



Formation of Residential Space in a Multicultural Community: The Interaction of Customary Institutions and Community Leaders in Tri Rukun Village, Boalemo, Gorontalo

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Abstract

Multicultural communities in rural areas face challenges in maintaining social harmony while preserving cultural identity within residential environments. Tri Rukun Village in Boalemo Regency, Gorontalo, represents a multicultural settlement inhabited by Gorontalo, Balinese, and Minahasan communities living together within the same environment. This study aims to analyze the roles of customary institutions and community leaders in shaping residential adaptation strategies in Tri Rukun Village. A qualitative method with an ethnographic approach was employed to understand social, cultural, and spatial dynamics within the community. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, while data analysis used thematic coding and the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model. The findings indicate that customary institutions play important roles in land distribution, housing arrangements, and spatial conflict resolution through deliberative mechanisms based on local wisdom. Community leaders contribute to planning, design, and post-occupancy evaluation processes. Residential adaptation does not eliminate cultural identity but instead produces architectural hybridization through modifications in building materials, spatial organization, and housing elements adapted to social and environmental needs.

Keywords: Architectural Hybridization, Community Leaders, Customary Institutions, Ethnography, Residential Adaptation

Pembentukan Ruang Bermukim pada Masyarakat Multikultural: Interaksi Lembaga Adat dan Tokoh Masyarakat di Desa Tri Rukun, Boalemo, Gorontalo

Abstrak

Masyarakat multikultural di wilayah pedesaan menghadapi tantangan dalam menjaga harmoni sosial sekaligus mempertahankan identitas budaya dalam lingkungan bermukim. Desa Tri Rukun di Kabupaten Boalemo, Gorontalo merupakan kawasan multikultural yang dihuni oleh masyarakat Gorontalo, Bali, dan Minahasa yang hidup berdampingan dalam satu lingkungan permukiman. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran lembaga adat dan tokoh masyarakat terhadap strategi adaptasi bermukim di Desa Tri Rukun. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi untuk memahami dinamika sosial, budaya, dan spasial dalam masyarakat. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan thematic coding dan model analisis interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lembaga adat berperan dalam pengaturan distribusi lahan, pengaturan rumah tinggal, dan penyelesaian konflik ruang melalui mekanisme musyawarah berbasis kearifan lokal. Tokoh masyarakat berperan pada proses perencanaan, perancangan, dan evaluasi pasca-huni. Adaptasi bermukim tidak menghilangkan identitas budaya, tetapi menghasilkan hibridisasi arsitektur melalui perubahan material bangunan, tata ruang, dan elemen rumah tinggal yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan sosial dan lingkungan.

Kata-kunci: Adaptasi Bermukim, Etnografi, Hibridisasi Arsitektur, Lembaga Adat, Tokoh Masyarakat

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Introduction

The phenomenon of multiculturalism in rural living environments creates complex socio-cultural dynamics, particularly in the context of residential adaptation. Tri Rukun Village in Boalemo Regency, Gorontalo, represents a concrete example of a community formed through migration and ethnic and religious diversity, consisting of Gorontalo, Balinese, and Minahasan ethnic groups with Islamic, Hindu, and Christian backgrounds [1]. This diversity not only creates socio-cultural opportunities but also poses challenges related to social cohesion, settlement management, the integration of local values, and the development of shared social structures within a heterogeneous community.

In multicultural communities, residential adaptation does not occur naturally but rather develops through social and cultural mechanisms involving various actors, including customary institutions and community leaders [2]. Residential adaptation is influenced not only by physical environmental conditions but also by social negotiation processes, the establishment of collective norms, and community decision-making mechanisms. Consequently, local actors possessing social legitimacy become important elements in maintaining social stability and shaping community residential practices.

Customary institutions play strategic roles in preserving local values, resolving conflicts, and fostering mutual understanding among different ethnic groups. Meanwhile, community leaders often function as intermediaries among social groups and become role models in responding to changes and formulating adaptation strategies within new environments. In addition, customary institutions and community leaders potentially influence settlement organization, land distribution, and the preservation of cultural identity through residential forms [3].

