interview, I sent a brief explanation of this research to the interviewees to give them an illustration of the topic of this research and to explain their rights in this research. In every interview, I obtained permission from each of the interviewees to record (audio-taped), store, and use the data for this thesis research and other research purposes, proven in signed informed consents.

The first fieldwork was done in 2017, from 13 July to 20 October, when I went to seven different cities in Java Island (Jakarta, Tangerang, Bandung, Bogor, Surabaya, Malang and Yogyakarta) especially to reach the interviewees who live in those cities. Five of those cities are where five of Indonesia's major state universities are located, as I intended to interview the academics and scholars who were mostly attached to an architecture school. In this fieldwork, I managed to interview twenty people: eight professional architects, four professors, six lecturers, one design critic and one from a related organisation. In the second fieldwork I did a year after, from 20 July to 1 October 2018, I focused more on going to five different cities in five different islands in Indonesia (Medan, Banjarmasin, Makassar, Ternate, and Denpasar), with the same purpose to interview academics and professional architects in that place. I interviewed eighteen people: five professional architects, two professors, seven lecturers, one design critic, one government representative, and one from a related organisation. Furthermore, as part of the snowballing method elaborated earlier, I have three additional interviewees: one professional architect, one government representative and one from a related organisation. In total, I have forty-one interviewees with diverse backgrounds and standpoints and representing different interests, in the hope that these selections are sufficient to portray the complexity in the discussion of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture (I elaborate more of the selection criteria and the selected interviewees in the next section). Although saturation is the stopping mark in determining how many participants should be included in qualitative research, yet the participant size for this research aligns with what is suggested by Baker and Edwards (2012) to go with twelve to fifty people (Baker & Edwards, 2012, p. 5), or by Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) who mentions around twelve to sixty people (Guest et al., 2006, p. 61), or by Mason (2010) who advise the number of twenty to fifty people (Mason, 2010). All interviews were done face-to-face in the time and place chosen by the

interviewees, except for two interviews that were done on the phone due to time and budget limitation. The two fieldworks I have done were partially supported by the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning and the University of Melbourne, ensuring the validity of the research as there is no conflict of interest at play.

III.3.2. Unit of analysis and the selection criteria

The unit of analysis of this research is academics, professional architects and people from government agencies or related organisations. Employing a purposive selection method for this research, I develop sets of criteria that help me select the interviewees and to make sure that the interviewees have enough understanding of the topic and have the capability to answer the questions. The criteria are as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *The interviewee selection criteria*

The scholars/ academics	The professional architects	The government and the related organisation
Indonesian born scholars and academics who work and teach in Indonesian state and/ or private universities	Indonesian born professional architects who work in Indonesian-based architectural firm and might teach in Indonesian state/ private universities	Indonesian born people who work for the Indonesian government or Indonesian-based companies
Expert in the field of architectural identity theory, usually people in the history, theory and criticism research group, or people with other research interest but have engaged in the discussion of architectural identity	Expert in architectural design practice, preferably the influential 'starchitects' whose works are legitimated with various design awards and are extensively referred to the academic and popular media, and who have given a significant influence to Indonesian students' works	A representative of an organisation that is actively engaged with and has been assigned to particularly deal with the issue of Indonesian and Nusantara architecture by their employer
Actively engaged with knowledge development particularly in the field of Indonesian and Nusantara architecture as part of the architectural identity discourse	Actively engaged with professional development particularly in the field of Indonesian and Nusantara architecture as part of the architectural identity discourse	Have a considerably high position in the government of the company and know more comprehensive information of what and why certain plans and decisions are made and what to achieve in the application of the plan
Have a clear standpoint toward the idea of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture, either supporting, opposing, or taking a neutral position	Have a clear standpoint toward the idea of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture, either supporting, opposing, or taking a neutral position	

Note. Written by Author, 2019.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I focused on interviewing academics and architects in Java Island where this topic has been developing quite extensively over the last couple of decades. The presence of 'Javanese sense' is also very apparent in the idea of Nusantara Architecture, since this terminology is derived from an old Javanese term. This conception is also compelling enough to attract the central government, also based in Java Island, to use the term. Interestingly, the main supporters and opposers of this terminology are also mostly from this island. This makes Java Island become the main place where the contestation of this terminology happens, and these reasons led me to focus my study on the island in the early stage of my study. Moreover, since many of the potential interviewees, especially the academics, are attached to various universities, therefore I used a similar selection method in selecting which universities that I need to focus on. I decided to take account of five universities in Java Island, two are on the West side of the island, one in the center, and the other two are on the East side.²⁸ This selection is led by my initial assumption that there is a strong contestation between architecture schools on the West and East ends of Java Island in terms of agreeing or opposing the term of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture. The architecture school of the University of Indonesia (UI) and the Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) are two schools on the West side of the island that have openly and strongly questioned the idea of Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture. The Gadjah Mada University (UGM), a university in the center part of the island that has been linked to a strong cultural tradition, has not shown any strong approval or rejection toward the topic of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture. In contrast, the architecture schools of two universities on the East end of Java Island, the Institut Teknologi Surabaya (ITS) and the Brawijaya University (UB), have shown strong interests in adopting and developing this topic, although the two have quite a striking difference: UB has developed more comprehensive adoption as the school has embedded the conception of Nusantara Architecture in the school's visions and missions, while ITS's adoption of the term is led solely by Josef Prijotomo (who is also the founder of the term) with not so much engagement shown by his colleagues.²⁹ Having this map in mind, I decided to go with these selections and worked on it in my first fieldwork.

²⁸ All of these universities are listed as top ten universities in Indonesia by QS World University Ranking in 2019. See the full list at <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/asian-university-rankings/2019> (accessed 25 October 2019)

²⁹ I come to this statement after having a conversation with Purwanita Setijanti, who is the dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Planning of ITS and a senior lecturer in its architecture school, on 10 October 2019. She mentions that there is a dynamic in the school that brings some lecturers to questioning Prijotomo's conception of Nusantara Architecture. I then realised that the leaning of the school toward the conception is not an institutional approach, unlike the more structured engagement of UB where most, if not all, lecturers of the school have partaken in the development of the conception of Nusantara Architecture.

However, having a concern that the participant selection was too narrow as they all are based in Java, and having an intention to escape the 'Javacentric' mindset that has been entrenched in the discussion of Nusantara Architecture, I then expanded the scrutiny area to other islands in Indonesia. With time and budget limitations, I chose five different cities that become the representation of five different islands in Indonesia. I developed some criteria that helped me narrow down the choices:

- Located outside Java Island, one city in each major island
- A big city in a province
- Has a well-recognised state university that has an architecture school
- Has scholars and architects that are influential at a local or national level
- Offers a distinctive contextual setting that might bring variation in responding to the topic of architectural identity and contextual design.

The list gives a general picture of what cities I should go to in my second fieldwork, but I also considered some places with which I have connections that can lead me to the intended interviewees. The five cities that I selected were Medan in North Sumatra, Banjarmasin in South Kalimantan, Makassar in South Sulawesi, Ternate in North Maluku, and Denpasar in Bali (I opt out Papua as the state university in this area does not have an architecture school just yet). I consider that these choices are, more or less, sufficient to create an inclusive sense in representing Indonesia as a vast and diverse country, as I take account of one considerably most vibrant city from each major island that has shown significant development of architecture, both in practice and academia. The five cities represent significant differences in terms of the contextual setting of the place and offer unique features that distinguish them from the rest. Medan and Makassar are both cosmopolitan cities but were developed based on different cultural characteristics and political drives. Banjarmasin and Ternate have strong natural contexts but in a very distinct way. Bali is a representation of a merge between traditionalism and modernism that has been widely perceived as 'the ideal' example of culture preservation in Indonesia. By looking at the different perspectives and approaches offered by the academics and architects in these cities, it helps to unfold the diversity in the way scholars and practitioners see and understand their architecture, in a way to construct a better understanding of how they perceive their architectural identity (See Appendix B for the list of interviewees).

In selecting the academics, I choose from each school one professor in Architectural History, Theory and Critique, and one lecturer that teaches subjects related to Indonesia's architectural history. I consider these people experts among their peers to discuss how Indonesia's architectural identity has been shaped over time within different contexts of power and social-political tensions. With their knowledge, I expect that they hold a certain position in responding to the rise of the term of Nusantara Architecture, and their logical reasoning behind their standpoints would help advance the

understanding of how Nusantara Architecture is perceived within the academic circles. For the selection of the architects, I choose at least one professional architects from each city that have engaged with various design practices, design competitions, public talks, or guest lectures related to the topic of Nusantara Architecture; or have publicly known to have a particular interest in the discussion of either Indonesian Architecture, Nusantara Architecture or architectural identity in general. For the government agencies, I select representatives that are directly engaged with the government program of Nusantara Architecture, particularly in the Ten New Bali program. I also consider other organisations that actively participate in discussing the topics of Nusantara and Nusantara Architecture, or organisations that seek to find alternative views in seeing Indonesia's architectural identity.

Expanding the area of discussion, as more cities and more people selected, does open a wider spectrum in which the discussion is exercised, but also with a consequence that it might end up in vaguer description as too many aspects are incorporated. Yet I believe it is a crucial step to incorporate any possible perspectives from other areas as they might propose different arguments due to different cultures or values. Looking at various standpoints helps me map the degree of acceptance of this terminology among Indonesian architecture scholars and professional architects, especially that some of them show some oppositions or disinterests in the discussion. Between strong supporting and opposing arguments, I need to emphasise that I position myself as detached from the two parties and tend to take a neutral position on this case. I base my opinion on the theories I have previously selected, therefore my arguments further in this thesis are based on my analyses as a researcher and are not trying to represent any of the contrasting arguments.

I faced some limitations during the data collection process, especially the difficulty in reaching for interviewees who are in a high-level position in the government. Some were difficult to contact (or did not reply to any contact attempts I made), and some were very welcoming but could not find a time to do the interview. This situation makes the number of interviewee from government representatives are quite limited compared to the number of interviewees from other groups. This is indeed not an ideal situation, but I tried to mend this gap by triangulating it with other sources that record the government's perspective like digital and printed media, although I am fully aware that the validity of this source will not be as accurate as a direct interview, since the reporter's bias is inevitably embedded and somehow impacts the way the news is framed. Another limitation that I faced in the data collection process is that I have limited knowledge about architectural practice and education outside Java Island, therefore it was quite tricky to select and contact academics and professional architects from outside Java who, I consider, understand the research topic and would be capable of

answering the interview questions. Aside from my limited knowledge, this might also be a sign of how entrenched 'Javacentrism' operates in the architectural discourse in Indonesia, as academics and architects in Java are privileged to be under the spotlight and gain popularities to be the reference of architectural trends in Indonesia. Meanwhile, only some of the academics and architects outside Java Island have access to the platform to capture national attention.

III.3.3. The interview questions

As I have mentioned in the previous section, I use a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions to allow the conversation to go in the direction led by the interviewees. It gives space to the interviewees not only to answer the question but also to elaborate their perspective and explain the reasoning behind their standpoint, as these reasonings are what enrich the discussion in this research. Patton (1980) asserts that using open-ended questions in an interview is "to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through a prior selection of questionnaire categories" (Patton, 1980, p. 28). I choose semi-structured interview, instead of an unstructured one, because in this type of interview, "the interviewer does follow a script to a certain extent" (Bryman, 2012, p. 471). This is particularly important as although this is explorative research, I, as the interviewer, have to make sure that the conversation with the interviewees is directing towards answering the research questions, and having a set of questions, to begin with, is helpful.

Table 2. Interview questions

GENERAL QUESTIONS		
The idea of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture, context, and identity		
1	What is Nusantara Architecture in your perspective?	
2	What is the difference between Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture?	
3	What is the urgency to use the term of Nusantara Architecture instead of Indonesian Architecture?	
4	What is the most important consideration in designing in Indonesian context? And why?	
5	Where is the position of the traditional and the modern in Indonesian architectural identity?	
6	To what extend do you think social, cultural, and historical context influence contemporary Indonesian architecture?	
The current condition of contemporary architectural design in Indonesia		
1	What do you think about today's Indonesian contemporary architecture?	
2	What do you think about the current design translation of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture?	
3	What do you think about the government's Nusantara Architecture Design Competition?	
4	How should architect negotiate their professional ego with the requirement of the clients and the consideration of the context?	
5	What are the most important skills/ abilities that architects need to possess in dealing with the conception of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture?	
6	What do you expect to change in the current condition of Indonesian architecture?	
SPECIFIC QUESTIONS		
	For Professional Architects	For Academics/ Scholars/ Critics
1	How far the discussion of Indonesian and Nusantara identity influences your design?	How important is the discussion of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture for theory development and education?
2	How important is context consideration in your design process?	How do you think the position of modernism in contemporary Indonesian architecture?
3	What part of the local context that you referred for your design? And how do you translate it into design?	Do you think that contemporary architects have possessed sufficient understanding towards the conception of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture?
4	What difficulty that you face when designing to adjust with the context?	What do you think is the biggest challenge for architects in escaping the domination of superficial translation of Indonesian and Nusantara architecture?
5	What is your personal agenda that you try to embed in your design? And how to escape the pragmatism in architectural design?	What kind of design spirit and agenda should architects possess in their design process?
6	Do you have any specific method that particularly shaped by the consideration of the context?	What do you think about Indonesian architecture schools currently dealing with the topic of Nusantara architecture as part of the discourse of architectural identity?
7	How do your clients respond to your contextual design?	To what direction do you think Indonesian architecture heading in the near future?

Note. Written by Author, 2017

I organize the questions into two parts (Table 2). The first part is general questions about the research topic that I ask all of the interviewees, and it is mostly seeking their opinion about the idea of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture. It also asks their opinion about the current situation of today's Indonesian Architecture, the urgency of going with the new term of Nusantara architecture, and as part of the idea of identity and contextual design, how the idea of Indonesia and Nusantara should ideally be embedded in architectural design. These questions are to get the general idea of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture from the interviewees' perspective to attain comparable arguments and see how each of the interviewees sits in a bigger map of this architectural identity discourse. The second part of the questions is more directed to their opinion related to their profession, either as academics or professional architects. These questions are collated to delve more into specific details of how the topic is tackled in their specific fields, therefore the answer is expected to be narrower and probably more technical. Making two separate kinds of questions allows me to scrutiny the interviewees' response to the main topic that help answer the research question, and also to draw distinctions between scholarly and professional perspectives and what constitutes the differences. Although there are also interviewees that are not architects nor academics, yet these questions are still considered relevant to be asked amid the variation in the follow-up questions.

III.3.4. The analysis

The interviews were done in Bahasa Indonesia and also transcribed in Bahasa. This is not only to save time, as the transcribing process is more to record and copy what the interviewees said but also to keep the accuracy and to avoid any mistranslation that might cause misunderstanding in the analysis process. The data attained in the interview is then transcribed and processed using a 'thematic analysis'. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) explain thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" and assert it is as "a foundational method for qualitative analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 78-79).³⁰

In organizing the data, I use NVivo to help grouping and classifying codes and themes, called 'nodes' in the program. Nodes themselves are "the route by which coding is undertaken ... as a collection of reference about a specific theme, places, person or other areas of interest" (Bryman, 2012, p. 596).

³⁰ Bryman, however, does not see this as an independent analyses method since not only it does not have "an identifiable heritage or ... a distinctive cluster of techniques", but also because this is "an activity that can be discerned in many if not most approaches to qualitative data analysis" (Bryman, 2012, p. 578)

The process of grouping the data into themes includes the process of generating codes, searching for themes, then reviewing and naming the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 87-92), and grouping interview content into codes can be seen as an organising process in the search for meaning and the value of the data. From the transcribed interview, I made codes as an initial grouping process, and in the first process, there were many codes generated from keywords given by the interviewees. After done with coding all the interviews, the second step was to revisit these codes and review what was in each code, to find some direct or indirect connections among codes. Codes that showed similarity then were grouped to form a bigger group. By this stage, the labels of the groups were getting more general and the numbers of groups were shrinking. This process was done a few more times until I came up with a few bigger groups of codes that were called themes. These themes particularly helped me find the points of attention in the interviews and led me in collating and focusing the discussion in this thesis.

III.3.5. Trustworthiness and credibility

One of the problems of qualitative research is that some biases and subjectivities potentially cloud the research process that allows the findings to be questioned and deemed invalid, especially by the scientific community. This kind of research is often “criticised for lacking scientific rigour with poor justification of the methods adopted, lack of transparency in the analytical procedures and the findings being merely a collection of personal opinions subject to researcher bias” (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 34). This is becoming a challenge in justifying this kind of research, although the ingrained biases are started to be seen as part of the characteristics of a qualitative study, instead of its weakness, particularly because value and meaning are undetachable in a real-life context, hence in social studies.

Brink (1993) and Noble and Smith (2015) argue that the terms of ‘reliability, validity and generalisability’ are not suitable for qualitative research, and instead, they suggest other terms that explain better the rigour within qualitative research. Those are: ‘trustworthiness, truth value, consistency, neutrality and applicability’. No matter how detailed the research methods in a qualitative study are explained, it is difficult for other researchers to get the same finding when trying to replicate it. Not only that values and biases of the researchers and the participants play a significant role in the process, but also that the social and political condition of the case studied is not a static entity and even small changes in the context affect how people act and react to it, hence generate different outcomes and findings. This makes, for instance, ‘reliability’, which “is concerned with the consistency, stability and repeatability ... of a research method to yield consistently the same results

over repeated testing periods” (Brink, 1993, p. 35) become very hard to achieve hence an unsuitable criterion to assess a qualitative study. This is a characteristic of a qualitative study that needs to be acknowledged, not as a weakness but as a strength, and it becomes unfair if it is assessed using an objective, mechanical and quantified framework.

Table 3. *The attempt to decrease potential errors in research*

The major sources of error	The attempts to decrease or eliminate the effects
The researcher	• Recognising, examining, and declaring the potential biases, underlying values and assumption in every stage of the research. • Maintaining reflective journals and documenting decisions during the research process that becomes a record that can be traced back during the process. • Generously engaged with supervisions and peer discussions as a ‘check and balance’ method to reduce research biases. • Being exposed to various discourses outside the discipline of architecture in order to expand perspectives in seeing the topic and to grasp a bigger picture of what happen beyond the research topic, as a way to dissolve personal biases.
The social context	• By offering to do interview in the way and the place that is comfortable for the interviewees. I do the interview in Bahasa Indonesia for the comfort of the interviewees, and let them decide not only the time and place of the interview, but also if they want to do it alone or asking other people to accompany them during the process. • Recognising that there is a certain social and political context that might restrict the interviewees from criticising what they are not agree upon. As there are strong ‘politeness’ culture in Indonesia’s social culture, especially among Javanese people, which makes criticising their ‘seniors’ and colleagues as unexpected, therefore I emphasise to them beforehand that they can always ask to make some part of the interview ‘off-the-record’ and this will not be included in the writing-up of the research. This also makes clear that in some parts, I, as the researcher, need to ‘read between the lines’ in interpreting the conversation. • Considering a wider social, political and historical context in which the research topic is discussed to give a proper contextual setting that bases the analysis process. • Making a ‘thick description’ of the contextual accounts encircling the research topic. This to explain that this research, hence the findings, is situated in and inseparable to a specific social political context. This research might give an illustration of what happens during the research’s time frame and area of study, but might not represent a general understanding of the topic in a wider case.
The participants	• Making sure that interviewees are clear on the nature of the research. This is particularly not difficult as the interviewees in this research are experts and highly educated people who are already familiar not only with the research topic, but also with the research process. • Comparing the result obtained with other evidence in order to clarify if what the interviewees say is actually what they do. This is quite obvious especially for architects who have many built works, thus confirmation can be done by putting side-by-side their statements and their actual works. • Keeping accurate records and note of the interviewees’ response to the level of verbatim descriptions. • Recognising that there is a danger of participants leaning to give answers that they thought would be expected in the conversation. However, in this research, this is definitely not the case. The interviewees are experts who have already developed standpoints in the discussion of the research topic and they convey, sometimes rather sharply and unapologetically, whether they are agree or disagree with the topic. • Recognising the ‘elite bias’, which means overweighting data from well-articulated, well-informed and high-status informants. Yet in this research, as the topic under scrutiny is the discourse that circulates among experts, then this bias becomes acceptable. Making sure that the interviewees are representing different opinions and contrasting views is the way of compromising with this potential error.
The method of data collection and analysis	• Recognising the certain strengths and limitations of qualitative research. • Presenting the research methodology and methods clearly, from the paradigm used as the lens to see the topic, to the ways and strategies in collecting, documenting and analysing data. • Selecting interviewees who fully understand the topic and can contribute to answering the research questions. To avoid sampling bias, I start with a list of interviewees that includes the same number of people representing both sides of the opinion (who support, oppose and have neutral position) to the research topic.

Note. Written by Author, 2019

There are some schemes offered to maintain the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research amidst the dynamic values and meanings that shade the whole process. Brink mentions that there are at least four threats of errors that can make the research less accurate and truthful, and those four are related to “(1) the researcher; (2) the subjects participating in the project; (3) the situation or social context; and (4) the methods of data collection and analysis” (Brink, 1993, p. 35). Noble and Smith assert that there are at last four credibility points that need to be taken into account in qualitative research and they suggest some strategies in ensuring the trustworthiness of the research (Noble & Smith, 2015, pp. 34-35). Responding to these, I compile a list of steps I have done throughout the research process as an attempt to keep the credibility of the research, hence ‘validate’ the findings (Table 3). By ensuring these steps as part of the procedure, I try to minimize what is called the ‘weakness’ of qualitative research and to legitimise the findings of this research.

III.4. Summary

This chapter elucidates the research methodology and methods I employ for this research. Having a purpose to explore the conception of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture as part of the architectural identity discourse leads me to employ a qualitative approach. I lean toward using a constructivist lens in discussing the topic as it embraces the biases and subjectivities offered by each interviewee that can be utilised to enrich the understanding of the topic and particularly to help answer the research questions. Starting with a paradigm that sees the world as socially constructed, I then open a way to challenge and problematise the conception of Nusantara Architecture, especially by questioning its definition and its position among other social, political and historical discourses. Taking a stance to problematise it does not mean I can take account only of my bias and judgment especially that in a ‘pomo’ way, relativism plays a significant role in seeing how things work.³¹ Paul Feyerabend’s famous phrase of ‘anything goes’ is seen as an ‘anarchistic philosophy of science’ that becomes an antithesis of the rational and scientific method that offers only a single, and rather absolute, version of the truth. This is the problem I see in the construction of the notion of Nusantara Architecture, as it has been promoted as a single-layered definition that is far detached from the context of social, politics and history, as if architecture as a discipline in which this conception is built is a sterile box that merely focuses on the built form and its aesthetic, and is located far away from the complex reality of the people as its inhabitants. Even if sterilising it is intended and done

³¹ ‘Pomo’ is a short for postmodernism.

deliberately, there is actually no way to disconnect architecture, and basically every other thing in the world's reality, from its political and historical connection, that even a chair is a chair because people have constructed an idea of 'chair' itself, hence connected to the social-political aspect of the society. Given that the conception of Nusantara Architecture was proposed by Prijotomo and is developed and stretched by many other scholars in many different directions, before it was adopted by the government for their political purposes, becomes evidence that the definition of Nusantara Architecture, whatever it might be, is not, and never will be, a finished and stable definition. This research tries to tease out and unpack this notion from a different, and rather unpopular, perspective, as it embraces the legitimacy of both contrasting arguments, and this is quite a peculiar way to treat it compared to many other developments of this discourse that commonly use a pragmatic, if not positivist, lens that results in taking the definition for granted.

Throughout the chapter, I elucidate my perspective as a starting point of this research, including theories that I use quite extensively in scrutinising and assessing the topic. I mention many times about my stances as part of my biases as a researcher that are impossible to be detached from me as a person and as a human being. Although having certain biases, hence being unobjective, has been deemed as a flaw of qualitative study, yet recent development of social studies has seen this rather as part of the characteristics of a qualitative study that becomes 'normal' in a certain degree, as long as the researcher can maintain the trustworthiness and the credibility of the research. The methods I use reflect the inclination of my methodology, appreciating the interviewees' biases thus opening up to any possibility of going to any direction they take me to in the interview. Having a semi-structured question particularly helps as unrestrictive guidance that becomes a checklist to make sure if the interviewees have, directly or indirectly, answered the research questions. The thematic analysis also offers a rather loose yet structured way to organise the data, as it can grow and develop during the analysis process rather than become a box in which all the data has to fit. The data is then analysed and discussed in a lengthy exploration, which is delivered in this thesis, to keep the 'thick description' that is expected from social studies in rendering not only the topic of Indonesian and Nusantara Architecture, but also the complexity of social, political and historical context that underlay the whole construction of this conception.

In the next chapter, I discuss a brief history of Indonesian architecture and the long-going process of finding the architectural representation that is considered as the 'fittest' and 'most appropriate' translation of Indonesian identity, from the time of the Dutch colonials to contemporary time. I do it in historical sequences, starting from the period of Dutch Indies architecture, to the independent era including the time of Sukarno and Suharto, then continuing to the current development of the

expression of identity in architectural design, including how the government presents the idea of Indonesian identity to international audiences through a series of international exhibitions. The next chapter is where I start portraying the intertwined connection between architecture and politics, and this idea persists throughout the whole discussion in this thesis and becomes one of the main arguments that I use to problematize the research topic.

Chapter IV

Indonesian Architecture and the Historical Context of the Search for Architectural Identity Representation

IV.1. Introduction

The importance of being ‘someone that matters’ in the global world, as discussed in Chapter II, leads countries in the world, especially in the Global-south, to find their distinctive identity. Architecture is one of the most apparent canvases to convey constructed images, but the ideation and appropriation process might not be as seamless as expected. The tight entanglement of power and politics in this construction process, most of the time, defines the direction taken since the political leader has the privilege to orchestrate the identity formation in the way that benefits the regime, mostly with the purpose to strengthen their authority. Indonesia cannot escape from the fact that the regime leaders have heavily, if not fully, influenced how the country representations are sculpted and curated. The divergent imagined community inside the national border is represented by architectural objects as a symbol of unity, and this decision is ultimately in the hands of the President regardless of people’s reactions. In this chapter, I historicise the conception of the country’s architectural identity by discussing some historical milestones in a sequence, following the timeline of Indonesia’s politics. It means that the discussion of Nusantara Architecture as a solid term, as proposed by Prijotomo, is not apparent until the later section of this chapter. This is to portray that it is the term of Indonesian Architecture that once was a prevalent conception in the question of national identity, as it has been discussed and debated extensively from the early stages of nationhood.

The first section of this chapter discusses the journey of finding as ‘appropriate’ representation of Indonesia’s architectural identity, spanning from the time of the Dutch colonials; the time of post-independence, with Soekarno’s and Soeharto’s preferences as the focuses; the reformation era which changes the social-political situation of the country that is impacted in the architecture; to the era of Joko Widodo that is presently the President of Indonesia. This is to delineate the different standpoints taken in seeing the core feature that makes Indonesia, ‘Indonesia’. The way some distinguished Dutch architects exercised the idea to localise architecture through the conception of ‘Indies architecture’, although still capturing the spirit of traditionalism, is very different from Soeharto’s imposition of traditionalism. Sukarno’s nation-building project, that relies on international style building, also speaks differently especially with different political ambitions inserted in the agenda. Therefore for this section, I discuss these identity construction attempts critically, particularly in analysing each

President's inclination on identity formation, their efforts to display it in a built form, and how this representation reflects the social-political condition of the country in that specific contextual time and place. This historical study gives a contextual description of the long-debated conception of Indonesian Architecture, whose complication leads to the emergence of Nusantara Architecture, and depicts that this discourse is definitely not new and that its severe multi-layered intricacies hinder scholars and professionals to ever achieve unanimous agreement of what is Indonesian, and later Nusantara, Architecture.

I use the next section to focus my discussion on how Indonesia represents itself to the international audience, by pinpointing four international exhibitions to set some examples and initiate discussion: 2014 and 2018 Venice Architecture Biennales, 2015 Venice Art Biennale and 2018 the International Monetary Fund-World Bank (IMF-WB) Annual Meetings. These illustrate some contrasting approaches, that when many of prominent Indonesian architects and artists try to escape the exotic representation of the country, the government seems still to put it under the spotlight. The influence of capitalism is apparent here, so is the world's geopolitical streams in arts and architecture. Discussing these strikingly different exhibitions not only portrays the divergence of how 'Indonesians perceive Indonesia', both the progressive and the conservative sides, but also depicts the strong political agenda that leads the government to maintain the exoticism of the country, disregarding the simmering urge to go beyond traditionalism. Yet regardless of variations, I argue that both perspectives still, lightly or intensely, put the binary of East-West into the discussion, thus expressing identity gains its significance from the need to convey to the world that 'us' is different to 'them'.

Toward the end of this chapter, I discuss the problematic interpretation of identity, especially the restrictive limitation that leaves many aspects left unincluded. I emphasise the different forces and complexities that encircle the conception of national identity; intricacies both from outside or inside the country that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to pin down the 'ultimate' identity for the nation. The profound tension between 'regional versus global', 'national versus supranational', 'history versus contemporary', 'regional versus subregional' and 'elite versus subaltern' are some of the hurdles faced in this discourse, and in discussing it, I affix the discussion to the context of Indonesia to picture the concrete obstacles in any identity construction attempts. These complications surrounding the term of Indonesian Architecture is what initiates the idea to come up with a new term of 'Nusantaran Architecture', to create a more defined boundary of what is and what is not included in the discussion.

IV.2. The construction of Indonesian Architecture throughout history

As discussed in Chapter II, national identity finds its significance to position a country in the global society, and this requires the ruling government to find, or create, a manifestation through which the constructed identity is well-represented. The direction chosen for this identity interpretation is also a reflection of how the government responds to the society's social, cultural, political and economic aspects, delivered through meaning and symbolism that portray so-called national identity and national unity (Vale, 2008, p. 10). Constructing identity, as Simone Weil (2001) argues, is definitely not an easy task, especially in finding the 'root' of the country, as she asserts that "to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognised need of the human soul" but "it is one of the hardest to define" (Weil, 2001, p. 40). In the case of Indonesia, the discussion of Indonesia's architectural identity seems to be a 'never-solved' problem, since the aim to find the 'root' or the 'essence' of Indonesia, if that even exists, is a problematic idea to begin with. This intention has been started, delved into and concretised many times in the history of Indonesia, even before the country's independence in 1945. There are at least two main questions that are prevalent, and I see these as crucial, in the discussion of this identity construction:

- Does Indonesia need architectural representation that 'embodies' its national identity?
- Can/ should local (traditional) architecture be a source of ideas for designing that architectural representation? (Wirjomartono et al., 2009, p. 327).

These two questions have been asked since the time of Dutch colonialism and hitherto have not been 'solved' due to their severe complication as they touch the precarious topic of identity, and this convolution makes some scholars detest this topic and see it as 'unconstructive', 'irrelevant' and even 'obsolete'.³² This is something that I need to underscore here that in tackling this kind of topic, one has to fully comprehend the fact that the question of identity is and will never be 'solved'. If 'solved' means finding the 'exact' answers for these questions, then any answers provided need to be problematised further. Any conclusion that leads to a finite and restrictive figuration of what identity is or should be, most of the time, can be suspected of basing the argument on a logical fallacy. Using Deleuze's understanding as I describe briefly in Chapter II, there is no stable condition of identity from which we can take a fixed formulation, as identity itself is in "all manner of 'becoming'" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21). In this sense, the question of 'what is Indonesian Architecture' becomes an

³² I get this opinion from the interviews I conducted during my fieldwork, that some of the respondents react negatively when I convey my research topic. One of the interviewees responds by saying "What is the importance of identity? ... I think with all the chaos in [our] living space in Indonesia, [the issue of] identity is the most irrelevant to be talked about" (D. Wicaksono 2017, pers. comm., 25 August).

open question that can be answered relatively from any perspectives and biases, and this might not be a 'right-or-wrong' situation, but more relies on whether it is appropriate and makes sense.³³

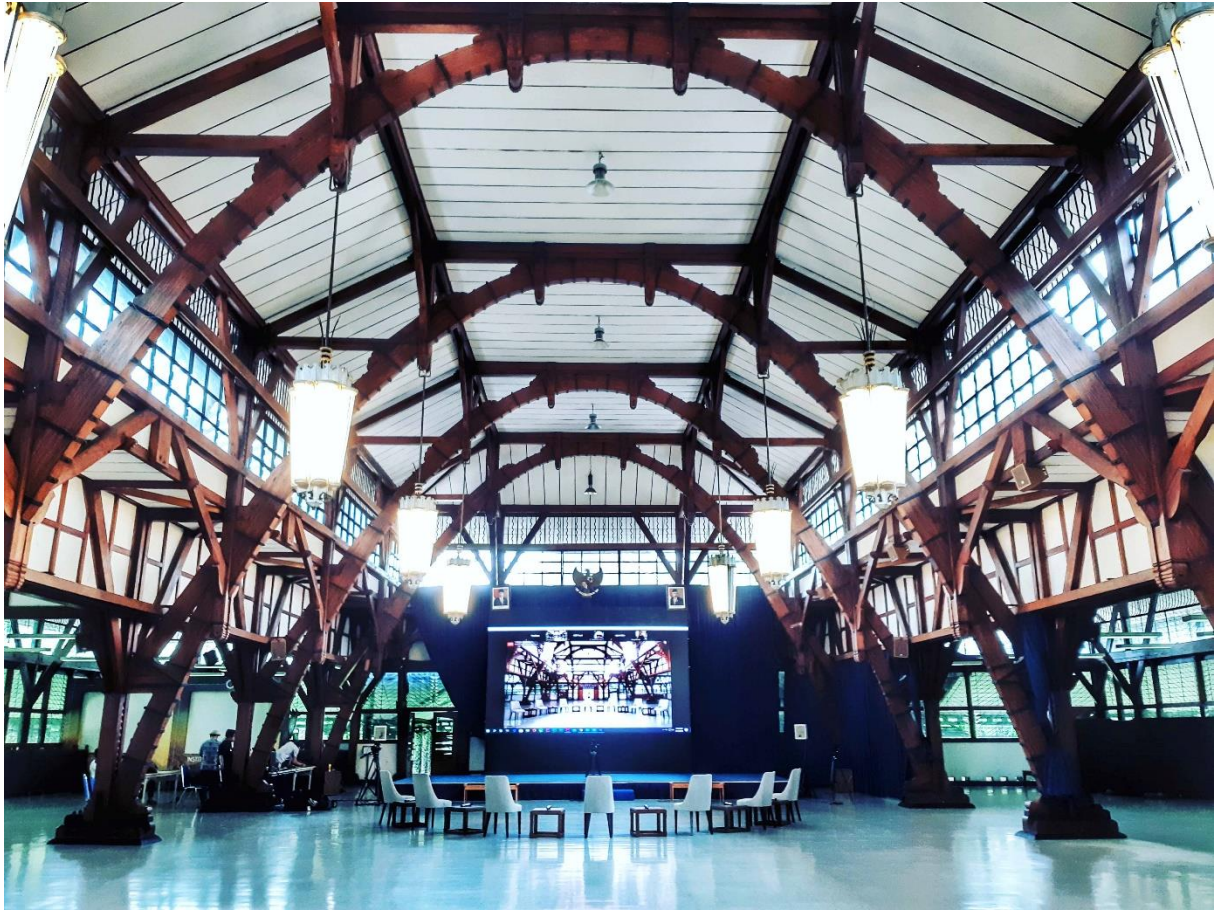


Figure 3. West Hall of Technische Hogeschool te Bandoeng (THB) – now Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)

Source: Joko Sarwono, 2020 (reprinted with permission)

The discussion about Indonesia's architectural identity was started in the colonial era as early as the 1920s, as one of the effects of the Dutch Ethical Policy implementation, when some prominent Dutch architects proposed an idea to synthesise the 'East and West' through a movement called Indies

³³ Deleuzians might not agree with the question I use here using 'what is...', as the 'is' implies that there is a finite answer for it. However, in this case, I need to use this form of question as this is how the question of Indonesian architectural identity has long been narrated. I need to emphasise that by stating 'what is Indonesian Architecture?' or 'what is Nusantara Architecture?' in this research, I do not intend to arrive at a conclusive definition, instead, I aim to challenge these questions from many angles and allow people to reflect that such questions cannot be answered straightforwardly.

architecture (*Indische modern bouwenstijl* – modern Indies) (Kusno, 2000, pp. 31-32; Passchier, 2008, p. 7; Wirjomartono et al., 2009, p. 327).³⁴ Indies architecture is an intellectual movement whose focus is to develop the civilisation of the colonised people; a movement perceived as “a synthesis of interests and ideas to be borne by an increasing number of the archipelago’s residents, a synthesis, therefore, neither ‘Indonesian’ nor ‘Dutch’, but a combination of what all the participants had to offer” (Doorn, 1983, p. 12 as cited in Kusno, 2000, p. 31). This movement was perceived and developed differently by the Dutch architects: Henri Maclaine Pont positioned it as a platform to bring the “East and West together without suppressing either” (Jessup, 1989, pp. 211-212 as cited in Kusno, 2000); H. P. Berlage suggested that it was a fusion of both the modern and the local; while for Thomas Karsten, it was “a unity of the spiritual and material needs” (Jessup, 1985, p. 138).³⁵ Extending these ideas, creating the “Indo-European Architecture” became the main aim, bringing ‘local context’ to the otherwise imported alien Dutch Architecture, regardless of the variations in understanding what was ‘local’. Pont, who was fascinated with Indonesian traditional architecture especially the grand Minangkabau house, designed the West and East Hall (*Aula Barat dan Timur*) of Technische Hogeschool te Bandoeng (THB) – now Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), a spectacle of local materials mixed with an advanced construction technology (Figure 3).³⁶ Karsten, in his work, the People’s Theatre (*Teater Rakyat*) in Semarang, modernised the traditional Javanese *joglo* house by creating a re-interpretation of *pendopo* (a gazebo-like building for gathering) mixed with a function of theatre which was not a familiar function among local people in that time. J. Gerber designed *Gouvernements Bedrijven* – now *Gedung Sate* – in Bandung, focusing on a tropical adjustment to a Dutch-style building, and the result was a colonial building with a steep pitched roof that ever since is an icon of West Java.

³⁴ The Ethical Policy was introduced by the Dutch to the Indies as a response to the broader global ‘competition’ among the imperialists to show which colonial projects were most successful. When this policy was implemented, there were some significant changes in the way Dutch government treated Indies, that the initial exploitative approach, which involves forced tropical cultivation and forced labour, was then changed into pacification approach, which applied in opening Indies for European migrants that brought cosmopolitanism to the area. This political dynamic then initiated the raise of the unified spirit of the Dutch East Indies and created an urge to think about Indies Architecture.

³⁵ Pont, Berlage and Karsten were some of the prominent Dutch architects who lived and practiced in the Dutch Indies. These architects were actively engaged with the issue of identity and locality, and had made rigorous attempts to combine the Dutch-style architecture with the local context. Their works have hitherto been considered influential and became precedents in many discussions of Indonesian architectural identity.

³⁶ The East and West Halls of Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) use bent laminated wood arches to create a long-span structure for the main hall room. This is considered as an advanced structural exploration of wood as a local material, especially considering the era of construction. Therefore in this project, the claim of ‘being local’ is not only about the look that is dominated by the exquisite rooflines, but also about how the design incorporates local materials and stretches it to new developmental experimentation. This is why these buildings are still among the list of ‘good examples’ of how to convey locality into architecture.



Figure 4. CONEF Building, now the office of the 'House of people representatives' of Indonesia
Source: Jarod MS, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

The direction of 'Indonesia-ness' was stretch to a different direction in the post-independence era after 1945.³⁷ Sukarno, as the first president, introduced Guided Democracy as the country's political ideology, although he understood democracy closer to a 'feudalism' whose issue of authority and decision making revolved around him as the highest leader. These centralised politics are characterised by the Javanese conception of power, that is "intangible, mysterious, and divine energy which animates the universe" (Anderson, 1972, p. 7), and that the divinity of the leader is not to be questioned.³⁸ This is shown in Sukarno's statement:

"In Guided Democracy ... the key ingredient is leadership. The Guider ... incorporates a spoonful of so-and-so with a dash of such-and-such, always taking care to incorporate a soupscon of the opposition. Then he cooks it and serves his final summation with "OK, now my dear brothers, it is like this and I hope you agree..." It's still democratic because everybody has given his comment" (Schwarz, 1999 as cited in Hasan, 2009, p. 217).

³⁷ Indonesia self-proclaimed its independence on 17 August 1945, but after this moment, the country was still dealing with the Dutch who returned and tried to reclaim their authority over the Indies. It was in 1950 Indonesia attained full independence and was recognised internationally, thus some literature might refer to this year as the year of Indonesia's independence.

³⁸ Anderson suggests that the power in the Javanese tradition is similar to a lamp that is started from the source, which is the leader and disperses to the surroundings. He states that "the gradual even diminution of the radiance of the lamp with increasing distance from the bulb is an exact metaphor for the Javanese conception not only of the structure of the state but also of centre-periphery relationships and of territorial sovereignty" (Anderson, 1972, p. 22).

He even figured himself as being 'one' with the people's voice:

"In every Seventeenth of August meeting ... it is as though I held a dialogue. A dialogue with the people. A two-way conversation between myself and the people, between my ego and my Alter Ego. A two-way conversation between comrade-in-arms and comrade-in-arms. A two-way conversation between two comrades who in reality are One" (Sukarno, 1965 as cited in Permanasari, 2007, p. 108).

It explains Sukarno's tendency to centralise himself as the radiant figure of the country and affects his standpoint in figuring the capital city of Jakarta as the center of the country, and his attempt to put Indonesia in the center of global geopolitical dynamics. Not only reflected in many of his international political agendas, like the Non-Aligned Movement he initiated in 1955, Sukarno's political direction is well translated in the way he conveyed his nation-building projects in Jakarta, concretised through the language of architecture, urban design and urban planning, particularly through a series of monuments and public buildings (Kusno, 2000, pp. 51-52). His manifesto is elucidated in his powerful statement:

"Build up Djakarta as beautifully as possible, build it as spectacular as possible, so that this city, which has become the centre of struggle of the Indonesian people, will be an inspiration and beacon to the whole of struggling mankind and to all the emerging forces. If Egypt was able to construct Cairo as its capital, Italy its Rome, France its Paris, and Brazil it Brasilia, then Indonesia must also proudly present Djakarta as the portal of the country" (Sukarno, 1962 as cited in Kusno, 2000, p. 54).

This speech depicts his ambition to put Jakarta in the global map equal to other capital cities in the world. To achieve this, making a statement by erecting 'monumental' buildings is an effective way to demonstrate power over labour and capital, a way that has been practiced even before the time of the Pyramids of Giza and Borobudur. Many new buildings were constructed as part of this project to display Indonesia as a new 'powerful' country and as part of an attempt to develop Indonesia's national identity: the CONEFO Building, that has since become the office of the 'House of people representatives' of Indonesia (Figure 4); Hotel Indonesia, the first luxurious hotel in Indonesia; Istiqlal Mosque, that was once the largest mosque in South East Asia in the '70s; Sarinah Department Store, that was the first luxurious department store in Jakarta; Senayan Sport Complex, that was built for 1962 Asian Games; and the most famous of all, the National Monument (*Monas*) in the heart of Jakarta (Kusno, 2000, p. 51; Leclerc, 1993, p. 51; Sopandi, 2009, pp. 55-58; Sudrajat, 1991, pp. 179-180). Most of these buildings are located on the main corridor of Thamrin and Sudirman Street as a focal point of Sukarno's design exercises: a corridor that spans from Monas as the center of the city, go to the South to the Thamrin and Sudirman Street (Figure 5).

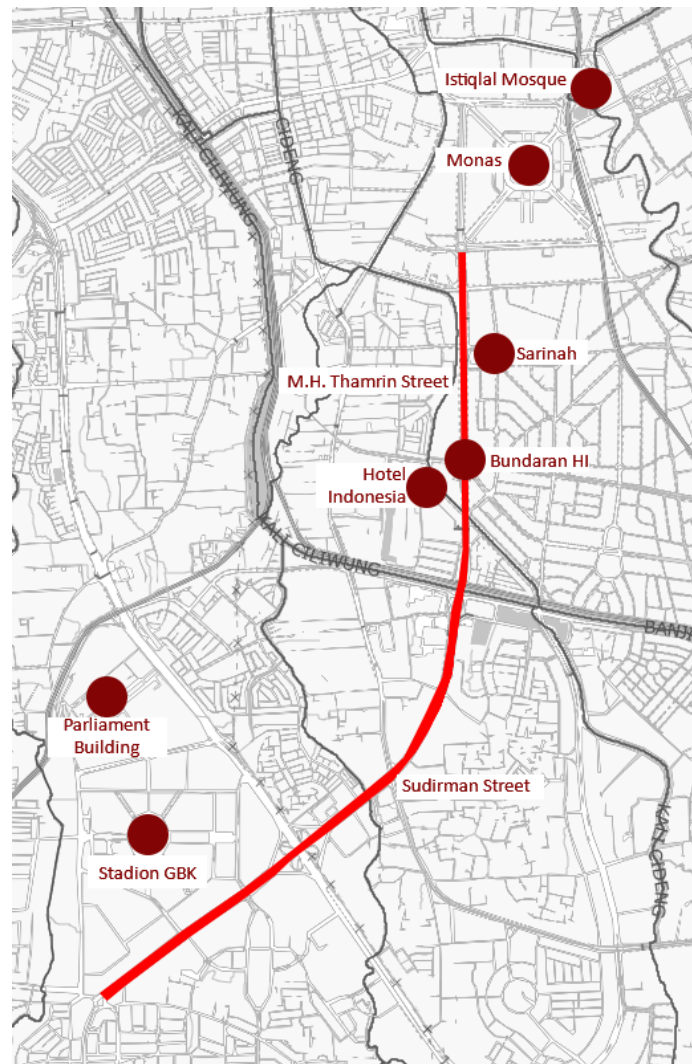


Figure 5. Keymap of Sukarno's nation building projects in Thamrin-Sudirman corridor
Source: Writer's document, 2020

Sukarno's priority was to build Jakarta as a representation of Indonesia as a newly independent country, therefore escaping from all form of colonial influence was a must for his design point of view. Sukarno, who was an architect, despised any language of traditional architecture in design at least for two reasons: (1) it was considered as an inheritance of the Dutch colonials in describing the Indies; (2) traditional architecture was deemed as "no longer adequate to convey the new nationalist spirit and the will to find a new Post-War Indonesian identity" (Sopandi, 2009, p. 53). For this reason, Sukarno chose to incorporate "modernism, functionalism and reductionism" (Widodo, 2006, p. 22) in a form of International style as a representation of progress and development, following global trends and showing the neutrality of modernism amidst the Cold War. Statements like "let us prove that we can also build the country like the Europeans and Americans do because we are equal" (as cited in

Prijotomo, 1996, pp. 5-6) became common narratives employed by the President to build people's pride and to create a sense of belonging to their nation. In achieving this purpose, the most powerful, and perhaps most successful, building in Sukarno's project is the National Monument (*Monas*) which has become a landmark of Indonesia (Figure 6). This monument is seen as the foundation of the new capital city, not only for the extravagant and controversial design for the time but also for its location that has become the center of the city since Dutch colonial times: a 900,000 square meter grass-covered area known as Koningsplein, a centre for governmental bodies designed by Thomas Karsten in 1938 (Kusno, 2000, p. 55; Leclerc, 1993, p. 38; Sopandi, 2009, p. 60).³⁹ In 1955, Sukarno opened a design competition for the monument and among 51 participants, none of them was announced a winner. Five years later, the government opened the second competition and received 136 proposals, but still, none of them managed to satisfy the President as the quality was deemed worse than the previous one, thus no winner was crowned in this competition. Finally in 1961, Sukarno, with his design ability as an architect, made his sketch of the monument, which was then refined by Soedarsono, a design that was anticipated to become a legacy of Sukarno and expected to stand for centuries just like Borobudur. This monument employs the shape of *linggam* and *yoni*, which are male and female sexual organs consecutively, something that Sukarno perceived as an ancient symbol of an eternal and balanced life, representing day and night, good and evil, positive and negative. The *yoni*, or the podium, is intended to be a museum with 48 dioramas exhibiting the process of achieving independence, and seen as a womb which conceives the seed of Indonesia. It then grows as the *linggam*, or the tower, which is seen as "a tree-torch reaching up to the golden flame fuelled by fighting spirit which keeps history alive" (Leclerc, 1993, p. 44). The monument also exhibits Sukarno's socialist political messages famously called 'The Lighthouse Politics' whose aim was to make Indonesia as the light-house (*mercusuar*) that shone on The New Emerging Forces of the third world countries ("Pengertian Politik Mercusuar," 2016). Despite the grandeur and the strong political ambition planted within the seed of the erection idea, this monument, however, shows the paradox of the President's utopian desire to create an extravagant spectacle, mostly for pleasing the international audience, amidst all the unsolved problems in the society. This monument becomes a phantasmagorical illusion that provides a fantasy of a modern country while problems in peripheral *kampungs* and villages are left unaddressed (Kusno, 2000, pp. 66-67).

³⁹ The construction of Monas received a rejection from the people and the students due to its expensive construction cost (including its 50-kgs of gold put on the top of the monument in a flame shape). This project was deemed as an extravagant waste of money in a tight post-independence situation where people believed that many more essential things that needed to be dealt within the society in that time other than building a monument.



Figure 6. National Monument (*Monas*) located at the heart of Jakarta

Source: Ghozian Hakeem, 2019 (reprinted with permission)

The second President, Suharto, stepped up to the throne after Sukarno was dislodged from power in 1965. This transfer of power was marked with a bloody event of the attempted coup by the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia – PKI*) in the ‘30th September Movement’ in which six generals were kidnapped and killed in an attempt to weaken the army. This incident, however, only backfired on the Communist Party, not only that their coup attempt failed, but also that they later became people’s targets that ended up with a massacre of more than half-a-million of PKI members (Cribb, 2015). This PKI movement led to the issue of *Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret* (The Order of the Eleventh of March) in 1966, which became a way for Suharto to take over power from Sukarno and build a new regime called the New Order.⁴⁰ In his authority, Suharto emphasised *stabilitas* (stability) as the main political agenda, especially to recover the society from the rupture caused by the incident. For this purpose, he stripped people’s political rights by creating a *massa mengambang* (floating mass), which forbade people from being affiliated with any political parties, and by *transmigrasi*,

⁴⁰ *Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret* (The Order of the Eleventh of March), or is commonly abbreviated as Supersemar, a document signed by President Sukarno on 11 March 1966 to give Suharto, who was the army commander at the time, an authority to “take whatever measures he ‘deemed necessary’ to restore order to the chaotic situation during the Indonesian killings of 1965–66”. Controversies are encircling this document, as this document comes in many versions, and rumour says that Sukarno signed it at gunpoint (“Supersemar,” n.d.).

which separated people from their political groups in their homeland to prevent any mass movements (Kusno, 2013, p. 85).^{41,42} Suharto's policy to depoliticise people also happened in many other aspects in society including in the arts and architecture, as any design and artworks were not allowed to convey any political messages and to be associated with any political agenda, a contrast to what happened in Sukarno's era.⁴³ Moreover, the widening economic gaps among social classes created further conflicts that threatened the national unity and made the rhetoric of 'revolution', which had been based on people's communality, become more difficult to sustain (Anderson, 1990, pp. 183-190). Aside from this, people's social lives were also getting more vulnerable as cultural gaps between the old and the young became more apparent, especially that the younger generation, as Suharto mentioned, had lost the sense of common goal and purpose and had been detached "from the history of the national struggle and the national identity ... [thus] they tend to orient themselves towards an alien culture, not their own" (as cited in Anderson, 1990, p. 184). For these reasons, Suharto needed to recreate "the social imaginary of Indonesia ... in such a way that social and cultural stability, within the continuing policy of 'development', could still be emphasised ... by safeguarding their vision of nationalism" (Kusno, 2000, p. 73).

As a response, the tradition was accentuated to evoke the sense of origin and identity, although in many cases, Suharto's perspective was very formal and literal, which ended up with 'traditionalising' national culture. The President then launched a project called 'Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park' (*Taman Mini Indonesia Indah – TMII*), a recreational park in which traditional houses from twenty seven provinces (now thirty three provinces) were built in miniature as a display of Indonesia's diverse culture. In the opening speech of this Miniature Park, Suharto highlighted the importance of national culture:

⁴¹ *Massa mengambang* (floating mass) was a government program to detach people from politics, as their involvement was deemed as inhibiting the process of *pembangunan* (development). The *massa mengambang* program was implemented to forbid political parties from creating organisational structure lower than the sub-districts level. This, however, has been criticised as this program only applied to two out of three political parties at that time, as *Golongan Karya (Golkar)*, which was Suharto's party, had a 'special right' to be able to set its unit to the grassroots level for *Golkar* was not considered as a 'party'.

⁴² *Transmigrasi* (transmigration) is a program to move people permanently from a densely populated area to a less populated area, mainly with the purpose to achieve even distribution in areas of the country. Kusno (2013), however, sees this agenda as another form of creating *massa mengambang* by detaching people from their political affiliations in their homelands.

⁴³ In the time of Sukarno, politics was embedded in many arts, architecture, and media movements, especially in spreading Sukarno's socialist agenda and championing the 'proletarian' characters of the people. This was mainly done through what was called *media komunitas* (community media), which was described as 'from, by, and for the people'. LEKRA – *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat* (people's cultural institution) was one of the most influential art media at that time.

“Economic development alone is not enough. ...the pursuit of material things on its own will make like cruel and painful. ... One’s life, therefore, will be calm and complete only when it is accompanied by spiritual welfare. The direction and guidance towards that spiritual welfare is, in fact, already in our possession; it lies in our beautiful and noble national cultural inheritance...”

(as cited in Kusno, 2000, pp. 72-73).

In this speech, Suharto emphasised the importance of pursuing life contentment aside from physical *pembangunan* (development) that he always pushed forward. The noble culture and tradition, which Budihardjo calls as ‘the roots of cultural heritage’ (*akar warisan budaya*) (as cited in Kusno, 2000, p. 72), were put in a prominent layer that acted as a unifier among diverse people and were expected to be a cure for the complex social problems of that time. Tradition became the main inspiration for the attempt to recreate the sense of national identity, not only to elevate national pride and to construct the national image but also to restore cultural stability amidst the oppression and inequality of his order.

Initiated in 1971 by Mrs. Suharto, this project of Beautiful Indonesia encapsulated the collection of *rumah adat* (traditional houses) of Indonesia, together with its traditional clothing, wedding costumes, dance, and other artifacts such as weapons and daily tools.⁴⁴ The park was built “to ‘inventorise’ (*inventarisasi*) traditional practices, in part through a process of rediscovery” (K. Robinson, 1997, p. 72), and to showcase the ‘peaks’ of culture from each region as a depiction of Indonesia’s cultural richness. Regardless of being problematic, the term ‘peak’ of culture is stated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in article 32 that says “the government shall advance the national culture” with the further elucidation of the constitution:⁴⁵

“The national culture is the product of the mental and spiritual activities of the entire Indonesian people. The old and indigenous cultures which were the peak of cultural life in all the regions of

⁴⁴ Inspired by Disneyland in the USA and Timland in Muangthai, Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park was built on the eastern end of Jakarta, on a 150 hectare land with an artificial lake filled with artificial islands resembling the form of the archipelago of Indonesia. The cable car that went across the lake gave the tourists experience of crossing the whole archipelago, from Sabang in the West to Merauke in the East. Traditional buildings were built side-by-side illustrating people who live together harmoniously amidst all the differences, a story that was politically curated and conveyed through an artistic dimension of the park. Some of the buildings were real traditional buildings disassembled from their original site and transported to Jakarta, while some were copies of the indigenous forms. Together with the traditional houses, each province displayed other traditional arts and live performances, unique flora and fauna, and other cultural heritage that were perceived as their identities. For further discussion of Beautiful Indonesia, see Kusno (2000); Prijotomo (1996); Widodo (2006).

⁴⁵ The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia was applicable in Suharto’s era, before any amendments. The first amendment was in 1999; the second in 2000; the third in 2001; and the fourth in 2002.

Indonesia, together form the national culture" ("The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia," 1989).

To believe that there were some 'peaks' among cultures was a menacing idea that potentially brought frictions instead of unity among people. In each pavilion of Beautiful Indonesia, only one traditional culture, among all the diversity in the regions, was chosen to represent each province, leaving questions of how to pick one among the others, whose decision, on what criteria. Especially labeling the selected culture as '*puncak kebudayaan daerah*' or the peak – *crème de la crème* – of the culture (Sopandi, 2017, p. 502), created an assumption that the selected cultures were better than the unselected others, hence created jealousy and rivalry among indigenous people. Not only that this park created a sense of being 'left out' and 'unrecognised' for the undisplayed indigenous cultures, it was also questionable in the choice to exclude the non-indigenous cultures such as Indonesian-Chinese culture (Kusno, 2000, p. 75). Moreover, between 1980 and 1990, provinces in Indonesia have gathered information about traditional cultures, beliefs and practices under the supervision of the Department of Education and Culture. This led to what Kathryn Robinson (1997) terms as "authorised versions of what constitutes authentic cultural traditions, an important aspect of which is the differentiation of presumed discrete cultural groups" (K. Robinson, 1997, p. 72). In this case, the ruler had the privilege to include or exclude some cultural groups from the list and to decide which cultures were deemed as 'worthy' to become representations of the region. Sopandi (2017) argues that even the buildings displayed in Beautiful Indonesia were *kreasi baru* (a new creation) that were supposedly created by the government to showcase characteristics of each province so that laypeople could easily associate the building with the place where it was originated. Every traditional architecture chosen was what was considered as 'the best example' from the region, mostly inspired by the houses of the elites in the regions. For instance, West Java was represented by the Kanoman Palace of Cirebon and Central Java with the Great Hall of Mangkunegaran Palace in Solo (Sopandi, 2017, p. 502). It is therefore evident that, albeit deemed as authentic, the cultural representations were merely a product of a cherry-picking culture to be treated as touristic objects, and this cultural issue became very political. Not only displaying a flattened, sanitised and authorised version of culture in the form of the miniatures, the Park also is a delineation of Suharto's narrow regionalism that put traditional architecture as the 'authentic' and 'ideal' identity of Indonesia, creating an impression that "the everlasting authentic culture of 'our' nation" really exists (Sumintardja, 1972, pp. 11-12 as cited in Kusno, 2000, p. 76).



Figure 7. East Java's House of Representatives building

Source: Dhiyeul Umam, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

Suharto's traditionalism was also depicted in his imposition on architectural designs of related public and government buildings. Traditional houses were appointed as 'compulsory' design precedents and treated as signifiers to 'localise' architecture, although in most cases, the translation was merely copying the physical forms or putting traditional elements and decorations on otherwise contemporary buildings (Purwaningrum, 2017). It is, therefore, no surprise that in that period, many government buildings were built with an oversized traditional roof sitting on top of a brick and glass building. East Java's House of Representatives building, which was built in 1987, for instance, was an example of how the 'traditionalization' of culture was a common method in architectural design at that time. In its building documentation, it is recorded that the design referred back to the Majapahit period especially for the gate design, using red brick for the material and Bentar Temple style for the entrance design, symbolising the "openness and dynamic East Java's people" (Figure 7). The building had an oversized *joglo* roof as a Javanese traditional element, and also had the main building called *Pendopo Ageng* (The Big Hall) as a representation of a gathering place for leaders and their people, similar to *pendopo* (pillared hall) in Javanese palace ("Gedung Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah Provinsi Jawa Timur," 2012).⁴⁶ Interestingly, these design elements, which might be deemed as

⁴⁶ *Joglo* is traditional vernacular houses of Javanese people, characterised by steep wide roofs, called *joglo* roof, with four main columns support in the middle supporting layered beam structure called *tumpang sari*, and

superficial and banal, were very much expected to comply with the local regulation in incorporating local culture into design.

Another story comes from the Governor's Office of West Sumatra Province, which was built in 1961 and was under construction for 10 years, which became an example of how a similar method was implied in the design process. Following the direction given by the Governor, although this was suspected to be under the pressure of the national government, the design of the four-storey office building had to be modified and the initial pyramid-shaped roof had to be replaced with the *bagongjong*-like roof to display the strong identity of Minangkabau ("Rumah Bagongjong," n.d.).⁴⁷ This building is then called *Rumah Bagongjong* (Bagongjong House) for its 'iconic' *gonjong* roof, copying the traditional roof of the place. This method to 'localise' architecture continued under the Governor Azwar Anas, who served from 1977 to 1987, issued a Regional Regulation that "obliges public building and public facilities [to employ] *gonjong* roof" (Erinaldi, 2016), following the suggestion of the previous Governor, Harun Zain. This practice persists in a contemporary context, and it is shown when the current Governor Irwan Prayitno criticises the new Regional Police Headquarters Building that does not incorporate *gonjong* roof, saying that "the building is magnificent ... too bad that it does not have *gonjong* [that] carries the characteristic of West Sumatra ... [and] indicates the region's identity" (Indrawan, 2017). For this reason, especially that it has become a requirement in the building code, Prayitno would suggest adding *gonjong* to the building, just as he did to the Office of Attorney General of West Sumatra that led to the adding of *gonjong* on top of the modern building (Figure 8).⁴⁸ This standpoint in seeing locality in architecture is Suharto's legacy that has been entrenched deeply in people's perception of regional identity. This kind of perspective is difficult to be shifted, as the people in power still preserve it and further legalise it through various rules and regulations. It is evident that the regime in power somehow controls art and architecture by providing strict guidance of what is allowed and not allowed in cultural interpretation.

several smaller columns in the outwards area. *Pendopo*, similarly using joglo roof, is a gazebo-like building that is open on all sides and is used for gathering.

⁴⁷ *Bagongjong* roof or *gonjong* roof is a roof of Minangkabau traditional houses with saddle-like shape and pointy horn-like ends.

⁴⁸ The West Sumatra's Building Code is stated in the Regional Regulation of West Sumatra Number 6/2011. In Chapter 17(2), it is stated that new important buildings "should be planned with utilising elements and/or decoration of traditional ornaments" ("West Sumatra's Building Code," 2011), and there is no *gonjong* roof stated as part of the requirement. However, it seems that the officers who deal with the building permit mostly translate this 'traditional ornament' as attaching *gonjong* roof on a building, similar to the Governor's perspective, therefore it is no surprise that this practice is still going today.



Figure 8. The Office of Attorney General of West Sumatra
Source: Dini Fitriyani, 2020 (reprinted with permission)

In the time of the New Order, the government's narrow regionalism received strong resistance from scholars, artists and young architects who opposed this traditional replication. This kind of translation was deemed a failure in making genuine connection with the local context, merely creating a kitsch expression that treated culture solely from its superficial cosmetic resemblances without trying to delve into a deeper meaning and historical substance (Kusno, 2013, p. 55; Purwaningrum, 2017; Tardiyana, 2005, p. 19; Tjahjono, 2002, p. 26; Widodo, 2006, p. 23). This 'unattractive and monotonous' architecture was strongly resisted by Indonesian Young Architects (*Arsitek Muda Indonesia [AMI]*) whose agenda was to propose competing forces against conservatism and to promote 'exploration' (*eksplorasi*) as the keyword of their manifesto.⁴⁹ As this narrow exoticism

⁴⁹ Indonesian Young Architects (AMI) tried to liberate themselves from the hegemony of traditionalism and criticised the government's top-down pseudo-neo-vernacular architecture. They envisioned architecture as a

perspective persists even after the Reformation, another movement emerged in 2008. *JongArsitek!*, founded by Danny Wicaksono, emerged to promote nationalism and bring back politics to architecture, echoing Sukarno's way of doing architecture. This organisation published an online magazine that was contributed by architecture students and was accessible to anyone since they kept "*JongArsitek!* as free as air" ("*Jong Arsitek!*," 2013, pp. 70-72). They posed critiques of contemporary Indonesian architecture, highlighting architecture students' fresh perspectives in seeing the complicated interpretation of Indonesian architecture (Kusno, 2013). The end of 2013 marked the end of *JongArsitek* magazine. After publishing more than 25 edition, it finally stopped production.

On 21 May 1998, after being the President of Indonesia for thirty two years, Soeharto finally stepped down from power, following the 'Reformation movement' that was marked with massive continuous rallies initiated by students in the capital city and spread throughout the country. Most of these rallies turned into riots, bringing conflict between people and the authorities, and putting Chinese-Indonesian people as a major targets for plundering, raping and killing (Kusno, 2000, p. 99). These acts of violence brought ruptures in society and created fears and distrust among people, and it made people, mostly upper-middle-class, start avoiding contact with open surroundings: building solid high fences around their houses and putting metal trellises on houses' openings. These people then chose to live in gated communities to be surrounded by people from the same social classes while keeping distance from the poor, since the poor were associated with criminality. Private developers used this as an opportunity to develop gated residential areas with solid high perimeter walls, like an island of luxury in the middle of vast irregular informal *kampung* settlements. Kusno (2013) calls this "planning privatopolis", where "developers planned to fulfill the dream of the upper-middle-class, searching for a well-planned built environment away from the *kampung*" (Kusno, 2013, p. 11), selling 'Disneyfied' design as a dream to escape from the disordered country. This phenomenon not only emphasised the social reality that the rich would not, or should not, be in the same space with the poor, it was also evidence that that social gap had been a severe problem in the Suharto era. Making islands of gated residences is still a trend in contemporary dwelling in many big cities, although it carries a paradox, as it connects people within the gate yet disconnects them from the people outside the gate. It is a utopian lifestyle living in a happy and harmonious neighbourhood, accentuating the distance between

process instead of a product, thus 'exploration' in the design should never stop. Today, three decades after this movement was founded, AMI's members still come up with explorative design although critiques might not be a common thing to share among members anymore (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September). AMI's pioneers, as they are now older, have stepped up to the next level and become Indonesia's prominent architects that actively contribute to shaping the current face of Indonesian architecture. See Kusno (2013); Nataprawira (2009); Widodo (2006).

the rich and the poor, a trend that came as a result of social friction yet seems to worsen the friction itself.



Figure 9. One example of minimalist house design that is currently popular among Indonesian people

Source: Furry A. Wilis, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

After the Reformation, the social, political and economic situation of the country has become more stable, and it led to a significant rise in the number of middle-class people in Indonesia. The country has become more urbanised since then. It “has urbanised on average more rapidly since 1960 than

most Asian countries” and “has the third-largest amount of urban land in East Asia, after China and Japan” (WorldBank, 2016, pp. 8-19), and it brought more demand for ‘good architecture’ hence more appreciation for the architect and profession.

