Settlement Dynamics and Factors Affecting Residence Selection in Population Density Settlements

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ABSTRACT

Settlements are one of the fundamental necessities of life. The functions of settlements go far beyond just providing a place for rest and shelter. Settlements serve as spaces where social interactions occur, relationships between individuals and groups develop, and community identities are formed. Ngagelrejo is located in the densely populated Wonokromo district of Surabaya, and despite its high population density, it is an area that is in great demand for residential purposes. When considering land ownership status, the entire area consists of land without citizen ownership titles, commonly referred to as “surat ijo” or green certificates. The purpose of this research is to understand the reasons why people choose to reside in densely populated areas. The research methodology employed is a qualitative phenomenological approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Triangulation and in-depth interviews were conducted to ensure the validity of the data. The results of the study indicate that the choice of living in a densely populated area is primarily influenced by strong family and friendship bonds. The location of the residence is relatively close to workplaces, providing convenience and compatibility with the surroundings. Additionally, the price of land in this area is lower compared to other areas in the city of Surabaya.

1. Introduction

Urban areas play a vital role as centers of economic growth and serve as hubs for economic, social, educational, and cultural activities (Bagheri & Soltani, 2023). In general, people decide to migrate from rural to urban areas with the hope of improving their quality of life (Rahman et al., 2023). Urban development holds strong allure for individuals from outside the area, driven by various factors, both economic and non-economic (Mujiburrahmad et al., 2021). Inadequate facilities in rural areas strongly contribute to the increase in urbanization rates. These facilities include education, healthcare services, places of worship, recreational areas, and various other amenities available within settlements (Lumbantoruan et al., 2017).

Several major cities in Indonesia, such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Semarang, are grappling with complex issues, one of which is housing problems. The annual population growth has led to the shrinking of available housing land (Nasution, 2019). Furthermore, in large cities with fierce competition for job opportunities, there is increasing pressure on environmental issues (Sari & Khadiyanto, 2014). This pressure arises from a combination of economic factors and population density, leading migrants to settle in the outskirts of cities, which eventually develop into densely populated settlements (Suud & Navitas, 2015).

The growth of settlements in some major cities is influenced by local environmental conditions (Ritonga, 2022), as individuals consider various factors when choosing a place to live (Rini et al., 2016). Besides serving as shelter and privacy, homes also play a significant role in socialization, imparting cultural values, and fulfilling basic human needs. As residential settlements, homes have a dual role in meeting both individual and community needs. The growth and formation of settlement patterns in an area greatly depend on the activities carried out by the local population (Apriantika, 2022).

Social, economic, and cultural phenomena arising from the urbanization process create an interesting narrative that is not only related to large cities where migrants settle but also impacts the original villages of those migrants. This is due to the migrants’ inclination to maintain their rural culture and daily lifestyles, despite having lived in cities for years (Kobi & Hendra, 2020). Generally, people decide to migrate because they want to improve their living conditions and economic situations (Crysta & Budisusanto, 2017). The desire for better
well-being and economic prospects is one of the motivating factors for migration to specific regions, as the prospect of a better economic life at the destination is a significant attraction (Mantra, 2015). Surabaya, a metropolitan city, is facing similar issues with its continuously growing population. In 2022, the city had a population of 2,987,863 people, covering 31 districts and 163 sub-districts, with a total area of 326.81 km². The population density in Surabaya reaches 9,165 people per km². During the period from 2010 to 2022, the population increased by 222,376 people, or about 7.4% (BPS, 2023). Densely populated settlements are scattered throughout Surabaya. This fact indicates that Surabaya is grappling with the same problem as other regions, namely, densely populated settlements (Prasetyo & Prasetyo, 2018).

This research employs the Rational Choice Theory. This theory, proposed by James Coleman in 1989 (Rejeki, 2019), emphasizes that individuals' actions aim to achieve specific goals, and these goals are determined by their values or preferences (choices) (Sastrawati, 2019). The use of this theory is highly suitable for explaining the dynamics within the settlements in Ngagelrejo sub-district. The concept refers to the rational actions taken by individuals to achieve specific goals based on their values or preferences. The Rational Choice Theory states that individuals choose actions that will optimize benefits or meet their desires and needs (Ritzer & Goodman, 2012).

This theory centers on individual behavior, considering individuals as humans with specific goals or intentions. The Rational Choice Theory argues that individual actions have specific goals determined by their values or preferences (Arjawa, 2014). This theory emphasizes the rational behavior of individuals who aim to achieve certain goals, where individuals are also considered capable of managing resources, whether natural or human resources, effectively to achieve their desired goals (Wirawan, 2012).

