

Continuity or Discontinuity, Revisiting the Legacy of *Wali Sanga* Mosques

Case Studies of Contemporary Mosques of *Nahdliyin* in Malang, East Java

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ABSTRACT

Many mosques in East Java are built by the *Nahdliyin* and are culturally affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the biggest Indonesian moderate Muslim organization. NU maintains a specific value system as the continuation of the *Wali Sanga* tradition. This paper discusses the representation of these values and traditions in the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* in Malang, East Java. These mosques are where a great basis of the *Nahdliyin* experiences dynamic interaction with other Muslim groups take place. The results show that despite their pluralistic formal expressions, these contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* share similar values and traditions with *Wali Sanga* mosques.

Keywords: *Wali Sanga, Nahdliyin, mosques, values and traditions, East Java*

INTRODUCTION

The *Wali Sanga* or “the Nine Leaders” is the board consisting of nine leaders of former Islamic preachers in *Nusantara* who lived around the 15th and 16th century. These Islamic preachers spread Islamic teachings in Indonesia through various cultural approaches, such as *tembang* (local lyrics) and *wayang* (shadow puppets). They also

established many mosques spread over the Java Island with an excellent acculturation among cultures as well as displaying great adaptations to local architectural traditions. Currently these mosques of *Wali Sanga* are among the physical inheritance of the *Wali Sanga*’s remaining legacies which are well maintained by the *Nahdliyin*.

The *Nahdliyin* itself is the culturally and ideologically affiliated people of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). They practice Nahdlatul Ulama's values and traditions in their daily lives, whether they are officially listed as the members of the organization or not. A national survey in 2004 showed that 42% of Indonesian Muslims feel culturally represented by NU in the way they view local traditions, flexibility, and tolerance (van Bruinessen, 2013, p.369).

Due to the necessary needs of Muslim people today, the *Nahdliyin* also builds many new mosques in their neighborhoods. These contemporary mosques have been established in the different socio-cultural as well as the economic-political context from the *Wali Sanga* mosques. These mosques were also constructed in the middle of the rapid development of technology and building materials.

An interesting question then arises as to whether the legacy of *Wali Sanga* is also maintained and represented in the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* or not. More questions also arise as to how precisely the Muslim people themselves, mainly the Traditionalist Muslims represented here by the *Nahdliyin*, view both locality and translocality or universality, as well as old and new, internal and external elements, in their mosques' architecture. Do the different formal expressions between the *Wali Sanga* mosques and the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* represent the dichotomic way of seeing local and trans-local elements in mosque architecture? Do the changes in certain physical aspects of mosque architecture represent continuity or discontinuity in non-physical aspects of mosque architecture, such as values, principles, and traditions? Therefore, this study aims to trace the representations of these values, principles, and traditions of the *Wali Sanga*'s teachings in the architecture of the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*.

These questions arise because many people think that the majority of these contemporary mosques no longer inherit the values of the *Wali Sanga* mosques. This opinion is quite reasonable, due to their different formal expressions from the traditional mosques of *Wali Sanga*. For example, the contemporary mosques are dominated with domes and minarets, two non-local elements which have replaced the local parts and changed the formal expression of Indonesian mosques. According to van Dijk, the Islamic Revivalism in the 19th century has taken part in introducing new formal expressions to mosques in South-East Asia. "Domes replaced the pyramidal roofs... minarets added to the existed mosques

and became an inseparable part of new mosques," (van Dijk, 2007, p.66). These new, non-local formal expressions are considered completely different from the local-traditional Javanese mosques.

In the discourse of sociopolitical context of Indonesian mosque development, the variety of mosques' formal expressions is frequently discussed regarding dichotomy between locality and translocality or universality. Minarets and domes are seen as the symbol of the Islamic Modernism which embraces universality, while the pyramidal roofs are considered as the symbol of Islamic Traditionalism which encompasses locality. According to van Dijk, Modernism and Reformism in Islam occurred and suppressed the identity of Islam (van Dijk, 2007, p.66).

In this regard, the development of contemporary mosques in Indonesia becomes inseparable from the role of various Islamic organizations that have been established and developed since the early 1900's. As the largest organization of the Traditionalist Muslims, Nahdlatul Ulama plays a significant role in developing and shaping the identity of Indonesian Muslims through their mosques. Nahdlatul Ulama also maintains specific value systems, *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*, which is believed to be the continuation of the *Wali Sanga*'s values and traditions. The value systems put forward the principles of *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawasuth* (moderation), and *tawazun* (balance) in spreading Islam in *Nusantara* (Fadeli & Subhan, 2012, p.13). Therefore, various efforts to maintain the Traditionalist Muslims' identity as the continuation of the *Wali Sanga*'s teachings through their contemporary mosques, in the middle of Indonesian socio-political dynamics, are necessary to be studied.

