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Spaces of the elderly based on the living arrangement (case study: Banyumanik Public Housing)

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Abstract

Along with the growth of the elderly population in urban areas, housing being important because the elderly in some countries use most of their time at home (Schulz, 2006). This paper aims to determine how the elderly use spaces in their living based on their living arrangement. With a qualitative approach, the study which is focused in Banyumanik Public housing Semarang shows three categories of space used are : micro, meso and macro and the living arrangements are: alone, with children / grandchildren, with spouses, spouses and children / grandchildren. The result is expected useful for the housing development.

Keywords: housing, spaces, elderly, living arrangement

1. Introduction

The development of the aging population will continue to increase in almost all countries, including Indonesia. It is estimated that in 2025, more than a fifth of Indonesia's population is elderly (Megarani, 2007, in Wijayanti, 2009). This makes Indonesia has the highest number of elderly population among the ASEAN countries. Because of the

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growing urban areas in the world, most of the elderly will live in urban areas and housing in urban areas becomes essential to be noted.

Housing as a residential environment has an important role for the elderly as one of the geriatric assessment (Darmojo, 1999). Housing is also a concern since some of the literature reveals that elderly in some countries use most of their time at home (Gitlin, 2003; Golant, 2003, in Schulz, 2006), and some researches also suggest the existence of this phenomenon as "age in place" (Klyszeiko, 2007).

The phenomenon of age in place in countries such as Europe and the United States as countries with their category of aged society, has affected the provision of housing, especially housing for the elderly. The provision has showed the need and demand factors of elderly, which are both based on the patterns of the elderly's living arrangement. Based on the United Nations (2005) the elderly's living arrangement is a way of living of the elderly at home. The living arrangements of the elderly are generally classified into five types (United Nations, 2005), that is:

1.Living alone
2. Living with a partner only
3. Staying with children (including adopted children), children-in-law or grandchild
4. Staying with other relatives
5. Staying with other people, apart from the elderly couple

Aging in place then becomes an approach to provide housing that can accommodate the needs of the elderly. It also becomes a good concept for residential renovation. Coolen (2008) has conducted a research related to aging in place and the emphasis of the research was on the interaction between the elderly and the housing that then generated spaces which make the elderly feel ease or raises memories. The intent of the study was to get the concept of the ideal home for the elderly. Based on the meaning of the built environment (Rapoport, 1982) which explained the interaction of humans and the environment, the relationship between the elderly and their home embodies a meaning of home of the elderly. Thus the concept of aging in place is a concept based on the meaning of home. With regard the living arrangement of the elderly will be obtained the variation of the meaning of home which then it will be known the preferences of spaces chosen by the elderly. This is one of a basic method that can provide a friendly housing for the elderly.

Aging in place already has been in Indonesia (Darmojo 1999, Abikusno ,2007, Wijayanti, 2009). Thus the problem of housing in urban areas should be paid attention. In the presence of the elderly at home, the housings are expected to be places which can improve the welfare of the elderly, and places where the elderly can live with their children and grand children prosperously (Elizabeth, 2004, in Wijayanti 2009). This is the efforts to improve the social welfare of the elderly in Indonesia. One of the policy of social welfare for the elderly is to maintain the philosophy of three generations under one roof. This philosophy guarantees the harmonious relationships between children, parents and the elderly in a special family bond. But in the other side, Indonesia has been no housing policy that consistent with the policy of the welfare of the elderly. It produces a problem about how to accomodate the needs of the elderly in the housing provision especially in urban areas. With this problem, the qualitative study emphasized on the inquiry of spaces chosen by the elderly in a housing based on their living arrangement is done. It is hoped the result of the study could be a supplement of housing provision concept. The study will support the dissertation of the author relating to the adaptation of housing by the elderly with case study of Housing Banyumanik Semarang.