As people started paying attention to the wider impacts of architecture on people’s lives, especially its significance as a social status symbol, the popularity of architecture soared. Many new architecture magazines were published highlighting selected ‘stylish’ architectural projects designed by big names and emerging architects, providing laypeople with knowledge of the latest vogue. These glossy magazines became a strong influencer in spreading the trend, including the trend of Minimalist houses (*rumah minimalis*) that has taken Indonesia by storm, framed as a symbol of the rising middle-class while offering modern lifestyle as a new symbol of economic establishment (Lukito & Handoko, 2018, p. 4) (Figure 9).⁵⁰ To fulfill the high demand, developers build it on a vast scale as ‘tract housing’: the same design for all the houses on a tract of land divided into an individual small lot for affordability purposes. Such unification brought anxieties to architects and scholars as it is deemed as disregarding the society’s social, cultural and environmental aspects that are supposed to be an integral part of the design process. They then offered a ‘counter-power’ against this trend by proposing new approaches and emphasising the importance of contextual design, accentuating the concept of ‘locality’ amidst the modern lifestyles and providing alternatives in how architecture could be appreciated. Eko Prawoto, a prominent Yogyakarta architect, states that a genuine beauty that is “honest, sincere, and humble; a beauty in the soul, not from a mathematic formula; [a beauty that is] not meant to be made, but it is there” (as cited in Hartanto, 2014), and that architecture should adjust to the context, not the other way around. Architecture in Indonesia should sit in the context of time and place, appreciating social, cultural, historical, natural and environmental aspects of the place it is located (Bakhtiar, Waani, & Rengkung, 2014, p. 33; Çizgen, 2012, pp. 5-6; Hidayatun & Damayanti, 2003, p. 65; Kusno, 2013, pp. 58-59; Tardiyana, 2005, p. 19; Widiastuti, 2015). One way to do this is revisiting ‘the root of Indonesia’s local culture’ (Hidayatun & Damayanti, 2003, pp. 63-64; Hidayatun & Wonoseputro, 2005, pp. 309-310; Kusno, 2000, pp. 172-175; 2013, pp. 51-53; Nas, 2006, p. 130; Prijotomo, 1996, pp. 2-4), although the conception of the ‘root’ is very vague and indefinite.

⁵⁰ The term *Minimalist architecture* in contemporary Indonesia has quite a different meaning to Minimalism in arts. Minimalist architecture that developed and became a trend since the early 2000s is understood as a stylistic form of architecture that incorporates basic geometric shapes, neutral colours, open concepts, flat roofs, and modern materials. With this clean-cut style, it rejects the presence of decoration as it aims for simplicity. But this style has been under constant criticism as it does not comply with the basic principle of tropical building, creating a high energy consumption and high maintenance buildings, especially that it is prone to problems as a result of harsh tropical heats and rains.

From the above delineations of Indonesia's architectural identity construction attempts, from the time of the colonial Dutch to the post-Reformation era, it is thus evident that the issue of architectural identity has been relevant and constantly under scrutiny. The construction process has been heavily influenced by the shifts of the geopolitical dynamics both nationally and globally, and it is thus evident that architecture has become one of the media in conveying a preferred social-political direction for the country. This aligns with Lawrence Vale's (2008) claim that national identity has always been shaped by the regime in power as part of their political tools. After the Reformation, Indonesia shifted its political approach from restrictive authoritarianism, which was following the leader's directions, to a market-oriented paradigm, which was complying with the clients' wishes. It also celebrated the euphoria of the Reformation's 'freedom of speech', hence 'freedom of design', that allowed Indonesian architects to finally have their liberty to exercise and experiment in design. These shifts made the government the regulator that created boundaries through various building regulations, but with fewer impositions in directing urban architectural development, especially since they focused more on supporting infrastructure developments to increase national income. If we see Indonesia's national leaders after Reformation, from Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, none of four of them had a restrictive and definitive cultural agenda in architecture, unlike their predecessors. This absence of authoritative power domination led architecture to develop according to market trends, especially in urban areas where 'cookie-cutter' residential developments have mushroomed in such an unprecedented way, something that appeals to the emerging middle-class. With the influence of globalisation and with the overloading stream of information, people started gaining awareness of modern architecture and its significances, especially as a signifier of wealth and economic security, and this particular style then became the main part of the country's architectural development. In this stage, the issue of identity became less crucial to people, and architectural design developed diversely, at least compared to when it was under Sukarno and Suharto.

Sukarno's and Suharto's perspectives of national identity, to some extents, are comparable to the Dutch architects' viewpoints. The binary thinking of 'East versus West' was vigorously present and became the framework that overarched the entire synthesis attempts, a sign of the domination of the Orientalist view. The Dutch architects put the Indies, or Indonesia, as an exotic Other to Dutch culture, therefore its exotic features became the main inspiration for any sculpting attempts for Indonesian or Indies Architecture. With this framework in mind, the influence of traditional architecture was very apparent in both eras, since grounding and localising architecture was mostly done by referring to traditional forms and knowledge (Purwaningrum, 2019, pp. 16-17). Most acclaimed projects that have been considered as the hybrid of the East and the West, from the West Hall of THB (now ITB) in Bandung, the People's Theatre in Semarang, the Pohsarang Church in Kediri, to the National

Monument in Jakarta, all of them incorporated the idea of traditional values as a point of departure in design. The West Hall of ITB, for instance, a building that has been considered as “the best example in Indonesia of a successful adaptation of an old idiom to new requirements, in which both are convincingly blended through the unique spatial vision of a distinguished architect” (Jessup, 1985, p. 146), was built based on the architect’s fascination towards Minangkabau *bagonjong* tensile roof combined with Javanese *pendopo* (pillared hall). The People’s Theatre was designed to combine an Eastern architectural form, which is a Javanese *joglo* house, with Western functional programming, which is a theatre. Pohsarang Church is rather ‘special’ since the design was an amalgamation of many different cultural forms of East and West. Instead of exercising one or two specific cultures, Pohsarang merged various cultural representations: Hindu-Javanese ascending terraced plans, Batak style copula, Balinese Pura’s linked courtyard, Majapahit niche, Shiva’s legend, Banten and Cirebon palace gate, and also a combination of Christians’ four evangelists story, Jerusalem temple veil, Calvary hill and also a Hajj rigour. The combination of so many aspects in the design leads to this church being deemed to be “a living monument to the distinctive syncretism of Indonesia” (Jessup, 1985, p. 148). These appreciations show that aside from the critique of being Orientalist, fusing the ‘East and West’ has also been appreciated as one of the ‘legitimate’ ways in gaining locality in an architecture.

It is then important to inspect how some approaches are deemed to be ‘good’ or ‘appropriate’ while others are accused of being ‘banal’ or even ‘absurd’. If we take a glance at Pont’s West Hall of ITB in Bandung and notice that the design was a combination of the Minangkabau tensile roof structure and the pillared hall of Central and East Java, then one can always question the contextuality of the building, especially that the design inspiration did not come from the place where it was located. How was this building crowned as one of the ‘best’ hybrid buildings? And for what reason did Pont choose Minangkabau’s, Central Java’s and East Java’s architectural features to be placed in a building that is located on the land of Sunda of West Java? As we know, West Java is known to have a distinct culture from Central and East Java, and it also has a sad history of East Java’s Majapahit army slaughtering West Java’s Sunda people when these Sunda people came to Majapahit to celebrate the marriage of their Princess (Vlekke, 1959, pp. 70-71). The two kingdoms have had enmity toward each other ever since and it has been unconsciously inherited in the culture as some of the people of the two areas still show antipathy toward each other. With a dark history overlay, Pont’s approach to getting inspiration from *pendopo* then can be considered questionable. Not to mention that the silhouette of the Minangkabau roof evokes the question of why choosing a certain culture that was ‘foreign’ to the land of Sunda, and how the selection process was narrowed down to choose Minangkabau instead of other cultures in Indonesia. These questions are very much expected, given that if the same approach

is applied by Indonesian contemporary architects in a contemporary context, the design is very likely to be critiqued as being un-contextual.

The answer to the question of this double standard, however, might be found if we highlight the fact that Pont had been through various in-depth engagements, researches and experimentations in the search for the 'essence' of the Indies. Therefore any translation, regardless of the shape it took, can be appreciated as a result of a rigorous searching process in treating culture as something complex, multilayered and dynamic; and most importantly, it was not treated merely as a visually pleasing product that relied for its worth on its aesthetics. Pont also extended the potential of the local materials, finding a possible new way to use them beyond the common methods in that particular time, thus not only embracing them merely for the sake of 'locality', but also stretching them for further development. These might be some fundamental differences between Pont's and Indonesian contemporary architects' works, and although this assessment might be subjective and very much arguable, this reasoning can at least depict the 'minimum requirement' of how to localise architecture. This method underscores the importance of appreciating culture as 'living', instead of a dead artifact, and hence acknowledges its intermingled complexity, especially with the people and seeing this as an entity that culture always changes and develops. Therefore, regardless of the Orientalist narration used in Pont's and Karsten's works in putting the East and West as 'equal' hence needed to be represented equally in architecture, both saw Indies architecture as an opportunity and dealt with the context through many long and optimistic researches in attaining a hybrid thinking. They did not aim to please any Western eyes and did not try to fulfill any Western expectation, and their designs were results of their analytical questions about Indies architecture, responding to more rooted social problems instead of just being focused on copying some traditional forms. This is something to be highlighted, especially in facing a contemporary reality that the visual aspect of architecture has become the main trap for most contemporary Indonesian architects with identity translation in architecture.

IV.3. Representing Indonesian Architecture to the international audience

As I have elaborated in Chapter II, it is evident that the international audience has been the main spectator to please and satisfy in the attempt to attain recognition, to validate the existence and the development of a country. The 'face' of a country thus becomes a prominent front-line that needs to be prepared and curated very carefully, a process that, most of the time, is directed by government and related agencies. This need is further facilitated with the presence of various international

exhibitions and Expos; a stage in which invited countries all over the world display the compact version of their country's representation while following certain themes that overarch the whole event. Among many international exhibitions, the Venice Biennale (*La Biennale di Venezia*) is considered as one of the most prestigious that provides a platform for many artistic disciplines, and its architecture section has become "[the] most important global exhibition and communication forum" (Ravenscroft, 2018) that becomes a place to address the academic side of architecture, mostly dealing with the social-political sides of architecture.⁵¹ This direction, however, was rejected by architects who believed that architectural exhibitions should be talking about architecture, or particularly about design, and emphasise that it is not the area for architects to discuss society and politics since there are professionals in those fields that are more capable of talking about them. Patrick Schumacher, the principal of Zaha Hadid Architects, has been one of the most forthright in voicing his disagreement with current biennales and calling them 'wasted biennales'. His initial stance to associate architecture primarily with design makes him question the legitimacy of the biennales for the absence of presentation of architectural work. He further refuses to put architecture as a profession in the same bracket with any political and social justice issues, as he overtly argues that "architects are in charge of the form of the built environment, not its content" (Winston, 2014). This opposition, however, indirectly signifies the success of the biennales to offer different perspectives in seeing architecture, escaping the pragmatism of architectural design, and to delve into the intangible aspects of architecture: anything but formal and visual aesthetics. Opposing Schumacher's contention, these intangible layers, I argue, add richness to the physical presence of architecture and become a sign that architecture as a built form stands on an underlying solid bedrock formed by grounded issues in society. This is a display of the interweaving connection between architecture and its context, and that architectural design is not simply a design exercise, but a study of intelligence, sensibility and empathy of the architect that elevates the significance of architecture.

One of the attempts to amalgamate the idea of Indonesian Architecture was displayed in the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale that marked Indonesia's first participation. Curated by Rem Koolhaas, the event held the theme of 'Absorbing Modernity: 1914-2014', observing retrospectively how architecture of each participating country has changed over a 100 years period, and analysing the influence of modernity on the local architecture, to see what has been lost, found, and transformed

⁵¹ The Venice Biennale is an international exhibition that encompasses various disciplines of art, including contemporary art, music, theatre, film, dance and architecture. Initiated in 1895, the exhibition originally took the name of *l'Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia* (1st International Art Exhibition of the City of Venice) focusing solely on art, before national pavilions were added in 1907 and then architecture in 1968. The independent architecture section of the biennale was established later in 1980.

of the national characteristics. Indonesia's pavilion of this Biennale was curated by five of Indonesia's notable architects: Avianti Armand, Setiadi Sopandi, David Hutama, Achmad Tardiyana, and Robin Hartanto. The pavilion took the theme of Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness (*Ketukangan: Kesadaran Material*), highlighting six local materials (i.e. wood, stone, brick, concrete, metal and bamboo) and observing their evolution, particularly how they have been used from time to time both in a vernacular and modern way. The curators argued that craftsmanship was an indivisible attribute of Indonesia's architectural identity for its capability to link with the formal aspects of architecture and with the social-cultural aspects of place. It was deemed an antithesis to modern building methods, as it put craftsmen as the main protagonists (the contractor, master builder, artisan, and architect at the same time), a contrast to the common method that put the architect merely as a link in a long chain, together with the clients, contractors, workers, users, and other parties that contribute to the very existence of one particular building. Craftsmanship thus allowed the craftsman to become both the architect and the builder of the house, creating a stronger connection to the building (Anex & Hartanto, 2014; Armand, Sopandi, Hutama, Hartanto, & Tardiyana, 2014, pp. 14-18), and to its social connection, as "a call to craftsmanship means a call for shaping the small economies, creative industries, and informal communities" (Ang, 2014).

This pavilion was considered successful in eliminating the stereotype of traditional architecture as the common image of Southeast Asian architecture, and showcasing Indonesian architects' new level of confidence in manipulating and contemporising local material, highlighting the tension between local craftsmanship and modern industrialization (Ang, 2014; Wal, 2014). The pavilion, however, was accused of not showing the common practices in Indonesia, as contemporary examples displayed were mostly aesthetic-driven typologies owned by Indonesian *bourgeoisies* or even foreigners. The discussion also put the architects under the spotlight instead of the role of the craftsmen, not so different from the common pattern of 'Starchitect' idolisation. The physical attribute of the materials also dominated the discussion while other contextual aspects were pushed aside as if this pavilion validated the position of tangible elements overshadowing the non-physical facets in architecture (Ang, 2014; Purwaningrum, 2019, p. 16; Wal, 2014; Widiastuti, 2015). Moreover, the examples chosen were dominated by residential and hospitality projects, omitting larger scale projects that are common in the urban landscape of Indonesia. Budiman Hendropurnomo has a particular disagreement with this selection, as he mentions that a country should not be represented with small projects like residential projects since these kinds of projects are very elitist and owned by certain social groups in society. These small projects cannot be considered as the representation of the society itself, especially when the public cannot enter, let alone experience, the buildings in person. He argues that larger-scale projects (e.g. apartments, public housing, schools, or religious buildings) would be

more appropriate examples to elucidate Indonesia and its architecture (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September), although I suspect that his bias is influenced by his fascination with big-scale public buildings since most of his projects, if not all, are large buildings and towers. Hendropurnomo's association with Melbourne based architecture firm, Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) also gives a significant influence on his eagerness to frame Indonesian Architecture within the stream of world trends, in this case, the massive urban development of sophisticated green towers and buildings.



Figure 10. Indonesia Pavilion at Venice Biennale of Architecture 2018

Source: Laurian Ghinițoiu, courtesy of ArchDaily, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

The second time Indonesia was invited to the same exhibition was in 2018 when the Biennale brought the theme of 'Free Space' curated by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara. The Indonesian pavilion presented the theme of '*Sunyata: A Poetic of Emptiness*', curated by Ary Indra, David Hutama, Dimas

Satria, Ardy Hartono, Johanes Adika, and Jonathan Aditya (Figure 10).⁵² The pavilion tried to capture the presence of emptiness or void that was considered as strongly rooted in Indonesian architecture ("Poetic Emptiness: Curatorial Statement for 'Sunyata', the Indonesian Pavilion at Venice Architecture Biennale 2018," 2018). The void itself was seen as "the crux of spatial organization" in Indonesian traditional architecture, while the emptiness was "an active entity, an instrument that injects order into the void ... a quality present within the void" (Indra & Setiadi, 2018). By presenting the volumetric spatial order of architecture rather than the formal one, this exhibition aimed to create a space where people can escape from their dependency on their eyes in appreciating architecture (A. Indra 2018, pers. comm., 1 September). Inside the Arsenale, a 21m by 18m piece of paper was hung horizontally and was let to curve down under its own weight, creating a different experience when walking around the installation. The curators invited visitors to make a connection with the emptiness of the space and to evoke some feelings that might emerge due to any similar experience that they might have had. This led people to be active determinants and main agencies in making a connection to the place, and put forward the thought of a "dialogue between human and space as the core of architectural manifestation" ("Poetic Emptiness: Curatorial Statement for 'Sunyata', the Indonesian Pavilion at Venice Architecture Biennale 2018," 2018).

Sunyata tried to challenge the common definition of architecture by stripping off any decoration and aesthetical element, and, instead, relied solely on the void-ness of the room and the sequence created by the hung paper. It made architectural elements, like a wall, floor and roof, have less significance except as an enclosure to create the void that, as suggested by Frampton's critical regionalism, "open to levels of perception other than the visual" (Frampton, 1987, p. 385). It initiated an experience that required the entire sensorium to perceive, to feel instead of to see, although the perception attained by the visitors might be varied and out of the curators' hands to predict, let alone to control. As the space had no ornaments or decorations that attracted the eyes, visitors were expected "to spend their time interacting with the surrounding air, sound and other people, or have a quiet moment of self-reflection" (Sarahtika, 2017). This representation thus required a certain degree of contemplation as a prerequisite, and any connection built between the person and the installation solely depended on one's emotional and physiological readiness and willingness to 'feel' the space, hence would be different from person to person. However, this kind of presentation, regardless of how interesting, was difficult to engage the visitors long enough to allow them to understand the narration conveyed, especially with contemporary culture that values things based on visual attraction and with the

⁵² *Sunyata* is originally a Sanskrit word '*sunyata*' means emptiness and voidness. It comes from the word *sunya* or *shunya* means zero, empty, void, or hollow. See Indra and Setiadi (2018).

domination of social media that directs people to do cyclic pattern of 'stop, click, leave'. Indra himself admits that not every visitor could grasp the message of the exhibition, as many just came and walked around the installation, then left after taking pictures. The intention "to restore the quality of space in architecture ... [where] humans are the main element of architecture" (Sarahtika, 2017) was thus hardly delivered to this segment of visitors. Yet Indra adds that some visitors did contemplate in the room and claimed to feel 'something', and, interestingly, those visitors were mostly Asian people. He thus suspects that his message of void and emptiness requires a specific 'cultural index' to be understood, a cultural understanding that is perhaps quite similar throughout South-East Asia (A. Indra 2018, pers. comm., 1 September).

Trying to be appealing with minimum ocular engagement was a way for the curators to critique the visual hegemony in architecture. This exhibition, however, did not convey its point clearly enough in terms of the conception of the 'emptiness', whether it was a phenomenological or physical construction. The way it was presented displayed an active space quality of emptiness that evoked human senses by space manipulation of scale, material, light and ventilation. The emptiness was thus treated as a ritualization process of the space that emphasised the metaphysical aspect of architecture. This, therefore, becomes perplexing when the curators, in the exhibition booklet (Setiadi, 2018, pp. 27-43), started to logicalise the 'mystery' of creating emptiness by providing some lists as a 'recipe' to create emptiness. This reduces the richness and complexity of the *sunyata* itself, especially when some of the illustrations offered depict a hazy connection with the definition of emptiness determined earlier. When it is mentioned that, for instance, a concentric model of voidness has three characteristics (i.e. a concentric space; a proportionally tall space; and a play of light that comes from the top of the building), one can question whether this list is exhaustive and whether any space that possesses those features instantly falls into this category. And also, how do we distinguish everyday empty spaces within random buildings from 'the' empty space that the curators aim to portray here? Yet, amidst the unclarity, it is fascinating to acknowledge that the value of voidness itself is rather more universal than local. Emptiness as a contemplating place is present not only in Indonesian Architecture but also in many other architectures in the world. The nave of San Josemaría Escrivá Church in Mexico, the prayer room of Blue Mosque in Istanbul, the 'Tower of Faces' of U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC and La Trobe Reading Room of State Library Victoria in Melbourne are a very few examples within the many buildings which might possess a similar quality of voidness that the curators intend to capture. It is compelling to note that even traditional architecture, as the point of departure in the *Sunyata* exhibition, has a timeless and universal value which is shared beyond the political and cultural border of Indonesia, and it thus becomes a proof that 'local' and 'universal' are not always in opposition.



Figure 11. Trokomod in 2015 Venice Art Biennale

Source: Luciano Romano, courtesy of Bumi Purnati Indonesia, 2015 (reprinted with permission)

Both Craftsmanship and *Sunyata* exhibitions put local topics in a contemporary and universal context, presenting a fluid Indonesian architectural identity that adjusts to the temporal context of globalization. This 'glocal' direction has been adopted in many other international exhibitions, including Art exhibitions held by the same organization in 2015 and 2019. In the 2015 Venice Art Biennale, Indonesia represented itself with the theme of Voyage, presenting a fusion of globalization and local culture. The main artist for this pavilion was Heri Dono, one of Indonesia's most acclaimed contemporary artists who uses his artworks to deliver messages and critiques about injustice, oppression, dictatorship and environmental issues. The pavilion itself told a story about Western colonialism in Indonesia that was started the spice trade; about Indonesia's independence era, including Sukarno's speech at the UN; and the nation's present struggles (Perdani, 2015). The main installation was called Trokomod, a hybrid of Trojan horse and Komodo dragon combined, a symbol of the colliding 'East and West' (Figure 11). Through this pavilion, Dono critiqued Western hegemony by reversing the position of who was seen and who was being seen, thus instead of presenting Indonesia's exotic culture from the Western point of view, he switched the role showing Western

icons from an Eastern perspective. This reflects the 'imagined' equality between the East and the West that both sides can be both protagonists and antagonists, both active subject and passive object, especially in terms of knowledge construction. With this pavilion, Dono aimed to put Indonesia on the global map, and it is clearly stated in his interview with *The Jakarta Post*: "in the global art scene, Indonesia has always been a blank spot - it is never talked about ... we want to be seen as equal" (Perdani, 2015).

Aside from those new progressive directions in imagining the nation's identity, incorporating various hybrid thinkings to synthesize East and West together, the domination of traditional culture appears still to be strongly held in contemporary Indonesia. This is evident in some other exhibitions that include cultural artifacts and activities together with contemporary developments in the display. One of the recent exhibitions was Indonesia's pavilion at the International Monetary Fund-World Bank (IMF-WB) Annual Meetings 2018 in Bali. Held by the Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises of Indonesia, the purpose of this pavilion was to showcase many strategic infrastructure projects and current development progress, including toll roads, airports and seaports, while offering information on investment projects and new tourist destinations with the hope to attract investors (Tang, 2018). The pavilion also exhibited many arts and crafts from 150 micro and creative industries and was targeted to make at least USD 460 thousand from the sales during the exhibition, although the actual turnover was far less than that. What was interesting was the presence of traditional house models as part of the promotion for the cultural and tourism sector, displayed together with other cultural presentations including the making of batik, flutes, hand fans, masks, and many other crafts (Saputro, 2018) (Figure 12). Although it is apparent that this pavilion was mostly profit-oriented, the way the government presented the nation by presenting the traditional culture side by side with the modern infrastructure projects is rather compelling. It was a literal elucidation without any further analysis nor synthesis with any other issues encircling the topic of identity itself. Exoticism was still strongly perceived as part of Indonesia's identity, and it was being embraced proudly by the government, although most of what was presented in this pavilion were only treated as a commodity rather than the actual living culture. In contrast to the discussion of the Venice Biennale exhibitions in which the curators tried to challenge Western domination, or at least to question it, in this pavilion the government openly accepted the Western exotic view of Indonesia and made use of it to gain profit through sales, trade, and tourism. Regardless of the criticism of this approach, it is crucial to admit that selling exoticism is still popular among Indonesian people, that most of the time, and mostly unconsciously, they assume that selling culture to the international world is part of culture preservation method and reflects their pride in the national heritage. Little do they realize that "touristic ethnicity ... is phony ethnicity ... as [it is] unauthentic, unworthy of anything more than

expose” (R. E. Wood, 1997, p. 2), and it brings many disruptions, many of which are bad and unexpected effects on society. The nature of tourism is never authentic, as culture has to be “reconstructed to become a tourist attraction, and when tourism has deeply infiltrated the system of society, it becomes inseparable from the culture itself” (Purwaningrum & Ardhyanto, 2018, pp. 5-6).



Figure 12. Indonesia’s pavilion at the International Monetary Fund-World Bank (IMF-WB) Annual Meetings 2018 in Bali, presenting traditional house models as part of the attraction

Source: Angga Yuniar, courtesy of Liputan6.com, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

The government’s initial purpose (to attract investors and make profit) is the exact opposite of other exhibitions curated by artists and architects, as was clearly stated by Jim Supangkat, one of the jury that selected curators for 2019 Venice Art Biennale: that the artworks were not expected to promote Indonesia in terms of tourism or other potentials. This was made clear by providing three main contents: comments, research, and critiques of various problems and discourses in global contemporary arts. These three contents, Supangkat argues, were embedded in this Biennale exhibition with the title of *Akal tak Sekali Datang, Runding tak Sekali Tiba* (Reason and Negotiation Never Come Just Once) showcasing artworks by artists Handiwirman Saputra and Syagini Ratna Wulan. This pavilion emphasized the importance of process while mocking the fast-moving digital world where any information is immediately available for everyone. Moreover, Supangkat claims that the

purpose of joining the exhibition was not about showcasing to the international world that Indonesia, albeit an 'unpopular' developing country, also had high-quality contemporary art, it was about how contemporary art in Indonesia became part of the development of world art. This is a distinct starting point that strongly indicates the confidence that Indonesia has and that it has always been part of international culture. Thus conveying identity does not have to be in the form of showcasing itself, but through conveying its thoughts and alternative perspectives on the problems shared by the global audience ("Artistic Team of Indonesia Pavilion for Venice Art Biennale 2019 is Announced," 2018; "Venice - National Participation," 2018).

The five pavilions discussed showed the divergence of how Indonesia represents itself in the international world. There has always been a discussion and criticism that follows each representation, and it can be seen as a constructive process that strengthens, as it challenges, people's understanding of their own country. Indonesia's pavilions in the biennales have shown immense efforts to capture the contemporary side of Indonesia and break free from the trap of traditionalism, how the Orientalist view would see the country. What is interesting, from my perspective, is that although there have been various syntheses between the East and the West in the process, the framework employed in some of the exhibitions still dwells on the comparison between Indonesia and the West. The craftsmanship themed pavilion highlights the difference between Eastern craftsmen, who are the master builders, and Western architects, who are just a part of a long list of professionals taking part in the project. The Voyage exhibition with its Trokomod ship bluntly challenges the 'East and West' concept by taking a 'revenge' by putting the East as the subject and the observer of Western culture, the opposite of an Orientalist perspective. Despite their contemporary approaches and their opposite views on Eastern exoticism, these two exhibitions still used the same stage offered by Orientalism, that is, maintaining the urge to put the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy and putting the West as a patron from which Indonesia gains its significance by providing the contrast. Although the East was no longer positioned as 'lower' than the West, yet the Orientalist's binary thinking, conscious or unconsciously, was still used as the main foundation that underpinned the arguments, where "the Orient has helped to design Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (Said, 1979, pp. 1-2). With the same framework as in Orientalism, Indonesia built its national identity by accentuating its unique and peculiar features, and this can be considered as a 'neo-exoticism' which hinges on "the binary opposition between something strange and familiar" (Setiawan & Subahianto, 2019, p. 198).⁵³ This may evoke further discussion, yet overall, what needs to be underlined is that any

⁵³ Neo-exoticism is a new way to 'exoticize' the country using 'contemporary eccentricity', instead of 'pure' traditional features, to showcase the attractiveness of Indonesian peculiarity that is distant to any Western

representation, either to exoticise or contemporarise Indonesia, should be critically examined to achieve a wider and more comprehensive understanding of this intricate topic of self-identity rendition. Regardless of the agreement or disagreement toward the content presented, every exhibition displaying Indonesia to an international audience needs to be recognized as part of an effort to delve into the Indonesian identity.

IV.4. The problematic conception of Indonesian Architecture and its alternative direction

After a long search throughout history, Indonesian Architecture is still very much undefinable, and even vaguer than before as the discussion is now growing far beyond the boundary of architecture. Indonesian Architecture as a representative of national identity is, and has always been, moving and changing, and it is a blatantly implausible task to interpret it in one finite and exclusive way, especially if one expects the terminology to have one uniform translation in architecture. By doing so means to disregard the complexity of the context surrounding the terminology and the diversity of the people who might perceive it. One better way is to see Indonesian Architecture as a process of ‘becoming’ instead of as a finished product, as it is repeatedly being contested, reproduced and reconstructed in the various form of transplants, transference, translation, and also syncretism (Missingham & Selenitsch, 2002, p. 4). Moreover, as the government’s authority and the architects’ standpoints influence the way the idea of identity is grasped and adopted, any design translations, therefore, have to be scrutinised both in and beyond their design scope, to better understand the broader aspects other than their mere physical aesthetic. I take account of Kim Dovey’s approach in investigating theories as he suggests that one should “judge concepts and ideas on the basis of what they enable us to do and see, and how they enable us to analyse and think” (Dovey, 2010, p. 6). Architectural design, therefore, should be assessed not only on its physical contribution to design discourse, in which the exercise of design approaches and methods are explored, but also on its social, cultural and political endowment to the place and the people as the basis of further analysis and thinking about and around the design itself.

culture. Although the discourse is still based on peculiarity, diversity, traditionalism and primitiveness that is constructed to serve the metropolitan view, yet the domestication process of creating ‘otherness’ is now acknowledging the hybrid culture in which local people have developed. Neo-exoticism operates on the distinction of ‘strange and familiar’ that can be curated to serve different political needs and purposes. See Setiawan and Subaharianto (2019).

The assimilation process of defining Indonesian Architecture is ongoing and is repeatedly being contested and constructed in the form of socio-cultural transplantation, adjustment, adaptation, accommodation, assimilation, hybridization, and materialization (Widodo, 2006, p. 17). Indonesian Architecture is not an independent entity, but rather a culmination of influences of local vernacular elements with features from China, Japan, India, Persia and Europe, and a mixture of modern, traditional, vernacular, Islamic, Chinese, Hindu, and colonial architecture (Nas, 2007, p. 9). Taking this into account, it is also important to underscore the fact that Indonesia's traditional architecture, which has been deemed as 'authentically' Indonesia, is not a purely 'native' culture but rather a compilation of foreign influences with native elements. Therefore, representing Indonesia with the language of traditional architecture means, conscious or unconsciously, acknowledging the foreign influence as part of the identity of the country. It thus appears as a double standard when other architecture in Indonesia, for instance, the Dutch colonial building, is deemed as a 'foreign' entity, more foreign than the traditional architecture. This logical fallacy creates an invalid argument positioning one as 'more Indonesia' than others. Moreover, it is also worth it to revisit the idea of 'Indonesia' itself: what is Indonesia? A recent study suggests that even Indonesian people are not purely 'Indonesian' as they carry different genetics originally from other countries, hence a proof that Indonesian people themselves are mixtures of different origins.⁵⁴ Therefore the narration of 'originality' in Indonesian identity might be challenged by questioning the definition of originality itself.

Aside from the external influences, there are also tensions come from within the country. The contestation between 'regional versus subregional' and 'history versus contemporary' have been the most prominent in the discussion. Finding architectural representations that do not dwell on the traditional image of the country requires architects to choose more universal translations that both modern but still possess a 'spirit' of Indonesia, or so they claim, as was displayed in both Venice Architecture Biennales. However, this approach unexpectedly highlights the 'elite versus peasant' and the 'urban versus rural' tensions, or Herbert Gans's (1975) 'taste culture', since the representations chosen are usually elitist, a depiction of high culture instead of a popular one.⁵⁵ One could argue that

⁵⁴ A study on 6,000 samples of DNA from different locations in Indonesia reveals that the ancestors of Indonesia did not come originally from the archipelago, instead they came in three main waves: 50,000 years ago from Africa; then 30,000 years ago from Vietnam; and then 5,000 to 6,000 years ago from Formosa (now Taiwan). The migration continued afterward, influenced by notable events in history, like the spread of Hinduism and Islam. See Sudoyo (2017).

⁵⁵ Herbert Gans (1975) suggests a term 'taste culture' to depict that cultures are heavily influenced by classes and statuses of their adherents, as the 'taste' and the understandings put in perceiving culture are not general concessions among all members of a heterogeneous society. In his argument, he asserts that "all taste cultures are of equal worth" (Gans, 1975, p. xiii). However, he highlights that 'high' culture, by educated elites, is "employed by one high-status group to assert the superiority of its own taste culture ... [to] all those less

choosing urban life to represent Indonesia is a valid argument since almost 70% of Indonesia will be urbanised by 2025 (Pitoko, 2016). However, the opulence of architecture representations chosen in the discussion is not even reachable for the urban middle class, let alone the lower-class people. Even in the life of progressive urban Jakarta, the city still has many *kampung* and slum areas shattered both around the city centre and on its fringes, where the problem of decent living and soaring land and property prices have been prominent in the last decade. Representing the country with immoderate generously-sized architecture is, therefore, problematic. Since Indonesia, as a country, would be very unlikely to stand comfortably among these social-economic dynamics, thus putting any single representation thus will always be debatable.

Designing architecture for the specific context of Indonesia, especially when it is then claimed as a representation of Indonesian identity, should consider not only the context's cultural-historical terms, but also its socio-temporal aspects (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 33; Çizgen, 2012, pp. 5-6; Hidayatun & Damayanti, 2003, p. 65; Kusno, 2013, pp. 58-59; Tardiyana, 2005, p. 19). Contemporary issues like the current existence of urban *kampung*, street vendors, informal settlements, shopping centres, traffic jams, recurrent flooding, and even the rise of radicalism in Islam and recent anti-feminism movement among some Indonesian women become a context to be recognised as part of the social-political aspects of locality, as has been extensively discussed by Abidin Kusno in his books (Kusno, 2000, 2010a, 2013; Kusno, Budiman, Zhong, & Prijotomo, 2012). Positioning Indonesian Architecture in its intra-national debate thus has to transect the borders of rich and poor, city and village, Java and non-Java, tradition and contemporary. The exclusivity of culture, the dissected social and economic class, the political fanaticism and the fetishism of particular stylistic appearances need to be unfastened and even traversed to arrive at a more elaborated discussion of Indonesian Architecture. The idea of locality, from which architects gain inspiration, need to be repeatedly contested and constructed to adjust to the current situation of the society to avoid the 'error of temporal compression' – assuming what is true at one time remains true at another (Missingham & Selenitsch, 2002, p. 9). Therefore, understanding culture has to be based on the presumption that it is a "manifestation of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively" ("Culture," 2018) that recognises the dynamic changes in society as a legitimate culture shaper, hence a machinic assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). The perception of what is Indonesia from the perspective of laypeople should also be taken into account, as their everyday living is an exposition of the condition of the society. Even if their approach is far from an expert's 'ideal' expectation, yet it is still another side of an "ongoing contestations of

educated or privileged ... [in order] to force changes in the content and availability of those taste cultures presently enjoyed by their social inferiors, or, more simply, as status politics" (Hirsch, 1976, pp. 487-488).

formulation of identity” among the diverse society that is an indivisible part of Indonesia (Achmadi, 2008, p. 89).

However, it is a paradox that the more inclusive the idea of Indonesian Architecture, the further it becomes disconnected from the pragmatism of architectural design itself, especially that the discussion has been addressed mostly at a theoretical level. Translating the idea of inclusive Indonesian Architecture into built form becomes an arduous challenge for architects since no such ‘guideline’ can be used to help translate the abstract idea into an architectural drawing. This illustrates the gap between theory and practice in the architecture discipline, so that Harsha Munasinghe explicitly states that “theories of architecture are not vehicles for architectural works, but vehicles for subscribing to certain world views” (Munasinghe, 2007). Furthermore, with all these intricacies and with no recipe in the making of Indonesian Architecture, architects thus have no choice but to impose their personal understanding in their design. Problems appear when the translations offered are criticised as lacking depth and dwelling at the level of ‘beautification’, a criticism that leads to a disjunction between theorists and professional architects. It is thus evident that the development of Indonesian Architecture at a theoretical level does not necessarily bring any significant contribution in architectural design, especially so that some theorists even question whether or not the ‘real’ Indonesian Architecture really exists (Nas, 2007, p. 9; Prijotomo, 1997, p. 9).

Amidst the perplexity over the conception of Indonesian Architecture, new terminology was introduced in the 1980s as a more ‘practical’ solution that supposedly offered a clearer and more concrete direction in achieving a sense of Indonesian identity in built form. The idea of ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ was initiated as a movement to go back to Indonesian cultural roots as a source for the country’s identity.⁵⁶ This new terminology has been widely, despite slowly, developing since then and reached its peak popularity after Indonesian ‘starchitect’, Yori Antar, used this phrase quite extensively in a traditional architecture preservation program of Wae Rebo (see Chapter V.3 for Wae Rebo preservation project). The idea grew to the national level after a big private paint company, Propan Raya, incorporated this idea as a tagline for their design competition, which was then incorporated by the government for their tourism program (see Chapter VI.2 for the development of

⁵⁶ I use the articulation of ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ in this thesis as an established terminology, an ideation of identity of the archipelago of Indonesia offered by Josef Prijotomo in the ‘80s as a counter-argument to the vagueness of the term ‘Indonesian Architecture’. This term offers to see identity from the cultural space (*ruang budaya*), detaching itself from political discussion. I use this term of Nusantara Architecture as a definitive term, pointing to a specific ‘stylistic’ stream, and not just merely any architecture in Nusantara (the archipelago). I use this consistently throughout this thesis.

the design competition and the tourism program). Nusantara Architecture was initiated to promote traditional architecture as a library and a concrete ground on which architects can comfortably build their design approach, especially now that this term has been accepted by most Indonesian architects as a strategic method to 'localise', if not 'traditionalise', architecture. The capacity of this term to offer both a pragmatic design solution as well as an ideological narration seemed appealing for the architects and the government, and with this interesting capacity the popularity of Nusantara Architecture soared unprecedentedly in the last decade alone.

IV.5. Summary

This chapter gives a historical context of the construction of Indonesian architectural identity by discussing the long journey to define Indonesian Architecture from the time of the Dutch colonials to the present day. Countless attempts have been made to employ architecture as a medium to convey Indonesian identity, from deliberate architectural and cultural experimentation made by Ponts and Karsten; the nation-building projects by Sukarno and Suharto; the shifts in approaching architecture following the political turmoil of Reformation; the efforts to create a contemporary face of Indonesia in various international exhibitions; to the recent emergence of Nusantara Architecture. At every stage, regardless of the physical forms employed, the direction of identity has always been influenced by the political condition of the country and the global geopolitical dynamics, meaning that architecture can never escape from its social-political contexts from within or outside the country. These internal and external forces have given a constant challenge that complicates the ideation process, as any architectural translation of identity is expected to inclusively represent the intricate relations of regional-global, history-contemporary, elite-peasant, and urban-rural so that it will not only become an empty spectacle that relies only on aesthetic connections. These interweaving issues create complexities that require the process to be constructed and reconstructed over time, and this makes the topic of identity become pertinent and persistent, particularly in the architectural discipline. In this sense, it becomes crucial to always requestion the meaning of identity, the point aimed at conveying it, the complexity in constructing it, and the perspective used in translating it. It is also important to ask how should one imagine the country's identity: is it from the perspective of Indonesian people seeing their own country, or is it based on expectations of an international audience?

The intra-national interpretation of identity has been largely determined by the political atmosphere of the country, and it is aligned with Lawrence Vale's (2008) argument that some leaders did impose

the direction of how the country should be represented. These phenomena were apparent especially in the pre-Reformation authoritarian era of Sukarno and Suharto who made decisions and regulations over stylistic architectural features that could or could not be employed in the identity translation. This changed in the post-Reformation era whose emancipatory agenda of 'freedom of speech' marked the liberation of artistic expression, including in architecture, creating a promising political condition for further exploratory experimentation on identity contestation. This state of political freedom and openness allowed architects to freely showcase their versions of the country's identity, despite the presence of the government agencies as decision-makers who decide whether or not these representations are 'appropriate' as the face of Indonesia. The process shifted from censorship to a more curatorial or competition jury, posing indirect control while maintaining the sense of independence of the architects. The government's authority over identity construction strengthens and becomes more pronounced in the era of Joko Widodo, as he supports the recent emergence of 'Nusantaran Architecture' and incorporates it as a tagline for the national tourism development strategies. In this case, although it somehow evokes the traditionalism accentuated by Suharto, it is yet different from the era of that predecessor who employed culture as a tool to legitimise his position and to pacify people's anxiety over their forced detachment from politics. Widodo's use of culture tend to serve capitalism, regardless of his self-branding or putting forward *pro-rakyat* (pro-people) policies and representing *wong cilik* (small people). I discuss further the national tourism agenda and Widodo's approach to culture in Chapter VI.

What is notable in this discussion is that although history has shown a wide range of architectural identity translations for Indonesia, arguments used in the construction process still mostly highlight the prominence of the 'West and East' comparison, putting forward the 'us' against 'them' narration. This direction can still be categorised as part of the development of Orientalism, despite the contrast value embedded: employing the term 'East' is no longer an instrument to marginalise Global-south people, instead, it is used as an empowering apparatus creating a significance in being a 'unique' part of the world. This direction, however, is seen as a faux 'emancipation', still a sign of a colonised thinking, as this does not contribute to any liberation in thinking still to be bound to the framework that sees the West as the 'patron'. As this is still a subtle extension of the wider binaries of advanced-primitive, core-periphery, and modern-traditional (Dados & Connell, 2012, p. 12), there has been a movement initiated by scholars from Global-south countries to instigate a new framework free from the hegemony of Western canons. With this liberated framework, identity is hoped to be imagined as an elucidation of the county's reality, rather than creating a false image merely to fulfill Western expectations. Furthermore, it is important to note that this phenomenon is not only happening in Indonesia but also all over the world, especially in the Global-south postcolonial countries where the

issue of identity becomes prevalent as a discussion to define themselves escaping the hegemony of colonial history (see Chapter II.2 for elaboration on East and West tensions on identity imagination in Global-south countries). These global phenomena are catalysed by at least two paradoxical contexts: an anti-imperialism spirit and pro-capitalism. In my argument here, I point out that the anti-imperialism spirit creates an urge to present an identity distinct from the colonist, while the pro-capitalist inclination serves as a platform to accentuate and commodify the exoticised identity, mostly through tourism. These become paradoxical since, as Vladimir Lenin argues, “imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general” (Lenin, 1999, p. 91). Capitalism has been thus deemed as a form of modern imperialism especially that the development of monopolist business companies has been ‘colonising’ undeveloped countries through labour and natural-resource exploitations and exportation of finance capital. These bring social inequalities and disparities, class conflicts, uneven development and a propensity towards crisis (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2013, pp. 19-20), all of which are the exact opposite to the initial purpose of the national-identity creation.

The above arguments elucidate the entangling complications between the identity construction process and the present of power and capital. With this in mind, culture can be seen as an intangible source that can be exploited like other forms of sources to serve the prosperity of hegemonic capitalism. This makes the following discussions in this thesis nowhere near linear and simple. In the next chapter, I discuss more elaborately the conception of Nusantara Architecture, starting from the background story of ‘Nusantara’ as a historical and geographical conception. I then continue to the current use of ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ as a terminology, especially scrutinising how it is used among theorists and academics, and how the pro and con positions in the discussion put their arguments. This understanding allows us to see the current perspective on how some Indonesian people are positioning themselves even more strongly against the Western domination, and willingly ‘traditionalise’ themselves as a way to gain a sense of identity. This appropriation is a sign of the ‘neo-exoticism’ view that has been prevalent in Indonesia and has influenced the development of architecture in the country.

Chapter V

Nusantaran Architecture as an Alternative Direction of Identity: A Scholarly Perspective

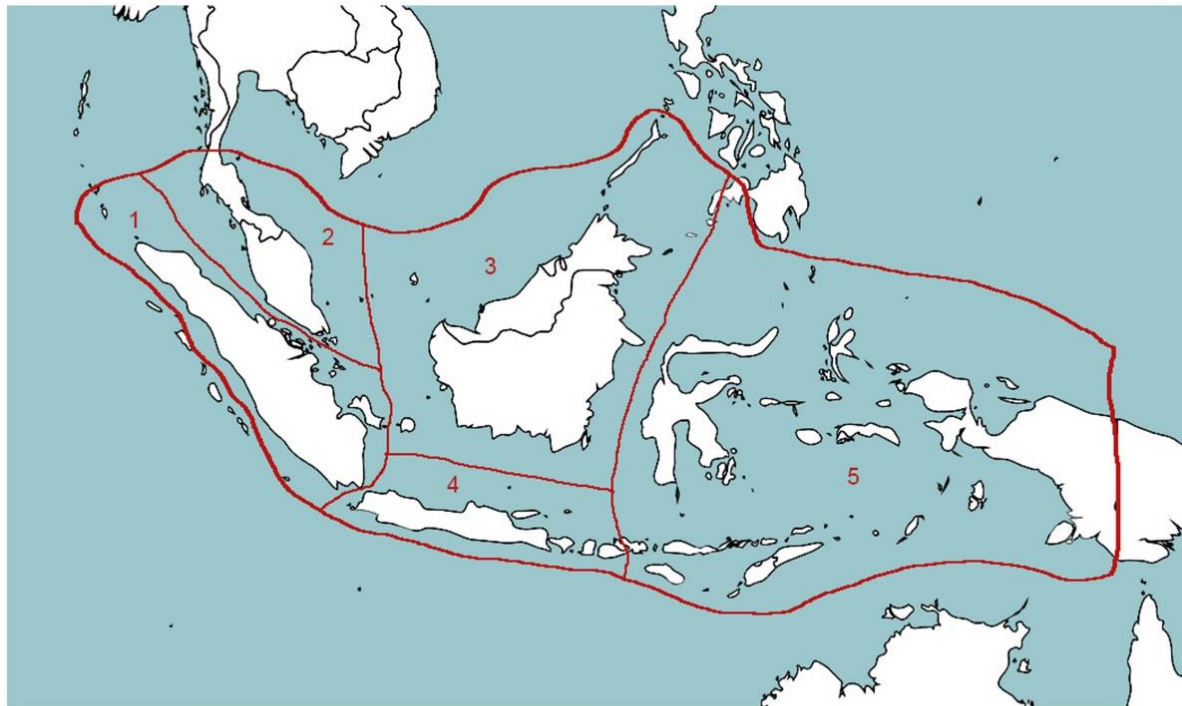
V.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the architectural history of identity construction in Indonesia. from the colonial years up to the contemporary time which culminates with the emergence of the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' emerges as an alternative direction. This chapter aims to extend the discussion by scrutinising the conception of Nusantara Architecture through contemporary scholarly debates among Indonesian academics. I will mainly analyse the problematic imaging of a distant past in the construction of contemporary identity shaped by the ruling regime and the academics to fulfil the need of having a representation of the county's identity. In my analysis, I will use the theorisations of identity constructions, especially by Lawrence Vale, as my analytical framing in dissecting the essentialist nature that idealises 'Nusantara' and 'Nusantaran Architecture', despite the terms' ambiguous meanings and lacking historical and empirical materials. As a result of this glorification, indigeneity, which is seen as the source of this identity construction, is treated as a seemingly finite and ahistorical entity.

I will begin this chapter by delving into the problematic underlying assumptions embedded in the framing of the historical construction of Majapahit and Nusantara, in particular by pointing to the contrasting standpoints that question the legitimacy of the conception of Nusantara itself. I will also investigate how the founding fathers of the country consistently appropriated this term for various political purposes, and how this term then became an 'alias' of Indonesia. In unpacking the unclarity of 'what is Nusantara', I propose a distinction in seeing the term from two possible contexts: the 'pre-colonial' and 'post-independence'. What I mean by the 'pre-colonial' meaning is the definition of Nusantara that refers to the history of the Majapahit Kingdom with its territory covering almost all of South East Asian archipelago. In contrast, the 'post-independence' meaning is the one that is associated with modern Indonesia, referring to territory inside the national border of the country. Through the investigation presented in this chapter, I argue that the articulation of 'Nusantaran Architecture' has been built on the narrative of Nusantara as constructed and promoted by the postcolonial ruling regime, that is the 'post-independence' meaning of Nusantara. This contradicts the claim of the supporters who keep accentuating the glorious 'pre-colonial' Majapahit story as the basis of their understanding.

I will use the next section to delineate the emergence of Nusantara Architecture, by revisiting what the founding father Prijotomo aims to achieve in launching this term as the new direction in architectural identity representation of the country. I then focus my analysis on how Indonesian academics position themselves in the debate on Nusantara Architecture. My analysis in this section is where I start to elaborate on the findings I got from my fieldwork, particularly to answer the first research question of this thesis. In mapping how the academics responded in the interview, academics from East Java and South Sulawesi gave full support on Nusantara Architecture, and thus in this chapter, I call these group as 'the supporters' of the conception. While some academics chose a neutral position, some others showed a strong disagreement to the conception, and hence I call this group 'the opposers' of the conception. In my analysis, I will take into account both the supporting and opposing arguments of the conception, and scrutinise how academics of each group demonstrate their reasonings in choosing their sides. I will extend this dialectic between the pros and the cons by expanding the discussion into a theoretical level. It aims to pinpoint some problematic stances in the construction of Nusantara Architecture, such as: the strong 'East and West' binary in the narration used in explaining the conception; the intention to sterilise the conception from politics; the arbitrary nature of the selective aesthetic framing of what could be categorised as 'Nusantaran Architecture'; and the exclusivity it unintentionally creates in defining the country's architectural identity.

In using the terms 'Indonesian Architecture' and 'Nusantaran Architecture' (with capital letters), I do not refer to any particular architecture styles or certain cultural artefacts, but rather to conceptions of the country's identity that is represented through architectural form. These conceptions are the main topic of discussion in this study, and Nusantara Architecture, in particular, is scrutinised in this chapter to see both the pros and cons. However, the analysis does not intend to offer a conclusive definition. Rather, it aims to highlight that Nusantara Architecture is a construct and highly contested conception, therefore, the conception has proven to be limited when read against the broader historical and political landscapes of the country.



The Division of *Nagaras* (Kingdoms) in Nusantara during Majapahit Periods (13th-14th century)
based on the book of *Nagarakertagama* (1365)

1. Nagara Melayu	3. Nagara Tanjungnegara	5. Nagara Makassar
2. Nagara Hujung Medini	4. Nagara Jawa	

Figure 13. The area of Majapahit Kingdom

Redrawn from: Mohamed Anwar Omar Din and Mahani Mohamad, 2016, p. 103

V.2. Re-reading the history of Nusantara

In this section, I focus my discussion on the term ‘Nusantara’ which has always been a familiar notion to Indonesian people, especially for the great story this term implies. I use this section to expand and to offer a more detailed explanation of what I already briefly discussed in Chapter 1.2 about the problematic construction of this term. To begin with, I should once again highlight that the term Nusantara offers a utopian idea of a big triumphant country. In this imaging, the country provides prosperity to the people and possesses astounding richness in its cultural diversity, while its people live harmoniously and peacefully side by side under the same authority of the leader. This depiction has deeply penetrated people’s minds and represents an ideal source from which contemporary Indonesia can take inspiration. The term ‘Nusantara’ originally came from the Kawi language and has the meaning of ‘archipelago’, from the words *nusya*—meaning ‘island’, and *antara*—meaning ‘within’ (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 37; Purwaningrum, 2017). This terminology was initially used in the era of the Majapahit Kingdom in 1331 (Vlekke, 1959, p. 69) under the reign of King Hayam Wuruk and Prime

Minister Gajah Mada to depict the area conquered by the kingdom. The area covered not only the Indonesian archipelago, but also Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, the Philippines, the Sulu Archipelago, southern Thailand, and East Timor (Arkandityo, 2016; Cribb, 2000, p. 87; "Majapahit," n.d.). Majapahit's supremacy over almost the entire archipelago of Southeast Asia has been considered as the most glorious period in the history of Indonesia, despite all the questions that follow (Figure 13).⁵⁷ As one of the most celebrated terms in Indonesia, Nusantara has grown its ideological roots in the people so that, most of the time, it successfully evokes people's sense of pride in belonging to the country. This ideological capacity has been strategically employed by the succession of ruling regimes of the postcolonial state to create an urge to unite under one authority, particularly in the beginning of the country's independence when internal conflicts became the main threat for the country's new existence.

V.2.1. Understanding Nusantara then and now

The 'pre-colonial' Nusantara

Indonesia's historiography tends to focus on the reproduction of what is perceived to be certain glorious past of the nation, often overlooking the different geopolitical landscape of the different historical eras. It also concentrates on the role of its revolutionary key figures (Bloembergen & Eickhoff, 2011, p. 407; Sudrajat, 2008, p. 41). The story of Nusantara has accentuated the role of the famous Prime Minister Gajah Mada in the imagining process of the 'glorious Indonesia' that was extensively employed to serve various political purposes in post-independent Indonesia. The conception of Nusantara has been considered a "fixed official version of the history" (Bloembergen & Eickhoff, 2011, p. 407), and due to extensive indoctrination by the government for decades, people started to perceive this historical account as 'the truth', regardless of its controversies. The main narration imposed was that the Majapahit Kingdom had once conquered the whole of 'Nusantara' under one authority and that Prime Minister Gajah Mada was positioned as "the country's first real nation-builder" (Grissom, 2012, p. Loc 394).

Gajah Mada mentioned the word Nusantara in his famous *Palapa* Oath, recorded in the Pararaton palm-leaf manuscript as the primary source of history for Majapahit and Nusantara.⁵⁸ This oldest

⁵⁷ For the history of the Majapahit Kingdom, see Bosch (1956); Cribb (2000); Din and Mohamad (2016); Meij (2011); Phalgunadi (1996); Vlekke (1959); M. Wood (2011).

⁵⁸ In Pararaton book, Gajah Mada's oath was illustrated as this (Phalgunadi, 1996, pp. 124-125):

remaining written account from the era has been perceived as legitimate, although many disagreements have surrounded the stories offered. The meaning of *palapa*, for instance, is translated differently, either as “*tantrist* rites introduced in Kertanagara's time” (Vlekke, 1959, p. 69); or as “taking a rest” (Phalgunadi, 1996, p. 14); or as *buah pala* (nutmeg) to describe spices or flavouring in food.

The term ‘Nusantara’, as a geographical conception, is also perceived differently by different scholars. The common understanding of this term refers to the area of 98 tributaries under the Majapahit Kingdoms’s sovereignty that covers Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Southern Thailand, Sulu archipelago, Philippines, and East Timor (Cribb, 2000, p. 87). Phalgunadi sees it as referring to the Indonesian archipelago, Tumasik (Singapore), the Malay Peninsula (West Malaysia), and North Borneo (East Malaysia) (Phalgunadi, 1996, p. 15). Vlekke understands it as “the four countries overseas” that once united under the crown of Kertanagara (Vlekke, 1959, p. 69). Aside from the debates over its geographical coverage, there are also disagreements over Majapahit’s political authority over these areas. The popular narrative is that Majapahit ruled (*menguasai*) Nusantara (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 37; Rahmawati, Tontowi, & Wakidi, 2013, p. 3; Rosyadi, 2015, p. 28), while others claim that these areas had a “subordinate relationship with Majapahit in the sense that it commanded tribute from local chiefs rather than governing them directly” (Grissom, 2012, p. Loc 388).⁵⁹ Phalgunadi and Vlekke agree that Majapahit maintained good relations with other countries like Siam (Muangthai), Marutma (Burma), Champa (Laos), Kamboja (Cambodia), Yavana (Vietnam), Annam, India, and China, but “there is no reason to assume that the outer islands were ever under direct Javanese rule” (Phalgunadi, 1996, p. 15; Vlekke, 1959, p. 72). Crib adds that:

“Majapahit fleets periodically visited many parts of the archipelago to obtain formal submission or in much the same way as they sent tribute to China, without any intention of submitting to orders from Eastern Java. The trading power of Majapahit gave it a powerful sanction against

“Sira Gajah Madapatih Amangkubhumi tan ayun amyktiha palapa, sira Gajah Mada: ‘Lamun huwus kalah Nusantara isun amukti palapa, lamun kalah ring Gurun, ring Seran, Tañung Pura, ring Haru, ring Pahang, ring Dampo, ring Bali, Sunda, Palembang, Tumasik, samana isun amukti palapa’”.

Translated as:

“Gajah Mada, the prime minister, did not want to take palapa. Gajah Mada said: ‘After conquering the whole island of Southeast Asia (Nusantara) I will enjoy palapa. When Gurun (New Guinea), Seram (South Moluccas), Tañung Pura (North Sumatra), Haru (North Moluccas), Pahang (Malaysia), Dampu (lesser Sunda), Bali, Sunda (West Java), Palembang (South Sumatra) and Tumasik (Singapore) are conquered, only I shall enjoy palapa’”.

⁵⁹ In the familiar narration of Nusantara that has been developing among Indonesian people, the Majapahit Kingdom was perceived to rule (*menguasai*) the Southeast Asian archipelago in a sense that it had full authority over the mentioned places. In Bahasa Indonesia, *menguasai* means a total power of authority over a specific area or thing, that includes “deciding, commanding, ruling, managing” of the ruled entity (“Kuasa,” n.d.).

defiant rulers. ... It is probably best, therefore, to see Majapahit's claims of empire as representing real authority, with the proviso that such authority never gave Majapahit significant administrative power outside Java, Bali and Madura" (Cribb, 2000, p. 87).

Moreover, Hasan Djafar, an Indonesian scholar, opposes using the word 'rule' to explain Majapahit's political position, as it implies that the kingdom was superior to the other kingdoms. He argues that Majapahit and the other kingdoms were *Mitreka Satata*, which was in an equal and mutual connection. He then proposes that the phrase Nusantara should be understood as 'the other islands' outside the Majapahit boundary and had nothing to do with the authority of the kingdom, thus the conception of Nusantara is similar to an association of kingdoms in a globalised way, and the members traded their commodities to one another rather than about ruling and having authority (Nurdiarsih, 2016).

These differences in understanding Majapahit's position over Nusantara have become a topic that is quite difficult to address, since the information given in the Pararaton and Negarakertagama manuscripts, as the primary sources for Majapahit history, is questionable in term of its validity. C.C. Berg questions the validity of the Negarakertagama book for he doubts Mpu Prapanca's proficiency in distinguishing facts and myths, and implies that some stories in Prapanca's book "never existed in reality" (Bosch, 1956, p. 6; M. Wood, 2011, p. 36). Cribb argues that the delineation of Nusantara in the book is merely a representation of "a sphere of limited influence ... or no more than a statement of geographical knowledge" (Cribb, 2000, p. 87). Vlekke suggests that the writer of these books "may have exaggerated" the supremacy of the kingdom and the king, especially when no evidence could prove the claim made in the books (G. Tjahjono 2017, pers. comm., 24 August; Vlekke, 1959, p. 72).⁶⁰ These questions also imply that the famous *Palapa* Oath is considered a myth; a moral fable; an aspiration; an unachieved goal; or a magical exercise to exaggerate the king's supremacy (Bosch, 1956, pp. 18-20; Nurdiarsih, 2016; Prijotomo, 2017, p. 59; Sudrajat, 2008, pp. 41-42; Vlekke, 1959, p. 6; M. Wood, 2011, p. 36).

⁶⁰ Although some scholars claim that there is evidence of Majapahit's authority in other areas in Indonesia, Vlekke responds by stating that the statue of a Javanese ruler in Sumatra, for example, does not directly indicate that the Majapahit reigned over the place. He says that there is not enough evidence to distinguish whether the statue was a triumphal token, or merely a present to the Sumatran king as part of their cooperation. See Vlekke (1959, p. 64).

The 'post-independence' Nusantara

The meaning of 'Nusantara' later shifted from its 'pre-colonial' origin. The conception of Nusantara started to evolve into its 'post-independence' meaning which has a specific territorial association with the political boundary of the Republic of Indonesia, from Sabang in the West to Merauke in the East, excluding the other countries mentioned in the controversies (Galih Widjil Pangarsa, 2008, p. 2; Purwaningrum, 2018). Indonesian scholars recognise both of the understandings but tend to use them interchangeably without caveat. Many scholars do not refer to a specific understanding in their discussion and, instead, they use Nusantara vaguely leading to ambiguity and inconsistency.⁶¹ Hidayatun and Wonoseputro (2005), for instance, use the term Nusantara as if it is interchangeable with many other terms: Indonesian archipelago; Southeast Asia; *Bumi Melayu* (Malayan world); *Bumi Pertiwi* (motherland of Indonesia); and Austronesia (Hidayatun & Wonoseputro, 2005, pp. 309-310). Bakhtiar et al. (2014) state that their understanding of Nusantara refers to the 'common understanding' they attained in their early educations, stating that "learning from a knowledge taught in primary schools, Nusantara is a very vast setting, that consists of islands and is inhabited by people with diverse culture" (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 43). Other scholars put Nusantara as an 'established' and widely understood conception, thus no longer needing further explanation (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 37; Prijotomo, 2017, p. 59; Yusran, 2016, pp. 8-10). These variations point to the vagueness of how the terminology of 'Nusantara' is perceived and used, that although many scholars seem to adopt and support this term, they use it in similarly vague and unclear ways. More problematically, very few, or even none of them, want to historicise it outside its common frame and ideation and none actually try to exercise how both pre-colonial and post-independence definitions sit in the broader context of the world's social and political history. For this, I argue that the terminology of Nusantara has long been taken for granted mostly due to people's overfamiliarity. This is menacing when a term that is so vague is taken as an absolute truth or an undisputed point of origin. Not only that it leads to a dogmatic view in believing the term as 'the' truth, but it also brings a problematic perspective if the distant past is idealised as a fixed given source of any identity construction. It leads to a threat of oversimplification that makes conclusions related to the term flattened, if not sterile, from any complex intertwined forces of history and socio-politics that surrounding the term. Identity

⁶¹ By arguing this, I do not intend to claim that both pre-colonial and post-independence 'Nusantara' have, or should have, specific and exclusive definitions. What I imply here is that when scholars use any of these terms, they should be able to explain what they mean by it in a comprehensive way and provide a theoretical background that supports their arguments; not just relying on vague delineations, especially if these delineations are solely based on a 'common understanding'.

construction remains treated as a skin-deep representation whose discussions cannot pass the point of the glorious ideal past and cultural richness as a national treasure.

If we trace how post-independence ‘Nusantara’ came into being, we can pinpoint at least two influential figures in the colonial time of Indonesia, among many scholars that had written stories about Nusantara, that reconstructed and popularised the term. The first was Douwes Dekker who brought back ‘Nusantara’ from the pre-Islam era to the pre-independence Indies, and who also initiated the shift of the meaning of the term to be an exclusive depiction of the Indonesian archipelago (Priyotomo, 2017, p. 59; Vlekke, 1959, p. 6). Some scholars, however, see this as a flawed historical record as they believe that Dekker proposed the term ‘Insulinde’, instead of Nusantara, to portray the people of the Indies (Avé, 1989, p. 228).⁶² The second national figure was Suwardi Surjaningrat, known as Ki Hadjar Dewantara, an Indonesian noble-born activist, writer, politician, and pioneer of Indonesian education, who formed the idea to revive the conception of ‘Nusantara’ when he was exiled to the Netherlands in 1918.⁶³ He developed an intention to find a name for the country that embodied its identity, unlike any terminologies that inherited foreign names, like India, Indies, or Insulinde. However, this idea did not receive a positive response because it did not have the capacity to evoke the same level of nationalism compared to the name ‘Indonesia’ (Avé, 1989, pp. 231-232; van der Kroef, 1951, p. 170; Vlekke, 1959, p. 380).^{64,65} The idea of Nusantara was then explored further

⁶² Douwes Dekker (1820-1887), who had a pseudonym of ‘Multatuli’, was a famous writer of an internationally recognised book entitled *Max Havelaar*. In this partly autobiographical book, he criticised the colonial administration and satirically attacked the Dutch bourgeoisie who he deemed as “pious and even unctuous among his kind, but laying his hands on every penny he could acquire from the Indies, while blandly ignoring the conditions under which the Indonesians toiled to produce this wealth” (Tikkanen, 2020; Vlekke, 1959, p. 304).

⁶³ Suwardi Surjaningrat, or Ki Hadjar Dewantara, was the founding father of *Taman Siswa* School (*taman*—means garden; *siswa*—means students), a revolutionary school for native people in the colonial era, founded in Yogyakarta in 1922. The school aimed to establish “a system of truly national Indonesian education” that was different from “the western type of schools which he considered too purely intellectual and too materialistic” (Vlekke, 1959, p. 380). He was heavily influenced by the philosophical ideas of Rabindranath Tagore, Maria Montessori, and Rudolf Steiner. By 1940, he had built 250 more *Taman Siswa* Schools throughout Indonesia (Kelch, 2014, pp. 14-17; Vlekke, 1959, p. 381).

⁶⁴ The term ‘Indonesia’ was initially used by English ethnologist G. W. Earl in 1850 and then adopted by German ethnologist Adolf Bastian in 1884 for his book title, and the acceptance of this book increased the popularity of the term among scholars and academics. The unclear definition of Indonesia was a subject of discussions, but when many Indonesian nationalist groups, both who lived in the Netherlands and in the East Indies, started to adopt it in the 1900s, the term Indonesia became strongly associated with nation, culture, and politics (Nagazumi, 1978, pp. 28-29; van der Kroef, 1951, pp. 166-168).

⁶⁵ The term Indonesia was officially employed in the national struggle against colonialism when it was incorporated in the declaration the Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) in the Second Youth Congress (*Kongres Pemuda Kedua*) on 28 October 1928. This moment became a legitimization of this term to become a unifier of otherwise divided groups. The Youth Pledge declaration goes as follows:

“Firstly, we, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, acknowledge one motherland, Indonesia.

Secondly, we, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, acknowledge one nation, the nation of Indonesia.

Thirdly, we, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, respect the language of unity, Indonesian”.

by Mohammad Yamin (Figure 14), an Indonesian poet, politician, historian, and nationalist, who found the conception very compelling in inspiring people to unite under one nation (Jusuf, 2013, pp. 36-37; Nurdiansih, 2016; M. Wood, 2011, pp. 36-37). Yamin saw the Majapahit setting “firm borders with which to define an independent state”, therefore at the time of Indonesia’s independence in 1945, he proposed the idea of the ‘Greater Indonesia’ while claiming that “all of island Southeast Asia be incorporated into the new nation, regardless of its current status” (M. Wood, 2011, pp. 36-37). In post-independence Indonesia, Yamin wrote a book entitled *Gajah Mada: The Hero of United Nusantara* (*Gadjah Mada: Pahlawan Persatuan Nusantara*), from which the conception of Nusantara became the official version that has been spread to and indoctrinated in Indonesian people. Not only did Yamin re-create the conception of ‘Nusantara’ and the Mighty Gajah Mada as the integrator of the country, he also illustrated the physical appearance of this hero that has been displayed in various educational books in Indonesia (Budianto, 2015). For this, Yamin has provided a complete, albeit questionable, story of the glorious Majapahit that becomes the basis of the people’s common conception of ‘Nusantara’, making it an ‘alias’ of Indonesia.