Interactions among different ethnic groups frequently require social and cultural mediation mechanisms facilitated by customary institutions and community leaders. Therefore, their presence becomes part of adaptation strategies that are not only technical and spatial but also reflect social and cultural dimensions within residential life. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of local actors in shaping social structures within multicultural communities [4], [5], [6]. Furthermore, customary institutions are not only responsible for preserving cultural values but also function as mediators of social relationships and facilitators of social harmony [6].

Conceptually, this study refers to Soja's Socio-Spatial Dialectics theory, which views space as a product of interactions between social structures and individual or collective agency [7]. Through this perspective, settlement formation and residential adaptation are understood not merely as physical processes but also as socio-spatial processes shaped by interactions among cultural values, social relations, and community practices. Therefore, customary institutions and community leaders are positioned as socio-cultural agents that influence and are simultaneously influenced by residential practices within communities.

Research on multicultural communities and residential adaptation has been widely conducted; however, most studies remain fragmented and have not comprehensively examined the relationship between local institutions and residential adaptation strategies. Rosantika and Swasto [8] and Aqilah and Supsilani [9] discussed adaptation strategies in settlement and ethnic contexts but paid limited attention to institutional roles. Studies by Firmansyah *et al.* [5] and Sonia and Sarwoprasodjo [6] highlighted the role of customary institutions in preserving cultural values but did not relate these roles to residential adaptation processes.

Similarly, studies by Abdullah *et al.* [10] and Pritantia *et al.* [11] focused primarily on social interaction and multicultural harmony without discussing how these dynamics influence residential structures and settlement patterns. Furthermore, Yahya *et al.* [12] and Wiyono [13] examined physical characteristics of rural settlements but provided limited discussion regarding the influence of local actors in adaptation processes. In addition, Irawan and Sunandar [14] and Hatta and Sudradjat [15] investigated the role of community leaders in village development but did not specifically examine their influence on residential adaptation in multicultural settings.

To explain how customary institutions and community leaders influence residential adaptation processes, this study adopts Role Theory. Role theory explains that individuals and institutions perform specific behaviors, responsibilities, and functions according to their social positions within society [16]. Social behavior is influenced by expectations associated with social status and positions, implying that customary institutions and community leaders are expected to maintain social order, regulate social relationships, and guide interactions within communities [17]. Therefore, this theory provides a conceptual basis for understanding how local actors

influence the formation and adaptation of residential environments within multicultural communities.

Previous studies examining community roles suggest that local actors can be analyzed using several indicators, including their roles as facilitators, mediators, regulators, motivators, and guardians of cultural values [18], [19]. The facilitator role refers to the ability to create communication and coordination opportunities among community groups. The mediator role concerns conflict resolution and consensus-building processes among social groups. The regulator role relates to the implementation of social norms and regulations governing community life. The motivator role refers to efforts in encouraging community participation and collective engagement. Meanwhile, the role of guardian of cultural values refers to preserving local identity and maintaining cultural continuity within society [18], [19].

To strengthen the analytical framework, this study adopts a qualitative analytical approach for examining actor involvement in residential adaptation processes. Previous studies on community roles frequently employ thematic analysis using coding techniques, categorization of actor functions, and interpretation of social interactions. In this study, qualitative analysis begins with identifying local actors involved in residential adaptation processes. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation are subsequently coded and categorized according to the role indicators identified previously, namely facilitator, mediator, regulator, motivator, and guardian of cultural values. The categorized findings are then interpreted using a socio-spatial perspective to identify patterns of interaction between local actors and residential adaptation processes within multicultural communities.

Based on previous studies, a research gap remains regarding how customary institutions and community leaders influence residential adaptation strategies within multicultural communities, particularly in contemporary rural settlement contexts. Existing studies have also provided limited explanation regarding indicators and analytical frameworks for examining local actors' roles in socio-spatial adaptation processes. Therefore, this study seeks not only to identify the involvement of customary institutions and community leaders but also to analyze how their roles influence residential adaptation processes within multicultural communities.

