Is Mass Housing Increase or Decrease Symbolic Curtural Diversity? An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract. Housing is one of basic needs in modern society driven by the population growth and limited land resource. Housing for low-income segment has minimum standard features which difficult personalization. Nevertheless, people have means to create personal identity symbol on facade material to show personalization in the simplest way. Purpose of this research is to investigate diversity symbol type created by housing resident despite personalization limited constraint. Transdiciplinary housing theory [1] is served as basic framework of this research. Observations conducted in five housing in Palembang discover fewer collectivism symbols and many individualism symbols. Thus author revised the transdiciplinary model and create housing social architecture model for better descriptions on how housing dweller responses to housing architecture and defines their cultural identity. Instead of tune down culture symbolism, mass housing exhibits more basic roots of this symbolism.

Keyword: Cultural, diversity, Identity symbol, Individualism, Mass housing

1 Introduction

Mass housing development for low-income people in Indonesia is done largely [2]. This housing development is conduct to provide affordable housing for low-income people works in city [3]. At the end of 2015, there are approximately 600 thousand houses was built in Indonesia and will be increased to 10 million house for the next 5 years [4]. In the housing developments, ratio of low-income people and high-income people provision is 7 to 3 [5]. Bureaucracy reformation cuts housing development permits from 33 permits with average time acquirement 769-981 days to only 11 permits with time average 44 days in favour to expedite housing development [6].

Housing community sociology has been research in long time in individualize western perspective [7]. Housing in the western was formed from individual culture has problem on how

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to maintain individualism values in crowded residential space such as apartment. In Indonesia, the opposite problem emerges from development of housing is how to maintain collectivism values in residential space that tends to make individual people.

In Indonesian collective culture community, especially in rural area, mass housing development raises a new phenomenon. Housing invites new people with new life style and dynamic in community [1]. Standard houses are built in different ways from collectivity ways Indonesian vernacular house built [8]. Despite the different, mass housing drives a new economy opportunity from the increased number of community. This differentiation and opportunity toss up a bet between degraded collectivism values and increased community welfare in rural area [9].

This paper essays the assumption that mass housing introducing individualism and degrading collectivism values in rural area community. It resolves problems occur on how to recognize occurring dynamics in housing for low-income people observed from cultural individualism-collectivism symbols. This research gives two main contributions on settlement literature:

- Overview on how collectivism and individualism unfold where mass housing presented in collective community.
- Proposed new theory on interdisciplinary approach to explain phenomenon related to connection between architecture and housing community sociology for low-income people.

2   Theory

According Salama, et al in [1], there are three theories used to explain human life style: group and grid, habitus and life mode. Group and grid theory from english antropolog, Mary Douglas, emerges in 1971 to illustrate group interaction in community [10]. Douglas formulize four group based on interaction pattern where dominant power between external and internal group take place. Group which has dominant internal interaction is isolate, such as prison. Group which has dominant external interaction (community determination) is positional. Group interaction based on self interest economy in community is individulist. This group considers social economy status in housing. Last type of group is enclave, where externally built structure is interactional declined and comply to internally built structure only.

Salama et al. in [1] perceives Douglas' group and grid theory intersect with habitus theory for Bourdieu [11] and life mode theory [12]. Habius is individual ability, tendency, and habit based on past experience [11]. Habitus creates human orientation to prioritize thing in life. This Individual habitus is manifested in three choices: cultural habits, survival needs, and social status.

Life mode theory states there are three mode of human life: self-employed life mode, wage earner life mode, and career-oriented life mode [13]. Salama et al. in [1] argues that life mode is not only for work related issue but about family issue and life comfort role. A house choosing determined by life mode factor oriented on future, include family, work, and comfort factors.