Figure 14. Mohammad Yamin, the writer who created imaginary conception of glorious Majapahit

Source: Litbang Kompas, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

Yamin's post-independence Nusantara received acceptance among Indonesian people after it was employed in various political campaigns and incorporated in school curricula. However, despite this acceptance, many questions followed this adoption. One question was about the selection of Majapahit that was 'championed' over many other kingdoms in the archipelago in the past. The fact that Indonesia is renowned as a Muslim majority country, for instance, has prompted many to question as to why not refer to an Islamic kingdom. There were many celebrated Islamic figures, such as Diponegoro, Imam Bonjol, and Teuku Umar who were battling the Dutch for independence, or Sultan Agung of Mataram who was able to reign over the Java and Madura Island (Febri, Wakidi, & Syaiful, 2016). These figures might have better information sources compared to Gajah Mada's story, which relied only on problematic historical records, yet Wood suggests that these Islamic figures were 'merely' seen as heroes in opposing colonialism, and were not as 'spectacular' as Hayam Wuruk and Gajah Mada who had been "venerated simply for their efforts in forming the nation" (M. Wood, 2011, p. 43). He asserts that this is somehow related to the Dutch colonials' predilection for bringing up the ancient Hindu-Buddist era that "Dutch scholars never developed the passion for Islamic antiquities that they had for those of ancient Hindu Java" (M. Wood, 2011, p. 38). If this is the case, then glorifying Majapahit and Nusantara might be directed by the preference of the colonial power, hence can be seen as another legacy of colonialism that has seeped into people's subconscious mind. The claim that associates 'Majapahit-isation' with 'locality' is somehow a paradox: the conception that was initially dictated by the colonists, who were anything but local, became a unifying tool for the locals to form a bond and to create a consciousness of an imagined nation. As Lawrence Vale argues, that despite sentimental, "an evocation of the past can be effectively used as a call for a new future", and this glorious distant past is needed to go beyond the present-day politics and threats of separatism. In this case, the term 'Nusantara', although problematic, does precisely that in a relatively successful way.

Another question that comes up is whether it is ethical to refer to Majapahit for the fact that the kingdom was imperialist. Behind Gajah Mada's glorious political ambition of land expansion, other states suffered from this oppression and imperialism. Wayan Jarrah Sastrawan explains that although these vassal states under Majapahit were protected, guarded, paying homage, bringing monthly gifts, and obedient to Majapahit's commands, yet any defiance shown "was attacked and wiped out completely by groups of naval officers, who were variously decorated" (Sastrawan, 2020).⁶⁶ This

⁶⁶ Sastrawan also mentions about Majapahit's religious domination as "religious scholars were sent in order to 'establish the doctrine' of Śiva and Buddha in the outer islands, 'so that there would not be deviation'" (Sastrawan, 2020). Vlekke adds that the story of *Kidung Sunda* (Song of Sunda) "offers a clue that may help us to understand the kind of the relationship then existing between Java and its overseas possessions" (Vlekke, 1959, p. 72). This story was a display of Majapahit's superior power over the smaller kingdoms who had to face

argument leads to an assumption that Nusantara under Majapahit was not a place of freedom, yet it was a place of distress and terror; and this is why many people might oppose the 'Majapahit-isation' of modern Indonesia. Susanto (2004) also argues that referring to the history of Majapahit has been a way to "revisit the history of violence in eliminating conflict in that time; and to justify the violence that has been used to annihilate, for instance, the resistance movements in Aceh, Maluku and Papua" (Susanto, 2004, p. 59).⁶⁷ He points out that the story of Majapahit, hence Nusantara, somehow, 'legalises' the repressive acts that have been done by the military whose purpose is to 'control the stability of the country'. Therefore, in this case, referring to Majapahit's story is questioned at least for two reasons: (1) whether it is ethical to refer Indonesian contemporary identity to the era of colonialism, especially because Indonesia suffered under colonialization for more than 350 years; (2) whether the idea of 'united' Nusantara can be put above humanity, that the exercise of an authoritarian power, as had been displayed by Gajah Mada, can be legitimated in silencing people with different political purposes. These questions become ripples in the mainstream of the history's perception, and the emergent voices that oppose the 'Majapahit-nisation' of the country create a new position in this discourse.

V.2.2. Infiltration of Majapahit's influence in contemporary Indonesia: Over-simplification of the trans-national terminology

The glorious story of the Majapahit Kingdom has become a source from which the Indonesian government gains inspiration. The ideal image of the kingdom seems to be very compelling for Indonesian people who inherit a country with great diversities of cultures and languages. The history of Majapahit has been repeatedly touched on in various public talks by authorities, for instance, in President Joko Widodo's statement mentioning that "Majapahit was glorious ... [and] this kind of history is what we should refer to" (B. P. Nugroho, 2015); or when he justified his sea-toll project mentioning that "Majapahit was marvellous because it paid attention to the seas and oceans, [thus]

some consequences if they were unwilling to serve the King's ambition, in that case, Sunda's princess serving Majapahit's king. Rudiannoor (2013) highlights the position of Majapahit as an aggressor by bringing up a Dayaknese poem *Nan Sarunai Usak Jawa* that tells the tragedy of Majapahit intentionally destroying the Dayak Kingdom in three aggressions.

⁶⁷ Susanto highlights how the story of Rangkuti's insurgency, which had been eradicated by Gajah Mada in 1319, was referred to by one of the Commanders of the Indonesian National Army as an exemplar in fighting the rebels, as the Commander said "Exterminate it. Without a doubt (*Sikat saja. Tidak usah ragu*)" (Susanto, 2004, p. 57).

we [should] not turn away (*memunggunji*) from the sea” (Hamdani, 2017).⁶⁸ The influence of Majapahit is also very apparent in the Indonesian National Army, shown, for instance, when Lieutenant General Ryamizard Ryacudu (a Commander of Army Strategic Command – *Pangkostrad*), brought up the theme of ‘Gajah Mada and *Palapa* Oath’ in the 41st Kostrad’s anniversary celebration in March 2002; or in their combat training when the colossal dance of *Amukti Palapa* was performed in front of the President and the military generals (Rudiannoor, 2013; Susanto, 2004, pp. 57-59). The Indonesian National Police (*Kepolisian Republik Indonesia – Polri*) has a celebration day called *Bhayangkara* Day, whose name came from the name of Gajah Mada’s elite forces who protected the king and the kingdom (Azanella, 2019). The Indonesian Navy (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia – Angkatan Laut*) also adopted the banner of Majapahit as their official naval jack, called the *Ular-ular Perang* (war snake) (Gnanasagaran, 2017). In a public domain, the domestic satellites of Indonesia were also named by Majapahit-related names, like *Palapa A-1*, Indonesia’s oldest satellite launched on 8 July 1976, and *Nusantara Satu*, the latest satellite launched on 21 February 2019 (Gustiningsih, 2019). These various ‘Neo-Majapahit’ adoptions are a sign that Indonesian authority is still fixated on one particular version of history in imaging itself and the country that, conscious or unconsciously, leads to a Java-centric fanatical mind. It allows an appropriation of Javanese stories to be circulated nationally, like the story of the *Jongko Jayabaya* prophecy promulgated during the presidential elections.⁶⁹ These direct or indirect appropriations showcase the domination of Javanese culture in the country, and it is hence understandable if some people who cannot relate to these stories might oppose this direction.

The founding fathers of Indonesia seemed to be so highly fascinated by the story of Majapahit that they took many ideas from this era during the establishment of Indonesia. The country’s national motto adopted a phrase of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which was taken from a *sasanti* (a wise word) in the *Sutasoma* book, written by Mpu Tantular in the 14th century in the Majapahit era (Lestari, 2015, p. 35), and this becomes a jargon promoted as a unifying conception of the diverse country.⁷⁰ This phrase

⁶⁸ Sea toll is a concept promoted by President Widodo in creating a connection among islands in Indonesia. It includes building massive infrastructures and modernising seaports to allow goods distribution more effectively, to lessen the price gap, especially between the West and the East of Indonesia.

⁶⁹ *Jongko Joyoboyo* is a prophecy made by Sri Aji Joyoboyo, or King Joyoboyo, the King of the Kediri Kingdom in East Java from 1130 to 1160 (Abimanyu, 2017, p. 137). The prophecy says that there will come a hidden knight (*satrio piningit*) that will be a just king (*ratu adil*) as a saviour that will bring peace and prosperity to the country (Palit, 2013). This prophecy was brought up many times, especially in the time of Presidential elections when people started to predict if any of the candidates matched the description of the *ratu adil* and *satrio piningit*.

⁷⁰ The text in the *Sutasoma* book is written as this:

*“Rwânêka dhâtu winuwus Buddha Wiswa,
Bhinnêki rakwa ring apan kena parwanosen,
Mangka ng Jinatwa kalawan Siwatatwa tunggal,
Bhinnêka tunggal ika tan hana dharma mangrwa.”*

itself is literal translated as ‘although different, yet one’, or having a general meaning of ‘unity in diversity’, and has become a credo that works as a ‘unifying mantra’ that has helped stimulate and foster the urge to unite people as one imagined community amidst all the differences. This motto was rendered as the country’s ideology and was incorporated in the constitution.⁷¹ Aside from this motto, the national flag of Indonesia, called the *Sang Saka Merah Putih*, was also inspired by Majapahit’s banner, called *Getih-getah Samudera* (Ohorella, 2019). In many of his speeches, Sukarno claimed that *getih* and *getah* had become part of people’s primordial conception since six centuries ago when the land of Indonesia was still in the era of kingdoms (Sukarno, 1963, p. 12; 2017).⁷²

In a recent history of Indonesia, the conception of ‘Nusantara’ was also literal added in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which is the most fundamental canon for the country, in the second amendment in Section IXA about State Territory, article 25A stating that:

“The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is an archipelagic state the surface and boundaries of which are to be established by law (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia adalah sebuah negara kepulauan yang berciri Nusantara dengan wilayah yang batas-batas dan hak-haknya ditetapkan dengan undang-undang)” (“The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Amended),” 2002).

If the phrase *berciri Nusantara* (having a characteristic of Nusantara) means having a characteristic of an archipelago, then the term Nusantara in that article is used to represent the ‘shape’ of the territory and not the ‘area’ of territory itself which points a specific border. Since the Explanation of the Constitution had been removed, the meaning of Nusantara in this text remains unclear. Harjono, one of the constitutional judges who took part in the amendment process of the 1945 Constitution, explains that Nusantara in this context was not used as a finite territorial term as it would intersect with the border of the neighbouring countries and would only initiate conflict. Instead, this term is

Translated as:

*“It is said that the well-known Buddha and Shiva are two different substances.
They are indeed different, yet how is it possible to recognise their difference in a glance,
since the truth of Jina (Buddha) and the truth of Shiva is one.
They are indeed different, but they are of the same kind, as there is no duality in Truth.”*

⁷¹ *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* was added to The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in the second amendment, written in Section XV, Article 36A, stating “The state’s Coat of Arms is the *Garuda Pancasila* with *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* as its motto”.

⁷² *Getih* is a Javanese term for blood, and *getah* is for plant sap. Sukarno accentuated the conception of *getih-getah* as two colours that had always been familiar to the people of Indonesia. *Getih* or red represents the sun; the blood of humans and animals; the woman’s intimate organ. *Getah* or white represents the moon; the blood of plants; the male’s sperm. *Getih getah* also represent the *gula klapa* (palm sugar – red, and coconut – white) that has been familiar for Javanese people (Sukarno, 2017). The red and white colour has also believed to appear in a banner crafted on the relief of Borobudur, called *tanjung mabang* (red) and *tanjung puteh* (white); and in the banner of Prince Diponegoro; and in the head turban of the Paderi movement of Padang (Gabrillin, 2018).

used as a *lingua franca* to represent the area that used to be under the Majapahit Kingdom, while using the neighbouring countries' definitive borders to define the country's boundary. Relating to this, he highlights that Majapahit was an empire thus did not have any definite border (as it represented the vassal states that were sheltered by a bigger kingdom), hence Nusantara is thus not a supranational terminology.⁷³ Interestingly, he explained that when the term Nusantara was proposed to be in the constitution, the constitutional judges in that session agreed to see 'Nusantara' as a cultural space (*ruang budaya*) instead of a territorial space (Harjono 2019, pers. comm., 22 August). His explanation might represent how the state understood the term Nusantara. If that is the case, then this accord gives legitimation to any following applications of this term, albeit resulting in some controversies, to adopt it as at least two conceptions: (1) as a territorial conception; and (2) as a cultural conception. These two conceptions become most referred in constructing an understanding of what Nusantara is, especially that Indonesian architectural community further conflate these two conceptions with the notion of architectural identity and authenticity for the nation. This is evidence of overlapping the practice of bordering and defining in using a term for identity construction.

The overlapping meaning of the term Nusantara is something that I need to highlight, as this term has proven its plasticity to be adaptable to many different directions. Not only as territorial and cultural concepts that I just elaborated above, but this term could also be an ideological concept, a historical concept, a political concept, or a geographical concept. In this sense, Nusantara does have a vague meaning, and this vagueness makes this concept suitable for appropriations by many of its proponents, regardless of the differing agenda. For the government, the vagueness of Nusantara has been maintained and strategically employed as a useful apparatus to extend its political agenda. Sukarno used this term quite often in his rhetoric for uniting people and creating a sense of belonging. In one of his speeches, he mentioned:

"If you are a Hindu, do not be an Indian; if you are a Muslim, do not be an Arabian; if you are a Christian, do not be a Jewish. [We have to] be a Nusantara, with its abundance of cultural richness. ... Our biggest enemy is our people, people who get drunk by foreign culture, who addicted to religion, who are willing to kill their people in upholding foreign culture. ... [We have to] remain united, building up this country without any bloodshed" (InformasiIndonesia, 2016).

⁷³ This idea aligns with what Benedict Anderson argues, that the conception of authority in Javanese politics is similar to "the gradual, even diminution of the radiance of the lamp with increasing distance from the bulb ... [that represents] not only of the structure of the state but also of centre-periphery relationships and of territorial sovereignty" (Anderson, 1990, p. 36).

In this speech, Sukarno positioned Nusantara not only as comparable to culture, but also religion, citizenship, and even nationalism. Sukarno seemed to use this term as an instrument for holding the country together and giving something that could be perceived as a collective identity regardless of the diversity. Suharto, on the other hand, used the term Nusantara as a conception of culture as an agenda to de-politicise people and disengage people from any political affiliation (Kusno, 2000, pp. 71-74; 2013, pp. 52-55) (see Chapter IV.2 for historical accounts on Sukarno's and Suharto's agenda in architecture). Suharto employed Nusantara by taking account of Majapahit's rigid hierarchy as a way to legitimate his position as 'a divine king' to the country. M. Wood (2011) therefore argues that "the New Order could be seen (and perhaps saw itself) as a 'New Majapahit' fulfilling Gajah Mada's goal of unifying the nation and protecting it from outside threats while ensuring the prosperity of a grateful population" (M. Wood, 2011, p. 42). Nusantara, therefore, is undoubtedly a multi-faceted term that possesses a versatility to serve as an instrument, not only for the people in power to attain their political purpose but also for the general people in the country to be a platform on which the collective identity is constructed and performed.

The versatility of the term 'Nusantara' allows broad interpretations that give varying effects. The term is enabling, liberating and empowering when used as an ideological and philosophical conception, at least for some people who perceive this term as illustrious; but when attached to another discipline to create a new term out of it, as in Nusantara Architecture, it is limiting, restrictive and unproductive. In the next section, I discuss the articulation of Nusantara Architecture before touching on the scholarly perspectives, many of which have shown firm acceptances or strong rejections, something that elucidates the paradox created by the term.

V.3. The articulation of Nusantara Architecture and its appropriation in the 21st century

Since its first emergence in the 1980s, the notion of Nusantara Architecture has been considered pivotal in the effort to define Indonesian architectural identity, especially with tradition and culture accentuated as the focus of discussion. Indonesian architectural critics, however, have problematise this mode of imaging identity, as it is narrow, restrictive and lacks a comprehensive explanation on its transfer process from conception into built form.

V.3.1. The initiation of Nusantara Architecture

As I have slightly touched in Chapter I.2, the 'indeterminate' Indonesian Architecture was perceived as counterproductive to the development of architecture in Indonesia, therefore a new conception, 'Nusantaran Architecture', that was initiated to provide a clearer and a more definite direction, especially for architects, to exercise any interpretations of Indonesia-ness. Nusantara Architecture was first introduced as a conception in the 1980s by Josef Prijotomo, a professor at the Institut Teknologi Surabaya (ITS). He referred to the term Nusantara which he understood as a part of a historical event of Indonesia that took place before the colonial period, or before 1799. By stating this, he tried to justify his inclination to see Nusantara Architecture specifically from the era of local kingdoms, particularly Majapahit (J. Prijotomo 2017, pers. comm., 19 September). His Nusantara Architecture leaned on the traditional and cultural aspects of Indonesia that also conformed to the state's understanding of the term Nusantara as a cultural space (Harjono 2019, pers. comm., 22 August). He underlined the persistence and perseverance of the traditional architecture that "has been passed from generation to generation with no sign of significant changes" (Prijotomo, 2008, p. 5), especially that it "possesses a rich and varied cultural development, in which the basic ingredients of indigenous life remained unaltered despite the overwhelming pressure of successive waves of Hindu, Mohammedan, and Western civilization" (van der Kroef, 1951, pp. 170-171).⁷⁴

Prijotomo's understanding of Nusantara Architecture is delineated in his inaugural speech:

"Both terms 'Nusantaran Architecture' and 'traditional architecture' refer to the same object: the architectural characteristics of different ethnicities in Indonesia. The difference between these two terms refers to the two different ways of constructing knowledge for the same object. The knowledge of traditional architecture is built from the discipline of anthropology, whereas Nusantara Architecture refers to a knowledge produced by the discipline of architecture" (Prijotomo, 2017, p. 67).

In this speech, he made a clear point that Nusantara Architecture was traditional architecture, only seen from a different field and discipline. One could see this explanation as an initial foundation of Nusantara Architecture as proposed by the initiator as a basis for further discussion, remembering that the current development has brought much more understanding of the term. This conception,

⁷⁴ In this statement, Van Der Kroef refers to J. C. van Leur in his book *Eenige Beschouwingen betreffende den ouden Aziatischen Handel* (1934, p. 120), saying that "various forms of foreign civilizations and a number of world religions have successively exerted their influence on Indonesia. ... [But] fundamental changes in the Indonesian ethnic or political order have not been wrought by them. The glow of world religions and foreign cultural traits is but a thin and easily disappearing polish; underneath them continues to exist the entire complexity of old indigenous traits..." (van der Kroef, 1951, pp. 170-171).

however, has been hedged, if not twisted, into different understandings by other scholars who disagreed with Prijotomo's standpoint. Most recent studies have argued that Nusantara Architecture was 'different-yet-alike' to traditional architecture, but none offered a more comprehensive understanding of the term.⁷⁵ The approach to separate the way the knowledge is constructed is problematic since, in the same time, the field of humanities and architectural history and theory are shifting dramatically towards interdisciplinary thinking. It is also unclear of the necessity of distinguishing architectural reading of the vernacular landscape from the anthropological reading, as detaching them from one another might reflect the methodological failure among Indonesian architectural scholars. It also creates further questions of how to position of Nusantara Architecture in the architectural discipline and a broader discussion of the world's social, political, and historical studies, as this positioning is crucial as a way in for people to orient themselves in this discourse.

Prijotomo further delineated the characteristics of Nusantara Architecture, despite the fact that this kind of formal analysis and formal characteristics primarily detach architectural forms from their historical and socio-political milieu. He created a list of characteristics of Indonesia's traditional architecture that he obtained from studying its formal attributes and exploring ten old Javanese manuscripts written between 1882 and 1933. The list goes as follows:

- Architecture as a shelter (*pernaungan*)

Quoting the *Kawruh Kalang Sasrawirjatma* book, written in 1928, Prijotomo argued that the conception of house, hence architecture, in a traditional community in Indonesia, was similar to 'taking shade' under a big tree.⁷⁶ This statement became his way in to associating Nusantara Architecture with the idea of a shelter, that is, different from a building that offered full protection, it was a place that gives coverage yet still allowed people underneath it to experience the surrounding area. He further explained that "although protected from direct exposure to the sun and the rain, [people inside] are still exposed to the heat of the sun and the dampness of the rain" (Prijotomo, 2017, p. 69) (Figure 15). This aligns with Galih Pangarsa's (2010) claim that Nusantara Architecture was originated from a tree, while

⁷⁵ The narrations to hedge or negate the connection between the Nusantara Architecture and traditional architecture came in many forms. Bakhtiar et al. (2014) mention that "Nusantaran Architecture is not traditional architecture, although both point to the same figures of architecture, that is an architecture developed by many nation people (*anak bangsa*) and ethnic groups in Indonesia" (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, pp. 32-33). Pitana (2012) mentions that "in the context of Nusantara Architecture, the symbolism of the local wisdom ... is a form of knowledge whose source is from values and local potency that has been passed from generation to generation that later called traditional culture" (Pitana, 2012).

⁷⁶ The quote Prijotomo took account says: "*Dados tiyang sumusup ing griya punika dipun upamekaken ngaup ing sangandhaping kajeng ageng*" which translated as "entering a building (*griya*) is seen and understood as an act of *berteduh*, or going into the shade under a big shady tree" (Prijotomo, 2017, p. 69).

Western architecture was a developed form of a cave, therefore he argues that Nusantara Architecture is “a tree in a form of a building” (Pangarsa, 2010, p. 37).

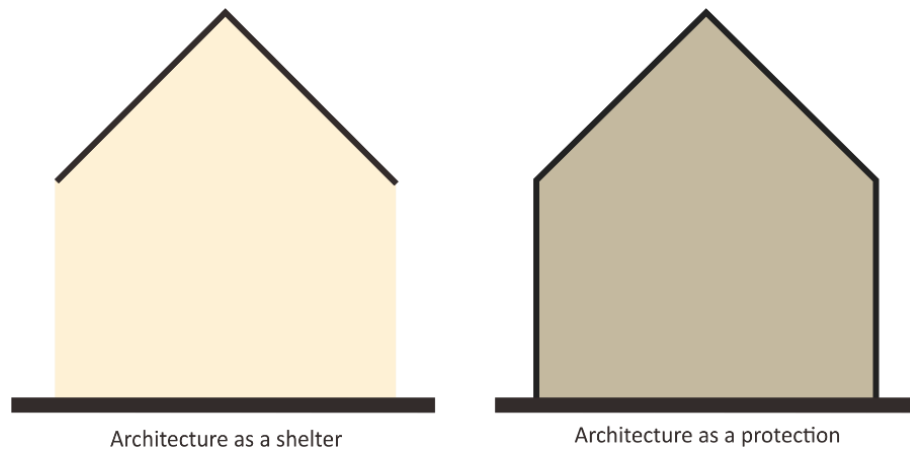


Figure 15. The difference between architecture as a shelter (left) and as a protection (right)

Redrawn from: Josef Prijotomo, 2017, p. 70

- The architecture of the roof

To extend the idea of a shelter, Prijotomo pointed out that Nusantara Architecture allowed the person in it to have both senses of being inside and outside all year long. It was possible because of the tropical condition of the country that did not have extreme weather variations, unlike places in sub-tropical countries. Since the sun exposure and the rainfall were two primary considerations in a tropical climate, he argued that the roof became the most crucial part of the building, hence it could be called ‘roof architecture’. In this sense, a wall is not an essential element. It can be negotiated to allow the tropical breeze to go in and out of the house and to encourage direct interaction between the inhabitants and their immediate surroundings.

- Built from roof to floor

With the conception of ‘roof architecture’, the shape of the roof (and its support and framing) became a determinant factor in organising the layout of the house, and it became the identity of the house. Thus in the construction of traditional houses, the roof was usually built first then followed by the room layout underneath it. This construction method was reversed in sequence from current modern building (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, pp. 40-43; Prijotomo, 2017, pp. 69-72).

- Organic material

Prijotomo highlighted that Nusantara Architecture commonly uses timber and other organic materials (such as bamboo, thatch, reeds, and *ijuk*/ palm fiber) and this usage demands regular maintenance and periodic recycling. This construction needed a special technique that involved ‘bundling’, ‘pegs-and-holes’ and ‘pegs-and-wedges’ system instead of using nails. This system allows flexibility where the structure can move slightly and wobble if there is an earthquake, hence called *konstruksi goyang* (shakeable structure) as an opposite of *konstruksi mati* (rigid construction) (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 41; Prijotomo, 2017, pp. 76-77).

- The culture of society-without-writing

Prijotomo emphasised that one striking characteristic of Nusantara people, as opposed to Western people, was that Nusantara people in the past were a ‘society-without-writing’. In this case, any information had been passed through spoken language instead of through written documents. Since the information was delivered in the form of folk tale, myth, fable, legend, poem, song, chronicle or proverb, Prijotomo suggested that to understand Nusantara Architecture requires that we should consider both the physical form and also the stories that surround it. In architecture, apprenticeship was a way to transfer knowledge from master to student, as learning-by-doing was how the knowledge was passed on, unlike formal learning. Prijotomo further argued that this particular characteristic of Nusantara people made knowledge of Nusantara Architecture stand outside the general frames of Western architectural knowledge, and for this, he used the term *Liyan* (the other/ the different) architecture (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 41; Prijotomo, 2017, p. 62).

- Ornament and decoration

In Nusantara Architecture, ornaments and decoration were something familiar and somewhat expected to appear in the traditional house. Not only for aesthetic reasons, but they also represented the owner’s social status and were a sign of social class (Prijotomo, 2017, p. 77).

- ‘Asymmetrical-Symmetry’

Traditional architecture has been consistent in employing a balance (*setangkup*) – between left and right, front and back, in a house plan. It did not necessarily come in symmetry but maintained this coupling divided with an axis (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 42). Some traditional houses used more than one axis to define the sacred from the least important part of the house, and this arrangement influenced the house’s layout and appearance.

These characteristics that Prijotomo offered reflect his approach to primary see of Nusantara Architecture from the perspective of architecture, instead of from the perspective of anthropology as

how he defined the term. He mainly focused on delineating the physical entity of architecture, that although he added some philosophical narrations in the explanation, the main point of discussion remains in the tangible aspects of architecture (i.e. the roof, the construction, the material, the decoration). One might consider this perspective as narrow and superficial, but others might see it as strategic and practical, especially for some architects in making built forms. Moreover, as an addition to the above list, Prijotomo also pointed out that Nusantara Architecture anchored its considerations on three aspects: the people, the tropical climate, and the maritime geographical condition. It also embraced local spirituality, which was defined as *waste* (related to rightness and goodness), *kalang* (related to aesthetics and blessing), and *wewangunan* (related to appropriateness in the relations between humans, nature, and society) (Hidayatun & Wonoseputro, 2005, p. 310; Pitana, 2012). These characteristics try to reach the cultural and philosophical level, but it is still unclear how these delineations relate to the contemporary context in which Nusantara Architecture is situated.

There are many understandings that have been offered about the term Nusantara Architecture, but the more ideas offered, the more visible the variations and the pros and cons in the discourse. Regardless, Nusantara Architecture is still widely seen, at least by its supporters, as a representation of cultural diversity, hence an essential image from which Indonesians can carve their national identity (Arkandityo, 2016; Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 37; Widodo, 2006, p. 17).

V.3.2. Contemporary Nusantara Architecture and questions that follow

The popularity of 'Nusantaran Architecture' spread nationwide since it was employed by Yori Antar, prominent Indonesian architect, in a movement he initiated in preserving threatened traditional architecture. This marked the boom of the term and became the key moment when Nusantara Architecture was then tightly associated with tourism. Antar has a strong perspective in translating the term into the field of heritage and conservation practices and at the same time tourism industry, and he has continuously been linking the two together in many of his following preservation projects. As I mentioned earlier that Prijotomo particularly associated Nusantara Architecture with the physical characteristic of traditional architecture, Antar's perspective extends it in the context of the restoration of that traditional built form. Interestingly, the conception of Nusantara Architecture, which is very ambiguous and lacking historical and empirical materials, seems to be benefited by Antar's projects as they offer a certain kind of empirical 'certainty' and its orientation towards the remote indigenous landscape. These projects can be seen as an implementation of Prijotomo's

formalist principles of identification of Nusantara Architecture, as they reinforce the essentialist tendency to treat indigeneity as a seemingly finite and ahistorical entity.

In 2008, Yori Antar started a non-profit organisation called *Rumah Asuh* (The Foster House) Foundation whose aim was to explore, organise, help and document the traditional houses potentially to be preserved. Their first project was in Wae Rebo, an isolated village in the East Nusa Tenggara region, where they found *Mbaru Niang*, a group of conical houses perceived as 'authentic' Manggarai architecture. However, from supposedly seven houses onsite, only two remained standing in decent shape, while two others were decaying and three had collapsed (Figure 16). In this situation, Antar initially proposed to help by offering to build a treehouse with guest house and small education facility, but the Wae Rebo's senior members rejected this idea. Further discussion achieved agreement to allow the villagers to build their homes as they envisioned independently, and this became a community-led project rather than that of the architects. Antar and his organisation enabled this project by facilitating the locals' dealing with the outside world, including the government and potential donors (Lad, 2013, pp. 4-10).



Figure 16. Mbaru Niang houses at Wae Rebo

Source: Untung Saroha Sihombing, 2015 (reprinted with permission)

Moreover, Antar also carried out a mission to document the traditional building tradition in the community, transferring the knowledge from spoken language to written language. It helped to make sure of the continuing existence of this knowledge, as in many cases, the elders who possessed the knowledge passed away before passing it on to the younger generation, especially with the difficult situation that most contemporary younger members of the communities were not particularly interested in their cultural practices. Yori also invited architecture students from different universities in Indonesia to come and join the project. These students were expected to learn directly from the locals as they each would be, what Antar termed an 'agent of change' for architecture development in Indonesia that could raise awareness of the importance of preserving traditional architecture (Lad, 2013, pp. 9-17).

This Wae Rebo preservation project went well and received support and appreciation from the Indonesian government and the people, including the private sector who were eager to help and donate. Upon completion in 2011, this project was awarded the 2012 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation for "the project has re-established sustainability of the local built environment and has promoted the pride and spirit of the community" (Lad, 2013, p. 16; UNESCO, 2013), and appeared in The Aga-Khan Award Shortlists Cycle 2011-2013 for it "initiated and facilitated a community-led revival of traditional techniques enabling all the original houses to be rebuilt" (AKDN, n.d.-b). This project became a milestone in how Indonesian people started to become 'aware' of the country's diverse culture, including, according to Antar, many more indigenous communities which had reached out to him and asked for similar help in building their cultural architecture (Lad, 2013, p. 1). As Antar extensively used the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' in representing this preservation project, he instigated national awareness of this term, and this became the starting point of the widespread uproar in championing this term as an identity representation. For this, Yori Antar was crowned The Warrior of Nusantara Architecture (*Pendekar Arsitektur Nusantara*) (Martin, 2016).

After Wae Rebo, Antar and *Rumah Asuh* have done similar projects in different places in Indonesia (e.g. Waetabula, Wainyapu, Ratenggaro, Komodo Island, Nias, Sintang, Suroba, and Sumba). Like what happened in Wae Rebo, which had 100 times more visitors in 2016 than before the preservation project (Ibo, 2016), these other projects also became some of the new tourist destinations in Indonesia. These projects affected the local economy and most of them achieved similar positive accomplishments in terms of attracting tourists and reviving the local economy. Antar extended these economic effects by initiating an exhibition outside the preserved place. In the Sumba preservation project, he curated a three-day-exhibition called 'The Soul of Sumba' on September 2017 in Jakarta,

where *tenun* (Sumba's traditional fabric) and locally-made jewellerys achieved total sales of 1.7 billion Rupiah (USD 125,000) (Y. Antar 2017, pers. comm., 5 October). This turnover has become one of Antar's highlights in depicting what a cultural preservation program could potentially bring to the community, as this economic leverage would not only increase their living standard, but also their pride in their culture.

Some scholars showed appreciation for these preservation projects. Oka Saraswati, a professor in Udayana University, suggested that Wae Rebo could be an example of how tourism could be managed comprehensively by the authority, stimulating an active and close collaboration with the locals while allowing tourists to experience the local people's everyday life. The development of tourism in the village, in her opinion, had an empowering effect on the local community who took part in the hospitality business, although she claimed that Yori's preservation project has been over-publicised, compared with, for example, various Balinese preservation projects that have been going for years but not announced (AAAO. Saraswati 2018, pers. comm., 15 September). Isnén Fitri, a senior lecturer in North Sumatra University, also expressed her acknowledgement, stating that the country "needed many more Yori [Antar] to do similar [preservation] like this" (I. Fitri 2018, pers. comm., 24 August). However, she emphasised that a preservation project should have aimed to preserve the cultural practice for the country and the future generations, and not for tourism. She further proposed to limit the number of visitors in the cultural places like Wae Rebo, and probably to give some restriction of what places could or could not be visited, remembering the damaging effect that tourism could bring to the cultural practices and cultural artefacts. In this case, she added, that local authority had an obligation to monitor the cultural development of the place, of how tourism complimented, instead of deteriorated, the local culture and brought more benefits, instead of disadvantage, to the locals (I. Fitri 2018, pers. comm., 24 August). Fitri's statement aligned with what was asserted by Catrini Kubontubuh, an expert in heritage and cultural preservation. She was fully aware that a preservation project should have offered a direct benefit to the locals as an effect of the process, and economic benefit seemed to the most appealing. However, she strongly asserted that the presence of tourism should be the 'side effect' instead of the main aim of any preservation projects. Therefore, the challenge would be to negotiate all aspects in the community and kept the preservation process from jeopardising the local culture for the sake of tourism (CP. Kubontubuh 2018, pers. comm., 11 September).

Regardless of the critiques of the touristic approach to preservation projects, Antar's success story attracted the Indonesian government to employ a similar method to boost the number of international tourists coming to the country, accentuating traditional and cultural practices and

artefacts as the main attractions. This, in turn, then led to the initiation of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition as part of the strategy for the Ten New Bali agenda (see Chapter VI.2 for comprehensive elaboration on the design competition and the critiques that follow). Since then, Nusantara Architecture has been associated with tourism in justifying culture preservation, and this move received sharp critiques being deemed too pragmatic in dealing with a complex cultural context, disregarding the interwoven layers of the social-political condition of the people as the inhabitants. Nusantara Architecture seemed to lose its grand agenda of being a representation of the country's identity, an extension to the ideological term of 'Nusantara' itself. The term merely became a gimmick, a brand to create an image following the tourist gaze rather than an agenda to nurture people's culture, supposedly a bottom-up process. It became a form of culture commodification, overlooking the potential problems that might appear as an effect of this tourism imposition.

It is also important to highlight that Wae Rebo's 'success' story is a one-sided narrative, as the socio-economic changes brought by tourism might be perceived differently by the locals. Tourism might alter the existing social and cultural practices in the village and turn it into a 'touristic ethnicity' that has been widely condemned by scholars for being phony (R. E. Wood, 1997, p. 2). Fatris MF (2016) questioned this situation in his article titled *Wae Rebo's Threatened Originality* by saying that "this sacred village is changing to be a recreational park and losing its magical touches" (Fatris, 2016). He shared his experience visiting the village and described his concerns: local people greeted in a uniform way as if they were trained to standardise their hospitality; the requirement for tourists to do 'check-in' in the front office before entering the village; and how the elderly made blessing using paper money as a media to the tourists after checking in (what he called 'pre-paid blessing'). Moreover, although some locals were proud of having their village listed as an international tourism destination, others were concerned that too many adjustments had been made to the rituals and cultural practices that made them lose their essence. A ritual of *Barong Wae* (a ritual for calling ancestors' spirits), for instance, was usually done in the evening but had been changed to be done in the morning adjusting for the needs of the tourists (Fatris, 2016). Although changes are expected within the expansion of tourism, further consideration is needed to see the effects for the community and their culture, since maintaining people's attachment and sense of belonging to their culture and tradition should become the main priority in any preservation attempt (Widiastuti, 2014, p. 12).

Regardless of all the criticisms, the rise of the Nusantara Architecture movement has demonstrated its influence in capturing people's attention on the issue of local identity. This conception put a competing power against modernism in architecture, and it provided an alternative design language for people in building their houses. The term has evoked the curiosity of Indonesian architects to delve

into Indonesia's local and traditional architecture, and it, at the least, provided an alternative design language outside that commonly accentuated in the glossy architectural magazines. Prijotomo's elaboration on the characteristics of Nusantara Architecture gave options apart from the firmly established Vitruvian triumvirate. Nusantara Architecture has not stood securely on a ground of a firm knowledge, particularly with the many questions entailed. Its presence, however, has proven that the issue of identity has always been appealing for Indonesian people, especially within the postcolonial context of the country, and that Indonesian scholars had much interest in this discourse.

V.4. Academics' standpoints amidst the contestation of Nusantara Architecture

The discourse on the term Nusantara Architecture has led to an exciting dialectic, and the question of 'what is Nusantara Architecture' has become a way to problematize its conception, its imaging process and its application to built form. 'Definition', albeit constructed and contested, is a starting point that directs and navigates the whole discussion. In this section, I investigate the scholarly perspectives of Nusantara Architecture delving into academics' opinions on their pros and cons. The discussion is based on interviews with architecture scholars and lecturers in Indonesia (see Appendix B for the list of interviewees). This section elaborates their views towards Nusantara Architecture and digs into the arguments that they put in having a particular standpoint toward the development of the term.

V.4.1. Understanding Nusantara Architecture from scholarly perspectives

The term 'Nusantaran Architecture' was first introduced in the 1980s by Josef Prijotomo, a professor in Institut Teknologi Surabaya (ITS), and he emphasised the cultural aspect in imagining the term. Prijotomo's understanding, as the founding father of term, has been discussed comprehensively in the previous section, especially in making a correlation between Nusantara Architecture and traditional architecture. What I need to highlight here is that Prijotomo also suggested that traditional architecture, hence Nusantara Architecture, was not a frozen culture. Thus it needs adjustments to fit contemporary contexts (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 33; Prijotomo, 2008, p. 6). This fitting, interestingly, needed to be shown in both tangible and intangible aspects, and both physical and non-physical attributes. Stating this meant he suggested physical and visual representation in the translation process, something that most Indonesian architects and scholars tried to avoid for it was often deemed to be shallow and superficial interpretation. Prijotomo argued that architecture was naturally

about physical form and space, therefore any values attached in architecture should have been manifested in something that could be seen and felt, incorporating shapes, forms, colours, or probably decorations and ornaments attained from the local architecture. Since he understood the term 'Nusantara' as a cultural space that included "all works and masterpieces made by Indonesian people in the past", therefore in imagining Nusantara Architecture, he asserted that these artistic works should have been incorporated or referred to (J. Prijotomo 2017, pers. comm., 19 September). Moreover, he noted that Nusantara Architecture also had a philosophical layer beyond its textual understanding, and this should become a consideration in the design process. One example that Prijotomo gave was the phrase *kajeng ageng* (a big tree), an example that I have also touched on in the previous section. That phrase had meaning not only as 'a house', but also 'a strong determination', or even 'a divine power' (Prijotomo, 2017, p. 69). In this context, the phrase 'seeking shelter under a big tree' could be perceived as 'seeking protection from God', and this was what he highlighted to elucidate the complexity of the traditional understanding of the conception of a house which was seen not only as a physical building but also as a pearl of wisdom.

Another of Prijotomo's intriguing ideas was his proposition that the position of Nusantara Architecture, hence traditional architecture, was equal to the Western Classical Architecture (Kusno, 2000, p. 79; Prijotomo, 2008, pp. 1-4).⁷⁷ Not only that both architectural styles have survived through history, but both also carried peculiar characteristics and physical elements that might be referred to and adopted in contemporary architecture. This idea, in a way, referred back to his argument mentioning the importance of visual representation in architecture, that a building needed an architectural element that speaks its style. Moreover, by putting Nusantara Architecture and Classical Architecture as equals, he implied that the two had their distinctive knowledges and methods, and hence needed different instruments for assessment or judgement. In this sense, he asserted that one could not assess Nusantara Architecture using the values embedded in Classical Architecture and vice versa. With this idea, Prijotomo aimed to oppose the domination of Western knowledge in architecture that, consciously or unconsciously, patronised and marginalised traditional architecture for having different standards and knowledge. In this regard, Nusantara Architecture touched the ideological aspect of Indonesian identity, of trying to get out of the hegemony of the Western perspective and empower itself as a free knowledge that was as significant as Western architectural knowledge.

⁷⁷ Prijotomo refers to Western Classical Architecture as *Arsitektur Klasik* in the interview.

This appealing conception of Nusantara Architecture was welcomed, and was particularly popular in the Architecture School of Brawijaya University, located in East Java. This school has been focusing on Nusantara Architecture since a senior lecturer, the late Galih Widjil Pangarsa, actively engaged with the discourse and proposed to adopt the conception into architectural education. The school's curricula were then altered to incorporate Nusantara Architecture, and since then, this term has become an overarching theme of the overall subjects and design studios. In positioning itself, the school chose to adopt the cultural aspects of the term, mainly focusing on exploring the traditional architecture, aligned with Prijotomo's standpoint. Agung Murti Nugroho, who was the Head of the Department at the time I conducted the interview, mentioned that the term 'Nusantara' was chosen as it delineated the cultural space, instead of the political space, of Indonesia. Therefore the highlight of Nusantara Architecture was the cultural practices and cultural artefacts of different tribes in Indonesia. In one of his writings, Nugroho mentioned that Nusantara Architecture referred to "the sustain[able] value of built environments in the past, present, and future which live in cultural spaces of the archipelago, located in between two continents and two oceans, containing natural and human-related aspects"; 'natural' here meant "disposition, harmony, diversity, togetherness, and prosperity", and 'human-related' meant "wisdom, humanity, concord, social interaction, and humbleness" (A. M. Nugroho, 2015, p. 139). For him, there were at least three aspects to consider in understanding the term: the focus, the locus and the modus. The focus of Nusantara Architecture was on the face (*rupa*), space (*ruang*), place (*tempat*), and culture (*budaya*). The locus was the area where it is located, which he admitted was still problematic whether it was referring to the whole Southeast Asian archipelago, or the national territory of Indonesia. The modus is the method to tackle the issue, and this varies from person to person, depending on one's perspective and opinion. Moreover, Nugroho further suggested that related to the dimension of space, Nusantara Architecture touched not only the third dimension, which was 'space', and the fourth dimension, which was 'place', but also the fifth dimension, which was related to 'energy, knowledge, and culture'. This fifth dimension, in his understanding, was the values attained by the people who have inhabited, reconstructed, and personalised the space and place (A.M. Nugroho 2017, pers. comm., 6 September). This statement illustrates how Nugroho tried to 'structure' his approach to the complexity of Nusantara Architecture by listing the characteristics of Nusantara Architecture, quite similar to Prijotomo's and other supporters' approach. However, Nugroho's wish to omit the discussion of politics from architecture was a paradox with his recognition of people's values over architecture, as every value embedded in the community is inherent in people's everyday politics itself. Also, he did not articulate the reason to detach politics from architecture, and this further led to the question of whether there was something 'uncomfortable' about this 'politics' that needed to be avoided.

Abraham Mohammad Ridjal, a lecturer of Brawijaya University who taught a subject (unit) of Nusantara Architecture, saw 'Nusantara' as a term that traversed the territory of a country and focused on the cultural relationship with the archipelago that bonded people together, and thus created an imagined space and connection. Similar to Prijotomo and Nugroho, Ridjal emphasised that Nusantara Architecture touched the cultural aspects. Interestingly, he mentioned that Dutch colonialism had altered local people's mindset and the way they appreciated their own culture since the Dutch had taken over not only the physical and economic layers but also the culture. Therefore, Ridjal claimed that Nusantara Architecture aimed to refer back to the culture and mindset from before colonisation began. What was compelling from Ridjal's perspective was that he mentioned an 'empathy' as a distinguishing characteristic of Nusantara Architecture, meaning that the architecture was based on human values and activities, both the value of the people who live in the building and the surrounding buildings. This empathy, he added, required sensitivity to understand the actual problems in the community, and to consider any effect brought by architecture, both positive and negative, tangible and intangible (A.M. Ridjal 2017, pers. comm., 7 September). Ridjal's view emphasises a different side of Nusantara Architecture, that although he agreed to see it as a cultural conception, he saw culture as people's way of life instead of the 'product' of people's way of life. He focused on empathy and sensitivity, instead of space, form and building, and this was particularly interesting since these are what contemporary architectural design has lacked (Lank, 2014).

Antariksa, a professor at Brawijaya University, mentioned that his standpoint started with the idea of 'Nusantara' as a place, an archipelago; therefore, Nusantara Architecture pointed to the architecture in that archipelago. He argued that the architecture he referred to happened to come in the form of traditional architecture, hence it was comprehensible if the discussion of Nusantara Architecture became closely related to this kind of architecture. By stating this, he became the only interviewee from Brawijaya University that admitted the direct connection between Nusantara Architecture and traditional architecture, although he saw the term merely as a label for the main object referred to. Moreover, he also mentioned that Nusantara Architecture was chosen for the school's curricula because it gave a freedom to see the locality of each culture and tribe as an independent entity, compared to the conception of Indonesian Architecture, for instance, that brought implications to see it as a unity of a country (Antariksa 2017, pers. comm., 8 September). In this sense, Antariksa suggested that using the term Nusantara Architecture was liberating, particularly in capturing the diversity of the country without any necessity to collate it into a single identity. This position is debatable yet might help in explaining why some scholars were very reluctant to use the term 'Indonesia' in the conception of the country's architectural identity.

From outside Java Island, Ria Wikantari, a scholar from Hasanuddin University in Makassar, stated her understanding of 'Nusantara' quite differently, as she argued that there were two conceptions of Nusantara: nusantara with a lowercase 'n'; and Nusantara with a capital 'N'. "The nusantara with a lowercase 'n' means [a vast area of the archipelago that] covers Taiwan, Japan, Fiji, Madagascar and Caribbean ... [while Nusantara] with a capital 'N' is the area [conquered] by Gajah Mada" (R. Wikantari 2018, pers. comm., 5 September). She appreciated Prijotomo's proposal of the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' as an attempt to find a 'local' name to represent architecture in Indonesia, and to incorporate the commonly overlooked layer of philosophy and local wisdom that could not be recorded in modern architectural knowledge. She highlighted the idea of regionalism, both the 'concrete' and the 'abstract', that covered climate, geographical location and culture, but her particular standpoint drew inspirations from the traditional architecture as the local architecture. She promoted the idea of a house with a pit underneath (*kolong*), verandah (*serambi*) and 'breathing' curtain-like wall (*tirai-mirai*) as some of the characteristics of traditional architecture in Indonesia. The colloquial everyday habits and the informal social characters of the people were also some traits of the Nusantaran people that needed to be captured in the idea of locality. Despite supporting the term, Wikantari's perspective was more relaxed compared to the previous scholars I discussed. She mentioned that the label 'Nusantaran Architecture' was used because there has been no other phrase as an option offered to replace it, hence the term's usage might be temporary. What is interesting in Wikantari's statement is that people's living culture could not be 'museumised', or, in a way, frozen, as these people had the right to change their life. Any changes thus should have been expected and allowed, as long as it was a natural process initiated and conducted by the people themselves, and not by dictation and coercion. She also added that what academics and people with authority could do was to 'stimulate' and 'guide' this development to the 'right' and 'acceptable' direction, although I strongly question how this 'right' direction should be determined and who would have the privilege to say what is right and not right in a cultural development.

V.4.2. Questions and critiques towards Nusantaran Architecture

Aside from the supporting arguments on Nusantaran Architecture, many Indonesian scholars challenge and question the vagueness of the term, as it lacks clarity in many fundamental aspects. Iwan Sudrajat, a professor in Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), questioned the conception of Nusantaran Architecture, especially its intention to link with Majapahit's legacy. He could not comprehend if one tried to construct a representation of contemporary Indonesian identity by delving into an era before Indonesian even existed. For him, it was also paradoxical to 'contemporise' the

conception of Nusantara Architecture, while referring to 'Nusantara' itself meant to go back to the past rather than to embrace contemporaneity. Referring to Majapahit, he added, was a problematic choice as Majapahit was imperialist, thus glorifying it was against the moral values of Indonesia as an ex-colonised country. Sudrajat also argued that putting Nusantara Architecture as a representation of Indonesian architectural identity was problematic rhetoric, especially in that identity was supposed to comprise the whole complete body, something holistic instead of something choppy and limited. Balinese architectural identity, for instance, could not be represented solely by its wall carvings or ornaments, since its identity was something embedded in the community and required strenuous efforts, if was not impossible, to extract and formulate its 'essence'. Sudrajat also argued that Nusantara Architecture had been emptied from its grounded values, hence could only work for branding and marketing purposes, especially that the aim of the movement itself has been shifted from knowledge development to economic expansion (I. Sudrajat 2017, pers. comm., 29 September).

Sudrajat posed an elaborated question that might represent the initial confusion of this new term: the question of whether Nusantara Architecture should have been seen as a label for a geographical area; or a range of cultures; or a series in history; or an identity concept; or an ideological belief. He further argued that the conception of Nusantara Architecture fitted none of these conceptions. Firstly, there has been a confusion in the term 'Nusantara' itself as a geographical area, as if it referred to Majapahit's Nusantara, then the area covered should have been not only Indonesia, but also Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, and the Philippines. How this understanding was single-handedly changed to refer solely to the archipelago inside the Indonesian border was the main question here. Secondly, Nusantara Architecture could not be associated as a cultural term nor historical term, since its aim to refer to the era of the kingdoms required one to treat culture and history as frozen entities. In this sense, culture and history were unplugged from its timeline on one particular time and attached to another time, implying that, in this case, the pre-colonial historical unit was still present today. Thirdly, it was questionable to refer to Nusantara Architecture as an identity conception or ideological belief as it did not represent the current condition of a contemporary living tradition, which meant that it detached the temporality of the context. For these reasons, Sudrajat asserted that the term Nusantara Architecture was only a premise, a thesis, and would remain as a discourse that would not have a settled position in the current state (I. Sudrajat 2017, pers. comm., 29 September).

Nawawiy Loebis, a professor at North Sumatra University, briefly mentioned that in Medan, according to his understanding, people did not support nor oppose the term 'Nusantaran Architecture', as they did not care. However, he posed a strong objection to this term, accusing this idea as being very

Javacentric and was a display of a 'chauvinistic' and 'authoritarian' approach in architecture in imposing some architects' idea of being local. Using some provocative phrases, he asserted that the conception was "a masochistic architecture, a sadistic architecture ... [which was proposed by] a group of people who were self-proclaimed to be 'Nusantaraists' [while] not being supported by theories, nor philosophies, nor [people's] living tradition" (MN. Loebis 2018, pers. comm., 24 August). He argued that architecture, hence Nusantara Architecture, should have been built based on people's actual contemporary living traditions. Otherwise, it would merely be a product of an empty hyper-real conception, an unreal and ungrounded imaginary that, in the case of Nusantara Architecture, came in the form of a traditional look. The conception of Nusantara Architecture was problematic because it tried to omit its connection with broader disciplines (e.g. anthropology, sociology, political science) that led to a disconnection with people's everyday culture and way of living. It also tried to refer back, or probably resurrect, the culture that has no longer been practised by most Indonesian people, hence not realistic for a contemporary context. Therefore instead of relying on the architects' utopian idea of going back to the local traditional knowledge and wisdom, Loebis suggested developing architecture by researching whether or not people still wanted to be part of that traditional culture. Moreover, Loebis further asserted that culture was an unstoppable moving entity that went briskly from one phase to the other, mixing one culture with another to create a hybrid-culture whose identity was no longer tied to its original place. Indonesian cities, for instance, have shaped their faces following the development and the advancement of people's culture, and this process has been unpreventable and inevitable, no matter how many architects and architecture schools in that place tried to prevent it (MN. Loebis 2018, pers. comm., 24 August).

What distinguished Loebis from other scholars was his strong argument saying that if a community has left one living tradition and its artefacts, and then they moved to another, it meant that the time of that particular culture has ended for that community hence no need to prevent it from vanishing. Stating this, Loebis critiqued the conception of Nusantara Architecture that tried to revive a traditional culture that was no longer practised by the people and suggested that the disappearance of traditional practices and artefacts was therefore inevitable and, in a way, expected. Any newly adopted culture in the community, no matter how foreign it was to the previous one, would in time be 'contaminated' by the local characteristics hence forming a new hybrid culture that would be a new 'local' culture. By this, he suggested that whatever presented in the community today, albeit with the condemnation of being Western-oriented, too modern and not local, it was the contemporary culture, and it was a reality for the conception of architectural identity. Therefore, cultural development was about how it was rooted in the community, hence not about the artificial, symbolism and imitation. Otherwise, it would merely be an 'orphan and infertile' architecture: without

predecessor and without a successor; as it did not come from the people and the people would not continue making it. Therefore, he suggested that the focus of Nusantara Architecture development should have been shifted to: (1) finding the actual contemporary living tradition of the community; (2) answering the reflective questions (e.g. why Nusantara, why choosing Majapahit to go back to, how it represented contemporary living tradition) (MN. Loebis 2018, pers. comm., 24 August).

Another scholar that questioned the conception of Nusantara Architecture was Gunawan Tjahjono, a professor at the University of Indonesia (UI), although he emphasised that his position was neither that he agreed nor disagreed. He explained that the term 'Nusantara' was an oblique terminology as it delineated an ambition of power by championing the figure of Gajah Mada as a hero for uniting the country, and this idea was intentionally constructed for a political agenda. The perspective to put someone as a hero brought an unobjective judgment in accepting his legacy, especially of having a belief that the hero could do no wrong. This over-admiration took away people's criticality to analyse if any given information was factually right, and, unfortunately, Tjahjono saw this phenomenon was happening in the discourse of Nusantara and Nusantara Architecture. The factual history has been taken for granted while the constructed version of Nusantara was foregrounded and idealised, overlooking other facts and other versions of the story that might contest the establishment of the conception. In this case, Tjahjono, as an Indonesian citizen, admitted that he might relate more to the term of Indonesian Architecture, instead of Nusantara Architecture, even though both terms have suffered from vagueness and unclarity. He chose it for a reason: that the term Indonesia had a clearer historical account, relating to the long struggle for independence that created a sense of obligation among citizens to continue to build the country (G. Tjahjono 2017, pers. comm., 24 August).

Isnén Fitri, a lecturer of North Sumatra University, posed a question related to the initial aims of proposing this term: is it to construct one etymological definition; or is it to illustrate various understandings offered about Nusantara Architecture? She, to some extent, agreed with the idea of strengthening the sense of identity for a country. However, she claimed that it would be almost impossible to make a definition of the term, remembering the vast area it covered, the ample range of typologies it referred to, and the lengthy time-span it touched on. Moreover, imposing a 'definition' for the term might be seen as an epitome of the researchers' egos. It fortified the argument that the idea of Nusantara Architecture did not come from the community and that the 'good' or 'right' determined by the researchers did not always work for the people. Instead of coming with definitions, researchers should have stimulated more discussions on this discourse by providing insights to the public with comprehensive supporting data, and let the public explore and interpret; or in the other words: let them think instead of telling them what was 'right' (I. Fitri 2018, pers. comm., 24 August).

Ikaputra, a lecturer in Universitas Gajah Mada (UGM), had a similar standpoint with Fitri to partly agree with the conception of Nusantara Architecture. He admitted that regardless of the vague definition, the idea of Nusantara has become an indispensable part of Indonesia's history and that Nusantara had, what he termed, the 'best architecture in the world'. Nusantara Architecture, in his opinion, was essential to pose a distinction of the 'local architecture' from other modern styles of architecture that was deemed as unfit for the context and the culture of the country. He further offered some understandings by drawing a close connection between the conception of Nusantara and Nusantara Architecture and argued that both could be approached from at least three perspectives, although each perspective had its drawbacks. Firstly, if Nusantara was a geographical location, then Nusantara Architecture was an architecture that was produced in this particular geographical area. The problem of this would be that there has not been a unanimous agreement of the territorial border of Nusantara. Secondly, if Nusantara was a diversity concept (*konsep kebhinekaan*), then Nusantara Architecture was any designs that embraced the archipelago's diversity and plurality. This understanding, however, became unclear. To determine what could and what could not be referred to by the term could be problematic, in the case of, for instance, having a building that responded to the diversity of the country but was designed by foreigner architects. Thirdly, if Nusantara was a historical conception, then Nusantara Architecture emphasised the history of the design and construction process of the architecture. It implied that the consideration and the process undertaken by the architects became important in determining Nusantara Architecture, especially in scrutinising and accommodating the characteristics of Indonesia, while, in a way, disregarding the issue of citizenship of the architects. By asserting this, Ikaputra highlighted, somewhat structurally, the uncertainties in the discourse of Nusantara Architecture that the term could not sit comfortably in those offered approaches, hence required comprehensive scrutiny before making any claim or implementation on it. Furthermore, drawing from his experience joining a discussion related to this term, Ikaputra critiqued the narrow perspective used in this discourse. He questioned the 'grand narrative', which leaned to vernacularism and traditionalism, that has been very dominant in the discourse and has been, in a way, imposed to shape the whole understanding of this term. For him, tropicality, humanity and local characteristics were three primary considerations for designing a 'locally inspired' building, and it did not have to deal with any formal and physical representation of culture and tradition (Ikaputra 2017, pers. comm., 10 October).

One of the lecturers from Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indah Widiastuti, shared the same standpoint with Ikaputra to partly support the conception of Nusantara Architecture, as she saw this contestation was part of the country's contemporary development hence needed to be critically accepted. In her analysis, Prijotomo's standpoint in conceptualising Nusantara Architecture lacked

breadth, as he saw the term solely from the architectural perspective and refused to create a link with other disciplines, like anthropology and social studies. This choice to sterilise the term created disconnection and was considered flawed, and this was why the term Nusantara Architecture would remain a problematic discourse. However, Widiastuti preferred to stand in the middle of the two dominant streams, as she criticised both supporters and opposers of this term. She problematized the way the supporters glorified the idea so much that they became unwilling to accept the fact that the term was vague and not well-defined. She also questioned the way the opposers despised the idea so much that they discounted the empirical fact of people's acceptance of this terminology. Both sides, in her opinion, created an antipathy to each other that forbids them to see possible 'truths' offered by their rivals. Aligned with Ikaputra's opinion, Widiastuti critiqued the 'unhealthy' and unproductive debates between the two groups, that led to opinion wars dominated by a few influential people. She argued that this contra-productive situation was a result of a minimal attempt to map different schools of thought in Indonesian architectural scholarship, creating a narrow understanding which led to being very reluctant to understand other groups' standpoints (I. Widiastuti 2017, pers. comm., 6 October). This situation might also be worsened by the forceful feature of Javanese culture to highly appreciate seniors as people who had power and charisma, as explained by Benedict Anderson (1990, p. 74), and that questioning and critiquing them was similar to being disrespectful and questioning their authority.

Aside from those scholars that strongly or partly oppose the conception of Nusantara Architecture, some other academics did not give attention to the term, mostly because they have had their mindset aligned with other terms that better elucidated the conception that they preferred to have. In this case, the conception of Nusantara Architecture was contested with the local architectural knowledge that was derived from the natural characters of the area and the local community's cultural practices. The interviewees who took this stance tended not to give any attention to the uproar relating to Nusantara Architecture and merely focused on the actual context that they had to deal with on an everyday basis. Anak Agung Ayu Oka Saraswati, a professor at Udayana University in Bali, was one of the academics that took this standpoint, as for her, Balinese Architecture was something that mattered to her and the people of Bali compared to the conception of Nusantara Architecture. She understood the political contestation in the architectural education between scholars from the West and East sides of Java regarding this topic, and she chose not to be part of it. However, she analysed that Nusantara Architecture has been on a shaky ground because of at least two things. First, this movement did not have a great 'master' (*suhu*) that could build a robust platform as a foundation for the knowledge development; and second, there was no way to fit the diversity of architectural traditions in Indonesia under one label like Nusantara Architecture. Saraswati preferred to focus on

Balinese architecture, as for her, not only was it tied and grounded to a specific area and its people, Balinese architecture has also covered various aspects of being tropical, local, cultural and sustainable. Her involvement in the Denpasar's Building Expert Team (*Tim Ahli Bangunan Gedung – TABG*) led her to have a strong projection of Balinese architecture and the political corridors that need to be complied with in designing a contemporary Balinese architecture. It strengthened her argument that Balinese people did not need another term, like Nusantara Architecture, to overshadow the cultural richness that has been present in Bali (AAAO. Saraswati 2018, pers. comm., 15 September).

Similar to this, instead of going with Nusantara Architecture, Maulana Ibrahim, a lecturer in Khairun University in Ternate, preferred to go with the term Architecture of North Maluku Islands (*Arsitektur Kepulauan Maluku Utara*) to represent the region's conception of local architecture, particularly on the geographical context. Regardless of this choice, he still showed a high appreciation in the incorporation of the well-known local term of 'Nusantara' in the conception of the country's architectural identity, although he also emphasised the need to approach it critically. Learning from the 'masters' (*begawan*) of Nusantara Architecture, he understood that the purpose of using 'Nusantaran Architecture', instead of 'Indonesian Architecture', was to escape the limitation of administrative borders of areas. In this sense, instead of referring to the name of the province in pointing to the architecture, like West Sumatran architecture or South Kalimantan Architecture, one could directly refer to the tribe or the name of the culture, like the Minangkabau architecture or Sundanese architecture. He also understood that the term aimed to employ the language of traditional architecture to highlight the 'sameness' among cultural tribes in Indonesia to create a sense of connection and belonging. For this reason, he did not intend to problematise Nusantara Architecture, including the claim of Javacentrism carried by the term. Instead, he used it to reflect upon and asked why people from the Eastern part of Indonesia could not generate a similar 'trend' (M. Ibrahim 2018, pers. comm., 17 September).

Compared to all the academics that I have previously discussed, academics from Lambung Mangkurat University in Banjar Baru showed a different response. Bani Noor Muchamad, a lecturer in that university, admitted that he has not been aware of any discussions related to Nusantara Architecture and did not know anything about any uproars and debates in Java about this term. He claimed that the academics in his university tended to focus on the knowledge about their local context, mainly dealing with Banjarmasin and Banjarbaru's wet, swampy soil characteristic. In discussing Nusantara Architecture, he recalled the regionalism movement that had previously emerged, that he assumed the two had a similar purpose, which was to stimulate the architects' awareness of the local contexts and characteristics in design. He further questioned if Nusantara Architecture was only a new

‘package’ of regionalism and if this new conception would only repeat the cyclic pattern of the up-and-down architectural trend that we have seen in the regionalism movement. What he emphasised in regionalism and any similar movements was that it had to be a bottom-up process, allowing the locals to define themselves while adjusting to the social, cultural and natural context of the place (BN. Muchamad 2018, pers. comm., 9 August). Muchamad’s perspective was supported by his colleagues in the same university, Ira Mentayani and Naimatul Aufa, as both were not aware of any contestation of the term Nusantara Architecture, and did not bother to jump into the debates. For them, making sure the students knew the actual particular condition of the area was the main goal rather than introducing an unclear terminology that did not have anything to do with their local context and culture. They also questioned if, in the making of Nusantara Architecture, one would invite local people to take part in the process, since from their experiences, local people, including local architects, were, most often than not, pushed aside from any big-scale projects. They also questioned the reason why it was traditionalism, which they referred to as the old cultural tradition that was preserved for its ‘authenticity’, that became the focus of exercising Nusantara Architecture. In their opinion, it was ‘vernacular architecture’, which referred to the people’s everyday architecture, that needed to be developed and taught to students for its relation to people’s everyday culture and habit (I. Mentayani & N. Aufa 2018, pers. comm., 9 August).

V.4.3. Discussion: The paradox of contemporary Nusantara Architecture

The intense discussions that have been going on surrounding this discourse were mainly started with the question of ‘what is Nusantara Architecture’, as the differences perceived in understanding it led to different standpoints taken by Indonesian scholars. The supporters have lucidly explained their standpoints as they tried to make an establishment of the term by starting to refer to an ‘entrenched’ definition as a ground on which they could build the knowledge, and this choice was the start of the discord between the two groups. In this case, there are at least three fundamental questions that need to be addressed here:

- a. what does Nusantara Architecture mean?
- b. why should it go back to the time of Majapahit and adopt the term ‘Nusantara’, amidst all other choices?
- c. how would this new term sit among other established knowledges (e.g. world’s history and politics) and other global phenomena?

The lengthy explanations given by the supporters of the term have not satisfyingly answered these questions and have not given a strong theoretical foundation of the direction chosen. Prijotomo's approach solely to see the term Nusantara Architecture from an architectural perspective, as he stated in his inaugural speech, instigated even more problems as the term would be detached even further from foundational theories. One of the problems would be his antipathy to 'the West', including its theories, that his approach seemed to focus only on initiating an 'Eastern-origin' knowledge that was sterile from the influence and, in a way, the domination of Western theories. This anti-West spirit was continued by his fellow supporters who, direct or indirectly, created a stance in comparing themselves with the West by juxtaposing globalisation and modernism with traditional architecture. If this understanding is put side-by-side with Edward Said's Orientalism, then one can easily claim that this 'anti-West' movement is an extension of the on-going legacy of colonialism itself. The 'anti-imperialism' spirit has been translated as an urge to accentuate the country's differences in comparison to the West, and no matter how 'philanthropic' and 'benign' the idea seemed to be, this idea to 'exoticise' the country was an affix to the way the Occident had patronised the Orient in the past (Said, 1979). Moreover, with this 'anti-West' perspective fixed in place, Nusantara Architecture was constructed to create a strong stance in this comparison, putting forward any contrasting aspects that make 'us' different to 'them', while putting aside any shared culture and other traits that indicate the sameness between the country and the West. Therefore, although labelled as Indonesia's 'architectural identity', yet the conception of Nusantara Architecture was all about traditional architecture, disregarding the fact that this traditional architecture was only one layer among so many layers in Indonesia's identity construction. The question now is how the other layers of the country's identity can be embraced and incorporated in this conception, like the fact that almost 70% of Indonesia's cities have been urbanised; or the strong presence of urban *kampung* in most cities in Indonesia; or the economic pressure that forces people to live in a house of limited space built from mass-produced building materials; or simply the fact that most contemporary people do not have any connection with the symbolism in traditional artefacts. These untouched layers of contemporary reality, as touched by some of the opposing interviewees, are one of the missing puzzles from the grand idea of Nusantara Architecture.

Another problematic purpose carried by the conception of Nusantara Architecture is the aim to 'depoliticise' architecture by shifting the focus onto the country's cultural properties. There are at least two things to be clarified: (1) what is meant by 'politics' in this context?; and (2) why architecture should be detached from politics in the first place when many studies have claimed that architecture

is inherently political?⁷⁸ For the first question, I have a suspicion that the supporters of Nusantara Architecture saw politics similar to Carl Schmitt's suggestion, that politics is understood in a negative way that it "is generally juxtaposed to 'state' or at least is brought into relation with it" hence "the state thus appears as something political, [and] the political as something pertaining to the state" (Schmitt, 2007, p. 20). Politics is thus seen as a 'high-level' deceptive negotiation usually done by professional politicians in relation to governmental power and authority, discounting the fact that there is also another layer of people's day-to-day political life as part of the politics itself. In this case, Chantal Mouffe distinguishes 'politics', which is grounded in the 'ontic' level dealing with "the manifold practices of conventional politics", and 'the political', where "the ontological concerns the very way in which society is instituted" (Mouffe, 2005, pp. 8-9).⁷⁹ Politics is thus not limited to technical issues dealt with by politicians, but it covers every decision that requires people to choose between conflicting alternatives, including religious, moral, economic or ethical issues (Mouffe, 2005, p. 10; Schmitt, 2007, p. 37), and this is the reason why I argue that politics should be acknowledged and incorporated in the context of architecture.⁸⁰ History indeed has shown how architecture has been used as a tool to showcase power, from the time of the Pyramid and of Borobudur to the time of Indonesia's National Monument and the Sydney Opera House. But there are also laypeople's politics that is practised on a daily basis that is inseparable from architecture, like positioning oneself among neighbours; or negotiating space with people around territory; or choosing to live with people from the same social class away from marginalised people; or participating in community activities. It is why the attempt to separate architecture and politics is problematic and almost impossible. Furthermore, taking on the second question, the attempt to detach politics from architecture might be influenced by the way Suharto's regime for three decades worked in framing art and culture, including architecture, as an entity that was sterilised from politics (see Chapter IV.2 for the explanation on Suharto's political strategy). If this is the case, then Nusantara Architecture would not only be an extension of Suharto's cultural indoctrination of championing traditional architecture as the 'identity' of the country, but also a legacy of his policy that once created a *massa mengambang* (floating mass)

⁷⁸ For further elaboration on the close connection between architecture and politics, see Achmadi (2006, 2007, 2008); Anderson (1972); Geertz (1972, 1973); Hasan (2009); Kusno (2000, 2010a, 2013); Permanasari (2007); Sudrajat (2008); Vale (2008).

