The Digital Approach of The Architecture Narrative to The Relation of Gereja Ayam Sacred Space and Social Space in Pasar Baru Neighborhood

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Abstract. As the main focus of religious celebrations, a religious building becomes a magnet for the social celebrants. The architectural composition of a religious structure is undoubtedly a crucial factor in determining the quality of public space in its surroundings. This study aims to explore the relationship between the sacred space of Gereja Ayam and the social space of Pasar Baru. This research employs the digital approach to the narrative storytelling of the Pasar Baru area and the Gereja Ayam as the case study, with the primary state of the art being the social space positioning of the Gereja Ayam sacred space on creating the sustainable urban environment of the Pasar Baru neighborhood. The main research question was how the Gereja Ayam as a sacred space created a close relationship with the Pasar Baru neighborhood. The research would help the digital concept of creating an integrated communal space as part of the Pasar Baru revitalization plan.

1 Introduction

Use Pasar Baru Jakarta, in the past, was a Dutch-formed area that was created as a space to boost Batavia’s economy, which was essential to support Dutch fortresses in Dutch East Indies [1]. They needed Chinese traders and farmers to support this development plan. Thus, they forced the Chinese back to Batavia by giving them the authority to collect market tax and work in the trading field [1]. This authority made them settle in this new area, where most shops were their own. Pasar Baru then became one of the most developed areas in Batavia for decades. This rapid development attracted more ethnic traders, such as Indians and locals, after the arrival of the Indian immigrant wave in the 1920s after World War I. After India’s independence in 1947, the wave continued even more Indian pockets in the Pasar Baru area, filled with shops, houses, and religious places. Ethnical plurality expanded after Indonesian independence as the Indonesian economy increased and Jakarta evolved as a metropolis city, followed by local traders’ immersion into the Pasar Baru area.

These multicultural ethnicities affected many aspects of the Pasar Baru community. Plurality life developed from architecture, culinary and religious establishments such as churches, Chinese temples, Sikh temples, and mosques spreading within the Pasar Baru area. These places are both spiritual and social apparatus essential for the residents [1]. One of those places is GPIB Pniel Church, also known as Gereja Ayam (Haantjes Kerk in Dutch or rooster church). It was named after the rooster sign on its weather vane on top of its roof. This church is one of the oldest religious buildings in this area, as it was built in 1856 as one of few churches in Batavia [2]. This church is made for residents of multicultural ethnicities such as natives, Chinese and Indian [3], so it has a close relationship with the local environment.

As part of the social and cultural aspect, the religious building remains integral to the urban space, functioning within historical urban [4]. Religious building as a center of religious events becomes a magnet for the people to celebrate the events. In contrast, it attracts much interest from its surroundings, such as culinary, entertainment, or even becoming a tourist attraction. A religious building is undoubtedly an essential determinant of the quality of public space through its architectural composition and urban planning, ensuring the readability of urban areas [4]. This research used the case study of the Pasar Baru area and the Gereja Ayam. Our primary state of the art is the social space positioning of Gereja Ayam sacred space in the urban living of Pasar Baru neighborhood.

This study aims to explore the relationship between the sacred space of Gereja Ayam and the social space of Pasar Baru. The main research question was how the Gereja Ayam as a sacred space created a close relationship with the Pasar Baru neighborhood. The research would help the concept of creating an integrated communal space as part of the Pasar Baru revitalization plan.

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2 Methods

The architectural narrative was taken as a methodology of analysis to explore the spatial relationship between sacred space and its surrounding social space.

Narrative in architecture in a historical context expresses symbolic meanings of particular religious context and specific references through classical architectural elements and symbolic forms. Architectural space is a background for holding religious ceremonies or rituals on the one hand and acts as a foreground for demonstrating religious narratives because of its figurative paintings (sculptures) and spatial composition [5].

The narrative process results in the processing of the story. The human psyche is traversed by tales as both art and life. It is one method for comprehending the real universe. Without a narrative, there is no identity and nobody else. This method can preserve and promote indigenous oral knowledge while engaging constructing capacities, community members, and celebrating diverse narratives and lived experiences. [6]

Storytelling is used as an approach to express the spatial environment in this research. Visual storytelling in digital format acts as another approach for sharing individual experiences. The digital instruments of design, such as social media output on Instagram and YouTube can work as a platform for exchanging ideas while helping the architectural representation avoid becoming a distant and abstract tool. Although the intentions of using visual tools for communication are justified, one can question the restrictive and exclusive qualities of these expert tools if they are the only representatives of design [7].