The three theories then combines in one framework describes motive and dynamics might happen in housing. Figure 1 shows elaboration Salama et al. in [1] on three theories in one framework named transdiciplinary.
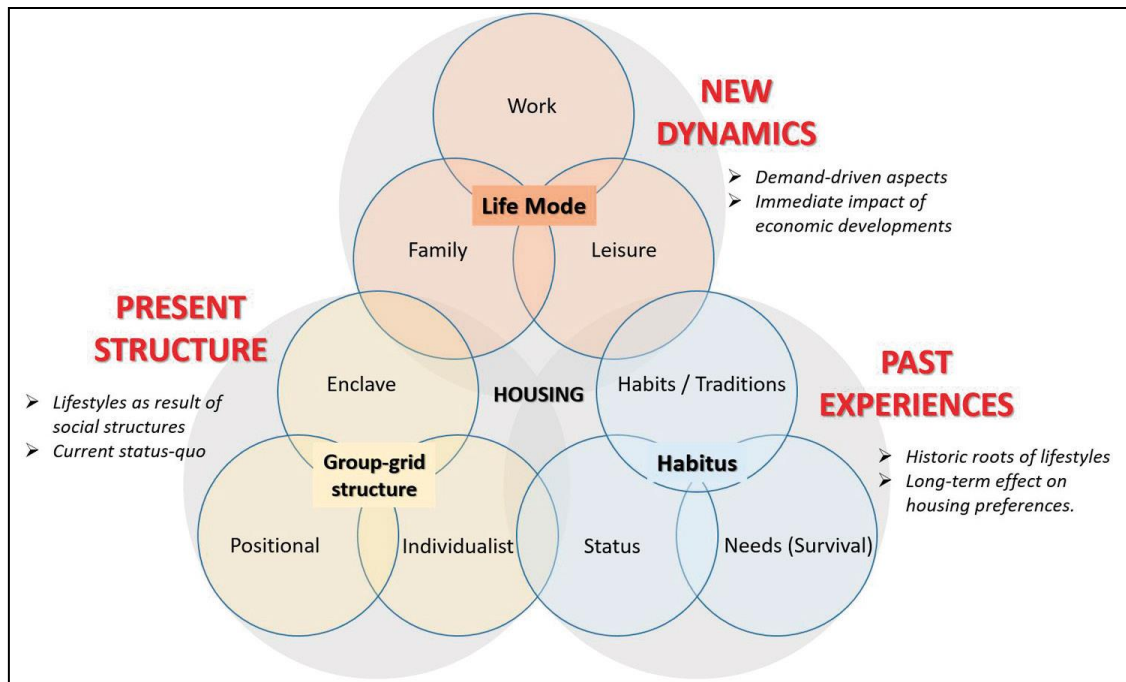

Figure 1 Transdiciplinary Framework (Salama et al, 2017)

Interlink connection shows intersections amongst group-grid theory, habitus theory, and life mode theory. Transdiciplinary theory [1] could contribute to study of low-income people housing in Indonesia. This paper analyzes elements of transdiciplinary theory [1] to be applied on explaining possibility of shifting culture from collectivism to individualism on low-income people lives in government subsidized housing. Non-intrusive observations are conducted on five low-income people housing of 405 houses in Palembang based on transdiciplinary framework.

3   Methodology

Research in this paper based on observations of five housing in Palembang, South Sumatera Province, Indonesia. All housing is dedicated to low-income people and subsides by government. A total of 405 houses is observed in all housing. Field observations were

conducted by researchers from July to November 2020. Objects of this observation include houses' facade and social interaction in the housing.

This research is also an ethnography study thus there is researcher lives in housing observed from the beginning. Researcher undertakes minimum intrusive and acts normally to lower suspicion amongst housing residents. If any suspicions arise, an elaborative explanation for purpose of this research is delivered.

An observation paper is given to the researchers to identify and log any religions symbol, cultural symbols, furniture, shops, vehicles, fences, children, head of households, and gardens in every house. All indicators represent Aspects in transdiciplinary theory, furniture (positional), fences (enclave/individualist), vehicles (status), children (family), shops (needs), culture/religion (habits/traditions), gardens (leisure), and head of households (work). All observation data on symbols and behaviors in the housings derived by researchers are analyzed in descriptive qualitative description.

4   Result

4.1. Positional Aspects

There is only five percents of houses has social openness attributes sitting area furniture (chairs and table) on the front yard for guess and open talk. Author realize then that social interaction did not occur on sitting area of the yard but on the street and front yard while standing and watching children plays. The interaction also happens between the resident in the housing complex and outside complex because they are family related. Meanwhile, there are trader from outside housing complex comes to offers foods and merchandize in morning and afternoon. This interaction results an open housing complex rather than a closed tight fortress.

