

Layers of Identities in Nahdliyyin Mosque Architecture and Some Related Socio-Political Context Within

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Abstract : The development of architecture today indicates that an architectural object often does not represent one single identity only. One architectural object could represents layers of multiple identities of an increasingly complex society. Mosque architecture for example, is mainly associated with one religious identity; that mosque architecture serves as the representation of Islamic identity. However, on many occasions, mosque architecture also serves as the representation of other motives, such as political, social, even individual identity. In normal circumstances, these layers of identities are not always seen or realized by common people outside the community. They are only represented implicitly in some symbolic forms, activities, and events. On the other hand, in specific circumstances, these kinds of identities were represented explicitly in mosque architecture. This paper is a part of an initial research on the representation of socio-political identities in Nahdliyyin mosques in East Java, Indonesia. Nahdliyyin mosques were chosen as the object of research because of its significance in Indonesian socio-political context, because majority of Indonesian muslims are culturally associated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) with its aswaja doctrine. Some frictions in mosque ownership and management between Nahdliyyin and other islamic school of thoughts, has resulted in preventive efforts, where some of the efforts are related to the representation of their identity in their mosque architecture. The research is a field research that took place in Malang, East Java. Malang is one of main cities in East Java; a cultural and regional basis of NU and Nahdliyyin people. Formal analysis were conducted in ten large Nahdliyyin mosques in Malang. Some structured and in-depth interviews were also held to explore the motives of identity representation in some architectural aspects of the mosques. The result of this initial study indicates that there are layers of identities which were manifested in the studied mosques. These layers of identities in Nahdliyyin mosques were based on the same main values, but represented through various formal expressions. Furthermore, the study also brings the deeper understanding on socio-political context of mosques in Nahdliyyin culture.

Keywords : Nahdliyyin mosque architecture, layers of identities, representation, Nahdlatul Ulama

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