

## Dwelling adaptation in a particular resident through patron-client relationship

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article history:</i> Received September 02, 2023 Received in revised form Oct. 11, 2023 Accepted November 25, 2023 Available online December 01, 2023</p> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Dwelling adaptation Patron-client relationship Urban poor</p> <p><b>*Corresponding author:</b> Hendrico Firzandy Latupeirissa Department of Architecture, Faculty of Art and Design, Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, Indonesia Email: <a href="mailto:hendrico.firzandy@umn.ac.id">hendrico.firzandy@umn.ac.id</a> ORCID: <a href="https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9187-7366">https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9187-7366</a></p>	<p><i>This research is conducted to determine the underlying reasons a particular theater group adjusts to a certain setting and conditions in order to maintain its continued presence in a location. One of the reasons previously identified for the acceptance and adaptation is the low affordability of housing. Therefore, qualitative design and grounded theory method were applied, and the habitation form of the group was observed to determine their dwelling adaptation. The results showed that the role of the government as patron was very important for the survival of groups, specifically in providing increasingly affordable housing for urban poor and catering for psychological and social welfare. Client was also discovered to have become increasingly attached to the housing assistance and considered patron as important figures and protectors. It was argued that certain stakeholders have an important role in producing residential designs to empower and maintain the survival of urban poor.</i></p>

### Introduction

Affordability is an important recurrent issue concerning housing in addition to the limited number of residences available (Sanjaya and Tobing 2019). The most significant implication is the threat to the welfare and mental health of the residents (Chung et al. 2020). This has led to the introduction of the co-housing concept to solve this problem (Chung et al. 2020). The implementation of this concept is based on affordability and the provision of different facilities for residents with similar interests. This means it has the ability to provide housing that supports the physical and mental health as well as the well-being of its residents (Tummers 2016). However, several residents do not understand the concept due to poor marketing strategies and the absence of relevant policies (Warner, Chambers,

and Andrews 2022; Sanguinetti and Hibbert 2018).

Government policy is also an obstacle to cheap housing due to the absence of appropriate attention on the importance of rental housing as an option for low-income residents (Pramudito, Praptantya, and Nasir 2019). Moreover, local governments tend to underestimate the problem of housing shortages due to the lack of a clear measurement model in their policies (Osinubi et al. 2022; Patel et al. 2019). There is a continuous decline in affordable rent due to increasing housing costs and residents budgeting 70% of their income to meet basic household needs. (Anacker and Li 2016; Kropczynski and Dyk 2012). The affordability crisis has prompted individuals to seek alternative solutions and take control. This is achieved through more creative customization of homes, management of finances,

and expression of individuality (Carney and Yu 2022).

The most dominant paradigms in cities over the past ten years are the affordability of housing as well as the availability of clean water and wastewater treatment services. This means there is a need for adequate housing programs to assist residents in developing their residents and environment (Thompson 2014). Attention also needs to be placed on the implementation of relevant policies and programs as well as appropriate financial well-being for residents (Marshall et al. 2022). This is necessary because social capital and environmental attributes contribute to perceptions of occupancy satisfaction level by residents. Policymakers and house owners need to consider these factors to ensure the development of residents (Li and Zhang 2021). An important step to achieve this is through the presentation of co-housing as a socially and environmentally sustainable collective model (Wang, Pan, and Hadjri 2021). This model is not initially attractive but eventually infiltrates residents due to its pragmatism and motivation for social relations.

Housing also has some social issues associated with quality activities normally conducted at home to improve the health, welfare, and life satisfaction of residents, specifically in their old age (Campbell 2017). These social activities are classified as place attachment dimension and related to place dependence and identity as well as friends, family, and natural ties. The aspect of friends and natural ties have been identified as the dominant determinants of attachment dimensions (Lies, Kang, and Sample 2017). Therefore, the loss or absence of a home is expected to have a long-term impact on both children and adults. The loss of the house is often not the main focus but the removal of social contacts and support networks during the process. It is also important to remember residents do not prioritize the modern facilities in a home but the friends and a sense of residents existing within the housing residents (Skobba, Scott, and Young 2015). This background information shows that housing has a great influence in determining the level of comfortable living due to the preferences of each for comfort in a dwelling (Yust and Meghdari 2023).