⁷⁹ Chantal Mouffe mentions that 'the political' is "the dimension of antagonism which [is] constitutive of human societies", while 'politics' is "the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organising human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political" (Mouffe, 2005, p. 9).

⁸⁰ Carl Schmitt (2007) argues that these moral, cultural, religious and ethical aspects constitute the distinction of 'friend and enemy' that indicates the presence of a 'union or separation', or an 'association or dissociation' (p.26-37). He then critiques the argument saying that since there is a formulation of 'politics=state', and since there are aspects of culture, religion, moral and ethical that are considered not necessarily to be related to the state and politics, then these aspects have to be neutralised (p.22).

which disallowed people from engaging with any political practices and discussions. Since then, politics has been seen as a negative and people seemed to, willingly, avoid and disassociate themselves from it, exactly how it has been displayed in Nusantara Architecture. It is problematic since the attempt to detach politics from architecture is, after all, merely another form of political conduct (Kusno, 2000, 2010a, 2013).

Some of the main aims of Nusantara Architecture are to create a discourse that counter-balances the established modernism and globalisation that has been too overpowering and to evoke the discussion of architectural identity and being local. In this case, traditional architecture that is deemed as the 'essence' of the country's identity has gained in significance, offering an alternative direction in architecture, while still emphasising the contemporaneity of the development to adjust with the temporal context. This new movement has captured the national attention with its many publications and has successfully attracted Indonesian architects, and even laypeople, to get involved in the discussion of architectural identity and contextual design, and such an achievement is something that needs to be appreciated. However, some problems follow. First, the assumption that puts traditional architecture as an 'authentic' and 'ideal' figuration of the country's identity is problematic, as one can ask how this assumption was built and on what logic it lays its foundation. Knowing that Indonesian traditional culture, particularly in the Western part of the archipelago, was originally from Southern China and Vietnam as part of an Austronesian world (Waterson, 1990, pp. 12-26), then one can conclude that this traditional architecture was as 'foreign' as the condemned modern architecture. In this sense, championing this particular architecture among others does not have any legitimate theoretical foundation. The many traditional cultures have indeed been developed for hundreds of years in the islands of Indonesia, and have also been merging with local ways of living and have become part of people's everyday cultures; but so was colonial architecture and modern architecture, as both have been in the country for decades and have become part of people's culture. If we stick with the definition offered in the Oxford dictionary, we understand culture as "the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively" ("Culture," 2018), thus the human intellectual development has to be one of the main considerations. If one takes account of this contemporary intellectual expansion, then adopting contemporary 'modern' architecture would make more sense than adopting traditional architecture, although both are foreign to the country, at least the modern culture is still being practiced by most of the people in the country.⁸¹

⁸¹ In this argument, I emphasise the 'contemporaneity' of the culture itself, that one community's identity takes account of what is happening among the people in the current state. Therefore this conception of identity

Nusantaran Architecture did aim to oppose the establishment of modern architecture, yet I argue that this conception has been creating a new establishment, repeating a similar stage as the one it initially challenged. Nusantara Architecture used to be a movement that tried to challenge the unification brought by modern architecture which created an industrialised architecture style. However, the recent development of the Nusantara Architecture conception has shown similar pattern of unification in treating architecture as a replicable object, particularly in the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition (see Chapter VI.2 for a comprehensive discussion of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition).⁸² The approach to making a 'template design' for the ten different places was a piece of evidence that architecture has been sterilised from context and treated as another industrial object. Moreover, if the 'minimalist' architecture as the sign of modernism in Indonesia was condemned as an extension of capitalism, then Nusantara Architecture is not very different as it is now an instrument of capitalism attached to tourism. If modern architecture was demonised for promoting liberalism, then the conception of Nusantara Architecture itself, more or less, has quite similar characteristics: (1) it is "unable to adequately grasp the pluralistic nature of the social world, with the conflicts that pluralism entails; conflicts for which no rational solution could ever exist"; and (2) it believes in a rational and universal consensus and tends to negate the others that do not fit with the grand narration proposed (Mouffe, 2005, pp. 10-11).⁸³ I pose this argument based on the 'essentialist' character of Nusantara Architecture that, amidst the complexity of contemporary reality, tries to come to a rational 'conclusion' of what Indonesia's architectural identity is and how it is supposed to be. Probably unconsciously, it creates a boundary that excludes anything that is not considered 'ideal' and does not fit the description offered. Although Nusantara Architecture aims to provide a container for the diversity of Indonesia, yet the ideas surrounding the term are actually limited and only accommodate one layer among many in the discussion of identity. This becomes an important point to discuss in questioning the term Nusantara Architecture, to open a discussion about inclusivity, grasping plurality and giving room to contingencies and adversaries, thus in this

cannot be generalised, as the contemporaneity of the people in the big cities, for instance, might be different from the people in the remote villages, let alone across the variety of island traditions.

⁸² I am aware that the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition is not a representation of the entire conception of Nusantara Architecture, especially that Prijotomo as the founder of the term has separated from the state in terms of its understanding. Yet in this case, I see the competition as an official attempt in designing Nusantara Architecture, and the winning designs can be considered as the 'official' translations of Nusantara Architecture.

⁸³ Mouffe, referring to Schmitt (2007), argues that liberalism, based on rationalism and individualism, believes in a universal consensus that, in a way, requires some acts of exclusion in achieving the expected result. Mouffe emphasises that it is impossible to attain a fully inclusive 'rational' consensus, and for this, liberalism tends to negate and omit the 'antagonism' which poses a generally contrasting standpoint to the mainstream (Mouffe, 2005, pp. 10-12).

sense, having a closed and restrictive definition of what Nusantara Architecture is something to avoid.

The pragmatic paradigm used by supporters to develop the conception of Nusantara Architecture might be the reason why this term has been heavily problematised. Not only sterilising it from a bigger social-political discussion, the term is also largely exercised toward a 'solution', adopting a 'solution focusing strategy' (Lawson, 1979, p. 66) and the practicality of 'knowing how' (Cross, 1982, p. 223) that have been deemed as the 'nature' of design itself (see Chapter II.5 for elaboration on design as a pragmatic activity). Approaching architecture from this perspective might lead to championing practicality as the end goal of the discussion, creating a series of 'recipes' in designing Nusantara Architecture, and interestingly, this approach seems to be particularly popular among architects as a fast solution to what they need in making designs. With the rapid development of technology where effectivity and efficiency become determining factors in architectural design, working toward a rational solution has been the 'normal' way to tackle the issues surrounding architecture.

Aside from the problematic academic culture that still follows the hierarchical pattern and puts the seniors as 'masters', as with the undisputed and unquestionable Javanese conceptions of charismatic leaders (Anderson, 1990, p. 74), one can also see that Nusantara Architecture has become a platform on which political contestation was exercised between architecture schools in the West and the East of Java. It extends a long-going concealed competition to capture the national spotlight. Universitas Indonesia (UI) and Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), both located on the West end of Java Island, have been seen as two of the most prestigious state universities in Indonesia. In the recent Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Ranking 2020 system referred to by the Ministry of Education and Culture (then named Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education), these two universities are listed as the top two in Indonesia (QS-University, 2020). Located close to the capital city of Indonesia, UI and ITB have engaged with the rapid development of architecture, and this influenced the way contemporary discourses dominated the direction of the schools. Meanwhile, in the East of Java Island, the emergence of Nusantara Architecture has provided a new platform on which the East Java-based universities, including Institut Teknologi Surabaya (ITS) and Universitas Brawijaya (UB), could capture national attention. The government adoption of the term was seen as a legitimization of its significance. This feud shows that Nusantara Architecture has become an apparatus to exercise the underlying tensions among educational institutions. In this case, not only that architectural education in Indonesia has suffered from Java-centrism at the national level, but also that there is a strong political contestation inside Java Island, and the discourse of Nusantara Architecture has provided a platform and an instrument for this dispute.

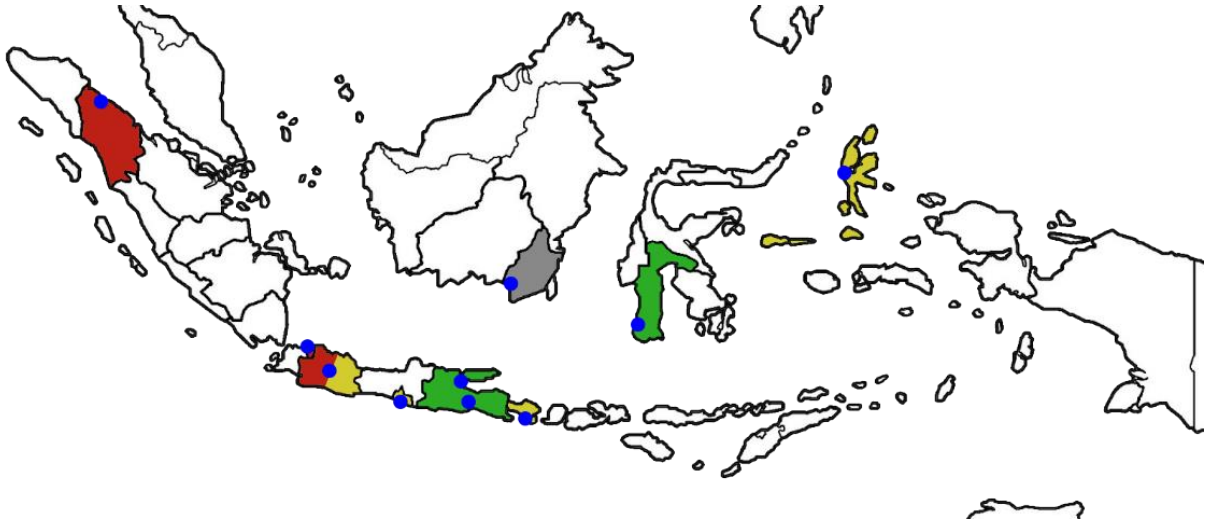


Figure 17. The interview location of Indonesian scholars

Source: Writer's document, 2019

Interestingly, if one puts the locations of the scholars interviewed on the map (Figure 17), it is clear that the acceptance of Nusantara Architecture in Indonesia has been limited, and very much contained to Surabaya, Malang and Makassar.⁸⁴ Scholars in these places expressed not only a strong acceptance of the term but also an eagerness to develop it further. The firm opposers were academics from Jakarta, Bandung, and Medan, while the rest of the interviewees, from Yogyakarta, Bali and Ternate, recognised this idea but only agree with it to some extent. Of interest was that four academics from South Kalimantan were unaware of this term, and by stating that they did not know “the discourse that was happening in Java” (BN. Muchamad 2018, pers. comm., 9 August), it means that they thought of Nusantara Architecture as a discussion for people in Java Island, and since they were not part of it, they did not see the necessity to follow the development. This situation could initiate further questions of how exactly scholars outside Java perceive this conception of Nusantara Architecture, including their positioning toward it being a Javacentric conception, to investigate the

⁸⁴ In Figure 17, the interview areas are coloured differently depending on the interviewees' response to the term Nusantara Architecture. Green illustrates a strong acceptance of the term; yellow illustrates the in-between position, either partly agreeing or partly disagreeing with the term; red indicates a strong opposition and rejection to the term; and grey indicates an incomprehension of the term.

claim of inclusivity that has become one of the arguments proposed by the supporters of Nusantara Architecture.

V.5. Summary

This chapter investigates the scholarly discussion toward the conception of Nusantara Architecture as an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of this term. To answer the question of ‘what do architecture scholars and theorists mean by Nusantara Architecture’ as stated in the research question, I opened this chapter with a discussion of the historical term ‘Nusantara’ as the main inspiration behind the emergence of Nusantara Architecture. I argue that at least two understandings surround the term ‘Nusantara’: (1) the ‘pre-colonial’ conception that drew on the history of the Majapahit Kingdom and Gajah Mada’s Palapa Oath as the main origin, and considering Nusantara as an area comprising most of the Southeast Asian archipelago; and (2) the ‘post-independence’ conception proposed by Yamin mostly for political purposes, where although referring to the history of Majapahit’s Nusantara, the conception was altered to refer only to inside the national border of Indonesia. These two meanings inherently propose different understandings, yet are always mixed-up in the construction of Nusantara Architecture, hence the lack of clarity with the idea. As part of my scrutiny, Majapahit glorification has been intensely present in contemporary Indonesia. I see that the long imposition and indoctrination have made these adaptations accepted as ‘normal’ by most of the people. Although there is no significant rejection of using these ‘neo-Majapahit’ terms, one can always argue that no rejection does not always necessarily mean acceptance. Just as has been revealed in this study, in many cases, people do not care since they do not see any necessity to engage with the issue.

Looking at how the initiators understood the term ‘Nusantaran Architecture’, it was crystal clear that this term did initially refer to traditional architecture as the basis of its arguments and development, albeit the negations of its traditionalism conveyed by some supporters of the term. Yori Antar’s Wae Rebo project then highlighted Prijotomo’s direction and successfully elevated it to be a national possibility. Despite the variations, most supporters, if not all, envisaged the same agenda: merging culture and tradition as part of locality with modernism and technological development as part of contemporaneity. The arguments conveyed by the supporters of this term were quite diverse, and one might easily show some disagreeing with others. Conversely, the opposers mostly came with the question of ‘what is Nusantara Architecture’ when asked about their position in the discourse. This shows a shared confusion that needs to be dealt with if the supporters want to be clear with otherwise

vague terminology. Although I am not in the position to judge this conception as ‘flawed’ and ‘better be eradicated’, as implied by some interviewees, I strongly question many of the assumptions that were proposed by the supporters. This study itself intends to evoke discussions from both sides, to create a more ‘healthy’ and productive discourse. Aside from questions of the supporters, in the discussion I also challenge the opposers not to negate the empirical situation in the country, especially since the term has become very popular among Indonesian people and architects. The clear aesthetic direction to refer to traditional architecture appeared to give a particular direction in providing an object to relate to in terms of identity construction. The need to have a ‘symbolism’ in an identity construction is exemplified when we consider that the state does need a ‘concrete idea’ to hold people together as an imagined community. It is indeed a complex challenge, and it is not easy to decide where to stand in this discourse, especially that, as a constructivist, I believe that everything is socially constructed. Therefore, further discussion is essentially needed in this discourse, not to find an agreement between the two groups but to enhance understanding and see how the ‘mutual-contamination’, following Yacobi (2008, p. 97), will impact in the development of this discourse.

Chapter VI

An Official Translation of Nusantara Architecture: The ‘Nusantaran Architecture Design Competition’

VI.1. Introduction

After discussing the development of the terminologies of Nusantara and Nusantara Architecture in the previous chapter, it becomes clear that the terms have vague definitions. The term ‘Nusantara’ has multiple meanings, and each of the users of this term have referred to completely different field. The pre-colonial Nusantara refers to the area associated with the vassal-states of the Majapahit Kingdom that covers most of the Southeast Asia archipelago, which includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, and the Philippine. The postcolonial Nusantara, on the other hand, has been used to date to refer to the area inside the national border of Indonesia, and this articulation has become the alias of Indonesia. Aside from the two meanings, there has been an emergence of the contemporary Nusantara which, according to Indonesian architecture scholars as discussed in Chapter V, is associated with cultural entities in Indonesia. This contemporary definition is what the discussion of Nusantara Architecture is then based on, and this new meaning has been used to justify the direction of Nusantara Architecture that has always been associated with Indonesian culture and tradition, mostly referring to traditional houses, decorations and ornaments.

As I have briefly mentioned before, the Indonesian government has been incorporating the term ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ in its national tourism development agenda. This chapter will problematise two potential pitfalls that might follow this plan. First, the adoption of Nusantara Architecture as part of a cultural tourism plan is seen as a ‘win-win-solution’ in merging the benefit of tourism, mostly financially, with what is claimed to be culture preservation. This plan, however, is problematic as it is dominated by profit-oriented purposes, instead of preserving culture, and the development of this cultural tourism in ten remote places in Indonesia will inevitably alter the local culture, instead of fortifying it. Second, the reference to Bali as the ‘ideal’ example of tourism in Indonesia is also debatable since there are many hidden social and economic complications that have been overlooked. Making Bali as an example for the Ten New Bali areas is therefore questionable, as in what term does Bali has to be referred to, and to what extend the ten new places would have to follow the success story, together with the social alteration, of Bali. These two pitfalls are discussed more thoroughly later in this chapter to understand the possible benefits and threats of the implementation of this tourism agenda.

This chapter, as such, will focus on the government's 'Ten New Bali' agenda as the main strategy for tourism development. The 'Nusantaran Architecture Design Competition' which has become the centrepiece of this agenda, will be the focus of my analysis. This competition called for Indonesian architects to contribute to the development of what is claimed as 'authentic' local experiences for tourists. The chapter will have five sections. In the first section, I will elucidate how the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition was initiated and how this became part of the government plan. I then continue with elaborating on the Ten New Bali development plan (e.g. the top three development priorities on each place and the targets for the homestay constructions, foreign visitors and national incomes by 2019), followed by some criticism of this ambitious agenda. The second part of this chapter will examine how the competition unfolded in five cycles between the year 2013 and year 2018, the nature of its brief and the composition of the panel of juries. The third part will discuss and compare the winning designs particularly from three cycles (i.e. the homestay, restaurant and souvenir centre cycles) while taking into account the background of the winning architects and the nature of their interrogation and interaction with the actual sites framed as one of the ten new destinations. The chapter concludes by discussing the problems that have emerged from the competition, and how it consistently ignores the local culture and poses a threat to rather than strengthening of the culture if the government's plan to make the winning designs as template designs for those chosen places is finally accomplished. The formalist nature of design process, most often than not, has regarded localities as mere sources of inspiration rather than actual real-life contexts whose problems have to be dealt with, and this inclination has led the architects to the trap of offering superficial interpretations of localities.

VI.2. The initiation of Nusantara Architecture Design Competition and its association with the national tourism plan

The term Nusantara Architecture was initiated by Josef Prijotomo but was popularised by Yori Antar when he and his team restored the Mbaru Niang conical houses in Wae Rebo on the eastern Indonesian island of Flores in 2011. This internationally-recognised restoration project, which was awarded the 2012 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation (UNESCO, 2013), and the subsequent cultural tourism there boom in Wae Rebo and Flores have elevated the popularity of both the slogan and the conception of Nusantara Architecture as the project provides the exotic experience of living among the locals in a remote village that the tourists were looking for. Nusantara Architecture becomes a well-accepted notion among Indonesian people since the Mbaru Niang restoration offers a very tangible meaning to the notion of Nusantara Architecture, as the

indigeneity of the traditional houses offers 'the otherness' that gives a clear distinction from the modern architecture that has been associated with the West. Subsequently, Yori Antar and his Wae Rebo were the inspiration of the inception of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition.

VI.2.1. The Nusantara Architecture Design Competition and the Ten New Bali

As I have stated in the previous section, Nusantara Architecture, as a slogan, captures national attention after being employed in a series of design competitions that support the country's cultural tourism industry. The encounter of Nusantara Architecture to the national government was facilitated by Propan Raya, a private sector, which, in that time, planned to develop a series of architectural design competition as part of the company's promotional campaign. The success story of Wae Rebo happened to be a catalyst in this process, as it was Yori Antar who inspired Yuwono Imanto, the main actor behind the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition, to take Nusantara Architecture as the theme of the competition. This section aims to trace back how the design competition was put together and to see how the competition was linked to the Ten New Bali agenda. Understanding the history of this competition is crucial to get a better understanding of who the actors involved in the uproar and to investigate any potential political and economic motives that are surrounding the competition, aside from the innocent claims of design explorations and culture preservations.

Upon completion of the Wae Rebo preservation project, Yori Antar invited a group of sponsors, two of whom were Kris Rianto Adidarma and Yuwono Imanto, consecutively the CEO and the Director of the Propan Raya Company, to the site.⁸⁵ In one discussion, the group talked about their concerns that architecture schools in Indonesia have been focusing too much on the modern development of architecture and have forgotten to look into the history of Indonesian architecture. The development of contemporary architecture in Indonesia in the last three decades (since the 1990s) has also been dominated by the look of modern minimalist houses that became the trend in residential housing and was considered as a social status symbol for the emerging middle-class. This discussion triggered Imanto to initiate a new design competition on this Nusantara Architecture theme, following his

⁸⁵ PT Propan Raya is a paint company that was founded by Hendra Adidarma in 1979. This company has actively promoted programs that include Nusantara Architecture, green building, and creative city. Propan has become an active partner of the government in developing the agenda of Nusantara Architecture, especially in holding the design competition.

other design competition on green building that he started in 2012 in collaboration with Naning Adiwoyo, the initiator of Green Building Council Indonesia (GBC Indonesia) (Y. Imanto 2018, pers. comm., 20 July).

For this new plan, according to the interview with Imanto, he mentioned that he was in contact with Mari Elka Pangestu, who was then the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, to decide the object for the first three rounds of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition: first was cultural housing (*rumah budaya*), second was a tourism village (*desa wisata*), and third was an airport.⁸⁶ With support from the minister, the competition was set to be part of the national planning, which means that the winning design would be built and funded by the central government.

However, after the competition was completed, the implementation plan had to be postponed as there was an election in 2014 and the new President, Joko Widodo, appointed a different person to lead the Ministry of Tourism. Later, to continue with the third cycle of the competition whose focus was to design the airport, Imanto then contacted Ignasius Jonan who was at the time the new Minister of Transportation. With Jonan's approval, the competition was set to align with the government's plan to develop a new airport in Alor, which thus became the site of the design competition. Moreover, Imanto further added that the following cycles of the competition were driven by the request of the President Joko Widodo himself, as in 2016 the government was developing a plan of Ten Priority of Tourism Destination (*10 Destinasi Wisata Prioritas*), which are:

- Danau Toba (North Sumatra)
- Bromo Tengger (East Java)
- Tanjung Kelayang (Bangka Belitung)
- Mandalika (West Nusa Tenggara)
- Tanjung Lesung (Banten)
- Labuan Bajo (East Nusa Tenggara)
- Kepulauan Seribu (Jakarta)
- Wakatobi (South East Sulawesi)
- Borobudur (Central Java)
- Morotai (Maluku).

Arief Yahya as the Minister of Tourism was instructed by Widodo to incorporate the concept of Nusantara Architecture as part of the plan of the development, and in the fifth cycle, the idea and the title of Nusantara restaurant as the theme of the competition came directly from Widodo himself

⁸⁶ In the discussion of Nusantara Architecture, the term *desa wisata* (tourism village) has been distinguished from *wisata desa* (tourism of the village). *Desa wisata* has become part of the campaign of the current tourism strategy, and it is referred to as "the integration between attraction, accommodation and supporting facilities that are served as part of people's living culture that is unified with the local tradition" (Nuryanti, 1993). The main difference between *desa wisata* and *wisata desa* is that the former is considered more holistic in serving tourism as it includes all aspects of the village, that are the people, the culture, the resources, and the natural or man-made attractions. *Wisata desa*, on the other hand, focuses solely on the attractions that happen to be located in the village, while the participation of the local people is very limited (M. A. Febri, 2018).

(Y. Imanto 2018, pers. comm., 20 July). This illustrates the significant role of Propan Raya Company in directing the development of this Nusantara Architecture Design Competition. Not only as an initiator, but Imanto has also persistently tried to expand the scope of the competition by lobbying influential people to support the plan. This resonates with Indah Widiastuti's concern that Indonesian architectural identity has been orchestrated by a concealed yet considerable power exercised by the construction industry companies (I. Widiastuti 2017, pers. comm., 6 October) that, as Frampton argues, these conglomerates have been "reducing architecture to the provision of an aesthetic skin – the packaging ... [that is] nothing more than a large commodity to facilitate its marketing" (Frampton, 1987, p. 376). It shows how Propan Raya Company engineers the development of the competition which causes the articulation of Nusantara Architecture to reach its peak popularity and to become prevalent among people's thinking as an effect of a massive campaign and media coverage. The tactical choice to adopt the emerging term of Nusantara Architecture has proven to be a success as it engages and captures the attention of the government and the people, without revealing the company's profit-oriented objectives. Although Imanto does not deny that Propan has a business interest in its support of a Nusantara Architecture agenda, he underlines that this Nusantara Architecture design competition is part of the effort to rebrand the company.

Incorporating the theme of 'Nusantara' makes the design competition align with the president's ambition to improve the country's cultural tourism. The competition itself has become one of the biggest design competitions in the country, and in its third cycle in 2016, 993 teams registered and it received 728 design proposals and it was recorded in the Indonesia World Records Museum (*Museum Rekor Indonesia–MURI*) as a design competition with most participants (Murdaningsih, 2016b; Odin, 2016; Ramadhiani, 2016). The competition is currently a collaboration project between the Ministry of Tourism, the Indonesian Agency for Creative Economy (BEKRAF), the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) and PT Propan Raya. This becomes one of the instruments to attain the targets set by the President, which are to double the number of foreign visitors to 20 million by 2019, to raise Indonesia's world ranking in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) from 70 to 30 (Purwaningrum & Ardhyanto, 2018, p. 2), and to make tourism one of "the core business and the backbone of the economy of the country in the future" (Murdaningsih, 2016a).

Table 4. Top 3 development priorities on 10 new tourism destinations

	Destinations	Top 3 priority developments
1	Danau Toba (North Sumatra)	- Developing the final stage of Silangit International Airport - Constructing a toll road from Medan to Tebing Tinggi - Improving the water quality of Toba Lake
2	Tanjung Kelayang (Bangka Belitung)	- Proposing a national geopark - Constructing HAS Hanandjoedin International Airport - Developing <i>desa wisata</i> (tourism village) homestays
3	Tanjung Lesung (Banten)	- Constructing a toll road from Serang to Panimbang - Building an airport at South Serang - Re-activating train route from Rangkasbitung to Labuan
4	Kepulauan Seribu (Jakarta)	- Improving the sewerage system - Improving the energy capacity at Seribu Islands - Developing <i>desa wisata</i> homestays
5	Borobudur (Central Java)	- Building New Yogya International Airport at Kulonprogo - Constructing a toll road from Bawen to Yogyakarta - Providing an airport train shuttle from Adi Soemarmo Airport at Solo
6	Bromo Tengger (East Java)	- Constructing a toll road from Malang to Pandaan - Constructing a toll road from Pasuruan to Probolinggo - Developing <i>desa wisata</i> homestays
7	Mandalika (West Nusa Tenggara)	- Constructing the grand Mosque - Reorganising Mandalika Beach area - Providing toilets and managing rubbish in Rinjani area
8	Labuan Bajo (East Nusa Tenggara)	- Developing Komodo Airport - Improving the Marina area and Labuan Bajo Harbour - Improving the Waste Management System
9	Wakatobi (South East Sulawesi)	- Developing Wakatobi Airport - Improving the connectivity by air - Reorganising the area of Sombu Dive and Toliamba Peak
10	Morotai (Maluku)	- Developing Pitu Airport - Developing the infrastructure inside the area of <i>Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus</i> (Special Economic Area) - Developing the infrastructure outside the area of <i>Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus</i> (Special Economic Area)

Note. Adapted from: Amanda, G., 2017, Republika.co.id.

With these targets, The Ministry of Tourism then set 10 programs, three of which become the priority and *desa wisata* homestay development is one of them.⁸⁷ With the 'Ten Priority of Tourism Destinations', also known as the 'Ten New Bali', the Ministry of Tourism then set an ambitious plan to

⁸⁷ The ten priority programs of national tourism development are: digital tourism; *desa wisata* homestay; airline development; tourism branding; top ten origination; top three main destination; the development of top ten priority destinations; competency certification for human resources; the initiation of the tourism-conscious movement; and crisis centre management (Amanda, 2017).

build 100 thousand homestays in the 10 destinations (Rachman, 2017). Each destination has its own top three priorities to be built (Amanda, 2017), with the focus on developing the infrastructure and accessibility which includes an airport, a harbour, a toll road and an energy supply (Table 4). Hiramshyah Sambudhy Thaib, the Chairman of the Team for the Acceleration of the Development of 10 Priority Tourism Destination, states that the homestay development is strategic for this plan as it is faster to be built as the construction only takes around six months, much faster than building hotels that might need up to five years. He also states that the homestays support the low-cost tourism concept that attracts domestic and international youngsters and backpackers, especially with the growing interest in choosing shared houses instead of hotels. The design of the homestay that adopts the style of the local traditional houses using organic materials such as timber and bamboo also becomes an aspect that might attract tourists (Rachman, 2017). Not only does this homestay plan promote Community Based Tourism (CBT) that strengthens public participation in tourism business, this program also aligns with the President's *nawacita* (nine missions) to "build Indonesia from the periphery by strengthening regions and villages under the unity of the country" ("Nawacita," 2017, p. 2).

However, the ambitious plan to build 100 thousand homestays is questioned by many experts. Taleb Rifai, the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, shows his concern that adding a massive number of room capacities only creates higher tensions among the providers, especially with the existing business players, and it opposes the aim of maintaining healthy economic competition in society. He also questions how the government regulates the presence of these new homestays, including how to make sure the taxes are paid and the homestays are well inspected. Carlos Vogeler, UNWTO's Executive Director for Member Relations, notes that the homestay plan is contradicting the digital tourism plan, as the former sells the country's traditional side which expects people to resonate with the past while the latter is very modern and progressive. Márcio Favilla, UNWTO's Executive Director for Operational Programmes and Institutional Relations, argues that the homestay agenda might only suit for the domestic market, but not for international tourists ("Homestay Jadi Topik Hangat dalam Forum PBB di Markas UNWTO," 2016). Moreover, Indonesian architects and scholars also express their anxiety over this plan. Adi Purnomo argues that the homestay plan, including the competition, is a 'blunder' as it does not consider the social impact of the plan if finally implemented. The fact that government sets up one competition for 10 different places and each winning design would be multiplied to 100 thousand units is very concerning as it would completely alter the local culture, especially in the places that do not have a strong cultural basis (A. Purnomo 2017, pers. comm., 3 October). Eko Prawoto criticises the homestay plan and competition heavily for relying on a quantitative approach without using a qualitative method to understand the human aspects of each place. The plan solely focuses on physical development without having clear social planning, and this

plan is a cultural imposition since the government does not even incorporate the local people's opinion in the decision-making process (E. Prawoto 2017, pers. comm., 10 October).

Table 5. *Homestay construction target 2017-2019*

Destination		Homestay construction target per year (room unit)		
		2017	2018	2019
1	Danau Toba	1600	2400	4000
2	Tanjung Kelayang	800	1200	2000
3	Tanjung Lesung	1600	2400	4000
4	Kota Tua & Seribu Islands	1600	2400	4000
5	Borobudur	3200	4800	8000
6	Bromo Tengger	1600	2400	4000
7	Mandalika	3200	4800	8000
8	Labuan Bajo	800	1200	2000
9	Wakatobi	800	1200	2000
10	Morotai	800	1200	2000
11	Other Destination	4000	6000	10000
TOTAL		20000	30000	50000

Note. Adapted from: Rachman, V., 2017, SWA Online Magazine

Interestingly, the campaign to build 100 thousand homestays is explained differently. Thaib explains in detail that the homestay was to be built in stages: 20 thousand rooms in 2007; 30 thousand in 2018; and 50 thousand in 2019 (Table 5) (Rachman, 2017). Imanto mentions that the number of 100 thousand should not be understood as a real numeric number, as it is only a slogan to represent the government's massive planning to build homestays, while the exact number might be not as much (Y. Imanto 2018, pers. comm., 20 July). Similar to Imanto's statement, Anneke Prasyanti, the Team Leader for the Homestay Development Acceleration Task Force, explains in detail that the number came from the Minister's intention to channel 10% of the aid for the government's one million housing program to build the homestay, so this implied 100 thousand homestays in the plan. Yet along the way, the number became not feasible as the credit offered was for developers and not for a Community Based Tourism (CBT). The number then significantly reduced to be only 10 thousand room units to be developed for the whole 10 destinations, and interestingly, Prasyanti mentioned that from that number, only 2.5% would be newly built homestays, and the rest would be a conversion or renovation from local people's existing houses (A. Prasyanti 2018, pers. comm., 24 September).

This inconsistency shows that the government's decision to run this program has not been carefully thought through and was more like an instant decision responding to the President's instruction. The decision was made without a comprehensive consideration of how to achieve it, let alone the impact of the implementation. It is quite an excessive ambition to simultaneously build 10 new destinations each with new infrastructure to be completed in the five years of Joko Widodo's governance term. Therefore, it is not surprising that at the end of 2017, the government finally announced that they had to lower their target and reduced the ten destinations into only four destinations, which are Danau Toba, Borobudur, Mandalika and Labuan Bajo.

However, these destinations still cannot replace Bali's position for Indonesia's tourism, as with the Mount Agung eruption in Bali in November 2017, when the airport had to be closed for four days, hundreds of flights had to be cancelled and 70 percent of the prospective tourists cancelled their trips, the country had lost two million of its foreign visitors and these Ten New Bali could not do much in filling the gap of the tourists Bali had lost (Adiakurnia, 2018). Moreover, in 2019, the government also needed to lower the initial target of 20 million foreign visitors to 18 million visitors, following the unachieved targets of the previous years, although it still shows an upward trend. In 2017, the country only had 14 million visitors from the initial target of 15 million visitors, and in 2018, they had 16 million visitors from the target of 17 million (Fitriani, 2019). The geographical position of Indonesia on the ring of fire that brings many disastrous events has been blamed for this problem. However, the government claims that, as one of the leading sectors to contribute to the national income, at the end of 2018, although the achievement was below target, tourism has been listed as the second biggest income for the country after crude palm oil (CPO) exports. The government also claims that the country's rank in the World Travel and Tourism Council has raised to be number 9 in the world's fastest growth in tourism, number 3 in Asia, and number 1 in South East Asia (Apriliani, 2018). For this reason, the Indonesian government has no doubt in investing big money in this sector, as by 2024, there will be another 500 trillion Rupiah invested for tourism, and around 36% of this is provided by the government and the rest comes from the private sector. This whole investment is used to build 120 thousand hotel rooms, 15 thousand restaurants, 100 recreation parks, 100 diving operations, 100 marinas, 100 *Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus* – KEK (Special Economic Area), and 100 thousand homestays (Fitriani, 2019).

VI.2.2. Political motives behind the cultural preservation agenda

Aside from the acclaimed success of this tourism agenda, it is crucial to see other obscured aspects that shaped and have driven this massive tourism effort, including the competition as the tool to achieve the agenda. When Abidin Kusno discusses the efforts to create a trans-local pan-Asian identity among Asian architects in the 1980s, he elucidates that in expressing their idea of regionalism, not only are the architects representing their own agency in manipulating the material and symbolic sources of place, but there is a strong influence of the nation-state's power with its nation-building projects and the geopolitical condition at that particular time (Kusno, 2010b, pp. 60-61).⁸⁸ Although architectural design relies on the architects' subjective sensibility in understanding what locality is about and in directing how the locality is drawn upon, architectural design needs to be understood also in relation to the external forces that directly or indirectly shape the architects' approaches and decisions.

President Joko Widodo, with his populist economic and development policies, has directed the economic development of Indonesia to be more 'pro-people' (*pro-rakyat*), especially when he represents himself as a representative of the 'small people' (*wong cilik*), and has initiated development from the periphery as part of his decentralised idea of nationhood.⁸⁹ In this policy, culture is positioned not only as a spectacle of the national identity-making policy but also as a tool to suppress the development of Islamic radicalism in the country (Aini, 2017). The propaganda of having a pristine national culture to be preserved is accentuated to nurture people's sense of belonging to the country, and the state's position of the 'saviour' of the local culture is considered as one of the populist strategies that can strengthen the political position of the government among its people. Focusing on building from the periphery also becomes a key idea to sell to the people during Widodo's presidential campaign as an embodiment of the inclusive development of marginal people and spaces. This is then followed with the promotion of the *desa wisata* tourism scheme which has the main purpose to empower marginal people through tourism while strengthening the bond between people and their culture. With the recent tourism boom enabled by massive technology development through

⁸⁸ Kusno discusses the first Asian Congress of Architects in 1984 that was held with a particular focus on 'Asian identity and cultural heritage'.

⁸⁹ Widodo has been considered as the representative of *wong cilik* (small people). This refers to marginalised and unprivileged people, or the peasantry. He even made a statement: "I never forgot where I came from; when I was young, I identified with the small people (*wong cilik*), I was one of them" (Mietzner, 2015, p. 25). This becomes his trademark in the presidential election that has been continued through his political decisions that are claimed as 'pro-people' (*pro-rakyat*).

various social and virtual media, cultural tourism is then highlighted to be the ultimate way to satisfy the economic, cultural, political and social empowerment for both the state and the people.

However, this cultural approach has to be seen more critically in the frame of a wider political discussion of the country. Although preserving the authenticity of the culture has been accentuated as part of Widodo's nation-building strategy, yet one can also argue that this might not be representing the government's approach in dealing with the real cultural life of the people. When the government mentions 'culture', what might be referred to is the traditional form of culture that still maintains a traditional way of life and still possesses traditional artefacts. This kind of culture is put under the spotlight since it carries the potential to be sold as a commodity that brings additional income for the country through tourism. Other 'un-pristine' and 'ordinary' real-life culture, on the other hand, does not get similar attention and in fact, it becomes a subject of disputation as both central and regional governments keep conflicting with the local people due to their opposite interests.

The problem of customary lands and forests, for instance, has become a source of conflict as "the governmental law is considered having a higher position compared to the customary law ... [and] the state does not recognise customary law" (Mutolib, Yonariza, Mahdi, & Ismono, 2015, p. 214). In many land dispute cases, local people have unwillingly to sacrifice their ownership of the lands which they have inhabited for hundreds of years due to land expansion for palm oil plantation, while these customary lands carry their customary rights and play an important role in maintaining their social cultural identity (Colchester & Chao, 2013, pp. 7-8). Even in the case of Sigapiton Village in Toba Lake, which becomes one of the locations in which the Ten New Bali tourism scheme is imposed, the current development of tourism has pushed local people away from their land and dislodged them from their right to access their land. In the opening of The Kaldera Resort, a high-end resort that is expected to copy the development of Nusa Dua Bali and Mandalika Lombok, the Danau Toba Authority Board as part of the local government removes local people who come to the location to ask about the status of their customary lands which have been occupied for the resort development, and their presence in the location is deemed as impeding the investors' interests (Tani, 2019).

It is a complete contrast that in the same village, the Ten New Bali scheme is applied using a campaign of local culture preservation and incorporating local people as the main actors. It is an example of the inconsistency of the government program, that on one side they are campaigning about the importance of cultural preservation, but at the same time, they unapologetically displace people from their land and culture for the sake of economic development. This hypocrisy is probably seen as a

common practice of how the government runs its programs for the sake of 'the greater good', but their decision in cherry-picking which culture is to be developed and which culture is to be destroyed is very much questionable.

The government's preference in beautifying culture is also considered problematic as it seems to avoid dealing with the real life problems in society. Housing affordability, resource accessibility, poverty, informal settlements, recurrent bushfires in Sumatra and Kalimantan Islands, and also the potential problems due to Indonesia's geographical position on the Ring of Fire become more crucial and fundamental problems to deal with rather than investing a massive amount of money in creating a new image of traditional culture. This top-down decision of task-representation only creates a symbolic built form as part of a national branding that does not touch a living social dynamic among local people and does not recognise the complex social and historical process of culture making in society, especially when the general public of each place are treated as passive spectators. In this regard, I need to highlight Amanda Achmadi's criticism saying that the trap of creating a symbolic representation of the country over and over again means that the country has not moved "beyond postcolonial state narratives of the past ... [where] elites consider the preferred image of the nation ... [by] relying purely on planning and design professionals' utopian ideals ... [and] imposing a singular idealised version [on the people]" (Achmadi, 2019).

The project of the Ten New Bali is probably more appealing for the country to work on as it gives visible instant results that can be measured and counted in the government's common quantitative methods in marking the development of the country, rather than working on people's social cultural problems, where improvement is barely noticeable and hard to be measured. Tackling the socio-cultural problem also requires a much longer time as it ideally requires not only a qualitative study and planning prior to the implementation, but also an intensive, sometimes personal, approach to the people, a method that is probably seen as spending too much effort for such an insignificant result that does not elevate the government's political position among its people. This becomes one of the severe problems of the Indonesian government's policies that most national decisions, if not all, are based on quantitative studies and projections and are assessed using a similar method in determining their success as if people and their problems can all be measured by numbers.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ My statement is based on Bambang Brodjonegoro's (then the Indonesian Minister for National Development Planning - BAPENNAS) public lecture entitled 'Building Indonesia from the East: Development Prospects and Challenges' on Monday, 12 March 2018 at the Asia Institute, the University of Melbourne.

Moreover, it is also naive to expect the government to employ qualitative approaches as these are only considered as slowing down any enactment processes, especially as the government has only the five years of their elected term to execute all their programs stated in their electoral campaigns. This gives a stronger political pressure that requires them to find the shortest way to deliver their promises in order to create a good impression on their constituents and wider society for the next political elections, regardless of the actual quality of the results. This becomes a cyclic pattern that makes the government treat their projects as only 'ticking the boxes', and this is even more apparent in the era of Joko Widodo as his well-known motto '*kerja, kerja, kerja!* – work, work, work!' exhibits his focus to implement his programs, although some might think that the executions are rather 'reckless'.⁹¹

This undercooked planning is what is evident in this tourism program. It is interesting to note that until the end of 2019 as the time limit set for this Ten New Bali program, from 100 thousand homestays to be built as the initial target, although then amended into 10 thousand for ten places, the government only managed to build one homestay as a prototype, located in Sigapiton Village in the Toba Lake area. The extravagant campaign's lack of execution shows how the program was based on hasty, if not incautious, planning. In assessing this homestay program, one can say that the government has failed in implementing it, regardless of the increased income from foreign visitors as the government has always highlighted. What is also interesting is that the government invited Java-based contractor, PT Indo Tech Bamboo, to build the prototype in Toba, the exact opposite of their initial plan to encourage local empowerment, meaning it was not to be built by local people using local materials. What is also intriguing is the statement given by the Minister of Tourism that after the ministry funded one prototype, "the next homestay construction can be funded by other investors" (Amiranti, 2017). This is puzzling as what has been in the campaign is that this project is planned to be funded by credit loans offered by the Bank Tabungan Negara (BTN) with 1% for the downpayment and 5% flat for credit interest, which is claimed as the cheapest credit scheme offered in Indonesia (Auliani, 2016).

What is also interesting is that the Ten New Bali tourism project, including the competition, is also wrapped up with some narration of 'paranoia'. It is a common perspective of the government, and wider people in general, that culture is treated as an object that needs securing (*pengamanan*). There is even a law that is proposedly made to emphasise this, saying that securing culture is crucial "to

⁹¹ '*Kerja, kerja, kerja!*' was a rethoric employed by Joko Widodo in his presidential campaign in 2014, elucidating an antithesis of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the previous president known for his 'stagnation' as if the country was run on autopilot. Widodo's jargon offered "someone who prioritized action over rhetoric; substantive communication over pompous speeches; and genuine interaction with the community over stage-managed ceremonies" (Mietzner, 2015, p. 23). For this, Widodo is considered pragmatic, technocratic and instinctive.

prevent foreign parties from making claims on the intellectual wealth” of Indonesian culture.⁹² A similar term is used in terms of ‘legitimising’ the Ten New Bali and Nusantara Architecture agendas, as the Minister of Tourism mentions that it is crucial to preserve the national culture (*budaya bangsa*) “so that Nusantara Architecture cannot be claimed by other countries” (Barlian, 2018). This outline is also accentuated by the key figures of the Nusantara Architecture movement, including Josef Prijotomo who questions Indonesian people’s lack of eagerness to promote traditional architecture and let other countries ‘claim’ it as theirs (J. Prijotomo 2017, pers. comm., 19 September), and Yori Antar who insists that if Indonesian people do not protect the culture, “foreigners (*orang luar*) will take (*ambil*) it” (Y. Antar 2017, pers. comm., 5 October). These kinds of narrations depict the anxiety and insecurity that appear as a result of seeing culture as an entity that can be exclusively ‘owned’ and hence has a ‘property right’ that needs to be protected. As the state is considered to hold the copyright of cultural artefacts, folklores and other outcomes of people’s culture, any ownership claim of the local culture, especially by other countries, is seen as a threat “that poses severe danger to the existence of culture ... [as it] is an act of uprooting the culture from its vessel, which is its people” (Patji, 2010, p. 168).⁹³ *Wayang, keris, and batik*, for instance, have become objects of a dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia in terms of ownership rights, and this discord has pushed the Indonesian government to officially register the three with UNESCO. It got the recognition in 2003, 2005 and 2009 respectively (Ya'kub, 2009). Abdul Rachman Patji (2010), one of the researchers of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (*LIPi*), elaborates his perspective towards the ‘ownership claims’ on various Indonesian cultural practices and cultural artefacts by many countries, and this view is an elucidation of a common perspective of Indonesian laypeople toward the demonised ‘foreign countries’ in terms of culture claim problems.⁹⁴ It is an interesting turn, as it does not only maintain the anxiety over the antagonist West, as seen in the Orientalism view, but further it proposes new strife with other countries, even with the closest neighbours. Perpetuating this anxiety seems to be beneficial for the government to justify their policies, in this case, their culture preservation program, and interestingly this politics of fear becomes an appealing rhetoric for the people.

However, although fearmongering has become a typical political narration chosen by the government, yet when dealing with the issue of culture, the government seems to overlook the complexity of the culture itself. This perspective is problematic as it fails to recognise that, firstly, culture is fluid and

⁹² It is stated in Indonesian Law Number 5/2017 on The Advancement of Culture, part 2 chapter 22(3).

⁹³ It is stated in Law Number 19/2002 on Copyright, part 3 chapter 10.

⁹⁴ The Indonesian Institute of Sciences (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia - LIPi*) is a non-ministerial government research institution responsible to the President under the auspices of the Ministry for Research, Technology, and Higher Education.

should be seen more as a process rather than a 'thing', thus culture spread and adaptation among regions and countries is inevitable. With people moving from one country to another, they bring their culture to the new place and possibly adapt or even reinvent it together with the culture of the new place, and this fusion creates a new hybrid culture that is difficult to identify whether it belongs to the old or new place. Secondly, cultural space is not a finite space, thus it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine its boundary. Indonesia as a country might have a clear and definitive territorial area that can be claimed as 'Indonesia's', but when talking about culture and claiming the ownership of a cultural practice, it becomes problematic if one makes a claim that one particular cultural practice belongs to Indonesia and thus cannot be present in other countries. Thirdly, many Indonesian people might forget the facts that Indonesian culture itself is not a given 'authentic' culture, instead, it is a complex multi-layered way of living that has evolved and becomes an accumulation of influences from many foreign countries, like China, Japan, India, Persia and Europe, and its architecture, for example, a mixture of modern, traditional, vernacular, Islamic, Chinese, Hindu, and colonial architecture (Nas, 2007, p. 9) together with many separate indigenous cultures. Therefore, claiming that a cultural artefact is 'authentic' and exclusively owned by a certain group of people is disregarding the complexity that underlays the long cultural process itself. The amplification of cultural ownership is therefore considered 'flawed' and the 'paranoia' of culture claiming should not be utilised to rationalise the urge of cultural preservation through the Nusantara Architecture agenda.

VI.2.3. Criticism of the competition and the tourism agenda

Not only do the Ten New Bali and Nusantara Architecture agendas have some complex political motives, they also have some problematic purposes. The initial aim was to apply the concept of community empowerment through the concept of *desa wisata* (tourism village) and to have local people actively involved and directly benefiting from the tourism activities, yet many core principles of the community empowerment process have been neglected in the implementation. Community-based development is believed to be the answer that can provide both the benefit and mitigation of damaging effects of tourism to society. It is particularly essential to incorporate the community power as it has a "better knowledge about the local condition" so that development would be more suitable to the local condition, and local communities have a "better ability to enforce the role, monitoring habits and verify action related to intervention" so that the continuity of the implementation can be preserved (Sutawa, 2012, p. 418). In this case, the government, initially acting as the dominant actor, is expected to act more as a facilitator to allow the new actors, the communities, to take part in the developments. However, it becomes a conflict as the government "is not ready to release some of its

power and domination" and the community "is often not ready to carry the new responsibility", and it leads to a situation where "bureaucratic culture rather than citizen-oriented culture is more prevalent" in this program (Asmorowati, 2013, p. 15). The local people's participation in political decision-making is limited "because groups dominant locally or nationally deliberately keep them in a subordinate position ... even in fairly 'open' political systems" (De Kadt, 1979, p. 42). It is reasonably acceptable to say that this national tourism agenda is an imposition, if not compulsion, from the central government on regional governments. The Nusantara Architecture Design Competition is evidence of this domination that the touristic architecture, assigned as the theme of the competition, is designed in the capital city, by architects who are outsiders to the local communities and judged by juries who are not familiar with the local people and local conditions of the new destinations (Purwaningrum & Ardhyanto, 2018, p. 4). There is no participatory involvement in the process, and this is contradicting the aim of making community-based tourism which requires the government and the community to work harmoniously as active actors in the decision-making process (Sutawa, 2012, p. 415). Methodius Kusumahadi, based on his experience with the Satunama organisation that has been involved directly with the local communities, argues that a program is considered empowering of the community if it is succeeding in increasing the capacity of the community to fulfil their needs, to access resources, to organise themselves, to be critical of themselves and their surroundings, and to control their environment and other aspects of life (Kusumahadi, 2007, p. 6). It is interesting to highlight the point of 'critical thinking' that is proposed by Kusumahadi, that although his context was the society under Suharto's oppression, yet this point is still relevant to date since contemporary society needs to be critical under the hegemony of capitalism and commodification. As Robert Wood states, most scholars have been "(implicitly or explicitly) condemning the 'bastardization' and 'commoditization' of previously authentic ethnic cultures for the purpose of touristic display" (R. E. Wood, 1997, p. 2), therefore people should be critical and selective in preserving their culture, so that it does not lose its essence and turns out to be merely a 'phony ethnicity'. Therefore, by making the local people passive recipients of the 'new' culture imposed on them in this Ten New Bali program, this tourism agenda creates a counter-productive effect to make them become unassertive, or even submissive, to anything brought by the tourism activities.

The top-down approach adopted in the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition seems to be a typical method of how the central government runs their programs. Despite the regional autonomy that was given in 1999 after the reformation, the central government still possesses an extensive power in imposing, if not coercing, their wishes in the regions. The process does not always run smoothly in adjusting the requirements given and the capacity of local government to make any implementation, yet any complaints and objections are usually concealed. In terms of architecture,

there is a big gap between what is expected by the central government and what is implemented by the regional government, and it creates a distrust that urges the central government to make a very rigid and detailed regulation in order to make sure that the result would be what they expected (A. Prasyanti 2018, pers. comm., 24 September). It becomes a problem when development in many regions in Indonesia is based on template designs that do not particularly consider the locality of the regions. Prasyanti mentions that she finds many *Peraturan Menteri* (Ministerial Regulations) on housing programs that require every new house to be built with certain materials, mostly brick or concrete blocks for walls and zinc roof sheets for the roof, regardless of the place where this regulation is implemented. It means that the government has disregarded the diversity of the people and does not give room for local people to develop their own preferences in building their houses, for instance, if they prefer to build a stilted house with local materials. This is why, in her perspective, the conception of Nusantara Architecture needs to be embedded in the national development program as it highlights the dissimilarity among places and shifts the initial idealization of modern brick houses into something that fits better to the local culture (A. Prasyanti 2018, pers. comm., 24 September). Prasyanti's statement shows her disagreement with the design choices that are required in the existing regulations, but she does not imply any disapproval in the top-down method given, while this method is what bothers the local experts. Having template design has been seen as the easiest way to attain the target, especially when the design is attached to the scheme that gives a 'concealed coercion' to the local government that leaves them with no choice but following the order. Bani Noor Mochamad, a senior lecturer in Lambung Mangkurat University in Banjarbaru, explains that the central government usually offers funding to the regional government under a certain scheme in which, in the case of public housing, the design has to follow the prototype that has been decided by the central government, otherwise the offer is cancelled. This creates a problem that the design does not suit the local conditions and does not accommodate the local people's habits and preferences, and in the end, the building is left unoccupied and becomes a burden for local government to maintain (BM. Mochamad 2018, pers. comm., 9 August). Similar frustration is expressed by Fakhri Anhar, the head of the Indonesian Institute of Architects chapter of South Kalimantan, as he complains about the 'typical' way the central government 'forces' local architects to follow the detailed ideas that, in a way, is restricting the local architects from developing themselves. He mentions this:

"... if one design comes from Jakarta [the central government], then all the planning, the contractors, the workers [also come from Jakarta], and local people only become their driver ... Because when the design comes from Jakarta, [it usually contains] technics and technologies that are unfamiliar to the local workers ... It is why in many cases, planning is dropped here and we have no idea what it is" (F. Anhar 2018, pers. comm., 9 August).

Anhar's statement shows that the central government's top-down method brings potential problems in the community, no matter how 'local' the design would be claimed to be. This condition has brought Anhar to become *sengit* (resentful) of the 'Jakartan' architects as a result of being excluded in the development of his hometown. However, as a quantitative and physical result is the measuring factor of success, local people's refusal and the dissent expressed because of the exclusion of local participation are the least problems that might bother the central government, as long as the number is achieved and the budget spent is on point. This is quite concerning if the same method is applied for the tourism agenda, as more people will be impacted and the wider area will be affected by the program. The designs attained from the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition, if implemented as template designs for local amenities, are similar to dictation, a total negation of the cultural preservation claim. By employing this method, it becomes evident that the central government is after the profit and would achieve the goal regardless of the cost.

Table 6. The Ten New Bali foreign visitors and national income target 2016-2019

	Destination	Existing performance in 2016				Expectation in 2019		
		Foreign visitors		Visitor growth	National income (USD)	Investment (million USD)	Expected foreign visitors	Expected national income (million USD)
		2012	2013					
1	Danau Toba	15,464	10,680	-30.94	10,680,000	1,000	1,000,000	1,000
2	Tanjung Kelayang	975	451	-53.74	451,000	1,660	500,000	500
3	Tanjung Lesung	8,336	1,739	-79.14	1,739,000	5,600	1,000,000	1,000
4	Kota Tua & Seribu Islands	4,627	16,384	254.10	16,384,000	1,020	1,000,000	2,000
5	Borobudur	193,982	227,337	17.19	27,337,000	1,520	2,000,000	2,000
6	Bromo Tengger	34,466	33,387	-3.13	33,387,000	1,200	1,000,000	1,000
7	Mandalika	121,482	125,307	3.15	125,307,000	3,600	2,000,000	2,000
8	Labuan Bajo	41,972	54,147	29.01	54,147,000	1,200	500,000	500
9	Wakatobi	2,179	3,315	52.13	3,315,000	1,400	500,000	500
10	Morotai	618	500	-19.09	500,000	3,600	500,000	500

Note. Adapted from: Rachman, V., 2017, SWA Online Magazine

Emanuel de Kadt observes that the "main emphasis [of tourism development planning] has been upon increasing the gross return from this activity in terms of higher foreign exchange earnings, or greater visitor numbers" (De Kadt, 1979, p. 40), while the social, political and human dimension has been largely overlooked. In the case of Indonesia, the main benchmark used by the government to measure the success of their tourism program has been the gross national income and annual number of visitors, a highly quantitative macro-economic approach (Table 6). Having a purpose to elevate the

local people's micro and creative businesses, the government has not made any study of how the recent tourism increase has contributed to the people's everyday income and has not made any confirmation that the distribution of any increased revenue has benefited the local people. Moreover, reflecting on an example of the community-based tourism efforts done in Lower Casamance, Senegal, local people have collectively built and run the village guesthouses organised under the community cooperatives, then this step then replicated by many private entrepreneurs to earn benefit from this type of facility (Saglio, 1979, p. 334). This issue has to be taken into account by the Indonesian people as the community-based tourism that is emphasised as the heart of this agenda can not be exclusively run by the locals. While the private sector adopts a similar approach, it would create competition in society and without decent access and capability to advertise their products and accommodations, local people might be deprived and tourism would, once more, fortify the powerful.

VI.2.4. Problematic turn to make Bali a tourism ideal

It is important to note that making Bali a reference for tourism development is problematic. Employing the tagline of 'Ten New Bali' does not only put Bali at a higher level compared to the other ten destinations, but it also gives a sense that Bali is so ideal that all places should mimic its 'success'. Maulana Ibrahim, a lecturer in Khairun University, expresses concern that putting Bali as 'superior' compared to the rest of the cultural groups in Indonesia might lead to an unnecessary friction among people, especially referring to his own experience to be joining a discussion in which a Makassar representative refused to put Bali as an example of cultural development (M. Ibrahim 2018, pers. comm., 17 September). Moreover, it is also unclear in what way and to what extent Bali has to be referred. Popo Danes, a renowned Balinese architect whose specialty is in tourism buildings, argues that this tagline might bring an unexpected effect of jealousy and antipathy to Bali. He asserts:

"Tourism is based on the content of identity and it contains the pride of the region, so [for instance] does Garut want to be called the next Sumedang? Does Cirebon want to be called the next Bandung? ... [The Ten New Bali] agenda can cause antipathy to Bali. And why it should be Bali? Will Bandung have suckling pigs [like in Bali]? ... Will Padang allow people wearing bikinis on the beach? The local contextual issue seems to be forgotten in this case" (P. Danes 2018, pers. comm., 16 September).

The cultural identity that is emphasised in Danes's statement has been overlooked in planning this tourism agenda. The characteristic of Bali and the ten destinations are not an apple-to-apple comparison, as Bali has been exposed to tourism for decades so that the local culture has been altered to a 'balanced point' where some cultural practices are secularised while the religious values of some

others is kept. Some observers believe that “Balinese have learned to distinguish between audiences ... [and have created] a performance [that] has its meaning for the Balinese, independent of its meaning for tourists” (Noronha, 1979, p. 201). This is seen as a unique feature of Bali that is not present in others of the Ten New Bali destinations, as Balinese religious rituals overlap with the culture, something that is believed to be the main foundation of Bali’s cultural survival (Patji, 2010, p. 178).

This is also emphasised by Anak Agung Ayu Oka Saraswati, a professor from Udayana University in Bali, as she argues that Balinese people’s culture is also part of their religion, thus practicing it on a daily basis has nothing to do with the burden of tourism expectation. This cultural and religious unity means that any rituals would still be performed with either the presence or absence of tourists, as the purpose of the ceremony is not as a tourist attraction (AAAO. Saraswati 2018, pers. comm., 15 September). Raymond Noronha (1979) further argues that “tourism has not destroyed Balinese culture” because Bali has one significant strength that other places might not have: Balinese people have developed and maintained strong customary ties with the *Bandjars* – a village level government, whose role is to preserve the social harmony among local people and to maintain the continuity of ritual and cultural ceremonies (Noronha, 1979, pp. 201-202). These unique factors might not be present in the ten new destinations, thus the development of Bali is not directly comparable nor replicable in the ten places. The government might only use this tagline to inspire people to attain a similar success to that which Bali has achieved, but without clear explanation and education, local people might not be aware that mirroring themselves to Bali and copying the development method of mass tourism could bring different social-political impacts to their local community.

Moreover, it is also intriguing how local people of the ten new destinations are expected to cope with the expectation to be the new Bali. Bali has been exposed to tourism activity for almost a century as it was started as early as the 1920s, and the number of foreign tourists soared after 1969 when the Ngurah Rai Airport was opened for the first time. Bali as a tourism destination can be deemed as a complete package, as it offers “lush tropical scenery, gorgeous beaches, terraced rice fields, Buddhist and Hindu temples and shrines, exotic dances and music and friendly people”, and has been called the “Island of the Gods” (Gibbons & Fish, 1989, p. 63). With such a long history of tourism where it has grown ‘slowly and organically’ (De Kadt, 1979, p. 42), Bali’s tourism has arrived in the equilibrium stage where the external force of tourism has been ‘harmonised’ with the local responses, although this balanced state has been condemned as unauthentic and fully commodified.

In the 'Ten New Bali' plan, it will take more than a 5-year implementation process to arrive at a similar stage as that in Bali. Therefore, the ambitious plan of Joko Widodo to build the ten places from scratch and hope to finish by 2019 is quite unfeasible, if not impossible, as has it proved. The Balinese people's long adjusting process to the social, political and economic changes would need to be skipped in the case of the ten new destinations, and it is concerning how the local people might be required to cope with the shifting culture. Moreover, local people's readiness in accepting tourism and the potential friction between the local and the foreign culture brought by tourism have not been studied. Along these years during my study, I have not found any feasibility study that particularly looks at the possible impacts on each of the destinations. The government has been too focused on the implementation even before having a settled plan and comprehensive study, and this is a concretization of the President's slogan '*kerja, kerja, kerja!* – work, work work!' which has been seen as an undermining of the importance of '*pikir, pikir, pikir!* – think, think, think!' (Fadil, 2018) and has been questioned by politicians from the opposite party: 'working on what? Working for who?' (Faiz, 2018).

Positioning Bali as the precedent of an 'ideal' tourist area in Indonesia also overlooks the fact that the cultural image of Bali is a product of curation to comply with, what John Urry terms, 'the tourist gaze' (Urry, 1992). Urry argues that the wide spread of the tourist gaze, especially through digital media, has made "all sorts of places ... have come to construct themselves as objects of the tourist gaze" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 105). Therefore, in the case of Bali, the cultural uniqueness has been purposely preserved and accentuated to be a touristic attraction. This understanding leads researchers to claim that the Balinese cultural condition is not 'authentic, timeless and unchanging', and yet this is all an image generated as part of the modernising changes (Howe, 2005, p. 2), hence called a 'paradise created' (Vickers, 1989).⁹⁵ Taufik Abdullah terms it as 'schakel-society', by which he refers as "an artificial world, a theatre, where both ruler and ruled played their roles while maintaining their separate sense of reality", and to maintain the stereotypes of this *schakel*-society, the timeless traditional Bali image has to be locked and barred (Nordholt, 1994, pp. 114-115).

Regardless of the critiques, the mindset of preserving the 'authentic' and 'exotic' Bali has lived to date, maintaining the idea of Bali which has been "conceived as a pre-existing, finite, and aesthetically ideal

⁹⁵ This implies that many aspects of Bali's cultural practices are proposefully made, mostly intended to be 'traditionalised', as Adrian Vickers argues that "one can see more 'traditional' rites and dances on Bali now than could have been observed in the nineteenth century" (Vickers, 1996, p. 31). Philip McKean also elaborates on the changes in traditional rites performed by the locals, as it more and more becomes a 'paid performance', although this is kept hidden by the tour guide to maintain the 'authentic feel' of Bali (McKean, 1976, pp. 10-11).

architectural otherness" (Achmadi, 2008, pp. 73-75), an extension of a 'Balinisation' idea asserted by P. Moojen, a Dutch architect, in 1917 (Nordholt, 1994, p. 109).⁹⁶ However, in terms of architecture, interestingly, the tropical resort-style that has become part of contemporary faces of Bali's tourism was not locally introduced; it was initially designed by Australian architect, Peter Muller, for an American investor, Charles Osborne (Dennis, 2018).⁹⁷ Muller's Kayu Aya Resort project, which later became the Oberoi Resort, was the first commercial beach-side resort in Bali that employed local people in the construction process, 600 labourers to be exact, and it was deemed as "the first time large numbers of Balinese derived real financial benefit from tourism to the island" (Dennis, 2018). Muller's Kayu Aya project, together with Geoffrey Bawa's Batujimbar Estate (1973), have popularised a particular tropical resort-style that became very popular not only in Bali but also mushroomed throughout Southeast Asia, named as 'tropical modernism'.⁹⁸ For this reason, what has been idealised as 'authentic Balinese experience' might not be local after all.

Regardless of the critiques, the Balinese government has set some building codes that delineates what is allowed and not allowed to be built in Bali. Bali's Building Code gives a very clear and solid explanation that every building to be built in Bali, including the non-traditional building, has to conform to the regional rules whose purpose is to make sure that the building "must be able to represent the style of Balinese traditional architecture" ("Bali's Building Codes," 2005, chapter 13)

⁹⁶ Moojen's perspective was of seeing Bali represented as part of the Dutch's *Baliseering* agenda, or the 'Balinisation of Bali', whose aim was "to teach the Balinese 'how to be authentically Balinese' ... preventing 'any improper expressions of modernism'" (Picard, 1996, p. 21 as cited in Howe, 2005, p. 19). To maintain Bali's 'authenticity', the Dutch government believed that Balinese people needed to be taught to do Balinese cultural rites or make cultural artefacts, including to build 'the real' Balinese architecture that was depicted as "the typical mud walls of the compounds, the thatched gates protected by mysterious signs" (Covarrubias, 1937, p. xx).

⁹⁷ Peter Muller is a renowned, currently retired, Australian architect who is famous for his local approach in designing various tropical resorts. He visited Bali in 1970 for the first time and decided to live there in Campuhan, Ubud. He designed a resort in Seminyak while trying to embrace the local cultural practices and construction techniques, although it means he needed to do an extensive training for the workers as they were unfamiliar with modern fixtures like faucet, toilet, or anything electrical. His other well-known project is Amandari Resort that has set a standard of a luxurious tropical resort on the island and even the world, as it was named as the best hotel in the world in 1992 and 1995 (Dennis, 2018).

⁹⁸ Geoffrey Bawa (July 23, 1919 – May 27, 2003) was a Sri Lankan architect who popularised a locally-influenced style of architecture, then called Tropical Modernism, "a design movement in which sensitivity for local context combines with the form-making principles of modernism" (Kunkel, 2019). His work has influenced the trend of tropical resorts in Bali, especially with his design of Batujimbar Estate in Sanur that marked the early development of Bali's tourism. This style has been accepted as an 'ideal' design for a tropical resort that was then copied throughout Southeast Asia. His regionalist view and his initial intention to exercise a location-specific design have turned into a template that was arrayed in many tropical cities. For this reason, in the 2000s, there was a rise of anti-Bawa-mania, asking architects "to come out from under the Bawa umbrella" (Robson, 2013).

shown in both outer and inner appearance of the building.⁹⁹ In the Explanation of chapter 7, this stylistic representation includes the site planning (*asta bumi*), the design and construction norms (*asta kosala-kosali*), the material usage (*janantaka*), and the ritual norms of the traditional building process (*bamakrtih*). More emphasis is written in the Bali Spatial Planning Regulation, particularly in chapters 122 and 124 about the “obligation to apply the Balinese architecture characteristic” in every residential building both in the city and village and in every accommodation building and any other tourism-related facilities (“Bali Spatial Planning Regulation 2009-2029,” 2009).¹⁰⁰ These regulations have the purpose of assuring that every building in Bali contributes to maintaining and strengthening the image of Balinese culture. However, the top-down approach shows no difference from P. Moojen’s dictation of the 1917 restoration process, as it means that one person or one institution had the prerogative to decide what was allowed and not allowed, what was good and not good.