METHODS

This explorative – qualitative research took place in Malang, the second largest city in East Java which has a great base of *Nahdliyin* people who maintain the traditions of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* in their daily lives. Besides being a cultural base of the *Nahdliyin*, East Java is also known historically as the center of Nahdlatul Ulama's establishment in 1926. The *Nahdliyin* in Malang, East Java has gone through dynamic interactions with other Islamic groups and organizations who have different thoughts and views about certain elements of a mosque. Malang is located in the heart of East Java as a city of education and tourism. Although the *Nahdliyin* is in the majority in this region, other Islamic groups and



Figure 1:
The location of Malang, East Java
(Source: Google Maps, 2017)

organizations are also proliferating. Therefore, it is interesting to study how the *Nahdliyin* in Malang, East Java represents a balance between continuity and change as well as tradition and innovation, through their contemporary mosque architecture.

Nahdliyin mosques having significant roles in the region were chosen for this research. The 20 mosques that were selected vary in their scope of services, from *Masjid Agung* to neighborhood mosques. *Masjid Agung* have the largest urban scope while neighborhood mosques have the smallest scope of service in small settlements. Meanwhile, three main *Wali Sanga* mosques were also studied as the reference: Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel Surabaya (East Java), Masjid Agung Demak (Central Java), and Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa, Cirebon (West Java). The documentation process to collect the data of mosques' physical elements were held from 2010 to 2015 in three *Wali Sanga* mosques, and from 2013 to 2016 in 20 contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*. The literary study and interview process took place from 2014 to 2016 to collect data on the mosques' non-physical elements.

A comparative analysis of the physical and non-physical aspects of both types of mosques was conducted to investigate which aspects of the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* represented changes and continuity, which aspects are considered important to be preserved, and which aspects are open to change. The identification of physical elements includes (1) mosque's exterior (the choice of roof-shape, façade, minaret, etc.), (2) mosque's interior and spatial division, (3) mosque's significant furniture (*minbar*, *bedug*, etc.), (4) mosque's ornamentation (calligraphy, natural patterns, etc.), (5) mosque's ablution facility, and (6) site and surroundings. Meanwhile, the non-physical elements' identification includes (1) historical background, (2) values and principles, (3) traditional events and activities, and (4) symbols

and meanings. These physical and non-physical elements are examined because of their importance in shaping the identity of Traditionalist mosques. Some of the fundamental distinctions with the Modernist mosques, as described in the introduction, are related to the different views towards some of the mosque's physical elements. The differences in the physical aspects between the Traditionalist mosques and the Modernist mosques were found in the building's exterior and interior images, spatial division, furniture selection, aesthetic preferences, the use of ornamentation, and the use of kullah on ablution facility. (Putrie & Martokusumo, 2017).

THE WALI SANGA MOSQUES: Adaptation, Acculturation, and Dynamic Tradition













Three *Wali Sanga* mosques were chosen as the representation of other *Wali Sanga* mosques in this study: Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel in East Java, Masjid Agung Demak in Central Java, and Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa in West Java. The three *Wali Sanga* mosques are considered as the most well-known and representative mosques for each region in Java (Figure 2). These mosques are also believed to be established by the members of *Wali Sanga*. Currently these *Wali Sanga* mosques play a major role as the Great Mosque (*Masjid Agung*) in their regions. The architecture of these mosques is shown in Table 1 below.



- Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa, West Java
- Masjid Agung Demak, Central Java
- Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel, East Java

Figure 2:
The location of three *Wali Sanga* mosques studied
(Source: Google Maps, 2017)

Table 1: Architecture of three Wali Sanga Mosques

Name of the Mosque	Site	Exterior	Transition Area	Interior
Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel, East Java				
Masjid Agung Demak, Central Java				
Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa, West Java				

(Source: Google Maps, 2017; Documentation of Putrie, 2010-2015)

The figures in Table 1 revealed that there are differences and similarities among the three *Wali Sanga* mosques. The differences are found in the details of the mosques, which are very contextual with their specific places (sites and surroundings) and times. For example, the roof-shape and the floorplan of Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa, West Java, are different from the common roof shapes and floor plan of other *Wali Sanga* mosques. In general, the majority of Javanese mosques, including *Wali Sanga* mosques, built during the 15th to 19th centuries have a square plan and four main pillars or *sakaguru* (Budi, 2006, p.231). Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa, with its rectangular plan and its twelve main pillars (*sakaguru*), has been included in other types of Javanese mosques

Meanwhile, similarities are found in the overall buildings' appearance which adapted the local and familiar forms of local construction at the time. The materials, the construction, and some features of the mosques, such as *gapura* (the gates), *bedug* (the gong), and *pendhapa* (the verandah) are the other forms of similarity in the adaptation to local culture. However, outside their adaptation to local culture, it appears that locality and translocality or universality were not seen as a dichotomy in the *Wali Sanga*

mosques. These mosques are great examples of the acculturation of two or more different cultures. One example is the existence of ceramic plates from Champa on the interior walls of Masjid Agung Demak (Figure 3). Various ceramic plates from China are also commonly found in old mosques of Cirebon, West Java.