The problem was also observed with the MT Theater Group experiencing difficulty in buying a house due to the lack of government assistance (Firzandy 2015). The government is patron of the

group and provides a not-so-large housing unit for the members based on the co-housing concept. The group did not have any other choice than to accept the facility and this showed that the government solved their problem. However, the members were required to overcome the limited space available considering their large number (Firzandy 2015).

This research was conducted with a focus on housing as a basic human need to sustain life, especially for the theatre residents. The purpose was to determine the underlying reasons the theater group adjust to a certain setting and conditions in order to maintain continued presence in the location. The focus was not on the problems associated with fulfilling the physical need for housing but more on the process of living due to relationship between the inhabitants. This led to the formation of the following research question: What adaptation strategy is implemented by the members of the MT Theater Group?

The research is important due to its focus on the increasing difficulty being experienced by urban poor residents to meet housing needs, specifically those living together in large groups. The residents are required to adapt to the limited space available and also try hard to ensure all family members have their own space in the residence.

Previous research reported the importance of understanding social values in the living space within a large or extended family (Hakim, Harjono, and Susanto 2022). It was discovered that family or kinship ties were valuable bonds associated with the desire to share things. Moreover, social values provide a platform to assist residents with economic limitations (Corroto et al. 2021; Harutyunyan, Öhman, and Fallahpour 2020). The results of Hakim were observed to be similar to those discovered in this research because they both understood residence as a platform for social relations. Meanwhile, the focus of this research was on a larger relational scale due to the inclusion of the government institutions as patron for theater groups. Castillo and Harutyunyan also reported the benefits of social relations in living with residents from the same livelihood background but this research focused more on the spatial implications.

The results are expected to assist organizers of housing facilities in the city in providing simple affordable housing while making it easier for

future residents to organize their space based on future family needs.

## Method

A qualitative method was applied to achieve the objectives of this research. It was selected to uncover subjective meanings from the perspective of the participants and determine the reasons for adaptation strategies adopted. This showed that the intention was not to test a hypothesis or a theory (Creswell 2007).

The object of this research was the MT Traditional Theater Group located for in a place provided by the local government for a very long time. Moreover, the participants were selected from the members of this group using a purposive sampling method (Creswell and Creswell 2018). The criterion used includes the length of stay with the group from the first to the third or last location. It was discovered that some participants were family members including children, relatives, or colleagues working and living in the research area.

Grounded theory analysis was used with the main data collected through interviews supported by field observations. The interview was designed using open-ended questions formulated based on a previously established conceptual framework including (1) the views of the participants about the local government operating as patron of the drama group, (2) their perception of their residential unit, and (3) adaptation strategies designed to live in the residential unit. The field observations were compared with the responses of the participants to determine the spatial form produced based on their adaptation. Therefore, several house plan diagrams were compared to explain adaptation forms and strategies implemented. The responses provided were analyzed using three stages of coding to produce a theory (Charmaz 2006).

## Results and discussion

The quality of the building was identified in the introduction section to influence occupancy value but not the only factor determining rent. Some of the other important factors include the size of the house and maintenance costs (Mathur 2019), social facilities, distance to the workplace, environmental security, clean water services, and waste treatment, as well as the availability of

other items considered necessary in homes of residents (Thompson 2014). This description showed that city residents with small incomes need to think about and prepare large amounts of money and other related things to rent a house.



