

Indonesian Family Living in Japanese Compact Apartment

-Definition of Spaces and Privacy Gradient-

Space Definition Interpersonal Relationship Privacy

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1. Introduction

In defining dwelling (housing), one can not only compare the physical artifacts encounters (Rapoport, 2005). Different culture had different perception and actualization of their dwelling. Such culture perceived 'core house' as their dwelling setting while other conceived not only the house but also its surroundings streets, shared wheels, religious institution, etc., that cannot be parted from their daily lifestyle as the dwelling settings. Nowadays, Japanese compact apartment have more functionally separation room compared to the traditionally large living room expressed as *i-ma* or living "space", but basically it still provides 'core house' as the basic dwelling for Japanese culture.

For the foreigners, sudden change from self satisfied house at hometown country to Japanese compact apartment had left no choice than to adapt to the condition. The limited domestic space will increase the space and activities incompatibility and although the physical setting had changed, cultural background inherited from previous living environment continuously adapted to the limited Japanese compact apartment. This will lead to compensation between space and activities that involves space-activities regulation. This paper discusses a preliminary research to understand how people from different culture adapt and cope with the constraint living environment in Japanese compact apartment around Tokyo area.

2. Research Objective and Methodology

The main objectives of this research are; 1. to know how the foreigners define and use the domestic space in Japanese compact apartment by understanding their activities-space regulation. 2. to understand how different types of interpersonal relationship influence the spatial and 3. to know how the privacy mechanisms deals with various interpersonal relationships. In the research, interviewee was asked to answer questionnaires consist of:

- Interviewee background (age, sex, family, occupation, etc.).
- Activities-space regulation. Interviewee was asked to sketch the layout of their apartment and to name the room by themselves. After that they were asked to write down all the activities (shown in Table 1). It is expected that they would perceive and use the space differently with the attended space usage by Japanese.
- Treatment of guests based on different type of interpersonal relationship (shown in table 2). To know how various interpersonal relationships influence to the spatial regulation, interviewee was asked of the location to accept different types of

guests in the house if it is his/her own guests and interviewee is by his/her own and if spouse is in the house. Then interviewee was asked where they would do certain activities if it is spouse's guest. There is also question regarding overnight guests. It is expected that interpersonal relationship in previous dwelling settings continued to happen in the current apartment, but the space limitation would make compromise in space regulation and it is also expected to have gradient to space permeability.

Table 1 List of Activities

Sleeping (Father, mother, children)
Eating (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, etc.)
Personal Hobby/Leisure (reading novel, listening to music, etc)
Personal Task (parents working, children studying, etc)
Personal meditation (relaxing by self, thinking by self, etc)
Family Communication. Talk and discussed on domestic matters.
Religious matter (praying, etc)
Celebration, having feast, community meeting, etc.
Other matters such as grooming, toilet, washing, drying, etc.

Table 2 Type of Interpersonal Relationship

Not so close guest man/woman (friend's friend, an acquaintance, etc).
Friend man/woman (campus's, organization's, neighbor friend, etc)
Relative man/woman (uncle, cousins, etc)
Children of neighbors, friends', relatives', etc.
Large occasion (more than 10 people)

- Privacy mechanisms. Interviewee was asked to describe their behavior if spouse accepts certain guests where he/she is doing personal activities. The answers to this question range from most subtle symbolical boundary to moderate and extreme physical boundary such as furniture, separation room, etc. (see table 3). It is expected that there is a relationship between the types of interpersonal relationship with kind of privacy mechanisms interviewee has to maintain privacy.

Table 3 List of Privacy Mechanisms involved

no physical and behavioral boundaries
Behavior boundaries ex. posture, not facing guest, etc.
limited physical boundaries, ex. Marking in same area w/ books.etc
moderate physical boundaries, ex. furniture arrangement
full physical boundaries for privacy ex. full partition/room difference
avoidance for privacy(go out)
prefer courtesy than privacy

4. Preliminary research

Preliminary research was being done in 2 floors Japanese apartment with 12 connected apartments where 4 Indonesian families and shared roommate lived in. Only 2 families and the shared apartment are being interviewed. Floor area of the 1st and 2nd apartment are the same (about 30m²), but there is difference on the apartment layout where rooms in 2nd floor divided by fixed *oshiree* and rooms in 1st floor divided by removable *fusuma*. (Fig.1)

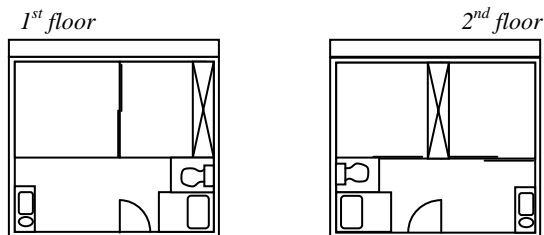


Figure 1 Difference in room layouts of 1st floor and 2nd floor apartments.