The regional regulation, to some extent, delimits the creativity process and the possible development of architecture. Popo Danes agrees that to some extent, the regulation has successfully controlled the development of Bali’s built environment, for instance, the restriction from building higher than 15m so that Bali would not turn into another metropolitan Jakarta or Surabaya with a massive number of high-rise buildings.¹⁰¹ Yet he expresses his objection to the regulation that requires specific architectural elements to be presented in the design. For instance, the regulation states that a building should have parts that can be perceived as a head, a body and feet; or that it should have *bebaturan* (elevated platform for the floor); or should adopt a certain shape and decoration for the gate (*Angkul-angkul*, *Kori Agung*, *Bentar Temple*, *Kodok Temple*); or should have certain exterior materials (limestone – *batu paras*, slate stone – *batu kali*, red brick – *batu bata*, chalkstone – *batu kapur*; or should follow the traditional zoning system (*tri mandala*; *surya mandala*; *hulu-teben*).¹⁰² This regulation, he adds, does not recognise the current fact that the majority of today’s population of the island of Bali are mid to low income earners, and this affects their ability to purchase lands which are already highly valued due to the rapid tourism development. In this case, applying the *mandala* restriction might no longer be relevant to this context (P. Danes 2018, pers. comm., 16 September). Saraswati, to some extent, agrees with Danes’s complaint that the strict rule does limit design, yet she emphasises that the purpose of the regulation is to protect the local people. She recognises that the regulation does give some ‘cultural indoctrination’ to the people. But, with appointing a certain style

⁹⁹ Bali’s Building Code is stated in the Regional Regulation of Bali Province Number 5/2005

¹⁰⁰ Bali Spatial Planning Regulation is stated in the Regional Regulation of Bali Province Number 16/2009

¹⁰¹ This regulation is stated in Bali Spatial Planning Regulation in chapter 95(2b).

¹⁰² It is stated in the Explanation of The Regional Regulation of Bali Province Number 5/2005 on Architectural Building Requirement, chapter 13(1).

for the architecture, for instance, the government tries to create sustainable development for the people. With certain materials and decorations required in a building, the continuity of the artisans' works are preserved as well as their skills, and it means providing jobs for local labour and protecting them from the pressure of imported technologies (AAAO. Saraswati 2018, pers. comm., 15 September).

It is then interesting to see the other side of the story that although the regulation was made to create interdependency between the tourism architecture development and the local people, yet the regulations fail to make sure that the local people, ideally, should be both the producers and the consumers. With the presence of the regulation, the local material production is sustained, so are local skills and local livelihoods. But, who do they make these materials for? Appointing certain local materials and decorations as representative of 'Bali' has brought social-economic cost for the people, as it attracts the rapid resort construction projects in Bali to extensively use these materials. This probably is the purpose of the regulation, to maximize the use of local materials, but such high demands have made the initially domestic materials unreachable for the people due to the high price and limited availability. Laypeople have to shift to the 'mass-produced' building materials for their cheaper prices, and this forces people to leave the traditional building measurement and move to metric measurement to adjust to the manufactured materials (Achmadi, 2008, p. 84).

Regardless of the problems, people from other regions commonly see the Bali regulation as an ideal example of how local government should protect their culture and their people. Fakhri Anhar, who is a professional architect from Banjarmasin, shows his appreciation and emphasises that the local regulation protects not only the architecture but also the architects. The requirement for architects from outside Bali to partner with local architects in doing any projects in Bali has helped securing jobs for the local architects. This is different to what usually happens in Anhar's hometown where around 30-40% of the registered local architects find it difficult to find projects due to the invasion of architects from Java that are attached to the central government's development scheme. Bali's regulation is something that Anhar dreams of having for his city (F. Anhar 2018, pers. comm., 9 August).

Aside from the pros and cons, it is crucial to admit that Bali's tourism development has grown too fast and, in the eyes of some local people, has turned into something beyond what they expected. Tourism has swollen, exceeding the capacity of what the land and the people can handle, and many problems have arisen from this non-stop development. With more than 80,000 hotel rooms and private villas (in 2016), and with approximately 70 new hotels built every year (Tedja, 2014), the land price has

soared and has become unreachable for the locals, especially land that is close to tourist attractions. The traffic problem is also inevitable as tourism development runs faster than infrastructure development. Ecosystem problems also arise, as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds have been damaged. Seeing this condition, some resistance has been building up among Balinese society to oppose the uncontrolled tourism expansion. One of the representatives of the opposition community gives this statement:

“I don’t blame the government or the investors or even those red-faced Bintang T-shirt-wearing tourists. I blame us, the Balinese, for letting this happen. For selling our lands, for getting the easy way out of poverty, for thinking that tourism is the only job that we can do. We sold our ricefields and buy our rice from another island, then we complain that the government is destroying Bali by building more hotels. We continue to be silent, to passively withstand the inflation, the lack of water, the traffic or even the rising fruit prices in the market” (Tedja, 2014).

The above statement is part of people’s responses against the government’s reclamation plan of Teluk Benoa in Nusa Dua (Figure 18) that was fought by a local social alliance called the ForBALI (*Forum Rakyat Bali Tolak Reklamasi*- Forum of Balinese People Against Reclamation), as the project was deemed merely an exploitation that would not only destroy the natural habitat in the area but also create a new social problem in South Bali (Gokkon, 2018; Gumilang, 2018; Tedja, 2014; Vali, n.d.) (See Appendix C for the elaboration on the Balinese’s resistance against the plan).



Figure 18. Site plan of Benoa Bay reclamation

Source: Agung Wardana, 2018

The strong resistance to this reclamation plan can initiate a further question of how the social-cultural issues sit as part of the considerations of any government's decision-making process. Aside from the potential mangrove-clearance and other ecological destruction as the effects of this plan, the 200 thousand job vacancies that would be brought by this project might be filled by the non-locals, probably mostly Javanese, and it can worsen the existing tension between (Hindu) Balinese and (Muslim) Javanese people especially after the Bali bombing on 12 October 2002. Leo Howe explains that this atrocity has resulted in the locals blaming the *orang Jawa* (the Javanese) as the main cause of many social problems in Bali, and discloses the developing antipathy between the locals and the migrants in Bali (Howe, 2005, p. 1). This social change is what fails to be captured within any numerical data that have become the basis of the government's plans and regulations, and the Ten New Bali plan, therefore, needs also to consider this 'negative side-effect' of tourism to be forestalled, if even possible, before it appears in the ten other areas.

Moreover, the strong resistance of Balinese people to the plan shows the importance of being critical of any imposed plans, allowing what Mouffe terms as 'agonism' to flourish among the people in the community (Mouffe, 2000, p. 16) while highlighting Kusumahadi's assertion that people's critical thinking is one of the important aspects to improve in this community empowerment (Kusumahadi, 2007, p. 6). Allowing the locals to have voices in this plan is critical, especially that "tourism does not stand apart from host cultures as a kind of obtrusive appendage ... but rather as an integral part of [the local] culture, holds in varying degrees for all cases" (as cited in R. E. Wood, 1997, p. 4). Injecting tourism into new places, as is planned in the Ten New Bali agenda, is, therefore, an irreversible act that needs comprehensive consideration, to make sure that the benefits do outweigh the costs and the locals can benefit from the activities, not only serving as pawns to attain the central government's overambitious targets.

The simmering problems on the island of Bali in relation to its tourism have posed an example that tourism can also bring a negative impact on the local people and their social, political and natural environment. Bali and its people have never been free from tensions and frictions in their journey to adapt to the rapid tourism development, and this should be one crucial consideration in idealising Bali in a narrative of an exemplary tourism destination in Indonesia. Disregarding the problem that Bali has experienced for the sake of improving the local and national economic developments would be a problematic turn that only poses a threat to the locals and their culture. The jargon of the Ten New Bali, therefore, needs to be criticised, so that the cultural tourism plan that is imposed in the ten new places will not only become replications of Bali's social, political, and environmental problems.

VI.3. The brief and the juries

In this section, I scrutinise more comprehensively the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition and focus particularly on the brief and the jury of the competition. By looking at this, I aim to get a better comprehension of the purpose of this competition and to see how the stakeholders have been framing and employing architecture as one of the supporting aspects of the Ten New Bali agenda. This complements the previous discussion I have elaborated about the national tourism agenda and widens the perspective in seeing this competition as an instrument that carries the government's political intention of a contemporary culture-making process.

As I have briefly mentioned in the previous section, the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition was initiated as a continuance of the first competition held by Propan Raya in 2012 that took the

theme of 'Green House Design – *Desain Rumah Hijau*' as a collaboration between Propan Raya and the Green Building Council Indonesia (GBCI). The next year, in 2013, taking the theme of 'Nusantaran Cultural House – *Rumah Budaya Nusantara*', Propan Raya for the first time used the word 'Nusantaran Architecture' for their competition series, and it happened after Yuwono Imanto, the company's director, engaged with Yori Antar's preservation project of Wae Rebo and had a discussion with the initiator of the conception of Nusantara Architecture, Josef Prijotomo. This cycle also marked the company's first collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism which then was led by Minister Mari Elka Pangestu, and from this point on, the competition was specifically directed to support the ministry's development agenda. In 2014 cycle, the theme of 'Nusantaran Tourism Village – *Desa Wisata Nusantara*' was chosen, focusing on enhancing the potential of otherwise underdeveloped villages, and in this cycle, the design competition was narrowing the field of participants only to professional architects and interior designers, unlike the previous cycles which were aimed at architecture students.

The year 2015 marked a stronger collaboration between Propan Raya, the Ministry of Tourism and a newly formed non-ministerial institution, BEKRAF (*Badan Ekonomi Kreatif* – the Indonesian Agency for Creative Economy). Joko Widodo, the new president, gave a challenging target to this ministry to raise the national income from tourism. Propan Raya's competition becomes a promising tool to make Indonesian architects and designers contribute to the development process. Starting from 2015, the competition has been curated to have a series of themes that specifically support the 'Ten New Bali' development and focused on developing tourism amenities to be built at the new destinations. The competition briefs also specifically mentioned the connection between architecture and tourism, and direct the use of architecture to support the government's plan.

The brief

Although the competition employs the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' as part of its title, it is quite surprising that the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition barely explains the meaning of Nusantara Architecture itself, not even from the perspective of the organising committee or the juries. Instead, they tend to, again, rely on people's over-familiarity with the term and loosely associate it with traditional architecture. In most of the briefs, Nusantara Architecture is associated with 'locality' (*kelokalan*), using the phrases of local architecture (*arsitektur lokal setempat*), local inspiration (*inspirasi kelokalan*), local ... identity (*identitas ... lokal*), local cultural ambience (*suasana budaya setempat*), and local materials (*material lokal*). What is meant by 'local'

itself is not discussed, yet the direction of how the brief is constructed gives an idea that ‘local’ here means traditional culture, and it brings the implication that ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ is ‘traditional architecture’. This is then accentuated in cycles 2016 and 2017 where it is literally stated that the design submitted “must attain the inspiration from traditional architecture in the area” as part of the scope of the competition (PropanRaya, 2016). The only effort to explain what is Nusantara Architecture appears rather briefly in the brief of the first cycle in 2013, where the competition still targeted students as the participants. It seems that at this stage, the idea of Nusantara Architecture was still idealistically held, especially that there was a purpose to educate students about contemporising traditional architecture. Nusantara Architecture is pictured as having these criteria:

- Nusantara Architecture should be represented on the appearance (*rupa*) and soul (*jiwa*)
- Nusantara Architecture is basically a green architecture that is environmentally friendly
- Nusantara Architecture is a combination of traditional and modern material, attained from local sources or overseas
- Nusantara Architecture can be translated in a wide range of design possibilities. Obtaining inspiration from the traditional architecture can come either in the form of copying it, which is appreciated more by lay people, or of abstracting it, which is preferred by professional architects.
- Nusantara Architecture should consider the location where it is built since this gives the ‘characteristic of Nusantara’ (*karakter Nusantara*) regardless of the technique and the material used on the building.
- Nusantara Architecture is characterised by its flexibility of space use as space is determined by a time-based usage instead of the type of activity
- Nusantara Architecture means optimising local materials, especially for the reason of price (PropanRaya, 2013).

This understanding of Nusantara Architecture recalls the way Josep Prijotomo imagines the idea of the terminology, and it is not a coincidence because he was one of the jury members in this 2013 cycle. The Nusantara Architecture is explained from its characteristics, which, unsurprisingly, are quite similar to the characteristics of Indonesia’s traditional architectures. Other than this explanation, no other cycles from the competition ever touch the definition of what Nusantara Architecture is.

Not only that the Terms of Reference of the competition do not explain the key term that becomes the main ‘theme’ of the whole competition, I also argue that this brief is also broad, vague, and general in conveying the purpose and the target of the competition, although it is unclear whether or not it is intentionally kept that way to provide a ‘one-size-fits-all’ framework for the ten destinations. The subject of the briefs have been changing from the first competition to the recent one, but the

connection between architecture and tourism has always been accentuated as the background of the competition, especially after the 2014 cycle. The Minister of Tourism kept emphasising the role of the competition was to “introduce, keep, and preserve national culture” (Barlian, 2018), but toward the more recent years, the purpose has shifted to mainly support tourism. At the beginning of this competition series, the brief purely focused on design exploration of Nusantara Architecture, conforming with the theme of an “architectural design that can contemporise Nusantara Architecture” (PropanRaya, 2013). The brief accentuated the ‘idealistic’ idea of Nusantara Architecture, where ‘tourism’ is not mentioned at all in the brief. In the next cycle in 2014, the competition committee shifted its target to professionals and the word ‘tourism’ is mentioned once in the foreword from Yuwono Imanto, that says:

“Architecture has significantly contributed not only to elevate the Indonesian culture but also to increase the national income from the rising number of foreign visitors who adore the beauty of architecture that becomes the tourism icons in different places in Indonesia” (PropanRaya, 2014).

This is the first affiliation of this competition series with the tourism agenda, despite being subtly explained, and in this case, tourism is still positioned as an after-effect of the architecture, not the other way around. It is a starting point for the next cycles to more obviously highlight the tourism agenda when it is later explained as the purpose of the competition. In cycle 2018, for instance, the brief opened with a sentence including “tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in Indonesia” (PropanRaya, 2018), followed by various data of tourism growth before discussing the competition itself. That is, the government puts tourism as the reason for the presence of the competition, hence the architecture. The brief also clearly mentions that:

“... the tourism development concept has to be well-constructed and well-planned. One of the ways is by incorporating local aspects, like Nusantara Architecture. Aside from strengthening the tourism concept, [incorporating local aspects] also accentuates the local identity and wisdom in the area. And this identity is what attracts people to come and visit” (PropanRaya, 2018).

This shows explicitly that local identity has to be displayed as an ‘attraction’ for international audiences. The sense is that local culture has to be preserved not because of its rooted value in the society, but because it is sellable and can be a tool to achieve the country’s economic targets. This culture commodification is then justified by underlining the economic benefit that can be attained by laypeople if they can actively involve themselves in tourism activities in their place. This justification corroborates the initial suspicion that this competition series is now merely about money, and not much to do with any preservation agenda. Interestingly, in the most recent competition in 2019,

serving for tourism development has become the only objective of the competition mentioned in the brief, dismissing the previous philanthropic idea of preserving the culture that was considered as the main purpose of the competition in its early years. On the brief for this batch, it is stated that:

“... [it is] important to incorporate local aspect, like Nusantara Architecture, ... to strengthen the tourism concept, and to showcase the local identity and local wisdom. Because this identity brings distinction and attracts tourists to come and visit the tourism destination” (PropanRaya, 2019).

In this stage of the competition, after going through various alterations in the previous six cycles, the government is confident to straightforwardly position the competition as a tool for their tourism agenda without needing to conceal it. Nusantara Architecture is openly treated as a commodity, a detached and sterilised artefact that has nothing to do with the people who are the ‘makers’ of the culture. The locality is no longer seen as an inherent aspect of the people’s living culture that has an entranced connection with the social and political aspects of the local people. It is then clear that the massive campaign of culture preservation was not really the intention of the competition, as it was merely a cover-up to a more profit-oriented project. It is important to note that two main collaborators who organise this competition have strong economic motives: PT Propan Raya needs a platform for rebranding and promoting their products at the national level (particularly using a branding strategy that is supported by the regime in power); while the government needs to increase their national income from tourism. The blurry purposes of the competition are what I deem as vague and it is quite deceiving since laypeople, probably including the participating architects, might genuinely think that their involvement in this competition demonstrates their contribution to preserving local culture.¹⁰³

Another problematic thing about the brief of the competition is that the ten places are discussed as a general region instead of a specific area or village in which the winning designs are projected to be built. The ten places are only mentioned as a list with no further explanation about the specific locations that are aimed to become the focus of the development, and this might be because the overall plan of this Ten New Bali itself has not been finalised to that level of detail. Also, the government is not willing to help the architects in ‘familiarising’ themselves with the local condition of the places, especially about the specific natural, social, political and economic conditions of each

¹⁰³ I base my argument here on my informal talks to some of my friends who are fellow young Indonesia architects. Throughout the conversations, they emphasised the need to preserve the ‘culture’ and depicted their strong intention to contribute to the process through the design competition. They showed a sense of pride for participating in the competitions, although they did not win.

area. By not knowing where their designs would sit and who would use the space, even if the architects are willing to do some research about the place, they can only make some generalisations in seeing the characteristic of the regions, like making a conclusion as if all people in Wakatobi are fishermen, or all the homestays in Tanjung Kelayang will be built on the beach facing the sea. This strengthens the bias of the architects, as their designs not only become representations of their personal agencies but also will be based on an insufficient contextual reading. To deal with this problem, some architects randomly select certain places (usually some specific villages) where their designs could be situated to help them contextualise their designs and solidify their justifications. Yet this approach might no longer be relevant if in the implementation, the government chooses areas that are different to those the architects suppose, especially if the people in the two areas have distinct cultures and ways of living.

Another problem from the brief is that the government seems to be unwilling to, or intentionally avoiding, specifying the goal they aim to achieve in each destination and what aspects they hope to see highlighted in each place. As part of a national tourism agenda, the government must have developed a vision, or probably a roadmap or even a more detailed plan, on which all the development should be based, and these might be different from one place to another since each destination has different development focuses (Amanda, 2017; Rachman, 2017). Interestingly, none of these aspects are mentioned in the brief, and as a consequence, this lack of direction and explanation gives an 'unlimited' room for the participating architects to develop their design assumptions based on their 'limited' understanding of the place. With no specific framework to align and no particular target to achieve, therefore the designs submitted in the competition can be considered as products of unspecific, if not 'random', approaches led by undirected thought developed by architects who happen to be outsiders of each place. The competition is thus seen more as a platform for design exercise rather than an instrument of a comprehensive act in achieving a bigger goal, either of tourism or cultural preservation.

This broad brief for the competition might be seen as a positive thing as it does not delimit any possibility in creating a design that might fit the need of the particular place. It gives freedom to the architects to set their design frames, approaches, methods and concepts, and this freedom of design is what has been appreciated in a post-modern context since it has led to many innovations, although sometimes it ends up with an over-the-top design whose fit-for-context is debatable. However, this unrestrictive brief for a design competition, especially when the results would be multiplied as template design for a community's architecture, means that the local people's culture development relies on personal exercises of the winning architects. The top-down approach of the implementation

of this competition will create cultural imposition on the community and the designs imposed do not have comprehensive social, cultural and historical thinking behind them. The new culture brought to the society is a personal interpretation of the outsiders whose purpose of making the design is probably in aiming for the grand prizes of the competition. Moreover, with limitless design possibilities submitted in the competition while not having a clear framework to assess them, the designs are judged on their physical engagement, including visual representation and material selection, in creating a connection with the locality as part of the criteria listed on the brief. 'Local appearance' becomes one emphasised assessment criterion that is stated clearly in the brief, and it seems to be more important than responding to the characteristics of the local community and how people live their everyday lives.

The Juries

The composition of the juries for the competition changes every year and usually consists of five to seven people from different disciplines. Yori Antar has been the head of the jury in every cycle, while the other juries are selected based on the theme of the competition, usually choosing representations from academics, professional architects, the government, BEKRAF (the Indonesian Agency for Creative Economy), and fields that are related to the particular theme of the competition. The competition had at least one academic as a jury member until its fifth cycle in 2017. After that, no academic has been a jury member and, interestingly, that is when the government became more apparent in the tourism purpose of the competition. There are at least three professional architects that are always present as jury members for each cycle, and also other professional people from different fields related to the theme, for instance, the jury from the green building council for the 2013 cycle or a jury from restaurant association for 2017 cycle. The presence of the government representatives as jury members started in 2015, and since then, more government people, both from the Ministry of Tourism and BEKRAF, were listed as jury members in the following cycles, especially after the competition was associated with the Ten New Bali agenda. What has been missing from the composition of the juries was the experts in social and cultural fields, while their opinions are crucial as the implementation of the competition might alter the established social and cultural pattern in the community.

If we look at the winning designs, we recognise that most of them, if not all, use a similar design language that shows intense similarity with traditional architecture. Whether or not all the designs submitted employ that kind of approach, it informs the juries' perspective of locality, that

traditionalism in architecture is what they expect to see in this competition and thus in examples crowned as winners. As people who get to choose the 'most appropriate' designs to be built in the ten places, the juries' standpoint in understanding the local culture and the problems that might entail their selection is therefore crucial. Although the architects' traditionalism and ocular-centrist perspective is the main subject of dispute in this research, yet the perspective of the juries who give 'legitimation' to those designs is somehow as important to be highlighted. This is a potential area for further studies, as these people can be seen as the 'decision-makers' of the new face of Indonesia's contemporary cultural representation, and it is worth discussing if they unanimously agree to employ this traditionalised perspective, or they are 'forced' to comply with some certain 'directives', like the government's tourism orientation.

If we examine more closely the committee of this competition, it is interesting that the position of the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) as an organisation is unclear. In the homestay cycle in 2016, the brief listed the committee of the competition, mentioning the advisory committee that consisted of Arief Yahya, the minister of tourism; Triawan Munaf, the head of BEKRAF; and Hendra Adidarma, the founder and the president director of Propan Raya. The head of the committee was Hiramasyah S. Thaib, the head of the Development Acceleration Team, and the deputy head was Yuwono Imanto, another director of Propan Raya. In this committee, IAI as an organisation was not present, except for some selected juries who were usually 'notable' architects. It is also unclear if those juries were recommended by IAI, or it was an arbitrary selection done by Propan Raya and the government. If the latter was the case, then one can be suspicious that the decision to choose 'starchitects' was to boost the popularity of the competition, and not really about expertise concerning the theme selected, which is about architecture and culture. This may explain the recent announcement given by the IAI West Java chapter that forbids its members from participating in the competition (Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia [IAI] Jawa Barat, 2019). The most recent Nusantara Architecture Design Competition is deemed as not complying with the design competition standard and with the IAI's code of ethics, and for this reason, IAI West Java Chapter asks its members "not to participate in the event, whether direct and indirect involvement, both as committee member or participant".¹⁰⁴ This announcement is then responded to by the IAI National Chapter in an announcement saying that they, as an organisation, do not forbid nor support their members to join the competition, but any risk that is predicted to appear regarding the copyright of the winning designs is outside their responsibility and they will not give any

¹⁰⁴ It is stated in IAI Jawa Barat's announcement letter Number 145/18 - 21/SK/IAI - JB/26.08.19 regarding 'An appeal concerning Design Competition Nusantara Tourism Information Centre'

legal aid regarding this problem.¹⁰⁵ This announcement was then followed by the IAI West Java Chapter that issued another announcement stating that the organisation is following the step of IAI National and supporting the decision that has been made. This dispute depicts the obscured fact that the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition is solely organised by Propan Raya, and therefore this competition can also be seen as Propan Raya's political turn to create a connection with the ruling regime. The urge to invite IAI as part of the organisers was probably important in the early years of this competition when Propan Raya still needed support and a promotional strategy to attract architects and designers to participate. But since Propan Raya has collaborated with the government and achieved a huge success in their competitions, the position of IAI as a professional organisation was no longer crucial. The fantastic amount of money offered as the prize, the potential future collaboration with the governmental agencies and the idea of helping the nation in preserving culture are probably seen as enough appeal to attract numerous participants. In that regard, with Propan Raya as a predominant player in this competition, one can have a suspicion that most, if not all, decisions in the competition, including who made the briefs and who chose the juries, can be made by Propan Raya. In the selection of the juries, in particular, one can argue that Propan Raya seems to 'cherry-pick' IAI's 'starchitects' and other high profile people to boost the popularity of the competition rather than having any intention of including experts of social and cultural science. This not only underpins the previous conclusion that cultural preservation is not the main purpose of this competition but this also makes clear that Propan Raya's business-oriented approach has driven the way this competition is organised.

Unfortunately, many Indonesian architects overlook these problems that underlay the whole competition and, instead, they see it as a pure design attempt at culture preservation. They do not see, or refuse to see, past the layer of architecture as built form, thus they, most of the time, overlook the severe social and cultural complication that potentially impacts the place. This is largely seen in the architecture as a profession in Indonesia, as architects tend to stay, mostly deliberately, in their comfort zone and see architecture being about design. One of the winner of the competition, Aditya Wirata, clearly mentions that architects have a specific field in which they work, and that is mainly the field of design and construction. Although important to be recognised, the broader socio-political aspects are deemed to be outside the responsibility of the architects. What interesting is that he tries to avoid what he calls a 'professional ego' which he understands as an ego of professionals who try to

¹⁰⁵ It is stated in IAI National's announcement letter Number 065/PN/2019 regarding 'An edict of enactment of Nusantara Architecture Design Competition Tourism Information Centre'

expand their field beyond the given boundary and try to be 'expert' in many fields at once. In this case, for architects, being critical to the area of economy, social and politics, for instance, can be a sign that they have stepped outside their professional boundary (A. Wiratama 2019, pers. comm., 18 October).

Architects limiting themselves in the field of design is probably influenced by the pragmatism of the 'Design as a discipline' itself. When architects do research, it mostly aims to explore ideas of how to start the design, and not to comprehensively understand the existing conditions of the place or the people who live in the place. With the many 'constraints' that they face (e.g. not enough time, too few resources, not enough budget, too much workload, etc.), understanding the real situation of a place is probably the last thing they can deal with. The pragmatism that is entrenched in the design process, most often than not, hinders architects from questioning or challenging the brief, and it leads them to work mainly on the technical side rather than touching the philosophical, political and social side of the people. With this approach, the offered solutions are, most of the time, superficial. This is a challenge that has been highlighted by many design critics, like Jeremy Till, Alan Berman, Witold Rybcynski. It is a trap from which architects should free themselves so that the designs they produce would give unique, probably unthinkable, contributions, if not solutions, that can benefit the people and their culture.

VI.4. The winning designs

As I have elaborated in the previous sections, one of the 'problems' in making cultural representation in design is that the result will be based on under-informed decisions, and in the case of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition, the decisions rely on the architects' design approach and the juries' selection preferences. The claim of representing 'authentic' culture is very much debatable. Every cycle has shown that the architects and juries seem to have a similar perspective in seeing culture as 'tradition', and this is shown in the designs submitted and selected as winners. In this section, in particular, I specifically look at the last three cycles that are used as supporting tools of the Ten New Bali program and are employing the term 'Nusantaran Architecture', which focus on homestay, restaurant and souvenir centre. I scrutinise the architects' approach in dealing with the vague briefs, especially on how they perceived 'locality' and represent it in design.

In the winning designs from two of the cycles of the competition, the homestay and restaurant design, there are three dominant aspects which the architects emphasise in order to 'contextualise' their

design proposals.¹⁰⁶ First is creating a connection to local/ traditional architecture that comes in the adoption of form and shape, zoning and function, intended activities to be replicated, or in a more philosophical idea. Second is the attempt to use local materials as much as possible, although for many reasons: to create similarity with the traditional architecture; to utilise the available materials on-site; to create a nuance of living with nature; to make it easy for the local people to build it on their own; or to respond to the local natural condition. The third is the effort to capture the natural context in which the design is situated, and this includes raising the issue of earthquake-prone areas; capturing the natural potential of the site, including the view; and recognising the local characteristics of the place (cold weather, secluded area, presence of trees and other natural elements, heritage conservation area, etc). Those three aspects are consecutively the most talked about aspects in the narration of the winning designs. The striking difference between these two cycles is that in the homestay cycle, the architects tend to highlight the everyday culture of the local people, including the local occupations and customs, while in the restaurant cycle, many of the architects start with considering the tourists' habit in using space and using design to construct a sequence that gives better experience for the visitors. This distinct approach might appear because homestay is understood more like a private building that accommodates more private activities compared to the restaurant that is a business place. This might also be influenced by the government's tourism campaign that gets more intense every year so that in the restaurant cycle, the tourism motive is more apparent than in the previous homestay cycle, and the architects feel more unrestricted in treating their designs as tourism facilities rather than cultural representations.

Another noticeable difference is that almost all of the restaurant designs propose a specific location on which the design is located and start to deal with the specific context of the place, while in the homestay designs, only three out of ten architects try to propose a location. This is a response to the brief's lack of specificity of where the designs would be located, and the lack of elaboration of the aims and focuses for each place's development. Dealing with this, the architects choose a place, despite with their own preferences, to construct their contextual assumption about the place and the people, and this should be appreciated as a sign that their designs are based on actual thinking of a specific place, not just an imaginary assumption of an unclear location. This also needs to be taken as a criticism of the brief itself, as it does not provide sufficient data for the architects to ground their designs. However, although the architects' decision to propose an actual location is appreciated, their

¹⁰⁶ I only make a comparison on homestay and restaurant cycles since these two cycles have ample data and have a direct connection with the Ten New Bali tourism plan, unlike the previous cycles that are not well documented and are held with an independent theme each year.

choices are debatable as most of their decisions are based on aspects that amplify the significance of the architecture as part of the tourism project. There are two main considerations of their choices. First, they tend to choose a place based on its approximate distance to the main attraction in the area, like Wanurejo Village in the Borobudur area, Papagaran Besar and Mesa Islands in Labuan Bajo area, and Sipisopiso Waterfall in the Toba Lake area. Second, the architects try to make use of the natural potential of the place, therefore they choose a place with the best view to maximise the selling point of the architecture. Westside of Tanjung Kelayang Beach is chosen for its quietness and tranquillity to give an exclusive feeling to the tourists; Ngadas Village in Bromo Tengger is chosen for its combination of mountain and savannah view; Tanjung Pasir Ujung Beach in the Tanjung Lesung area is selected for its impressive ocean view that offers both sunrise and sunset panoramas on its two sides.¹⁰⁷ These selections are based on the potential tourism attractions instead considering the potential development of the local people with their complex social and cultural institutions. Although the real selection criteria set by architects remain unclear and unstated, yet from the way the locations are highlighted in the design narration, one can question if the location selection has gone through a comprehensive deliberation, especially if the intention was involving culture preservation.

Aside from the problem with the site choices, there are some issues that need to be addressed in the way the government and architects see the whole approach of this competition. In analysing it, I refer to what Missingham and Selenitsch (2002, pp. 8-9) suggest about common pitfalls in referring to culture in design. First, by promoting this competition, the government is making a 'simplistic comparativism' that treats the winning designs as 'ideal' solutions that work for all people in the region. The architects come with their selection for the location to narrow down the scope of the design context, yet it means that their design decisions might only be relevant if their proposed locations match with the government's selected places in the implementation plan. Even within the same region, each village most likely possesses distinctive characteristics, both for its natural and human-related contexts, and these aspects become strong determinants in how the local people perceive identity. Inaccurate assumption results in irrelevant design 'solutions'. Architecture should accentuate its specificity and should not be seen as an industrial object that can comply with the principle of the one-size-fits-all framework.

¹⁰⁷ To see more of the architects' site choices, refer to Sari, D. P., Inezita, I., & Gandhawangi, S. (2017). *Desain Restoran Nusantara - Sayembara Desain Restoran Nusantara* (I. Akmal Ed.). Jakarta: PT Imaji Media Pustaka and Triastari, A., Noviarimbi, F., Annissa, A., Wanaditya, K. P., & Ridzqo, I. F. (2017). *Desain Rumah Wisata Nusantara - Sayembara Desain Rumah Wisata (Homestay) Nusantara*. Jakarta: PT Imaji Media Pustaka.

Second, it is a flawed assumption to believe that there is a 'unitariness' among people, as if all people in the region can be represented as one single institution, and also in terms of their representations, as if there is a complete and ideal exemplar of culture that can be a representation of all people in the region. The assumption of the 'unitary of entity' is depicted clearly in how the idea of Ten New Bali is proposed. Bali is treated as one whole body as if every part of Bali has the same degree of cultural development, which is then used for tourism, and this similar viewpoint is used to see the selected areas that are projected to be the new Bali. This generalisation sees that people in each area can be represented through one or two 'distinctive characteristics' from which the designs start and gain their significance. The 'unitary of representation' assumption is portrayed in how both the government and architects keep proposing ideas that speak as if there were culture and tradition that once wholly represented the area, and this kind of representation should be preserved and reproduced in a contemporary way. This perspective disregards cultural variations and diversities among small groups of people and might probably end up suppressing the minority. This is similar to imposing one single face as an 'ideal' representation of all people and as a result, it can either indirectly 'force' people to follow what is perceived as ideal while pushing aside their initial identity, as happened in Penglipuran Village in complying with the perceived ideal of Balinese architecture following the 1992 Bali Village Tourism Development (Achmadi, 2006, pp. 88-90), or it can create a social division as some people feel excluded and not represented, like what happened in the selection of Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature (*Taman Mini Indonesia Indah*) that only gave room for one traditional architecture to represent the whole province that in the end created tension among local tribes.

The third pitfall is the flawed assumption in 'attributing constancy' by plucking a static entity out of a continuously evolving culture. Always referring back to traditional architecture is one obvious symptom of this problem, as if this kind of architecture is timeless and constantly relevant regardless of the progressively evolving culture. Attributing constancy to one kind of architecture means one tries to freeze the culture and prohibits it from moving, and this is a problematic, and futile, effort.

The fourth pitfall relates to 'temporal compression', which assumes that what is true at one time remains true at another. Traditional architecture might be a relevant answer for the natural, social and cultural condition of the place in that particular time, but it does not mean it is easily relevant to the contemporary condition. It is also important to note that traditional architecture used to be 'the' contemporary architecture back at its peak period, so one should regard that there is a contemporaneity in the way traditional architecture works in a particular range of time and space. Therefore, in creating a new architecture for the 'now' condition, similar contemporaneity needs to be

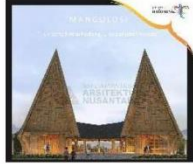
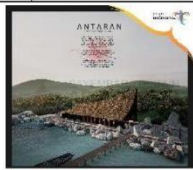
taken into account so that this proposed contemporary architecture can respond to the present and future contemporary needs and conditions of the people.

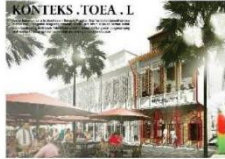
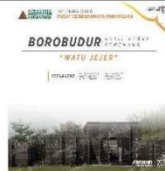
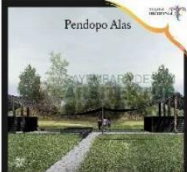
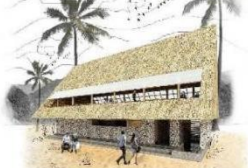
The fifth pitfall is a 'naïve assimilation' which sees that culture is considered commensurable, hence interchangeable, and can be directly transported from one to another. Adopting certain forms and shapes of cultural artefacts and attaching them to a different culture is an oversimplification that disregards the long social, cultural and political process of each culture, itself. Traditional architecture, for instance, is a product of complex historical and cultural weaves, and the form and shape taken for the building relates mostly to local people's rituals and the community's social customs (Waterson, 1990, p. 43), hence not this is about aesthetics. Assimilating these kinds of forms and shapes to contemporary culture, especially when it is connected to tourism, thus becomes meaningless, as none of the aspects of local ritual, culture and custom that plays and takes part in the replication of this visual resemblance is relevant. There is no local value that can be conveyed through the design, except for some bogus ethnicities that are usually present through various claims given by the architects. This is a product of too much 'focusing on the visual' and the appearance of the architecture, as the sixth pitfall, and this mostly ends up as, borrowing Raymond Noronha's (1979, p. 177) term, 'Waikikianization' of culture.

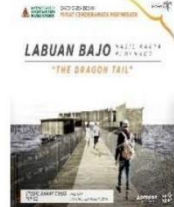
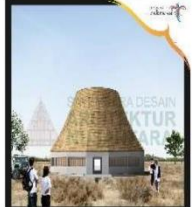
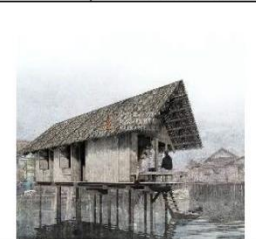
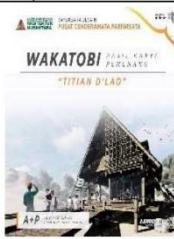
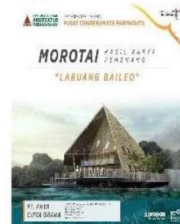
If we scrutinise the process of the design competition, we can see that the process of each cycle is detached and unconnected, especially in terms of maintaining coherence between cycles. Especially with the unrestrictive briefs, it is very difficult to ensure that each destination would have consistent design translations as a response for a similar context. Comparing the winning designs from different cycles reveals that the designs of the various amenities, including homestays, restaurants, souvenir centres and information centres, for one particular area possess striking dissimilarities and this incoherence might impact how the local people and the visitors perceive 'local'. With the briefs that were written vaguely and no further explanation mentioned about the places and the previous winning designs in the briefs, I thus suspect that the government does not concern itself with how designs from each sequence of the competition would relate to each other. The coherence needed to create a sense of wholeness and consistency to the new development of the place seems to be the last thing to be considered, not as important as the look, the functionality and the cost of the new design, as underlined in the briefs. This emphasises the partial thinking employed in this development process, and it is evidence that the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition provides a choppy instead of a comprehensive idea of development, and its advocacy of 'inappropriate' development might jeopardise the local culture itself.

In approaching locality, although most of the architects, if not all, refer back to traditional architecture as their design precedents (Table 7), as also part of the instructions in the brief, the architects approach the idea of locality in a quite distinctive way and they capture and narrate different aspects of the local context. More intangible cultural aspects are referred to as the leading idea of design, as in Toba Lake's homestay design where Deni Wahyu Setiawan and the team accentuated the tradition of having a *tataring* room as the 'life' of a traditional house that recently has started to disappear, or in Bromo Tengger's restaurant design where Edison Gunawan and Indra Pramana highlighted the importance of a *pawon* room as a place not only for cooking activity, but also for gathering and socialising (Sari, Inezita, & Gandhawangi, 2017, p. 86; Triastari, Noviarimbi, Annissa, Wanaditya, & Ridzqo, 2017, p. 16). Some architects focus more on the natural conditions of their picked locations and use them as the determining aspect for their design decisions, as in Labuan Bajo's homestay design where Rizki Bhaskara and the team were concerned with the remoteness of the location thus using fewer transferable materials from the city became the main consideration, or in Tanjung Kelayang's homestay design where Gigih Nalendra and the team chose the shape of a thin house so that the design can sit between coconut tree on the beach (Triastari, Noviarimbi, et al., 2017). Other architects directly state that their designs are 'imitating' the local houses or other local artefacts in their selected locations, as in Morotai where Mochamad Ridwan Fauzi and the team copy the look of North Molucca's Sasadu House for their restaurant design, or Seribu Islands and Old City's restaurant design where Mochamad Ridwan Fauzi and the team mimicked the Dutch-Chinese architecture that is commonly seen in their chosen area (Sari et al., 2017). These examples highlight concerns over whether the amenity designs are related to one another, remembering that they will be positioned relatively closely.

Table 7. The winning design of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition for the Ten New Bali for category homestay, restaurant, souvenir centre and tourism information centre

Nusantaran Architecture Design Competition The winning designs									
Destination		2016 – Homestay category		2017 – Restaurant category		2018 – Souvenir centre category		2019 – Tourism Information centre category	
		Title	Architect(s)	Title	Architect(s)	Title	Architect(s)	Title	Architect(s)
1	Danau Toba	Jabu Na Ture	Deni Wahyu Setiawan, PT Realline Studio	Parmananganan Siwaluh Jabu	Antonius SETHA Pramudya,, PT Panorama Group Residential Developer	Partungkoan Toba	Ezra Ganesha Prihardanu, Dedi Kurnia Dwitomo, Achmad Yusuf Fandy Nugroho	Mangulosi	Teguh Iswara Suardi, Febi Ivan, Lutfi Hutama
									
2	Tanjung Kelayang	Thin House	Gigih Nalendra, Team Alvasara	Bale Nyamen	Yonathan Hartanto, Yessi Anastasia	Perenggan Khageswara	Arch. Dipl. Ing., Cosmas D. Gozali, IAI, Hilman Rushdi, Winnata Tito, Beatrice Bursa, Andrew Karta, Gusti Rianggono	Antaran	Rhesa Jonathan
									
3	Tanjung Lesung	New Gateway to Adventure in the West Edge of Java	Edwin Adinata, Team Arsitek	Leuit Na Sagara Lesung	Chandra Tri Adiputra, Stephanie Monieca, Fadhil Hasairin, Hendrawan Setyanegara, Ajeng Nadia Ilmiani, Ricky, Gabriel Pardamean Hutagalung, Benedictus Thomas Pradipta Tri Prakasa Wasistawilasa, Aulia Prakoso Nugroho, Arief Mubaraq	Imah Kriya	Muhammad Muhjar Annur, Afif Hadi Wiesi, Dama Nurgraha Putratama, Dimas Derry Dwiyatna, Garnadi	Carita Lisung	Guszeus Wisnu, Ben Barukh Kurniawan
									

4	Kota Tua & Seribu Islands	Titik Temu	Aditya Wiratama, PT Urbane Indonesia	Konteks Toea.L	Mochamad Ridwan Fauzi, Daniel Caesar Pratama, Muhammad Hadyan, Steven Widyatmadja	Atap Toea Jakarta	Muhammad Hadyan	Sabda Tua	Kanigara Ubaszti Putra, Assy Saffa
									
5	Borobudur	Gnomon Urip	Aditya Wiratama, PT Urbane Indonesia	Mandalavista	Rizky Rachmadanti, Aditya Wiratama, Hendri Y. Sudarman	Watu Jejer	Fauzia Evanindya, Andro Kaliandi, Rama Dwiwahyu, Romi Dwiwahyu, Astidira Apti, Guda M. Suhardi	Jagad Rewang	Ryan Zachrie
									
6	Bromo Tengger	Dusun Guyub Bromo	Verena Rafaela, PT Grahaciota	Pawon Tigo Tungku	Edison Gunawan, Indra Pramana	Watu Murup	Muhammad Hilmy Arieza, Shendy Kresnaputra	Pendopo Alas	Gana Ganesha
									
7	Mandalika	Rumah Separo Mandalika	Wendi Isnandar, Universitas Mercu Buana	Berugak Mandalika	Yuristo Maulidan, Firman Maulana Rhamdani, Yusup Rahayu Bahtiar	Be.La.Ju	Harly Valiant Noviano, Alifa Imama Syahnovy	Bedait Mandalika	Amiratul Karimah
									

8	Labuan Bajo	Naung Kampung Papagaran	Rizki Bhaskara, Team Blur Architect and Design Studio	Dermaga Makan	Ardinanto Prakoso Rudini, Andesha Hermintomo, Endy Ersal	The Dragon Tail	Hariman, Antonius Setha Pramudya	Bajo Sabae	Antonius Setha Pramudya
									
9	Wakatobi	Roma Boe	Kalvin Widjaja, Team PT Airmas Asri	Kusina Bowe	Kalvin Widjaja, Dian Indah Sekar Rini	Titian D'lao	Aditya Tri Suwito, Pramudya Ridho Pambudi	Tia Wakatobi	Tobias Kea Suksmalana, Jaka Nur Sukma
									
10	Morotai	Rumahku a Home to Stay	Wijaya Suryanegara Yapeter, PT Studio Tanpa Batas	Oti Bubane	Mochamad Ridwan Fauzi, Daniel Caesar Pratama, Muhammad Hadyan, Steven Widyatmadja	Labuang Baileo	Arch. Dipl. Ing., Cosmas D. Gozali, IAI, Hilman Rushdi, Winnata Tito, Beatrice Bursa, Andrew Karta, Gusti Rianggono	Fala Sasa'dua Morotai	
									

Note. Adapted from: Sayembara Desain Arsitektur Nusantara (Facebook), Courtesy of Propan Raya, 2016-2019 (adapted with permission)

BOROBUDUR

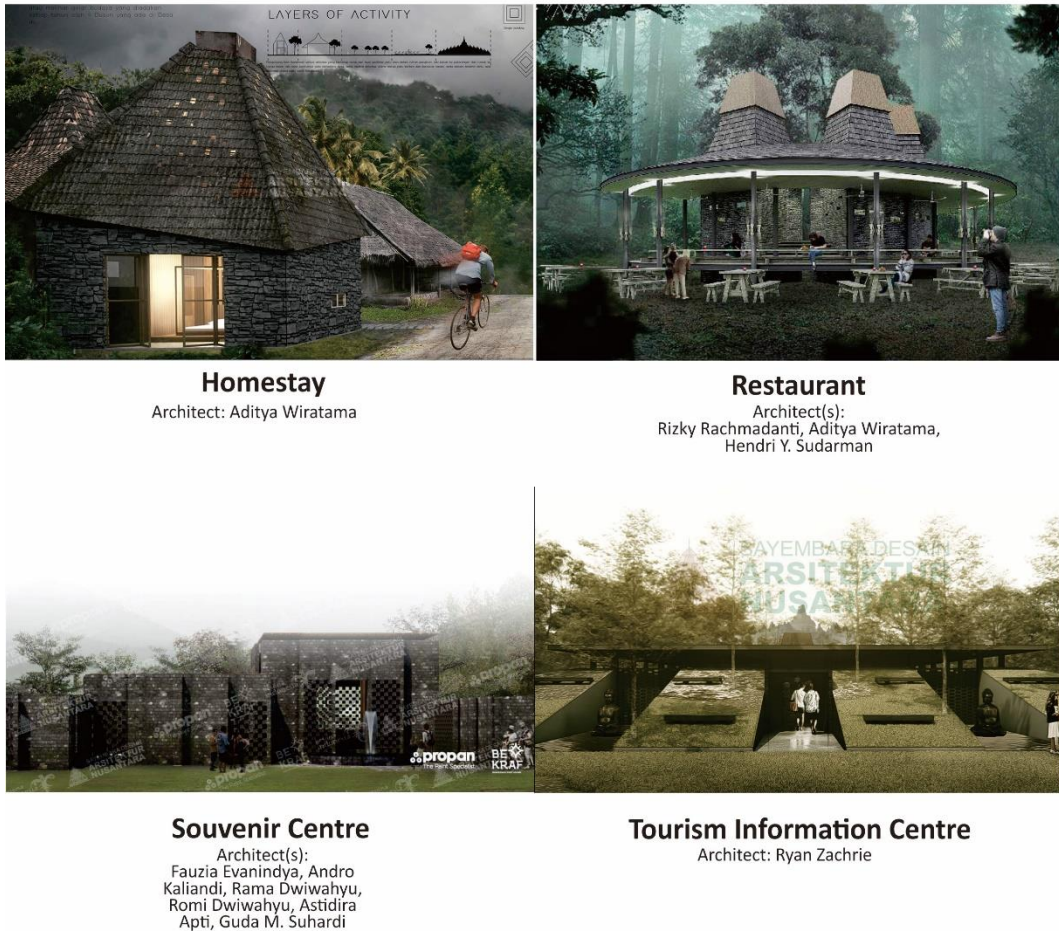


Figure 19. The winning designs for Borobudur area in the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition for homestay, restaurant, souvenir centre and information centre categories

Source: Propan Raya, 2019 (reprinted with permission)

Among the results of the multiple series of the competition, not only is there a lack of coherence, but one can also scrutinise the incoherence in terms of how the winning designs sit side-by-side with the local buildings in the area. The winning designs for the Borobudur area can pose as an example for this problem. As the winners refer to Borobudur as their design precedent, it is understandable that they choose to use black andesite slate stone for the wall cover to create a visual resemblance with the main attraction of the place (Figure 19). However, it becomes problematic when the new designs sit among the existing local houses, as local people do not use the same materials for their houses. Local people tend to use materials that are accessible and available for them, and most of them, if not all, have no intention to replicate the grand Borobudur in terms of visual aesthetic. Living around the Borobudur area does not mean that people build their house using the same material as Borobudur,

as probably the black stone itself is expensive and not much available within the area, although this is negated by the architects saying that “all the materials used are available around the village and are be able to be done by the local craftsmen” (Triastari, Noviarimbi, et al., 2017, p. 72). In that regard, it is thus evident that the winning designs of the Borobudur area from each cycle try to make a connection with the main attraction, the Borobudur temple, not with the local people and their culture. The designs are results of the exercised ideas of having the Borobudur temple in mind, trying to engage the national and international audience by representing some ocular-based connections to the main attraction in the area rather than engaging with the real-life local culture.

Aside from the material chosen, the forms and shapes employed in the proposed designs are also distinct from how local people usually build their houses. The homestay designs are mostly proposed with rectangle floorplans with some projections for future development, while the restaurant and souvenir center designs employ more complex floorplans and designs. The potential problem to appear is that local people are not familiar with the construction process of the proposed designs, especially with the twists and turns to give the modern sense to it, like a circular floorplan for a restaurant in Borobudur or asymmetric roof form for a restaurant in Wakatobi. These designs are not common ways for locals to build their architecture, so it requires some learning and an adjustment process for them to tackle the complexity. The government needs to make sure that they are willing to do some education and training to the local people to cope with the construction standard that is expected for the design so that the local artisans can build it, not just importing high-skilled craftsmen from other areas to build as commonly happens in many of the government projects. If community empowering is one of the aims of this agenda, then making sure that local people become the executor and the operator of these design schemes is critical.

Another thing that needs to be problematized here is the way architects conceptualise their design to align with one or two local artefacts that detach them from the reality of the people. Many of the architects try to grasp the philosophical narration of the precedent before they translate and embed it into the new design, usually with the common analogy and metaphor method, to add value to design and to contextualise the new architecture. This is a common practice among architects all over the world to ‘borrow’ some narration to justify their design decisions, and this method has been considered as ‘appropriate’ and acceptable. This, however, brings at least two problems. First, the philosophy chosen, most of the time, fails to encapsulate the real conditions of the people as it is mostly based on some imaginations that have no direct connection with the people and the complexity of their culture. Sean Griffiths (2018) strongly opposes this approach what he calls ‘bogus’ or ‘fake’ meanings and emphasises that:

“... the search for ‘meaning’, ‘narrative’ and ‘metaphor’ is the disease of our time. ... these applied significations only represent ideas about something outside of the reality of the object. They are purely mental constructions. Their meanings have no grounding in material reality, hence they are superficial and unstable in nature” (Griffiths, 2018).

He points to the influence of late capitalism in this case as this effort strips down the significance of the object in a way to commodify it. In the case of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition, restaurant design for the Borobudur area can be one of the examples of this questioned approach. Rizky Rachmadanti and the team take the idea of ‘macrocosm’ and ‘microcosm’ of the Borobudur temple as a philosophical story behind their design. They represent the idea of macrocosmos with a *mandala*, which is then translated as a circular shape of the floorplan, and microcosmos with cellular automata, which is represented by the various size of the andesite slate stone as wall cover material. The design also adopts the principle of step pyramid that represents three chapters of life (before born; when living in the world; and after passing away) and they translate these steps in the zoning of the design (Sari et al., 2017, p. 72). Similar to this, in a design for the restaurant in Toba Lake, Antonius Setha Pramudya and Regi Kusnadi use the narration of Batak Karo traditional house’s philosophy of ‘macrocosm of three worlds’, which is used to determine the vertical zoning of the building (Sari et al., 2017, p. 16). This is what Griffiths questions. The meanings the architects try to embed are way too imaginary and have no direct connection with the people themselves, especially in terms of their identity in a sense of how they perceive themselves as an independent body and part of a wider community. The idea of macrocosm and microcosm might be appealing for selling ideas, but it does not represent people’s social and political position, the constant struggle of their everyday life, the harmony and conflict in their community, the problems they constantly face in the urban and rural space, the effort they make to adapt and adopt the everchanging modernistic culture as part of their evolved identity, or probably the tension to live among wider society and to become part of a social mechanism. The ‘bogus’ meaning narrated by the architects are articulated rather arbitrarily and contribute nothing in terms of attaching values, and this is when design becomes ‘meaningless’ and detached from its actual context.

In that regard, one can further question the philosophical narrations chosen by the architects and the way it is translated into the design. In restaurant designs for the Borobudur area, one can ask why the design should refer to Borobudur in the first place? Will referring to Borobudur make the building deemed local? Is this reference based on Borobudur’s religious significance, or tourist significance? From all elements of Borobudur, why do the architects focus on the idea of ‘macrocosm’ and ‘microcosm’? Why is the concept of macrocosm represented with a *mandala*, and why is the *mandala* represented with a circular floorplan? Why is microcosm portrayed as an irregular pattern of wall

cover materials? How do these semiotic plays add value of the design and its significance for local people's life? Moreover, similar to this, another symbolism in design is apparent in the design of airport in Mali Alor as part of the third cycle of the competition. The architects Sukendro Sukendar Priyoso and team choose to incorporate twenty structural triangular frames in their design "as a representation of 20 Islands of Alor" (Triastari, Arimbi, Annissa, & Kusumawardhani, 2017, p. 30). This kind of symbolism is a common yet questionable way to embed meaning in architecture, as the design solely relies on visible similarities, including numbers, form, shapes, colour, texture or materials, to anchor the building to its standing ground. In the case of Mali Alor airport, the decision to represent the number of the islands in the structural frame is the architects' personal and arbitrary decision based on their imagination and perception of Mali Alor, instead of referring to the natural and social-cultural context of the immediate surrounding of the site. Why is it that the twenty islands need to be referred to? Why not something else that is more connected to the site or the culture of the people around the site? These kinds of questions can be easily asked of the architects. They might be difficult to answer except with the argument of 'why not?'. This shows that most of the design decisions, if not all, do not base their justifications on the actual conditions that determine the interrelationship between the land and the people. This is why the claim of being 'local' and 'authentic' is problematic and a weak if not flawed claim. This, therefore, needs to be problematized since the initial aim of the competition is to reproduce the almost extinct 'authentic and local' architecture among people who already show disinterest in preserving their own culture, and this will be an empty claim if the architects keep discounting people's perception of themselves, their community and their lands.

What is interesting in almost all of the winning designs is that the new designs stand out when they are placed among local people's houses. They do not blend in, and probably that is the purpose and that is why each design is chosen as the winner for its different, if not exotic, hence sellable appearance. Not only that the design does not appear to make unity with the local houses, but the function itself also is probably not a common function for the locals hence alien to their culture. It forces people to adjust and probably alter their known everyday culture into something else in which the function of homestay and restaurant are included and facilitated. They also need to adapt to the presence of the new designs among their immediate space as they sit side-by-side with their houses and other community facilities. In this sense, there might be tension and negotiation in their culture reconstruction process in which they make a compromise to the new entity of their culture regardless of their agreement or disagreement over this new tourism scheme imposed on them.

Changing culture is not always a bad and unexpected thing, and the government's involvement in elevating local culture is also crucial to accelerating the growth and development of each place. Yun

Gao (2016), who discusses two remote villages in China that are developed under the government's cultural tourism plans, similar to the Ten New Bali scheme in Indonesia, suggests that government and professional architects play important roles in enhancing the conditions and living quality of the local people. Recognising this, she emphasises the importance of participatory planning, enabling collaboration between local people who know the local culture, and the professionals who understand the technical plan. She asserts that:

"... architects' professional knowledge is not the sole criteria used to assess sustainable development or decide the action plans. The villagers ... need to act as part of the decision-making process. ... [Therefore] architects and planners should be encouraged to get involved in rural development by adopting a long term interest, rather than simply transferring their urban design methods to rural projects" (Gao, 2016, pp. 17-19).

To concretise this, she comes with some aspects that need to be considered in applying development planning to some remote local area:

- Promoting a working group in which different stakeholders can take part in the development planning process, and this group should be inclusive and allow different levels and groups in the community to participate
- Allowing the working group to propose and evaluate the program according to their experience, and it includes the existing material culture and non-material culture of the village. This is ideally followed by employing a participatory design method so that the working group can directly involve in the decision-making process and allow them to see and possibly alter the plan
- Emphasising on the sustainability of the plan by stimulating and nurturing the changing attitude of the locals and by providing appropriate tools, instruments and methods that support this purpose. This includes some workshops for the local people to improve their understanding of some new design and construction methods
- Protecting local cultural heritage and recording the local culture
- Treating the development as a long term process and allowing any alteration demanded by the local people. The plan must also consider the impacts it brings on various levels: for the individual, the village, and the town or county (Gao, 2016, pp. 17-18).

In this regard, the Ten New Bali tourism plan can be deemed problematic as it does not allow any participatory process hence does not give room for the local people to speak out and take part in the planning process. The position of the government and professional architects that are supposed to be mediators and facilitators of this change is distorted and become the only actors in the decision-making process. This problem can be rectified if the government is willing to see this project as a

community-building project rather than a tourism development project, and thus be willing to let go of the instant result expected from the scheme and allow more time for the iteration process. The architects also need to shift their approach to focus more on the people with their complex opinions and interests. Participatory design is indeed a long back-and-forth process and this might not be as compact and efficient as a normal design process, yet when dealing with a community, architects should put aside their 'ego' and be willing to listen and accommodate the people. Although, what comes out as a result is probably different to their expectation. This is why Gao also emphasises the 'special social responsibility' that is attached to the profession of architects and planners that encompasses the role "to support the interface between knowledge and practical skills coming from different stakeholders" and the role to "work as local social and cultural experts, in addition to working as designers" (Gao, 2016, pp. 18-19). This can be seen as a critique for the architect as a profession that has been widely and openly associated in serving people with power and capital, and tends to achieve a result in the shortest way possible. Instead of designing a building to be an attention seeker, architects should start to think about what the locals want and need, and start to position them as legitimate clients of the project, and that they have a legitimate right to direct where their culture shifting is heading and is not just to be dictated by the government.

Until the end of 2019, which was approaching the end of the timeframe of this Ten New Bali program, the government only managed to build one homestay prototype, which is in Sigapiton Village that was officially opened by the Minister of Tourism on 15 October 2017 (Figure 20). This so-called *Jabu Na Ture* homestay is inspired by the *Jabu Bolon* traditional house, the customary house of the Batak Toba people, as a reference attempt to preserve some local characteristics that had gotten less attention from the locals (Amiranti, 2017; Triastari, Noviarimbi, et al., 2017, p. 16). During my research on this prototype building, I found that PT Realline Studio, a Semarang-based architecture firm that designed this homestay, had built one pilot project in Bandung before building the prototype in the Toba Lake area. This pilot project was done by PT Indo Tech Bamboo as the contractor who also built the prototype in Toba Lake, and this is questionable. It is different from the campaign to let local people build the homestay as part of the community-based empowerment plan. Having a building that is designed, selected and constructed by outsiders can be seen as a 'cultural oppression' to the local people and this is an unexpected method in applying a cultural agenda. Moreover, what is interesting about the *Jabu Na Ture* prototype is that the prototype in Bandung is openly offered to the public and its building components can be packed and shipped in a container to be delivered to any place in

Indonesia.¹⁰⁸ This is an interesting turn to treat what was initially claimed as ‘local architecture’ to be no different from knock-down IKEA furniture that can be transferred in a flat-packed package. This attitude depicts an approach dictated by neo-capitalism that discounts the need for local context in architecture and instead, it is treated as an industrial product with an exact replicable blueprint. This confirms my initial arguments to see this problematic competition as merely an instrument of money-oriented purposes that sees architecture as merely a commodity.

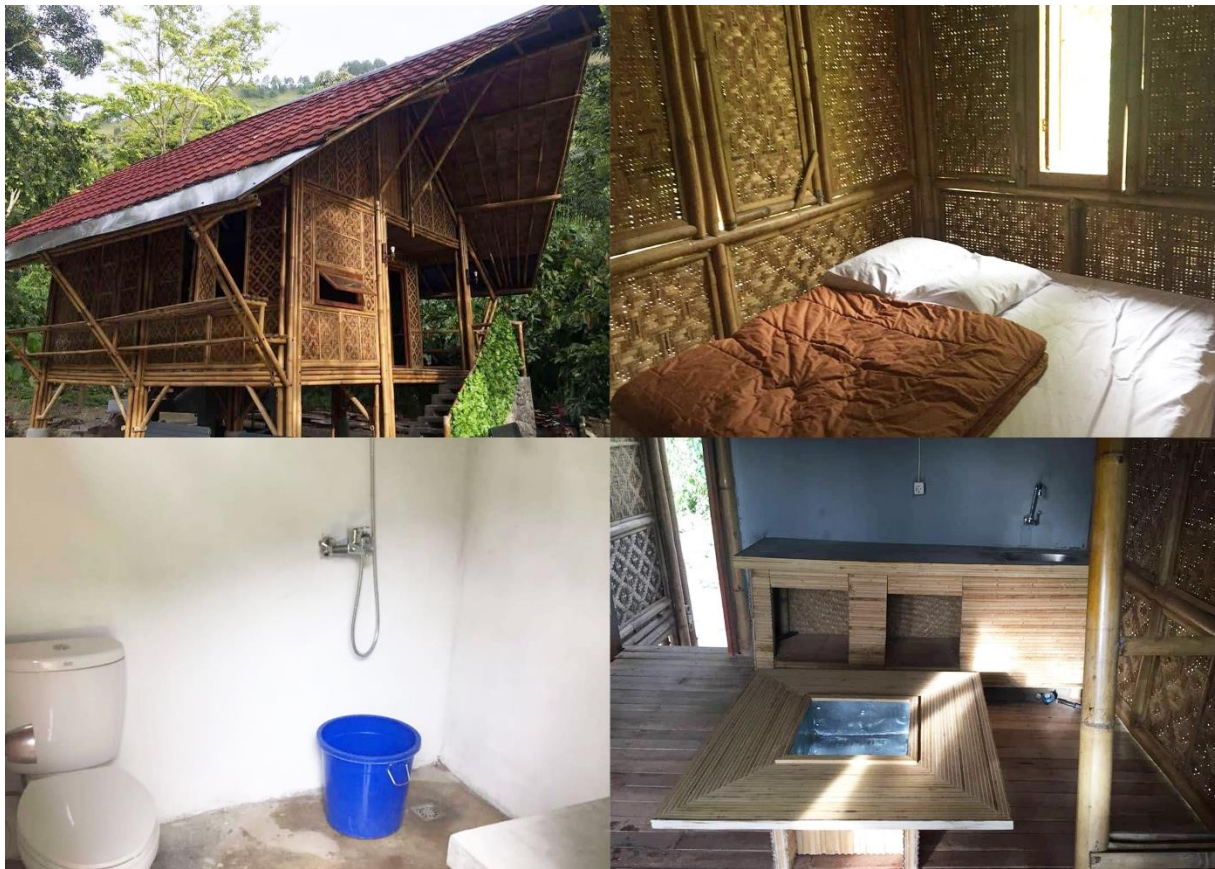


Figure 20. Jabu Na Ture homestay prototype at Sigapiton Village

Source: Wonderful Danau Toba (Instagram @danautobawonderful), 2018 (reprinted with permission)

¹⁰⁸ I got this information from Riri Seftirianti, an architect of PT. Urbane Indonesia, who visited the Jabu Na Ture prototype in Bandung on 9 July 2017 and was offered by the security guard in that place if she wanted to buy a similar house. From this guard, Seftirianti got the information that this similar design can be replicated and that they can send the unassembled components to any place in Indonesia.

VI.5. Summary

This chapter investigated the Indonesian government's tourism agenda of the Ten New Bali and how it incorporates architecture as part of the attraction through the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition to design a series of building typologies that will form the key built infrastructure of the new ten destinations. This chapter argues that, the competition has served as a tool to support the tourism plan regardless of the philanthropic campaign of cultural preservation that is accentuated in attracting Indonesian architects to participate. There is a concealed economic motive that dominates and drives the whole planning, especially that both main actors of this competition, the government and Propan Raya, have a particular interest in gaining tourism income and having a platform to advertise themselves respectively. This plan also carries the government's political agenda of accentuating the president's proletarian program along with his 'building from the periphery' campaign.

The term 'Nusantaran Architecture' is employed to raise people's sense of belonging to their culture, although this is quite often wrapped up with the narration of fear, that other countries might claim Indonesian culture unless the people are willing to preserve it. The narration of culture preservation is then used to underpin the entire plan, covering the complex political drives behind it, and what is concerning is that many Indonesian architects fail to see beyond the campaign and artlessly believe that their participation in this agenda through the competition marks their contribution in preserving the national culture.

For this Ten New Bali tourism plan, the government expects a high-pace development and aims to fully execute this plan in less than five years, following Joko Widodo's presidential term. In 2016, the government set a staggering goal to build 100 thousand homestays in ten new destinations, raising questions and concerns of both the national and the international audience. However, this plan seems to have been a raw idea that was not carefully thought out and not well-supported with comprehensive studies and analysis before its announcement. This was proven in how this plan was perceived differently by many people in the government and the target number kept changing. Until 2019, although the target has been lowered, the government only managed to build one homestay intended as a prototype in the Toba Lake area. Furthermore, not only has the target number of homestays been cut down, the number of regions that were to become the focus of this plan has also been reduced, from ten to four destinations. The whole program is also problematic, as it appears from the initial thinking of using tourism to promote cultural preservation, to the top-down method employed for the implementation. For a program that claims to be driven by the intention to restore and protect local culture, it was delivered without any evidence of participatory process. There are many

other questions entailed, especially the domination of quantitative-based analysis in measuring its success, the problematic decision to put Bali as the reference of tourism success, and also the preassumption to put culture equivalent to tradition and traditional artefacts and this perspective champions traditional architecture as the 'ideal' culture for Indonesian people that needs to be preserved.

In the next chapter, I discuss more elaborately about how architects as a profession works and how this pragmatism is nurtured by the way these architects are trained at architecture schools. I also extend the discussion to look at some particular ways that have been used by Indonesian architects as part of their attempt to 'localise' their building. This relates to the labels of 'Indonesian Architecture' and 'Nusantaran Architecture', especially to see how these architects translate the idea of identity into designs.

