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A Symbolism Study on Architecture and Ornament of Tosan Ward in Pura Mangkunegaran Palace

Ega Azaria Airlangga¹, Susanto², Wardo³

¹ Cultural Studies Program, The Postgraduate School of Universitas Sebelas Maret. Email: egaazariaa@gmail.com

² Cultural Studies Program, The Postgraduate School of Universitas Sebelas Maret. Email: susantofibuns@staff.uns.ac.id

³ Cultural Studies Program, The Postgraduate School of Universitas Sebelas Maret. Email: warto2013@staff.uns.ac.id

Abstract

Bangsals Tosan (Tosan Ward) is one of European Architecture-Style buildings existing in Pura Mangkunegaran palace complex, Surakarta, Central Java. This article discusses the symbolic meaning of *Bangsals Tosan's* architecture and ornament. *Bangsals Tosan* as a European architecture building and a part of Pura Mangkunegaran Palace building. As a European-architecture building, *Bangsals Tosan* belongs to neoclassical architecture-style building functioning as *marquise* and symbolizing an independent and sovereign state. As a part of Pura Mangkunegaran Palace building, *Bangsals Tosan* is a part of *pendapa* called *kuncungan* and symbolizes Mangkunegaran as a genuine state led by a legitimate ruler getting God's mandate. Despite varying meanings, taken together *Bangsals Tosan* has the same meaning, i.e. as the symbol of Mangkunegaran Ruler's power and authority.

Keywords: Symbolism, Authority, Mangkunegaran

1. Introduction

Kadipaten Mangkunegaran is a fraction state of Mataram Dynastic located in Surakarta. Mangkunegaran was established in 1757 following *Perjanjian Salatiga* (Salatiga Agreement) ending the conflict between Raden Mas Said and Sunan Paku Buwana III from Surakarta. Then, Raden Mas Said become the first Ruler in Mangkunegaran with title Mangkunegara I, taken from his father's title, *Pangeran* (Prince) Mangkunegara Kartasura (Mansfeld, 1916; Metz, 1939; Nurhajarini, et al., 1999).

Traditionally, the status of Mangkunegaran state was under Kasunanan Surakarta. The status of Mangkunegaran is as *kadipaten* (principality or duchy) and Kasunanan Surakarta as the *keraton* (kingdom). The status disallowed Mangkunegaran to have the symbols of power like that applied to Kasunanan Surakarta (Darsiti Soeratman, 2000; Wasino, 2008;2014). Such a condition led Mangkunegaran to look for the legitimacy of power through symbols of foreign culture, one of which is European culture. European culture started to enter Mangkunegaran since the establishment of *Legiun Mangkunegaran* (Mangkunegaran Legion) in Mangkunegaran II era, based on Governor

General Daendels' Decree on July 29, 1808 (Aukes, 1935; Wiryasaputra, 1978). The influence of European culture on Mangkunegaran developed more strongly in Mangkunegaran IV reign. Mangkunegara IV is a ruler considered as basis of economic modernization in Mangkunegaran area. In addition to be the ruler, Mangkunegaran IV was also a businessman, particularly in plantation areas. Modernization process promoted by Mangkunegaran IV has changed Mangkunegaran into a Javanese kingdom modified with external culture, particularly European one (Metz, 1939; Pringgodigdo, 1950; Birsyada, et al, 2016).

The strong influence of European culture can be seen from architectural style of buildings in Pura Mangkunegaran palace complex. Pura Mangkunegaran is a palace with Javanese traditional pattern and structure, but decorated with some ornaments and furniture elicited from abroad, particularly Europe (Singgih, 1986; Rosanawati, 2019). One of most interesting and unique parts in Pura Mangkunegaran is *Bangsals Tosan*. The material of *Bangsals Tosan* was ordered specifically from Europe, with European typical carving and sculpture decoration. This building is replete with European-style architecture and ornament, but it was constructed adhering to *Pendhapa Ageng* Mangkunegaran, political and social-cultural central building of Mangkunegaran containing Javanese cosmological values (Ronald, 2005; Adikusuma, 2013).