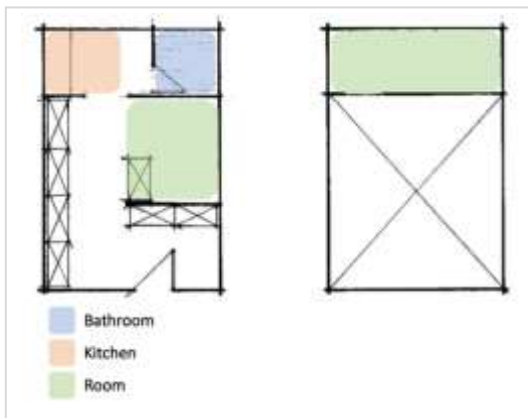
Figure 1. Basic unit

The members of the MT Theater Group used as the object of this research lived with their families and offspring in government-provided housing. The large number of the members led to the provision of communal housing with several rooms arranged in a row. The building consisted of two floors with each containing ten rooms measuring 4m x 6m (24m<sup>2</sup>) as presented in figure 1. Moreover, each was designed in an open plan with a bathroom and kitchenette at the back. This spatial arrangement allowed each occupant the freedom to arrange according to individual needs as showed in figures 2 and 3. Furthermore, the rooms were arranged to face each other and a communal space was provided in the middle. Closer observation showed that the building was relatively simple but sturdy and provided electricity, clean water facilities, and good waste management. The communal space was also observed to be used by the group members to conduct their respective daily activities, including those related to performances. An interesting phenomenon was that the members accommodated up to three generations in one small residential unit. It was also discovered that the room measuring 4m x 6m was filled by two to three heads of families with their blood or family ties due to the non-availability of enough residential units. The back wall of some units was observed to have been moved backward to widen the kitchen space normally used to support the side jobs of some residents as catering entrepreneurs. Each occupant was also discovered

to have modified the small unit to accommodate the activities of all the family members as presented in figures 4 and 5.



**Figure 2.** Modified unit adjusted to a young or senior couple occupants



**Figure 3.** Modified unit adjusted to young couple with baby or toddler occupants

The residential unit typically consists of two floors designed with a ceiling-to-floor distance of 3.5 meters. The first floor has the living room and the bedroom for the parents while the second floor is reserved for the bedroom of the married children. The participants showed deep gratitude for the government-provided housing, which they shared with their families and colleagues. This communal living arrangement was observed to have fostered a sense of closeness and strong bonds. For the MT group, this residence served as a connection between the members and the government, symbolizing their identity and existence as a traditional theater group.

These circumstances provided information on different aspects of the dynamics associated with the theatrical group. The high cost of housing in

major cities made accommodation unattainable for financially disadvantaged families like the group members, even with government subsidies. Therefore, the free housing provided by the local government served as a lifeline for this group, enabling them to maintain livelihoods and quality of life. Consequently, they are relieved of the burden of searching for alternative, unaffordable housing. This showed that the government-provided housing was instrumental in ensuring the continued existence of this group within residents.

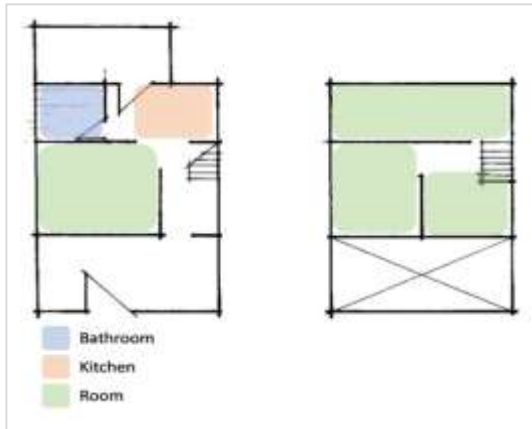


**Figure 4.** Modified unit adjusted to more than one couple occupants with children

Several previous research on social housing showed that residents housing model was able to solve the problem of affordability for poor. However, some problems such as funding continuity were identified with this type of program despite their importance to poor. An example was the Housing First program implemented as an effective method to provide permanent housing for urban poor, specifically to prevent the phenomenon of homelessness (Kennedy et al. 2016; Sullivan and Olsen 2016). It was also stated in another research that the provision of social housing facilities should consider the needs and happiness of the residents (Hooper 2021).