4.2. Enclave

Enclave can be defined as houses have similar facade or standard type. There is seven percents of the houses in original form or facade. These houses don't have massive changes on the facade or keep the original facade. They are tends located side by side on the junction and have many residents especially children. Children are often spend time outside their home to play with their neighbour or visit other house freely.

4.3. Individualist

While some houses remains the same. There are houses that have very outstanding differentiation. Changing paints, adding new part of building, covering all yard with ceramics, and closed fences are signature those houses have. There is car or grocery shop built blocking interior view of house from street. Residents of these house seldom been seen due to their

occupations but have high structural position amongst housing residents. Minimum social interaction with surrounding community but has high social status or sell community's needs.

4.4. Status

The housing residents prioritize status is claimed to be individualist group. It covers 73% of the housing residents of observed housing. The residents are very individualist and uphold social status. Both can't be differentiate due to similarity in indications. Their status are defined by wealth and official symbols. They serve housing community in their own way which includes providing grocery shop or having high structural positions amongst housing residents.

4.5. Needs (Survival)

Fifteen percents of the community have their earning from the housing community whereas six percents from shops and the other nine percents from in house venture. In-house venture includes specific foods and cellular phone counter. Interaction from these house residents are mainly happen at their shops when other resident in the community visiting or buying from them. And there are fewer children in this house.

4.6. Habits/Tradition

Cultural aspect in this housing is not high enough. Only ten percents of houses have religion symbols like calligraphy or red paper (chunlian). These symbols are embedded in individualist houses mostly while more modest houses and enclave houses have them too. Even though residents of these houses have less interaction in the community, symbol on their houses represents their religiosity. Through cultural or religious event such as selamatan and tahlilan, they open their houses to neighbours and interact.

4.7. Family

Family aspect is stood out in enclave houses. These houses tend to have many children and their children play outside actively. Their houses' exteriors are modest while the interior can be extensive. Children sometimes play their toys inside house and moves from one house to another without any obstacles due to absent of fence between houses. And house's yard frequently holds big family gathering for interaction.

4.8. Works

Most of house residents has occupations outside housing complex whether residents of individualist houses or enclave houses. Residents of enclave houses work near housing complex as workshop worker, food trader, or factory labor. Farther workplaces are occupied by residents of individualist houses. Their occupations are builder, truck driver, or supervisor. When they are

working, active interactions are done by their spouses dominates by spouses from enclave houses. While spouses from individualist houses prefer to open grocery shops.

4.9. Leisure

Approximately 18% of houses observed has gardens on their front yards especially the enclave houses. Gardens at these houses are planted with bushes located strategically. Individualist houses also have garden with is compromised by size due to optimization with carport or shop which enclave house doesn't have as constraints. Constraints on enclave houses' garden is no extensive design can be implemented because children play.