It is a cultural symbol produced with certain meaning corresponding to the producer creating it. In turn, others will be faced with the cultural symbol that then gives meaning corresponding to what it represents is, although this meaning is likely different from what is intended by the producer of cultural symbol (Nas, 2011). The significance that goes on through the production and consumption of markers, will create what is called hypercity.

The concept of hypercity is a development of the phenomenon of hyperreality proposed by Baudrillard and Umberto Eco, which is applied to urban phenomena. All symbols of the city (in this paper is the architecture of the building) create a reality that can be more real than the reality in the city itself. In hypercity, a city is a sign, and the meaning or discourse of a city symbol is a marker. Research in city symbolism using the hypercity approach is used to see the representation and simulation of the city. This kind of approach makes the image and identity of the city as a starting point, which can reconnect to the actual material reality of the city. The production and consumption of hypercity, and the possibility of opening up the meaning of description (representation) and identity (personal concept), can explain the power struggles over the material city at the local or global level and can form the basis for applied studies aimed at introducing the identity of a city (Nas, 2006).

This article would like to analyze the symbolism of architecture and ornament of *Bangsals Tosan*, the building replete with European cultural symbols existing in Pura Mangkunegaran. The analysis is viewed from the history of *Bangsals Tosan* construction history, the reason underlying the establishment of *Bangsals Tosan*, the meaning of architectural symbol and ornament existing in *Bangsals Tosan*, and the interest of the authority behind the construction of *Bangsals Tosan*.

2. Method

This research was a qualitative descriptive research. Informants were selected purposively consisting of family members of *Trah* Mangkunegaran family and employees or servants (*abdi dalem*) of Mangkunegaran. This study also utilized secondary data source deriving from documents, archives, and data obtained from Reksa Pustaka Mangkunegaran Library and internet-related research themes. Data collection was carried out using observation, in-depth interviews and study document methods. Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model including three components: data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1992).

3. Results

3.1 History of *Bangsals Tosan*

During Mangkunegara IV's reign, some renovation was conducted on *Pendhapa Ageng* Mangkunegaran. This project was led by a Dutch, Willem Kamp. In *Pengetan Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Adipati Arya Mangkunagara IV*,

V, VI Dumugi Inggang Kaping VII it is mentioned that Mangkunegara IV hired Willem Kamp for big profitable projects, one of which was the construction of Colomadu Sugar Plant or Factory in 1816.

The renovation of *Pendhapa Ageng* Mangkunegaran was begun in 1864. *Pendhapa Ageng* building formerly was painted with dark purple was changed into greenish white. Its floor tile was replaced with Italian marble. In addition to renovation, the *Pendhapa Ageng* building was also expanded by adding porch on the side of building and in the north of *Pendhapa Ageng* connected to *Pringgitan*, the building between *Pendhapa Ageng* and *Dalem Ageng* usually used for holding art performance such as *wayang kulit* (leather puppet) and etc.

A new building was added to the south part, called *Bangsai Tosan*. The building functions as the place for the guests visiting to go up and down the horse or horse cart. The material of *Bangsai Tosan* was made of iron and produced in Berlin, Germany. The order of *Bangsai Tosan* was conducted by a Dutch, Borsig, on Mangkunegara IV's request to Willem Kamp (Padmasusastra 1898; Pigeud, 1927; Kamajaya, 1992).