3 Findings

3.1 Gereja Ayam as A Sacred Space

Pasar Baru becomes a community living space that develops into a site with plural and multicultural characteristics in the spirit of liberalism that is forced to be developed that way due to the growth of Jakarta as a metropolis city. This plurality has given space for many living aspects to grow; one of those is religion. Many religious establishments spread in this area, creating spaces as a social and religious instrument for those immigrants.

As shown in the figure below, this multicultural community creates a sacred space of diversity in the Pasar Baru area. [8]

Fig. 2. Religious building mapping around Pasar Baru [11]

One of the oldest religious buildings in this area is GPIB Pniel Church, also known as Gereja Ayam (Haantjes Kerk in Dutch or rooster church). It was named after the rooster sign on its weather vane on top of its roof. This church is one of the oldest religious buildings in this area, as it was built in 1856 as one of the few churches in Batavia at that time [2]. This church is made for residents of multicultural ethnicities such as natives, Chinese and Indian [3], so it has a close relationship with the local environment.

Gereja Ayam, or GPIB Pniel Church, is located on Samanhudi street and Gereja Ayam street, Pasar Baru, the oldest church in the Pasar Baru area. It was started as a small chapel built in 1856 on Pintoe Besi street (now Gereja Ayam street), and its congregation is mostly natives, using Malay and Dutch language for its preaching.

Fig. 3. Old postcard as it showed the former chapel of Haantjes Kerk [2]
Since this chapel was the only worship place for the natives and surrounding community, it became overwhelmed, and this chapel then be restored as a bigger church in 1913 and finished in 1915, designed and built by an architect biro Cuijpers en Hulswit as it was written in the inscription inside this church [2]:

"Niewue Kerk: Gesticht Door De Evangelische Gemeente To Batavia: Met Hulpe Van Enkele Milde Gevers: Dat Uwe Oogen Open Zijn, Nacht En Dag, Over Dit Huis (I Kon.8, vers 29): Gebouwd In De Jaren Onzes Heeren 1913-1915: Arch. ED. Cuijpers & Hulswit Te Batavia - New Church: Founded By The Evangelical Congregation To Batavia: With Help From Some Mild Givers: That Thy Eyes Be Open, Night And Day, About This House (I Kings 8, verse 29): Built In The Years Of Our Lord 1913-1915: Arch. ED. Cuijpers & Hulswit In Batavia"

Fig. 4. An old photo in the 1920s showed the new church of Haandtjes Kerk [2].

It became well-known as Gereja Ayam (rooster church) or Haantjes Kerk in Dutch because of the rooster weathervane at the top of its tower.

Fig. 5. Left, Gereja Ayam in 2021. Right, Rooster weathervane above Gereja Ayam

3.2 The Social Space in The Urban Living of The Pasar Baru Neighborhood

3.2.1 Social Space as Living Space

Public space as a living space in a city is formed from multidimensional aspects, where various elements are combined with different depths, creating a unique urban space that differentiates one town from another [9]. The multidimensional aspects that form the urban space in a city are conventionally determined by the architectural typology aspects in it, creating outdoor spaces as public spaces, which become a place for the movement of social activities of its users. In a more recent approach, urban spatial space is not only seen with a one-way approach but is more related to the interdisciplinary approach [10].

3.2.2 Social Space background in Pasar Baru.

Pasar Baru, as a forum formed by the Dutch East Indies government, which was also a meeting place for various ethnic groups in Batavia, namely Chinese, Malay, Indian, indigenous, and other ethnic groups, made this place a melting pot of these various ethnicities. Pasar Baru, at that time, was the fastest growing place in terms of population, economy, and infrastructure.[1]

This development continued until the post-Independence era, after which many ethnic Indians entered and settled in this region. They also built places of business, settlements, as well as places of worship (which can be seen in the Sikh temples in this area). Many local Indonesian traders also began to enter and set up business places in this area, which made Pasar Baru more colorful. This immersion affected many social aspects of the Pasar Baru community. It creates more social spaces that develop from architecture, culinary and religious establishments.