Illustration in figure 2 shows how symbolism and dynamic place on a subsided housing block. The individualist houses (I) tends placed in the front of the housing block while enclave house (E) within the housing block. These two types of house are group themselves. On the front, there are facing individualist houses while within there are 10 enclave houses facing each other. Individualist houses has fence and behind this fence there are cars, shop, or garden. House can have all of them (garden, car, and shop) or have one of three. Enclave houses also have shop in smaller and simpler size (Figure 2).
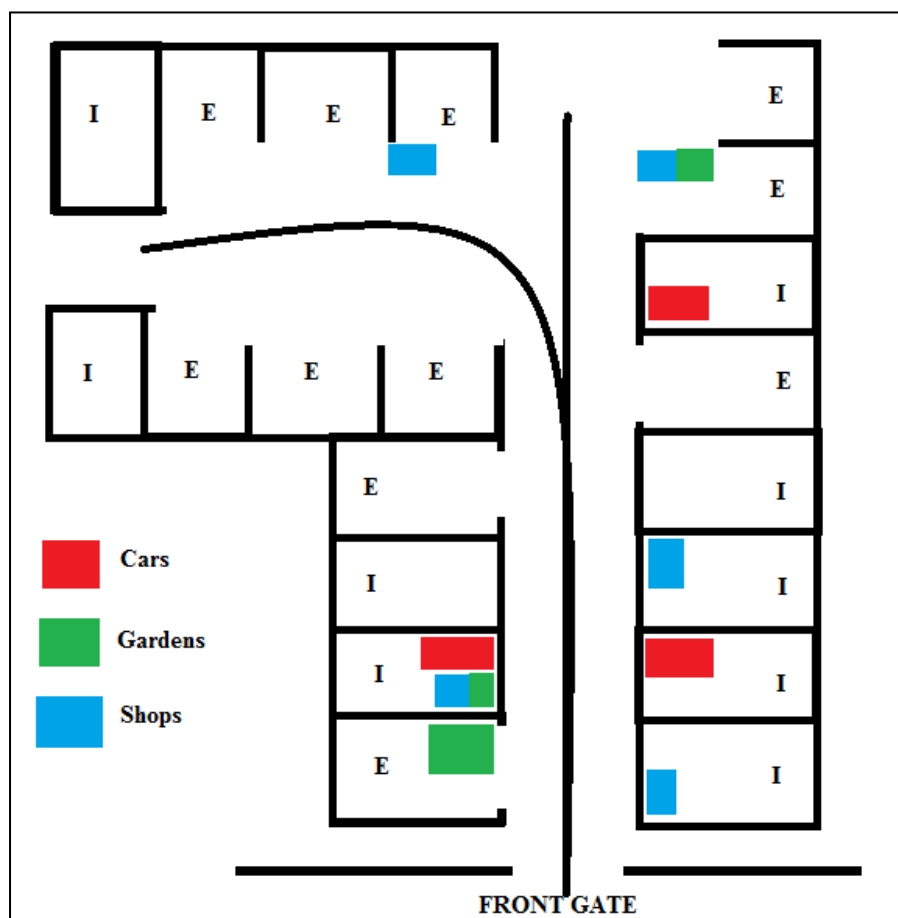

Figure 2 Illustration of a Subsidized Housing Block

5   Discussion

Finding in the result show cultural factor has minor place for community lives in housing. Cultural symbol can be found only in 10% of houses in form of universal meaning like religion. The most symbols found are individualist symbol as in 73%. Minimum symbols found are social symbol (5%), family symbol, leisure, and works. This result leads author to rethink the transdiciplinary framework from Salama et al (2017) used in the first place (Figure 3). Are those symbols hidden by residents of house or not needed at all? Why does framework theory Salama et al (2017) have unbalanced scale of habitus perspective greater that life mode?
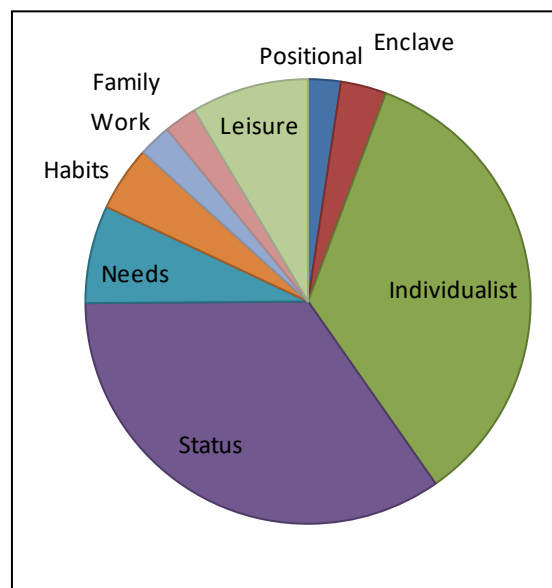

Figure 3 Composiition Indicators from observation (Transdiciplinary Framework, Salama et al, 2017)

This question leads to thought about privacy in housing architecture. In collective community like in Indonesia, should all houses be uniform for collectivity purpose? House without delicates facade have different objective which is place for more residents especially children. Residents of this house tend to have garden and can play outside and inside house. Facade without individualism together with prioritizing family manifested by head of household hard work outside the housing complex and inside-outside house activity comfort. Provided social space are fully utilized by these house residents.