In the questionnaires, an example of apartment plan sketched by the interviewees are shown in Fig. 2

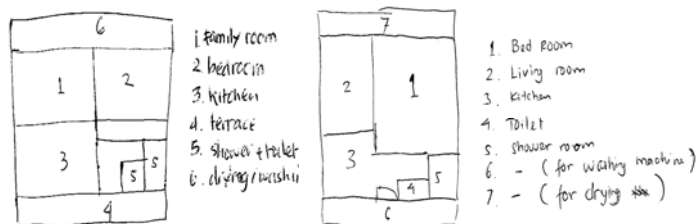


Figure 2 example of illustration of room layouts sketched by subjects.

These two sketched plans were drawn by the husband and wife of the same family, but rooms were named differently where the husband named it as multi function room and wife named it as family/play room. Another interesting point is that in both plans, the interviewees sketched part of the hallway as part of the apartment plan (which actually a public access). It turned out that it acted as a buffer zone/acceptance area of unknown/not so close guests where in previous hometown house accepted in the outdoor guest area.

Relating to the activities-space regulation, at the freedom of being by oneself at home, almost all parts of the apartment were used for personal activities even activities which require privacy such as personal hobby/leisure, task and meditation. But in the presence of other family members, personal activities were arranged by time usage or room separation (for parents mostly bedroom). An example of woman activities-spatial regulations shown in Fig.3

Regarding interpersonal activities-spatial relationship, findings show different interpersonal relationship influence different permeability to the domestic space where the closer the relationship is the more permeable it is to domestic space (see figure 4).

Another important note is that acceptance of opposite sex is stricter without the presence of spouse in the house. When spouse is accepting guests, freedom of personal activities were limited to the point that only bedroom provide privacy. In all cases family/relatives are always welcome to stay although it means that the multifunction/ family room will change function to bedroom at night. As for the presence of large occasion, the apartment won't provide any private room because all part of the apartment are open to public (even the bedroom), in exchange privacy were kept by

hiding private items from public view such as in *oshiree*, or cabinet.



Figure 3 activities pattern for woman in the presence of one self, with family, not close(acquaintance) and close guest (friend/relative)

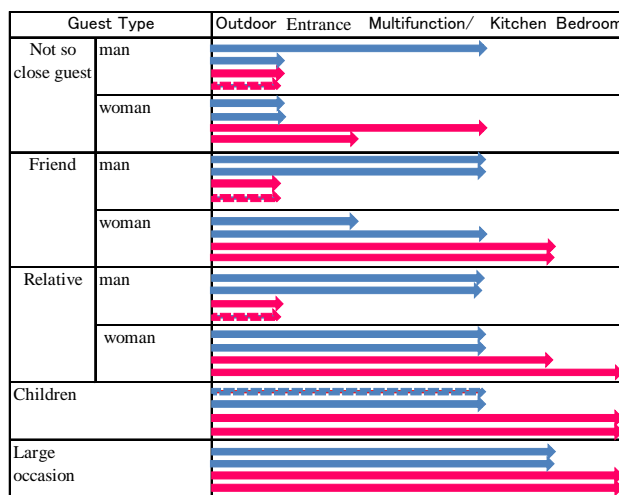


Figure 4 Difference in acceptance of various types of guests by man and woman

In regards to privacy, different, if interpersonal relationship is forced in certain room, the farther the relationship is the more influence it has to reduce/relocate personal activities and more physical boundary needed to maintain privacy. Though, there is an interesting finding where woman prefer courtesy to accept the spouse's guests that she acquaintance to and stop her personal activities until they leave, if guests are the same sex or relatives.

5. Remarks

Within limitation, people have tendency to define space more clearly. By understanding how people adapt and cope to the changes to a constraint environment, pattern of spatial organization in individual and interpersonal activities is expected to give an outcome that could clarify the core activities-spatial interaction inherited in different culture.

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