Figure 1: Bangsal Tosan in Pura Mangkunegaran Palace (Source: Authors Document)

Apart from Willem Kamp and Borsig, who played a role in the founding of *Bangsai Tosan* was Prince Gandasewaya, son of Mangkunegara IV. When Prince Gandasewaya lived in the Netherlands, he studied architecture in Delft, the Netherlands. He received orders from Mangkunegara IV to prepare orders for steel and marble materials to be brought to Mangkunegaran to be used as *Bangsai Tosan* in *Pendhapa Ageng* and *Gedhong Tosan*, mausoleum of Mangkunegara IV at the cemetery of the Mangkunegaran royal family, Astana Girilayu (Carey, 2019)

The material of *Bangsai Tosan* came to Mangkunegaran in 1875 and was established on *Jumat Legi* (Friday Legi), 13th date of Sapar month in *Ehe* Year of 1804 according to Javanese calendar or November 12, 1875 in Christian era (Padmasusastra 1898; Pigeud, 1927; Kamajaya, 1992). Since the establishment of *Bangsai Tosan* in *Pendhapa Ageng*, this building became “modern face” of Mangkunegaran, in which the iron-based building is established close to the wood-based *pendhapa* building. In addition to being a gate, some kingdom ceremonies are held in front of or inside *Bangsai Tosan*.

3.2 *Bangsai Tosan* as a European architecture building

Bangsai Tosan is a marquis (awning) with European neoclassical-style architectural shape. European neoclassical architecture integrates art into building shape, so that the elements like painting, relief, and sculpture are inside, inspired with Roman and Greek architecture (Blunt, 1988). It can be seen from *Bangsai Tosan*'s buffer with Corinthian style and the upper façade of *Bangsai Tosan* called pediment.

Pediment is the slightly slope roof wall wrapped with angled cornice in Roman or Greek temple (Ching, 2000). Relief or sculpture in pediment part usually tells or symbolizes the owner or function of building. In the church, the relief of pediment symbolizes spiritual and religious matters or the stories of saints and Bible. In palace,

government office, and monument, the relief of pediment symbolizes nationalism, patriotism, justice, and glory of the ruler.



Figure 2: The pediment of Bangsal Tosan (Source: Authors Document)

The pediment of *Bangsal Tosan* contains the symbol of *Kadipaten Mangkunegaran* made with European states-style symbol. For example, there is letter “MN,” constituting the initial of Mangkunegaran put inside the shield with two supporters and crown on the top. The supporters of Mangkunegaran symbol constitute *putti*. *Putti* is a naked boy, either with or without wings, often appearing in Baroque and Rokoko architecture buildings. *Putti* is the representation of *kerubim* angel symbolizing the glory of or the presence of God.

The two *puttis* in the symbol of Mangkunegaran have different styles. The *putti* in the west lift a torch, that can be defined as the symbol of truth, freedom, and independence, while the one in the east holds feather that can be defined as the symbol of peace and composure. In addition to the two *puttis* in the symbol of Mangkunegaran, there are four reliefs of *putti* in the pediment of *Bangsal Tosan*, two of them hold music instruments like *rebana* (tambourine).

In the west and east of *Bangsal Tosan* pediment, there are reliefs of military equipment and music instrument. Military instrument relief is located in the west, including pistol, lance, cannon, bayonet, and fasces. Fasces are a bundle of rods bound together around an ax with the blade projecting, carried before ancient Roman magistrates as an emblem of authority. Relief of music instruments is located in the east, including tambourine, *gambus* and trumpet shapes. Military equipment and music instrument can be said as the symbol of rule or power and culture, constituting an important element composing a state.

In addition, there are also grapevine and face reliefs, and Roman-Greek-style vase sculptures. There are five face reliefs, one of which is put below the symbol of Mangkunegaran, and the other four are put below the pediment of *Bangsal Tosan*. Meanwhile, the classical-style vase sculpture is located in the west and the east of pediment. Taken together, these reliefs symbolize Mangkunegaran as an independent and sovereign state; it was the mission of Mangkunegaran rulers under two big rulers at that time: Kasunanan Surakarta and Dutch Colonial. Using European style and symbol means to declare that Mangkunegaran was a modern kingdom having power nearly as same as that of Dutch Colonial government.

