

## Changes in the Function of Betawi Traditional Houses in the Setu Babakan Area, Srengseng Sawah Village, South Jakarta

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### ABSTRACT

The research entitled “Changes in the Function of Betawi Traditional Houses in the Setu Babakan Area, Srengseng Sawah Village, South Jakarta”. The purpose of this research is to describe the form of functional changes that occur in Betawi traditional houses in Srengseng Sawah and the factors behind the functional changes in Betawi traditional houses in Srengseng Sawah. The theory used in this research is the theory of social change from Selo Soemardjan which is used to identify the factors that cause changes in function in Betawi traditional houses and the theory of functionalism from Malinowski. This research uses qualitative methods, with data collection techniques based on observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of this study explain the form of functional changes that occur in Betawi traditional houses including the function for the place to carry out the *Baturan* ceremony, the function for the place to carry out the *Bebarit* ceremony, the function to hold weddings and circumcisions, the function to distinguish social status, the function to store tools and agricultural products. Furthermore, the factors behind the change in function include religion, economy, lifestyle changes, technological advances, and the division of inheritance.

**Keywords:** *Change, Function, Betawi Traditional House*

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### INTRODUCTION

Betawi culture is a combination of various traditions and cultural values that exist in Jakarta and its surroundings. Betawi culture has been influenced by local cultures from various regions in Indonesia, especially Javanese and Sundanese cultures, as well as cultures from abroad such as Chinese, Arabic and European. One of the characteristics of Betawi culture is the art of lenong which is a traditional theater, traditional musical instruments such as tanjidor, Betawi specialties such as kerak telur and soto betawi, then traditional houses. The design of Betawi traditional houses characterized by Joglo houses, Kebaya houses, and Gudang houses, illustrates the expertise of the Betawi people in utilizing natural materials such as wood and bamboo.

Since the beginning of Jakarta, the coastal area is where the Betawi tribe began, precisely in the estuary area of the Ciliwung River. Betawi culture was created following the development of the population from the coast to the city center. People in coastal areas live from trading and fishing, while people in the city center and suburbs live from agriculture (Swadarma and Aryanto, 2013: 10). The Betawi community is the result of a combination of various tribes in Indonesia but is still bound together. At first, the existing social groups consisted of Sundanese people. But over time it mixed with tribes from other islands (Faizah et al, 2018: 39). Betawi people are grouped based on the area where they live and their livelihoods. The Betawi community is divided into 2, namely Central Betawi (city) and Suburban Betawi.

Suburban Betawi communities are scattered in various areas around Jakarta, one of which is Srengseng Sawah Village, South Jakarta. Precisely in the Setu Babakan area, there is a village inhabited by the original Betawi ethnic community, Srengseng Sawah Village. This village has several traditional Betawi houses with kebaya and gudang types. In the past, Betawi houses were used as a place to carry out cultural traditions that have existed since their ancestors. As Jakarta developed into a metropolitan city, the Betawi people were slowly pushed aside by migrants from outside the region and chose to settle in the suburbs of Jakarta. Betawi houses can still be found only in the Setu Babakan area, because in Srengseng Sawah many Betawi houses have been replaced by modern residences.

The Betawi traditional house in Setu Babakan Betawi Village is one of the remaining cultures owned by the Betawi people. Traditional houses are an important part of the community's identity. In the modern era, Betawi traditional houses have changed their function from before. From this background, the author is interested in examining what forms of functional changes have occurred in Betawi traditional houses in the Setu Babakan area, Srengseng Sawah.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. The research object in this study is the phenomenon of changes in the function of Betawi traditional houses in the Setu Babakan Area, Srengseng Sawah Village, South Jakarta. The location of this research is in Setu Babakan Betawi Cultural Village, Srengseng Sawah. Primary data in this research is information from the manager of the Betawi Cultural Village area, community leaders, Betawi cultural experts and the surrounding community. Secondary data in this research are documentation, official archives from the Betawi Cultural Village, journals, and scientific articles related to the research. Furthermore, data collection techniques are based on observation of Betawi traditional houses in Setu Babakan, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis includes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### History of Betawi Traditional House in Srengseng Sawah

