



Unveiling the Philosophical Meaning of the Four Pillars of the South Sulawesi Religious High Court: Symbolism and Relevance Within the Judicial System

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the philosophical meaning of the four pillars on the facade of the West Sulawesi High Court of Religion through a hermeneutic approach within the frame of local culture. The pillars not only function as structural and aesthetic elements, but also represent the core values of the judiciary: justice, legal certainty, expediency and integrity. The architectural symbolism was analyzed in relation to the social, cultural and religious context of the local community. The methods used included literature studies, visual observations, and interviews with judicial officials and cultural figures. The results show that the four pillars reflect the principles of Islamic law such as al-'adl (justice), al-ḥikmah (wisdom), al-mīzān (balance), and al-qudwah (exemplary). These values are reinforced by the integration of motifs typical of the three main ethnic groups of West Sulawesi Mamasa, Mamuju, and Mandar. Mamasa motifs highlight courage and spirituality, Mamuju emphasizes cosmic harmony and balance, while Mandar promotes collective order and regularity. This integration deepens the symbolic meaning of the four pillars as moral reminders and reflections of cultural identity. As such, the pillars are not merely architectural artifacts, but symbolic instruments that reinforce legal values and local identity in judicial institutions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the study of public institutional architecture, courthouse buildings are understood not merely as physical spaces that facilitate legal processes, but also as visual representations of a nation's legal legitimacy and identity. Such buildings serve not only as administrative spaces for the judiciary but also as cultural artifacts and institutional symbols that reflect the core values of the legal system they house. Every design element—from the architectural structure and ornamentation to the selection of building materials—carries profound meaning, intrinsically linked to the principles that underpin the judicial system (Brown, L. A. 2010).

The history of the Supreme Court in Indonesia is closely linked to the nation's experience under colonial rule. The influence of Dutch, British, and Japanese colonialism helped shape the development of the judiciary in Indonesia. Significant changes occurred during the Dutch East Indies era, one of which was the transition from the Raad van Justitie to the Hoge Raad.

The Supreme Court building was originally established as the "Hof van Justitie" (High Court) during the Dutch colonial era in 1848 in Batavia (now Jakarta). It was designed in a Neoclassical architectural style, which—both practically and symbolically—conveys strength, stability, and authority. The massive pillars on the front façade serve as a primary emblem of the majesty of the law and the power of the state. Later, under the auspices of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, a new building—initiated during the presidency of Soeharto and inaugurated on August 19, 1994—retained these four grand pillars on its front façade. These pillars symbolize the strength, justice, truth, and steadfastness of Indonesia's highest judicial institution, while also serving as a monumental symbol of the Supreme Court's authority as the cornerstone of law enforcement in the nation.

In the architecture of the Supreme Court building of the Republic of Indonesia, the selection of visual elements—such as paint color—plays a significant role in reinforcing the building's symbolic meaning. The main pillars on the front facade are painted in a pristine white (color code E2000), which visually conveys a sense of purity, justice, and the neutrality of the essential values within the judicial system.

Furthermore, the open and transparent design of the building reflects a commitment to the principles of openness and accountability within the judicial process. The architecture of the courthouse embodies universal and egalitarian values of justice, asserting that every individual—regardless of their status or background—is entitled to fair treatment before the law. In this sense, a courthouse is more than just a venue for legal proceedings; it serves as a living symbol that invites the public to understand and appreciate a legal system dedicated to upholding justice, truth, and equality.

Although the four pillars on the front facade of the Supreme Court building carry profound philosophical significance, in reality, many view them merely as aesthetic elements. This superficial interpretation causes these legal symbols—which ought to represent the fundamental values of the judiciary, such as justice, legal certainty, utility, and independence—to lose their educational and inspirational value in the eyes of the public.

The four pillars serve as both visual markers and an architectural narrative, emphasizing four core principles: justice, legal certainty, utility, and integrity. Within the context of Islamic law—which forms the operational foundation for religious courts—these values resonate with the principles of *al-'adl* (justice), *al-ḥikmah* (wisdom), *al-mīzān* (balance), and *al-qudwah* (exemplary conduct). These four principles are implicitly incorporated into the design of the religious court building, which integrates religious values with local culture—including motifs from the three primary cultures of West Sulawesi: Mamasa, Mamuju, and Mandar. These motifs not only reflect a wealth of local wisdom but also reinforce the connection between

legal principles and the cultural identity embedded within the building's architectural structure.

Institutionally, the use of four pillars as an architectural icon has become part of the visual design standards for judicial institutions, as stipulated in the technical guidelines for the construction of court buildings under the Supreme Court. This serves not only to standardize the institutional image but also to instill the understanding that the judiciary does not merely rest upon a physical structure; rather, it stands upon strong and balanced moral and legal values.