4. Discussion

4.1 The meaning of *Bangsal Tosan* viewed from Mangkunegaran's Perspective

Bangsal Tosan is not a distinctive building but a part of *Pendhapa Ageng* Mangkunegaran, called *kuncungan*. As a part of Javanese architecture building, *Bangsal Tosan* has new definition, viewed from either its architecture or its ornament. It is mentioned in a manuscript entitled *Wredining Bangsal Tosan*, a *tembang* (song) telling the establishment of *Bangsal Tosan* and the meaning of ornament inside viewed from Javanese people's perspective (Padmasusastra 1898; Pigeud, 1927; Kamajaya, 1992).

In *Wredining Bangsal Tosan*, there is a sentence *dara gèpak pinapak lir candhi* meaning “*dara gepak*'s house should be like a temple.” *Dara gepak* is one of *kampung* house types with the roof aslant on its two sides or has

triangular shape. The sentence explains that the pediment of *Bangsals Tosan* is triangular-shaped, just like *dara gepak* house and temple shape. The comparison between *Bangsals Tosan* and *dara gepak* house and temple shape is a form of Javanese meaning given to European building architecture. The sentence wants to explain that the placement of *Bangsals Tosan* as *kuncungan* in *Pendhapa Ageng* Mangkunegaran and its building shape does not violate the rule of Javanese house shape or is corresponding to Javanese people's identity.

Meanwhile, the existence of European-style Mangkunegaran symbol is interpreted as the form of respect to Dutch Kingdom. It is written in two verses of *Wredining Bangsal Tosan* as follows:

pinardawa rêrènggan ing nginggil, pucak sinung makuthasmaraja, tumumpang tamèng isthane, punika wrédinipun, Kangjêng Raja Wilêm pinundhi, tamèng nayakanira, kang nangkis pakewuh, pinarcayèng rèh jajahan, kang dèn andêl ing wadya kang dèn ratoni, dene aksara asma.

Mangkunagara ingkang umungging, tamèng raja iku wrédinira, tan liya amung sumendhe, mring para andêlipun, Kangjêng Raja Nèdêrlan sami, kang anèng tanah Jawa, dene ron kang mlêngkung, kalih pang tinalèn pita, yeka tândha kang asma wus pinarcadi, antuk bintang ing jaja.

Translation:

The parable above means that the king's crown is put onto (upper) end of (*Bangsals Tosan*), where shield (shield-like object) is arranged, meaning that His Majesty King Willem (Willem III) had prominent guidance, declining to be in trouble, trustable to colonial, trustable to the soldiers mastered, while the name Mangkunegaran located on the king's shield means that it stands to the people it believes in, i.e. Lord King of Netherland, existing in Java land, while the curving leaves and the tree branch tied with ribbon indicates the trustable one, getting star (award) on breast.

These two verses explain Mangkunegaran's recognition of the rule of the King of Netherland's, Willem III, ruling from 1849 to 1890. King Willem III was described as a wise person, trusted by his people, soldier, and colonized areas. Meanwhile, the Mangkunegaran rulers were the ones believed in by the King of Netherland in Java land, who had gotten awards and military-grade from the Kingdom of Netherland.

In addition, this verse indicates that the king's crown symbolizes the King of Netherland's crown. Some writings argued that the crown is like Adipati Karna's crown, one of characters in Javanese puppetry story (Siswokratono, 2006). However, it was not explained in the written archive discussing *Bangsals Tosan*, one of which is *Wredining Bangsal Tosan*. The pictures of old archive show that in Dutch Colonial era, the crown put above the symbol of Mangkunegaran is like European typical king crown. *Bangsals Tosan* is a building constructed in Europe, so that the symbol of crown is used following the crown of king existing in Europe. An argument that the crown is Adipati Karna's crown refers more to the carving of Mangkunegaran symbol on *pringgitan* part using the crown like puppetry story, rather than the crown existing in *Bangsals Tosan*.

