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## Living together: The phenomenon of house occupancy in Indonesia with particular reference to Balikpapan East Kalimantan

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# Living together: The phenomenon of house occupancy in Indonesia with particular reference to Balikpapan East Kalimantan

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**Abstract.** This study explores housing problem concerning the most widely perceived idea of housing needs that heavily influenced by the technical and macro-scale level as well as the units' tenure and occupancy which is mainly perceived as owning and renting. On the other hand, the housing cannot be seen as such due to the existence of different context of the problem and the various aspirations of occupants. This research highlights the other kind of occupancy phenomenon among Indonesian who can get access to and live in a housing unit without owning or renting –by living and staying with their relatives. In particular reference to Balikpapan East Kalimantan, this study concerns the modus of this specific kind of house occupancy and aims to reveal the housing processes as well as aspirations of the house occupants who live and stay together.

## 1. Introductions and Background of Study

### 1.1. Human Settlement and House

The landscapes and its hierarchy change from time to time from natural landscapes into increasingly dense populated settlements [1]. Human settlements can be categorized into groups that reflect their permanent level [2]; it can be in the form of urban, rural and remote settlements [3], and it may refer to occupation in new areas as well as a place of residence that has been inhabited by humans, both large and small scales [4]. A house can be considered as a human settlement in its smallest scale, an architectural product that is constructed and inhabited as the built environment. Furthermore, a house is one of the basic human needs –as a shelter. Although it universally can be found everywhere in the world, there are many differences and uniqueness in its physical and non-physical aspects. Housing is a problem that depends on social and economic realities. Therefore, it needs to be understood in its complexity and dynamics in a changing time context, not just examining the material aspects, but also the cultural background and aspirations of households who will inhabit the house [5].

### 1.2. Housing as Macro Problem

Houses providing was developed in countries based on capitalist economics, which saw it as a process of demand-supply between the housing industries and consumers. Generally, in countries that have economies based on market capitalist such as the United States, there is a general ability of a market to allocate goods and resources through the law of supply and demand [6]. Technical, aggregate and macro-scale supply-demand become the dominant

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paradigm in viewing housing needs globally. The most well-known housing needs modeling was proposed by Holman in 1975 that essentially sees a net change in the balance between housing stock and the number of households [7]. Holman model was then criticized due to its lack of linkage to economic aspects [7]. Some further studies modified this model by including economic aspects, for instance, it examines the supply-demand of units with a focus on prices, households income, and the number of available units [8] [9] [10]. In accordance, the fulfillment of housing units operates in the matter of tenure status. House tenure refers to an arrangement under which household occupies entirely or some part of a housing unit; the types of it include ownership, rental, etc. [11]. Owned-rental polarization is the principal approach of seeing house tenure and becomes the focus of housing studies in various countries, such as a study conducted in 2013 about some countries in Central and Eastern Europe [12], study in 2016 in New Zealand regarding occupancy patterns from 1986 to 2013 [13], and a study conducted in context of the Poland in 2004 [14]. Further attention to house ownership was carried out by a study concerning United States context in 2007 with regard to income varieties of the owners [15]. Another study that was also conducted in the United States proposed an argument indicated that types of tenure are also conditioned by psychological aspects of the occupants [16].

### *1.3. Problem and Issue*

It was reported by the Indonesian statistical office (Badan Pusat Statistik) in the result of 2010 population census under the topic of family and household structure, that there are some categories of household members' relation with the head of the household which refer to the non-family relationship, stated as "*famili lain*". It is mentioned that not only the presence of children in-laws (1.99%), parent and parents-in-law (2.01%), and grandchildren (4.05%), but also other relatives (3.52%) in households [17]. The widely perceived house tenure status that is discussed above has not yet included kind of occupancy among Indonesian who can get access to housing unit by living and staying together with their relatives and without owning or renting. In developing countries, such as Indonesia, the society is present and constituted by the dual conditions. People, values, and institutions can be either modern or traditional; both can possibly be present co-exist in a matter called dual society [18]. In the context of this dual society, the problem of housing has not been clearly mapped.

### *1.4. Research Question and Purpose*

This study concerns the modus of specific kind of house occupancy namely living together in a housing unit with particular reference to Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The research question is: why does this kind of house occupancy occur? The purpose of this study is to reveal the housing processes and aspirations of the house occupants who live and stay together.