Fig. 6. Historical background of Pasar Baru
3.2.3 Social Space Growth in Pasar Baru

Social Space Growth in Pasar Baru. Pasar Baru or Passer Baroe was a Dutch-formed area that was created as a space to boost Batavia's economy, which was essential to support Dutch fortresses in Dutch East Indies[1]. They needed Chinese traders and farmers to support this development plan. Thus they forced the Chinese back to Batavia by giving them the authority to collect market tax and work in the trading field[1]. This authority made them settle in this new area, where most shops were their own. This authority also made them powerful, increased the economy's growth in that area, and boosted it into the most developed area in Batavia. This rapid economic growth influenced the society to create more social spaces that became critical nodes for that area, such as shop arcades with culinary and eating spaces, houses with communal spaces in between clusters, and religious spaces.

During the colonial era, Pasar Baru was a space with the primary function of being an alternative market, which progressively merged with the Dutch colonial habitus. As a result of post-colonial development, this region became a fusion of diverse cultures with distinct lifestyles and requirements [1]. As an asset of Jakarta, this juxtaposition of modernism and colonial heritage is charismatic for Pasar Baru, as it conveys the city's lengthy and illustrious history. This trading location is dominated by centuries-old Chinese, Indian, Betawi, and European structures.

After Indonesia Independence, this growing area attracted more ethnicities to immerse. They create more shops, houses, culinary spots, and religious spaces. It was not only a Chinese development pocket, but it grew into Indian pockets. More Indian came triggered by the Indian wave after their independence, and the last local community pockets came from Jakarta and the surrounding. The diversity was growing.

3.3 The Relationship Between The Sacred Space and The Social Space in The Urban Living of The Pasar Baru Neighborhood

As seen from the picture below, the social space within the Gereja Ayam is growing with the development of the surrounding community's needs. At the beginning of the construction of the Gereja Ayam, there were not many other activities by the local community. Activities are only centered on religious activities held at the Gereja Ayam so that the developing social space is still centered on the location of the church itself, even though multicultural activities have emerged here due to a pluralistic society.

The growth of social space in the Pasar Baru area occurred gradually, from the beginning of its establishment, and then reached its peak in the New Order era, which then declined in the present.

Fig. 7. Social space growth in Pasar Baru.

Fig. 8. Social Space Growth in the Gereja Ayam Area

After independence, the Pasar Baru area developed with the inclusion of local Jakarta communities with diverse economic dynamics. The development of shopping arcades along the Pasar Baru axis has developed the surrounding environment and the environment around the Gereja Ayam. Housing and parking lots were initially built to support economic growth and trade in the neighborhood. The development of trade, apart from housing, other facilities such as culinary and places of worship have also increased. The Gereja Ayam was also the target of mobs in the May 1998 riots, which caused some damage to the church's exterior, which was later renovated to restore it to its original condition.
Now, the Gereja Ayam area has developed into a very diverse area, with schools and several places of worship nearby, such as the Kurnia Christian Church which is located almost next door to the Gereja Ayam, monastery, and other churches around it. This area also has several houses, although only one is still inhabited. Most of the facilities in this area are trade and culinary areas, with many stalls located on the pedestrian side of the Gereja Ayam. Sadly, these culinary spots cover the Gereja Ayam; not many know that the Gereja Ayam is one of the oldest churches in Jakarta.

In this case study, the digital technology applied as a research output for its contribution to the cultural heritage preservation. This visual perceptual experience is expected to create a bigger impact to the social space growth in the Gereja Ayam area, that may encourage further development of this area.

4 Conclusion
The social space within the Gereja Ayam has been growing from time to time. It was blended naturally with the sacred space inside the church. Only a thin boundary was found to separate the sacred space and social space in the case of Gereja Ayam. One of the reasons was the dense urban area development of surrounding Gereja Ayam is known well for its multi-culture and yet multi multi-religion area since it was first developed during the colonialism era.

The thin layer between the sacred and social space has created a close relationship between Gereja Ayam as ritual space and its social space surroundings. The parameter architecture element, the wall, the door, and even the cock symbol on the top of Gereja Ayam as the architecture boundary between its sacred interior space and social space outside the building was humbly built without showing its power as the religious symbol.

Digital storytelling is being used to transmit the result of its relationship between sacred space dan social space in the Gereja Ayam environment, thus this digital perceptual experience will contribute to its cultural heritage transmitting instrument.

The study would contribute to the future study on building the concept of creating an integrated communal space as part of the Pasar Baru revitalization plan.

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