Furthermore, there is a question about whether individualism in group and grid theory is genuinely individualism compare to enclave and positional. Douglas in [14] defends opinion that individualism is self benefit concern and product of commercial community. Self benefit and commercial community are public tendency, and self benefit stands out from privacy with its wealth. It's not necessarily mean uniform houses are not wealth. They just have different priority which is family or residents in house. Enclave group refuses to participate in competition and orientates in social cooperation. Both individualist and enclave root from same

community social relationship while one (enclave) merges into community the other stands out. In this perspective, positional should be the base of enclave and individualist. Therefore, in collective community like in Indonesia, even individualist will participate being part of collectivism. Thus in observations there are more exterior individualist than enclave. This result is in line with finding from Davis and Wu in [15] that pleasure in social status have strong correlation with individualist. As said by Jiang et al in [16] individualism behind collectivism manifestation. Materialism can drive collective oriented quality in Asian community [17]. Culture and economy are manifestation of individualism where exterior are directed to show social status as part community that participate economically (through survival symbol) or culturally (through religion symbol).

Those thoughts lead author to revise transdiciplinary model. Figure 4 represent theoretically elaboration of transdiciplinary framework modification of Salama et al (2017) based on this research.
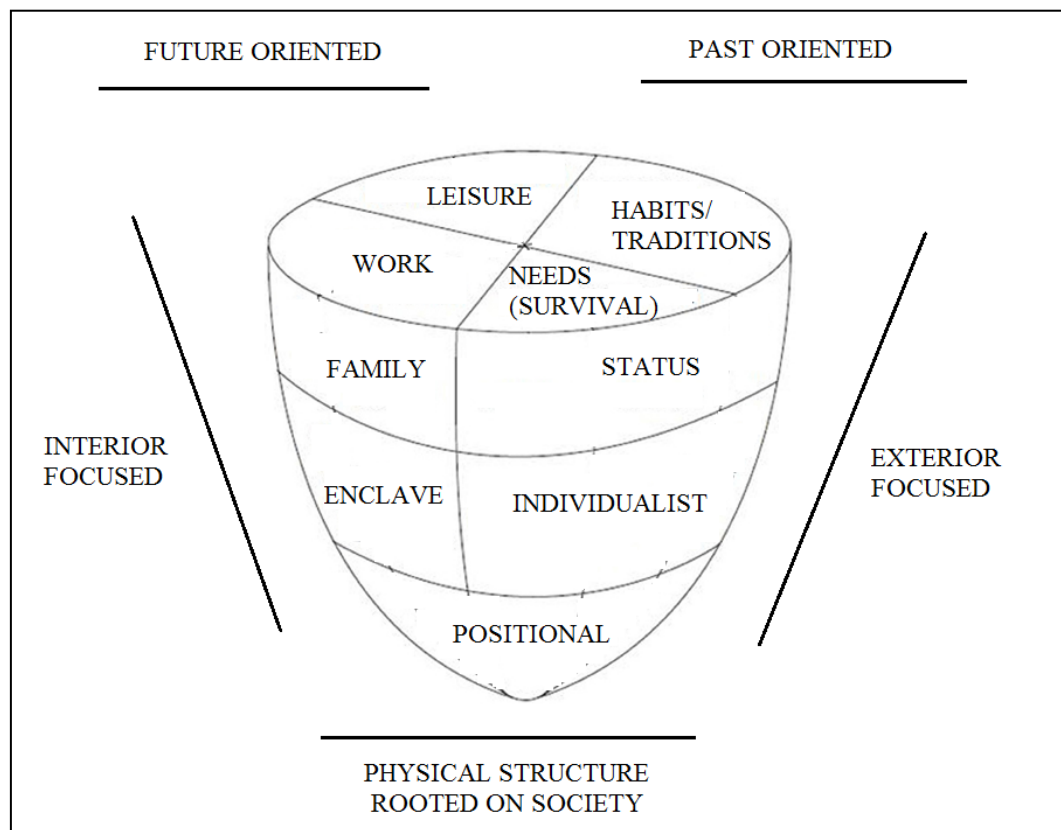

Figure 4 Housing Social Architecture Theory (Source: Author)

The modified model, work and needs in Salama et al (2017) are paired that become a three-dimensional model. The pairing is based on fact that ventures in housing is another form of work done by house resident to survive. It supports house resident's social status for serving housing community. It differs from house resident works outside housing that serve their family needs only. In addition of serving community economically, individual status of the resident is

acknowledged for serving community culturally in habits/tradition. Mean while, the enclave group is not recognized for serving family with work only but also serving family with leisure.

