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# Co-residence as housing strategy for Betawi families: Case study of Betawi family houses in Cengkareng, West Jakarta

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**Abstract.** The number of Betawi families, known as the native tribe of Jakarta, in the capital city is decreasing due to massive urbanization. The fierce economic competition with the resilient migrants has purged them to the suburban Jakarta. In order to live in Jakarta and close to their current job locations, transforming the inherited multi-generational family house to co-residence becomes the favorable option. This paper aims to examine the co-residence as a housing strategy of Betawi families to live in Jakarta. There are certain adjustments in determining the strategy of living together, especially with a lot of relatives. Qualitative research method with in-depth interviews and longitudinal through direct observations were delivered to investigate and discover the meticulous the process of transformations throughout the years. These Betawi families have been living the residences since the 1980s, and both have numerous core family from various generation. This type of living, co-residence, need some strategies such as expanding new spaces, shared spaces and merger-separation of the clean-dirty water and electric channel. Based on the selected two houses of Betawi families in Cengkareng, West Jakarta, this paper poses the argument that co-residence is not only the housing strategy for Betawi families to live in Jakarta but also generating extra incomes to the family as it provides rent rooms for migrants.

## 1. Introduction

The majority of the academic literature on coresidence living has focused on the implications of this living arrangement for financial within the family. Based on the previous study, coresidence is still the major form of living arrangement for the elderly population in contemporary China, and it is higher in rural areas than in urban areas [1]. Older parents' and children's economic resources are major determinants of choice to co-reside [1]. The better their economic conditions, the less likely they will choose coresidence, or conversely the worse the economic conditions, the more likely they will choose coresidence [1]. Some of these factors represent the needs of the parent and include teen parenthood, a need for financial support or child care, or a general need for parenting or other assistance on the part of the mother [2]. Cultural factors may also play a key role in the formation of three-generational families, as some cultures with a familial orientation may enter into such arrangements due to cultural preferences, not out of need [2].

Betawi people have a habit of providing some land to their children when they get married where they can live [3]. Nonetheless, it is causing the fragmentation of the house and raising population density on Betawi settlement area. Homeowner status may reflect the ability of the parents to give their children a home, which results in prolonged coresidence [4]. Some family members will settle in a parent's

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residence; this caused a type of co-residence living although some others move out of the house. This Betawi family house can accommodate some of the needs of the residents who occupy it. Various changes and adjustments are done on the house as a housing strategy for the sake of family wellness.

It was further assumed that each life cycle stage would result in a different set of housing needs and trigger off a change in housing requirements and the likelihood of a move [5]. For example, following the first move from the family, the needs of house space are likely minimal but adequate. The following marriage and the birth of a child space needs will increase, and the family would move to a larger house. Finally, once the children have left home, the family would likely to move in again in order to reduce housing consumption and the costs of maintenance [5].

Often, the adjustment of needs in the form of parents' residential transformation also occurred in a small scale, such as the addition of sleeping space, changes in space layout and addition of other new space. In this case, there are certainly some adjustments in determining the strategy of co-residence, especially with quite a lot number of relatives in it. The adjustment may not only be a physical transformation of the occupation but also in the form of career mobility or family adaptation [6].

The purpose of this writing is to find out how the stage by stage process of physical adjustment, related to the background of any house changes that occur. Finding out strategies of co-residence of the house inhabited by Betawi families is another purpose.

## **2. Research Method**

The variable that used in this writing is residence in two Betawi families. Residences of both families are basically a parent's residence, which then transformed into a residence for future generations. The transformation of residences in both families has been done several times either on a large and small scale since the 1980s. Data collected during the observation process are plan drawing in each residential transformation, family lineage in the year in which the residence is transformed, the cause of residence changes, the dimension and type of room addition in residence to each transformation, space ownership and responsibility each family member at the residence, mechanical systems in the last transformation.

The method of writing this research is qualitative from the observation at a glance over the past few years, followed by two months in-depth observation mainly with the oldest generation of two Betawi families in Cengkareng, West Jakarta. This direct observation of the location is performed by taking pictures, sketching together with the old generation and interviewing some occupants, including reviewing the transformation stages and background of each change. Based on the interview and the in-depth interviews, a time series plan residence drawing since the first establishment is made that showed changes in each residential transformation.

The way to analyze data is with linking all data, mainly forms of residential transformation with differences in occupants at the residence, to deepen the reasons residence transformation and the way they lived their life at the residence that transformed. This paper also comes with literature studies such as textbooks, journals, and trusted internet sources to discuss the topic more deeply and to gain a better understanding of the topic as well.