Chapter VII

Bridging the Past and the Present: Adopting Nusantara Architecture in Design

VII.1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored the government's agenda of Nusantara Architecture and discussed the design competition that has become the instrument in creating the 'official' version of Nusantara Architecture. This process highlights the political drive behind the adoption of the architectural concept that negates the previous intention of some scholars to separate architecture from politics by proposing the use of Nusantara (pre-colonial term) as opposed to Indonesia (national state connotation). The tight engagement between the government's programs with the slogan of Nusantara Architecture shows the robust dichotomous tensions of global-local, modern-traditional and West-East arguments. The 'Nusantaran Architecture Design Competition' also manifests this engagement, treating culture and tradition as ways of anchoring architecture to its context, although the translation that the competitions offer (through their TOR and as articulated in the selected designs) is somewhat questionable. This chapter will expand this analysis by essentially questioning the way the architectural profession has attempted to articulate, illustrate and formalise the idea of Nusantara Architecture.

As an extension of the previous discussion on the scholarly perspectives, this chapter focuses on how Indonesian professional architects respond to the conception of Nusantara Architecture. This chapter scrutinises the architects' standpoint in translating the conception into built form and explores why they choose particular translations over others. This captures not only the technicality of the design process but also the reflective aspects relating to philosophy and humanity, part of the architects' principles and values. The first section of this chapter discusses the architects' conception of Nusantara Architecture, both the pros and cons, because the architect's stance is as equally significant as the context and the program in making architecture (Missingham, 2017, p. 9). This unveils the domination of the tangible translation and its connection with the nature of design. Architects tend to employ ideas that provide a starting point for design decisions (Waldron & Waldron, 1988, p. 104). This preference leads to specific dominant methods where traditional artefacts become main inspirations for the design exercise, aligning with Nesbitt's argument that "classical aesthetic values like imitation were championed in this rejection of modernism" (Nesbitt, 1996, p. 43). This 'neo-exoticism' approach (Setiawan & Subaharianto, 2019, p. 198), or what Frampton terms 'Neo-

Historicism' (Frampton, 1987, p. 385), leads to 'traditionalising' the country's architectural identity construction.¹⁰⁹

The second part of this chapter discusses the aspects touched in manifesting the idea of being Nusantara and being local. The answer the architects provided in interviews, albeit pragmatic, helps to construct an understanding of the 'important' aspects to deal with in Indonesia architectural design. The points raised are further juxtaposed with the scholars' opinions, to provide a comparison of the two perspectives. Aside from the architects' statements, this chapter also critically explores some of their architectural works to see how the aspects they mentioned are embedded in their designs that create the current face of contemporary Indonesia. The third section of the chapter is a discussion of the architects' perspectives put together with the theories, to construct, and further challenge, the understanding of the term Nusantara Architecture. In this case, I need to emphasise that the aim of this study is never to come up with a definitive and prescriptive conclusion, but to delve into different standpoints and critically analyse them to initiate discussion and potentially to develop the discourse.

VII.2. Ask the architects: Professional perspectives on the notion of Nusantara Architecture

The vague conception of 'Nusantaran Architecture' has brought confusion not only among academics but also among professional architects. The term has been understood differently, and scholars and architects seem to have different tones in addressing this problem. Academics have shown stronger reactions, either agreement or disagreement, and had a firmer stance in their arguments (see Chapter V for elaborations on the scholarly discussion). Conversely, based on the interviews done, professional architects mostly have more 'relaxed' opinions, most of which are because they see the term solely as a 'label'. Some did show strong rejection, but only a few of them provided theories to back up their arguments. Most of the architects built their opinion based on a pragmatic framework, particularly in the way the term dealt with the 'concrete' idea of being local. Therefore, the conception of

¹⁰⁹ In this study, I incline to using 'neo-exoticism', as an affix of Said's Orientalism idea, rather than 'Neo-Historicism', as part of Frampton's critique. Both refer to more or less similar meanings, a movement to 'traditionalise' contemporary culture, including architecture. Neo-exoticism, in this case, offers a clearer depiction of the idea of treating a culture as different and 'distant', particularly in comparison with the 'West' or Europe. Similar to Said's Orientalism, Graham Huggan (2001) and Benjamin Schmidt (2015) also use the term 'exotic' to depict the otherness whose image oscillates between the dichotomy of strangeness and familiarity, that mostly comes in the form of cultural practices and artefacts of Asia and Africa. I put the word 'neo' before 'exoticism' to distinguish the 'new ideal', since in contemporary Indonesia, the country's 'ideal' exotic is no longer seen as a 'pure' traditionalism, but the 'fusion' between the traditional and the modern. In this sense, the winning designs of a Nusantara Architecture Design Competition might represent the idea of 'neo-exoticism'.

Nusantaran Architecture is exercised as a physical entity, something that is visually, tactilely, and auditorily available to be experienced.

Architects and the pragmatism of the profession

Since there is no unanimous agreement on what Nusantara Architecture is, the architects offered numerous ideas of what they considered as the ‘embodiments’ of Nusantara Architecture. While some of the architects could reflectively explain their stances in this discourse, others found it hard to explicate in detail where they would put themselves in the discourse. The nature of architectural design has shaped their approach to rely more on their ‘senses’ that, most of the time, was difficult to explain. Nigel Cross’s (2006) assertion of ‘knowing how’ was apparent in this case. Architectural design is seen as tacit knowledge and as a ‘black box’, which implies that the architects’ thinking process is unclear and can only be traced back and assessed by investigating the output of the design (Banham, 1996, p. 293; J. W. Robinson, 2001, p. 68). However, since one should “understand architecture not as the building, but as the thought process that creates the building” (Plowright, 2014, p. 38), discussing the position of the architects is also vital.

Seeing beyond the pragmatism of the profession becomes necessary, and putting critique on the architecture is expected to bring back the critical discussion that has been avoided in contemporary architectural praxis in the country (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September). This situation might be an effect of the regulation stated in the IAI’s code of ethics standard, mentioning:

“Architect should not harass other architects’ works ... in an unfair way, in an open forum or mass media. ... Architect, if asked to give an opinion on other architects’ works, should let the concerned architects know. Critique of other architects’ works should be done inside professional boundaries and under a tested objectivity” (Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia [IAI], 2007, p. 25).

Although having an intention to control the healthy environment of the profession, this regulation, in a way, takes away the culture of critique that used to be present in the previous generation of Indonesian architects, particularly in the time of Indonesian Young Architects (*Arsitek Muda Indonesia [AMI]*). The absence of peer critique creates a void in how architecture as a built form would be assessed and how the architects’ perspective would be challenged. This condition inhibits and decelerates the development of contemporary discourses, including that of Nusantara Architecture. Ichsan Teng, the head of the Indonesian Institute of Architects chapter of North Molucca, highlighted the role of academics in this matter that “academics should persist in their critique as [there is a] truth in their knowledge” (I. Teng 2018, pers. comm., 20 September). Not only putting academics as

responsible for maintaining the culture of critique in the discipline, Teng also emphasised that it was academics' responsibility to 'formulate' any architectural conception, including Nusantara Architecture, since architects might not see the discourse as something important. He also stated that academics also had a responsibility to educate laypeople about architecture, hence the need to write not only in academic journals but also in popular media. The incapability of the academics to generate a clear conception of an architectural discourse might lead to confusion in the architectural praxis (I. Teng 2018, pers. comm., 20 September). Teng's statement represents the common expectation of scholars in general, that "it is the critic's job to provide resistances to theory, to open it up toward historical reality, toward society, toward human needs and interests, to point up those concrete instances drawn from everyday reality" (Racevskis, 2005, p. 87). This expectation, however, has strengthened the partition in the discipline between academics and architects, elucidating the wide gap between theory and practice.

Indonesian architects associate themselves as a group of professionals that are separated from the group of theorists. Many of the interviewees implied that the discourse of Nusantara Architecture was in the domain of theory, so architects felt reluctant to give a robust response to this. Achmad Tardiyana, an academic and an architect from Bandung (West Java), explained that the knowledge produced by the two streams was not always directly related to each other. At an academic level, the questions that led to research did not always have a practical connection, and in fact, he argued that "the practicality of how [a theory] would be used is not the main domain of the academics" since the most important was the knowledge development (A. Tardiyana 2017, pers. comm., 2 October). With a minimum reciprocal knowledge contribution between the architects and the academics, the two seemed to have a sharp boundary and, here, cross-critique was something highly unexpected. In this case, Ramadhoni Dwipayana, a professional architect from Medan (North Sumatra), mentioned that each profession had its capacity to probe their field, but that might not be the case when they had to critique the other party. He implied that theorists might not have enough 'ammunition' to critique professional architects (R. Dwipayana 2018, pers. comm., 23 August), with the assumption that theorists might not have enough 'field experiences' to understand the complexity of practice entirely. This situation was also highlighted by Budiman Hendropurnomo, the head architect of DCM Indonesia, who vigorously responded to this dichotomy by critiquing academics who became very idealistic in their critique and could not see things from the perspective of the architects. He asserted that "those professors did not do design ... [so] they did not know how difficult it was to design" (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September). However, in the situation that the profession relied on the presence of peer-critique, there was a cultural issue that 'prevented' it from happening, as critique "would be considered impolite and offensive" (R. Dwipayana 2018, pers. comm., 23

August). Budiman further mentioned that it should be architects who critique other architects, as in the time of AMI yet, interestingly, he mentioned that the current development did not need architects to critique anymore.

Another discussion raised was about that relevancy of research topics of academics that failed to touch people's real-life problems and contribute to architectural design. Danny Wicaksono, a young, emerging Jakartan architect, showed a profound disagreement in the topic brought within the interview, as for him, the topic of identity would not contribute to any severe problems in everyday life, such as poverty, recurrent floods, and traffic jams. He deemed the discourse encircling architectural identity "obsolete and irrelevant within the current flattened world and blended people", or in other words, "identity was absurd ... [and] nonsense" (D. Wicaksono 2017, pers. comm., 25 August). He further questioned why academics kept critiquing professional architects, instead of critiquing themselves, since architects were products of architecture schools, thus the academic field was, for him, the one to 'blame' if anything went off-track. There are at least three things that are worth to note from Wicaksono's standpoint. First, his strong tone responding to the topic of the interview showed not only the separation between academics and professionals, but even more than that: a detestation, or a frustration. He did touch a relevant question challenging the academic culture of architecture, yet his defensive response could be a sign of resentment towards academics as people who could only 'problematised' everything and 'blame' the architects. Secondly, at the end of the interview, he revealed that his rejection of the conception of identity was because he did not feel any association with a particular ethnic group. He was born Javanese, but he has been living in big cities hence never knew his 'roots'. Therefore, in his view, the topic of identity became irrelevant for him and possibly for people who share a similar experience with him. Albeit flawed, his understanding of 'identity' might represent the common perception, seeing identity as related to traditional culture, and this view has been very apparent in the construction of 'Nusantaran Architecture'. Thirdly, Wicaksono was an example of how different people might understand identity, that not everyone in Indonesia would always feel related to any traditional practices and artefacts. This situation emphasises the previous question of the inclusivity of the conception of Nusantara Architecture, whether the term was wide enough to encompass the myriad different identities that were present in Indonesia.

This brings us to the pragmatism of the profession of architects and architectural design. Some architects might be able to articulate their thinking process, but some said it was almost impossible to break down the steps of how they design since their design choices were influenced by the values that were inherent in their life. Achmad Tardiyana highlighted this pragmatism in the profession and

mentioned that “[he was] a professional architect hence pragmatic in seeing the conception of Indonesia-ness ... [in a way that he] tended to refer back to the geographical and empirical [context]” (A. Tardiyana 2017, pers. comm., 2 October). He further elaborated that he, as an Indonesian, carried an understanding of what Indonesia was in the back of his head, hence his response to the actual context of the place could be considered as a rendition of Indonesia-ness. Ary Indra, a Jakarta-based architect and the curator of the Indonesian contribution to the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, admitted that he did not have a specific method in approaching context and design problems, as intuition and personal experiences played a significant role in shaping his responses. These design processes thus became unexplainable, as the architect’s personal preferences, most of the time, directed the whole of each process. Indra compared designing with appetite in choosing what to eat: it was just about what one felt like having in that particular moment, and needed no further reasoning. That was why Indra mentioned that his works were mostly driven by what he felt like designing, then finding the ‘reasoning’ to justify the choices (A. Indra 2018, pers. comm., 1 September). Interestingly, this pragmatic and practical exploration became a common approach in architectural design, and Indonesia’s prominent architects seemed not to have any problem in disclosing it. Yu Sing, an emerging young architect from Bandung, mentioned that architects had their freedom to attain any design inspiration, regardless of sources. He argued that “design could be started ... [with] the strong concept then followed with the form, or with exploring the form then come with the concept”, and both processes were accepted, or even expected, in the architectural praxis (Y. Sing 2017, pers. comm., 11 August). Hendropurnomo also conveyed a similar argument that the design choices mostly depended on the architects’ background. He asserted:

“Those professors [expect us to] find a theory before we start drawing. How many months will it take? That is the problem; we practitioners do not do that. I am Indonesian, I came from Malang, I speak ngoko Javanese, I am a collector [of antiques]. When I draw, I am all ready, because everything has been sedimented in me. All I need to do is keep going, and whatever comes out [from me], in my opinion, that will be Indonesian Architecture” (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September).

The architects’ statements, above, argue that explaining a design process itself is an arduous task, but this displays a potential pitfall in legitimising the architects’ purpose, regardless of the process and the result. The design becomes a one-way and unquestionable process, and the architects become the main, if not sole, decision-makers.¹¹⁰ With this stance, architects might shut down the importance of

¹¹⁰ I do not try to disregard the influence of other experts, clients and stakeholders in the design process, particularly that some might argue that putting “the architect as a solitary genius ... [is a] pretty outdated idea” (Arieff, 2014). But in many cases of the work of big name architects, the architect is a dominant driver of the

capturing broader voices, for instance, through participatory methods. Further, this circumstance might extend the phenomena of ‘starchitects’, who are “the lone genius, the brilliant flair of the sketch on the napkin, the celebrity, the worldwide renown ... [who] often achieved their success not only via design but through charisma, charm, contacts and the ability to present a proposal succinctly, compellingly and convincingly” (Heathcote, 2017). What is commonly understood from the ‘starchitects’ is that “no one dares dispute the master[s] as his plans unfold ... [although their] ungainly creation [becomes] a sort of fetish object, or at worst, an urban catastrophe”, and even becomes a “cultural imperialism” (Lank, 2014). Interestingly, this term has been rejected by the ‘starchitects’ themselves, like Frank Gehry and Rem Koolhaas who hate to bear the label, as it is deemed as “snarky [and] patronizing” (Russell, 2014). It is seen as “a sloppy, derogatory term that is both insulting to the architects described and to the profession in general ... [and] does not serve any real purpose except to denigrate a few individuals” (Jaklitsch, 2013). The term has been under long debate among design critics, but one point, in particular, is that their big names, and the big clients behind the projects, have allowed them to extend their explorations in ways that is far away from contextual reality. Alan Berman critiques the ‘self-obsessed’ culture of ‘starchitects’ that the buildings they design “generally serve little social purpose ... [creating] individualistic buildings for atomised communities, architecture without a conscience” (Berman, 2015). Berman pinpoints one problem that is relevant to the context of Indonesian architectural profession, that the profession has failed to examine itself. Then with the ‘no-critique’ culture among Indonesian architects that I have elaborated above, how can architecture be assessed and evaluated? Who would have the right to do that?

The ‘locatecture’

Berman’s critique reminds us of one piece of writing written by Witold Rybcynski in The New York Times that evoked a massive debate encircling the topic of ‘starchitecture vs locatecture’. He builds his argument based on social architecture, that:

“Architecture ... is a social art, rather than a personal one, a reflection of a society and its values rather than a medium of individual expression. ... [Starchitects], however talented ... don’t

design. This premise might be suitable for this study, since the interviewees from the professional group are all prominent architects, most of whom are internationally recognised. Many of the interviewees have clearly stated that they have got a specific architectural style and method, so the client should have followed the architects’ way, otherwise they could find other architects for their projects.

intimately know the place they are working in ... [Therefore] instead of starchitects, locatects ... locals [that are] working locally” (Rybczynski, 2014).

Rybczynski’s view, although seen as flawed and simplistic by many other critics, proposes a legitimate concern of local architecture and the question of how to deal with the locality. He mainly argues that architects and developers should have more sensitivity to the place and local context and promote local talent instead of keeping on importing ‘outsiders’ to design for an ‘unfamiliar’ location. This perspective becomes debatable in a way that architectural design, according to Vishaan Chakrabarti, is “not a question of where one practices, but how, ... [and] the real issue is whether architects, global or local, are creating work that is of, by and for the places and people they serve” (Chakrabarti, 2014). Therefore designing a local architecture, according to him, does not have to be designed by local architects, but it is about “[being] humanistic ... [and] accompanied by empathy and rationality” (Lank, 2014).

It is interesting to discuss Rybczynski’s ‘locatecture’ and its relevance to the contemporary tension in architectural practice in Indonesia. Being local is the new ‘popular’ movement right now in Indonesia, shown in the way all interviewees of this research agree to incorporate locality in their design. Regardless, there are still questions that need clarification. Firstly, the question of what is local; what is ‘locatecture’; and how ‘local’ is this ‘locatecture’? The problem is the work of architects, is most of the time, does not involve a direct observation or analysis of the local context. The common assumption of bamboo and timber as local materials, for instance, has become a widespread yet flawed understanding of locality. As an example, most of the winning designs of the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition use these materials with similar reason: that these are local materials that are available in the place; but are they? The prototype that was built in Toba showed otherwise, as bamboo that became the primary material of the design was not available onsite, hence needed to be imported from other places. The assumption of locality, mostly based on vague generalisation, becomes problematic, particularly in the reluctance of the architects to delve deeper into the ‘real context’. This inclination extends to what Chakrabarti argues that “[visiting the place and collaborating with local experts] has not been the case in the recent work done by some globe-trotting ‘starchitects’ or their mega-firm counterparts” (Chakrabarti, 2014).

The second question arises if the work of ‘locatecture’ has to be done by the locals. The easy answer is ‘no’; but if we see the complex tension of local versus non-local architects, then the answer might be different. As I have elaborated previously, Fakhri Anhar mentioned that the profession in Banjarmasin has suffered because of the government’s top-down method in dropping in designs done by architects from outside the area, mostly from Java (F. Anhar 2018, pers. comm., 9 August). Not only

did the designs not fit with Banjarmasin's wet soil context, but also local architects were mostly excluded in the process (see Chapter VI.2 for further elaboration on the top-down approach of the governmental projects). Nurturing the local profession, as Rybcynski suggests, becomes crucial in this case so that local architects have the quality expected in the profession while fostering their local knowledge and embed it in their architecture. In the context of Indonesia, not only would this challenge the Java-centric domination, but it would also empower local places in terms of their built forms and the people, including the architects.

In the conception of Nusantara Architecture, the discussion of local context has been very apparent among architects. Going beyond 'assumption' in interpreting locality is hence essential, embracing the forces and tensions that are present on site. However, some scholars have shown some doubts if architects would respond to it. Jeremy Till (2009) argues that although "architecture is a dependent discipline ... [yet] architecture, as profession and practice, does everything to resist that very dependency" (Till, 2009, p. 1). The architects tend to reject these external forces for it is beyond their control and would only be interference in the design plan. Their predilection to rely on internal contemplation in making design decision is seen as a repeated pattern that becomes part of the characteristic of the profession itself. They rarely acknowledge the complexity of the multilayered contextual problems of the place in which their design would be situated. In many cases, architects interpret the users' needs and see them merely as a program to develop the *utilitas*, as Vitruvius called it, and to make sure of the efficiency of the proposed building plan, primarily to fulfil the economic pressure given by the commissioning agency. This preference is what Allan Colquhoun calls "the rationalisation of social life under industrial capitalism" (Colquhoun, 1997, p. 15). People are no longer entitled to be involved in the process of design, even in the form of participatory design, as architects, in some cases, assume that the users do not know what they want and need. People as the end-users of the architecture are treated as passive objects and seen "as beholders, not willed agents" (Stevens, 1998, p. 13). This phenomenon is evident in the way architecture is presented in the glossy magazines where most pictures are cleared from human activities as if architecture was built for itself, not as a place for humans. Denying the human aspect in architecture is naïve and simplistic, as if "it is to admit the impossible: a world without people" (Freire, 2005, p. 50).

Nusantaran Architecture vs Indonesian Architecture

In dealing with the conception of Nusantara Architecture, architects who supported and opposed Nusantara Architecture used similar justifications as the academics who posed the same stance (see

Chapter V.4 for further investigation of the scholarly perspectives over Nusantara Architecture). What was particularly compelling in the interviews with the professional architects was that the option of adopting either 'Indonesian Architecture' or 'Nusantaran Architecture' was very apparent and was strongly polarised. Both suffer a similar vagueness, as both hitherto do not have any specific architectural conception and design language that are generally accepted among architecture scholars and professionals, although both terms have been persistently used in elucidating the country's architectural identity. This section investigates further the reason why some architects opted for 'Indonesian Architecture' instead of 'Nusantaran Architecture', and analyses their conception of 'Indonesia-ness' that they tried to convey.

The close association of Nusantara Architecture with traditional representation has been seen as being the main problem in design translation, and was deemed as a form of romanticising architecture. In this regard, Ary Indra argued that contemporary Nusantara Architecture has failed to embrace the contemporaneity of culture and has disregarded the complexity of today's real-life context. He brought up the fact that traditional architecture was once a representation of the locals' contemporary culture in that time, and that their choices of building material, shape and structure expressed in the architecture portrayed what was available in that particular time. By mentioning this, he argued that Nusantara Architecture should have incorporated the contemporaneity of today's reality, instead of going primarily to the past. Moreover, he argued that the problem with Nusantara Architecture was that the term tried to "rigidify something that does not need to be rigidified", and he then proposed that "all architecture in Indonesia, whenever it was built, [is] Nusantara Architecture" (A. Indra 2018, pers. comm., 1 September). The pitfall of the conception Nusantara Architecture was "the trap of form ... the trap of materialism and ocular-centrism" (A. Indra 2018, pers. comm., 1 September). 'Value and meaning' (*nilai*) should become the most important issues to grasp in delving into traditional architecture, instead of the visual-related elements. He admitted that developmental milestones would be more graspable if associated with something 'real' and concrete, but he firmly emphasised that being easy did not always mean being 'right'. However, Indra recognised that the pressures that surrounded architects of clients' requirements and budget-related issues have become significant drivers in design consideration. If these were the real forces that encircled architecture in Indonesia, then he questioned if it might be what Nusantara Architecture was, that Nusantara Architecture was about dealing with the hegemony economy and capitalism (A. Indra 2018, pers. comm., 1 September).

Adi Purnomo, one of Indonesia's more famous architects, spoke in a similar tone when he problematized the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition in that the government planned to

build 100,000 homestay units: “maybe that is Nusantara Architecture?” (A. Purnomo 2017, pers. comm., 3 October). Purnomo argued that as an idea, ‘Nusantaran’ has been imaginary, fragmented and absurd, both as a historical and geographical term, particularly with the unclear history it possessed, therefore it was a paradox to imagine the term as a unity or a ‘wholeness’. Therefore, one could not see Nusantara Architecture as a representation of a ‘wholeness’ for architectural identity in Indonesia, as what was strikingly apparent for him was the constant changes (*keniscayaan keberubahan*) and the inevitable foreign influence on architecture in Indonesia. Purnomo emphasised that architecture was only a tip of an iceberg that sat on top of layers of historical, social and political structures that, most of the time, were unacknowledged. Seeing architecture in Indonesia, he added, one needed to see the particularity of each region and build from the local people’s everyday culture and activities. With the intense romanticism showed in the current movement of Nusantara Architecture, Purnomo sharply questioned: “how can we become very resistant to the thing we have [i.e the contemporary modern life]? And what is it that we think we actually have?” (A. Purnomo 2017, pers. comm., 3 October).

Interestingly, Indra and Purnomo are two of the architects that preferred to use the term ‘Indonesian Architecture’, instead of ‘Nusantaran Architecture’. Although they see both as labels, they mentioned that they opted for Indonesian Architecture as it offered a more apparent context of nationhood with its lucid history of struggles, from the time of Dutch colonialism to the contemporary, post-independence time. Purnomo mentioned that the conception of “Indonesian Architecture is easier to be grasped, as we agree that idea of Indonesia itself was collectively constructed” (A. Purnomo 2017, pers. comm., 3 October). This standpoint was different from supporters of Nusantara Architecture that see the conception of Nusantara as given and treat it as ‘the truth’. With positioning Indonesia as something constructed, it opened the possibility of questioning and problematising any ideas that were attached to it, including the term Indonesian Architecture. With the complexity that surrounded the term, and with the contested definition and understanding, Indonesian Architecture, therefore, would never work within a finite conclusion. In this case, Indra problematised the tendency of synthesising the conception to a ‘definite’ conclusion. He mentioned:

“[We] do not need a conclusion. [The problem is] Indonesian people are used to making conclusions. ...architecture is a process. ... Just call it Indonesian Architecture. ... What is the Indonesian Architecture? [It is] everything [architecture] that is present in Indonesia, regardless of good or bad. No need to draw a [definite] conclusion, just call it Indonesian Architecture” (A. Indra 2018, pers. comm., 1 September).

Indra referred to Indonesia as a nation that has a specific territory, therefore in ‘defining’ what Indonesian Architecture was, he zoomed out to the overall area of the country and saw every

architecture that has been built inside that territory and called it Indonesian Architecture. A similar perspective was also proposed by Achmad Tardiyana, who also preferred Indonesian Architecture instead of Nusantara Architecture. He argued that Indonesian Architecture should be understood as a contested understanding and not as an attempt to come to an 'identity' construction since the conception of 'Indonesia-ness' itself has not been understood completely. Aligned with Indra's argument, Tardiyana agreed to see the conception based on the geographical territory of the country, but with a temporal extension in his explanation. He mentioned:

"...call it Indonesian Architecture [which is the architecture that presents] since [the country's] independence, since the name of Indonesia was officially used. That is Indonesian Architecture, ... since Indonesia got its freedom. Why should one change [the name of] Indonesia to be Nusantara? ... [The name of] Indonesia is more neutral, even [if] the name was not given by [an] Indonesian" (A. Tardiyana 2017, pers. comm., 2 October).

This stance expressed the inclusivity of the conception of Indonesian Architecture, as the broad geographical and temporal context referred opened to a more comprehensive interpretation of the conception, although some might see it as too broad and too vague, just as unclear as the term Nusantara Architecture itself.

Through analysis, there are at least three ways of seeing the conception of Indonesian Architecture, and each comes with its entailed problems. First is to see Indonesian Architecture as the 'architecture in Indonesia', meaning that it refers to 'Indonesia' as a geographical term; hence its architecture is whatever is located in that specific territory. Yet this perspective raises a question whether if the architecture is designed by foreign architects, or designed by directly copying 'imported' styles from outside Indonesia is it still to be called Indonesian. Second is to see Indonesian Architecture as the 'architecture designed by Indonesians', hence seeing Indonesian people as representative of the conception of 'Indonesia' itself. This understanding, however, does not create a boundary of the place if the design is located outside the country. It might also need more specification of who would be called 'Indonesian'. Third, the most intricate yet most referred to, is to see Indonesian Architecture as a conception to represent national identity: as a representation of the nationhood in the eyes of its citizens and its neighbouring countries. In this mode of understanding, the term is seen more as an image conception, a mind-frame that does not necessarily refer to an actual object, yet instead, it picturises the 'ideal' form of identity construction that represents the characteristics of the country. This perspective of the term is the most problematic compared to the previous two, as there will be a severe challenge of relativism and complexity to stabilise the term. The term Indonesian Architecture as an identity construction hitherto stands on a shaky foundation that might not be firm, since any stability might involve a pragmatic dissection of the term from the broader social-political context that

would reduce the inclusivity of the term, hence it is problematic to be claimed as an identity representation.

With no rigid conception of the term, contemporary architects then put forward their interpretation in the way they design. In this case, Indonesian Architecture was proposed to respond to the broader context beyond the site where the building was located. Therefore, the context should have been seen both as: (1) a physical and environmental condition of the immediate surroundings of the site; and (2) an intangible situation in the area that comprised the social, political and economic problems. Tardiyana mentioned that, as an urban designer, he had a strong bias to see the problem of the city to start with the project. An everyday life problem became his way in to design, and how his architecture could contribute to the city space. Ecology, accessibility, conductivity, shared-space and city movement were some points that he brought up as part of his design considerations. He believed that dealing with these problems was “a representation of Indonesia-ness” and an expression of ‘being Indonesian’ “without the need to formalise [the conception] under the discussion of culture ... [and] without the burden of historical [narration]” (A. Tardiyana 2017, pers. comm., 2 October). Similarly, Purnomo also proposed to see the immediate surroundings as the starting point of design. Delving into the city’s masterplan, maintaining the spirit of building the city and its people and creating public places for people were some of his approaches in design. He emphasised that there was no need to purposefully construct the idea of identity in this sense, as identity was how other people see what we do on an everyday basis, as “the more [one] tried to find and construct [his] identity [representation], the further [one] became with [his] ‘actual’ identity” (A. Purnomo 2017, pers. comm., 3 October).

VII.3. Translating Nusantara Architecture into built form

Designing in the specific context of Indonesia requires the architects to interpret the context that leads to specific design ‘solutions’. With the ‘black box’ nature of architectural design, the architects have an opportunity to exercise with the broad contextual problems, but their subjectivity leads their predilections in the process and the translations become very divergent. In this case, agreement or disagreement is expected, and further discussion is required.

The previous section has displayed the variations in the way Indonesian architects responded to the conception of Nusantara Architecture. Some agreed to it and fully supported the term; some disagree and leaned towards a conception of Indonesian Architecture instead; some chose a neutral

position as they considered both merely as 'labels'. What is particularly interesting is that regardless of the positions and inclination they chose, they talked about the same thing in terms of design considerations. Local context was what they all referred to, and the way they translated the local context was not very different from one another. For this reason, in discussing the local context in this section, I use the terms 'Indonesian Architecture' and 'Nusantaran Architecture' rather loosely, as in this particular case, in the designerly perspective, they refer to the same things. However, although the two terms might be interchangeable in some senses and the specificity of these terms might get loose in the way the architects perceive them, I tend to use the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' to follow the topic of this research.

Based on the interviews, this section discusses the contextual aspects that are considered 'important' by Indonesia's prominent architects. Capturing how often and how comprehensive are the aspects discussed by the interviewees, the arrangement of the elaboration below follows the sequence from the most talked-about to the least, to see some patterns of the most common concerns in concretising the abstract idea of Indonesia Architecture or Nusantara Architecture into built form. There are five aspects discussed in this section: tropical climate; local materials and craftsmanship; traditional culture; contemporary culture; and nature and ecology. Each aspect is critically analysed to grasp a better understanding of the common pragmatic views that architects employed in their design. The discussion also delves into some buildings in Indonesia that might fall into each category, as examples of how Indonesian architects render the concept of 'Indonesia-ness' and 'Nusantara-ness' into built form. Moreover, it is crucial to highlight that when I refer to the term 'Indonesian architects' or 'contemporary architects' in the following discussion, I only refer to the contemporary Indonesian architects that I interviewed, with no intention to generalise it. The discussion that this study offers might help in the unfolding of how some architects think about contextual design and how they make selections for design translation.

VII.3.1. Tropical climate

When asked about the most important aspect to deal with in designing in the Indonesian context, most architects, if not all, seemed to have particular attention to the tropical climate as the ultimate shaper of buildings. As the first and foremost consideration of the context, they indicated that Indonesian Architecture was inherently tropical architecture. Indonesia's position on the equator, which stretches from 6.08°N to 11.15°S and 94.45°E to 141.05°E (Hartawan, 2011, p. 2), brings specific consequences in terms of natural conditions, having only two seasons: dry and rainy. The intense

rainfall of more than 2,000 millimetres per year (Römer, 2017) shapes the essential requirement of a sloping roof with a wide overhang that wraps around the building. This climatic context has been dealt with continually, even since the time of traditional architecture, albeit with variations, and the response to this environmental condition has been inherited and inserted in people's primordial consciousness (Widiastuti, 2014, p. 9). Prijotomo's conception of Nusantara Architecture itself draws from the characteristics of tropical climate (see Chapter V.3 for elaboration on Prijotomo's idea on Nusantara Architecture). With the idea of taking shelter, the concern is hence not with the wall but the roof that creates a shaded living space. The questions of 'how big the roof is' and 'how wide the overhang is' become significant variables in discussing Nusantara Architecture (Bakhtiar et al., 2014, p. 40). Contemporary architects seemed to agree with this conception and further exercise it, although the steep roofing requirement has been challenged and deconstructed to follow recent stylistic trends.

The significance of tropical climate for architecture in Indonesian was accentuated in the 2015 Frankfurt Book Fair at the German Museum of Architecture (DAM), where Indonesia was invited as the Guest of Honour. Curated by Avianti Armand and Setiadi Sopandi in collaboration with DAM's director, Peter Cachola Schmal, the exhibition took a title of 'Tropicality Revisited' and scrutinised the role of tropical climate in shaping people's living culture and tradition in Indonesia (Wright, 2015). Through this exhibition, the curators tried to broaden people's perception of tropical architecture, that:

"The attempt and attitude toward the tropical climate are not limited to providing shelter from sun-heat and rain 'problems' ... yet it also encompasses creative and artistic ideas of how the architect performs: accepting rain, manipulating light, dissipating humidity, taking shelter under the shades, constructing envelope, creating slits, cooling the shades, and letting breeze seep through the corner of the room" (Hartanto, 2017).

In this case, the curators emphasised that the tropical climate was a starting point of creativity instead of a limitation of design. They challenged the common stereotypes of tropical architecture, like steep sloping roofs and big overhanging eaves, through the series of case studies exhibited, and argued that tropical architecture was not merely a label with series of conditions and requirements that can be check-listed to determine if a building fell into this label. By positioning it as a subject for discussion, tropical architecture was thus contested and was inclusive of any 'anomalies' that were different from the typical. This analytical approach offered a different perspective compared with Prijotomo's understanding, and provided divergent viewpoints that have been accepted by contemporary Indonesian architects. Between the two contrasting groups, Prijotomo's stance was particularly popular for giving a list of 'prescriptions' of what to consider in designing tropical Nusantara

Architecture, a clear guidance that was seen as favourable for architects' pragmatism; while Armand and Sopandi's perspective might be seen as a liberating way to free architecture from an understanding that was closed and restrictive.

With no extreme weather conditions that might pose a threat to the people, some architects find it necessary to challenge the separation between the indoor and the outdoor part of the house. Blurring the borderline between being inside and outside has been a frequent exercise in many of the designs, while still capturing the particular characteristic of Indonesian people who tend to avoid direct contact with the sunlight. In this case, providing a shaded gathering area, for instance, is a fair bargain of being outdoor yet still feel protected. Andra Matin, one of Indonesia's prominent architects, tried to translate this concept in his own house, the AM House, located in Bintaro, South Jakarta (Figure 21). He designed a semi-outdoor open living, dining and kitchen area as the central gathering place on the first floor. The way Matin designed the common area reminds us of a traditional way of living where "the inhabitants spent little time inside the house during the day, and that other space - the sheltered area beneath the house, ... complemented the enclosed space of the house and form an essential extension of it" (Waterson, 1990, p. 32). In this house, the design of the bedrooms, both the master bedroom that is placed on a narrow mezzanine and the children's bedrooms that resemble small single-loaded cubicles, indicates that a bedroom is just a place to sleep and suggests that other activities should be done outside the bedroom. All the bedrooms are seal-tight and air-conditioned, yet by minimising the bedroom sizes, he reduced the need for the air conditioner to the minimum. Locating a shared bathroom on one end of the house, instead of making an ensuite or jack-and-jill bathroom, for instance, also indirectly pushes the occupants to go out of the bedroom. The configuration of the bedrooms and bathroom creates better chances for social interaction among people in the house, and the shaded terrace is the main place to facilitate the meet ("AM-House," n.d.; "Sleeping Like in a Hut," 2015). Moreover, Avianti Armand writes an article about this house:

"Preoccupied with the idea of spending more time outside in this tropical climate, ... [Matin's] design showcases his mission to prove that we can have a tropical living experience with modern form, material and tectonics; the house is a manifestation of Matin's expectations of weather, as well as his expression and experimentation. ... Timber ramps and timber-paved platforms are fluidly interconnected without clear boundaries defining sheltered and unsheltered areas" (Armand, 2018, p. 118).

Armand's appreciation of this house emphasises the peculiarity of this house to serve almost all activities in the semi-outdoor space, something that is very rare to find especially in Jakarta's housing trend. She also underlines the space sequence of this house, offering a fascinating cinematic journey when people walk on the continuous ramps. This house seems to be an interesting, yet uncommon,

exercise in fusing the modern look with tropical weather, while maintaining the richness of the architectural space.

This design, however, displays a paradox that in order to make people gather in the outdoor living room, the bedrooms have to be made as narrow, hence uncomfortable, as possible. The children's bedroom is more like a closet rather than a bedroom, similar to a unit in a capsule hotel. The space provided is tiny. The master bedroom is also tiny, only a little wider than a king-size bed. This design does not allow the occupants to do their activities inside, hence forces them to go out. It means the occupants are expected to sacrifice their comfort in their private spaces in order to make them utilise the living room. This condition raises the question that if people need to be 'forced' to gather outside, will they still gather in the outdoor living room if they are provided with decent comfort in the bedroom? If they will not, then does it mean that the 'ideal' traditional living culture, to gather outside on a shaded area, as Prijotomo suggests, no longer exists among contemporary city people, particularly Jakartans? If it no longer exists, should architecture still push people to do something that they are not comfortable with? Furthermore, there is a suspicion that the merged indoor-outdoor living in this design requires a trade-off in terms of comfort, especially since Jakarta's hot and humid condition is not the most comfortable condition to live in. This is shown in how the Jakartans prefer to have air conditioners at home, or prefer to go to shopping malls as they provide air-conditioned comfort, creating a sense that nature, or in this case the weather, "is commonly regarded as a threat" (Armand, 2018, p. 118). This might bring a question of comfort regarding Matin's open living room that, despite the many ceiling fans provided, people would not have the advantage of adjusting their surrounding comfort to their liking. As we understand from the principles of sustainable development, in order to create a successful green building, trade-offs are indeed inevitable, yet architects should not sacrifice too much the occupants' comfort for the sake of achieving the goal, as it might only receive people's suspicion and scepticism (Ashkenas, 2012). Building with sustainable development means "creating living conditions that are ecologically compatible, economically acceptable and which give users' needs top priority", and this is something mostly forgotten when architects only focus on the environmental dimension, causing green buildings to receive "some negative attitudes and perceptions" from the occupants (Mansour & Radford, 2014, p. 41). Thus, further study is needed to analyse how Matin's design works for the occupants and how the trade-off of not having an active cooling system affects the everyday life to help objectively analyse the success rate of this building.



Figure 21. Andra Matin designs a living and dining area under a shade with no walls, creating an indoor-outdoor living
Source: Studio Andra Matin, 2013 (reprinted with permission)

Among the elements of the tropical climate, like sunlight, temperature and humidity, it is the heavy rainfall that constantly becomes a challenge to the people. Rainwater, as building's worst enemy, is a 'threat' that may cause various damages to the building, from damp and mould; to the decay of the materials; to the deterioration of the facade. However, instead of protecting the building from the rainwater, some contemporary architects intentionally make use of the rainwater to help them create a certain look to their building. The rainwater is expected to bring natural dilapidation to the

appearance of the building, that moulds, watermarks and any discolourations are expected as part of the design, and all these changes are an enrichment to the design itself. In some projects, mould and overgrown vegetation on the walls are used to give a distinct characteristic to the building and create a stronger sense of being outdoors and unified with nature. Adi Purnomo's design displays this approach, as in the *Sithowati* House, he incorporated material imperfection caused by a natural process as a 'natural' aesthetic element (Figure 22). The architect was confident when explaining to his client how the building would turn out in time after constant exposure to the rain and direct sunlight. He explained that "the wood will rot, the brick walls will be covered with moss, plants will be allowed to run riot, and large areas will be covered by moving water" ("Greening the City," 2013). Since the worn and scruffy look was what he was after in this project, therefore rainwater was no longer seen as a menace, but as an essential part of the design without which the intended look would not be achieved. This design is an experiment that might not be popular among clients. It is the opposite of most clients' purpose when hiring architects, as they might expect to get the best-polished design instead of a humble and worn look building. Moreover, the maintenance issue would be another reason for not choosing to go with this approach. Yet regardless of the pros and cons, Purnomo's design has successfully integrated the element of climate as part of the architectural design without making it artificial. Although it is the look of the building that was pursued in incorporating rainwater, yet this approach offers a different method compared to the literal and ocular-centric translation.



Figure 22. Adi Purnomo's design that incorporates rainwater as part of the design

Source: Christian Schaulin, courtesy of Habitus Living, 2013 (reprinted with permission)

In another project, Purnomo tried to capture the characteristic of tropical sunlight by experimenting with the movement of the sun. He tried to incorporate the sun's changing patterns as the key element of the design in *Studio Cahaya* (The Light Studio) project (Figure 23). The idea to play with the light came as an attempt to accommodate the owner who was a photographer, painter and sculptor; thus light was essential for his work. Purnomo studied the sun's movement on the equator year-round and found some repetitive angles on a temporal basis, and did further experiments to find out how far the sunlight could penetrate the building. The design becomes a blank canvas for shades and shadows orchestrated by putting simple objects on a glass roof, creating a pattern of shadows to the interior wall. As the pattern changes over time in a day, this building possesses a dynamic that relies on the presence of the sun to create the interior ambience, therefore the sun is an inseparable design feature of this house. Purnomo's designs display the architect's progressive way to respond to the tropical climate and deconstruct the established presumption to avoid contact with direct sunlight and rainwater in a building. Instead of following the 'conservative' rule of tropical houses, with sloping roofs, wide eaves and merging indoor-outdoor living, Purnomo pushed the boundary of making contemporary tropical architecture. What is worth noting here is that he did rigorous design research

before the design process, so whatever came up as a result, it embodied the comprehensive thinking process instead of just pursuing a skin-deep physical aesthetic. Purnomo's research-based design sometimes comes as bold, peculiar and not everyone's cup of tea, yet regardless of the result, this design approach is what should be expected from Indonesian architects, that architecture is beyond beautification and there should be deeper thinking behind every design.



Figure 23. Studi-O Cahaya is an example of making sunlight as an integral part of the design

Source: Mamostudio, 2009 (reprinted with permission)

In contemporary Indonesia, although the tropical climate has got the most attention in making contextual architecture, yet the architects' understanding of this feature and their willingness to explore wider possibilities in this issue varies from one to another. Prominent architects have the privilege to make experiments and explorations, while other, 'less famous' architects might struggle bargaining over clients' demands. As sometimes the architects' and clients' expectation are opposite to each other, the challenge would be to make the best compromise of the two forces. The tropical climate has always been a dominant natural context for living in Indonesia, therefore it is reasonable

to say that dealing with tropical climate is the root of Nusantara (or Indonesian) Architecture (Widiastuti, 2014, p. 3). The response of tropical climate is even cultural, and in a way creating a 'climatic other', as Nihal Pererra suggests that:

“As Rapoport has demonstrated, people's responses to the climate is cultural; it is built upon the choices they make within the possibilities they see, and this is a significant process that shapes buildings, their internal spaces, appearance, and uses” (Perera, 2010, p. 76).

VII.3.2. Local materials

The second aspect of local context that Indonesian architects deemed important was the incorporation of local materials and local craftsmanship. In terms of craftsmanship, Indonesian traditional houses typically have a post-and-lintel structure, wooden or bamboo walls, and thatched roofs that are built on stilts (except for Java and Bali) using mortise and tenon techniques with pegs and wedges instead of nails (Dawson & Gillow, 1994, p. 10; Waterson, 1990). This construction method requires specific craftsmanship skills in building, assembling, and, in some cases, disassembling the houses, and this is where local material becomes an intrinsic part of the architecture.

The idea of local material as part of Indonesian identity was brought up in the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale where Indonesia presented a theme of Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness (*Ketukangan: Kesadaran Material*) to exhibit the country's 100 years history (see Chapter IV.3 for further elaboration on the exhibition as a way for the country to represent itself to the international audiences). This exhibition was a legitimization of the importance of local materials in Indonesian architectural discourse and treated them as an integral part of the idea of local architecture. Achmad Tardiyana, as one of the curators, mentioned that the exhibition scrutinised local material not only as physical objects but also as extensions and manifestations of the local culture and wisdom. This also investigated craftsmanship not only as construction activity but also as an intrinsic part of the local knowledge that carried values in the society (A. D. Tardiyana 2017, pers. comm., 2 October). Craftsmanship was then seen as an intertwined connection between material and culture that was almost impossible to detach. Roxana Waterson (1990), in her book *The Living House*, gives opening remarks emphasizing the inseparable connection between architecture and its social and symbolic function. Throughout the book, she displayed that almost every part of the traditional house, from its structural choices to its shapes and decorations, possessed meanings from the culture of its creators and inhabitants (Waterson, 1990). Symbols themselves are an embodiment of an abstract and philosophical story behind the architecture (Rusnandar, 2015, p. 98). Romo Mangun, an Indonesian

highly respected humanist and architect, gives similar emphasis, that every building has both *guna* (the use) and *citra* (the image). *Guna* is more about the physical and technical aspects of the building, while *citra* is closer to the culture and meaning of the architecture, and the two are interweaved as a unity (Mangunwijaya, 2013, p. 54).

Lawrence Vale (2008) throughout his book *Architecture, Power and National Identity* emphasizes architecture's position is a product of both social and cultural conditions, yet the symbolic meanings need to be analyzed from its political and cultural context that helped to bring the architecture into being. In this case, he emphasizes that the meaning of a building sometimes has nothing to do with the architecture itself, yet, in many cases, it is an effect of some historical, political or cultural events (Vale, 2008, pp. 3-6). Therefore, it is crucial to note that architecture is never a neutral entity, as it always expresses aspects of political, social, economic, and culture of the context (Goodman, 1985, p. 649). Moreover, Harold Proshansky (1976) notes the connection of architecture and the complexity of the human being in a social-psychological form. In dealing with the character and behaviour of human being, the simple cause-and-effect relationship principle should no longer be employed, as this method fails to capture the intricate connection between the built environment and human experience. He argues that "there is no physical setting that is not also a social and cultural setting" (Proshansky, 1976, p. 308), and architecture is thus inseparable from its social-cultural value. For this reason, he suggests switching the research method from explanatory to descriptive, following Bruno Latour's idea in understanding social phenomena, highlighting the relativity of the research on temporal and contextual base. With time and context (place) becoming the crux of social-psychology, he argues that there is nothing in human-related study that can be considered fixed. He elaborates his opinion:

"... whatever generalisations emerge must be viewed in the context of the social structure and social process that defines our present society. As that context changes, not only will those so-called general principles no longer be applicable, but future researchers will have to identify the essential characteristics of the changing society in order to derive a new set of principles. For me, environmental psychology is a socio-historical behavioural science ... What it finds today may have little consequence for our society 100 years from now" (Proshansky, 1976, p. 310).

For this reason, sterilising architecture from the human factors as its creators and users is impossible, especially in the discussion of local material and craftsmanship whose position is very close to people's everyday life in Indonesia's local architecture. Therefore in the following discussion, instead of discussing the quantitative and tangible quality of each material, I analyse each local material from how it is used and accepted by locals, including its social and cultural consequences.

Timber

Among many local materials, timber has been recorded as the oldest material used and is considered as the basic and the most common construction material for traditional houses in Indonesia. This material reached its golden age at the time when traditional houses were still the primary living place in the society (Armand et al., 2014, p. 25; Forestyana, 2014, p. 75). Indonesian architects have long incorporated timber as one significant element in architectural design, either as part of a structural component or decorative element. Eko Prawoto, a Yogyakarta architect, utilized timber as a material which people were familiar with when he took part in the recovery process after an earthquake hit Yogyakarta on 27 May 2006. Bantul Village was a region that received the worst impact. Most houses and roads were destroyed. Prawoto then designed a basic timber frame structure that could easily be multiplied according to the expected size of the house, and the simplicity of the design made it possible to be constructed by the locals in a short period (Figure 24). Coconut timber was chosen as a main structure of the house for its strength and availability on-site, while other parts of the house used salvaged materials from the ruins. By *gotong royong* (working together), local people managed to build 65 houses in 3 months with construction cost per house only 10 million rupiahs or less than USD 700. This project not only rebuilt the village's physical condition, but also restored people's esteem as they developed social connections throughout the process, and for this achievement, the project was shortlisted in the Aga Khan Award Cycle 2008-2010. Although it was an emergency response that was not intended to be a permanent solution, today, after more than ten years of the project, local people still live in these houses and have developed and expanded them to facilitate their growing need (AKDN, n.d.-a, pp. 45-46; Galih Widjil Pangarsa, 2008). This project illustrated that the material choices could create a wider impact on the community, that the simplicity of the construction process allowed the locals to get involved in the process with the limited tools they had. People's participation would not have been as high if the architect chose to use modern materials, like steel frame for instance, since the locals would not have the capacity to work with such materials without some specific skills and equipments. Choosing timber opened an opportunity for social participation, and it is evidence that local materials carry a connection with the social and cultural aspect of the community.



Figure 24. Eko Prawoto's design in Ngibikan Village after earthquake
Source: Arsvitananto Wijaya, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

Aside from building structure, timber can also be used to make decorative elements that can look either rustic and humble, or polished and extravagant. Stella Maris Church at North Jakarta uses timber as an aesthetic element to create a sense of opulence yet is modest at the same time (Figure 25). The architect, Budiman Hendropurnomo, among the most frequent awardees in the history of IAI Awards (*IAI AWARDS - Sebuah Perjalanan*, 2015), used timber to create warmth and softness in contrast with the hard natural stone on the façade, embodying the analogy of a womb, which was hard and strong on the outside but warm and sacred in the inside. He designed wall-to-ceiling curvaceous layers of teak (*jati*) that covers almost the whole interior surface of the nave, using smaller pieces of timber arrayed in patterns and put small gaps between each wood piece to allow sunlight to peek inside. The wood element created intimacy in such a big room, although some people might question the sensitivity of the architect to use that much timber just for the sake of visual appearance. The modern and extravagant look of this building was criticized by the church's senior members, as "they preferred Gothic-centric designs that were evident in most traditional churches, such as the Jakarta Cathedral" (Budiman, 2015). Despite the objections, the look of this church and the ambience

created inside has attracted new people to come, particularly the young. This project was shortlisted in the 2015 World Architecture Festival for category Best Religious Building and received 2015 Commendation for Interior Architecture from Australian Institute of Architects (Budiman, 2015; "Commendation for Interior Architecture," 2015; MajalahAsri, 2015).

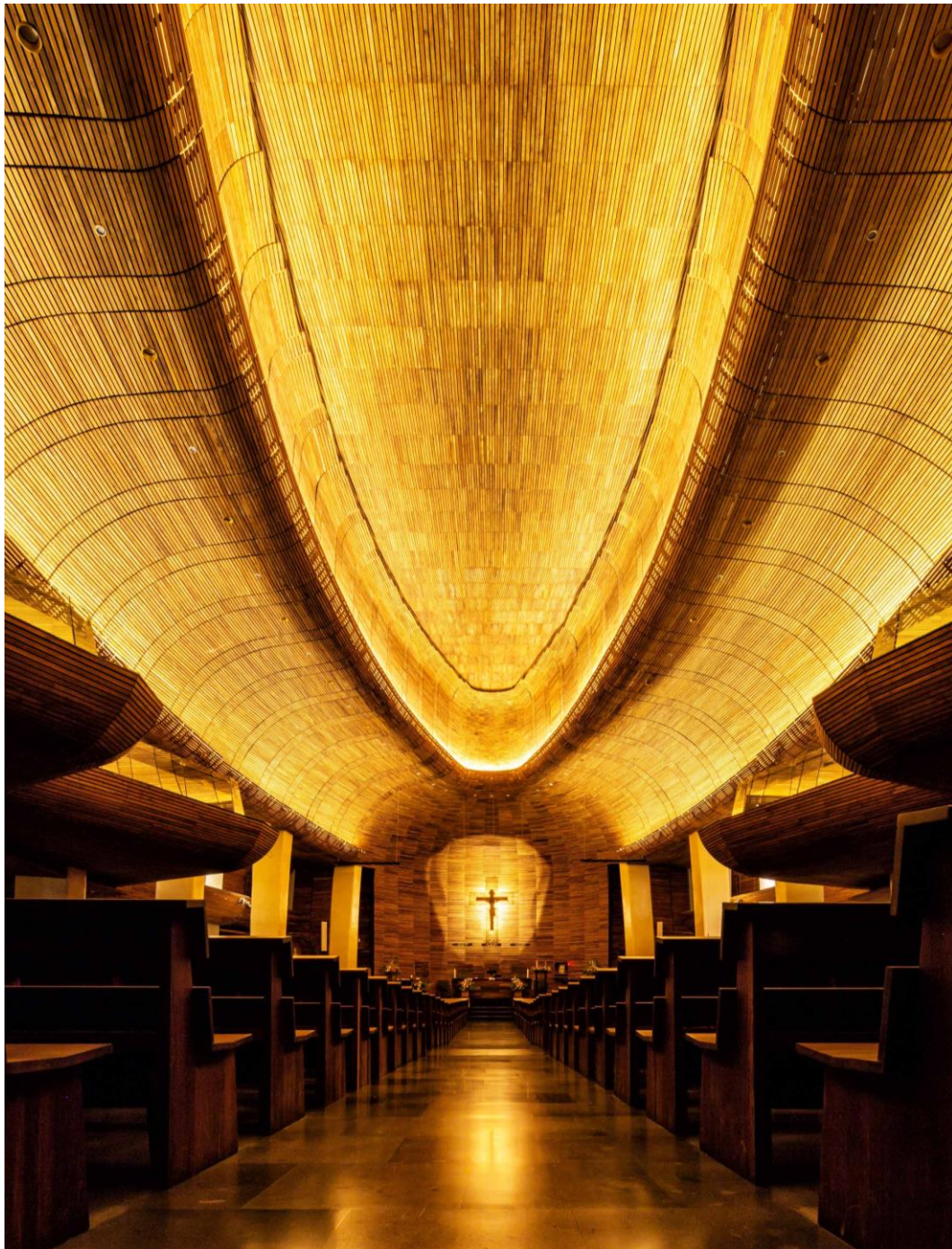


Figure 25. Stella Maris Church uses teak wood to create a warm ambience of the nave
Source: Gunarto Song, 2020 (reprinted with permission)

The two examples above show the versatility of timber as a building material. Different to some other materials that can only be associated with limited social class, like marble or steel, for instance, timber can adjust itself to both low and upper-class building. In the case of both buildings, timber material was successful in stimulating human connection, although it came in very different ways: Bantul Village project stimulated local people's social interaction during the construction process; while Stella Maris Church employed the visual appeal of the wooden nave to attract people for worship together. As timber is one of the characteristics of Nusantara Architecture (Priyotomo, 2017, p. 76), the two examples elucidate the variation and expansion in how local material was approached by the architects, although there will be no set of criteria to determine if any of the two projects is more 'Nusantaran Architecture' than the other. One can argue that the idea of timber as a local material is more comprehensible and essential in the Ngibikan Village project, as Prawoto chose the material based on his observations on site. It is a distinctive approach compared to Hendropurnomo's project located in Jakarta, a city with no forest or wood sources nearby, so the idea of timber as a local material was based more on an assumption. It brings up the question of 'what is local material' in the first place, and how to determine if one material is local. Regardless of the approach, the two projects depict the development of contemporary craftsmanship Indonesia, and architects might stretch the idea of local materials to different directions.

Bamboo

Bamboo is also a common material in Indonesia's traditional houses, yet its contemporary usage was not popular until recently. From around 1.250 types of bamboo in the world, 159 types are from Indonesia (Mayasari & Suryawan, 2012, p. 140), and only a few that are known by Indonesian people. Albeit the potential development, there has been an assumption associating bamboo with the poor, mainly because people in the village might use raw bamboo without any prior treatment that causes dullness in the look and makes it vulnerable to parasitic insects, and so is seen as a low-quality building material. However, in the early 2010s, when the issue of sustainable development emerged, the idea of green architecture became a popular topic, and bamboo gained in significance as an alternative, sustainably resourced material. Bamboo is considered as 'the material of the future', not only for its faster growth compared to other natural materials but also for its strong yet light-weighted character, very versatile in term of possible utilization.



Figure 26. A training centre for organic agriculture in Parung Bogor, an example of design exploration on bamboo
Source: Kamil Muhammad, 2017 (reprinted with permission)

Since that boom of the sustainability discourse, bamboo has captured the attention of Indonesian architects who have started to incorporate this material both for aesthetic decoration and for the main structural system. A recently completed project in Parung, West Java, gives an example of the architects' sensitivity to maximize the material potency available on the site. Kamil Muhammad and Brahmastyo Puji, two emerging Indonesian architects, designed a training centre for organic agriculture on land owned by the NGO Urban Poor Consortium (Figure 26). With a limited budget, the architects chose bamboo as the main structure of the hall, where 90% of the bamboos used were harvested on-site. Other materials, including coconut tree boards and palm sugar leaves (*rumbia*) for the roof, were acquired from within 2km radius. The material chosen for the building, especially the bamboo structure, was "a significant driver in engaging the community" (Puji, 2017). This project was an opportunity to explore the otherwise underrated material and became a suitable platform to introduce its potential to the local people. During the construction process, the architects conducted a workshop inviting local community and students from Parahyangan University to disseminate the

knowledge and skill of how to use bamboo, from its preservation process prior to usage to the installation process. Moreover, in creating a centrepiece of the hall, the architects, with the collaboration with Parahyangan University and Architecture Sans Frontières Indonesia (ASF-ID) experimented with a bamboo hyperboloid system as the main structure. This system replaced the need for supporting columns in the middle of the building while providing an aesthetic element. With its modest look, the building provided a shared space that was approachable for the locals and versatile enough to accommodate people's activities. The design itself has some flaws that caused rainwater leakage, and for a temporary solution, people put additional tarpaulin layer under the *rumbia* leaves. As an on-going research project, the architects admitted that many problems were expected and evaluation and refinement were needed. They also intended to conduct another workshop for the locals about building maintenance. Their decision to keep using *rumbia* as roof cover after the problem appeared, instead of changing to a metal roof, for instance, shows the idealism of the architects in their commitment to local material exploration. In this case, the architects used bamboo as an instrument to engage people with the construction and maintenance process as part of their social contribution and created a sense of belonging for the building. This project received the Acknowledgement Prize for Growing Grassroots in Indonesia, at the Lafarge Holcim Awards 2017 Asia Pacific (Jek, 2018; Puji, 2017).

Another project used bamboo with more grandeur. The Great Hall of Outward Bound Indonesia (OBI) Eco Campus at Jatiluhur, West Java, shows the potency of bamboo for a long-span structural system (Figure 27). Designed by Andry Widyowijatnoko, a lecturer at Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), the Great Hall was a shaded multi-function gathering place that had an open ground floor and mezzanine that accommodated around 800 people standing. With the analogy of an upside-down boat, this hall was constructed using 8,000 bamboo poles, all of which were locally grown. The complexity of the design, the size of the building and the amount of bamboo used gave staggering effect to the people standing under its roof. Although the structural design did look complex, it was constructed with simple methods, as claimed by the architect, combining bolted joint and bamboo lashing techniques and did not require special craftsmanship. It is important to note that the architect was not involved during the construction process. Instead, the only communication between the architect and the worker was through the drawings (Widyowijatnoko & Aditra, 2018). It might be a sign that bamboo construction is not severely complicated that the common construction workers were able to get it done. What is interesting to discuss is that the construction process of the Great Hall followed a 'common' top-down process of architecture, a hierarchical instruction that went one way from the architect to the worker. In this case, the amplification of the social effect that was expected from local material usage, as we saw in the Parung project, did not happen in this project. Nevertheless, despite

the arguable contribution to the local people, this building is a bold statement that bamboo is not only for poor people. The fact that this building has been used as a venue of many prestigious events shows that bamboo can bring elegance and sophistication. This design was mentioned in ARCASIA Awards For Architecture 2016 in category Social/ Institutional Buildings.



Figure 27. The Great Hall of Outward Bound Indonesia (OBI) Eco Campus shows contemporary use of bamboo in architecture
Source: Andry Widyowijatnoko and Rakhmat F. Aditra, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

Local material and its social-historical context

Some of the examples I present in this section illustrate the intertwined relationship between the local material as a physical object and as a manifestation of local culture, hence not sterile, and the capacity to induce people to connect. Some local communities are equipped with a set of rules in identifying and understanding the local materials, that sometimes come in the form of mythical story and taboo. It is a manifestation of the nature of local Indonesian tradition, and even of South-East Asian tradition, that “ritual functions are inseparable from the house’s identity” (Waterson, 1990, p. 46). Barry Dawson and John Gillow (1994) argue that traditional architecture was developed “to cope not only with the climate and the natural hazards of the land but also with the intangible realms of animistic mythology” (Dawson & Gillow, 1994, p. 7). There is a layer of spirituality attached to every cultural tradition in Indonesia, shown in attachment to ancient spirits and to supernatural power. The traditional house itself “is not always primarily, or even at all, a place of residence” (Waterson, 1990, p. 43), but more a ritual site of the clan and family. The Nuaulu house of Seram, for instance, can be seen more as the place to put family heirlooms and sacred objects, hence is less to be seen as a place for humans, and as a place that allows the family to have rituals continuously, thus the house construction itself is never considered completed. Roy Ellen (1986) argues that:

“... numa mone is seldom complete. As with the suane, the clan ritual house takes many years of dedicated construction and ritual activity, and may often be repaired long before it is ritually complete. ... The building of the house is, therefore, one of the eternal ceremonial cycles and a focus of ritual which regulates the Nuaulu conception of time” (Ellen, 1986, p. 26).

In this sense, the house in the traditional community in Indonesia is often not merely functional as a dwelling place, but is a place of ritual for the whole clan. It explains why many traditional houses are still preserved by families, regardless of the high maintenance cost, only to be left locked and empty as no one lives in that house anymore. These houses act as a symbol of social prestige, ritual centre for the clan and “the source of an individual’s pride and feelings of identity”; and “it is these houses which individuals will name as ‘theirs’ even if they reside elsewhere” (Waterson, 1990, pp. 43-44).

Some scholars try to investigate connections between superstitious rituals and logical explanation. The house construction process in Java, for instance, requires a *Munggah Molo* ritual in putting up the top ridge of the roof frame, where the owner, with the help of the workers, climbs onto the roof, puts up the top ridge and hangs various things to bring good luck for the family. Regardless of the mysticism, some scholars believe that the ritual is practical to test the strength of the roof. People involved in the ritual need to go up and down the roof several times, and their weight and movement put the roof to the test of whether it has been built well enough (Priyotomo, 2017, pp. 62-63). This

custom was a method to challenge the skill of the craftsmen and the quality of the materials chosen at a time when knowledge and calculation of load force had not existed. In another community, the Sundanese *Kasepuhan Sinarresmi*, there is a rule to install timber columns in the same orientation as the tree grows, that the part of the wood closer to the root (*puhu*) should be on the bottom, while the part closer to the leaves or the twig (*congo*) should be on the top. It is a message to place something in the proper place where it belongs, and a metaphor of a strong mother (*puhu*) supporting the children (*congo*) (Rusnandar, 2015, pp. 102-103). In Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi, “house beams must always be arranged with their ‘root’ ends to the south, which is referred to in the *Sasean* area as the ‘root’ of the house” (Waterson, 1990, p. 34). The family heirloom is then placed on the southern-most area to ‘fertilize’ the root so that the ‘branches and leaves’ will grow strong and beautiful. In these cases, timber arrangement represents local people’s connection to the cosmos, to the surrounding nature, to the house’s ancestors. The column becomes a medium for storytelling, conveying meaning and messages way beyond its physical attributes and its function as a wood pillar.

Material choice in traditional architecture is beyond aesthetic consideration, as there is a further cultural implication expected from using a specific material. Choosing timber as the primary material for houses, for instance, is to make the house movable. In Javanese culture, there is a guideline book called *Primbon* that sets rules and instructions of not only how to build a house, but also how to move the house (Dawson & Gillow, 1994, p. 32; Prijotomo, 1995). In the Bugis tribe of South Sulawesi, the house-moving culture called *Mappalette Bola* is still preserved to the present time, carried out by sliding or lifting the house to the new place with help from the community (Figure 28). This ritual becomes a celebration as the owner will serve a feast for the people after the moving is done (Pratisto, 2017). In this case, the choice of timber material makes the house-moving process possible, and thus becomes a reason for the cultural rite’s presence. If the building material chosen was permanent, like brick, for instance, there will be no rituals related to house-moving, and a book like *Primbon* would not record anything related to house moving (Prijotomo, 1995). This aligns with Reimar Schefold’s argument that the traditional house plays a significant social role in bringing people together and strengthening the bond among community members. He addresses it as:

“The major uma ceremonies, performed collectively and with the greatest possible splendour, are an attempt to allay the constant threat of internal dissension and a consequent split; recurrent and strong emphasis on the necessity of remaining tightly-knit and close together shows clearly how disconcerting the possibility of the disintegration of the uma is to its members. ... Thus there is everywhere a recognizable effort to establish good social relations spontaneously and on an equal footing. Alliances secure the uma from outward dangers, ceremonies unite it against dangers from within” (Schefold, 1982, p. 127).

This explains that ritual tradition is not only spiritual but also social; and the house related ceremony is a medium to create social connection among people. In this case, the choice of the material for the house is, direct or indirectly, connected to the very existence of rituals like *Mappalette Bola*, hence an integral part of local culture itself.



Figure 28. The ritual of Mappalette Bola in South Sulawesi

Source: Candriko Pratisto, courtesy of Good News from Indonesia, 2017

Local materials thus have a much deeper layer of social, economic and spiritual connection than merely being about function and appearance. In contemporary Indonesia, Eko Prawoto, who dedicates himself to exploring Indonesia's local materials, argues that by incorporating local materials in a building, architects contribute to the attempt to preserve the sustainability of local skills and knowledge. Using local materials requires dialogues between the architect, the craftsman, and the construction worker, and it creates social interaction that is valuable in human relationships. Choosing local materials also means directing the funds to the local artisans and craftsmen instead of delivering it to the factories of the big-capital owners. For these reasons, Prawoto emphasises that using local materials means spreading the value of social alignment and bringing architecture that shares (E. Prawoto 2017, pers. comm., 10 October). With the tight connection between local materials and their

cultural impacts, it becomes impossible to see materials merely as physical objects, if not commodities, or to sterilize the discussion of local materials from its historical culture. Moreover, choosing local materials might also stimulate a sustainable design, particularly creating an interdependency between nature, as the source, and humans, as the users. Yu Sing argued that this mutual dependency was a key to sustainable development, as when people realised they needed nature, they would start to preserve it (Y. Sing 2017, pers. comm., 11 August). In this case, it is different from the green building concept that focuses on building performance. This kind of sustainability involves broader social aspects and requires the active participation of the community members.