Etymologically, patron could be defined as someone that protects, provides, and defends the interests of other parties under its care. The theatre residents, as the object of this research, also saw the government as a party that protected and provided shelter for them. The group experienced loss and change of owner, leading to the high anticipation of assistance from the government for communal settlements. This was

extracted from the responses of several participants. It was stated that the group would have been forced to disband without government assistance and return to seek their fortune elsewhere. Other members said that they felt honored and valued under the guidance of the government while some showed the freedom to interact with the local residents. Another group member expressed happiness at not having to worry about housing anymore and this allowed more concentration on the duties in the theater group. Each member was generally grateful for the opportunity provided to continue the play because that was the only thing they knew and understood to do as a way of life. An opportunity like this was rarely obtained by other groups residing in the same city. Several members also expressed their pride in being asked to contribute story ideas or suggestions for theatrical performances. One important thing often expressed by the participants was that they did not need to spend money on the cost of the housing inhabited. This showed that the communal housing provided by the government was important in maintaining the life and livelihood of the group. It would have been difficult for the members to survive without this assistance.



**Figure 5.** Modified unit for more than one couple occupants with children and an extra land at the back

This form of patronage was considered relationship with the theatre group. According to Scott, patron-client relationship is normally between two parties in unbalanced social and financial conditions (Scott 1972). This showed that the government, in this case the patron, provided housing assistance for the group as a base camp to defend their lives. The theatrical group, considered as client, returned services to

the government by giving the best contribution to the development of theatrics as a cultural asset. This unequal exchange of services made the theatrical group (client) indebted to the government (patron) and increasingly bound to relationship. The phenomenon was associated with the inability of the group to break away because of the difficulty in obtaining cheap housing to meet the needs of the members in the city. Meanwhile, housing is one of the basic needs to maintain economic sustainability as well as the only strategy for poor to develop their economy (Arnstein 1969; Anacker and Crossney 2016).

This discussion showed that residential design was very important to the provision of opportunities for prospective residents to adapt to their future residences. The trend was associated with the fact that most of the participants were underprivileged and had difficulty providing shelter for themselves. The residents were very dependent on others expected to truly understand their needs. This showed that the participation of stakeholders and policymakers was very important in providing housing designs to assist the group to survive in the city. Therefore, the design process was found to be a crucial step in providing residential units capable of understanding the basic needs of life while empowering the marginalized group. This showed that the prospective residents needed to participate in the design process (Arnstein 1969). Finally, this research argued that the design process should be made by including the users and other stakeholders in order to empower and maintain the survival of the residents as well as the buildings in case of limited resources. Adaptation of the occupants showed the ability of the design to respect the environment by allowing the development of the residents without having to occupy a lot of surrounding land. This showed the ability of proper architectural design to contribute to ecological sustainability through the use of natural resources without having to deplete or cause any damage to them (Miller and Spoolman 2014). Comfort was also found to be more influenced by the ability of the occupants to adapt to implementing their activities inside the house or territory (Hapsari et al. 2023).

## Conclusions

In conclusion, this research had three main answers to the question of adaptation strategies

used by the TM theatre residents to maintain its existence. It was discovered that (1) the group relied on patron-client relationship associated with an imbalance exchange between two parties, making the receiver to be more dependent and attached to the aid provider. The MT Group considered the local government an important figure and protector of its existence. (2) The members of the group also developed a space adaptation to accommodate families for two or three generations in the housing unit. This method allowed the members of the MT Theatrical Group to maintain their survival and livelihood in the city. Moreover, (3) the implementation of the right architectural design guided the residents in adapting to limited resources as well as contributing to ecological sustainability. These three results also showed that the authorities had a big role and should intervene in solving housing problems for poor urban residents living in large groups.

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**Hendrico Firzandy Latupeirissa** contributed to the research concepts preparation, methodologies, investigations, data analysis, visualization, articles drafting and revisions.

**Antony Sihombing** contribute to the research concepts preparation and literature reviews, data analysis, of article drafts preparation and validation.

**Achmad Hery Fuad** contribute to methodology, supervision, and validation.