Research on densely populated settlements has been conducted on various topics, such as efforts to reduce densely populated settlements in urban areas (Pasya, 2016), factors influencing the development of slums (Zulkarnaini et al., 2019), the negative impact of living in slum areas in terms of health, physical, and social aspects (Lilford et al., 2019), mapping slum areas to support sustainable development (Thomson et al., 2020), and the causes of settlement slumminess in Bagan Deli.

2. Methods

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method using a phenomenological approach inspired by Alfred Schutz. The primary aim of this method is to achieve a deeper understanding of the meaning of a specific event or phenomenon related to human beings in a specific context. Alfred Schutz was one of the early figures in the development of phenomenological approaches, which are used as analytical tools to describe various phenomena. Furthermore, Schutz developed this phenomenological approach in a more structured, comprehensive, and practical way, making it suitable for understanding various phenomena in the social realm (Nindito, 2005).

The main focus of this research is to uncover the reasons why people choose to live in Ngagelrejo Subdistrict. Considering the land ownership status in the entire Ngagelrejo Subdistrict is land without ownership rights, commonly referred to as "surat ijo" (green letter), the phenomenological approach is utilized to delve into the dynamics and reasons behind the residents' choice to live and settle in an area with no land ownership status.

This study was conducted in Ngagelrejo Subdistrict, Wonokromo District, Surabaya City. The primary data sources in this research are key informants and supporting informants selected purposively (Magfiroh & Sofia, 2020). Key informants are long-time residents of the area with in-depth knowledge of the history of their residence. The selection of key informants was intentionally done based on the consideration that they possess the most relevant knowledge to the research focus. These key informants were identified with the assistance of supporting informants such as neighborhood association leaders, community leaders, and local officials who are more familiar with the local community and can provide valuable information. Primary data sources in this research are residents who have resided in Ngagelrejo Subdistrict for an extended period.

The phenomenological approach was chosen as it accommodates elements of knowledge related to life experiences, social interactions, and meanings associated with the lives of the informants (Cresswell, 2015). Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and documentary studies. Data analysis employs a qualitative approach following the conceptual framework of Miles and Huberman, involving three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and data verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The research was conducted in Ngagelrejo Subdistrict, Wonokromo District, Surabaya City, located approximately 20 minutes or about 6 kilometers from the city center of Surabaya (Figure 1).
3. Results and Discussion

Surabaya, as the capital of East Java Province, holds significant appeal, particularly for job seekers from outside the Surabaya region. One of the factors attracting migration from other areas is that Surabaya serves as an industrial hub in East Java. Socio-economic factors play a pivotal role in facilitating the surge of migration from outside the region (Adeliana et al., 2023).

Figure 1. Location Map of the Research

Figure 2. The settlement conditions in the research location
Table 1. Population Data from the 2020 Population Census in the Wonokromo District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Name</th>
<th>Population Count</th>
<th>percentage</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sawunggaling</td>
<td>24,769</td>
<td>17,12</td>
<td>97,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonokromo</td>
<td>36,842</td>
<td>25,47</td>
<td>95,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jagir</td>
<td>18,985</td>
<td>13,13</td>
<td>97,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngagelrejo</td>
<td>40,071</td>
<td>27,7</td>
<td>96,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngagel</td>
<td>11,062</td>
<td>7,65</td>
<td>95,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darmo</td>
<td>12,921</td>
<td>8,95</td>
<td>93,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Count</strong></td>
<td><strong>144,650</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>96,1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kecamatan Wonokromo in Figures 2021

Table 1 illustrates that the largest population resides in Ngagelrejo Subdistrict, with a total of 40,071 individuals, accounting for approximately 27.7% of the population. The population density in Ngagelrejo Subdistrict is 27,469 individuals per km², which falls into the 'dense' category according to SNI 03-1733-2004 on Urban Housing Environment Planning Procedures (Husin et al., 2017). It is followed by Wonokromo, Sawunggaling, Jagir, Darmo, and Ngagel Subdistricts. Geographically, Ngagelrejo Subdistrict is the closest to Wonokromo Station and the Surabaya Industrial Estate Rungkut (SIER). The high population is also influenced by the presence of the Regional Drinking Water Company (PDAM), located in the area. Naturally, workers there prefer to reside in a nearby area. From a phenomenological perspective, it is revealed that the reasons residents choose to live in the 'green letter' (surat ijo) area of Ngagelrejo Subdistrict in Surabaya.