The connection between these core values is reflected in the symbolism of the four pillars, which frequently serve as a central element in the architectural design of courthouse buildings. Found in many judicial structures, these pillars are preserved and maintained as a visual representation of four fundamental principles within the justice system: justice, truth, equality, and transparency. Each pillar not only reinforces the building's architectural identity but also signifies that the legal system upheld within its walls must consistently reflect and maintain these principles. Consequently, the symbolism of the four pillars is more than just a cultural legacy; it is an affirmation of the judiciary's ongoing commitment to carrying out its duties in alignment with the core values inherent in the law itself.

This study focuses on the four pillars at the West Sulawesi Religious High Court—a representative judicial institution under the auspices of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia. These four pillars, which adorn the front of the building, serve not merely as architectural elements but also embody philosophical symbolism representing fundamental judicial values: justice, legal certainty, utility, and integrity. This research aims to examine how the symbolism of these four pillars reflects legal principles within a local context, as well as how this meaning is understood by judicial officials and the public in the West Sulawesi region.

A hermeneutic approach is employed in this research as an interpretive method that enables the exploration of meanings underlying the visual expressions of architecture—specifically, by examining how the symbol of the four pillars is understood within cultural and legal contexts.

This research can provide a deeper understanding of studies in the fields of symbolic architecture and the philosophy of law—specifically regarding the relationship between architectural elements (such as the four pillars) and the philosophical meanings that underpin judicial power in Indonesia. The findings of this research may serve as an additional reference for the development of theories concerning symbolism in the architectural design of legal institutions.



Figure 1. High Religious Court of West Sulawesi

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Philosophical Meaning of Pillars in Architecture

Pillars in architecture carry a profound philosophical significance; they serve not merely as structural elements, but also as symbols of strength, balance, and resilience. From ancient

times to the present day, pillars have frequently been used to represent authority, justice, and stability within various institutions, such as those pertaining to the judiciary, government, and education (Summerson, J. 1980).

In terms of their philosophical significance in architecture, pillars first reflect stability and strength; they symbolize the robustness and durability of a structure, both physically and conceptually. In the context of government or judicial buildings, pillars represent legal stability and social order. Secondly, they signify balance and harmony—as seen in Greek and Roman architecture, where pillars are employed to establish proportion and equilibrium, symbolizing harmony within life and society (Roth, L. M. 1993).

According to Janson, H. W. & Janson, A. F. (2001), a third meaning is authority and grandeur; many courthouses, banks, and academic institutions employ large pillars to project a sense of gravitas, power, and public trust. A fourth meaning relates to spirituality and eternity; in many cultures, pillars are viewed as supports for the world or as links between heaven and earth. In Gothic architecture, for instance, soaring pillars symbolize human aspirations toward a higher spirituality. A fifth function is that of protection and security, as pillars can also represent a safeguard against external forces. In historical structures, pillars are frequently used to support massive roofs, conveying the impression that the building is capable of sheltering those within it (Fletcher, B. 1996).

2.2 History of the Pillars

The use of pillars on the front facade of a building has a long history, dating back to ancient times and continuing to be employed today across various architectural styles.

In Ancient Greek architecture (8th century BC – 1st century BC), pillars were first used extensively, particularly in temple structures such as the Parthenon in Athens. The Greeks developed three primary styles of columns or pillars: the simple and robust Doric, which symbolizes strength and stability; the more slender Ionic, characterized by spiral ornaments (volute) and representing elegance; and the highly decorative Corinthian, featuring acanthus leaf ornamentation and often employed in grand edifices. Within Greek culture, pillars were not merely structural elements; they also carried philosophical significance, embodying order, beauty, and balance (Smith, 2005).

The Romans (1st century BC – 5th century AD) adapted and developed the Greek column system, introducing innovations such as the use of concrete and the integration of columns into walls as pilasters. Roman columns were frequently employed in public structures—such as the Colosseum and the Pantheon—to convey power and grandeur (Jones, 2010).

In Europe, the Renaissance architectural style (14th–17th centuries) revived the use of pillars, drawing inspiration from Greece and Rome. Pillars were incorporated into churches, palaces, and government buildings, emphasizing harmonious proportions and classical aesthetics (Brown, 2013).

From the 17th to the 19th century, Baroque and Neoclassical architecture began to flourish. The Baroque style employs columns with more dynamic and opulent ornamentation, while the Neoclassical style—as seen in the White House in the U.S. and Buckingham Palace in the U.K.—returns to Greco-Roman forms, featuring columns that convey grandeur and authority (Turner, 2017).

In the modern and contemporary era (20th century to the present), pillars continue to be used, though they function more as aesthetic elements rather than as primary structural components. Courthouses, banks, and government institutions often feature pillars at their entrances to convey an impression of stability, strength, and public trust (Williams, 2020).