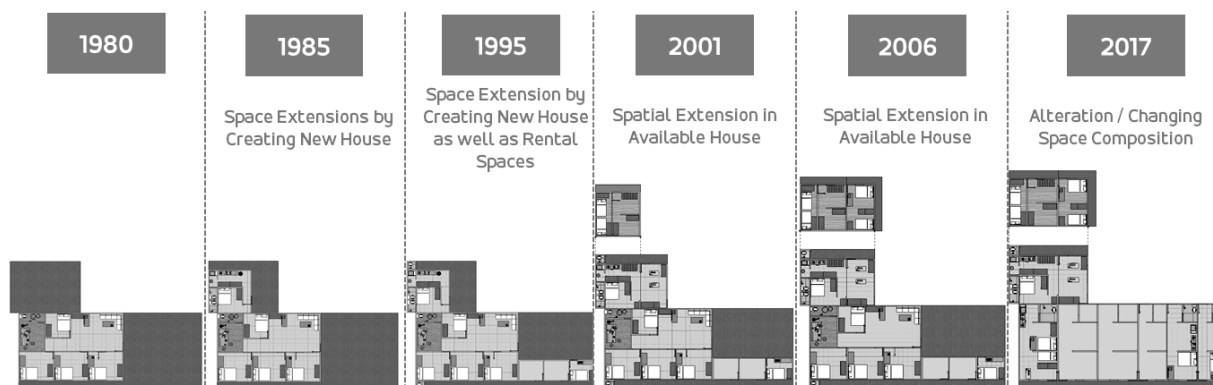
## **3. Result**

Commonly, the previous studies discuss coresidence as a strategy for an economic issue. It was told that economic resources are major determinants of choice to co-reside. The better their economic conditions, the less likely they will choose coresidence, or conversely the worse the economic conditions, the more likely they will choose coresidence [1]. Children would be the main beneficiary in this economic case [1]. Moreover, for parents, coresidence is an important way to improve their quality of life. Elderly parents who cannot take care of themselves due to advanced age or losing a spouse, coresidence with their children help them [1].

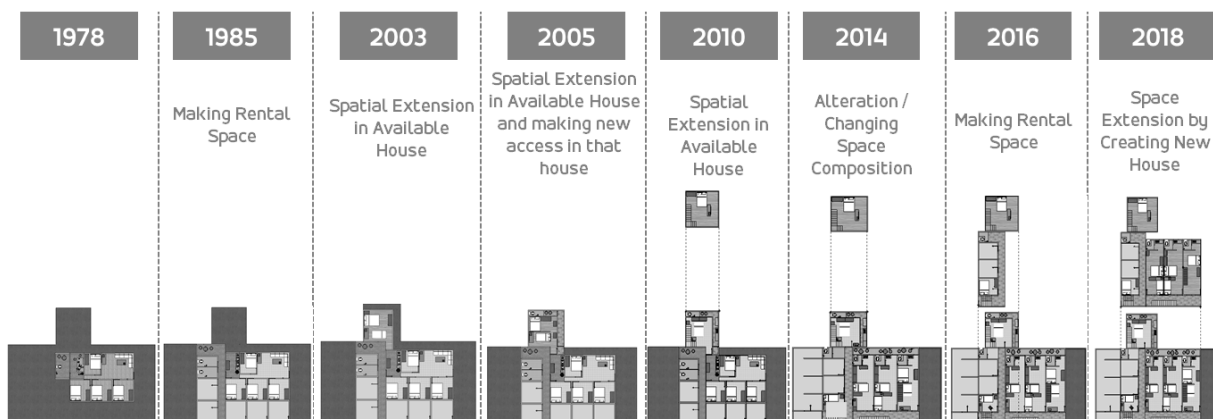
But this time, coresidence is about the culture of Betawi families. Betawi people have a habit of dividing part of their residential land for each of their children. This condition has occurred continuously since the previous four generations. The oldest generation, in this case, got a residential area of 237 m<sup>2</sup> from the previous generation. Then they built the residence on a small portion of the land. When children

grow up and get married, they will share their land little by little to their children. This then triggers the formation of the Betawi community in a particular dwelling and forms a coresidence living.

Both cases studies are located at Bojong Raya St. 001/04, Rawa Buaya, Cengkareng, West Jakarta. The distance between them only around 300 meters. Basically, this area has some of the Betawi families who have lived since a long time ago that made up about 40% of the population in the *Rukun Tetangga 001* (abbreviated as RT 001 or neighborhood). The number of residents in RT 001 is as many as 560 people. Both selected residences were selected as case studies due to the significant transformation that has taken place. The transformation of houses in both families has been done several times either on a large and small scale. The residence of both families is basically a parent's residence which then switched to be the residence for successive generations.