3.1 Distance to Workplace

When viewed from a geographical perspective, Kelurahan Ngagelrejo is strategically located. Its proximity to the Rungkut industrial area and easy access to office areas in Surabaya City make it an attractive choice. Not only that, but access to other strategic locations such as the Purabaya terminal and the Sidoarjo industrial area was also mentioned by informants as reasons for choosing to live in that area. The location and availability of land are factors in the geographical aspect that contribute to the development of settlements. Informants stated that the distance between their residence and workplace was one of the key considerations in determining the location of their settlement. Four informants mentioned this, with one of them explaining (L1).

"...sejujurnya, iya, alasan saya memilih tinggal disini karena jaraknya dekat dengan rungkat, kerja saya disana..." (L1).

"...To be honest, yes, the reason I chose to live here is because it’s close to Rungkut, where I work..." (L1)

Informants consider the factor of accessibility or ease in reaching their workplace. They believe that a long commute can reduce productivity at work. However, on the other hand, informants also don’t want to lose time with their families.

In general, the residents of Kelurahan Ngagelrejo come from outside the Surabaya area. Their desire to improve their family’s economic quality becomes a motivation for these newcomers. This is supported by strong centripetal movement factors, such as job opportunities and proximity to the city center, which can reduce accommodation costs. This is common in developing countries. Land prices or rentals in the city center are much higher compared to other areas outside its territory. The more strategic the location of housing, the better, and it has a higher demand (Maryana & Erwansyah, 2022). The outskirts of the city, including Kelurahan Ngagelrejo, are the main targets for newcomers. They choose to live in areas with leasehold land status and prioritize simple housing facilities.

The difficulty of obtaining land for low-income newcomers forces them to choose untitled locations (Sukaryanto, 2020). The low and unclear land status by the Surabaya City government, including in this neighborhood, presents an opportunity for the growth of densely populated residential areas, leading to increased demand for informal housing, land speculation, and increased conflicts related to land ownership and land use.

3.2 Family and Friendship Relationships

Human beings as social creatures undoubtedly require interaction with others, as this interaction is an integral part of daily life that enables the exchange of information, values, culture, and the development of interpersonal relationships. Various forms of interaction in a region, whether in the form of communication,
collaboration, or conflict, can lead to various diverse impacts on individuals, society, and the surrounding environment. Informants in the Ngagelrejo sub-district stated that family relationships or friendships have a significant influence on the decision to occupy this area. Here is a quote from an interview with an informant L6.

“…Di sini awalnya ya tidak jalan pekerjaan saya. Kemudian bertemu kakak ipar dan akhirnya jualan, karena tidak punya bakat berjualan. Bisanya hanya mengukir kayu, mlitur kayu, tukan kayu…”(L6).

“…Here, initially, my job prospects were not good. Then, I met my brother-in-law, and eventually, I started selling things because I didn’t have a talent for selling. My expertise was only in carving wood, milling wood, and woodworking…”(L6)

The informants relocated due to economic factors and the choice of housing location was influenced by family ties. The desire to settle in this area was greatly influenced by the surrounding environment, especially by close relatives who encouraged the informants to live in the area. On the other hand, influence also came from people or families who had already been living in Kelurahan Ngagelrejo.

A characteristic feature that emerged in other residential areas is the presence of an extended family system, which is the practice of accommodating or providing overnight stays to others who have the same job or come from the same region and are treated as if they were family. Quote from an interview with one of the informants (P8),

“…Saya asli dari Ponorogo awalnya dulu ikut bibi saya di daerah Rungkut (Surabaya Timur). Kemudian saya menikah dan ikut suami saya tinggal disini. Disini itu aslinya rumah mertua saya …”(P8).

“…I'm originally from Ponorogo. Initially, I stayed with my aunt in the Rungkut area (East Surabaya). Then I got married and moved here. Here, this was originally my in-laws' house…”(P8)

The informant, as a homemaker, chose to live in Ngagelrejo because of family factors, following her husband's or in-laws' domicile since 1990 until having 3 children. This nature made them accustomed to living together, helping each other, and protecting each other. There is an extraordinary family bond among the members, so life in their environment is characterized by mutual respect. The family bond is still strong, so they continue to support and help each other in their activities to improve their welfare. Therefore, the existence of family ties and friendships is one of the most dominant factors that cause settlers to choose to live in Ngagelrejo.

The high demand for labor in big cities like Surabaya attracts migrants from other areas. Additionally, the low income in their hometowns is also a driving factor for people to move to other areas. For example, an informant from Ponorogo Regency, where the standard wage is 2.1 million rupiahs, chose to seek livelihoods in Surabaya with a standard wage of 4.5 million rupiahs. The significant difference in job wage standards, which is twice as high, certainly becomes a special consideration in the informants' choice of livelihood. This includes Ngagelrejo, which was then considered a suburban area in Surabaya, with land status that could be said to be unclear. The availability of transportation and high job opportunities are other attractive factors for informants to decide to live in this area.