Meanwhile, Gothic architecture (12th–16th centuries) is best known for its use of slender, soaring pillars within churches. Its structural principles remain influential in buildings that

feature pillars at the front, as seen in Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. In the Gothic era, these pillars support pointed arches and large stained-glass windows, reflecting a sense of spirituality and a connection to God (Murray, 2015).

During the colonial era (16th–19th centuries), pillars were used to showcase the power and cultural dominance of Europe across various parts of the world, including the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Many government buildings and colonial mansions adopted Neoclassical and Baroque-style pillars to reflect social status and grandeur—notable examples being the Merdeka Palace in Indonesia and the White House in the United States (Robinson, 2018).

Beaux-Arts architecture (19th century – early 20th century) flourished in Europe and the United States, incorporating Classical, Renaissance, and Baroque elements. In this style, columns were used to emphasize strength, balance, and harmony in significant buildings, such as the Library of Congress in the U.S. and the Grand Palais in France. During this era, columns served not only a structural purpose but also functioned as decorative elements, signifying intellectual and cultural distinction (Fletcher, 2012).

During the Art Deco era (1920s–1940s), the use of pillars frequently took the form of pilasters—columns attached to a wall—while still maintaining an essence of grandeur and prestige. Well-known examples of this style include the Empire State Building in New York and the Sarinah Building in Jakarta (Hill, 2021).

Brutalist architecture (1950s – 1970s), pillars began to function more as large, expressive concrete structures, reflecting solidity and functionality. This style is widely used in government and judicial buildings to show legal stability and state authority, such as the Brasilia Supreme Court Building designed by Oscar Niemeyer (Ching, 2019).

In Postmodern and contemporary architecture (1980s–present), the use of pillars is primarily symbolic and decorative. For instance, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia building adopts a classical style featuring large pillars to underscore legal authority and public trust. In some modern designs, pillars are crafted to be slimmer and lighter—often utilizing steel or glass—to reflect transparency and openness within the legal and governmental systems (Anderson, 2023).

2.3 The Symbolism of Pillars in Legal Architecture and Its Influence on Public Perception

The architecture of courthouse buildings—specifically the use of large pillars—has long served as a symbol of power and authority within the classical architectural tradition, both in the Western world and in Indonesia. These pillars function not merely as decorative elements; they also convey a profound message, reflecting stability, strength, and the supremacy of the law. In the context of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, the four pillars featured on the building's façade represent four core principles of judicial power: justice, legal certainty, utility, and independence (Rapoport, 1969).

The symbolism of pillars as a representation of legal values has a strong foundation in the theory of legal philosophy. These pillars illustrate how the law should be applied consistently and independently. The first pillar symbolizes justice, which serves as the primary objective of any judicial system. The second pillar, representing legal certainty, asserts that the law must be enforced based on clear and transparent foundations. The third pillar, symbolizing utility, emphasizes that the application of the law should provide benefits to the broader society. Meanwhile, the fourth pillar represents the independence of the judiciary, which is essential for ensuring that courts can function without external influence.

Moreover, the use of these large pillars has a psychological impact on the public. According to Epstein (2003), such architectural symbols project an image of authority and credibility for the Supreme Court, making the institution appear solid and steadfast in the execution of its duties. For many, a grand structure featuring large pillars is often associated

with strength and justice; consequently, this reinforces the public's perception of the Supreme Court as a firm and fair institution.

Nevertheless, although many people view these pillars as architectural elements that enhance the grandeur of a building, a deeper understanding of their philosophical and symbolic significance is often overlooked. In fact, grasping the symbolism of these pillars can deepen our appreciation for the importance of the fundamental principles of the judiciary and how these principles are manifested in the physical structure of a courthouse (Van Romondt, 1985).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach, aiming to understand the philosophical significance embedded in the four pillars of the Supreme Court. Data collection was conducted through several methods: in-depth interviews with experts in law, architecture, and symbolic culture; direct observation of the architectural elements of the Supreme Court building; and document analysis, including literature, historical archives, and academic studies concerning architectural symbolism within judicial institutions.

The data obtained were then analyzed philosophically, utilizing symbolic interpretation and hermeneutics to decipher the meanings inherent in the four-pillar structure and to explore their connections to the principles of justice, the rule of law, truth, and the independence of the judiciary.

A hermeneutic approach was applied to interpret the symbolic meaning contained within the Supreme Court's four pillars. Hermeneutics allows for the reading of architecture as a "cultural text"—one that communicates not only through its physical form but also through the values and history it embodies. In this context, the pillars are understood as visual symbols representing the principles of justice and legal independence. The interpretation integrates historical context, institutional philosophy, and contemporary perspectives on the architecture of judicial institutions.

