



## **Kindred Campers: The Alternative Pre-Bridgeheader Migration Stage of Low-Income Migrants in Jakarta, Indonesia**

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**Abstract:** *The Government of Indonesia (GoI) has been facing problems in providing affordable houses for Indonesian low-income peoples. Research on the housing preferences of low-income people is important in order for the GoI to understand and be able to provide affordable housing that meets the needs of low-income people. According to Turner (1968a), the housing preferences of low-income migrants is largely influenced by economic factors, so Turner divides low-income migration into three stages: namely the bridgeheader, land consolidator, and status seeker. But the question arises as to whether it is possible for first time low-income migrants to arrive and live in the city centre directly, without any prior experience? If not, then is there a stage before the bridgeheader stage? If it is, then what are the first-housing preferences of low-income migrants? This paper critiques Turner's theory of the low-income's migration stage, that there is a possibility of stage before bridgeheader, we call it 'kindred campers'.*

**Keywords:** the low-income; migration stage; housing preferences.

## Introduction

Housing is declared a basic right, but over the decades, the provision of housing has been running up against serious obstacles. Since Independence in 1945, the Government of Indonesia (GoI) has launched various housing policies and programmes. Unfortunately, those programmes still produce obsolete results. Various studies have shown that the incompatibility of location and housing design with the social, economic, and cultural conditions of low-income people is the main cause of government programme failures (Adianto 2010). Knowing what a person wants when choosing a residence is important for understanding people's preferences for achieving a comfortable life. On the other hand, for low-income people choosing a housing location is limited by financial resources. Low-income people have limited options to choose the location of their residence, yet they have unique preferences regarding this choice, which change accordingly when their social, economic, and cultural needs and conditions change.

In order to improve the quality of life of citizens, GoI began to implement a self-help housing concept, which was spearheaded by Turner (1968b). His work in many South American cities has been acclaimed as one of the most important milestones for worldwide slum upgrading and improvement programmes. The idea of 'self-help housing' is centred on the ability of low-income people to build their own suitable housing. According to his thorough observations, the quality of housing will improve as people's economic situations improve. This improvement will also affect the intra-urban migration pattern of low-income people in the city. Low-income migrants who move to the city in search of jobs first migrate to the city centre and occupy vacant land as temporary shelter. In this first stage of migration, the migrant is called a 'bridgeheader', whose strategy is to live in the city centre, where there are various kinds of job opportunities, in order to minimise the transportation costs of getting to their job's location. When their financial situation improves after having a steady job and income for a time, low-income migrants tend to seek a better neighbourhood and more secure tenure, even if doing so increases the distance between the housing and the workplace. Turner (1968a) has termed this stage that of the 'land consolidator'. If the economy the migrants' financial situation continues to improve, they continue to improve, the low-income migrants enter the third stage and become 'status seekers'.

For almost four decades, Turner's theory of the stages of low-income intra-urban migration has remained unchallenged. Studies in several countries, such as in China (Gottschalch 2013; Li 2007; Wang 2004) and Latin America (Klak & Holtzclaw 1993), have continued to identify similar stages of migration. Those studies have revealed that low-income migrants move through similar stages to those described by Turner by usurping and occupying vacant land for

their modest shelters in the city centre in order to take advantage of available job opportunities. The next stages occur as a consequence of improvements to their financial situation.

These stages relate to the concept of housing preference and choice. According to Jansen et al. (2011), preference refers to the relative attractiveness of an object, while choice refers to actual behaviour. The former may reflect the latter (Molin et al. 1996), but the latter is not determined only by the former (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001; Timmermans et al. 1994). Although preference is subjective, it is not static. Preferences change along with changes in a person's life (Mulder 1995). Job location, promotion, marriage, family, retirement, or divorce can be a housing preference that affects the housing choice. Therefore, studies on housing preferences are important for understanding how housing provision fits a community's needs. Choice is shaped by preference, market conditions, regulations, availability, and internal and external personal factors such as lifestyle and social class (Jansen 2011).