Based on the issues described above, the research question of this study is: How do customary

institutions and community leaders influence residential adaptation strategies in multicultural communities in Tri Rukun Village, Boalemo, Gorontalo? Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the roles of customary institutions and community leaders in shaping residential adaptation strategies within multicultural communities in Tri Rukun Village, Boalemo, Gorontalo.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative method using an ethnographic approach combined with thematic coding and the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman [16], [20]. This analytical framework was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the roles of customary institutions and community leaders in shaping residential adaptation strategies within multicultural communities. The ethnographic approach was used to explore social practices, cultural values, and patterns of interaction within the local context, while thematic coding served as an analytical tool for identifying and categorizing actors' roles. Furthermore, the interactive model of Miles and Huberman was applied to systematically organize, interpret, and construct meanings from the collected data.

The combination of these approaches was intended to address the analysis of community roles by integrating cultural interpretation with a structured analytical process. Previous studies on community participation and local institutional roles commonly employ thematic categorization and role indicators to identify the functions of social actors in community development processes [20], [21]. Therefore, this study adopted role indicators consisting of facilitator, mediator, regulator, motivator, and guardian of cultural values as analytical tools for examining the involvement of customary institutions and community leaders in residential adaptation processes.

This study focused not only on the physical outcomes of residential adaptation but also on the cultural meanings, social relationships, and institutional structures that influence residential practices within multicultural communities.

The research site was selected purposively based on its relevance to the objectives and characteristics required by the study. Tri Rukun Village, Wonosari District, Boalemo Regency, Gorontalo Province, was selected because it represents a multicultural rural community inhabited by people from different ethnic backgrounds, including Gorontalo, Minahasan, and

Balinese communities living together within a shared social environment.

The selection of the study area was based on the following considerations:

1. Intensive social interactions occur among different ethnic groups;
2. Customary institutions remain actively involved in community decision-making processes, including matters related to residential settlements;
3. Community leaders play significant roles in maintaining social harmony and mediating adaptation practices among cultural groups; and
4. The area exhibits complex residential adaptation dynamics influenced by social, cultural, and institutional factors.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection was conducted using several ethnographic techniques, including:

- a. Participant Observation. Researchers conducted direct observations of daily community activities, settlement patterns, social interactions, and the use of communal spaces. Participant observation enabled researchers to directly engage with and understand social realities and cultural practices within the community.
- b. In-depth Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants selected through purposive sampling, including customary leaders, community leaders, village officials, and residents from different ethnic backgrounds. The interviews focused on participants' experiences, perceptions, residential adaptation practices, and the involvement of local actors in these processes.
- c. Documentation. Documentation techniques were employed through the collection of supporting materials such as village maps, customary documents, village archives, records of community meetings, visual documentation, and other materials related to the social and spatial conditions of the settlement.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis process was conducted continuously from the field data collection stage to the interpretation of findings using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman. The analytical process consisted of four stages:

- a. Data Reduction. Data obtained from participant observations, interviews, and documentation were selected, classified, and focused on information relevant to residential adaptation strategies,

spatial organization, and the roles of customary institutions and community leaders.

- b. Coding and Thematic Categorization. The reduced data were analyzed using an open coding process to identify emerging themes from field findings. The identified themes were then categorized according to role indicators derived from previous studies, including:
 - Facilitator
 - Mediator
 - Regulator
 - Motivator
 - Guardian of cultural values

These indicators served as analytical tools for identifying and interpreting the forms of involvement of customary institutions and community leaders in residential adaptation processes.

- c. Data Display. The categorized findings were presented in descriptive narratives, interview quotations, photographs, spatial maps, and settlement sketches to illustrate the relationship between social interactions and spatial adaptation practices.
- d. Conclusion Drawing and Interpretation. The final stage involved interpreting the findings using a socio-spatial perspective to understand how cultural values, social relationships, and local actors influence settlement patterns and residential adaptation processes within multicultural communities.