Another example of the acculturation is the design of the *maqsura* in Masjid Agung Demak. The design of the *maqsura* (Figure 4) is the combination of the Javanese, Chinese, and Arabic cultures. *Maqsuras* are unique features in the Sultanate mosques, such as Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa and Masjid Agung Demak. *Maqsura* is a small enclosure for the Sultan and his guards, which is equipped with some self-defense tools against sudden attacks. Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa even has two *maqsuras* at the opposite corners of the main area.

The acculturation in the *Wali Sanga* mosques is one form of the physical representation of three values in *Wali Sanga's* teachings: *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawasuth* (moderation), and *tawazun* (balance). Another form of the representation of these values are the meaningful sayings of the *Sunans* (the members of *Wali Sanga*). For example, the famous



Figure 3:
Ceramic plates of Masjid Agung Demak



Figure 4:
Maqsuras in Masjid Agung Demak (left) and Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa (center & right)

saying of Sunan Gunung Jati, “*ingsun titip tajug lan fakir miskin*,” or “I entrust (You) with the mosques and the poor,” emphasized the importance of mosques as well as the balance of their religious and social roles.

Furthermore, flexibility in combining local and trans-local elements as well as old and new elements on one side, while preserving and maintaining Islamic

principles at the other side, has resulted in the dynamic tradition of Islamic civilization in Nusantara. This principle of dynamic tradition, as shown in the architecture of the *Wali Sanga*’s mosques, is a part of *Wali Sanga*’s legacies in looking at change and continuity with a fair and balanced view. In detail, the Table 2 below will show us the physical and non-physical aspects of the three *Wali Sanga* mosques.

Table 2: Architectural Aspects of the *Wali Sanga* Mosques

Physical Aspects	Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel	Masjid Agung Demak	Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa
Floorplan (early period)	Square	Square	Rectangle
Roofshape	<i>Tajug tumpang dua</i> (Two-tiered pyramid roof)	<i>Tajug tumpang tiga</i> (Three-tiered pyramid roof)	<i>Limasan tumpang tiga</i> (Three-tiered rectangle-based pyramid roof)
Main structure	4 <i>sakaguru</i> (main columns), 12 <i>sakarawa</i> (secondary columns)	4 <i>sakaguru</i> and 8 <i>sakarawa</i>	12 <i>sakaguru</i> and 18 <i>sakarawa</i>