The history of the establishment of the Betawi traditional house in Srengseng Sawah in the literature does not explain what year the house was founded. Betawi traditional houses are thought to have existed since the Dutch colonial era. Betawi traditional houses are categorized based on their livelihood and region of residence. Betawi society is divided into two areas, namely central Betawi and suburban Betawi. Central Betawi are Betawi people who live in the area of Jakarta that used to be called Batavia (Central Jakarta). The area where the Central Betawi people live is the center of the economy and government. The traditional house they build is the Joglo house. Suburban Betawi are Betawi people who live around Jakarta, the economic life of suburban Betawi people depends on agriculture. The traditional houses they build are kebaya houses and gudang houses (Kurniasih, 2022: 14).

The Srengseng Sawah area is an agricultural area inhabited by suburban Betawi people. Most of them work as farmers and traders. Traditional houses built by the suburban Betawi community are kebaya and gudang type houses. Betawi houses with traditional building models were still found in Srengseng Sawah in the 70s. In this era, Betawi houses still used natural materials. Since the entry of the development equity program in the 90s in Srengseng Sawah, Betawi houses of this era have been combined with modern materials that are more durable and follow modern construction standards.

The rapid development of Jakarta as a metropolitan city is not matched by the development of the Jakarta community as a whole, especially the development of the Betawi community (Megawanti, 2015: 226). Therefore, Betawi community leaders discussed it with the DKI Jakarta government to build a place for the preservation and development of Betawi culture. Based on this discourse, a replica of the village called the Betawi cultural village was formed, which is located in the Setu Babakan area. The area was chosen because there is a government asset in the form of a lake that can represent the life of the Betawi people. Then the environment is still surrounded by Betawi houses. The following Betawi traditional houses are found in the Betawi cultural village:

#### 1. Gudang House



The gudang-type house is the home of the Betawi ethnic group who live in the hinterland. The development of this kind of house became more widespread

during the Dutch colonialism era. The colonizers built gudang houses to store spices that they would take to Europe. Therefore, this house is called a Gudang house because it is related to the gudang houses that were built at that time (Betawi Cultural Village archive, 2023).

## 2. Kebaya House



The kebaya-type traditional house is the most widely established Betawi traditional house by the community and is officially used as a symbol of Betawi ethnic architecture. The roof shape of the kebaya house is left and right and has several pairs of roofs so that it will look like folds on a kebaya.

## 3. Joglo House



Joglo-type houses were formerly built by village elders called *bebongkot*. If the joglo house cannot accommodate the community at a certain event, for example during Eid, then a rectangular building without a partition is made in the yard of the house called *blandongan* (Betawi Cultural Village archive, 2023).

### Form of Change in Function of Betawi Traditional House in Srengseng Sawah

Betawi traditional houses, like other traditional houses in general, have functions that have been traditionally assigned and maintained for centuries. However, with changing lifestyles, especially in urban areas where Betawi traditional houses are commonly located, some of these traditional functions may undergo transformation. The initial concept of building a Betawi traditional house was not only for living, but also for performing traditional rituals and ceremonies. Since the entry of the development equity

program in the 90s, the function of traditional houses in the Setu Babakan, Srengseng Sawah area has undergone several changes including the following:

**1. The function for the place to carry out the *Baturan* ceremony**

Betawi people in the past used Betawi houses as a place to carry out the *Baturan* ceremony which was carried out when first building a house. *Baturan* is one of the terms in the tradition of building a house in Betawi society or the tradition of making a *rume*. The *Baturan* ceremony has existed since ancient times when people would build a house and was carried out for generations.



(Source: Website Seni Budaya Jakarta, 2024)

During the *Baturan* ceremony, the community will work together starting from cutting down trees and then leveling the ground. After that, the land will be measured and then excavated to increase the height by about 20-30cm as wide as the house to be built. The activity begins with a joint prayer to ask God for the house building process to run smoothly, and inviting neighbors to ask them to help the house building process voluntarily.

Since 1985, the *Baturan* ceremony in Setu Babakan has not been performed anymore. This is because people have switched to building simpler houses. Currently, the Betawi house in Srengseng Sawah is only for family living, and serves as a place to socialize the forum for the study and development of Betawi culture in Setu Babakan.