Data Validity

To ensure the credibility and validity of findings, this study employed source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and informant triangulation techniques. Information obtained from observations was cross-checked with interview and documentation data. Additionally, member checking was conducted with key informants to ensure the consistency and accuracy of interpretations.

Results and Discussion

Map or Description of the Research Area

Geographically, Tri Rukun Village is located in a lowland area with village road networks connecting different hamlets. Community settlements are distributed in a linear pattern along the main roads, while some residential areas form small clusters around agricultural land. This spatial pattern reflects the community's adaptation to geographical conditions as well as their accessibility needs.

The sketch of the research area indicates the presence of prominent communal spaces, such as community halls, mosques, churches, and temples. The existence of these places of worship represents a tangible symbol of organized diversity within a shared village space. The strategic placement of communal spaces throughout the village also reflects the community's collective awareness of creating shared spaces for interaction and social activities.

Visually, the village map shows a relatively even distribution of ethnic groups, although there is a tendency for small-scale clustering based on family ties or ethnic affiliations. However, this clustering does not create rigid social boundaries, as social and economic activities continue to occur across different groups. The map therefore assists researchers in understanding the spatial context that forms the background of residential adaptation within the multicultural community.

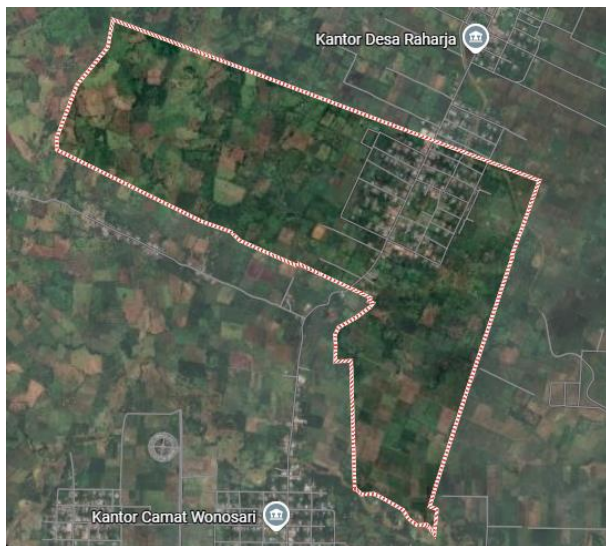


Figure 1. Map of research area

Historical Background of Tri Rukun Village

Tri Rukun Village was established during the period of population migration to the Gorontalo region, which was primarily driven by the government's transmigration program and independent migration from Balinese and Minahasan communities [1]. Initially, the area consisted of forest land that was later converted into agricultural land. The land-clearing process involved collaboration among different ethnic groups, indicating that the village had embodied values of cross-cultural cooperation from its early stages.

The name "Tri Rukun" itself reflects the philosophy of three ethnic groups living harmoniously together, namely the Gorontalo, Balinese, and Minahasan

communities. This name was collectively agreed upon by the village founders as a symbol of unity in diversity. Such an initial spirit gradually became embedded in the community's daily social and residential practices. Consequently, this historical background established a strong socio-cultural foundation for creating social harmony within the village.

The formation process of Tri Rukun Village demonstrates that the community has long been accustomed to living with diversity. This historical legacy continues to influence residential adaptation patterns, in which each ethnic group attempts to preserve its cultural identity while simultaneously creating opportunities for compromise and interaction with other groups. Therefore, the village's historical development serves as an important foundation for understanding the multicultural dynamics that continue to exist today.

Most residents of Tri Rukun Village depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods, particularly rice, corn, and coconut farming. In addition, some residents are engaged in small-scale plantation activities involving commodities such as cocoa and cloves. These economic conditions have created collective working patterns through practices such as *mapalus* or mutual cooperation, which not only function as economic mechanisms but also strengthen interethnic solidarity.