**Figure 1.** House Transformation in grandpa Saman and grandma Idda family  
**Source: Personal Graphic, April 2018**



**Figure 2.** House Transformation in grandpa Mahdi and grandma Rauhil family  
**Source: Personal Graphic, April 2018**

The first family house belongs to Grandpa Saman and Grandma Idda, which was built in 1980 within an area of only 65.5 m<sup>2</sup>. The number of residents at that time was 8 people. During the last transformation of 2017, there were 19 people of the family members who occupied a building area of 237 m<sup>2</sup>. The second family house owned by Grandpa Mahdi and Grandma Rauhil was built in 1978 with an initial building area of 96 m<sup>2</sup>. The last transformation performed in 2018, the building area has an area of 237 m<sup>2</sup> occupied by a total of 20 family members.

Within face coresidence with four different generations, in this case, it was needed any residence adjustment strategies.

### *3.1 Strategies of Co-residence in House Transformation of Betawi Families*

The following are some strategies of co-residence in the house transformation of Betawi families. Each strategy will describe an example of a representative period from Grandpa Saman or Grandpa Mahdi families. The selection is based on the most significant transformation that takes place in the house.

*3.1.1. Expanding new Spaces in order to Get More Spaces.* In both case studies, there is an ongoing transformation of space that still exists in the same residence with access that depends on it. This extending new spaces with conjoint accessibility occurred because the family needs more spaces for new residents, also the growth of children. Families will take the initiative to create additional space in certain areas. Extensions generally tend to be horizontal. When Betawi families no longer have free space to extend the space, then vertically extension will be applied. This is indicated by maximizing the available land for residence. This space extension can be done in various habitable areas or service areas. The person in charge of this dwelling is the head of the old occupant's family.

This conjoint accessibility occurred as the service rooms like kitchen and bathroom remain in the main residence. So this conjoint accessibility makes all their activities occurred inside the house. Access that is utilized in this case is the primary residence access that has been made since a long time ago. The location of the access is on the front side of the house. So to go to the new space created in the outdoor area, occupants still have to go through the main access, along with other census families. A few years later, when they have own kitchen and bathroom in their new spaces, they would make new access that connects to outdoor directly, so their access no longer dependent on the main residence.

In both families, the transformations are taken place in the form of space extensions to create a separate residence. This is to improve the quality of space privacy in the family. This generally occurs when the children of the Betawi family enter the marriage phase which then given some portion of the land to become their place to live. By creating new access to this new space, it is expected that the occupants have separate access. It is important to avoid sharing it with other family members in residence. Space extension can be made vertically or horizontally. A door as new access is formed when the extension is done horizontally. Whereas, if the extension is applied vertically to make some space on the second floor, a stair will be created as an intermediary to the new access.

There are two types of stairs created in this case, the shared stairs (located outside) and private stairs (inside the residence). The stairs made outside is connected to the desire to cease the involvement between upper and lower residences while the stairs inside maintain the connection between the upper and lower residences. Separate accessibility between upper and lower residences is due to the existence of two married couple. While merging upper-lower residence access is because the residence is only occupied by one census family. The addition of access directly affects the separation of family accessibility within the residence. The person in charge of this dwelling is the head of each household.

*3.1.2 Shared Spaces Together While Co-Residence.* Living together in residence with multifamily, sharing space is something that happens. Space consists of two types, namely habitable space and service space [7]. The habitation space is the living room, dining room, and bedroom while service space is including kitchen, bathroom, balcony, terrace, storage room, commercial space and other open spaces [7].

Betawi residents will share the space in residence in the form of a non-private room, both habitable spaces and service spaces. The only private space in the Betawi residence is the bedroom. This is an uninterrupted space even by other family members, except the census family. The habitable spaces used together are the living room. And all service spaces include a kitchen, terrace, and bathroom used together for multifamily. Amount of each of these spaces is only one in both families. Therefore, these Betawi family's rooms tend to be spacious to accommodate many residents in one room.

Shared space has an influence on household activity in the form of shared responsibility. Some residents have responsibility for the maintenance of existing shared space. The more occupants of the residence, the lighter and fewer the housework assigned to each occupant. Shared spaces also have an impact on shared objects. However, they do not share everything contained in residence, only some furniture such as guest chairs, TV and refrigerator are used together. The objects situated in the private space (bedroom), absolutely belong to each space owner.