## **2. Literature Review: Housing Problem in the Context of Developing Countries and Dual Society**

One of a prominent figure in the effort to uncover housing problems in the context of developing countries and dual society is John F. Turner. Through his book titled *Housing by People*, Turner analyzed housing problem in several Central-South American countries [19]. There were tendencies of failures in housing projects that were provided by authorities because of a "mismatch" [19]. It happened due to the house is seen as "what it is" by the providers, an assessment that positions a house as an object and merely a building that is used as a residence which can be simply produced with certain physical quantities and standards in a mass and identical manner [19]. In this view, the physical shape of the house itself is the focus, while the house occupants are excluded. Turner presented an argument concerning house as "what it does", that a house plays a role in various aspects of lives of its inhabitants as well as brings satisfaction to its inhabitants -which is not always and even not related to physical problems at all [19]. Turner's study indicates that housing problems are not uniform for everyone, because each person has their own aspects of life. Turner's argument also contains an explanation that in a context of developing countries, the people or the occupants

are the factual "developer" and a "provider" of suitable housing for themselves [19]. His arguments also suggest that technical, aggregate, and macro-scale approach to comprehend housing problem does not actually fit with the needs of the occupants. Therefore, there is a necessity to apprehend deeper issue in housing problem. It requires microanalysis of the housing process to reveal various and specific aspirations of house occupants.

### 3. Research Method

To accommodate microanalysis of the housing process and understand the modus of the occupants, qualitative method and particularly Grounded Research are chosen as the method to explore and reveal the aspirations of the house occupants. Grounded Research is utilized to develop a theory –instead of testing –and helps the researcher to find alternative meaning and understanding of a phenomenon under study [20]. By applying this method, this study begins without any preconceived theory and hypothesis. The informants are 11 households that practice living and staying together with their relatives. They are interviewed and observed to gather the data, focusing on aspirations, experiences, and also the everyday routines in the households during the practice of living and staying together. The informants are members of the households, namely the original members of the households as the hosts and the additional member(s) of the household as the person(s) who come(s) along to live and stay.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

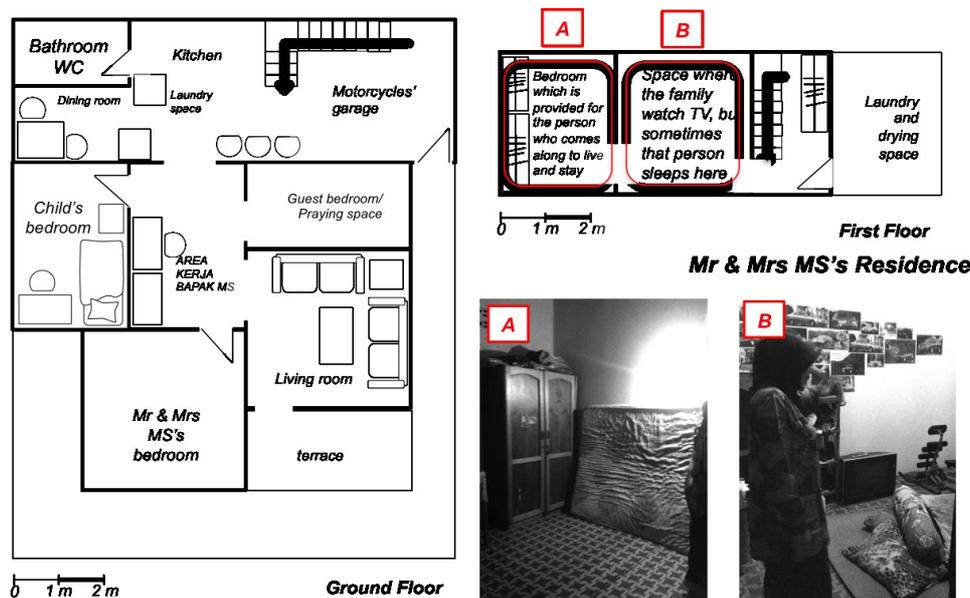
#### 4.1. Preference of Living and Staying Together Among Kinfolks

Existing studies suggest that the practice of living together in the same house can be seen as post-marital residency both in the form of patrilocal and matrilocal; as discussed in the context of Minangkabau families who do not migrate are commonly live in matrilineal residence [21], Javanese married couples that are expected to set up neolocal household but many of them actually live in matrilineal residence [22], and there are also some patrilocal arrangements exist in Indonesia, namely among Balinese, Endenese, Bataks, and Nias [23]. The recent study published in 2018 mentions that young married couples, in fact, live with one or the other parents [24]. It is also common that elderly parents in Indonesia live with their adult children [25] [26] [27]. In addition, it is common for Indonesian young people to stay at their parental home until they get married [28]. In some Asian countries, most children are expected to live with their parents until marriage, in contrast to children in Western countries who are expected to leave their parental house even before marriage [29].