The four pillars were selected as the object of this study because they occupy a central position—both visually and symbolically—on the facade of the Supreme Court building, representing the fundamental strengths of the Indonesian judiciary. These pillars serve not merely as aesthetic architectural elements, but as symbols of core philosophical values: justice, strength, truth, and the steadfastness of the law (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Through an examination of these four pillars, this study aims to reveal how architectural elements can function as a medium for representing noble values within the national legal system.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

The building of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court is more than just a physical structure for administrative tasks and court proceedings. It has been designed with a keen awareness of the importance of symbolism in architecture. Every design element—from the building's form and structure, its ornaments and decorations, the choice of materials and colors, to its interior spatial layout—likely carries specific meanings or represents core values upheld by the religious judicial institution. These symbols serve as a form of visual communication, conveying the identity, religious values, and principles of justice that underpin the operations of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court.

Beyond its symbolic aspects, the building is also crafted with a strong focus on aesthetics. Visual beauty was a key consideration in its design, encompassing harmonious proportions

and scale, an engaging composition of architectural elements, meticulous attention to detail, and a seamless integration with the surrounding environment. Consequently, the West Sulawesi Religious High Court building serves not only a practical purpose but also aims to create a space that is beautiful and dignified, offering a positive visual experience for its users and the public alike. The strategic location of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court—situated within the Governor's Office Complex on Jalan Abdul Malik Pattana Endeng, in the Rangas area of Simboro and Islands District, Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi 91511—further reinforces its role. Being located within the provincial government's administrative hub, which is easily accessible from various directions via main roads, the site greatly facilitates the smooth conduct of legal and judicial activities.

The West Sulawesi Religious High Court building features a modern architectural design that incorporates both functional and powerful symbolic elements. One of its most striking primary features is the set of four large pillars adorning the building's front facade. These pillars serve not only as structural elements but are also imbued with profound symbolic meaning. Provided below are images of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court.

Based on direct on-site observation, the pillars on the main façade of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia building are painted in a shade known as "Putih Permai" (pristine white), designated by the code E2000. This same color is applied to the pillars of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court, creating a clean and uniform visual appearance. The choice of this color appears consistent with the classical architectural design adopted by the building.



Figure 2. The Four Pillars of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court (PTA)

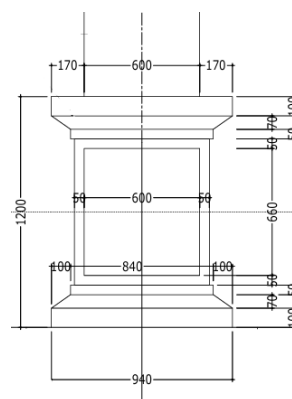


Figure 3. Dimensions of the pillars at the West Sulawesi Religious High Court (PTA)

The 60-centimeter-wide pillars on the front facade of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court represent the strength and steadfast principles of the judicial institution. As noted by Van Romondt (1985), large pillars in classical architecture serve to express stability and authority. This is further supported by Rapoport's (1969) perspective, which suggests that the physical form of a building can convey social values, including justice and morality. Furthermore, these pillars create a sense of protection and establish the institution's credibility, as examined by Epstein (2003).

The elevation of the building via its foundation serves as a symbolic separation between the mundane (profane) realm and the legal (sacred) realm—a concept that aligns with the idea of transcendence in religious architecture, as discussed by Eliade (1959). The height of the ground floor serves not only a technical function but also signifies reverence for the values of law and justice.

Meanwhile, the broad bases of the pillars reflect a foundation of local values and customs that contextually support the Islamic legal system. As argued by Nasr (1987), the integration of Islamic teachings with local wisdom serves as a vital basis for designing spaces that represent culture-based justice.



Figure 4. Four Pillars with the Main Entrance Located Between the Pillars

The four pillars flanking the main entrance of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court—arranged symmetrically on the front façade—represent a balance of legal principles. As noted by Van Romondt (1985), pillars in architecture are not merely structural elements; they serve as symbols of institutional values that uphold the authority of a building. The central placement of the main entrance suggests that access to justice originates from a neutral point, ensuring equality for all those seeking justice.

Interviews with local architects and legal practitioners confirm that this design was intended to convey moral and philosophical messages. The first pillar symbolizes legal certainty, providing a guarantee of clarity and firmness in the law; the second represents justice, the fundamental cornerstone of both Islamic and modern legal systems; the third reflects utility, underscoring the law's function in providing beneficial solutions; and the fourth embodies integrity—the honesty and morality of judicial officials. Accordingly, this study first outlines the architectural characteristics of these four pillars before delving into the philosophical meanings embedded within them.

a. Architectural Form Featuring Four Pillars at the West Sulawesi Religious High Court Building

The four pillars on the main facade of the Sulawesi Religious High Court are designed by adopting a classical architectural style, drawing inspiration from the concept of columns found in Greek and Roman architecture. These pillars are tall and robust, with a diameter proportional to the building as a whole, conveying a sense of grandeur and authority. This design reflects the stability and steadfastness of the law within a judicial system that serves to provide legal certainty for the public (Ching, 2019).