*3.1.3 Merger-Separation of the Clean-Dirty Water Channel and Electric Channel for Efficient and Effective Live.* Transformation is needed in order to fulfill the needs of each occupant. In both case studies, the peak of transformation in the form of residence alteration is made to create private residences for each second generations. Residence alteration is in the form of changes in the composition of the habitation. In both case study, alteration leads to changes in the family's water and electricity systems. The Betawi residence now has them more in number resulting from the dividing, and automatically has more water and electricity channel systems. In reality, Betawi residential water and electricity channels are often combined with other inherited residences.

Merged water and the electric channel are aimed so that the family leads an effective and efficient life. The integration of clean water channels in this case study is based on the residence position. Residences that are parallel to each other simplify the formation of clean water channels in the same stream. The residences whose channel are merged with each other are transformed at the same time. This is due to the water channel system that has been planned to be merged from the beginning. Some water channels of rented dwelling are merged as well. These rented dwelling's water channel system is merged with the owner's residence. For clean water provider, it's the rented house owner who is held responsible for the rented room's clean water consumption. The tenant will have to pay to the owner who will then pay such rental spaces monthly clean water consumption to the clean water provider.

The dirty water channel is generally merged. One septic tank can be used for one, two, or six residences. This shows the effectiveness of septic tank usage. The location of the septic tank itself is adjacent to the existing toilet in the residence so that the flow of dirty water would not be too long.

The electrical system of each rental residence is stand-alone with the separate electric channel except in Mr. Zein's family that is still merged with the other five residences. The residential postpaid electricity payment system shall be paid by the head of the family. Prepaid system is applied to the rental residence and coordinated by the tenants.

The existence of merging on the utility system shows the form of multifamily in these Betawi families, even though each census family has separate residence. In these combined conditions, the costs paid collectively per month by the head of the household coordinated by the youngest one. This show evidence of cost savings resulted from living co-residence.

#### **4. Discussion**

This co-residence starts when the oldest generation, in this case, gets inherited land in the 1980s. At this time, the price of land was still very low, and there were not many migrants who inhabited the city of Jakarta, especially in the Cengkareng region. As indigenous people, it is not surprising that they also get the vast and cheap land from their parents. The allocation of this inheritance took place on a chain later in the day when their children entered the marriage phase. The existing land has been fairly designed from the beginning to be distributed evenly to all children.

Parents' income, ownership, and size of the home are indicators of parents' opportunities to offer their children accommodation of living [4]. In this case, the size of the home is one indicator that causes co-residence in the Betawi family. This then became a culture in the Betawi family to do co-residence as a housing strategy. Although culture became the first factor that led to the formation of co-residence living, it was also caused by the low economic ability of the Betawi family. The existence of inherited land that is obtained without paying can reduce the cost of building residences quite rapidly. Even in the journey of residence, various other economic benefits such as cheaper household financing are borne together. From time to time, the Betawi families' occupancy change and tend to have an increase in



family members. Increased number of family members has triggered the transformation of dwelling in both families. The addition of family members occurred through marriage, childbearing, and the return of the old occupant to the parent's home [8]. The family life cycle can affect housing transformation. Not only increasing the need for more spaces but changing the housing composition based on the physical and psychological needs of residents.

In the case study, not all children in the Betawi family eventually occupied the land that had been given by their parents. Some children actually stay at another residence. The only factor that causes this is due to the following spouse who also gets heir land with better conditions. As for another inherited land owned, it is used as a rental space construction that produces passive income every month.

With the existence of co-residence, several positive impacts were found. Household financing that is diverse like water, electricity can be borne jointly so that the cost of spending is more efficient. In addition, household responsibilities such as sweeping, mopping and so on, can also be shared so that the workload is lighter. However, this, on the other hand, is relied on by some parties not to take part in caring about household responsibilities. As for the other disadvantages of co-residence living is the lack of privacy in each family due to mixing space. This is the most dominant trigger for physical adjustment, along with changes in composition and needs of family members.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that as a dwelling's residents face the development of the stages in life and changing needs, these Betawi families make some physical adjustment. Furthermore, the Betawi families living together in a single residence and later would be split into several residences. Basically, co-residence is beneficial to the occupants as they share responsibilities, and utility costs can be divided, so they actually save more. Spatially, co-residence requires special strategies of the building so they can continue occupying the residence. Some adjustments made are extending the spaces with conjoint or separate access, sharing some spaces through co-residence, and merged-separated clean-dirty water and electric channel.

## 6. Acknowledgments

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