Revised model implicates those three theories: group and grid, habitus, and life mode are not parallel theories but hierarchically built structured theory. Group and grid theory (life style theory) become base support structure in this built model. Life mode theory and habitus theory stand on life style theory. That is to say housing community has two base types: future oriented type based in life mode theory and past oriented type based in habitus theory. For future oriented type, family is the primary and serving it through works and leisure. While for past oriented type, social status is the primary and serving it through house venture in the housing community (driven by survival needs) and local habit preservation.

The very base part in the model is positional because it gives connection between housing and surrounding community. This connection can be physically or genetically. Housing is in middle of community and house residents come from community. Positional splits into two groups: enclave and individualist. Enclave is group develops small groups becoming independent from community and built their own household while individualist is entities stay attached to community and preserving self identity through social status positioning in community.

Author convinces that this framework is better than framework of Salama et al (2017) for numbers of reason. First, author connects work and survival that seem detached from framework Salama et al (2017). In fact, as author observed, survival of housing residents in form of distinctive work that internally oriented and intersect their status. Second, this model explains how exterior manifestation from framework Salama et al (2017) able to present habitus aspects rather than life mode. This model clarifies that habitus aspect is exterior oriented while life mode is interior oriented. Uniform houses are interior oriented for family comfort and preserved head of household function as living earner outside housing complex. They, even though have money, will not built an extensive exterior since a long preserved closed social interact amongst enclave can be perished. Third, author's model is better because placing present structure as base support which cannot be separated from housing and reflecting how physical environment cannot be separated from community sociology at a time become foothold for those who future oriented or past oriented.

6   Conclusion

From the cross perspective of architecture and culture in mass housing, author has exceed urban multicultural life static description offering dynamic illustration enabling further researcher uncover new space in modern architecture and cultural discourse. Author's finding exhibits that mass housing creates secular pockets in peri-urban area that reflect melting point between rural and urban community. Mass housing do not degrade symbolic culture crucially but expose

basic aspect behind symbolic culture which is an individualism-enclave dichotomy. Many houses use individualism symbols but the rest is clean enclave. Houses accentuate cultural symbols also have prioritized individualism symbols. Instead of showing a differentiate group of individual-collective, housing exhibit segregation of individual-enclave.

Finding on peri-urban housing area profile as an enclave individualist-hierarchy give an theoretical implication. First, mass housing is a meeting point of two thought of cultural symbolism: enclave and individualism. On one side, there are houses with outstanding exterior of heavy cultural and individualism symbols but secluded socially. On the other hand, there are houses which uniformly in exterior but have high social activity. Second, mass housing can be start for community changing from rural style to be more urban style. High individualism in housing area brings urban impressions to rural area and begins forming a new economic system bounds to local economy bringing a slow change on economic level. Third, mass housing can be source of survival for its residents. Some of Independent new families live in new house separated from previous generations make housing ecosystem as source of living earning for survival. Fourth, as mention before, this paper contribute to development of transdiciplinary framework model Salama et al (2017) where needs (survival) in habitus theory framework can intersect with work in life mode theory framework (new dynamic) thus making a three-dimensional model. Fifth, this research emphasize that individualism actually is past oriented for collectivism community such as in Indonesia and future oriented to collectivism where enclave lead to prioritizing family and it future, instead of social status leads to basic needs and tradition.

Indeed, this research is very limited. Theoretically inference mention is base on researcher experiences and observation on numbers of housing as empirical base case study and qualitative as complement of this research. Further research will have to test housing architectureal theory propositions proposed. For example, further research can check out the house orientation in housing, exteriorly or interiorly, then surveying resident temporal orientation. Author's theory states that house in housing focus on interior will be future oriented, mean while house focuses on exterior will be past oriented. Second, author's inference from five housing with total 405 houses is relatively few and should be generalize in difference contexts. Third, indicators which author used might not valid yet to approach concept of individualism, status, needs, and habits. A meticulously instruments development might be needed to enhanced this research theme.

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