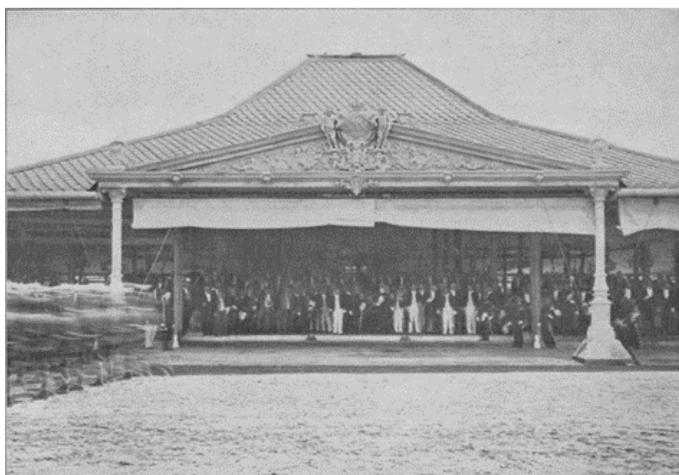


Figure 3: Soldier Parade in front of *Bangsals Tosan* of Pura Mangkunegaran, from this figure it can be seen the shape of European-style crown on the top of *Bangsals Tosan* (Source: Mansfeld, 1916)

It indicates the strong influence of Dutch Colonial on Mangkunegaran. The rulers of Mangkunegaran were represented as only the King of Netherland's right-hand men. However these verses also want to indicate that the effect of Mangkunegaran's rule is higher than that of Kasunanan Surakarta's. Traditionally, Mangkunegaran was under Kasunanan Surakarta, but militarily and economically it could be said as superior to Kasunanan Surakarta. Meanwhile, *putti* sculpture and relief are defined as *widadary* or fairy. One of verses in tells *putti* relief as follows:

widadari ingkang ngapit-apit, kang satunggal obor kang ginawa, kalam kar kang satunggal, yeka sasmitanipun, kang tinêdha ing siyang ratri, mugè mitulungana, dhatêng prajanipun, yèn pêtêng dèn padhangêna, lamun supe sumêlang ruwêding kapti, mugè dèn èngêtêna.

Translation:

Fairies accompanying are in the left-right (sides), one of which carries torch, while another one brings pen hair, meaning that they are expected to always give help the kingdom both at day and at night, so that if the kingdom is dark the fairy would make it bright, and if the kingdom forget and worry about the complicated wish, it will be reminded.

Fairy is a beautiful woman living in heaven, according to Hindu religion, in charge of delivering messages and trialing the human's creed strength. Fairy concept is similar to *putti* concept, the difference lies on fairy represented as beautiful woman, while *putti* as a boy. The meaning of fairy sculpture on Mangkunegaran symbol symbolizes the truth light that can guide the kingdom. This meaning is similar to its original meaning explaining the freedom and the tranquility.

Wredining Bangsal Tosan also explains the meaning of vase sculpture located in the west and east of *Bangsals Tosan* pediment, as follows:

wontên malih rêrênggan ing nginggil, ujung ngajêng kanan kering mawa, gêruk tosan pêpindhane, kumbaya duk ing dangu, kang kinarya ngêdus Pamadi, anèng Endra Buwana, tinulad ing wangun, kang isi tirta nugraha, wit Sang Parta samana madêg narpati, gumanti Batharendra.

Translation:

There is again a parable above, the left-right front end carries a small iron bowl, called *klenthing*, used to bath Permadi or Arjuna, in Indra Buwana, such condition is imitated, containing gifted water, then the Parta becoming the King at that time, succeeding Batharendra (Bathara Indra).

These verses about the meaning of both vase sculpture and *gentong* want to indicate the traditional authority power of Mangkunegaran. Mangkunegaran ruler is the legitimate one, getting mandate from God, just like Arjuna who got gifted water or mandate from Bathara Indra to become king in Indra Buwana. In addition, these verses want to indicate that Mangkunegaran is not a puppet state under other state's influence, but a genuine sovereign one.