3.3 Comfortable Feelings

Human needs extend beyond basic survival necessities; they also encompass higher-level needs such as social relationships with other humans, self-esteem, security, and the need for self-actualization (Rahmawati, 2018). Furthermore, human dwellings play a crucial role as places for socialization, value formation, and meeting basic human needs. The living environment that provides ease in daily life becomes a top priority compared to the physical form of their homes. One of the most fundamental psychological needs is the need for protection and security. The needs of each individual in residential areas are similar to those in other areas. These needs encompass more than just physical aspects; they also include the fulfillment of psychological needs such as comfort, security, self-actualization, and affection. If these basic needs are not met, feelings of discomfort or unease can arise. The need for security is particularly prominent among residents in these settlement areas. Even though they live in less-than-ideal conditions, they still feel comfortable and content.
residing there due to the sense of security and mutual protection among fellow residents. The increasing population, accompanied by a rise in the number of buildings or settlements, is influenced by several factors. The nearly identical socio-economic conditions among residents in Kelurahan Ngagelrejo create a sense of comfort and contentment in choosing to reside there. Based on the explanations provided by the informants P7.


“...The environment here is good, sir. The people are all very nice. My husband used to work in the Kenjeran area before he passed away. But he would come back home here. He used to sell things in Kenjeran because it's a bustling area there ...”(P7).

One of the informants mentioned that the social environment in Kelurahan Ngagelrejo is very good. Therefore, even though the informant's husband worked in Kenjeran District, which is 12 kilometers away, they still chose to live in Kelurahan Ngagelrejo.

3.4 Relatively Affordable Prices

The hope of improving the economic conditions in the destination region is one of the interesting factors that influence a person's decision to migrate to a particular destination. (Mantra, 2015). Administratively, the status of the land in Kelurahan Ngagelrejo is a land with a warrant. The warrant is a local term for citizens in the city of Surabaya who occupy land not SHM, legally the correct name is the land use permit (IPT) (Dewi et al., 2023). It is one of the triggers that can make the price of land there cheaper than land in other regions with a SHM certificate. The hope of workers who migrate or migrate to the city is to gain or improve the quality of life and the economy. (Rindarjono, 2012). One of them migrated to the Ngagelrejo Valley. Causes of densely populated areas or an increase in the number of depleted areas in the city are due to economic factors such as poverty and economic crisis (Persada & Suroso, 2019). Access from the easy-to-reach location of the settlement in the Ngagelrejo Kelurahan as well as the proximity to both the center of Surabaya and outside of Surabaya, is a unique attraction for this region. Urban areas have a strong attraction factor to influence the population outside urban areas (Puspitosari & Hariyanto, 2013) namely job availability and the potential for higher incomes. The district of Ngagelrejo, once a suburb of Surabaya, has become one of the destinations for immigrants seeking employment. The population was relatively small, and there was so much unmanaged land that the price of the land at that time was quite cheap. (Sukaryanto, 2020). That's why six informants chose to settle in the Ngagelrejo Valley. As one of the following informants L9.

“...dulu saya tidak punya uang untuk beli tanah di daerah lain, dan disini harganya juga lebih murah. Dulu saat beli rumah dan tanah ini, kondisi rumahnya seadanya, kemudian saya bangun secara bertahap dan apa adanya...”(L9).

“...I didn't have the money to buy land in other areas, and it was cheaper here, when I bought this house and this land, the condition of the house was the same, then I built it gradually and what it was...”(L9)

From an informant's statement that he doesn't have enough money to buy land in another area, this reflects the financial constraints he might face, which then affects his choice to live in the current location.

4. Conclusions

The dynamics that influenced the informant's decision in choosing to settle in the Ngagelrejo Valley as a reality that happens in urban areas. It becomes interesting to study further, if viewed from the land status then the whole of the territory is land with IPT or without ownership. With the status of the land, the informant still chooses to remain in the place of residence that has been occupied for a long time. As for information that can be found from informants, there are several factors that are the arguments or reasons for staying in the territory. The close family and friendship factors, good accessibility for everyday activities, as well as close proximity to the industrial centre and the outlet of the city of Surabaya, create a comfortable atmosphere and make those who have long lived here feel comfortable, because of the strong sense of family and friendliness, so that there
is a feeling of reluctance to move. As far as advanced research can be done on efforts to maintain the quality of life in densely populated areas.

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