Table 2: Architectural Aspects of the Wali Sanga Mosques

Physical Aspects	Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel	Masjid Agung Demak	Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa
Women area	Left side (verandah & main building); different building (south-east area)	Left side (<i>pawestren</i> / enclosed room for women)	Left side (<i>serambi selatan</i> / south verandah)
Significant furniture	<i>Bedug</i> ; <i>kentongan</i> ; throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	<i>Bedug</i> , <i>kentongan</i> , throne-shaped <i>minbar</i> , <i>maqsura</i>	<i>Bedug</i> , <i>kentongan</i> , throne-shaped <i>minbar</i> , <i>maqsura</i>
Ornamentation	<i>Memolo</i> ; <i>tlacapan</i> ; golden Arabic calligraphy; eight petals floral shape	<i>Memolo</i> ; turtle-shape on mihrab wall; crown, floral & animal shapes; <i>Surya Majapahit</i> ; Champa's ceramic plates; Arabic calligraphy	<i>Ganjah mayangkara</i> ; <i>manglen</i> ; intricate geometric & floral ornament; rhombus shapes; lotus flower
Ablution facility (kullah, well, etc)	<i>Kullah</i> (shallow pool for foot washing), well, huge water tub	Well, <i>kolam wudhu</i> (ablution pool)	<i>Gosang</i> (terracotta water container), well, <i>kullah</i> (in front of <i>Narpati</i> door)
Other facilities	<i>Serambi</i> (linear verandah), <i>gapura</i> , <i>minaret</i> , cemetery (west side), <i>istiwa</i> (sundial)	<i>Serambi/pendhapa</i> , <i>gerbang regol</i> (has been demolished), minaret, cemetery (west side)	<i>Gapura</i> , <i>pendhapa</i> , cemetery (south side), <i>istiwa</i> (sundial)
Non-Physical Aspects	Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel	Masjid Agung Demak	Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa
Historical aspect	Established in 1420 by Sunan Ampel, has gone through many development phases	Established around 1479 by Raden Patah & <i>Wali Sanga</i> , has gone through many development phases	Established around 1489 by Sunan Gunung Jati & <i>Wali Sanga</i> , has gone through many development phases
Activities	Daily prayers, Friday prayers, <i>led</i> prayers, <i>Tarawih</i> prayers, <i>ziarah</i> (pilgrimage), <i>Shalawat</i> , <i>Istighotsah</i> , <i>Tadarus</i> , <i>Pengajian</i> (Islamic teaching), etc.	Daily prayers, Friday prayers, <i>led</i> prayers, <i>Tarawih</i> prayers, <i>ziarah</i> (pilgrimage), <i>Shalawat</i> , <i>Istighotsah</i> , <i>Tadarus</i> , <i>Pengajian</i> (Islamic teaching), etc.	Daily prayers, Friday prayers, <i>led</i> prayers, <i>Tarawih</i> prayers, <i>ziarah</i> (pilgrimage), <i>Shalawat</i> , <i>Istighotsah</i> , <i>Tadarus</i> , <i>Pengajian</i> (Islamic teaching), <i>Azan Pitu</i> , etc.
Traditional events	<i>Haul</i> of Sunan Ampel, <i>Maulid Nabi</i> , <i>Nuzulul Quran</i> , <i>Maleman</i>	<i>Nuzulul Quran</i> , <i>Maulid Nabi</i> , <i>Grebeg</i> (10 Dzulhijjah)	<i>Panjang Jimat</i> , <i>Haul</i> of Sunan Gunung Jati
Symbols and meanings	Five gates (<i>gapura</i>) symbolizes five pillars in Islam (<i>Rukun Islam</i>): <i>Gapuro Mungghah</i> , <i>Poso</i> , <i>Ngamal</i> , <i>Madep</i> , <i>Paneksen</i>	<i>Surya Majapahit</i> symbolizes the close relationship between Demak and Majapahit	Nine doors symbolize the nine members of the <i>Wali Sanga</i> , the small size of the doors symbolize the submission and respect for the religion
Values	<i>tasamuh</i> (tolerance), <i>tawasuth</i> (moderation), <i>tawazun</i> (balance), dynamic tradition	<i>tasamuh</i> (tolerance), <i>tawasuth</i> (moderation), <i>tawazun</i> (balance), dynamic tradition	<i>tasamuh</i> (tolerance), <i>tawasuth</i> (moderation), <i>tawazun</i> (balance), dynamic tradition
Mythical stories	The legend of Mbah Soleh, The legend of Mbah Bolong	The legend of <i>Lawang Bledag</i> (The Lightning Door)	The legend of <i>Menjangan Wulung</i> (The Black Magic)

(Source: Photography, observation, and interview data of Putrie, 2010-2016; Masjid2000 (Nugraha, et.al, 2000))

Some features of the *Wali Sanga* mosques mentioned above, such as square floor plan, *sakaguru*, *gapura*, *pendhapa*, *bedug*, and *pawestren*, are also the common features of other *Wali Sanga* mosques. However, *minarets* were not a common feature in the early period. Some minarets of *Wali Sanga* mosques were built at a later stage of development. Other *Wali Sanga* mosques such as Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa, remain without minarets. According to the mosque's caretaker, the absence of a minaret or any higher construction is a form of respect to the *Sultan* (the King) and the *Keraton* (the Palace).

Ornamentation commonly found in *Wali Sanga* mosques were local and natural patterns such as flowers, leaves, or plant tendrils. One also finds some abstraction of animal figures, such as turtle-shape ornament at the *mihrab* wall of Masjid Agung

Demak. Arabic calligraphy was not commonly used in the early stages of these *Wali Sanga* mosques. However, in the next phase of development, some Arabic calligraphy began to be used as an ornament in some parts of the mosques' interiors. In Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel, there is some golden Arabic calligraphy on the columns and the ceilings.

Ablution pools differ in their shapes and names but are commonly large in size and volumes. In Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa, two huge water pots called *gosang* were placed at the north side of the mosque (Figure 6). Water features such as ablution pools and wells are an inseparable part of *Wali Sanga* mosques. Sometimes the presence of water in the mosques has a mythical meaning other than its basic purposes, such as *sumur berkah* (well of blessings) in Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel.



Figure 5:
Bedug and *kentongan* in Masjid Agung Sunan Ampel (left), Masjid Agung Demak (center), and Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa (right)



Figure 6:
Gosang in Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa

THE CONTEMPORARY MOSQUES OF NAHDLIYIN:



A Picture of Unity in Diversity

As the key holders of the continuity of the *Wali Sanga's* teachings, the *Nahdliyin* are expected to have an adequate comprehension of the values and principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. Therefore, their mosques are also projected to inherit the values behind the physical forms of the *Wali Sanga* mosques. Although it seems impossible to expect the same formal expressions because of the changing

era, socio-political context, the development of materials and technologies, the continuity can still be traced in some physical and non-physical aspects of Masjid *Wali Sanga* in the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*.