The challenges

Indonesia's traditional architecture, most of the time, relates to something beyond logic, and it creates a distance between modern people and local culture. The urge to rationalise local culture, including its materials, forces the architect to use a method that detaches them from any meanings and cultural implications that used to be entailed by their physical presence. Aesthetic domination also reduces the local material usage to be only about the visual. Sudjar Adityadjaja, an architect from Makassar (South Sulawesi), admitted that in many of his designs, he incorporated local materials more as a decoration rather than as an essential part of the house. He mentioned that "when [he] uses timber, [it] would not be a timber wall, ... unlike the Torajan house that uses wood as a tectonic wall ... [since] the client only wants the artificial ... as patches ... [on a brick] wall behind it" (M. S. Adityadjaja 2018, pers comm., 4 September). He emphasized that it was the client's preference to avoid natural materials, that was probably related to the maintenance and decaying problem as inevitable consequences, particularly in the humid condition of the country.

Seeing a local material as a sterile visual object allows contemporary development to manufacture the fabricated or synthetic 'local material' that offers similar visual characteristic but is produced in a much faster time and with a much cheaper price tag. Choosing this faux material means having the same visual quality without dealing with the maintenance issue and the short life-cycle. With a higher supply ability, the availability of the product can be maintained that is particularly beneficial for construction works to run on time, and this can reduce the likelihood of unexpected additional budget. The standardized material also offers a constant strength and durability to ensure the quality of the building. The contemporary push to look for the highest efficiency leads some architects to shift to synthetic materials, albeit this choice is problematic. Chris Abel (2000) discusses the necessity of mass

production materials in this industrialized era. Instead of becoming a limitation, standardization helps architects in their creative process. Abel illustrates:

“... [the] rules for the industrialization of building [is]: standardization - with a limited number of sizes selected for their combinatorial value; and modular coordination - providing a numerical measure for determining those standard sizes. It was claimed that only in this manner could the variety be achieved which could facilitate mass production. Acceptance of such standards throughout the building industry is generally believed to make possible interchangeability of components and therefore increase the choice available to the designer” (Abel, 2000, pp. 5-6).

Abel’s scientific approach to architecture makes him emphasise that manufactured materials are unavoidable within today’s technology development. Therefore, he argues that constructing a conception of identity and social relationship might need to adjust to this context to adhere with the contemporary reality of fast development and industrialization. It is one bold view in seeing the contemporaneity of identity, and despite problematic and arguable, the argument aligns with the pragmatism and the practicality in architectural design.

Aside from that perspective, there is another view that highlights the importance of nurturing social and cultural relationships between humans, culture and nature through the use of local materials. Despite the advantages of using synthetic materials in architecture, it detaches architecture from its broader context and treats it merely as a spectacle, an object of display. Employing faux materials eliminates the interdependent relationship between humans and nature, and discourages people from creating a connection with their culture. Industrial materials also have a chain of supply where there will be no farmers and craftsmen needed. In this case, there will be a very minimal social impact by choosing this material and gives way for economic consideration to dominate. Leo Howe (2005) argues that when the two are put in tension, most of the time, culture succumbs, that “cultural values are exchanged for ... economic values” (Howe, 2005, p. 135). The need for time and cost efficiency threaten the presence of social-cultural connections embedded in the usage of local materials, and it is a challenge for the architects to find a balanced compromise between the two.

Interestingly, the development of synthetic and fabricated materials has opened a more extensive option for architects to convey their idea of being ‘local’, and even being ‘Indonesian’. Hendropurnomo used synthetic rattan for the Paskal 23 shopping mall design in Bandung; Tardiyana, in his conceptual design for a hotel in Ubud, incorporated synthetic webbing for the façade; Andra Martin employed fabricated laminated wood for an installation called Elevation in the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale. These new options become a ‘standardised’ option for local materials, although one can question to what extent these can be called ‘local’. Miranti Gumayana and Rubi Roesli used

synthetic rattan for the Indonesia Pavillion in the 2015 World Expo in Milan to extend the design concept inspired by a traditional Indonesian tool for fishing, Bubu Ikan. In this case, a synthetic material helped them in the project as “they had to choose a required material that suits Europe’s building standard but also reflected Indonesian culture ... [and] the natural rattan was not all-weather and did not pass the World Expo standard” (Viro, 2017). These cases pose a challenge for our understanding of: (1) what is local material; (2) what makes a material ‘local’; and (3) to what extent architects should stick with the natural material as ‘local’ material in design. It is a dilemma over an interrelation between the material, the human social aspects and the sustainable environment, and further discussion is needed to understand the compromise of the idealist idea of local material with the realist contemporary development.

VII.3.3. Traditional culture

Culture has been deemed to represent the ‘essence’ of the identity of the country. During the interview, architects showed their fascination with ‘culture’, but diversely: some associate it with traditional culture, particularly the supporters of Nusantara Architecture; some see it as a contemporary culture (which I discuss in the following section). In Indonesia, in general, the term ‘culture’ commonly means ‘traditional culture’, in such a way that the two become interchangeable, an effect of a prolonged political imposition of the second president of the country, Suharto (see Chapter IV.2 for a further historical explanation of the era of Suharto). In the discussion of Indonesian architectural identity, it is problematic to refer solely to traditional culture as even the rural vernacular culture has experienced modernisation in various levels of exposure (see Chapter V.4 for the dispute over referring to traditional culture for Indonesia’s architectural identity). Since culture is never a static entity and “is not a collection of relics or ornaments, but a practical necessity” (Adam, 2012, p. 199), thus what was there in the past is not always relevant for today’s context.

Although problematic, this traditionalist view is quite popular and widely accepted among Indonesian architects, particularly in making so-called contextual design where traditional architecture becomes a design repertoire. Yori Antar from Jakarta and Sudjar Adityadjaja from Makassar were two professional architects that showed fascination with traditional architecture as a representation of the country’s identity, although they admitted that they did not directly inject traditional values and philosophy into their contemporary designs. Both had an intense engagement with traditional communities, Antar with his Rumah Asuh, and Adityadjaja with his research into remote villages. Traditional culture, for them, had to be the main inspiration for architectural design, but they

conveyed it with totally different rhetoric: Antar proposed traditional architecture as opposed to ‘the modern West’; while Adityadjaja started with his passion for exploring the unrecorded story of traditional construction methods. In translating such ideas to contemporary design, Adityadjaja had a more literal adaptation of traditional forms and shapes. He openly showed appreciation over Suharto’s traditionalist approach as a sign that the government supported the development of traditional culture (M. S. Adityadjaja 2018, pers comm., 4 September). Antar, on the other hand, mentioned that he tried to find the nuance and the ‘soul’ instead of the physical, and he admitted that he “will always be a modern man, bringing cell phone and car everywhere, and [he] designs modern architecture” (Y. Antar 2017, pers. comm., 5 October). In this sense, Antar did not feel it was a burden to embed the languages of traditional architecture into his design, while Adityadjaja seemed to show a slight regret of not being able to bring traditional value further to his works.



Figure 29. The Central Library of the University of Indonesia at Depok

Source: Rafiqurrata A'yun, 2019 (reprinted with permission)

Budiman Hendropurnomo was another of the architects who repeatedly mentioned being inspired by traditional architecture, as he believed in the importance of expressing the ‘Indonesia-ness’ in his designs. He said that DCM Indonesia as a chained architecture firm group required him to socialise internationally among other DCM groups, where articulating and promoting the country’s identity became more relevant. On each design, he conveyed his version of ‘being Indonesian’ by linking the

design to the local stories or artefacts. Maya Ubud Hotel at Bali had a strong axis toward the sea that represented a Balinese philosophy in the story of the gods and the demons. Binus University at Malang was inspired by *candis* (temples) that were located around Malang, although this design has been changed from the previous proposal whose concept, as he claimed, came from the *Candi Tikus* and *Candi Waringin Lawang* (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September), two temples that interestingly were not located in Malang. The Central Library of the University of Indonesia at Depok (Figure 29) took a shape analogy of the *prasasti* (tablet of stone), an artefact on which knowledge and wisdom were written, although the building has experienced severe leaking problems and was questioned in terms of its propriety as it was too glamorous as a state university's library (Purwaningrum, 2019, p. 16). Alila Hotel at Solo (Figure 30), whose building form was inspired by the axis and hierarchical plan of the *Kasunanan* Palace, employed a gigantic *Selendang Solo*, a 40-meter batik decoration on an aluminium plate in the interior as "an identity element and a nuance shaper" of the hotel (Sunowo, 2016, pp. 91-92). Hendropurnomo represented his version of locality through design narrations enwrapping the modern building, and his fascination toward traditional culture has firmed his focus on creating a connection between his designs and the traditional elements, rather than to respond to the contemporary tensions in the immediate surroundings. He claimed that history was what he tried to incorporate, albeit it was his arbitrary understanding of the history itself. Yet it seemed that any translation of history was expected, as he mentioned that:

"If I am asked what Indonesian Architecture is, my answer is simple: anything that is made by us as Indonesian, and that is Indonesian Architecture. You have history, I have history, so whatever we make as Indonesian will be 'Indonesia'" (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September).

With such a statement, the arbitrariness and pragmatism of design were facilitated, regardless of the results and effects.

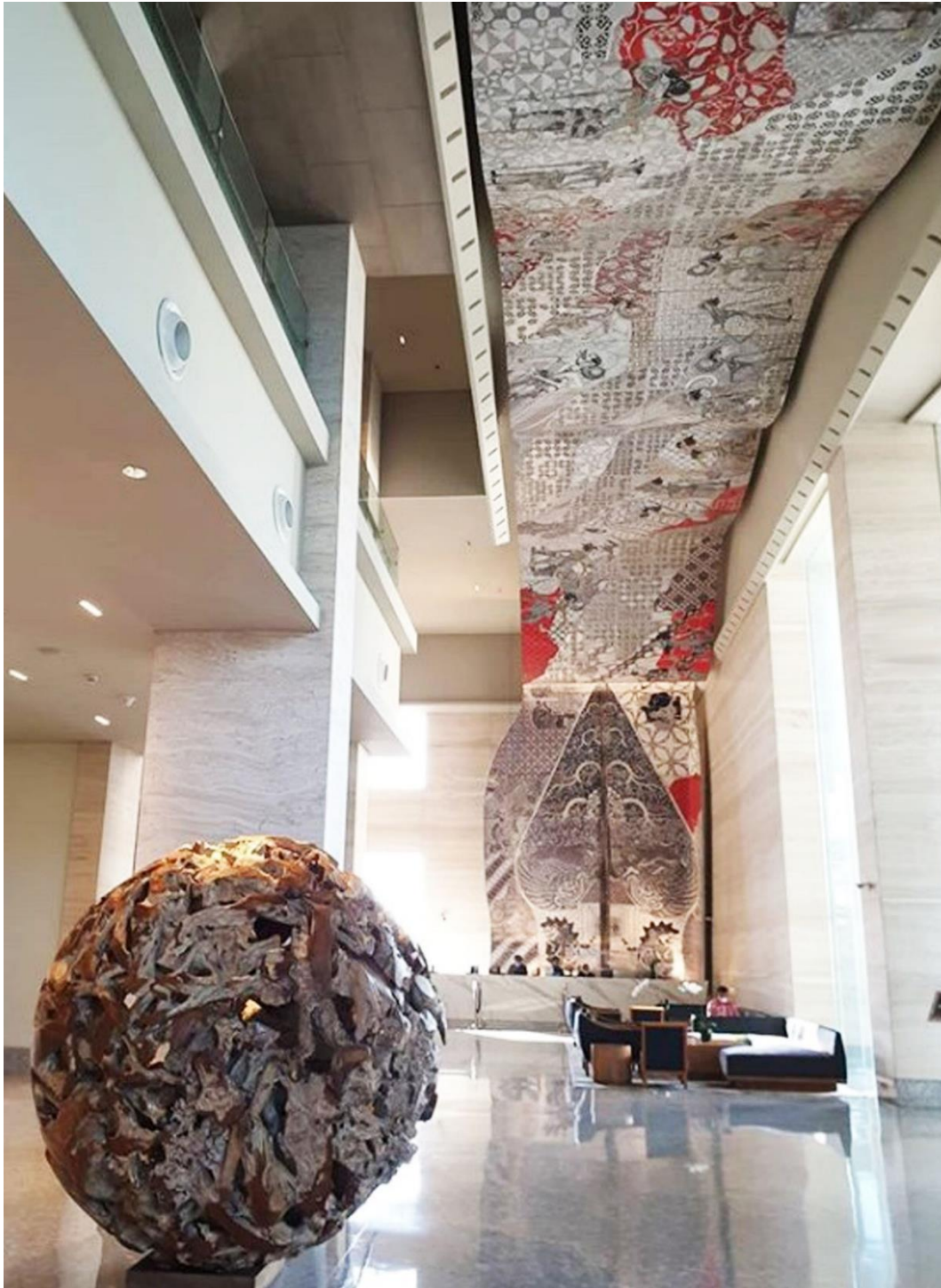


Figure 30. 40-meters-long batik decoration at Alila Hotel, Solo
Source: Rosa Leini, 2020 (reprinted with permission)

Another example worth looking at is Yu Sing's Phinisi Tower in Makassar (South Sulawesi) that was deemed as a 'good' translation of Nusantara Architecture and has been highly discussed by both architects and academics (Figure 31). The 17-floor tower is an educational building of Makassar State

University (*Universitas Negeri Makassar – UNM*) that was built to be an icon of the city. Taking the philosophy of Makassar traditional house, the architect dissected the building into levels: the foot (*kolong/ awa bola*) was translated into open space pilotis area; the body (*lotang*) came as podium part of the building; the head (*rakkeang*) was expressed as a tower. Sing also incorporated a hyperbolic paraboloid curve in the tower shape to create a metaphor of the sail of a Phinisi boat (Sing, 2009). Deemed as one of the most ‘unique’ educational buildings in Indonesia (Harahap, 2015), this building is considered successful in presenting an alternative architectural design in town, particularly for its interesting shape and strategic location that makes it a new icon of Makassar. The building itself has become a design precedent for architecture students in Makassar, and even Indonesia, as not only engaging and ‘relatable’ in terms of shape, it is considered as ‘successful’ in facilitating the students’ needs, with an open ground floor area as a common space to host various activities, something that is uncommon in Indonesia’s public building designs. Ria Wikantari, a lecturer of Hasanuddin University in Makassar, argues that the Phinisi Tower design represents a good example of how principles in traditional architecture are incorporated in contemporary architecture, regardless of the styles and forms. She suggests that the tower incorporates all the aspects of the Makassarese traditional architecture: having a *kolong* or space under the stilted floor; a *serambi* or a place where people can gather outside the house; and a *tirai-mirai* wall or a wall that allows wind to seep in that brings natural circulation inside the house. These characteristics are what she refers to as the ‘shape-grammars’, or probably similar to Christopher Alexander’s ‘pattern language’, that the tower design incorporates Makassarese traditional pattern that is familiar to the Makassarese people. Incorporating local pattern allows laypeople, including Wikantari’s students, to grasp the idea conveyed, and this building, in her opinion, speaks a clearer design language than others of Makassar’s iconic buildings that use similar concepts of local culture and artefacts, like the Kalla Tower for instance. She argues that the building exhibits both ‘concrete’ and ‘abstract’ translation of regionalism that not only gives a relatable metaphor that guides people of how to understand the building but also responds well to the local climate and local culture (R. Wikantari 2018, pers. comm., 5 September).



Figure 31. Phinisi Tower, a new icon in Makassar designed in resemblance with Makassar's traditional sailboat

Source: Aria Yuda, 2019 (reprinted with permission)

The Phinisi Tower does have the quality to be an 'iconic building', particularly that the gigantic hyperbolic curve does work effectively in catching people's eyes, similar to Charles Jencks' assertion that an iconic building has to be 'splashy', sometimes bizarre and contradictory, to give what he terms as "shock and awe" to the area (Jencks, 2005, p. 18). The problem is that if we talk about local context, most iconic buildings, if not all, do not always represent, let alone have a connection, with the immediate surrounding's social and cultural context. In the case of the tower, the *Phinisi* sailboat does represent a fishing and trading culture of Bugis-Makassar people, and also a portrait of local craftsmanship in making an exquisite wooden boat, one of which managed to sail from Jakarta to Canada in 1986 (Nontji, 2017). However, when the sail's curvy shape is taken and applied to a building, one can question why the architect chose the sailboat in the first place, and which and whose culture

it tries to represent. One can also ask whether the translation relates to contemporary Makassarese people, or with the fast-growing city of Makassar, or with the educational purposes of the university. A metaphor is seen as a way to inject the idea of local context into a building, and it aligns to what Nelson Goodman (1985) argues that metaphorical expression is one of the strategic methods in embedding cultural meaning. However, he also poses a warning that using metaphor in design might be considered too basic and straightforward in conveying symbol, albeit its popularity among architects (Goodman, 1985, pp. 644-648). The design narration helps in creating a symbol, an icon, but this visual similarity does not necessarily make the building 'local'. In my perspective, it is not the shape of curvy Phinisi sailboat that creates a connection to the context; yet it is how this tower responds positively to the climate, to the natural condition of the site, and to the local community that then makes it worthy of being called 'going local'. There would be further study needed to investigate how this Phinisi Tower accommodates the intertwined tensions in its immediate surroundings, but one important thing to highlight is that its contextuality should no longer be assessed from its geometric shape or what it resembles.

As far as the metaphorical translation of culture is questioned, Ary Indra emphasises that a 'good design' should allow people to have various interpretations of a building, following Charles Jencks' (2005) conception of an 'enigmatic signifier'. Indra adds that architects should maintain multiple layers in a design, from the very cliché to the most meaningful, and convey it in a different way to different audiences. Although the architects should be able to communicate their design at a deeper level to academics and design critics, he argues that the superficial layer is still needed for a conversation with people who are not professionally concerned with why buildings look the way they do (A. Indra 2018, pers. comm., 1 September). This point is confirmed by Feni Kurniati's (2016) in her master thesis, studying local people perceptions of The Grand Mosque of West Sumatra in Padang (Figure 32). Although the architect Rizal Muslimin, a former Bandung-based architect, referred to the Islamic story of the Holy Black Stone (*Hajar Aswad*), Padangnese people, however, develop an intense connection with the mosque mostly for its shape that resembles the traditional roof. Kurniati mentions that 95% of her respondents agree that this mosque successfully displays their local culture, and among those positive reviews, 52% of them think that the mosque is associated with the shape of Minangkabau traditional roof (Figure 33); 35% attracted by its local traditional decoration on the façade and the interior; and 8% linked the building with the philosophy of Minangkabau culture (Kurniati, 2016, pp. 74-75). It shows how attached are some of Indonesia's local people to the formal representation of their cultural artefacts, and it seems that the more literal that translation is, the more appreciation they have. This finding, then, creates a question of how architects should respond to this situation. Should architects come with a literal translation that can be understood by all audiences? Or should

they create architecture that carries deeper contemplative meaning although not many people would be able to grasp it? Is it actually possible to make a compromise between the two?



Figure 32. The Grand Mosque of West Sumatra
Source: Wildan Sidiq, 2018 (reprinted with permission)



Figure 33. The gadang house of Minangkabau

Source: Ian Piliang, 2020 (reprinted with permission)

In the discussion of Nusantara Architecture, one of the main arguments is to ‘contemporize the culture’ (*mengkinikan budaya*), but it is never unclear of what ‘contemporize’ means. As the traditional and the modern have been put side-by-side as if the two are antithetical to each other, merging the two is then seen as a ‘solution’ to support both forces (Priyotomo, 2014, pp. 22-24). The problem with this view, treating traditional architecture as the ‘original’ and ‘legitimate’ architectural

identity of the country, has at least two flaws: (1) it puts aside the contemporaneity of living culture; and (2) it disregards the fact that Indonesia's traditional architecture used to be a 'foreign' culture that was an amalgamation of many foreign traditions of Asia. Roxana Waterson explains that Indonesia's traditional architecture has a strong Southern China influence, particularly the Dong Son style dated 600-400BC (Waterson, 1990, pp. 12-23). She argues that "the 'Indonesian-type' house would be better viewed as a genuinely 'Austronesian' creation, pre-dating the Dong Son period, and that the saddle-roofed buildings represented on the Dong Son drums were examples of a style which was already well developed by this time" (Waterson, 1990, p. 26). Robert Blust (1976), a linguist who studies the cultural history of the Austronesian world, supports this argument by underlining the similarity in the way Austronesian people refer to some artefacts, despite some irregularity in the East of Indonesia.¹¹¹ By studying their languages, Blust concludes that Austronesian dwelling units had similarities that were:

"...evidently raised on posts and entered by a (probably notched log) ladder. The roof (which was, therefore, gabled) contained a ridgepole, possibly covered by an inverted log or bamboo rain shield ... and was thatched, probably with sago leaf. A hearth was built on the floor (probably in one corner) and one or more storage shelves for pots, firewood etc., above it. The inhabitants slept using a wooden pillow or headrest. They possessed the pig, fowl and dog, but also hunted; made pottery, plaited (presumably) mats and baskets, but also wove true fabrics on a (probably simple back) loom; mended torn materials with needle and thread, tattooed themselves, chewed betel and evidently had a form of intoxicating drink" (Blust, 1976, p. 36).

If we use Waterson and Blust's studies to assess the essentialist perspective of Indonesia's traditional architecture, we can see that what has been considered as the 'real' Indonesian houses may not be 'authentic' Indonesian. Even the most common features of Indonesia's traditional houses, which are built on piles and have big saddle roofs, originated from outside Indonesia. It is why one finds a severe "difficulty in determining exactly what art and architecture can be termed indigenous" to one country, as, different to a national border that marks a country's political territory and jurisdiction, it is almost impossible to make a cultural border among countries (Flores-Meiser, 2018). The complex process of amalgamation between the native and the incomer creates a new form of architecture that carries both cultures. Nihal Perera, in his article proposing the concept of *Critical Vernacularism* (2010) mentions that "vernacular buildings are not authentic, static, nor pure forms produced in insular

¹¹¹ Robert Blust (1976) shows example of 'the pig' that was spoken quite similarly throughout Austronesian countries: *baboy* in Luzon; *babi* in Batak Toba, Java and Malay Peninsula; *bawoi* in Dayak Ngaju; *babui* in Sediq, North-central Formosa; *vavui* in Paiwan, Southern Formosa; *wawu* in Bare'e, Central Sulawesi; and *fafi* in Western Timor (p.24). These Austronesian people also have a cognate word for house or dwelling unit (e.g. *lumaq*- Bunun, Central Formosa; *rumah*- Malay Peninsula; *ruma*- Arosi, Northern San Crist) (p.36).

environments ... [that] almost all cultures have, from time to time, absorbed ‘foreign’ elements, made developments within the particular culture, and ‘modernized’ their worldviews” (Perera, 2010, p. 76). In this case, the premise of ‘Indonesia versus the global world’, that is used quite extensively by Prijotomo (2014, pp. 22-25), and particularly popular among Indonesian architects, is thus debatable since the traditional architecture is a product of ancient globalisations.



Figure 34. *Rumah gadang* (far right) is located side by side with ‘modern’ *rumah ketek* (left) as part of Minangkabau traditional culture
Source: Indah Widiastuti, 2019 (reprinted with permission)

Dichotomising ‘the traditional versus the modern’ may also fall into the trap of Orientalism, dwelling in the idea of exoticising the East. Scholars like Abidin Kusno, Gunawan Tjahjono, Iwan Sudrajat, Amanda Achmadi, and Johannes Widodo have shown a strong opposition toward this perspective, as

this view leads to stereotyping culture and is not productive in developing the idea of 'identity'.¹¹² It is seen as a legacy of colonialism (Kusno, 2000, pp. 26-31; Purwaningrum, 2018, p. 629; Tjahjono, 2017, p. 51), particularly if used to adhere with contemporary capitalism that is a form of modern imperialism (see Chapter IV.5 for elaboration of my argument on capitalism in the discussion of national identity). Although the mode of exoticism has shifted to a modern-traditional hybrid ideal, yet the dichotomy is still present; the romantic and nostalgic slant on traditionalism still dominates; and the blind adoration, if not fetishism, of traditional architecture, is still used as a language to impose nationalism, if not chauvinism. The stereotypical thinking would also lead to what Anderson calls a 'serialisation', a thinking mode to see things as replicable objects that can be put into boxes for its 'serial' categories (Anderson, 2006, p. 184), although in reality, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to ultimately make categorisation on social objects, especially when the criteria of classification itself is not necessarily reliable (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21).

Aninda Moezier's (2017) PhD thesis discusses the modern *rumah ketek* as a spatial addition to the traditional *rumah gadang*, housing the growing needs of the inhabitants. Interestingly, because of modern look does not comply with the common perception of Minangkabau's cultural housing, *rumah ketek* is excluded from the discussion on Minangkabau 'traditional' or 'vernacular' house, even though the local people have incorporated it as an appendix to the *rumah gadang* (Figure 34). Moezier thus criticises that the studies of houses in Indonesia are still commonly fixated to the conservative idea of being 'modern versus traditional', and have not vigorously incorporated the socio-political dynamics in which the idea of a cultural house is contested. The rigid perspective has led those studies to become selective of the house type they analyse, creating a boundary of what is and what is not categorised as the 'exemplar of traditions'. She says:

"I argue that the existing writings on Minangkabau houses largely suffer from the problem of translation (translating the local categories of rumah gadang and rumah ketek into 'traditional' and 'modern' houses); the problem of selection (focusing the analysis only on one type of house that is perceived as 'traditional', which is the rumah gadang); and the problem of idealisation (producing the essentialised image of rumah gadang as an ideal exemplar of matrilineal traditions that are perceived as unchanging)" (Moezier, 2017).

That partial understanding of seeing local culture disregards the fluid tradition impacted by socio-political changes. It aligns to Marcel Vellinga's assertion that "many of those involved in the vernacular discourse are still unable to deal with the conjunction and transformation of traditional and modern

¹¹² See Achmadi (2006, 2007, 2008); Kusno (2000, 2010a, 2013); Sudrajat (1991); Tjahjono (2017); Widodo (2006).

elements that characterize much of the world's architecture at the beginning of the twenty-first century" (Vellinga, 2006, p. 90). *Rumah gadang* is currently seen as a formal attribute of matrilineal culture, a prestige symbol of kinship, despite mostly being left unoccupied daily as *rumah ketek* has become the main living and gathering place of the kinship members. Indah Widiastuti and Feni Kurniati (2019) also highlight the shifting paradigm in seeing the two houses as a response to the ever-changing social-political context in the community, where *rumah ketek* is developed "due to the increasing male roles in the house-compound" in the matrilineal kinship, and as a "modern reinterpretation of *bilik* (traditional room for individual female kin inside *rumah gadang*) into individual dwelling structures outside but around *rumah gadang*" (Widiastuti & Kurniati, 2019, p. 26). In this sense, the dichotomy of modern and traditional is no longer relevant, and this transformation should be seen as a 'development' of the tradition toward the contemporaneity, instead of seeing it as a 'deterioration'. This shift needs to be incorporated in the discourse, to escape the dichotomy of traditional-modern. The liquidity of culture has to be recognised; thus, the rigid framework of idealising traditional houses as the quintessential cultural representation of Indonesia is no longer justifiable in this case.

Therefore, in dealing with the hybrid culture, architects should develop a new framework in which the complexity of the contested identity could be captured and facilitated. Contemporaneity is one pivotal focus (Griffiths, 2018), and it means searching for what is happening 'here and now' instead of relying on the common assumption that is sometimes flawed. Investigating contemporary living traditions might lead architects to an unexpected direction, something that might be deemed 'inauthentic' and 'not ideal', but that might be representing the 'real' culture of contemporary people. Vellinga emphasises that the variation in the tradition "is no example of the contamination and decline of a [tradition] ... nor is it a 'fake', 'replica' or an 'imitation' ... [instead] it represents a new phase in the living [tradition]" (Vellinga, 2006, p. 90). The critical question now is that if contemporary people no longer develop a connection with traditional culture, then should architects try to 'force' to bring it back to life, or should they just let it fade away to be replaced by the more recently developed culture? This question will need further discussion, but regardless of the answers, deconstructing the picturesque ideas of the 'ideal' (Sopandi, 2014) is essential in opening up to a more realistic approach to dealing with context and culture.

VII.3.4. Contemporary challenge

Starting the design process by dealing with people's everyday present reality is one translation offered by the architects in conveying their 'Indonesia-ness' in design. In response to the complex social

challenges, many of them start to capture the underlying tension before formulating some 'solutions'. Contemporary challenges, in this case, cover all aspects that are present in people's day-to-day life, including economic problems, social gaps and frictions, environmental degradation, extensive urbanization, unemployment, slums and urban sprawling, informal developments, and even the rise of radicalism, authoritarianism and sinophobia. All these forces create intertwined tensions that shape the constant struggle in contemporary life and affect how people act, behave and negotiate their surrounding context. These contextual problems constitute what Rittel and Webber term as the 'wicked' problems that "are ill-defined ... [and] rely upon elusive political judgment for resolution", as opposed to the 'tame' or 'benign' scientific problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 160). With the malignant properties of wicked problems, it becomes very tricky to determine and formulate assumptions toward the 'solutions', although Rittel and Webber do not believe that there will be any solutions to wicked problems, as any 'solutions' would only lead to other, new issues. Some architects might make some 'unfit' assumptions that make any designs proposed to not work as expected, mainly if the standpoint is still more or less 'imprisoned' by the trap of the formal and aesthetic side of architecture.

In Indonesia, one particular success was shown by the project by the late Yousef Bilyarta Mangunwijaya that became a breakthrough in the discipline of architecture in the country. In the early '80s, he took part in a social revitalization project of *Kampung Kali Code* (Code River Village) in Yogyakarta, a crime-invested slum area that the government planned to eradicate.¹¹³ Mangunwijaya offered a particular approach that aimed to revive the architectural, social and political aspects of the place, and helped to rebuild the area and the community by building social spaces including "a public hall, a workshop cabin, a homeless shelter, communal toilets, a library, playgrounds, and a cleaning place" (Idham, 2018). He had a peculiar method of getting involved directly in the project and worked together with the locals, unlike a common top-down method that architects typically employ. This project was more like a 'jam-session' between the architect and the people, where both had a certain

¹¹³ Kali Code was a slum area, albeit centrally located, that was considered as the 'dark spot' of Yogyakarta where very-low-income people, including street singers, baggers, pickpockets, burglars and prostitutes, lived. The place became a crime infested area and was considered as the most dangerous area in the city and it was why the local government started to "periodically eradicate the shelters by burning and dismissing the people" (Idham, 2018, p. 179). This sporadic plan, however, did not go very well as the people kept coming back to the area, and the plan was completely halted after the chief of the village together with Mangunwijaya persuaded the government to postpone the plan and convinced them that people of Kali Code could improve their quality of life, although this negotiation required Mangunwijaya to go on a hunger strike as a protest to the government (Prasetyo, 2012).

level of freedom and spontaneity in expressing their artistic sides, making an exquisite collaboration in making architecture (Istanto, 1999, p. 43).

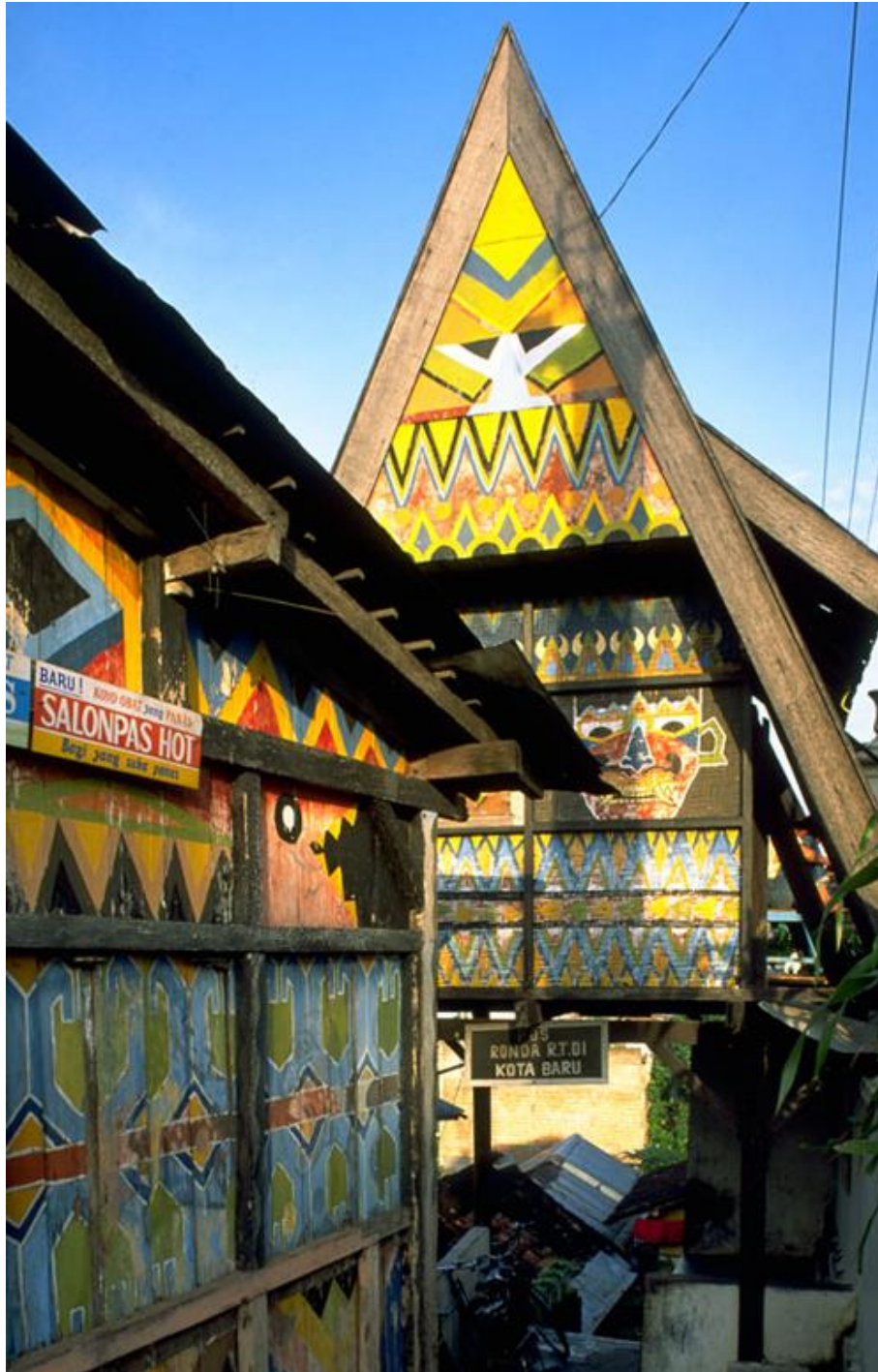


Figure 35. House in Kampung Kali Code
Source: Yori Antar, 1985 (reprinted with permission)

This project seemed to break the rigid boundary of how to make ‘good’ architecture, as Mangunwijaya only provided some sketches without any detailed drawing as the initial instruction, while other decisions would be made on-site (Figure 35). In this case, the presence of the architect was very crucial, since any decision was based on what was available on site. It was not only to reduce the cost but also to educate people that materials available from their surroundings could be utilized if they would need to make changes or maintenance on the building in the future. The role of the architect in this project was challenged to have better sensitivity in what and how to build in a certain social-political and natural condition and to be more creative in utilizing the limited resources without sacrificing people’s quality of living. In this project, architecture was no longer about aesthetics; it was about the people; about ‘curing’ their social-cultural problem; about ‘teaching’ people to improve their everyday living condition. It was one of not so many successful projects that placed the human aspect at the centre of attention. Mangunwijaya’s attachment to this project made him move to the *kampung* for six years to mentor the people and then became the trusted elder in the *kampung*. Even after the architecture project had finished, he continued to assist local people to have better education and appropriate jobs and founded the People’s Cottage Foundation (*Yayasan Pondok Rakyat- YPR*), a social-cultural organisation in which people from different disciplines and backgrounds contributed to the betterment of Kali Code’s people (Prasetiyo, 2012). The astounding effects of this project for the local people let it to receive the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1992, and Mangunwijaya was awarded The Ruth and Ralph Erskine Fellowship in 1995 for his devotion to the less privileged. Although the condition of the *kampung* starts to decrease as the community are no longer continue what Romo Mangun had taught (Idham, 2018, pp. 179-181), yet this project is still notable as a breakthrough in Indonesian architectural design. The way Mangunwijaya dealt with the project has been recognized hitherto as a good example of how architecture should incorporate, and ideally enhance, the social, political and cultural condition of the place and the people.



Figure 36. Eko Prawoto's residence

Source: Paul Kadarisman, courtesy of Konteks, 2015

Mangunwijaya's approach has triggered extensive discussions and attracted followers, many of whom are contemporary architects. Eko Prawoto was one of them, and his proletarian approach to architecture was shown when he helped to rebuild the Ngibikan Village post-disaster (see Chapter VII.3 for the further story about Ngibikan Village). He was called as '*arsitek pemulung*' (scavenging architect) for his passion for collecting and reusing the shattered left-over materials on the site, and as '*arsitek kampung*' (low-class/ village architect) because his unpretentious style in design, amplifying the character of the peasant (Galih Widjil Pangarsa, 2008, pp. 9-15). In architectural design, Prawoto mentioned that his role as an architect was only to 'structurise' the space and the plan, to make sure of a good flow and a usable spaces for the inhabitant, while the rest of the decision was up to the collaboration of the owner and the craftsmen (E. Prawoto 2017, pers. comm., 10 October). Prawoto's preference to become *kampung* showed in his own house's design where he tried to fit into the 'style' of the neighbouring houses, using bare local materials and maintaining the character of *kampung* corridor (Figure 36). Further, his design also showed his struggle to face the limited budget he had (Domek, 2012), requiring him to extend some experimentation with the design, where

flexibility, including the movable interior partition, was one of the emphases. He also let an existing durian tree stay in place, although it stood in the middle of the living room and caused rainwater to wet some furniture. In this case, Prawoto showed a different approach to design, embracing the irregularity, inconsistency and imperfection of local craftsmanship, and showing a different kind of aesthetic.

As a financial problem is a challenge for contemporary people to have a house, architects' creative maneuver is needed to deal with this problem. Some architects in Indonesia have extended their approach to be able to design under a tight budget, and the results have created a new style of architecture that is quite uncommon for Indonesian architectural design. Ahmad Djuhara, a Jakartan architect who was the Head of Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) national chapter, faced this challenge when Nugroho Wisnu, the client, asked them to design a house in a narrow 5-meter by 30-meter land (Figure 37), forcing the architects to explore the spatial arrangement that could house a couple with two young children and a live-in maid. The old house Wisnu purchased on the site had experienced severe termite damage that forced the architects to tear down the whole house and build from scratch. The initial design was to use steel as the main structure, but as the steel price soared at the construction time, the architects found an alternative of concrete-steel combination to fit the tight budget, while the rest of the materials were attained from within a half-mile radius of the site and some were reclaimed materials. The house had a split level to avoid the cost to flatten the sloped land, and the ground floor was left open while all the living functions were placed upstairs, creating a sense of a floating box. With a cost of 200 million Rupiah (USD 15,000) for the 215 square meter house (Akmal, 2012, p. 50), or around one-third of the average building construction price per square meter, the architects demonstrated a successful response to the tight restrictions by designing a peculiar building that performed well environmentally and economically without sacrificing the comfort of the inhabitants (Powell, 2010). One might question the house's odd shape in the middle of the neighbourhood, but Ahmad Djuhara underlined that in this project, "style is the consequence, not the objective" (Pitchforth, 2010, p. 94). This project was not Ahmad and Wendy Djuhara's first low-cost housing project, as in their previous design of the *Rumah Baja* (Steel House), they managed to design a three-storey house using mainly reclaimed steel that cost almost similar money to Wisnu's house for a 117 square meters building. What was particularly interesting was that the open space on the ground floor had been used as a gathering area for the immediate community around the house, providing a social space for the neighbourhood. This steel house was awarded the 2002 IAI Award and was nominated for the 2004 Aga Khan Award, while the Wisnu's house was awarded the 2008 IAI Award. The Djuharas' works have contributed in challenging the conservative approach in dwelling design, and have captured professionals' attention, particularly the young architects, as it was

"representing a new direction in architecture and a distancing from the approach of the older members of the profession" (Lim, 2004, p. 10).

Other architects have also tried to contribute to the community by opening some part of their private properties for the people in the neighbourhood. Tardiyana dedicated the ground floor of his residence for a public library, particularly for children in the area. Sing designed his office with an amphitheatre on the ground floor that was completely open for the public to use for neighbourhood meetings. The challenge was to understand the character of the people that might use the space, as Sing mentioned that although he has left the ground floor open, his neighbours did not necessarily come and use it (Y. Sing 2017, pers. comm., 11 August). The complexity of engaging people using designs appears in this case and shows that most of the time, there is a gap between the architects' assumptions and the people's perception of architecture. Sing faced the severely complicated 'wicked problems' when in 2005 he engaged with the project of *Rumah Deret* (Rowing House) in Tamansari area of Bandung city as part of the government's city *kampung* improvement program, where informal settlement would be 'formalised' through a public housing development. Regardless of the innovative design that tried to accommodate most of the people's everyday needs, as claimed by the architect, yet some of the people refused to be relocated and filed five lawsuits against the projects and caused a severe hurdle in the process. People refused for various reasons: from refusing to lose their businesses on-site serving for the need of students of nearby campuses; disagreeing with the idea of paying a monthly rent when they moved back to the new housing that was about to be built on-site, mainly due to their unstable monthly income; questioning that there would not be any just mechanism to proportionally give household who owned a bigger site to get a bigger unit; and rejecting the financial compensation that they deemed as too low (Kusyala, Darmana, & Lim, 2018, p. 118). This heated problem has caused a long delay, particularly after vanguardist NGOs took part in the support for the people. Even five years after the project was initiated, the only progress to date was the eviction and demolition of the *kampung*, and people still fought back by protesting and making a strike on the ruin of their ex-home.



Figure 37. The Wisnu House by Ahmad and Wendy Djuhara
Source: Djuhara+djuhara, 2008 (reprinted with permission)

Many progressive views demand architecture to be more inclusive and transgressive in dealing with the unruly development of social-political context. It is a real-life challenge that creates tensions encircling the architecture, pushing architects to escape from the sterilised view to see the profession as merely about design. In the case of urban informality, Ananya Roy (2017) is sharply against eviction

that she deems an extension of commodification of lands and capitalisation of the state, and as a form of dispossession of the poor through various criminalisation and illegalisation that might lead to racial banishment (Roy, 2017, pp. A2-A3). Kim Dovey (2013) supports this view and emphasises that such demolition and dispossession of the urban poor, as happened in Tamansari, can be seen a 'state crime', and for this, he amplifies the need to 'informalise' architecture, which means to "move onwards from both the fixity *of* form and the fixation *on* form that dominates the profession" (Dovey, 2013, p. 87). He challenges 'formal' architecture to be more adaptive to the social context to give space for the transgressiveness of informal development, as he mentions that:

"Informal construction transgresses some definitions of architecture, and our engagement with it requires modes of practice that transgress normalised boundaries of architectural practice and ideology. These transgressions are multiple: towards research-based participatory practice in multidisciplinary teams; towards the design of dynamic adaptive assemblages as well as the shaping of formal outcomes; towards a truly 'critical' architecture and a radical informalisation of architecture as socio-environmental art" (Dovey, 2013, p. 83).

In this case, architects should not only focus on exercising the design, but also in plotting their positions within the intertwined challenges of the context of the architecture. This focus might not be a popular standpoint amidst the pragmatism of the discipline, but there is an apparent movement among Indonesian architects to treat architecture as part of the advocacy for unprivileged groups.

VII.3.5. Nature and ecology

Natural and environmental consideration is one of the most discussed points when Indonesian architects explain their idea of being local. Nature, in this case, covers the wide characteristics of Indonesia: its rich biodiversities as a result of having a tropical climate; the large part of the sea that makes Indonesia a maritime country; the position of the country in the ring of fire that bring numerous potential volcanic eruptions and seismic activities; the fertile soil that allows vegetation to quickly grow; and the environmental problem that causes deforestation, flood, and even global warming. Some interviewees discussed the fact that architecture and construction projects all over the world have contributed to natural destruction and various water, land and air pollutions. They emphasized the importance for architects to be mindful of the environmental aspects of projects and to be responsible for how design impacts surrounding areas. Globally, architecture and construction contribute 36% of total energy use (Abergel, Dean, & Dulac, 2017, p. 6), and also contribute to excessive deforestation following the need of land on which to reside and the need of natural materials to construct. What is concerning is that Indonesia is titled as "the country with the most

deforestation” in the world, that it has lost more than 15.79 million hectares of its tropical forest in the last 100 years (Bradford, 2018). These reasons push the movement of green and sustainable architecture as part of the quintessential part of any development, and in Indonesia in particular, with the fast degradation of the quality of the environment, the environmental and ecological consciousness is seen as part of ‘going local’ movement. The challenge for the profession is how to respond to this problem at a fundamental level, escaping what Peter Buchanan (2012) terms as the ‘destructive tendencies’ of architecture. Architects need to redefine the necessity of architecture and challenge the ‘superficial’ way to bridge nature and the people (e.g. blurring the separation of indoor and outdoor living, or bringing landscape to the house by creating wide openings), as most still recklessly accommodates the profligate consumption of energy (Buchanan, 2012).

It is noteworthy that many architects in the interviews pinpointed Indonesia’s traditional architecture as an ‘ideal’ example of living in harmony with nature, hence the ‘best’ sustainable architecture. Yori Antar suggested that traditional architecture has proven its quality of being green and sustainable by having various interesting features. First, the house used natural material that was available in the surrounding area, hence fewer efforts in transporting the material, or in this case less emission and pollutants for transportation. Second, the house was on stilts, so water and air could circulate underneath the house, and it brought two implication: (1) it acted as a passive cooling system amidst the tropical weather; (2) it did not have big land footprint thus allowing more area for water catchment and avoiding the problems of floods and groundwater shortage. Third, the house did not dig into the ground, as many used pile structures that were put on the *umpak* (stone base) with no underground foundation. Fourth, it used natural materials with lashing or peg-and-wedge technique that created an earthquake-resistant building that fitted perfectly with Indonesia’s ring of fire condition (Y. Antar 2017, pers. comm., 5 October). Yu Sing seemed to agree with Antar and further tried to incorporate some of these ideas in one of his projects in Bogor, West Java. In the Hatika House project (Figure 38), Sing designed a house with a pit underneath it adopting the idea of a stilted house, and incorporating an experimental housing structured called *RISHA* that has been developed to be a cheap yet strong earthquake-resistant pre-cast structure.¹¹⁴ Since this project, Sing has developed many elevated house designs, some of which were experimental and used *umpak* (stone base) foundation that sat on the ground, similar to the principle of some traditional architecture. By endorsing this type of design, Sing

¹¹⁴ *RISHA* (*Rumah Instan Sederhana Sehat*/ Instant Simple Healthy House) is an experimental precast structure developed since 2004 by the Research Departemen of the Ministry of Public Work and Public Housing of Indonesia. This knock-down sytem is designed as an alternative structure for the cheap housing development that can be built in short period of time and complies with the principle of earth-quake resistance.

believed he was contributing to the environment, at least by not ‘hurting’ the land and allowing water to flow freely underneath the house.



Figure 38. Hatika House (left) constructed using the *RISHA* structure (right)

Source: Studio Akanoma, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

Interestingly, other than the previous experimental approach in smaller housing projects, Yu Sing still showed his favour to the metaphorical way of resembling nature, similar to what he showed in the Phinisi Tower (see Chapter VII.3 for a more elaborate story of the Phinisi Tower). In his Wikasatrian project at Bogor (Figure 39), as three mountains surrounded the site, he appreciated the surrounding scenery by mimicking the shape of the mountain, creating a hill-like shape with three tops representing the three mountains (Sing, 2014). He claimed to capture the character of Indonesia’s landscape that had numerous active volcanoes that brought fertility to the soil, represented in the analogy of the terraced paddy fields on the layered canopies of the façade. He also brought the story of Semar, a Javanese sacred guardian spirit that was a symbol of wisdom and leadership, matched with the purpose of the building to become a leadership centre (Y. Sing 2017, pers. comm., 11 August). This concept of this sculptural design depicts the metaphorical method that dominates the

development of architectural design in Indonesia, where architects use a design narration as a tie to link a design and its context. It supports Buchanan's critique of the superficiality in architecture that over-emphasizes quantifiable elements translated into a formal design representation that is majorly based on function, anatomy and form of the referred object (Buchanan, 2012). It might be an exquisite product of design exercise, yet it still lacks of clarity of how the building sits in accordance with nature itself as the main reference, and how it contributes to the immediate natural surroundings. With this approach, nature is positioned as a detached reference to feeding humans' need of meaning, and this is the reason why Sean Griffiths sees meaning in architecture merely as arbitrary consolatory fiction (Griffiths, 2018).



Figure 39. Wikasatrian adopts the shape of the mountain to mimic the surrounding scenery

Source: Studio Akanoma, 2014 (reprinted with permission)

Another interesting response came from Budiman Hendropurnomo who mentioned that he had a fascination with trees and preferred to appreciate nature by putting trees and other plants in the design, as he claimed that “the greener [the design is], the more Indonesia [it is]” (B. Hendropurnomo

2017, pers. comm., 28 September). He asserted that native plants could be seen as a symbol of the identity of the country since Indonesia had many specific native plants that could not grow outside the country. Design-wise, he used the metaphor of the tree as something that emerged from the Indonesian soil and soared vertically, and he translated it as putting a mound-like ground on the bottom of the building or using heavy natural materials on the podium of the building (as a contrast to the lighter materials for the tower); or incorporating climbing veins for the building façade (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September). Moreover, aside from the tree-related translation, Hendropurnomo also claimed that he has always pushed his designs to have the quality of green buildings, and many of them received green star rating from the Green Building Council of Indonesian (GBCI). One of his designs, the Sensa Hotel, was an extension of an existing shopping mall located in Cihampelas Street, one busy shopping destination of Bandung. Located within the 3.5 hectares of Cihampelas Walk (Ciwalk) Mall, he created a seamless connection between the mall, the hotel, and the Cihampelas shopping arcade. To preserve the site as the green oasis of the area, he conserved many hundred-years-old big trees onsite and let the design flow between those trees, and it impacted significantly the micro-condition of the area (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September). With this design, Ciwalk became one shopping mall that, probably, has the best and most comfortable outdoor area in Bandung, and it provides an anti-thesis to a common prescription of bulky air-conditioned shopping malls in Indonesia. This hotel was awarded the 2011 IAI Award for commercial residence category (*IAI AWARDS - Sebuah Perjalanan*, 2015).

A different approach in appreciating nature in architecture was shown by Deddy Wahjudi and Nelly Daniel, Bandung-based husband-and-wife architects who own an architecture firm named LABO. They designed their home and office connected, called *LABO the Mori* (LABO's jungle) in a secluded hilly area of Bandung, West Java (Figure 40). The house had an interesting concept of openness that was translated with a very minimal wall used as a room separator, including in the bedrooms that were only separated with curtains. The house was dominated by bare concrete and glass material, allowing visual connection between the indoor rooms with open nature on the outside. Many overgrown plants and trees were incorporated as part of the design. Creeper plants, for instance, replaced the need of curtain for the outdoor window as the vines were thick enough to give shade and privacy to the people in the house, or the vines that creep on top of the polycarbonate roof gave additional protection of heat and noise during rain (Izzati, 2018). Moreover, an open wire-meshed wall substituted for the solid walls and allowed not only a breeze to enter the house, but also other natural elements such as heat, rain, and even vines with their leaves and fruits that crept into the interior of the house. It not only blurs the border between the indoor and outdoor living but also allowed nature to crawl into the interior of the house. This office/house was awarded the 2015 IAI Award for its successful attempt to

“utilize a very low Building Coverage Ratio (BCR) ... [that] with a very small floor area, it can bring such a rich place” (*IAI AWARDS - Sebuah Perjalanan*, 2015).



Figure 40. LABO de Mori

Source: Aisyah Izzati, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

The LABO de Mori’s design allows seamless interaction with nature, visually and physically. The large frameless window allowed an unobstructed view between inside and outside, allowing a big opening for an expansive feeling of the home. It aligned to Jay Osgerby’s argument, saying that “the larger the view, the bigger the aperture, the more you can be absorbed in the view, and the more you become part of the landscape outside” (Osgerby, 2018). The design might have tried to treat nature not only as a visually pleasing object but opened a potential interaction with the inhabitants. However, this can be a reflection of whether nature or landscape has been a subject or an object in this dialogue and whether we ever asked what nature needed from us, instead of what we need from nature. The

problem is that architecture in relationship to nature has been about what man feels, touches and sees, and never the reverse. This is why Buchanan suggests to us to rethink and redefine the connection between man and nature in architecture (Buchanan, 2012) so that the two can play the same important role equally as both subject and object, not as the conqueror and the conquered, where the relationship can bring benefit to both parties.

VII.4. Discussion: The local context in design, what does this tell us about architecture?

As I mentioned in the previous section Indonesian architects have developed an inclination towards either the conception of Indonesian Architecture, Nusantara Architecture, or ignoring both; but what is interesting is that regardless of their positions, all of them agreed that they referred to the 'local context'. It leads to a further question whether there is any significant difference between the two conceptions in terms of design translation, and if they both refer to the same thing, why would one need the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' in the first place? In that regard, it is understandable if one argues that both terms are just different labels that explain the same things, as suggested by the architects who chose to ignore the uproar. Moreover, theoretically speaking, Nusantara Architecture might have specificity in pointing to the traditional architecture, and I argue that this narration has been used rather 'strategically' by some prominent architects in their design translation, particularly in creating design rhetoric to anchor their otherwise modern design into the context. I use the word 'strategically' in explaining it because architects tended to use it loosely, unlike the academics who mostly showed stronger stances. The supporters of Nusantara Architecture like Yori Antar and Budiman Hendropurnomo did not bear any burden in complying to the characteristics of Nusantara Architecture that was proposed by Prijotomo as the initiator of the term. Antar, in particular, the architect that has been called the Warrior of Nusantara Architecture (*Pendekar Arsitektur Nusantara*) (Martin, 2016), kept the idea of Nusantara Architecture as his narration in his preservation projects but did not necessarily translate this in his everyday design as his projects might be closer to a modern tropical style (Sidharta, 2006; Simpson, 2017; Tanuwijaya, 2016).

The discourse of Nusantara Architecture was initially proposed as a conception and a mind-frame of architectural identity, without referring to any specific architecture, hence grounding it is an arduous task. In terms of design, I argue that there are at least three potential pitfalls in employing the concept of Nusantara Architecture, and these pitfalls show that Nusantara Architecture is more restrictive than liberating in dealing with the locality in architecture hence rather unproductive in translating ideas into built form.

First, there is an unexpected 'essentialist trap' of traditionalism that is entailed with the term's usage, particularly in terms of treating culture as frozen and given and hence that it can be idealised and freely referred to. Despite the claim to 'contemporise the traditional' to allow the 'old' and the 'new' colliding together, the term is too fixated in championing one particular culture, which is traditional culture, and allowing architects to claim as if they represent a culture by adopting any traditional-related shapes, form or looks.¹¹⁵ It is an old-school idea in understanding identity that this method was already intensified for decades that "identity – regional or national – is a matter of architectural expression and therefore a matter of form, or style if you like" (Klassen, 1984, p. 289). In this case, visual resemblances and design narrations become a vital aspect of tying in the building to the context, and it amplifies, and in a way justifies, the pragmatism and arbitrariness of architecture as a profession. The presence of silhouette became prominent as a symbol, a logo, what Anderson termed as 'logoisation' (Anderson, 2006, pp. 183-184), and this silhouette became an instant label that could be attached or detached from a building. This approach had been extensively exercised rather literally in the Suharto era when traditional-related elements had to be attached to a modern building as a 'signifier' of identity that ended up with 'a matchbox topped with headdress' (Horayangkura, 2010, p. 65) (Figure 41). Interestingly, this phenomenon is happening not only among Indonesian architects but also in broader global south countries where identity is still perceived to be rooted in traditional culture.¹¹⁶ Although this literal translation is no longer a common method among contemporary architects, the idea of incorporating traditional forms in a more 'subtle' way still relies on physical resemblances, and it is something to rethink what identity is in the first place and whether identity really needs any traditional references at all.

¹¹⁵ In this case, I refer tradition as long established values, customs, beliefs and practices that has been passed on from generation to generation ("Tradition," 2018). It is usually considered sacred, and is being preserved with strict principle that gives no room for modification, different to culture that is a manifestation of human intellectual achievement ("Culture," 2018), hence constantly changing and developing.

¹¹⁶ For some of the works looking at Global-south countries, see the work of Achmadi (2007); Bryce (2007); Canan et al. (2015); Ebraheem (2013); Horayangkura (2010, 2017); Ikudayisi and Odeyale (2019); Ozaslan and Akalin (2011); Svamivastu (2014); Yacobi (2008).



Figure 41. Minangkabau traditional roof attached to a modern high-rise building in Jakarta

Source: Arif Wisudyastomo, 2018 (reprinted with permission)

Second, Nusantara Architecture does not inform any specific form, style or method, therefore any claim of being Nusantara Architecture is solely based on the architects' understanding that varies from person to person. It means that there are no specific criteria if architecture is or is not considered as Nusantara Architecture, and any architects can make any arbitrary claim if one design might or might not be included as a representation of the term. Prijotomo did mention a spectrum on which 'Nusantaran Architecture' and 'modern architecture' were put on the opposite ends of when he discussed contemporary architecture. He mentioned that architectural projects in Indonesia carried both sides of the spectrum in a different degree, for instance, the West Sumatra Grand Mosque had "a low level of Nusantara Architecture [and] a high level of modernity" while Eko Prawoto's works had "a high level of Nusantara Architecture [and] a low level of modernity" (J. Prijotomo 2017, pers.

comm., 19 September). This categorisation, however, is very problematic, not only that it shows a dichotomist and essentialist perspective, but also it does not have a clear classification basis. As the spectrum is open to multiple interpretations, who would have the right to determine it and how? If it is about the physical representation, then one needs to remember that many philosophers for centuries have refused this approach. Plato had shown a bitterness towards any mimetic arts that he deemed as “a form of deception” since it relied so much on the eyes to interpret; Descartes distrusted the visible world for his suspicion of it being “a potential or actual illusion” (Kavanagh, 2004); and David Michael Levin suggested that the visual sense had too strong a power to “grasp and fixate, to reify, and totalise; a tendency to dominate, secure, and control” (“Indonesia, Sunyata: The Poetics Of Emptiness,” 2018). Therefore, if this approach is used as a parameter to define what is and what is not Nusantara Architecture, then one might need to question why such a method has to be legitimated.

Third, Nusantara Architecture does not necessarily represent the people, as most projects focus on exercising design as a reproduction of ‘culture’ representation. The grand narration of the term dwells on the idea of culture as artefacts rather than attached to its people who have inherent ever-changing social-political tensions embedded in their daily struggles. Achmadi’s (2007) and Moezir’s (2017) arguments gain significance in this case in emphasising how contemporary development has forced people to develop and adjust their traditional houses to cope not only with their growing needs but also with the contemporary development in construction technologies amidst the financial and cultural pressure. Moreover, the preference to alter local culture does not only happen in architecture but in many arts disciplines, creating fusions that represent their ‘hybrid’ local ‘pop’ culture (Storey, 2015). Even in Yogyakarta and Surakarta, the two most notable cultural cities for Javanese tradition, contemporary socio-political forces and tensions has allowed people to alter the ‘*Jathilan*’ folk dance to be mixed with hip-hop song, danced by acrobatic dancers with Mohawk hairdos and ankle boots, and incorporated a rap song in the Javanese language (Hatley, 2012).¹¹⁷ This change should be seen as part of the development of the culture, instead of demonising it as a contamination or deterioration, particularly that it exhibits the malleability of Indonesian culture that “the strength of Indonesia’s polymorph culture lies in its elasticity and adaptability, able to absorb many foreign (or regional) influences, adopting these into new forms and expressions” (Steinberg, 2008). In this case, incorporating and further accommodating these social changes becomes crucial in constructing a

¹¹⁷ *Jathilan* (*kuda lumping*) dance, or often called ‘braid horse (*jaran kepang*)’ dance, is a dance depicting horsemen riding woven bamboo horses. As this performance also incorporates supernatural activity, some of the dancer will get ‘possessed’ and enter the trance conditions. While in trance, they will display unusual abilities, such as eating glass and resistance to the effects of whipping or hot coals.

sense of identity, and the grounded way is to incorporate participatory process to really understand the situation in the community instead of relying on questionable assumptions.

From five aspects of the locality that I have explained in the preceding section, four of them (i.e. climate, materiality, traditional culture, and nature) deal with the physical attributes of the context. In this sense, architecture is still largely stuck with being concerned with the tangible aspects of context and overlooks the 'wickedness' of contemporary real-life problems. Only one aspect tries to capture the intangible problems, and it seems to be less popular and less talked about in the interviews. What is interesting is that all these five aspects have been part of the discussion of the critical regionalism movement and have been largely exercised on a bigger scale. In 1984, the Asian Congress of Architects in Manila made the first attempt to construct an identity conception that was not restricted to the national level (Klassen, 1984, pp. 274-276). Although there was no unanimous voice on what constitutes the 'Asian' identity, yet there was a similar alignment in an attempt to overcome the national differences and form 'cultural-based' alliances across nation-state boundaries to "reconstitute a transnational cultural heritage based on common historical traits and topography of the region as a whole" (Kusno, 2010b, p. 63). In this case, the five aspects are the typical aspects that have been included in any discussion about regionalism and national identity, therefore a question about how the conception of Nusantara Architecture sits within this movement is expected. Moreover, knowing that climate has become one prominent universal aspect that binds the region together, particularly in South-east Asia, it becomes an expected direction to design a tropical house or a tropical city, and in a way, it has nothing to do with being Nusantara Architecture. The prominent architects I interviewed have demonstrated that design dealt with these universal forces with or without the label of Nusantara Architecture. There are a commonality and universality of these aspects of identities, therefore making a narration of an exclusive identity out of these aspects is rather debatable. The stilted house that is claimed as one of the characteristics of Nusantara Architecture, for instance, is a shared culture of Austronesian indigenous houses; the big sloping thatched roof is part of the tropical house characters that can be easily found in many tropical countries like Vanuatu, Maldives, Madagascar, even Hawaii. The connection to the water, as Indonesia is a maritime country, can also be found in other archipelagian countries like the Bahamas, Fiji, the Philippines, or Solomon Islands. In this case, despite the characteristics of Nusantara Architecture present in Indonesia's traditional architecture, it needs to be highlighted as a shared culture due to many similarities in the natural condition of the places rather than claiming them to be 'exclusively Indonesia'.

Prijotomo seems to debunk this argument as he problematizes the constant reference to Roxana Waterson's and Rapoport's books when studying Indonesia's traditional architecture (Adiyanto, 2014). But I argue that this is the restrictive part of the conception of Nusantara Architecture, as the perspective used is rather narrow. It tries to peculiarize what Indonesia has in terms of traditional culture and disregard the fact that what happens in the country is part of global phenomena and is an effect of a long historical-political process that occurred. The term fails to address the similar pattern that happens in most, if not all, global south countries in terms of having an urge to 'find' their 'lost' identities in response to modernism; the need to be 'different' from the West; the impulse to showcase the exotic characteristic of the country; the inclination to exercise the old and the new in design; and the patriotic narration of securing national identity. I have not encountered any studies supporting Nusantara Architecture that try to situate these phenomena within what has been happening in the world, particularly among other postcolonial countries. What happens in Indonesia, including the emergence of Nusantara Architecture, is part of a global movement as a way to showcase an anti-colonialist spirit, inherited from a long imperialist era. The fact that Nusantara Architecture was that recently incorporated into the tourism agenda creates a paradox as the initial anti-imperialism spirit is now used to support capitalism, which is a form of modern imperialism (see Chapter IV.5 for further elaboration on my argument on this paradox). The way Nusantara Architecture is constructed makes it detached from the broader context and that makes it very questionable, and, in some sense, does not sit right with the previously established knowledge. There are significant gaps that need to be mended if the supporters of Nusantara Architecture want to make the conception more 'stable'.

Embedding locality in architectural design

Adi Purnomo conveyed a valid point that the very attempt to 'find' and represent identity is inherently problematic and misleading, as he argued that identity was not 'lost', hence did not need to be 'found'. Identity has always been embedded in people's ways of conducting their everyday life and activities. He argued that identity had to be done naturally, and in design, the more one tried to find, construct or represent identity, the further one would get from the 'genuine' identity itself (A. Purnomo 2017, pers. comm., 3 October). As most architects rely on the idea of 'going local' as part of identity construction, I argue that their perspectives in seeing what is 'local' also needs to be challenged. In many design proposals, architects understood locality based on a general assumption. The danger of maintaining this kind of assumption is that not only that it is, most of the time, flawed and inaccurate, but also it generalises the context in an oversimplifying manner. The locality is treated as a prescriptive

checklist that allows architects to go 'local' by complying to the prescription: using local natural materials; incorporating breathable walls and sloping roofs; getting ideas from local relics, artefacts or performances; incorporating local ornaments and crafts. The assumption of bamboo as a local material, for instance, can be questioned in the case of the homestay winning design for Toba area in the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition. The architects realised that bamboo, the material used in the design, was not available in the particular place it was built. As a result, the contractor needed to bring bamboo from somewhere else, although it took away the aim of using material that the locals could get easy access to. It is, therefore, crucial to merge the idea of 'local' to a specific context of place or area, and not as a suspended idea that is universally applicable. The claim of 'local' should be based on on-site research, scrutinizing what is and is not available, where engagement with the site becomes crucial.

Setiadi Sopandi, a design critic, challenges the way architects create a hybrid architecture combining the local and the modern that he deems unchanging over the last century of Indonesian architecture. He uses an interesting analogy in explaining it. The first is like a chocolate-filled croissant, implying there is a 'core', which is the 'local ideal', that is put inside the wrap of the modern skin. The second is like a rainbow cake, where the local and the modern are placed side by side, arranged and repeated, then pasted together. The third is like a chemical mixture in a test tube, where the local and the modern are put together in the tube to be stirred and shaken to form a completely new 'species' of architecture that no longer carries the characteristic of the local and the modern (Sopandi, 2014). It is a valid question for Indonesian architects to find a liberating framework that escapes the repeated patterns Sopandi pinpoints. Moreover, in the way the analogies are collated, it seems that Sopandi also challenges the idea that the 'ingredients' of architecture are always a 'thing', a tangible object that can be manipulated, and therefore the result will never be far from physical translation. It might be conflicting for the architects to let go of the physical aesthetic, as they are trained to appreciate 'beauty', mainly as it is an apparent media to give the impression that is recognisable for everyday people. Sometimes to make this beauty, the essence of 'locality' has to be negotiated. Therefore the use of faux material, for instance, to maintain the look of thatch, timber or rattan, becomes something treated as a trade-off; an opposite to "*Pulchrum splendour est veritatis*" (beauty is a radiation of a truthfulness) that Mangunwijaya had always emphasized (Mangunwijaya, 2013, p. 20). If this is the case, then architecture is designed to be a spectacle, an attraction rather than a product of culture, and the role of the people as the culture maker is omitted making architecture become further disconnected from its culture.