Therefore, Turner (1968a) assumed that the main preferences determining housing choice among low-income migrants are housing affordability and their own limited financial means. This strategy is an understandable way of minimising the costs of transportation by occupying housing that is close to job opportunities in the city centre. However, is it possible for first-time low-income migrants to arrive and live in the city centre from the outset, without any prior experience in the city? If this is not possible, then is there a stage before the bridgeheader stage? If it is, then what are the very first housing preferences of low-income migrants?

Though there are many preferences that determine housing choice, only a small number of studies have focused on this issue, especially in Indonesia. This research aims to scrutinise the migration pattern of low-income people within the city in order to improve our understanding of their housing trajectory. The result of this research will help to improve housing policy for low-income people in cities, especially in Indonesia.

## **Methodology**

This study was conducted in DKI Jakarta Province as the capital of Indonesia, which has the highest rate of migration in the independent era. This province consists of 5 (five) municipalities (East, West, Central, North, and South Jakarta) and 1 (one) regency (Thousand Islands Regency). However, the regency has the smallest rate of migration because of its geographical conditions and lack of economic activities and infrastructure conditions. The other municipalities enjoy the highest rates of urban development progress in Indonesia, and attract migrants to participate in various job opportunities.

Kampung, a high-density urban settlement, has been known to be an attractive destination for people migrating to the city from rural areas/other parts of the country. According to the City Planning and Development Agency Report in 2014, there are more than 400 kampongs with slum quality in Jakarta. The study was conducted in the highest-density kampung in each municipality according to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2014-2017. They are Kampung Kalibaru (Cilincing Subdistrict, North Jakarta); Kampung Menteng (Tebet Subdistrict, South Jakarta); Kampung Melayu (Jatinegara Subdistrict, East Jakarta); Kampung Tanah Tinggi (Johar Baru Subdistrict, Central Jakarta); and Kampung Kapok (Cengkareng Subdistrict, West Jakarta).

The primary data were collected using questionnaires in order to identify the preferences behind housing choice, the number, duration and locations of an occupied house since migrating to Jakarta, and the demographic situation. Because of a reluctance to participate among the kampong residents, the decision was made to use the snowball sampling technique. This study questioned 50 households from each kampong, and the respondents were household members over the age of 15. There were a total of 420 respondents from 5 (five) kampongs, comprising 76 respondents from Tanah Tinggi (Central Jakarta), 90 respondents from (North Jakarta), 84 respondents from Kalibaru (West Jakarta), 79 respondents from Menteng Dalam (South Jakarta), and 91 respondents from Kampung Melayu (East Jakarta).

The analysis was carried out using a quantitative approach, namely descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis is conducted by presenting a cross-tabulation analysis between selected independent variables and dependent variables as brief general information on the housing preferences of low-income migrants in Jakarta. Inferential analysis is conducted by means of multinomial logistic regression analysis and is used to rank the preference categories of housing choice as the dependent variables and the determinants of the preferences as the independent variables. The estimation uses the comparative values of the determinants that influence preferences to confirm the descriptive analysis results of the first-house preferences of low-income migrants in Jakarta.

## **Adapting and adjusting to city life as a factor in the first-housing preferences of low-income migrants in Jakarta**

Our findings show that the first-house preferences of low-income migrants in Jakarta are not only based on economic factors. From the descriptive analysis, the first-house preferences of low-income migrants in Indonesia are influenced by the wish to follow one's parents to Jakarta (35.20%), to be close to the family's house (30.00%), to acquire new shelter quickly after a disaster (13.80%), to be close to one's place of work (13.60%), and to be close to public facilities (7.10%), and some respondents did not answer this question (0.20%). Most of the low-income migrants moved to their first-house in Jakarta because they wanted to follow their parents. The change in housing location from some other city to Jakarta was based on the desire to unite the family, rather than on economic considerations. The next most important preference is to live close to where one's family or kin live. Living to the home of family or kin helps first-time low-income migrants to adapt and adjust to city life. In the case of job-seekers, they prefer to stay with or close to the home of kin or family in Jakarta, even if that home is located far from the city centre where there are many job opportunities. For students who migrate to study in Jakarta, living with kin or family is useful for adapting and adjusting to the way of life in the city. The third most common preference is no other options, which means any available house that they can afford to buy or rent. Most of the respondents who have this preference had been the victims of eviction or a natural disaster who then needed to find another place to reside. Living close to one's workplace is the fourth-ranking preference, which is consistent with Turner's concept of migration stages.