**2. The function for the place to carry out the *Bebarit* ceremony**

In the past, Betawi people conducted *bebarit* ceremonies using Betawi houses, by bringing in prayer warriors. The *bebarit* ceremony is an earth alms ceremony performed as a sign of gratitude for the abundant harvest.



(Source: Youtube Aditya Ganesha Putra, 2017)

In the *Bebarit* process, people also give offerings in the form of *ancak bekakak* to honor the ancestors. Since the 90s, this *Bebarit* ceremony has not been performed in Srengseng Sawah because the rice fields and the person who leads the prayers in the *Bebarit* ceremony no longer exist. Currently, Betawi houses in Srengseng Sawah tend to be used as residences, a place for community deliberation, and a guesthouse for guests who come from outside the region to conduct research or attend cultural festivals in Betawi cultural villages.

### **3. The function to hold weddings and circumcisions**

Betawi traditional houses are often used as a place to organize various traditional or cultural events that are important in the life of the Betawi people. Various types of traditional events that are often held in Betawi houses include weddings and circumcisions. In the past, many events such as weddings and circumcisions were held in kebaya houses, with additional *plampang* in the yard. It was taboo for the bride and groom to be outside the house because the aisle garden was inside, and it was almost impossible to find the bride and groom in the yard.

Since the 90s to 2000 conditions have changed, the room inside the house that was used for the aisle garden when there is a wedding or circumcision event, is no longer. The Betawi community in Srengseng Sawah switched to using buildings, this is considered more practical and modern. Currently, the function of Betawi houses in Srengseng Sawah is only as a place to live, as well as small businesses such as food stalls.

### **4. The function to distinguish social status**

Betawi houses are divided into three types: kebaya houses, gudang houses and joglo houses. The three types of houses are categorized based on the area they live in and their social status. In the past, joglo-type houses were mostly built by Central (city) Betawi people who came from upper-class families or *bebongkot*. Kebaya houses and gudang houses were built by suburban Betawi people who made their living as farmers and traders. Then the joglo house was built by the central Betawi community (city) who came from the upper class.

In the early 2000s, joglo houses no longer served to differentiate the social status of Betawi people. Currently, Betawi people from the upper class do not have to build joglo-type houses, one of which is due to differences in tastes in house construction and adjusting to the availability of land, if the available land is very minimal, a kebaya or gudang model house can be built.

#### **5. The function to store tools and agricultural products**

The gudang-type Betawi house has several important functions in the daily activities of the Betawi people, especially in the past in Srengseng Sawah which is an agricultural area. The house functions as a place to live and a place to store goods, crops in the form of rice seeds and rice, as well as their agricultural tools such as hoes, machetes, and fertilizers. Starting in 2000, the gudang house has changed its function, which was originally used as a place to storing agricultural products in the form of rice seeds and rice, but now only functions as a place to live. The change in function of the gudang house is due to the fact that the rice fields in Srengseng Sawah are no longer found.

### **Factors Behind the Change in Function of the Betawi Traditional House in Srengseng Sawah**

Customary houses are an important component of the physical elements of social reflection formed due to the traditions of the community. The presence of community traditions in this traditional house creates a reciprocal relationship or a complementary relationship (Rahmat, 2018: 3). The Betawi traditional house as an ethnic Betawi identity cannot be separated from the phenomenon of change. Changes in function in traditional Betawi ethnic houses occur due to the times and innovations from technology. In this development, there is a community effort to adapt to existing progress and make new steps in life. Changes in the function of Betawi traditional houses are influenced by the following factors:

#### **1. Religion**

The Betawi people in Srengseng Sawah no longer perform the *Bebarit* and *ancak bekakak* ceremonies because those who lead the prayers at the *Bebarit* ceremony no longer exist, and there are no more rice fields in the Srengseng Sawah area. Then the religious knowledge of the community is getting higher so that the ritual is considered incompatible with Islamic law, because it is a polytheistic thing. However, there are religious activities that can still be carried out in the house such as death, njuh harian, and maulidan.

#### **2. Economy**

The economy can shift the function of Betawi houses, economic limitations can encourage Betawi house owners to change the function of the house into a small business place to generate additional economic income for the owner of the house. In addition, economic limitations can limit people who want to hold events such as circumcision, if the costs are insufficient to hold parties and entertainment, it is replaced by holding simple thanksgiving. However, it is inversely proportional

to people who come from the upper class, they usually choose buildings as a place to hold weddings or circumcisions and use catering services.