The Table 3 is the list of names, scopes, and figures of the twenty contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*. These mosques were first built in the 20th century, and have gone through many developmental phases. All of them were constructed by the *Nahdliyin*, and have a clear cultural affiliation to Nahdlatul Ulama.

Table 3: Twenty studied contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*

M1. Masjid Agung Jami' (grand mosque)	M2. Quba (great mosque)	M3. Noor (neighborhood mosque)	M4. Nurul Falakh (jami' mosque)	M5. Jami' Blimbing (jami' mosque)
				
M6. Sabilillah (great mosque)	M7. Darussalam (neighborhood msq.)	M8. Roisiyah (neighborhood msq.)	M9. Manarul Huda (jami' mosque)	M10. Ro'is Dahlan (great mosque)
				
M11. Al-Isti'dad (jami' mosque)	M12. Nurul Huda (neighborhood msq.)	M13. Al-Ikhsan (jami' mosque)	M14. An-Nawawi (jami' mosque)	M15. Abdullah (great mosque)
				
M16. Al-Barokah (jami' mosque)	M17. Darussalam (jami' mosque)	M18. Al-Fattah (jami' mosque)	M19. Al-Mubarakah (neighborhood msq.)	M20. Al-Halal (neighborhood msq.)
				

(Source: Documentation of Putrie, 2013-2016)

Table 4: Architectural aspects of the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*

Mosques	Building Exterior	Interior & Spatial Division	Significant Furniture	Ornamentation	Ablution Facility	Site & Surroundings
M1	Dome & pyramid roofs; minarets; green & white; eclectic style	Women area at the right-back side of main prayer area	<i>Bedug</i> ; <i>kentongan</i> ; throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Rich in ornaments; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> (shallow pool for foot washing), water faucets	Some graves at the west side of the building; settlement & business area
M2	Pyramid roof; minarets; green & white; eclectic style	Women area at the left-back corner of the main prayer area	<i>Bedug</i> ; <i>kentongan</i> ; throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Rich in ornaments; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M3	Domes roof; a minaret; green & white; eclectic style	Women area at the right-back corner of the main prayer area	Throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Rich in ornaments; local patterns, mozaic, & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets, huge water tub	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M4	Pyramid roof; a minaret; green & light yellow; eclectic style	Women area at the right side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug</i> ; <i>kentongan</i> ; throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M5	Pyramid roof; a minaret; light brown with green accent; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	Throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M6	Dome roof; a minaret; white with gold accent; modern style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug</i> ; <i>kentongan</i> ; throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M7	Dome roof; a minaret; light green with light pink accent; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug</i> ; <i>kentongan</i> ; throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement
M8	Domes roof; minarets; green & light yellow; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	Simple permanent <i>minbar</i> with three-step stair	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement
M9	Dome roof; a minaret; green & yellow; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug</i> ; <i>kentongan</i> ; throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Rich in ornaments; local patterns, mozaic, & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M10	Dome roof; a minaret; green & light green	Women area at the right side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug</i> ; <i>kentongan</i> ; throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area

Table 4: Architectural aspects of the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* (Continue)

Mosques	Building Exterior	Interior & Spatial Division	Significant Furniture	Ornamentation	Ablution Facility	Site & Surroundings
M11	Dome roof; a minaret; green & yellow; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug; kentongan; throne-shaped minbar</i>	Rich in ornaments; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement
M12	Dome roof; no minaret; light green & yellow; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug; kentongan; throne-shaped minbar</i>	Rich in ornaments; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement
M13	Domes roof; no minaret; white; modern style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	Throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M14	Pyramid roof; no minaret; pale pink & green; eclectic style	Women area at the back side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug; kentongan; throne-shaped minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement
M15	Dome & pyramid roofs; no minaret; light brown & green; modern style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	Throne-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M16	Dome roof; minarets; light brown & green; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug; kentongan; throne-shaped minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement
M17	Dome roof; no minaret; grey & green with gold accent; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	Podium-shaped <i>minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement & business area
M18	Domes roof; a minaret; yellow & green; eclectic style	Women area at the right side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug; kentongan; permanent minbar with three-step stair</i>	Rich in ornaments; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement
M19	Pyramid roofs; a minaret; light green; eclectic style	Women area at the left-back corner of the main prayer area	<i>Bedug; kentongan; throne-shaped minbar</i>	Partly ornamented; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	No grave in the site; settlement
M20	Dome roof; a minaret, green & light pink; eclectic style	Women area at the left side in the main prayer area	<i>Bedug; kentongan; throne-shaped minbar</i>	Rich in ornaments; local patterns & Arabic calligraphy	<i>Kullah</i> , water faucets	Some graves at the north side of the building; settlement