Beyond their role as structural elements supporting the front of the building, the pillars also serve as symbols representing balance and harmony within the law. This aligns with the concept in symbolic architecture, which posits that architectural elements can reflect the social, cultural, and ideological significance of the institution they house (Summerson, 1980).

b. Philosophical Significance of the Four Pillars of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court Building

The four pillars at the Sulawesi Religious High Court serve not merely as architectural elements; they also reflect the fundamental values of a judicial system that is fair, authoritative, and trustworthy. Each pillar represents a core legal principle that serves as a foundation for upholding justice, namely:

1. Legal Certainty

- The first pillar signifies that the law must be clear, definitive, and understandable to all parties seeking justice.

- Within the religious judicial system, legal certainty serves as a fundamental cornerstone, ensuring that the resulting rulings have a solid legal basis and do not give rise to conflicting interpretations.
- Legal certainty also refers to the requirement that all regulations and laws must be applied consistently, without any ambiguity in their implementation (Auda, 2008).

2. Justice

- The second pillar signifies that the law must be upheld fairly, without any discrimination or specific interests that could influence court rulings.
- The concept of justice within the religious court system emphasizes balance in adjudicating cases based on both Sharia principles and positive law.
- The justice referred to here is not merely formal but also substantive—that is, justice that truly provides a sense of fairness to the broader society (Creswell, 2014).

3. Utility

- The third pillar reflects the idea that the law must not only be enforced firmly but must also provide tangible benefits to society.
- In the context of religious courts, this principle of utility is closely linked to the concept of *maslahah*—the idea that a legal decision must yield a greater benefit and avoid causing harm to the parties involved.
- A sound court decision is one that does not merely follow rules rigidly, but also considers its broader impact on the social life of the community (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

4. Integrity

- The fourth pillar signifies that judges and all judicial personnel must possess a high level of integrity in the performance of their duties.
- This integrity encompasses honesty, professionalism, and a commitment to upholding justice based on established legal principles.
- Within the judicial system, integrity is a crucial factor in maintaining public trust in legal institutions and ensuring that every decision rendered is truly grounded in justice, rather than in personal interests or the interests of specific groups (Yin, 2018).

4.2 Discussion

This study reveals that the four pillars at the Religious High Court of Sulawesi hold a significance that transcends mere architectural elements. These pillars serve as visual representations of fundamental values within the judicial system: legal certainty, justice, utility, and integrity. To gain a deeper understanding of how these pillars embody such philosophical concepts, this discussion further explores the relationship between architecture and legal symbolism, as well as its relevance within both Islamic and modern judicial systems.

In this research, a hermeneutic approach is employed to interpret the symbolic meanings embedded in the four pillars of the Religious High Court of West Sulawesi building. As a method of interpreting meaning—rooted in textual and philosophical studies—hermeneutics enables the researcher to uncover layers of significance beneath the physical architectural form, while taking into account historical and cultural contexts, as well as the values prevalent within society and legal institutions.

a. The Symbolism of Pillars in the Architecture of Law and the Judiciary

History shows that the use of pillars in the architecture of governance and law dates back to ancient times. In Greek and Roman architecture, pillars were frequently employed as

primary elements in temples, palaces, and courthouses. In classical architecture, pillars symbolize the strength, steadfastness, and authority inherent to the institutions they house (Summerson, 1980). This is evident in structures such as the Parthenon in Greece and the Roman Forum, both of which utilize pillars as a fundamental structural component.

In the modern era, the symbolism of the pillar persists in the design of judicial buildings across various nations. The United States Supreme Court building, the White House, and numerous legal institutions throughout Europe and Asia incorporate pillars into their facades to reflect stability and the rule of law. Similarly, the High Religious Court of Sulawesi features four pillars on its facade, symbolizing the principles of a fair and principled judiciary.

Within the context of a court, pillars do not merely convey a sense of grandeur and authority; they also carry a profound philosophical significance, representing a robust and trustworthy legal system. The four pillars standing firmly in front of the building communicate a visual message to the public: that this judicial institution rests upon a solid foundation, one that cannot be easily swayed by external interference.

b. The Philosophical Significance of the Four Pillars in the Context of Islamic Jurisprudence

In the Islamic judicial system, the ideal legal concept must be grounded in the principles of *maqashid al-shari'ah*—the ultimate objectives of Islamic law—which encompass the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Auda, 2008). The four pillars that form the architectural framework of the Religious High Court of Sulawesi can be associated with these principles as follows:

1. Legal Certainty from Islamic and Modern Perspectives

- The first pillar, which represents legal certainty, is rooted in the principle that the law must consist of clear, consistent rules that are understandable to the public. In Islam, legal certainty is guaranteed through the existence of Sharia, which provides clear guidance for the community.
- In the context of modern judicial systems, legal certainty is realized through written legal rules and transparent judicial procedures. This is essential to ensure that there is no ambiguity in the application of the law—ambiguity that could otherwise harm the public or lead to injustice (Creswell, 2014).