In the cases that are examined in this study, the original members and the additional member of the household who lives and stay together are bonded as kinfolks. They recognize their relationship with each other as "*saudara*" (relatives). For them, this term is not only referring to people who have blood relations. The data gatherings show that they are affiliated by consanguinity (related as uncle/aunt and nephew and related as cousins), affinity relationship (related as in-laws), and also non-kinship (close family friends). Distinct to the previous studies as mentioned above which demonstrate that living and staying together involve members who have a parent-child relationship, the finding of this study reveals that this practice can also occur among extent members of kinship and furthermore non-kin. As the result of the interviews, they comprehend their practice of living and staying together as a common practice, some of them regard this practice as a tradition that they inherited from their elders, and many of them see it as the preference. This finding is coherence with studies which propose that flexibility of a household's composition and boundaries in South-East Asia including Indonesia is an essential aspect of residency, which a nuclear household may consist other relatives who find shelter and sustenance in it [21] and nuclear family has extensively portrayed the European family, meanwhile in Asia, extended family has been the custom [30].

The previous study which discusses the practice of living and staying together between parent and child stated that whether children obey the tradition, are altruistic or not, they have reasons to live together with their parents and these social and family structures are based on filial piety [31]. On the other hand, there is also filial support that given by the parents to children as discusses that it is common for a young family to live with parents/in-laws until

they have enough deposit for housing loan [32]. Comparable to those existing studies, the results of this study also indicate that there are some values and virtues that underlie the practice of living and staying together. Both the original members of the household as the host and the additional member who comes along to stay recognize some obligation and eagerness of assistantship to one another as kinfolks. They mentioned the phrase “*saling menolong sesama saudara*” (help one another as relatives) to explain their reasons for living and staying together. This phrase can indicate the matter of reciprocity. Reciprocity refers to a situation when people share feelings and attitudes mutually that involves not only intersubjectivity and interpersonal interaction but also between groups [33]. As the underlying value of the practice of living and staying together, reciprocity between the host and the one who comes along is especially corresponding with the context of migration as will be described in the next section.



**Figure 1.** The floor plan and a particular highlight of spaces to sleep that is provided for the person who comes along to live and stay in one of the informants' residence

#### 4.2. Particular Reference of Housing Process in The Context of Chain Migration

Chronologically, the cases of living and staying together that are investigated in this study initiated by some discussion about migration. The follow up of those discussions can be an invitation from the host, request from the person who will come along, or wish from the third party which is affiliated with both of two others (e.g., the parent of the candidate). Both the hosts and the persons who come along are migrants that live and stay in Balikpapan East Kalimantan. The hosts are migrants who arrived initially (migrate to Balikpapan between the mid-1980s and early 2000s) and then inviting some of their relatives to migrate as well as to live and stay in their houses (the persons who come along approximately months to 6 years recent). As mentioned above that there is a willingness to help each other among them, the hosts as previous migrants intend to assist their relatives' youngsters to find employment in Balikpapan as the city of destination. They provide general information about job opportunities in Balikpapan, give the inspiration to migrate, and offer to provide places to stay free of charge. Correspondingly, these offers are matched with the needs of the relatives' youngsters who later will come along, as they are in the middle of employment seeking, have no income, and have not able to afford accommodation yet. In addition, the hosts do not only offer a place to stay but also provide basic needs such as meals.

Statistical data shows that Balikpapan is the biggest migrants recipient area in East Kalimantan concerning inter-provinces in-migration flows [34]. East Kalimantan itself is at

top three of highest in-migration recipient in regard to outer island provinces (the two others are Riau and Kepulauan Riau) other than some provinces in Java which are a major destination of internal migration in Indonesia (DKI Jakarta, East Java, and Banten) [35]. The interviews show there is shared and similar opinion among the informants that Balikpapan is an ideal city of destination due to assumed widely open employment opportunity and there are some jobs in mining and oil industries that they associate with a big salary. In the viewpoint of the recent migrants who later come along, they are interested in migrating partly because they are inspired by the accomplishment and sometimes the well-off of the relatives who invite them to migrate to Balikpapan. This finding indicates that migration in this study may refer to a pattern of migration that was called "chain migration". It was explained that in migration there is a movement of migrants who have studied opportunities, provided transportation, given initial accommodation and work; which has been arranged or available by the social relations with previous migrants [36]. Thus, in this case, migrating and living together in the destination city of migration are two things that cannot be separated. The existence and role of relatives who have come and settled in Balikpapan are significant.

### 5. Conclusion

Beyond the global standard of housing, in the micro level, the occupants have their own idea and preferences concerning how to live as well as how to occupy housing units. To address the research question regarding why living and staying together happen as well as to undertake the purpose of this study that is to reveal the housing process and aspirations of the people who practice this kind of house occupancy, this study have found 2 major findings namely (1) there is a preference for living and staying together among kinfolks that furthermore is based on the value of reciprocity and (2) in particular reference to Balikpapan, living and staying with the relatives refer to housing process in the context of chain migration which the role of previous migrants is enabling the recent migrants to migrate as well as to get access to housing in the city of destination.

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