Although agriculture remains the primary economic sector, the development of informal economic activities has also become increasingly evident, including small-scale trading, local shops, and service-based businesses. Differences in ethnic backgrounds have contributed positively to economic diversity; for example, Balinese residents introduced different agricultural techniques, while Minahasan residents established food-related businesses characterized by distinctive culinary traditions. This demonstrates a synergistic relationship between economic activities and cultural diversity in promoting community sustainability.

The relatively homogeneous socio-economic conditions within the agricultural sector, combined with diversity in supporting sectors, have contributed to strong social cohesion within the community. No single ethnic group dominates economic ownership or activities. As a result, the community tends to maintain relatively egalitarian social relations, minimizing the occurrence of economic conflicts. Such conditions provide an important foundation for peaceful residential adaptation.

Socio-Cultural Dynamics within a Multicultural Community

Field observations indicate that public spaces in Tri Rukun Village function as important arenas for interethnic social interaction. Markets, village roads, and residential front yards are actively occupied by social activities involving individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Figure 2). Community members interact, conduct economic transactions, and gather together without considering ethnic differences. This phenomenon demonstrates that public spaces function not merely as areas for movement and circulation but also as important mediums for social integration [19].



Figure 2. Harmonious relationship between the Balinese ethnic community and local residents

Religious life within the village also demonstrates notable cross-ethnic participation. For example, during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, Balinese and Minahasan communities participate in visiting Muslim households. Conversely, during Galungan and Christmas celebrations, residents from other ethnic groups contribute to the preparations and attend the events with mutual respect and appreciation (Figure 3). This demonstrates that the village's social spaces are not restricted to a particular group but remain open and inclusive to all community members.

Interactions within public spaces further reveal a deeply rooted culture of tolerance. Children from different ethnic backgrounds play together in village fields, while adults collaborate in community-based mutual cooperation activities. Such interaction patterns foster trust among community members and reduce the potential for social conflict. Therefore, public spaces play a significant role in strengthening collective identity and social cohesion within Tri Rukun Village.



Figure 3. Hindu religious activities in Tri Rukun Village

Observational data indicate that social activities within the village are conducted inclusively and involve participation from all ethnic groups. For instance, community service activities (gotong royong) are attended not only by Gorontalo residents but also by Balinese and Minahasan communities, who actively contribute to these activities. Such balanced participation suggests the existence of collective norms emphasizing togetherness and mutual cooperation. Activities of this kind play an important role in maintaining interethnic solidarity.

Table 1 demonstrates that customary deliberation (musyawarah adat) serves as a decision-making platform involving members from various ethnic backgrounds. Although these discussions are generally led by customary leaders, individuals from other ethnic groups are also provided with opportunities to express their opinions. Therefore, customary deliberation functions not only as a mechanism for conflict resolution but also as a means of strengthening social legitimacy. This practice reinforces democratic values at the local level.

Figure 4 further demonstrates that socio-cultural activities in Tri Rukun Village are spatially integrated within the settlement structure rather than concentrated in a single communal center. Religious activities, customary deliberations, social gatherings, and collective community activities are distributed throughout different parts of the village, reflecting the inclusive nature of social interactions among ethnic groups. The spatial distribution also indicates that communal spaces function not only as physical gathering areas but also as socio-cultural nodes that strengthen multicultural relationships and collective identity within the village environment.

Table 1. Socio-cultural activities and architectural spatial requirements in Tri Rukun Village

No.	Socio-Cultural Activity	Ethnic Groups Involved	Form of Interaction	Socio-Cultural Meaning	Spatial / Architectural Implications
1	Community Service Activities	Gorontalo, Balinese, Minahasan	Collective cleaning of roads and drainage systems	Strengthens solidarity and environmental awareness	Requires accessible circulation and shared outdoor spaces
2	Customary Deliberation	Gorontalo customary leaders, Balinese and Minahasan leaders	Discussions on land use and settlement regulations	Reflects local democracy and social legitimacy	Requires communal meeting spaces
3	Eid al-Fitr Celebration	All ethnic groups	Visiting and sharing meals	Enhances tolerance and togetherness	Requires flexible gathering and reception spaces
4	Galungan Celebration (Hindu)	All ethnic groups	Joint participation in religious preparations	Represents interfaith solidarity	Requires ritual and ceremonial spaces
5	Christmas Celebration	Gorontalo, Balinese, Minahasan	Visiting and exchanging gifts	Strengthens social cohesion	Requires adaptable communal spaces
6	Community Social Activities	All ethnic groups	Monthly community gatherings	Strengthens interethnic social networks	Requires semi-public and interaction spaces
7	Traditional Marriage Ceremonies	Gorontalo, Balinese, Minahasan	Collective participation in ceremonies	Integrates customary and multicultural values	Requires flexible open spaces and larger gathering areas