4.2 European Architectural Symbol as a means of strengthening Mangkunegara IV

Mangkunegara IV was a Mangkunegaran ruler ruling from 1853 to 1881, born with a name Raden Mas Sudira, the 7th (seventh) child of Prince Hadiwijaya I, the grandson of Sunan Paku Buwana III from Surakarta with Raden Ajeng Sakeli, the daughter of Mangkunegara II. Considering patrilineage, Mangkunegara IV is the grand-grand child of Sunan Paku Buwana III, while based on matrilineage, he is the grandson of Mangkunegara II (Padmasusastra, 1902; Pigeaud, 1927).

At that time, the succession of power in Java was generally conducted using patrilineage, so that the election of Raden Mas Sudira to be the ruler of Mangkunegaran was something extraordinary. Raden Mas Sudira was elected to be the ruler not because he came from Mangkunegaran patrilineage but due to his competency and achievement. Before ruling, Raden Mas Sudira or Prince Gandakusuma had ever been the Commander of Mangkunegaran Legion and *Patih* (a kind of Prime Minister) of Mangkunegaran.

After Mangkunegara III's decease, *Trah* Mangkunegaran family designated him to be Mangkunegara IV, because the sons of Mangkunegara III were considered as less competent or compatible to sit on the throne. Mangkunegara

III's eldest son, Raden Mas Sudana or Prince Suryadiningrat did not believe in inheriting the Mangkunegaran throne on the grounds that he had problems such as debt and illegal ownership. This shows that the rulers in Mangkunegaran are not only seen from the lineage, but also in terms of personality, achievements, and strong support from the *Trah* Mangkunegaran family.



Figure 4: Mangkunegara IV in the uniform of a Dutch Colonial Army Colonel (Source: KITLV)

Having been inaugurated, Mangkunegara IV then got married with Raden Ajeng Dhunuk, the daughter of Mangkunegara III (Padmasusastra, 1902; Pigeaud, 1927). This marriage was carried out as a way to tie the Mangkunegara III family together, so that there was no internal conflict within the Mangkunegaran family. This marriage also served to legalize Mangkunegara IV on the throne of Mangkunegaran, because in Javanese tradition a ruling king must have a lineage or kinship with the previous ruler (Moertono, 1985).

His experience with military and government field, support from the palace, and his marriage with the daughter of previous ruler, and his closeness to Dutch reinforced his (Mangkunegara IV)'s authority. But, his status as the descent of *Trah* Mangkunegaran family from matrilineage could not reinforce his authority in Mangkunegaran. The succession through matrilineage has actually been conducted before in Mangkunegaran. Following Mangkunegara II's decease, Raden Mas Serengat or Prince Riya, the son of the oldest daughter of Mangkunegara II, Raden Ajeng Sayati with Prince Natakusuma, the grandson of Sunan Paku Buwana III from Surakarta, was elected to be the next ruler with title Mangkunegara III (Padmasusastra, 1902; Pigeaud, 1927). It occurred because Mangkunegara II did not have son from his consort (*permaisuri*). However, Mangkunegara III did not maintain his authority successfully, because after his decease, his descent was not trusted to inherit the throne.

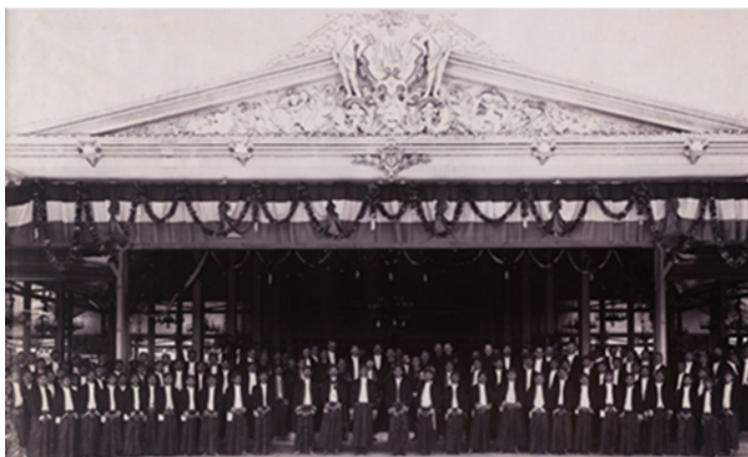


Figure 5: Officials of Keraton Kasunanan Surakarta taking their picture together in *Bangsals Tosan* of Pura Mangkunegaran Palace (Source: KITLV)