### **3. Lifestyle changes**

Changes in the function of a culture can be influenced by the increasingly modern lifestyle of the Betawi people. Modern lifestyles lead to a clearer separation of space between the family room, living room, and sleeping room. This can lead to the refurbishment of Betawi houses to create spaces that better suit modern needs. Along with urbanization in Jakarta and the need for more efficient space, Betawi houses can experience a change in function from being used for storage of tools and agricultural products, to now being used only as a place to live.

### **4. Technological advances**

New discoveries in various fields of technology can affect various aspects of human life, including in the context of traditional Betawi house construction. The materials used in the construction of Betawi houses in the 90s are modern, previously using materials from the environment such as leaf tiles, bamboo, wood and *gejogan* or dirt floors, have now changed to light steel and floors that already use ceramics. The use of modern materials is considered more practical and easy to obtain, replacing traditional materials such as bamboo, wood and wicker.

With new innovations in technology, it is possible to use apps to design and layout Betawi houses in more detail before starting construction. This allows for a more accurate picture and makes it easier for homeowners to see how their home will look as a whole.

### **5. The division of inheritance**

The division of inheritance is one of the factors that influence changes in the function of Betawi traditional houses and the preservation of Betawi culture. This is because the division of inheritance can cause changes in the ownership of Betawi traditional houses. When an inherited Betawi house changes hands to a new owner, it is possible that they have a different view on the function and maintenance of Betawi traditional houses.

Changes in the function of Betawi traditional houses are influenced by the following factors: The higher religious knowledge of the Betawi people has led to the non-performance of the *Bebarit* ceremony because it is considered not in accordance with Islamic law. The existence of economic limitations makes people look for other alternatives in organizing cultural activities. Changes in lifestyle and technological advances make people switch to modern housing with building materials that are easily available to be more efficient and practical. Then the division of inheritance can cause changes in the form and function of Betawi houses when in the hands of the new owner.

This is in accordance with the theory of social change according to Selo Soemardjan in Hakim (2022: 21) which says that changes that occur in social institutions in a society affect the social system, including values, mindsets and patterns of behavior between groups in society. Between social change and cultural change has one related



aspect, namely both are related to an acceptance of new ways or an improvement in the way society meets its needs.

This includes the changes in function that occur in Betawi traditional houses, which were once used as a place for activities related to livelihoods, daily activities, ceremonies in the belief system, and a place for family deliberations. Nowadays, Betawi people build houses following modern house models. Modern lifestyles have also led to a reduction in traditional practices associated with Betawi traditional houses, such as religious rituals or traditional ceremonies.

## CONCLUSION

Betawi houses have undergone several changes in function from before. The following are the changes in function that occurred: 1) Previously functioned as a place to carry out the *Baturan* ceremony, now it is a place to live and a place for socialization of the Betawi cultural assessment and development forum at Setu Babakan. 2) Formerly functioned as a place to carry out the *Bebarit* ceremony, now it is a place to live, a place for community deliberation and a place to stay for guests who come from outside the region in order to conduct research or attend cultural festivals in the Betawi cultural village. 3) Formerly used to organize weddings and circumcisions, now only as a place to live and small businesses such as food stalls. 4) It used to be used to distinguish social status, now Betawi people from the upper class do not have to build a Joglo house, due to differences in tastes in house construction and adjusting to the availability of land. 5) It used to be used to store agricultural tools and products, now it is only used as a place to live because the rice fields no longer exist.

The change in function is caused by several factors including: 1) Religion, seen from the higher religious knowledge of the Betawi people so that the *Bebarit* ceremony is considered not in accordance with Islamic law. 2) Economy, seen from the insufficient economic life of the community so that it limits them in holding cultural activities in their homes. 3) Lifestyle changes, seen from the modern lifestyle of the community that can change their understanding of the use of Betawi houses. 4) Technological advances, seen from innovations in building materials and design technology that can change traditional elements with more modern designs. 5) The division of inheritance, seen from the sale of inherited traditional houses that can cause changes in the function and shape of the house in the hands of new owners.

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