Figure 4. Multi-layered analytical map of socio-cultural activities and spatial zoning in Tri Rukun Village, Boalemo Regency

The map illustrates the relationship between accessibility, communal activities, and settlement patterns. Areas located along primary circulation routes tend to accommodate more intensive social interactions and public activities, while residential clusters maintain cultural characteristics associated with each ethnic community. Nevertheless, these

spatial distinctions do not create rigid territorial segregation, as social interactions continue to occur across ethnic boundaries through shared communal spaces and collective activities.

Religious celebrations provide another example of social in clusiveness within the community. During

religious festivities, residents from different religious backgrounds visit and support one another. This indicates that tolerance is not merely a symbolic value but has become an integral part of everyday social practices. Such activities represent a tangible form of social adaptation strategies within a culturally diverse community.

The Role of Customary Institutions in Residential Adaptation

1. Decision-Making Mechanisms Related to Land Allocation and Housing Development

Customary institutions in Tri Rukun Village play a central role in determining land allocation for residents, particularly for newly established families. The land distribution process is conducted through collective deliberation to ensure fairness among different ethnic groups. This mechanism minimizes the potential for conflicts arising from unilateral land claims. Therefore, customary institutions function not only as mechanisms for maintaining social order but also as guarantors of the sustainability of community living spaces.

In addition to land allocation, housing development also involves consideration by customary institutions. For instance, housing orientation and the distance between buildings are expected to comply with customary regulations that have been passed down through generations. These regulations are intended to preserve environmental harmony and prevent potential social issues. The involvement of customary institutions in such technical aspects demonstrates the integration of cultural values into spatial practices.

This decision-making process reflects a balance between contemporary needs and traditional values [20]. Residents are able to construct houses according to their economic capacities while still adhering to customary norms. Consequently, decisions made by customary institutions represent a practical form of residential adaptation strategy that integrates social, cultural, and spatial dimensions.

2. The Role of Customary Institutions in Spatial Conflict Resolution

Spatial conflicts, such as disputes over land boundaries or the use of public facilities, frequently arise in rural communities. However, in Tri Rukun Village, such conflicts are generally resolved through customary institutions rather than formal legal mechanisms. This approach is perceived as more efficient and effective while also preserving social

relationships. Furthermore, this conflict-resolution mechanism has become a long-established practice accepted by all ethnic groups within the community.

The resolution process is carried out through open deliberative meetings held at the village hall. All parties involved in the dispute are given equal opportunities to express their perspectives, while customary leaders act as mediators throughout the process. Decisions are made based on principles of fairness and local wisdom. Through this mechanism, conflicts are resolved not only at the technical level but also at the social level.

The involvement of customary institutions in conflict resolution demonstrates that the community prioritizes social harmony over individual interests and unilateral outcomes. This restorative approach differs from conflict-resolution patterns commonly found in urban settings, which tend to rely more heavily on formal legal procedures. These findings indicate that customary institutions serve as important instruments in maintaining social and spatial stability within the village.

3. Interview Narratives with Customary Leaders and Members of Customary Institutions

During the interviews, the customary leader stated that the fundamental principle underlying every decision is maintaining a balance among customary values, religious beliefs, and community needs. He emphasized that customary decisions should benefit all parties to avoid perceptions of injustice within the community. According to him, maintaining social harmony is considered more important than pursuing individual interests. This perspective demonstrates the significant influence of customary institutions on daily community life.