Seeing his predecessors' history, to maintain his authority the Mangkunegara IV should make some reformation never done by the previous rulers, by means of conducting modernization in Mangkunegaran. Modernization conducted by Mangkunegara IV evidently benefited and brought advances to Mangkunegaran, and then became added value to the power of Mangkunegara IV's authority. This modernization eventually led to the stronger influence of European culture on Mangkunegaran, from economic system, lifestyle, fashion, to architecture. An output of Mangkunegaran modernization in architecture field was the construction of *Bangsals Tosan* in Pura Mangkunegaran palace.

Bangsals Tosan is not only a European architecture building, but its location in front of *Pendhapa Ageng* also made it the symbol of Mangkunegaran's glory. Each of guests visiting Pura Mangkunegaran palace must pass through *Bangsals Tosan*, so that those visiting this palace will be able to feel "the aura" of Mangkunegaran power and authority. Architecture and ornament existing in *Bangsals Tosan* is a symbol indicating that *Trah* Mangkunegaran-Hadiwijayan family (Padmasusastra, 1902), led by Mangkunegara IV, was the legitimate, strong, and respected ruler of Kadipaten Mangkunegaran. Mangkunegara IV also successfully attracted Dutch Colonial government's sympathy. The existence of *Bangsals Tosan* in Pura Mangkunegaran palace complex symbolizes Mangkunegaran as non-anti-Dutch state, but the one that could live adjacent to Dutch.

Modernization and European cultural symbol reinforced the influence of Kadipaten Mangkunegaran's rule and the authority of Mangkunegara IV and *Trah* Mangkunegaran-Hadiwijayan family. Mangkunegara IV successfully maintained his throne, rule, and authority as the ruler of Mangkunegaran and bequeathed it to his descents from patrilineage. In addition, the influence of European cultural symbols released Mangkunegaran from the influence of Kasunanan Surakarta and attracted Dutch Colonial's attention positively.

5. Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that *Bangsals Tosan* is the symbol of modernization and European cultural domination in Mangkunegaran, characterized with its location in front of *Pendhapa Ageng* Mangkunegaran. Modernization and the use of European cultural symbol led Mangkunegaran to be considered as more advanced and opened compared with other Javanese kingdoms, and "equal" to European nations.

Bangsals Tosan represents the use of European cultural symbols for traditional authority interests. The existence of European cultural symbol was utilized by Mangkunegara IV to reinforce the traditional authority influence, by means of adding new meaning compatible to Javanese mindset and to Mangkunegara IV's discourse in the architecture and ornament of *Bangsals Tosan*. The reason Mangkunegara IV chose a symbol of architectural culture that was different from the previous ruler was to get different added value from the previous ruler and wanted to show that he was able to bring change for Mangkunegaran towards a new era that was better than the era of the previous ruler.

The architectural symbolism in *Bangsals Tosan* at Pura Mangkunegaran symbolizes the form of Dutch colonial cultural and political domination in Mangkunegaran. In addition, architectural symbolism is an attempt by the Mangkunegaran ruler to maintain his authority as the legitimate ruler of the Kadipaten Mangkunegaran.

Bangsals Tosan originally constituting the product of European cultural symbol has changed into the product of colonial cultural symbol. The original meaning given to architecture and ornament of *Bangsals Tosan* as a European-style building could not hold out and changed in its meaning corresponding to Mangkunegaran rulers' discourse.

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