2. Justice as the Foundation of Islamic Law and Modern Jurisprudence

- The second pillar, representing justice, serves as a core value within both the Islamic legal system and positive law. In Islam, justice (*al-'adl*) is a fundamental principle that judges must uphold in every ruling. The Quran emphasizes justice as an obligation for every leader and judge in the execution of their duties (Auda, 2008).
- In the context of modern jurisprudence, justice entails more than merely granting individuals their rights; it also ensures that the legal system remains impartial—favoring no specific group—and free from political interference. This pillar serves as a reminder that the law must be upheld regardless of the social, economic, or political backgrounds of the parties involved in a dispute.

3. Utility as the Objective of Judicial Decisions

- The third pillar, which represents utility, relates to the purpose of law in providing the best solutions for society. In Islam, this concept is known as *maslahah*—a legal principle ensuring that every legal decision yields benefits while avoiding harm to the community (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- Within modern judicial systems, the utility of law implies that every court decision should generate a positive impact on society, rather than serving merely as a rigid rule that disregards social consequences. Decisions based solely on the letter of the

law, without considering their social repercussions, may diminish public trust in the judicial system.

4. Integrity as the Moral Foundation for Judges and Judicial Officials

- The fourth pillar, which represents integrity, asserts that every judge and judicial official must possess high moral standards. In Islamic law, a judge (qadhi) is required to act justly and honestly, and must not accept bribes or yield to pressure when adjudicating cases.
- In the context of modern judiciaries, integrity is a key aspect in maintaining public trust in judicial institutions. Without integrity, a judicial system risks losing its legitimacy and fostering distrust within society (Yin, 2018).

c. Implications and Relevance within Contemporary Judicial Systems

This study finds that the use of four pillars in the architecture of the Religious High Court of Sulawesi is not merely a legacy of classical design; it also carries deeper implications for shaping public perception of the legal institution. These pillars reflect the stability and steadfastness of the legal system, while conveying a symbolic message to the public that the court is an institution dedicated to upholding justice in a transparent and independent manner.

Within the context of Indonesia's judicial system, architectural designs featuring large pillars are frequently employed in other court buildings, such as those of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court. This indicates a continuity in the use of architectural symbolism to reinforce legal legitimacy and enhance public trust in judicial institutions.

However, a primary challenge lies in ensuring that the values represented by these pillars are genuinely reflected in judicial practice. Without the consistent implementation of principles such as legal certainty, justice, utility, and integrity, the symbolism of the pillars risks becoming nothing more than a decorative element devoid of any substantive meaning. Consequently, this study underscores the importance of strengthening legal values within judicial practice, ensuring that the symbolism reflected in the architecture remains aligned with the reality on the ground.

d. Architectural Symbolism of the Four Pillars from the Perspective of Local Cultural Hermeneutics

In the design of judicial institutions—such as the Supreme Court and the courts under its jurisdiction—architectural forms and ornaments serve as more than mere visual elements; they possess a symbolic power that reflects legal values, justice, and local cultural identity. Consequently, the articulation of specific forms and the emphasis on traditional ornamentation become highly relevant in representing a spirit of justice rooted in local wisdom. This research explores the relationship between architectural symbolism and the traditional Mandar motifs found at the base of pillars. These motifs are not merely decorative; they embody philosophical values—such as order, justice, integrity, and utility—that are integral to the life of the community. Within the context of institutional architecture and an "intangible" architectural approach, these motifs function as symbols of local wisdom, integrated into the value system of the religious court (peradilan agama).

1. A Symbol of Order and Legal Certainty
Symmetrical checkered and striped motifs reflect an organized and patterned social structure, representing the principle of legal certainty. Much like these fixed and unchanging patterns, the law is expected to be stable, consistent, and capable of providing clear guarantees to society.
2. Social Harmony and the Pillar of Utility

The recurring patterns in Mandar textiles illustrate the values of togetherness and the collective spirit of coastal communities living side by side. This aligns with the principle of utility, which posits that the law should deliver tangible benefits to the welfare of society, rather than merely serving as an adherence to formal procedures.

3. The Black-and-White Contrast as Justice

The dominance of black and white reflects a dichotomy of values—between right and wrong, honesty and betrayal—which lies at the core of the principle of justice. In the context of religious courts, this signifies that moral considerations, conscience, and social ethics serve as the primary determinants in the administration of the law.

4. Ancestral Ornaments and the Pillar of Integrity

Mandar motifs represent a cultural heritage preserved through generations. Within the context of legal institutions, this symbolizes integrity: upholding fundamental principles, maintaining high ethical standards, and remaining steadfast in the noble values inherited within the judicial system.