A comparative analysis based on the observation and documentation data of these mosques showed similarities and differences in certain architectural aspects (Table 4). These similarities and differences provide an overview of which aspects are considered substantive and fundamental for *Nahdliyin* mosques, and which aspects are considered open to a variety or diversity. Similarities and differences found in the *Nahdliyin* mosques are as follows:

1. Building Exterior

Most mosques adapt domes and minarets; some mosques combine dome and pyramidal roofs (Figure 7). Almost all mosques vary in their size, shape, amount, and color of domes and minarets. These

mosques also vary in their architectural styles. Some mosques use modern style, but most of them use an eclectic style with excessive ornamentation. This aspect, therefore, represents diversity and plurality in the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*.

2. Interior and Spatial Division

Almost all mosques place the women's area at the left or right side of the men's area; both are set in the main prayer area of the mosque (Figure 8). Only one mosque placed the women's area symmetrically behind the men's area (M14). Meanwhile, the partitions are mostly above the eye level and non-transparent. This aspect represents unity in the *Nahdliyin* mosques.



Figure 7:
Three types of the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*: Mosque with dome(s) (left, M13), mosque with pyramidal roof (center, M10), and mosque with the combination of both elements (right, M19).



Figure 8: Spatial division between men and women area in the main room of the mosques (M10, M20, M11)

3. Significant Furniture

Almost all mosques use throne-shaped *minbars* (Figure 9), only one mosque use a podium-shaped minbar. The throne-shaped minbars vary in its size and details, but all of them consist of a three-step stair, a seat, and a *khateeb* stick. Most mosques also preserve *bedug* and *kentongan* (Figure 10).

The absence of the *bedug* in the mosques studied is due to some pragmatic reasons. Ideologically and politically, the *Nahdliyin* consider the existence of *bedug* significant as a part of the ritual, as well as an attempt to show the identity of the Nahdlatul Ulama's (Putrie & Martokusumo, 2017). Therefore, this aspect represents unity in the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*.



Figure 9:
Classical throne-shaped minbars in the contemporary mosques of Nahdliyin (M11, M20, M1, M3, M9)



Figure 10:
Bedug and kentongan in the contemporary mosques of Nahdliyin (M1, M2, M6, M7, M10, M12)

4. Ornamentation

Almost all mosques use ornamentation to beautify the interior and exterior of the buildings. Most mosques use calligraphy and local patterns of nature in the interior, and geometric designs on the exterior (Figure 11). Therefore, this aspect represents unity as well as diversity in the contemporary mosques of Nahdliyin.

5. Ablution facilities

Almost all mosques maintain *kullah* or the shallow pool with a minimum of 216 liters of water at the ablution area (Figure 12). Only one mosque does not have any *kullah* in its ablution area. This aspect represents unity in the contemporary mosques of Nahdliyin.

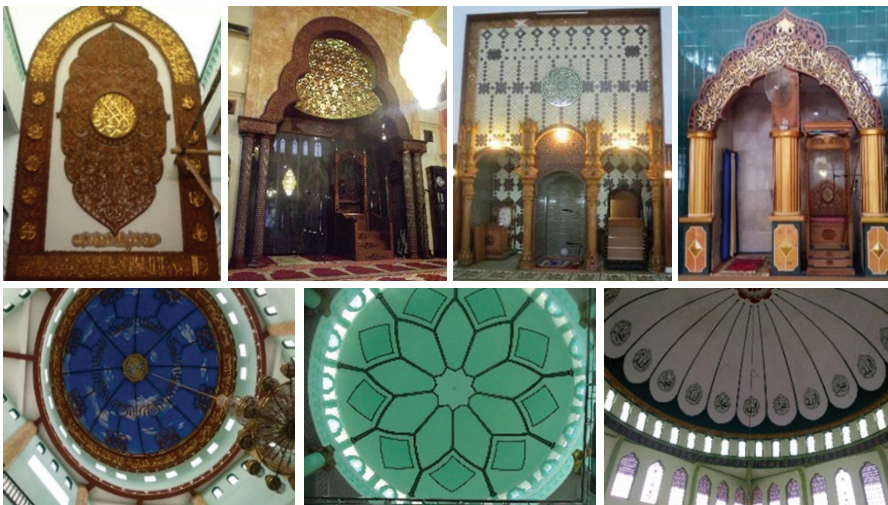


Figure 11:
Ornamentation mostly found in the mihrab area (above: M2, M3, M6, M16) and inside the domes (below: M9, M12, M20)



Figure 12:
Kullah or the shallow pool to wash feet before entering the mosque's main area (M8, M12, M14, M19, M7, M1)

6. Mosques' Sites

Most mosques maximize the size of the building, so there is only small area left vacant. Even in the five times of daily prayer, only a few areas of these buildings are used, but during the Friday prayer times and Islamic feasts, all of the areas are usually full of people. Two mosques preserve old graves near the buildings (Figure 13).