The urge to embed 'meaning' in architecture, through various metaphorical and analogical superficial objects, is also seen as the 'cancer of architecture' (Horayangkura, 2010, p. 65), mainly if the end goal is to sell architecture. Sean Griffiths (2018) calls it the 'disease of our time' as this bogus meaning only leads to architecture commodification by "bolt[ing] some sort of superfluous, immediate and fully formed signification onto things ... [that] otherwise have none" to create architecture that has "no more value than that of an image printed on a souvenir tea towel" (Griffiths, 2018). This metaphorical approach is also challenged further:

"...these applied significations only represent ideas about something outside of the reality of the object. They are purely mental constructions. Their meanings have no grounding in material reality, hence they are superficial and unstable in nature." (Griffiths, 2018).

He underlines that meaning is arbitrary thus does not represent the contemporary reality, therefore either it is Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's duck or decorated shed (Kohlstedt, 2016), building's crass metaphor and meaning has nothing to do with how the building would accommodate people and their habitation, and how the living culture will continue in it. It is counterproductive to the main aim of architecture to provide an environmental improvement for human beings, as Sopandi notes that a successful contextual design is when the architect understands the real potencies and problems of the area and the community around the site, then manages to bring maximum advantage for the people amidst any hurdles and restrictions on the project. The meaning conveyed through design narration, he added, was better left concealed to let people interpret the architecture based on their senses and knowledge without any prior framing from the architects (S. Sopandi 2017, pers. comm., 16 September).

To counter the 'gimmickisation' of architecture, social contribution becomes a language accentuated to 'neutralise' the capitalism in the profession. Many architects have built and spread awareness of the duty of the architect as a profession to contribute to the betterment of the community, and they took their own method in applying it: Prawoto's craftsmanship approach to employing local skill, Sing's experimental cheap housing to find an alternative housing solution for the poor, Djuhara's low-budget houses to help people with limited money to have small yet comfortable houses. Aside from these directions, some architects showed some different views in understanding the social aspect of architecture. Hendropurnomo (B. Hendropurnomo 2017, pers. comm., 28 September) and Matin (A. Matin 2017, pers. comm., 26 August 2017), for instance, explained that their social contribution was by designing public buildings that could be used and experienced by people from different social and economic backgrounds, regardless of the functions, the methods, and the problems they dealt with. Although questionable, it shows a different attitude in the spectrum of social architecture, that dealing with social issues, for some reasons, is reduced to merely being about providing a place to gather, as

if it would not pose any difference if it were a shopping mall, a mosque, a library, or a park. It seemed like the problem of social gaps and barriers was not addressed in this sense, that social inclusivity was not part of the parameter of these stances. Moreover, it seems that the social side of architecture can be explored more easily in a smaller project, with a more specific group of people to accommodate; a more precise problem appears to be tackled; and there is a more room for the architects to experiment in the thinking processes, conceptions and designs. Listening to the explanations of the interviewees, there was a sense of being more profound, more rooted and more genuine when one did a smaller project compared with when one did the big one. Yu Sing, for instance, explained deeper and more intimately when he mentioned his ‘unpopular’ projects dealing with local people exploring local material, compared to his extravagant projects like the Phinisi Tower and the Wikasatrian building that have been seen as ‘ideal’ examples of Nusantara Architecture. There was a superficiality in the way he explained the two famous projects compared to the smaller local projects, although Sing then argued that it was something typical in architectural design to have a slight superficiality, as design could be started either from the contextual problem or from the initial conception proposed by the architects (Y. Sing 2017, pers. comm., 11 August) (see Chapter VII.2 for elaboration about the ‘tolerated’ arbitrariness of the architect as a profession).

In this case, Frampton’s critical regionalism becomes a relevant critique, particularly for Nusantara Architecture, a direction that he terms as Neo-Historicist. In this case, he argues that the initial intention of preserving culture will end up by degrading it. Frampton mentions:

“...the rich seams of our cultural heritage will soon be exhausted, burnt out, particularly when a cannibalized lexicon of eclectic historical reference, freely mixed with modernist fragments and formalist banalities, serves as the superficial gilt with which to market architecture, to situate it finally as one more item within an endless field of free-floating commodities and images”
(Frampton, 1987, pp. 375-377).

Frampton highlights the need to liberate architecture from sentimentalised traditionalism as it might mean representing bourgeois aesthetics, and for this reason, taking a critical approach is essential. Understanding the brisk movement of the culture is a prerequisite before capturing it through architecture, but there are always more questions entailed. How do architects decide which culture to promote? Is there anything called a ‘bad’ culture that needs to be avoided? Who would have the right to make a choice? If posting pictures on social media has become a new culture of the people, is Frampton’s critique of reducing architecture as ‘scenography’ still relevant? If the people can only develop a sense of belonging to the building that is visually familiar to them, is ocular-centrism in architecture still to be considered a bad thing? To what extent architects should resist the hegemony of capitalism while the profession itself is part of capitalism? Aside from all these questions, it is also

important to critically question the idea of identity itself, where critical and analytical approaches should be employed in refining our understanding in the future search for answers of 'who we are' and 'what do we do' as Indonesians.

VII.5. Conclusion: Nusantara Architecture as a practical notion in approaching the Indonesian context and locality in architectural design

This chapter has elaborated the conception of Nusantara Architecture in terms of design translation. Indonesian architects have conveyed their preferences for either going with Nusantara Architecture, Indonesian Architecture, or disregarding both as they treated the two merely as labels. What was interesting was that regardless of the positioning, all architects that I interviewed illustrated a somewhat similar understanding that what mattered in design is to approach the local contexts. All of them agreed that grounding architecture to its site was the most crucial matter in making the architecture 'local', and in doing so, there were at least five aspects that were brought about rather extensively and repetitively by the architects:

- tropical context,
- local material,
- traditional culture,
- contemporary challenges, and
- nature and ecology.

Each architect approached these contextual aspects differently, some might show opposition to each other, and this was seen as acceptable variations, remembering that their choices depicted their biases which were influenced by many aspects of their life (e.g. their past experiences, past educations, perception of identity, moods and preferences). It is therefore difficult to pinpoint what they should and should not do in terms of design, yet at the end, it is how the designs respond to the contexts and how each contributes to the betterment of the community (culturally, socially, politically and economically) are the fair way to assess the design, rather than basing it on particular visual vogue, technological obsession or symbolism fetish. The unfit 'answer' to a specific contextual problem would only lead to another form of problems that contributes to the worsening of the 'wicked' problems.

The architects have displayed that they went with their understanding in translating Nusantara Architecture, or Indonesian Architecture, into designs, and in many cases, their viewpoints did not always align with the scholarly understanding of the concepts. The way they took a similar approach in either designing Nusantara Architecture or Indonesian Architecture showed that the uproars in

contesting the two terms did not affect the design translations. It leads us to an understanding of why some architects showed some scepticism toward the development of conceptions, as no matter how the two terms were perceived, the architects eventually would use the same approach and method in translating it into a building. In this case, the conception of Nusantara Architecture that has been extensively contested among scholars might lose its significance in the designerly perspective, particularly as aside from the traditionalist direction, it does not inform any specificities that can be useful for the development of contemporary architecture.

From the list that constitute the contextual aspects referred to in design, it is apparent that the tangible and physical aspects dominate the architects' conception of 'being local', and it is too essentialist to claim that these aspects alone could represent locality. The locality is a big complicated word, as it encompasses various intertwined aspects that are poorly described and barely understood. Therefore responding to climate and local materials, for instance, should have been instinctually embedded in the design, but not the end goal of the design itself. Local climate and materials are indeed part of the locality, but these are just small bits of what constitutes locality itself, and they should not shift the focus from contributing to solution of the actual problems in the community that go way beyond physical and stylistic problems. Embracing locality means capturing what happens in people's everyday life, including their position and negotiation over opportunities and threats as part of their daily struggle, and these all should not be reduced to be solely about climate, material, or traditional-related look. Architects, albeit is challenging, are expected to maximise the positive contribution and minimise the negative effects caused by the presence of the building. Therefore, a rigorous study of the context, preferably incorporating participatory process, is required before making any design decision.

There is a different depth between the scholarly and designerly perspectives in dealing with the conception of Nusantara Architecture. The architects' standpoints seem to be strangled in the practical side of architectural design, that hinders them from exploring more extensively the intangible aspects. The fact that, at the end, architecture has to be transferred into drawing to be constructed into a building, is why I argue pragmatism itself is inherent in the profession. It is where I question how we should situate architecture among other design disciplines, as architecture has a strong humanistic dimension that should suffuse the whole thinking process for each building is a container of human life. Design, on the other hand, has been illustrated, at least by Nigel Cross and Bryan Lawson, as closer to the knowledge of 'making things', thus practical, pragmatic and putting forward knowledge of 'how to make' rather than 'what to make'. These are two contrasting natures of knowledge, and what is interesting is to combine them in the conception of 'architectural design'. It

has been debated how architects should treat architectural design: does it lean toward architecture's humanism or design's pragmatism? From my observation, architectural design has been treated more like a sterile process relying on design knowledge, particularly with the rapid development of design and construction methods that are related to parametric and digital development. It is a challenge for architecture scholars and professionals to delve into the essence and the purpose of architecture, and further situate the discipline to, ideally, incorporate the two natures of the discipline.

Chapter VIII

Recontesting Indonesia's Architectural Identity in the 20th Century Context

VIII.1. Introduction

Throughout the history of Indonesia, the construction of a specific architectural identity has become part of the political language used in extending power domination of the political regimes. Sukarno and Suharto have shown examples of how architecture could be used as an instrument to convey political messages, both to the people in the country and to the international world. Employing different architectural languages in crafting what was perceived to be the country's national identity, Sukarno and Suharto have demonstrated how powerful architecture can be in directing, regulating, controlling, and even silencing, people in accordance to the political will of the authorities. However, the post-Suharto political landscape showed different dynamics, as the translation of architectural identity was no longer monopolised by the authority as the sole actor. The freedom of speech that was fought for in the 1999 mass demonstrations, which then led to a riot in all over the country, has shifted the architectural identity contestation, since everyone could make their own interpretation of how architecture represented their identity. The development of architecture then became even more fluid and diverse when capitalism showed its influence on how architecture should have been understood. The manifestation of architectural identity became more contrast and segmented, highlighting the gap of socio-economic classes that distanced the poor from the rich. With industrial architecture gained in popularity, unification became apparent, followed by disneyfied islands of gated residentials, creating the urge to revisit of how architecture, culture and identity should be understood in the contemporary social-political context.

The emergence of Nusantara Architecture can be considered as one of the reactions over this anxiety of the threat in 'losing' the local identity. Nusantara Architecture, as understood by its proponents, voices the resistance over the domination of modern industrial architecture. Indonesian architects and architecture scholars then initiated a movement to refer back to 'culture' and 'tradition' as repertoires for architectural design. This movement was strategically captured by a private sector which aimed to promote this struggle for the company's rebranding purposes. This was when the government took part, extending the business-oriented motives in the production of what seemingly represents the nation's architectural identity. It makes the development of Nusantara Architecture is different from what happened in the era of Sukarno and Suharto. Not only that capitalism governs

the direction of contemporary national identity, unlike the previous era in which power domination underpinned how architectural identity was crafted, but the current political era also allows more actors and stakeholders to take part in the discussion and the shaping of the country's national identity. The authorities, the academics, the professionals, the private sectors and even the lay people can freely share their opinions of their version of national identity. In this case, Nusantara Architecture becomes a point of dispute in this debate. This situation leads to an open contestation that, unlike a somewhat dictatorial way of Sukarno and Suharto in asserting their official version of architectural identity, the current era of Jowo Widodo allows debates and competitions in the formation of the 'ideal' representation of architectural identity. In this case, the domination of the government in directing the nation's architectural identity is concealed and masked, hidden behind the seemingly democratic plan of the Ten new Bali program and the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition series. The government's top-down planning, if not coercion, is maintained, yet it is wrapped up with populist and egalitarian narratives that successfully captivate people, especially since Widodo has been seen as a political leader that is associated with proletarian.

If Suharto used traditional culture as an instrument to shift people's attention from politics, Widodo uses it to suppress the threat of radicalism in the country. Traditional realms act as a sanctuary from which people can retain their pride and their sense of belonging to Indonesia as a culturally rich country. This pride can also lead to a narrow understanding of how culture and tradition should be perceived, especially with various geopolitical dynamics that add tensions to maintain and protect what is considered as the 'assets' of the country. The rapid competition of cultural tourism, especially among South East Asian countries who 'sell' somewhat similar indigeneities, and the intense frictions of culture claiming problems, especially with Malaysia, have created an urge among Indonesian people to preserve the authentic traditional artefacts. These overlapping forces put traditional realm under the spotlight, and Nusantara Architecture gains momentum to shine amidst these political dynamics. Once again, architectural discourses and the design communities take refuge under the safe place of the ideal traditional architecture, away from the complexity of social, political and economic tension of marginalised communities like the urban vernaculars and the villagers.

This thesis has explored the conception of Nusantara Architecture adjacent to the various internal and external factors that directly or indirectly shape the understanding of the conception. The previous chapters of this thesis have discussed the construction of Nusantara Architecture as a recently re-emerged conception proposed as an alternative direction in imagining the country's architectural identity. Developing quite extensively since the 2011 Wae Rebo preservation project, Nusantara Architecture has gained in popularity among Indonesian architects and architectural

academics. It has become part of the Indonesian government's identity politics, attached to national tourism programmes and displayed in various national and international campaigns. The far-reaching spread of this term at the national level, despite its vagueness in definition, has become one of the main drives in conducting this research, which is intended to attain a better understanding of what Nusantara Architecture is as a mental conception that operates concerning a national identity construction.

The literature review chapter (Chapter II) discusses Edward Said's Orientalism, Lawrence Vale's national identity and Kenneth Frampton's critical regionalism that become the underpinning theories for my analysis in this thesis. These theories help to probe the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' not only as an architectural terminology, but also as a product of social, political and historical exercises or, in other words, as part of the discipline of Humanities, rather than a pure design and engineering exercise. In this sense, Nusantara Architecture, as an architectural identity conception, should be situated in a broader context of people's everyday social-political tensions, taking account of the intricacies in which power and authority determine the national identity representation. The inclination to flatten architecture into a visual object, as one of the signs of the hegemony of capitalism, is also questioned, while teasing out the conception of regionalism that once became a trend among third world countries. Moreover, the entrenched exoticism, as a result of dichotomous thinking (a legacy of colonisation), becomes one important topic to be challenged, mainly to question the prevalent assumption that there is an 'authentic Indonesia', whose root is from traditional architecture, that is different from the 'West'. This prevailing presupposition, which becomes characteristic of postcolonial countries, renders the direction to which the translation of identity is heading. In the case of Nusantara Architecture, the portrayal of architectural identity is ingrained within the imagining of traditional architecture as the pristine 'core', of even the 'DNA' (Adiyanto, 2018, p. B015), of architecture in Indonesia. This conjecture, however, as I follow Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage in looking at identity conception, is very much problematic as it creates a disjunction with the fact that culture and identity are moving and changing, or are better treated as verbs rather than nouns. The idea of idealising one particular culture as 'the right way of living' of Indonesian people is similar to freezing one particular culture that can be dragged along, whether with modification, adaptation or hybridisation, to be applied in the contemporary context in which the architecture sits.

The rest of the chapters in this thesis comprehensively discuss Nusantara Architecture, from the historical account of identity construction in Indonesia, including the problematic identity articulation at national and international level (Chapter IV); the history of 'Nusantara' and 'Nusantaran

Architecture', including the way Indonesian academics perceive the conception from contrasting perspectives (Chapter V); the government's political moves in incorporating Nusantara Architecture as a slogan for its political campaign and economic gain (Chapter VI); and the way the term is manifested into built form, including the professional architects' standpoint in translating the term (Chapter VII). Each chapter puts the above topics adjacent to the theoretical frameworks employed in this thesis, most of the time in a contrasting manner, to generate critical discussions and further expand the understanding of the term 'Nusantaran Architecture', highlighting the constructivist view that endorses critique and discussion to always question any arguments presented. This chapter then summarises, and further concludes, what the previous chapters have elaborated, by pinpointing the key findings in this thesis, and further exploring the suggestions and the possibility of future works that can be conducted as an extension of this work.

The first section focuses on positioning the term 'Nusantara' and 'Nusantaran Architecture' in a clearer platform, to better situate the two conceptions in a broader historical, social and political context of the country. The next section emphasises the necessity to escape the binary thinking that has become a legacy of colonialism. In this case, Said's Orientalism underpins the analysis in challenging the dogmatic view of Nusantara Architecture which suggests traditional building methods as 'the most appropriate' to be perceived as the country's architectural identity, regardless of the variations and modifications entailed. The next section focuses on summarising the problematic conception of 'being contextual' in architectural design, shown in various architectural projects deemed as contextual buildings. The section investigates the concept of contextuality that has mostly been translated within a narrow perspective, a global phenomenon that, in Frampton's critical regionalism, is affected by the domination of visual sense and the hegemony of capitalism. This chapter, hence this thesis, concludes by teasing out the possible future development of this study, including pinpointing some limitations of this work.

VIII.2. Positioning 'Nusantara' and 'Nusantaran Architecture'

The dynamic of Indonesia's architectural identity construction that was started in the era of the Dutch colonials has led to the emergence of contemporary Nusantara Architecture. Initiated to escape the vagueness of the term Indonesian Architecture, contemporary Nusantara Architecture is championed as a dual-identity alternative, as a body in which the so-called the 'essence' of the country's culture, or the traditional, can be hybridised with contemporary development, or the modern. Despite being contested, this conception is deemed successful in representing the 'authentic'

Indonesian culture and in teasing out people's sense of belonging to the country. The development of this conception has been far-reaching in the architectural discourse, as it is amplified not only by the academics, but also by the architects and the government, that involves massive publication and media coverage at the national and international level. The conception of Nusantara Architecture has been strategically adopted by the government to support the national tourism project of the Ten New Bali, with the idea of 'selling' the local culture to gain financial benefits, both for the country and for the local people, while 'preserving' local culture that is threatened by modernism. In the discussion, I consider the series of Nusantara Architecture Design Competitions as an official attempt to recreate an architectural identity, thus, in a way, a part of nation-building projects under President Joko Widodo. Scrutinising this political agenda, aside from the main discussion of what Nusantara Architecture is, is essential to see a bigger picture where the idea of authenticity is constructed by people in power, a world phenomenon that, according to Lawrence Vale, is ubiquitous not only in the global south context, but in almost all the world's nations. In the case of Indonesia, what is done with Nusantara Architecture creates a similar paternalistic storyline, repeating the history of other nation-building projects undertaken by previous presidents, particularly Sukarno and Suharto.

In general, I conclude that both terms 'Nusantara' and 'Nusantaran Architecture' are confused understandings, as both definitions have been taken for granted due to people's over-familiarity with them. The terms are omnipresent and have all-pervading effects in many aspects of the country, and even the phrase 'Nusantara' is stated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the highest constitution of the country. Yet despite the extensive use, most of the adoptions, if not all, are similarly vague and groundless, as none offers an elaborated understanding or definition that can pin down the meaning of the term. In the discussion, I recognise the malleability of the term 'Nusantara', a special trait of the term that is, in a way, present as a result of a long and pervasive indoctrination by the government. This versatility makes the term adaptable to be used in various contexts, either as a cultural, territorial, historical, ideological, political, or geographical concept, and even the first president, Sukarno, declared this term as comparable to religion, citizenship and even nationalism. Yet, however fluid, these understandings mostly come with dogmatic views, as the term Nusantara has been glorified obsequiously for decades in an uncritical way that takes out the necessity to question 'what is it really?' about this term, or why one should use this term to delineate contemporary culture and identity. Some questions remain unanswered, like a question of why one should still drag along the term that was coined seven centuries ago to represent the contemporary identity; or why it is the Majapahit Kingdom to be referred to in the choice of terminology, while Indonesia had many glorified kingdoms, including Mataram Islam that represented the biggest Islamic kingdom in the country (and the fact that Indonesia is a Muslim majority country); or how the term is

deemed to be the manifestation of the country's diversity, while there is a strong Javacentrism, hence ancient imperialism and contemporary domination, entailed that calls for disputes from areas outside Java Island. These unanswered questions put the term in a hot seat, scrutinised for its paradoxical effects: it feels like enabling, liberating and empowering when articulated as an ideological and philosophical conception; but somehow limiting, restrictive and unproductive when attached to another discipline to create a new term out of it, as in Nusantara Architecture. Any effects, however liberating or restrictive, are a result of a long process of abstraction and entrancement, with some dictations and insinuations in which some propaganda motives is involved; thus it is essential to recognise that the value embedded within the terms are constructed and open for disputation. Seeing the terms, both 'Nusantara' and 'Nusantaran Architecture', as finite and settled terminology is therefore flawed and only leads to distorted narrations and inaccurate conclusions.

To untwine the vagueness of the term 'Nusantara', I suggest that there are two different conceptions of Nusantara that have been interlaced, overlaying each other, and used rather interchangeably in constructing the understanding of the term. The 'pre-colonial Nusantara' points to the area comprising most of the Southeast Asian archipelago that was once aimed to be united under the authority of the Majapahit Kingdom, articulated in Gajah Mada's Palapa Oath. This conception of Nusantara was constructed elucidating the King's political ambition to expand the kingdom's authority, and despite insufficient evidence of whether or not the target was accomplished, this conception has been narrated as the most glorious era in the history of Indonesia. The 'post-independence' Nusantara, on the other hand, refers to the area inside the national border of Indonesia, a conception constructed by Mohammad Yamin for political purposes in the era when potential disintegration was the main issue for the country. With accentuating the narration of glorious 'pre-colonial' Nusantara, this conception was adopted as the official translation of Nusantara that was then asserted in the curricula and, in a way, indoctrinated in the younger generations. Looking at the distinctions, I argue that the two conceptions refer to different entities, are based on different histories, are constructed for different purposes, and focus on different aspects; therefore the two should not be used interchangeably. The contemporary development of the term reveals that the intertwined conception of 'pre-colonial' and 'post-independence' Nusantara has caused a severe confusion of what it is that the term 'Nusantara' tries to pinpoint, including in the term 'Nusantaran Architecture'. As the term has largely been used with no specificity, it becomes an arduous job to situate the term in broader academic discussions, especially that contemporary Nusantara has been intentionally sterilised from political aspects, and with chauvinistic narrations shadowing the conception, the term becomes further detached from the world's geopolitical dynamics.

As an effect of the far-reaching ideological meaning in the term 'Nusantara', it influences how the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' is internalised and perceived, despite the disjunction with broader knowledge constructions that create a problematic circumstance in positioning the term. Nusantara Architecture becomes a salient, if not essential, conception to render the architectural identity of the country, wrapped up with the narrative of idealism that is then labelled as 'the most appropriate' direction of the country's architectural development. While detaching itself from political discussion, Nusantara Architecture comfortably explores the cultural side of Indonesia, although understanding culture in this case is still heavily related to the past, the traditional, the exotic; something that is openly challenged by the opposers of the term. This problematic standpoint led me to investigate further, as I discuss in the next section.

VIII.3. Escaping the Orientalism: Breaking free from the colonial mould

As one of the main theories I use to base my arguments in this thesis, Orientalism has had a profound influence on how I explore the conception of Nusantara Architecture. As I mentioned earlier, there is a problematic positioning of Nusantara Architecture, not only that it is deemed as 'the most appropriate' culture for Indonesian ways of living, but also that it is mainly approached with a traditional, hence exotic, portrayal. This problem, I suggest, was started from the initial framing of the problem I tried to consider. By continuously demonising the West, Josef Prijotomo, the initiator of the term, and his fellow supporters seem to focus on initiating an 'Eastern-origin' knowledge that is sterile from the influence and, in a way, the domination, of Western theories. However, juxtaposing the East's traditionalism, deemed as innocent and benign, and the West's modernism, accused as wicked and aggressive, can lead to a trap of a severe simplification, when the theories raised within this framework are merely aimed to create a contrast to what they try to challenge, regardless of the factual context. If this is the case, then despite being labelled as representing Indonesia's architectural identity, the conception of Nusantara Architecture is fixated with creating a reversal of the West, accentuating the country's architectural polarity and distinctive traits, while, in a way, leaving out some factual contexts and disregarding the fact that there are tonnes of layers of reality that need to be embraced in constructing the conception of identity.

It is also essential to note that although glorifying the traditional might also look like an anti-thesis to Said's Orientalism, that the Orient is no longer seen in a derogatory view but rather in an emancipatory perspective, yet the dichotomous platform it employs marks the obstinate presence of Orientalism mutated in a new form. The 'traditional' in this case, that is representing the 'local', also evolves. It no

longer narrowly refers to traditional architecture but expands to any possible hybridisation between the traditional and the modern, hence I call it 'neo-exoticism' in the discussion. Yet, however progressive, it still stands on a platform of binary thinking, that there are East and West that need to be put against each other, that one is an antipole to the other. With the narration of 'us' versus 'them' underpinning the construction of Nusantara Architecture, romanticising the traditional, as an 'ideal' source of ideas to which any development of the country should refer, is to be expected, but as a consequence, it relies on partial arguments. It fails to embrace other complex realities within the country (e.g. rapid urbanisation, traffic jams and floods, mushrooming urban *kampung*, people's economic and political struggles, marginal people being scapegoated for urban problems, etc.) that mingle together, shaping the actual contemporary identity of the country. Idealising traditional architecture, wrapped up in illustrious grand narratives, does not create significant connections with these real-life problems, and this is why the claim of 'architectural identity' is very much arguable.

Moreover, there is also an irony in how identity construction is implemented. Using the Nusantara Architecture Design Competition as a platform to develop architectural identity translation, the government representatives somehow impose their understanding on what is 'good and appropriate' to be the face of the local people in the intended places. These representatives, either they are government staffs, prominent academia or big-name architects, formulated the terms of reference of the competition and judged the winners, as if they, and the regime they represent, play a role as the new 'Occident' and position the local people as the 'Orient', subordinate to the formerly 'Orient.' As the new Occident, the government freely advance themselves as competent to speak for the locals. They treat the local people as passive receivers, claiming that these people are not well aware of their own culture hence unable to speak for themselves about it. This is the sign that Orientalism is still being reproduced, despite the variations to align with the need of this era. The Orient is still marginalised and silenced, and is still treated as an object that can be orchestrated, as their 'theatrical' performance benefits the other party that is superior to them.

The strong assertion to the local people in implementing the Nusantara Architecture agenda signs a strong sense of power and authority plays in the conception. Nusantara Architecture is used, and somehow abused, for mainly instant economic gains, neglecting the fact that it jeopardises the natural process of culture-making. A new alien culture is constructed elsewhere and inserted into the local living culture, mainly to comply with the demands of capitalism, while extending the claim of cultural preservation as propaganda. In this case, I argue that 'selling' Nusantara Architecture for tourism creates a paradox, that although the construction of the term is started with the spirit of anti-imperialism, narrated in various anti-West portrayals, yet in contemporary development, the term is

now complying with capitalism, which is a form of neo-imperialism. Further, I also suggest that a manifestation of contemporary Orientalism, Nusantara Architecture, can be utilised as an instrument to adhere to the hegemony of capitalism, although this is in contrast to the aim of the initial purpose of Said's movement.

VIII.4. Contextual place-ness as a starting point in reimagining Indonesian architectural identity

Discussing the translation of architectural identity to design requires one to shift the mindset from philosophical to a more pragmatic level. In architectural design, despite the grandiose background story that legitimates the design decisions, the identity of a place is mainly translated as a contextual design, extending the idea of local architecture. Locality thus becomes a key to pin down architecture to its place and context, as a way to express the identity of the place. Although the definition of 'local' is also debatable, yet incorporating local material, local labour, local craftsmen, local culture and local rituals are deemed the 'most appropriate' methods in designing a building with an appropriate identity. Investigating the architects' standpoints reveals that no matter how wide and deep the discussion they offer in the interviews, their buildings, hence architectural designs, can never entirely escape from the profoundly-superficial layer of the aesthetics of architecture. In this case, the question of asserting 'meaning' of architecture is also questioned, as design narration that is pushed forward sometimes just becomes an instrument to justify, in a way legitimise, the architects' arbitrary aesthetic selections.

The contestation between Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture as a representation of national architectural identity is very much apparent among Indonesian architects. Although the distribution of the supporters and the opposers among architects is quite similar to the distribution of the scholars, architects are inclined to openly pick a side between the two terminologies and articulate their reasonings. One interesting finding in this research is that, regardless of their preference, either supporting Indonesian Architecture or Nusantara Architecture, all of them discuss contextual aspects when explaining what their designs refer to. There are at least five aspects that are profound in the discussion and are repeatedly mentioned, some receiving more emphasis than others. They are (listed from the most important):

- tropical climate;
- local material (craftsmanship);
- traditional culture;
- contemporary culture; and

- nature and ecology.

Although there are variations in how architects perceive it, and some viewpoints are even contradicting the others, these contextual traits are profoundly important in the design translation and have been treated as a validation of contextual design. This then raises a critical question: if there is no difference between Indonesian Architecture and Nusantara Architecture in terms of design translation, why does one need the term 'Nusantaran Architecture' in the first place? What does it aim to represent?

In the discussion, I argue that Nusantara Architecture is not a 'productive' conception in terms of translating design ideas into built form. It has an unexpected 'essentialist trap': to traditionalise architecture that treats culture as a frozen entity that can be unplugged from its context. In this case, visual resemblance and design narration become an instant label to tie the building to the context. As the term does not inform any specific form, style or method, in design, there is an intense subjectivity involved in any translation offered. This leads to further difficulties in deciding on parameters to define what is and what is not Nusantara Architecture, or to identify which architecture is considered Nusantara Architecture and which is not. Moreover, since the translation of Nusantara Architecture exercises more in creating a 'culture' representation rather than focusing on the people with their inherent ever-changing social-political tensions embedded in their daily struggles, therefore in some cases, any modification by the locals to their architecture is seen as contamination or deterioration of the 'original' local culture. The act of renovating, expanding and modernising their house is deemed inappropriate, in a way disregarding the constant challenges that the locals have to deal with (e.g. the family growing needs, the social pressure, the economic hardship due to high cost in maintaining traditional house). Understanding this complexity is essential in perceiving architecture, to make sure that similar simplification and fixation of any cultural representation can be avoided, embracing the fact that culture is continually moving and changing, and that there is no way to ever prevent it from changing.

VIII.5. Toward postcolonial thinking of Indonesian Architecture: Where to go from here?

From the entire argumentation I pose in this thesis, I point to gaps and flaws in the conception of Nusantara Architecture that 'weaken' its position in the discourse. Many questions have signified the shaky foundation the term has, mostly encircling the philosophical problems of the definition that inform not only the meaning carried by the name, but also the positioning in a broader world context. To resolve this, a pragmatic or practical perspective is no longer enough to provide satisfactory

explanations. Deconstructing the existing thinking of Nusantara Architecture is necessary to ask if it complies with an established social-political knowledge of world's history and whether or not this term is considered logical, legitimate and lucid enough to be adopted as part of arguments about Indonesia's architectural identity. It can serve as a direction for further research if the supporters of the term are willing to investigate more about the term's strengths and weaknesses, since any research developments, both from the supporting or the opposing arguments, are expected to make sure the discourse keeps rolling.

Throughout this thesis, I elaborate the trap of Orientalism in this identity construction as a sign that colonised thinking is still 'safe and sound' in contemporary Indonesia and dominates the identity imagining process of the country. Aligned with what is proposed by a majority of researchers, particularly in the Global-south countries, there is a potent need to escape the hegemony of the Western-dominated framework. The urge to see the West as a 'patron' in the identity construction needs to be challenged so that Indonesia's architectural identity can be contested without being fixated in the dualism of 'East and West'. The recent development of Nusantara Architecture is evidence that exoticising the country's image has become an excessive obsession, and rather chauvinistic, of the idea that oscillates between the 'modern' and the 'traditional'. Liberating the thinking from this binary is a must to embrace other initially neglected layers of people's lives in this identity construction. It is an excellent chance for further researches, not only to initiate a new direction of imagining the country's architectural identity, but also to contribute in constructing a framework that is free from the hegemony of colonialism; a framework that fits the contextual condition of the country as part of Global-south postcolonial states.

The experts' perspectives discussed in this thesis reveal their mind construction in understanding the concept of culture and identity. However, their perspectives mostly came from observations and investigations, despite thoroughly and meticulously, hence might be distant from the actual contestation among local people in their daily life struggles. Confining the interviewees' selection criteria to prominent architects and scholars makes the knowledge construction of Nusantara Architecture scrutinised in this thesis focuses on high-level narrations and contested discourse. This might be seen as the knowledge that is constituted by middle-class stakeholders. Laypeople's perspective, on the other hand, is not recorded here. This gap is another opportunity to be taken in further research to expand the discussion and include the locals' viewpoints that would complement this thesis and further enrich the discussion of the country's architectural identity.

This research only covers the phenomena of architectural identity making in Indonesia between 2016 and 2019 when I undertook the doctoral study. Many notable events happened in between and after that timeline that I do not take account of comprehensively due to time and financial limitations. Staggering events like the movement of Indonesia's capital city from Jakarta to Penajam Paser Utara dan Kutai Kertanegara becomes a crucial milestone in the discussion of architectural identity, as this mega project will be a platform for exercising the idea of 'being Indonesia'. Since 'identity' has been touched on as one of the criteria in the design competition for this project, it marks the presence of the reappearance of this issue at a national level, and it is interesting to see how the current government would perceive the country's identity and construct a representation of it. Further study is needed to delve deeper into this process to critically investigate how the new capital city will sit together with the local dynamics and how the presence of the new city contributes, or further alters, the established social-political culture of the locals; to see the method used and the actors involved in the process; to scrutinise the potential interests that play and direct the whole scenario of the translation process; and to inspect if the same patterns and directions that have been used in past Indonesia are being re-accentuated, or whether will this lead to a new path. Understanding this becomes crucial to comprehend the social-political process behind the most recent identity making in Indonesia so that national identity-making is no longer assessed from a pragmatic perspective, but incorporates broader intangible aspects. This becomes a potential topic for further study that can contribute to a broader discourse on national identity and architectural identity translations of it.

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Appendix A

Plain Language Statement and Informed Consent Form of the Research Interviews

Plain Language Statement

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning



Project:

INDONESIAN ARCHITECTS AND BEING INDONESIAN:

The Contemporary Nusantara Context in Architectural Design and Education

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

What is this research about?

The issue of Indonesian context and identity has been constantly discussed among Indonesian architects and scholars, as it has been constantly moving and changing. In today's Indonesia, modern architecture has provided a massive influence in the construction of collective social identity. In dealing with Nusantara context, architects must choose particular version of this notion among many other possibilities mostly depending on their personal preferences, biases, or even past experiences. This research will scrutinize these architects' and scholars' point of views, and ask what Nusantara architecture means for them.

In Indonesian architectural education, as required by the Indonesian government stated in the Draft of Architect Bill, and by APTARI (Indonesian Association of School of Architecture [IASA]) specified in a list of Generic, Specialized, and Unique Competencies, thus Indonesian architecture schools should incorporate the discussion of Indonesian local context and identity in their teaching syllabuses. So, as part of the connection between architectural education and the profession, Indonesian architecture schools have actively invited practicing architects to teach as guest lecturers, to contribute and

raise awareness of Indonesian local context and identity. This research will also examine what the invited architects have conveyed to students in lectures. Further, this research will directly consider schools' and academic approaches to Nusantara context, missions, and curricula.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate, we would ask you to participate in an interview, so we can get a more detailed picture of what your opinion about Nusantara architecture. We estimate that the total time commitment required of you would be approximately 60 minutes. With your permission, the interview would be digitally recorded so that we can make an accurate record of what you say. When the recording has been transcribed, you would be provided with a copy of the transcript, so that you can verify that the information is correct and/or request deletions.

What are the possible benefits?

This research will be beneficial for the improvement of Indonesian architecture curricula, to cast a light on the complexity in current attempts to define Nusantara identity through architecture. This research will also give benefit on the discussion of Indonesian and Nusantara architecture, as it will address the differences and the dialectics between the practitioner's and the educator's view, which have been largely overlooked.

What are the possible risks?

This research has low potential risk, as it employs general topics and the discussion will consider notions of Indonesian and Nusantara architecture and context.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

At your request, a brief summary of the findings will be sent to you once the thesis arising from this research has been completed.

What will happen to information about me?

We intend to protect the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. In the final report, you will be referred to by your name only if you give your permission, otherwise you will be referred to anonymously. The digital data will be kept in a password-protected computer file, and non-digital data will be kept securely in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning. The data will only be assessable to the Responsible Researcher, Co-Researcher, and Student Researcher.

During storage, the data might be used multiple times as a source for this thesis project and other future research that closely related to the topic. The possible use of this data is as a source of information for publication in journal articles, conference papers, or PhD thesis publication. The data will be kept for minimum 5 years after publication.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers; A/Prof Gregory Missingham (+61 3 83447043), Dr Amanda Achmadi (+61 3 90355377), or Diah A. Purwaningrum (+61 402096486 – rpurwaningru@student.unimelb.edu.au).

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Office for Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.

Plain Language Statement

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning



Proyek:

ARSITEK INDONESIA DAN KEINDONESIAANNYA:

Nusantara Masa Kini sebagai Konteks Desain dan Pendidikan Arsitektur

A/Prof Gregory Missingham (Penanggungjawab Peneliti)

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Pendahuluan

Terima kasih atas kesempatan yang Anda berikan untuk berpartisipasi dalam riset ini. Dokumen ini akan memberikan informasi lebih jauh mengenai proyek riset ini untuk membantu Anda memutuskan apakah akan bersedia berpartisipasi di dalamnya atau tidak.

Dimohon untuk dapat membaca informasi ini dengan hati-hati. Anda dapat bertanya mengenai hal apa saja yang kurang Anda mengerti. Partisipasi Anda bersifat sukarela. Anda dapat memilih untuk tidak berpartisipasi, dan Anda bisa membatalkan keterlibatan anda setiap saat, bahkan ketika proses riset sudah berjalan.

Tentang apakah riset ini?

Makna konteks dan identitas Indonesia selalu menjadi bahan diskusi diantara arsitek dan cendekia Indonesia, terutama mengenai bagaimana pemaknaan kedua konsep ini selalu bergerak dan berubah. Di Indonesia saat ini, modernitas dan kecanggihan teknologi telah memberi pengaruh besar dalam membentuk identitas kolektif masyarakat. Menyikapi hal ini, terutama dengan media diskursus Arsitektur Nusantara, para arsitek harus memilih fokus atau perspektif tertentu diantara banyaknya kemungkinan, dimana pilihan ini sedikit banyak dipengaruhi oleh pilihan pribadi, latar belakang pendidikan dan sosial, dan juga pengalaman masa lampau mereka. Riset ini ingin melihat lebih jauh bagaimana arsitek dan cendekia Indonesia melihat pemaknaan konteks dan identitas melalui desain dan pemikiran arsitektur.

Dalam dunia pendidikan, seperti dipersyaratkan oleh pemerintah dalam Rancangan Undang-Undang Arsitek, dan juga oleh APTARI (Asosiasi Pendidikan Tinggi Arsitektur Indonesia) yang tertuang dalam daftar Kemampuan Umum, Kemampuan Khusus, dan Kemampuan Lain, maka institusi pendidikan arsitektur di Indonesia diminta untuk memasukkan unsur konteks and identitas lokal dalam silabus pengajarannya. Maka dari

itu, dalam hubungannya antara profesi arsitek dan pendidikan arsitektur, sekolah arsitektur di Indonesia telah secara aktif mengundang para praktisi untuk memberikan kuliah tamu, untuk memberikan pengetahuan dan membangkitkan kesadaran akan pentingnya konteks dan identitas Indonesia. Karena itulah, riset ini juga ingin mempertanyakan apa sebenarnya yang disampaikan oleh para arsitek tersebut dalam kuliahnya. Lebih lanjut, riset ini juga akan melihat bagaimana pendekatan sekolah arsitektur di Indonesia secara akademik menyikapi permasalahan mengenai konteks Nusantara.

Apa yang akan saya lakukan jika berpartisipasi?

Jika Anda setuju untuk berpartisipasi, kami akan meminta Anda untuk bersedia diwawancara, sehingga kami dapat melihat lebih dalam bagaimana pendapat Anda mengenai Arsitektur Nusantara. Kami meminta kesediaan anda untuk dapat memberi komitmen waktu pada riset ini kurang lebih selama 60 menit. Dengan ijin Anda, wawancara akan kami rekam sehingga data akan dapat kami dokumentasikan dengan akurat. Setelah hasil wawancara ditranskripsikan, Anda akan mendapatkan satu salinan transkrip tersebut, sehingga Anda dapat memverifikasi apakah informasi yang tercantum sudah benar, atau jika ada informasi yang akan Anda hapuskan dari transkrip.

Apakah kemungkinan manfaat dari riset ini?

Riset ini akan membawa manfaat bagi pengembangan pendidikan arsitektur di Indonesia, untuk memberi gambaran yang lebih luas mengenai kompleksitas pemaknaan konteks dan identitas Indonesia melalui arsitektur. Riset ini juga akan memberi kontribusi dalam diskusi mengenai Arsitektur Indonesia dan Nusantara, terutama dalam melihat perbedaan pandangan dan dialektika diantara para praktisi dan pengajar arsitektur dalam memaknai identitas Indonesia.

Apakah kemungkinan resikonya?

Riset ini masuk dalam kategori riset beresiko rendah, karena topiknya berada dalam ranah umum dan diskusinya berkisar mengenai arsitektur dan konteks Indonesia dan Nusantara.

Apakah saya harus berpartisipasi?

Tidak. Partisipasi Anda bersifat sukarela. Anda dapat mengundurkan diri pada fase apapun, dan dapat menarik data yang telah Anda berikan.

Apakah saya akan mengetahui hasil riset ini?

Dengan permintaan anda, dokumentasi singkat mengenai hasil riset ini akan dikirimkan kepada Anda ketika tesis yang berkaitan dengan riset ini telah selesai.

Apa yang akan terjadi dengan informasi mengenai diri saya?

Kami berkomitmen untuk sepenuhnya menjaga kerahasiaan dari respon yang Anda berikan, sebagaimana ditentukan oleh hukum. Dalam laporan akhir, nama Anda akan

disebutkan sebagai sumber jika Anda memberikan ijin, atau akan disebutkan sebagai 'tanpa nama (*anonymous*)' jika Anda tidak memberikan ijin. Data digital akan disimpan dalam file komputer bersandi (*password*), dan data fisik akan disimpan dalam lemari terkunci di Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning The University of Melbourne. Data yang tersedia hanya akan dapat diakses oleh Penanggungjawab Peneliti, Peneliti Pendamping, dan Mahasiswa Peneliti.

Pada masa penyimpanan, data wawancara ini mungkin akan digunakan lebih dari satu kali untuk proyek tesis ini dan juga penelitian lain di waktu mendatang yang memiliki topik serupa. Data ini akan digunakan sebagai sumber informasi untuk penulisan artikel jurnal, paparan konferensi, atau publikasi tesis. Data tersebut akan disimpan selama minimal 5 tahun setelah publikasi.

Bagaimana saya mendapatkan informasi lebih lanjut?

Jika Anda membutuhkan informasi lebih lanjut mengenai riset ini, silahkan menghubungi A/Prof Gregory Missingham (+61 3 83447043), Dr Amanda Achmadi (+61 3 90355377), atau Diah Asih Purwaningrum (+61 402 096 486 – email: rpurwaningru@student.unimelb.edu.au).

Siapa yang dapat saya hubungi jika saya memiliki kekhawatiran mengenai riset ini?

Riset ini telah disetujui oleh the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. Jika Anda memiliki permasalahan atau keluhan mengenai pelaksanaan riset ini, dimana Anda tidak ingin menyampaikan langsung kepada tim riset, Anda dapat menghubungi Manajer Human Research Ethics, Office for Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 atau Email: HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au. Semua keluhan Anda akan dirahasiakan. Dalam penyampaian keluhan, mohon menyebutkan nama tim riset terkait, atau nomer ID etik.

Consent Form

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning



Project:

INDONESIAN ARCHITECTS AND BEING INDONESIAN:

The Contemporary Nusantara Context in Architectural Design and Education

Primary Researcher: A/Prof Gregory Missingham

Co Researchers: Dr Amanda Achmadi

Student Researcher: Diah Asih Purwaningrum M.Sc

Name of Participant: _____

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.
2. I understand that the purpose of this research is to investigate the notions of Nusantara architecture in the Indonesian architectural profession and architectural education.
3. I understand that my participation in this project is for research purposes only.
4. I acknowledge that the possible effects of participating in this research project have been explained to my satisfaction.
5. In this project I will be required to be interviewed.
6. I understand that my interviews may be audio taped.
7. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this project anytime without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data that I have provided.
8. I understand that the data from this research will be safely stored at the University of Melbourne and will be kept for minimum 5 years after publication.
9. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements; my data will be password protected and accessible only by the named researchers.
10. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form, it will be retained by the researcher.

Participant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

HREC Number: 1749710.1 Project Start Date: 15 August 2017 Version: 2

Surat Persetujuan

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning



Proyek:

ARSITEK INDONESIA DAN KEINDONESIAANNYA:

Konteks Nusantara Kontemporer pada Desain dan Pendidikan Arsitektur

Penanggungjawab Peneliti: A/Prof Gregory Missingham

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Tanda Tangan Partisipan: _____ **Tanggal:** _____

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Appendix B

List of interviewees

	Academics/ scholars		Professional architects		The government representation and related organisations	
	Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
From Java Island	Prof. Josep Prijotomo	Institut Teknologi Surabaya (ITS)	Yori Antar	Han Awal and Partner	Setiadi Sopandi	Design critic, Pelita Harapan University (UPH)
	Prof. Iwan Sudradjat	Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)	Adi Purnomo	Mamostudio	Adib Abadi	Head of Indonesian Association of School of Architecture (APTARI)
	Indah Widiastuti, PhD		Budiman Hendropurnomo	DCM Indonesia	David Utama	Design critic, Inisiator of Critical Context
	Dr. Eng. Arif Sarwo Wibowo,		Eko Prawoto	Eko Prawoto Architecture Workshop	Anneke Prasyanti	Team Leader for Homestay Development Acceleration Task Force, Ministry of Tourism, Jakarta
	Prof. Antariksa	Brawijaya University (UB)	Yu Sing	Akanoma Studio	Yuwono Imanto	Director of PT. Propan Raya, Jakarta
	Agung Murti Nugroho, Ph.D		Andra Matin	Andra Matin Architect	Catrini Pratihari Kubontubuh	Executive Director of Arsari Djojohadikusumo Foundation
	Abraham M. Ridjal, MT		Ahmad Tardiyana	Urbane Indonesia	Prof. Kacung Marijan	President Commissioner of PT Taman Wisata Candi Borobudur, Prambanan, dan Ratu Boko (PT TWC)
	Prof. Gunawan Tjahjono	University of Indonesia (UI)	Danny Wicaksono	Studiosadar	Dr. Harjono	Ex-Constitutional Judge, Airlangga University (Unair)
	Ikaputra, Ph.D	Gadjah Mada University (UGM)	Aditya Wiratama	AW Architect		
	Diananta Pramitasari, Ph.D		Ary Indra	Aboday		
From outside Java Island	Prof. M. Nawawiy Loebis	North Sumatra University (USU)	Ramadhoni Dwipayana	Simon+Dhoni Studio		
	Isnen Fitri, M.Eng					
	Dr. Bani Noor Muchamad	Lambung Mangkurat University (Unlam)	Fakhri Anhar	IAI - South Kalimantan Branch		
	Dr. Ira Mentayani					
	Naimatul Aufa, Msc,					
	Ria Wikantari Rosalia, PhD	Hasanuddin University (Unhas)	M Sudjar Adityadjaja	PT. Panrita Sembilan		
	Prof. A. A. Ayu Oka Saraswati	Udayana University (Unud)	Popo Danes	Popo Danes Architect		
	Maulana Ibrahim, PhD	Khairun University (Unkhair)	Ichsan Teng	IAI - Maluku Utara Branch		

Note. Written by Author, 2019

Appendix C

The Balinese people against the Teluk Benoa reclamation plan

The Teluk Benoa reclamation plan is a development scheme as an extension of tourism development plan in South Bali that was initiated after the President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono signed a Government Regulation Number 51/2014 that changed the status of Benoa Bay from 'conservation area' to 'revitalisation area'. In this plan, the government proposed to make 12 new artificial islands with the area of 700 hectares in Benoa Bay, and to achieve this, 40 million meter cubic of sands would be imported from outside the area ("Kisruh di Pulau Dewata: Sebagian Warga Bali Tolak Reklamasi Teluk Benoa," 2016). The development would include a golf course, a Disneyesque amusement park and a car racing circuit that were projected to become new tourism attractions in South Bali. This grand design, however, was wrapped up with a narration of protecting mangrove forests in the Benoa area while opening new working vacancies for local people. Instead of accepting this appealing offer, Balinese people from different backgrounds and different regions gathered and formed a social alliance called ForBALI (*Forum Rakyat Bali Tolak Reklamasi*- Forum of Balinese People Against Reclamation) to fight the government's decision that granted a permit to PT. Tirta Wahana Bali International- PT.TWBI, owned by Indonesian tycoon Tomy Winata, to initiate the reclamation process.

In this resistance, the locals develop a sense to put the central government as the antagonist who "wants to exploit Balinese resources" hence needs to be stopped and Bali Island needs to be protected (Vali, n.d.). In their argument, ForBALI emphasises that this reclamation project would only cause social jealousy between South Bali, which has always been the government's priority for development, and the other regions in Bali. This plan will also worsen the social condition in South Bali that is already very dense, especially if there will be 200 thousand more workers predicted to come to the area to fill in the vacancies and not to mention the number of tourists who will populate the area. Traffic congestion is also predicted to get worse in South Bali, remembering that Bali has not developed any good mass transportation system. ForBALI also problematizes the purpose of opening a new hotel complex when Bali has suffered from room oversupply in the last few years, and the reason for creating a massive number of job vacancies as Bali's unemployment rate has been very low. Moreover, this plan is also considered bad news for the fisherman, as they might lose their job if the islands are built. The sacredness of Teluk Benoa, with its 24 Hindu temples in the surrounding area, is also under

the threat since this Disney-fication plan is the exact contrast to the expected preservation project. Environmental issue is also raised, as creating new islands means destroying the existing coral reefs, potentially raising the seawater level and creating a new threat from people in the area, especially that Teluk Benoa is an estuary for three rivers ("Kisruh di Pulau Dewata: Sebagian Warga Bali Tolak Reklamasi Teluk Benoa," 2016). Finally, after five years of dispute, on August 2018, the reclamation was finally stopped and this was considered as a "victory for Balinese people" and was seen as a reminder of the need to "criticise the unfair development" which accuses private investors of ignoring the interest of Balinese people and Balinese environment (Gumilang, 2018).

This strong resistance illustrates how, in some cases, the government, consciously or not, overlooks the actual social condition of society and solely focuses on the numerical data in making a plan for the society. This reclamation plan displays the government intentions to focus on economic development from tourism without really considering the tangible and intangible costs of the projects that have to be borne by the locals. The social cost, in particular, is concerning, especially if the 200thousand job vacancies would then be filled by non-locals, probably mostly Javanese. It can add to the existing tension between (Hindu) Balinese and (Muslim) Javanese people especially after the Bali bombing on 12 October 2002. Leo Howe explains that this atrocity has brought the local people's hatred to the surface and has revealed the previously concealed social friction on the island which has always been called 'paradise'. He mentions:

"...it was more recent migrants, mostly Muslims from Java and elsewhere in Indonesia working and living in the tourist areas and towns of south Bali, who quickly became targets for retaliation by Balinese Hindus. For several decades these migrant workers have been blamed for most of the crime, drug abuse, prostitution and other social ills besetting modern Bali. Ask many Balinese about these issues and the stereotypical reply is that 'Balinese people do not do such things, it must be orang jawa' – other Indonesians, though not necessarily Javanese" (Howe, 2005, p. 1).

Howe's statement discloses the developing antipathy between the locals and the migrants in Bali. Tourism has brought new people to the area, not only outsiders as visitors but also outsiders who want to migrate and make a living from tourism activities. This creates a massive change in the social, cultural and political constellation of the place, and the readiness of the people to accept the change is hence challenged. Therefore, tourism has to be measured not only for its numerical effect as for economic contribution but also for its social effect to the people. Even Bali, which has been idealised as an exemple of successful tourism development in Indonesia, carries concealed problems that can be a time bomb hidden in the harmonious appearance of the people. Therefore, since the government intends to multiply the 'success' of Bali to other ten new destinations, it is important that the 'negative

side-effect' of tourism is recognised and further prevented so that the same problem would not appear in other areas.

Glossary

10 destinasi wisata prioritas	Ten Priority of Tourism Destination; another term for the Ten New Bali
Akal tak Sekali Datang, Runding tak Sekali Tiba	Reason and Negotiation Never Come Just Once; a theme for Indonesia's pavillion in the Venice Art Biennale 2019
Akar Warisan Budaya	The roots of cultural heritage;
AMI (Arsitek Muda Indonesia)	Indonesian Young Architects; a group of young architects who envisioned architecture as an exploration
Anak Bangsa	Nation people
Angkul-angkul, Kori Agung, Bentar Temple, Kodok Temple	A certain shape and decoration for the Balinese gate
Arsitek Kampung	Low-class/ village architect
Arsitek Muda Indonesia (AMI)	Indonesian Young Architects
Arsitek Pemulung	Scavenging architect
Arsitektur Kepulauan Maluku Utara	Architecture of North Molucca Islands
Arsitektur Klasik	Classical architecture
Arsitektur Lokal Setempat	Local architecture
Asta Bumi	The site planning (Balinese)
Asta Kosala-kosali	The design and construction norms (Balinese)
Aula Barat dan Timur	West and East Hall of Technische Hogeschool te Bandoeng (THB) – now Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)
Badan Ekonomi Kreatif (BEKRAF)	The Indonesian Agency for Creative Economy
Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional (BAPENNAS)	The Indonesian Minister for National Development Planning
Bagonjong Roof or Gonjong	The roof of Minangkabau traditional houses with saddle-like shape and pointy horn-like end
Bamakrtih	The ritual norms of the traditional building process (Balinese)
Bandjars	A village level government in Bali, whose role is to preserve the social harmony among local people and to maintain the continuity of ritual and cultural ceremonies
Barong Wae	A ritual for calling ancestors' spirits, done by local Wae Rebo people
Batik	Javanese traditional fabric print; a technique of wax-resist dyeing applied to the whole cloth
Batu Bata	Red brick
Batu Kali	Slate stone
Batu Kapur	Chalkstone
Batu Paras	Limestone

Bebaturan	Elevated platform for the floor (Balinese)
Begawan	The masters; a person who is considered knowledgeable
erciri Nusantara	Having a characteristic of Nusantara
Berjiwa Nusantara	Embedding Nusantara soul
Berteduh	Taking shelter
Berwawasan Nusantara	Embracing Nusantara insight
Bhayangkara Day	A celebration day of The Indonesian National Police (Kepolisian Republik Indonesia – Polri)
Bhinneka Tunggal Ika	The Unity in Diversity; ‘although different, yet one’ or having a general meaning of ‘unity in diversity’, is the official national motto of Indonesia that becomes a ‘unifying mantra’ for Indonesia’s diverse people
Bourgeoisies	Middle class, usually with materialistic value
Budaya	Culture
Bumi Melayu	Malayan world
Bumi Pertiwi	Motherland of Indonesia;
CONEFO Building	The office of the ‘House of people representatives’ of Indonesia
Congo	The leaves or the twig (Sundanese)
Dari Sabang sampai Merauke	From Sabang to Marauke; a jargon whose initial meaning indicates the coverage geographical area of Indonesia, but has been perceived as having stronger meaning of unity, determination, aspiration of a country that carries national, state and ideological entities. Sabang is a small island in Aceh Province located at the Western border of Indonesia, while Marauke is a regency in Papua Province that marks the Eastern border of Indonesia.
Desa wisata	A tourism village; the government's agenda to create an integration between attraction, accommodation and supporting facilities that are served as part of people’s living culture that is unified with the local tradition”
Desa Wisata Nusantara	Nusantaran Tourism Village;
Desain Rumah Hijau	Green house design;
Eksplorasi	Exploration
Forum Rakyat Bali Tolak Reklamasi (ForBALI)	Forum of Balinese People Against Reclamation; a forum that was against the government’s reclamation plan of Teluk Benoa in Nusa Dua
Geisteswissenschaft	A type of science that bases its exploration on empathetic understanding in understanding people’s everyday lived experience in specific historical settings
Getah	Plant sap (Javanese)
Getih	Blood (Javanese)

Getih-getah	Blood and Sap; two colours (red and white) that had always been familiar to the people of Indonesia
Getih-getah Samudera	Majapahit's banner
Golongan Karya (Golkar)	The Working Group; used to be Suharto's political party
Gotong royong	Working together;
Griya	House, building;
Idem or Identitas	The same; emphasises the creation of the sense of sameness; the quality of being identical as a group; the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is
Ijuk	Palm fiber
Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia (IAI)	The Indonesian Institute of Architects
IMF-WB	The International Monetary Fund-World Bank
Inventarisasi	Inventory
ITB (Institut Teknologi Bandung)	The Institut Teknologi Bandung
ITS (Institut Teknologi Sepuluh November)	The Institut Teknologi Surabaya
Jabu Bolon	Traditional house of Batak Toba people
Janantaka	The material usage (Balinese)
Jathilan (Kuda Lumping) Dance or Jaran Kepang (Braid Horse)	A Javanese dance depicting horsemen riding woven bamboo horses. As this performance also incorporates supernatural activity, some of the dancer will get 'possessed' and enter the trance conditions. While in trance, they will display unusual abilities, such as eating glass and resistance to the effects of whipping or hot coals.
Joglo	Traditional vernacular houses of Javanese people, characterised by steep wide roofs, with four main columns support in the middle supporting layered beam structure and several smaller columns in the outwards area
Joglo Roof	Steep wide roofs in traditional vernacular houses of Javanese people
JongArsitek!	Young Architect; a contemporary online media which extend Sukarno's socialist agenda
Jongko Jayabaya	A prophecy made by Sri Aji Joyoboyo, or King Joyoboyo, the King of the Kediri Kingdom in East Java from 1130 to 1160.
Kajeng Ageng	A big tree (Javanese)
Kalang	Javanese local spirituality that related to aesthetics and blessing
Kali Code	Code River; a slum area, albeit centrally located, in Yogyakarta that was considered as the 'dark spot' where very-low-income people, including street singers, baggers, pickpockets, burglars and prostitutes, lived

Kampung	Kampong
Kampungan	Related to low-class peasant who live in the village
karakter Nusantara	Characteristic of nusantara;
Kasepuhan Sinarresmi	Sinarresmi Palace
Kearifan Lokal	Local wisdom
Kelokalan	Locality;
Keniscayaan Keberubahan	The constant changes
Kepolisian Republik Indonesia (Polri)	The Indonesian National Police
Keris	Javanese traditional weapon; an asymmetrical dagger with distinctive blade-patterning
Kerja, kerja, kerja!	Work, work, work!; a rethoric employed by Joko Widodo in his presidential campaign in 2014, elucidating his plan to execute all the development plans that were left unfinished by the previous presidents
Ketukangan: Kesadaran Material	Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness; a theme for Indonesia's pavillion in the Venice Architecture Biennale 2014
Kidung Sunda	The Song of Sunda; a story about Pajajaran King and his army that were slaughtered by Majapahit army on the day that was supposed to be the marriage of Majapahit King and Pajajaran Princess
Kolong	A pit underneath a house
Kolong/ Awa Bola	The foot; open space pilotis area; space under the stilted floor (Makassarese)
Konsep Kebhinekaan	A diversity concept
Konstruksi Goyang	Shakeable structure; structure that allows flexibility where the structure can move slightly and wobble if there is an earthquake
Konstruksi Mati	Rigid structure; structure that allows flexibility where the structure cannot move slightly and wobble if there is an earthquake
Kreasi Baru	A new creation
La Biennale di Venezia	Venice Biennale; one of the most prestigious international exhibitions that provides a platform for many artistic disciplines, including architecture
Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (LIPI)	The Indonesian Institute of Sciences; a non-ministerial government research institution responsible to the President under the auspices of the Ministry for Research, Technology, and Higher Education.
Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA)	People's Cultural Institution; one of the most influential socialist art media at Sukarno's time
Linggam	Male sexual organs
Lotang	The body; podium part of the building (Makassarese)
Mappalette Bola	The house-moving culture preserved by Bugis tribe of South Sulawesi

Massa Mengambang	Floating mass; Indonesian government's program to detach people from politics
Material Lokal	Local materials;
Mbaru Niang	A group of conical houses perceived as 'authentic' Manggarai architecture
Media Komunitas	Community Media; a socialist media which had a motto 'from, by, and for the people'
Menuju Arsitektur Indonesia	Towards Indonesian Architecture; a symposium held by the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) on 2-3 December 1982 in Yogyakarta
Mercusuar	The light-house
Mitreka Satata	An equal and mutual connection between partnering countries/ kingdoms
Monas	The National Monument which has become a landmark of Indonesia
Munggah Molo	A Javanese ritual in putting up the top ridge of the roof frame, where the owner, with the help of the workers, climbs onto the roof, puts up the top ridge and hangs various things to bring good luck for the family
Museum Rekor Indonesia (MURI)	The Indonesia World Records Museum
Nagara Rimba Nusantara	The title of the winning design for Indonesia's new capital city; a utopian idea of having a capital city surrounded by forests and rivers, expressing a 'balance' between man-made infrastructure and mother nature
Nan Sarunai Usak Jawa	Nansarunai Kingdon has been Destroyed by Java (Majapahit); a Dayaknese poem that tells the tragedy of Majapahit intentionally destroying the Dayak Kingdom in three aggressions
Nawacita	The nine missions campaigned by President Joko Widodo in the presidential election in 2014
Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia - NKRI	The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia; the official name of Indonesia, as a depiction of the unitary form of the archipelagic state whose sovereignty comprises both its lands and waters
Nilai	Value; meaning
Nusantara	The Archipelago; originally came from the Kawi language, from the words nusya—meaning 'island', and antara—meaning 'within'.
Nusantara Satu	One Nusantara; the latest Indonesian satellite launched on 21 February 2019
Palapa	A nutmeg to describe spices or flavouring in food
Pancasila	The Five Principles; the official ideology of Indonesia that comprises the postulation of religiosity; humanity; unity; democracy; and social justice
Pawon Room	A place not only for cooking activity, but also for gathering and socialising

Pendekar Arsitektur Nusantara	The Warrior of Nusantara Architecture; the national awareness of the term of Nusantara Architecture in preservation project of Wae Rebo
Pendopo Ageng	The main pillared hall in Javanese palace
Peraturan Menteri	Ministrial regulations;
Pernaungan	Shelter;
PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia)	The Indonesian Communist Party
Primbon	A Javanese guideline book that sets rules and instructions of not only how to build a house, but also how to move the house
Pro-rakyat	Pro-people
Puhu	The root (Sundanese)
Puncak Kebudayaan Daerah	The peak – crème de la crème – of the culture
Rakkeang	The head; expressed as a tower (Makassarese)
RISHA (Rumah Instan Sederhana Sehat)	Instant Simple Healty House; an experimental precast structure developed since 2004 by the Research Departemen of the Ministry of Public Work and Public Housing of Indonesia. This knock-down sytem is designed as an alternative structure for the cheap housing development that can be built in short period of time and complies with the principle of earth-quake resistance.
Ruang	Space
Rumah Adat	Traditional house
Rumah Asuh	The Foster House; an Indonesian non-profit organisation that has a movement in preserving threatened traditional architecture
Rumah Bagonjong	Bagonjong House; a building which has bagonjong roof
Rumah Budaya	Cultural housing;
Rumah Budaya Nusantara	Nusantaran cultural house;
Rumah Gadang	The Big House; the Minangkabau traditional house
Rumah Ketek	The Small House; an addition to the traditional rumah gadang, housing the growing needs of the inhabitants
Rumah Minimalis	Minimalist house
Rumbia	Palm sugar leaves
Rupa	Face; physical appearance
Sang Saka Merah Putih	The Red and White Flag; the national flag of Indonesia
Serambi	Verandah; terrace; a place where people can gather outside the house
Setangkup	A balance between left and right, front and back
Simposium Arsitektur Tradisional	Traditional Architecture Symposium; a symposium held by the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) on 4-5 December 1981 in Jakarta
Stabilitas	Stability;

Starchitect	Famous architect who is perceived as a lone genius, a celebrity in the discipline, a charismatic professional
Suasana Budaya Setempat	Local cultural ambience
Sunyata	Emptiness; originally from a Sanskrit word 'sunnata' means emptiness and voidness; a theme for Indonesia's pavillion in the Venice Architecture Biennale 2018
Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret (Supersemar)	The Order of the Eleventh of March; a document signed by President Sukarno on 11 March 1966 to give Suharto, who was the army commander at the time, an authority to restore order to the chaotic situation during the Indonesian killings of 1965–66".
Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII)	Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park; a recreational park in which traditional houses from twenty-seven provinces (now thirty-three provinces) were built in miniature as a display of Indonesia's diverse culture
Taman Siswa	Student's Garden; a revolutionary school for native people in the colonial era, founded by Ki Hadjar Dewantara in Yogyakarta in 1922
Tanjung Mabang	A red banner crafted on the relief of Borobudur
Tataring Room	A room with hearth (Bataknese)
Teater Rakyat	People's Theatre; a modernised the traditional Javanese joglo house by creating a re-interpretation of pendopo (a gazebo-like building for gathering) mixed with a function of theatre which was not a familiar function among local people in that time
Tentara Nasional Indonesia – Angkatan Laut	The Indonesian Navy
Tim Ahli Bangunan Gedung (TABG)	The Denpasar's Building Expert Team
Tirai-mirai	A 'breathing' curtain-like wall; a wall that allows wind to seep in that brings natural circulation inside the house
Transmigrasi	A program to move people permanently from a densely populated area to a less populated area, mainly with the purpose to achieve even distribution in areas of the country
Tri Hita Karana	The Three Causes of Prosperity; a traditional philosophy for life on the island of Bali, Indonesia
Tri Mandala; Surya Mandala; Hulu–Teben	The traditional zoning system (Balinese)
Tri Praja	The Three Power; the three governmental bodies (executive, legislative and judicative)
Tumpang Sari	Four main columns support in the middle supporting layered beam structure in traditional vernacular houses of Javanese people
Tunjung Puteh	A white banner crafted on the relief of Borobudur
UB (Universitas Brawijaya)	The Brawijaya University
UGM (Universitas Gadjah Mada)	The Gadjah Mada University

UI (Universitas Indonesia)	The University of Indonesia
Umpak	Stone base
Undang-undang Dasar 1945	The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia; the foundational constitution that becomes the basis for all laws of Indonesia
UNM (Universitas Negeri Makassar)	Makassar State University
Urban Kampung	Urban kampong
USU (Universitas Sumatra Utara)	The university of North Sumatra
Waste	Javanese local spirituality that related to rightness and goodness
Wayang	Shadow puppet
Wewangunan	Javanese local spirituality that related to appropriateness in the relations between humans, nature, and society
Wisata Desa	A tourism of the village; a tourism that focuses solely on the attractions that happen to be located in the village, while the participation of the local people is very limited
Wong Cilik	Small people
Yayasan Pondok Rakyat (YPR)	The People's Cottage Foundation; a social-cultural organisation in which people from different disciplines and backgrounds contributed to the betterment of Kali Code's people
Yoni	Female sexual organs