Thus, the inclusion of Mandar motifs in the design of the pillar bases does more than just enhance the building's aesthetic; it also underscores the fact that law and justice in Indonesia are inextricably linked to local cultural roots—roots rich in meaning and values.

The Supreme Court—specifically its architectural pillars, which serve as symbols of legal steadfastness—incorporates cultural values from the three primary ethnic groups in West Sulawesi: the Mamasa, the Mamuju, and the Mandar. Each of these groups possesses a heritage of values and visual symbols imbued with deep significance; when integrated appropriately, these elements can strengthen the philosophical meaning of judicial buildings within a profound local context.

e. Andesite Stone Pattern

The andesite stone motif located at the base of the pillars at the West Sulawesi Religious High Court carries a powerful symbolic meaning, representing robustness, steadfastness of principle, and legal stability. As an architectural element supporting the pillar structures, the andesite stone reflects the importance of a solid foundation in the execution of judicial duties. Within the context of local values and Islamic law, this stone serves as an emblem of the integrity and honesty that form the basis for upholding justice. Furthermore, the use of this natural material expresses the legal institution's affinity for local wisdom, simplicity, and sustainability. Thus, the andesite stone motif not only enhances the visual structure but also reinforces the philosophical significance of the pillars as supports for the ethics and morality of the law.

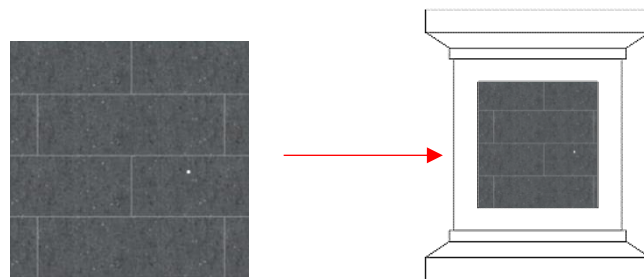


Figure 5. Andesite Stone Pattern

f. Mamasa Pattern

The traditional Mamasa motif, located at the base of the pillars of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court, is more than a mere decorative ornament; it carries a philosophical significance that reflects the noble values of the Toraja Mamasa community. Each element of

color and pattern within this motif conveys a symbolic message that resonates with the principles of justice within the context of the religious judiciary.



Figure 6. Mamasa Pattern

1. Red symbolizes courage and sacrifice; in the context of the judiciary, it represents a firm determination to uphold the law, even when faced with risks or moral pressure.
2. Yellow reflects nobility and wisdom, aligning with the role of a judge—a figure who must uphold honor and deliver clear, fair decisions.
3. Brown, or an earthy orange, represents fertility and a connection to the earth, reflecting the principle that the law should be beneficial and firmly rooted in social reality and the needs of the community.
4. Vertical stripe patterns symbolize the connection between heaven and earth—representing the spiritual values that serve as a foundation for reaching fair and balanced legal decisions.

Within the building's facade structure, the Mamasa motif conveys an additional meaning: that the judicial institution does not exist in a vacuum, but is instead anchored in local cultural roots. The presence of this motif reinforces the position of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court as an institution that not only upholds the law in a formal sense but also respects the spiritual, cultural, and moral values of the local community. Consequently, the court's architecture serves as a symbolic space that integrates law, culture, and justice into a cohesive visual narrative.

g. Mamuju Pattern

The traditional Mamuju motifs found on the right side of the pillar bases are more than mere decoration; they are a cultural expression imbued with spiritual, social, and legal values. In the architecture of judicial institutions, the integration of these motifs reflects an "intangible" architectural approach—designing spaces based on invisible cultural values. Through their colors, forms, and visual structures, the Mamuju motifs reinforce the symbolism of the four pillars of the judiciary: legal certainty, justice, utility, and independence.



Figure 7. Mamuju Pattern

1. **Symmetry and Legal Certainty**
Geometric and symmetrical motifs reflect order, clarity, and a well-organized legal structure, aligning with the principle of legal certainty—ensuring that the law is fair and comprehensible to the public.

2. Colors and the Pillars of Justice

The colors red, black, and yellow symbolize courage, strength, and wisdom—core values essential for upholding justice with both firmness and discernment.

3. Natural Motifs and Social Utility

Wave-like and zigzag patterns, reminiscent of the sea and mountains, represent harmony with nature, underscoring that the law should provide tangible benefits and foster social well-being.

4. Social Function and Autonomy

Motifs that denote social status and customary traditions highlight the importance of cultural identity as a foundation for the independence of the judiciary, ensuring it remains free from external interference.

5. Symbolic Relevance

By incorporating Mamuju motifs into its façade design, the High Religious Court of West Sulawesi affirms its connection to local culture, demonstrating that a modern legal system can remain rooted in traditional values rich with meaning.

h. Mandar Pattern

The motifs from North Sumatra featured in the image typically originate from Batak culture, where each design element carries specific meanings and symbolism. Below is an explanation of the common symbols and meanings associated with North Sumatra's traditional motifs that may be relevant to the patterns shown in the image.