Figure 13:
Old graves preserved in the site of Masjid Agung Jami' (left, M1) and Masjidil Halal (right, M20)

7. Values and Tradition

The attempt to understand the contemporary mosques of Nahdliyin cannot be separated from

the values, views, and traditions that are firmly held by the Nahdliyin. All of the mosques studied hold many traditional religious events, such as *Maulid Nabi*, *Shalawatan*, *Tahlilan*, *Istighotsah*, *Haul*, etc. (Figure 14). These traditional events held in contemporary mosques of Nahdliyin are clear evidence of the continuity of the Wali Sanga's teachings. Furthermore, the Nahdliyin also hold a principle of dynamic tradition expressed in a concise statement, "*al-muhafazhatu 'ala al-qadimi al-sholih wa al-akhdu bi al-jadidi al-ashlah*" (Fadeli & Subhan, 2012, p.139), or "preserving the old ones which are good, accepting the new ones which are better." This principle states tradition is something dynamic with no dichotomy between old and new, local and non-local. The fundamental value of everything lies in its virtue.

The contemporary mosques of Nahdliyin show some phenomena of change and continuity between the past and the present, as well as similarities and differences between the contemporary mosques themselves. It is interesting to discover the significance of some aspects that continue to be preserved and maintained in most of the contemporary mosques studied. It is also interesting to understand so many changes and diversity found in many aspects of these mosques.



Figure 14:
Traditional religious events in Nahdliyin mosques such as haul, maulid, istighotsah, etc.

CONTINUITY OR DISCONTINUITY: The Traces of the *Wali Sanga's* Legacy in the Contemporary Mosque of *Nahdliyin*

After analyzing both the *Wali Sanga* Mosques and the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*, the continuing aspects of *Wali Sanga* mosques' traditions can be recognized in the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*. The continuing aspects mostly found in the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* are (1) the traditional religious events: *Maulidan*, *shalawatan*, *tahlilan*, *istighotsah*, *haul*, (2) the values of *tasamuh*, *tawasuth*, *tawazun*, and the principle of dynamic tradition, (3) the spatial division between men and women, (4) the significant furniture: *bedug*, *kentongan*, throne-shaped *minbar*, and the khatib stick, (5) the ablution facility: *kullah*, (6) the acculturation of ornamentation: the combination of local natural patterns, geometry, and Arabic calligraphy.

Other aspects such as the existence of cemetery or graves are not commonly found in the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*. However, in general, the presence of graves near or around mosques, especially the historical ones, is permitted. Another aspect like the two or three-tiered pyramidal roof with the *sakaguru* structure is rarely found on the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*. The contemporary use of pyramidal roof is often combined with, or entirely replaced by domes. Masjid Agung Jami' Malang is one example of the combination of the preserved and the new elements, as well as the local and non-local elements. The mosque's main structure of *sakaguru* and the pyramidal roof are preserved well, but the new facade is dominated by the domes and the excessive geometric ornaments (Figure 15).

The phenomena of change and diversity in certain aspects of the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* have shown that as the representation of the

Traditionalist Muslims, the *Nahdliyin* are open to new and external elements. It appears that these changing aspects are considered as 'profane' aspects of a mosque that are flexibly changing during times, and at the same time are opened to variety and diversity. Unlike the Western Modernists who reject tradition, *Aswaja* school of thought does not recognize the dualism between tradition and modernity (Harris, 2015, p. 152). They have no conception that the new one is definitely better than the old one, or the new one must replace the old one (Harris, 2015, p. 152). They accept new and external elements not because they reject old and local elements, but simply to combine both elements and give the balance between tradition and innovation, as well as unity and diversity.

Meanwhile, continuity and similarities found in various aspects of the *Nahdliyin's* contemporary mosques explained that despite so many changes occurring, the *Nahdliyin* have a great respect for their religious traditions that have lasted since the early development of Islam in Nusantara. Most of the preserved physical aspects interrelate closely with non-physical aspects such as the traditions, the values, the legal aspects of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), etc. These preserved aspects are considered as inseparable parts of ritual worships (*ibadat*) which are substantive for the *Nahdliyin*. Moreover, it appears that the preserved aspects of these mosques are the result of an attempt to maintain connectedness between the traditions of Muslims in the past with the contemporary Traditionalist Muslims represented by the *Nahdliyin*. These preserved aspects can also be understood as an attempt to maintain the identity as Traditionalist Muslims which is somewhat different from the Modernist Muslims, such as the use of *bedug* and throne-shape *minbar*.

