

The role of the 19th century Dutch colonialization in introducing Middle Eastern domes (*kubah*) for mosques in Sumatra (Indonesia)

Kemas Ridwan Kurniawan, Ratu Arum Kusumawardhani

Abstract The introduction of Middle Eastern style architecture in Indonesia is suspected to have a strong relationship with orientalism particularly during the 19th century's Dutch colonial practice. Nowadays in majority opinion of Indonesian, it is believed that the Middle Eastern merchants who introduce *kubah* (Middle Eastern dome) to the mosque architecture in Indonesia. Based on the above idea, this paper has two objectives which are: firstly, looking at the historical relationship between religious architecture and politics (colonialism), especially in the construction of dome style buildings (mosques, palaces) in Sumatra, and secondly considering Orientalism (part of colonial practices) as important intellectual agency for mixing architectural cultural symbols. This paper stands from socio-historical perspectives and try to cross check the relation between space, people, power and time. The research itself is based on literature studies (space, power, colonialism/orientalism), archives studies and field investigation to several artifacts in Aceh, Medan Deli, and Riau, including some interviews with related historical experts. As an early assumptions, there was Dutch political interest on bringing the Middle Eastern – Oriental architectural elements into mosque's architecture of Netherland Indies, to replace a 'non – architectural' traditional roofs which considered representing the less developed civilization.

Keywords dome, colonialism, mosque, power, orientalism