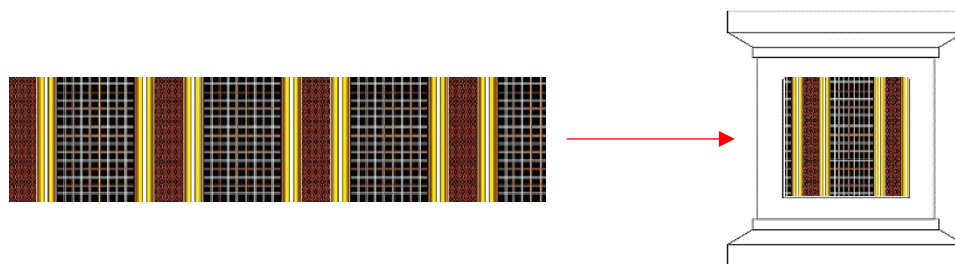


Figure 8. Mandar Pattern

1. Geometric Patterns and Vertical Lines

Regular geometric patterns and vertical lines often symbolize order, stability, and a solid social structure. These reflect the harmonious values within Batak society, which places a high premium on order in both social life and traditional customs.

2. Golden Yellow

The color yellow or gold typically symbolizes nobility, wealth, and courage. Within the context of Batak culture, this color can also represent honor and high social status.

3. Red

Red symbolizes courage, vitality, and strength. This color is also associated with spiritual protection and the sacrifices made by ancestors.

4. Black

Black is often interpreted as a color that provides protection against evil and spiritual forces. It also signifies strength and steadfastness in upholding customs and traditions.

5. Symbolic Motifs

Complex, repeating patterns reflect the cycle of life and the interconnectedness between humanity, nature, and ancestral spirits. These motifs also serve as a reminder of the importance of balance and harmony between the physical and spiritual worlds.

5. CONCLUSION

This study asserts that the four pillars on the front façade of the West Sulawesi Religious High Court are not merely architectural design elements, but rather symbolic manifestations of core values within the legal system. Each pillar represents legal certainty, justice, utility, and integrity—fundamental principles that serve as the ethical and operational pillars of the judicial institution, from the perspectives of both Islamic and modern law.

Through a symbolic approach and hermeneutic analysis, this research uncovers the profound meanings embedded within these architectural elements. The four pillars do not only support the physical structure of the building; they also represent the moral burden and responsibilities borne by the judicial institution. The placement of the main entrance—situated precisely between the four pillars—signifies that access to justice can only be attained when all these fundamental legal principles are upheld in a balanced and integrated manner.

However, the reality on the ground reveals that public perception of these elements remains quite limited. Many people view the pillars merely as decorative components, failing to recognize the philosophical symbolism behind them. This reflects a gap between the visual representation of the legal institution and the public's understanding of the symbolic meanings it embodies.

The public tendency to reduce these pillars to mere aesthetic elements is a critical point highlighted in this study. When legal symbols are misunderstood or overlooked by the public, the effectiveness of symbolism as a tool for communicating values is diminished. Symbols that ought to strengthen the image of the judicial institution instead lose their substantive meaning. Consequently, it is essential for judicial bodies and academics to educate the public on the philosophical significance of the legal symbols employed—utilizing approaches such as cultural engagement, public legal education, and the promotion of visual literacy within public spaces.

Furthermore, the philosophical values symbolized by these four pillars must also be manifested through the concrete actions of judicial officials. Without the consistent implementation of these values, the pillars remain merely symbolic decorations, failing to strengthen the legitimacy of legal institutions. The administration of justice must embody the essence of these pillars: stability, fairness, utility, and integrity.

Traditional motifs from the three primary ethnic groups in West Sulawesi—the Mamasa, Mamuju, and Mandar—possess symbolic significance that aligns with the values represented by these four pillars. The Mamasa motifs, characterized by a prominence of red and vertical patterns, reflect courage, spirituality, and the connection between the physical and spiritual realms—resonating with the principles of legal certainty and integrity. Meanwhile, the Mamuju motifs feature a harmonious blend of colors and intricate patterns, signifying nobility, cosmic power, and a balance of social values, thereby supporting the concept of inclusive justice. The Mandar motifs, distinguished by symmetrical linear patterns and earthy tones, represent order, tranquility, and utility within the collective life of the community—a reflection of the principle of "utility" (usefulness) that serves as a foundation for the work of judicial institutions.

Thus, this study asserts that the symbolism of the four pillars at the West Sulawesi Religious High Court does not exist in isolation; rather, it can be enriched by the visual and philosophical meanings inherent in local traditional motifs. The pillars, the motifs, and the underlying values must function in harmony, ensuring that these symbols are not merely architectural ornaments, but truly represent the face of justice as it exists within the cultural context of West Sulawesi.

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