By studying the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin*, one comprehends the representation of the *Nahdliyin's* perspective towards tradition, where



Figure 15:
The combination of old and new, local and non-local elements in the exterior and the interior of Masjid Agung Jami' Malang (M1)

tradition is thought of as something dynamic and flexible. The *Nahdliyin* preserve some substantive aspects of tradition, at the same time they are also open to new and external profane aspects in it. The change in physical aspects is not an absolute representation of the change in values, principles, and other non-physical aspects.

Essentially, the *Nahdliyin*'s view towards tradition is in line with the contemporary discourse on the tradition in general. Tradition according to Waterson, "is something that is continually recreated and remodeled, even [though] it is represented as fixed and unchanging..." (Waterson in Crouch & Johnson, 2001, p.3). In other words, tradition is a cultural product that will continue to change (Rahaju, 2010, p.51). Similarly, tradition according to Siregar is one of the institutional aspects of the culture that is constantly changing, at least at its potential level (Siregar, 1990, p.6).

Moreover, the characteristics of tradition itself, in addition to constantly changing, according to Siregar, are reflected not only on the 'skin' or outer appearance (Siregar, 1990, p.6). Tradition in architecture is related to tradition in the culture, which is always connected with certain beliefs, empirical knowledge, values and norms, as well as symbols on the one hand and certain architectural impression on the other side (Bachtar in Siregar, 1990, p.3). Therefore, the discussion about change and continuity, as well as similarities and differences in this study, is inseparable from the aspects of principles, beliefs, and values expressed in contemporary mosques of the *Nahdliyin*.

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the representation of the values and traditions of the *Nahdliyin* in their contemporary mosque architecture. These values and traditions from the *Wali Sanga*'s teachings can also be traced in the architecture of the *Wali Sanga* mosques. From the description above, it can be concluded that despite the change and the diversity, the architecture of the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* is the representation of their maintained values, principles, and traditions. The pluralistic formal expressions of the contemporary mosques of *Nahdliyin* are derived from unity in their values and principles of tolerance (*tasamuh*), moderation (*tawasuth*), balance (*tawazun*), and dynamic tradition (*al-muhafazhatu 'ala al-qadimi al-sholih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadidi al-ashlah*) inherited from

the great former Islamic preachers in Nusantara, the *Wali Sanga*.

In the discourse of mosque architectural development, it can be concluded that there are influences of specific ideologies of various Islamic groups on mosques' design and construction, as explored in the Traditionalists' mosques described in this paper. Therefore, the development of mosque architecture could have a strong relationship with the development of these Islamic groups and their socio-political dynamics. From the result of this study, there are indications that people's efforts to maintain their values, principles, and traditions in their mosques are not merely driven by ideological reasons, but rather by political reasons, for example, their resistance towards the Modernists' values and perspectives. Thus, further studies are needed to reveal these underlying motives in maintaining specific identity elements in mosque architecture. Further studies are also needed to investigate the effort to maintain the *Nahdliyin*'s values and traditions in contemporary mosques with a heterogeneous Muslim community.

GLOSSARY

Aswaja an-Nahdliyah The term *Aswaja* is an abbreviation of *Ahlu al-sunnah wa al-Jamaah*, one of the main schools of thoughts in Islam which follows the great Islamic scholars (such as Imam Asy'ari, Imam Syafi'i, etc.) in three main aspects of Islamic teachings: *Akidah* (Islamic Theology), *Fiqh* (Islamic Law), and *Tasawwuf* (Islamic Spirituality). The term *an-Nahdliyah* refers to *Nahdlatul Ulama* itself.

Grebeg Cultural event in Java to celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday

Haul Momentum for the commemoration of the Islamic scholars or significant figures who have died

Ied prayers Congregational prayers held during the two main feasts of the Muslims

Istighotsah An invocation which Muslims make by reciting specific phrases to ask for salvation and help from God

Maleman Staying up all night to recite the Quran during the nights of Ramadhan

Masjid Agung The grand mosque of the city with an important role for the society

Maulid Nabi Momentum for the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday

Nuzulul Quran Momentum for the commemoration of the first revelation of Quran to the Prophet Muhammad

Panjang Jimat Cultural event in the Cirebon Sultanate to celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday

Pawestren An enclosed space for women in Javanese traditional mosques located mostly at the left side of the main prayer hall

Shalawat An invocation which Muslims make by reciting the compliment for the Prophet Muhammad and his blessed family

Sunan An appellation for the members of the *Wali Sanga*, for example, Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Gunung Jati, etc.

Tadarus The act of reciting the Quran

Tarawih prayers Congregational prayers held during the nights of Ramadan

Tasamuh A tolerant attitude towards differences in religion as well as in the social and cultural issues.

Tawasuth The attitude of moderation that upholds the principles of justice in community life.

Tawazun A balanced attitude in dedication to Allah, to others, and to the environment.

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