A member of the customary institution further explained that openness is consistently prioritized during deliberative processes. Individuals from all ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to attend and express their aspirations and opinions. This practice illustrates the inclusiveness of customary institutions, which do not exclusively represent a particular group or ethnicity. Such practices contribute to creating a sense of security and belonging among residents from different ethnic communities.

The interview findings indicate that customary institutions function as essential pillars in supporting residential adaptation within Tri Rukun Village (Table 2). They serve not only as guardians of cultural values but also as social mediators facilitating interactions

Table 2. Forms of multicultural community adaptation in Tri Rukun Village

No.	Ethnic	Characteristics of Traditional Houses	Forms of Adaptation in Tri Rukun Village	Meaning of Adaptation
1	Gorontalo	Wooden stilt house with a high gable roof and a front staircase	The lower structure has been replaced with concrete, and parts of the walls have been reconstructed using brick materials, while the gable roof has been retained.	The Gorontalo architectural identity remains evident despite modifications made to accommodate structural and functional requirements.
2	Bali	House layout incorporating a family temple, distinctive carved ornaments, and the use of red brick and wooden materials.	Prayer spaces have been reduced in size due to land limitations, while distinctive Balinese ornaments continue to be incorporated into doors and windows.	Balinese cultural identity is preserved despite the simplification of spatial arrangements.
3	Minahasa	Wooden stilt houses with spacious verandas, large ventilation openings, and gable roofs	The veranda size has been reduced to accommodate limited land availability, and a combination of wood and concrete materials has been introduced while maintaining the original ventilation features.	This reflects the flexibility of Minahasan culture while simultaneously adapting to local environmental conditions.

among diverse groups. Their presence contributes to making adaptation processes more structured and culturally legitimate. Therefore, customary institutions can be regarded as key agents in sustaining multiculturalism within the community.

In addition to socio-cultural adaptation, multicultural interaction in Tri Rukun Village also influences the transformation of residential architecture among different ethnic communities. Field observations indicate that housing adaptation occurs through selective modification processes in which residents maintain important cultural elements while simultaneously adjusting building forms, materials, and spatial arrangements to contemporary environmental and social conditions. These processes demonstrate that architectural adaptation within multicultural settlements does not eliminate cultural identity but materials, simplification of spatial layouts, and adjustment of traditional architectural elements demonstrate that cultural identity remains flexible and adaptive rather than static. These findings support the view that multicultural settlements are dynamic socio-spatial environments shaped through continuous interaction between cultural values, social relationships, and environmental adaptation processes.

The Role of Community Leaders in Residential Adaptation

Community leaders in Tri Rukun Village function not only as social mediators among ethnic groups but also as key actors involved in shaping settlement environments and influencing decisions related to residential spaces. Their roles can be identified

throughout the planning, design, and post-occupancy evaluation stages of settlement development, which are carried out through participatory community processes. These findings indicate that the formation of residential environments is influenced not only by physical factors but also by socio-cultural values and collective decision-making mechanisms within the community.

1. The Role of Community Leaders in the Planning Stage

During the planning stage, community leaders act as facilitators in community deliberation processes related to settlement development. Their involvement includes assisting residents in determining housing locations, planning environmental access roads, allocating communal spaces, and managing land distribution while ensuring balance and equity among different ethnic groups.

Field observations indicate that decisions regarding housing locations are not made individually but are determined through collective discussions that take into account accessibility, proximity to family members, economic activities, and social relationships within the community. Community leaders play an important role in ensuring that such decisions do not lead to spatial dominance by a particular ethnic group.

Community participation at this stage reflects a bottom-up planning approach, in which residents' needs and aspirations serve as the primary basis for spatial decision-making.

2. The Role of Community Leaders in the Design Stage

During the design stage, community leaders serve as intermediaries between local cultural values and residents' functional housing needs. Although the community consists of different ethnic groups, the housing development process demonstrates the adaptation of architectural forms to local environmental conditions.

Community leaders provide recommendations regarding building orientation, spacing between houses, the use of communal spaces, and architectural elements that should be maintained as representations of each ethnic group's cultural identity. For example, the Gorontalo community continues to preserve traditional gable roof forms and stilt-house characteristics despite changes in construction materials. Similarly, the Balinese community maintains cultural ornaments despite modifications and simplifications of spatial layouts resulting from land limitations.

Interview findings indicate that design decisions consider not only the technical aspects of buildings but also social comfort, neighborhood relationships, and the sustainability of cultural values.

3. The Role of Community Leaders in the Post-Occupancy Evaluation Stage

Following the occupation of residential environments, community leaders continue to play a role in evaluating environmental conditions and patterns of spatial use. Evaluation activities are generally conducted informally through community meetings, mutual cooperation activities (*gotong royong*), and discussions held during social and religious gatherings.

The evaluation process includes several aspects:

- environmental comfort within residential areas;
- accessibility among housing units;
- utilization of communal spaces;
- interethnic social relationships;
- changes in residents' spatial needs.

Field observations indicate that modifications to housing structures, such as spatial expansion, material changes, and adjustments to building elements, are generally carried out in response to residents' needs while maintaining compatibility with surrounding environmental conditions.

This evaluation stage demonstrates that residential adaptation is a dynamic and ongoing process. Community leaders function as intermediaries who

connect community needs with the sustainability of both social and spatial environments.

Findings presented in Table 2 indicate that although each ethnic group has experienced modifications in building forms and construction materials, cultural identity continues to be preserved through specific architectural elements. These findings suggest that adaptation does not eliminate cultural identity; rather, it reconstructs and transforms cultural expressions to remain relevant within contemporary social, economic, and environmental contexts. Therefore, community leaders function not only as social actors but also as spatial agents who influence the formation and adaptation processes of multicultural settlements in Tri Rukun Village.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that residential adaptation strategies in the multicultural community of Tri Rukun Village are shaped through the interaction between socio-cultural mechanisms and spatial practices involving customary institutions, community leaders, and local residents. The study demonstrates that adaptation processes are not limited to social interactions but are also reflected in the formation of settlement patterns, housing modifications, and the development of communal spaces that accommodate multicultural activities.

Customary institutions play an important role in regulating residential environments through mechanisms related to land allocation, housing arrangements, and conflict resolution. Through deliberative processes based on local wisdom, customary institutions contribute to maintaining spatial balance and preventing potential conflicts regarding land ownership and residential boundaries. Their role extends beyond preserving cultural values, functioning as a mechanism that guides the organization and sustainability of settlement structures.

Community leaders play a significant role throughout architectural processes, including planning, design, and post-occupancy evaluation stages. During the planning stage, they facilitate community participation in determining housing locations, circulation networks, and communal spaces. At the design stage, they help integrate local cultural values with residents' functional needs through decisions concerning building orientation, housing layout, and the preservation of cultural architectural elements. During post-occupancy evaluation, community leaders continue to facilitate discussions regarding

environmental conditions, spatial use, and residents' changing needs. This demonstrates that settlement formation in Tri Rukun Village follows a participatory and adaptive process rather than an individual decision-making approach.

The findings further reveal that adaptation within multicultural settlements does not imply the loss of cultural identity but instead results in the transformation and reconstruction of architectural expressions. Changes in building structures, construction materials, and spatial arrangements among Gorontalo, Balinese, and Minahasan communities indicate a process of architectural hybridization in which traditional values are maintained while adapting to environmental conditions and contemporary needs. The emergence of specific spatial requirements related to socio-cultural activities also influences the development of communal spaces and residential environments.

Overall, this study confirms that successful residential adaptation in multicultural rural communities depends not only on strong social relationships but also on the active involvement of local actors in shaping spatial environments. The participatory mechanisms and culturally based approaches observed in Tri Rukun Village provide an important reference for developing inclusive and sustainable settlement planning strategies. Although this study focuses on a specific local context, its findings may contribute to future studies on multicultural settlements and culturally responsive architectural planning.

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