This finding supports Turner's theory of the first-housing preference of migrants according to Turner's theory of the first migration stage. There are at least 3 (three) first-time housing preferences for low-income migrants in Jakarta that are more important than the preference of being close to the workplace. Most respondents are willing to live far from the city centre in order to stay close to their kin or family who can give them guidance about living in the city. For students who are studying in Jakarta and far from their parents' home, but also for job-

seekers and first-time workers, living with kin or family gives them a sense of security, and their family in the village will feel this about them too. It allows parents to supervise their children and make sure they are safe in Jakarta, through intense communication with trusted kin or family. For eviction and disaster victims, moving to their first housing in Jakarta is one of the steps they can take towards finding a new job and stability in life, which can no longer be obtained in the desolate location of their previous housing. These preferences indicate that first-time housing is part of a person's adaptation and adjustment to living in the city, rather than an economic asset, as Turner states.

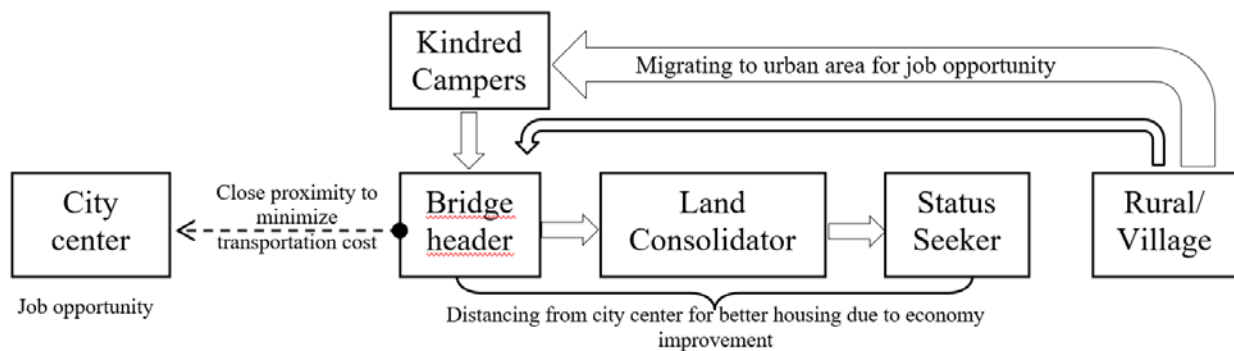
An in-depth study was conducted using multinomial logistic regression with the aim of identifying the factors that are significant for determining the 'family considerations' preference. The result of the multinomial logistic regression demonstrates that the first-housing preference of married and unmarried low-income respondents in Jakarta is to live close to kin or family. According to the results of a structured interview, married respondents prefer to live close to kin or family for at least two reasons. The first reason is so that their family can look after their first housing and children. The second reason is so that they and their family can help each other given the volatile financial conditions of living in the city life. Finally, they can also help prevent each other from becoming lonely in the context of big city life. This result strengthens the previous result of the descriptive analysis.

## **Kindred campers and critics of Turner's migration stages**

To answer the first question, first-time low-income migrants need a transitional space of temporary residence in order to adapt and adjust to city life. Without prior knowledge, it was very difficult for first-time low-income migrants to live in the city, which has different norms, culture, and other unwritten rules.

Based on the results of the structured interview, the first-time housing preference for low-income migrants in Jakarta is about more than just finding temporary shelter in order to seize a job opportunity, as Turner argued. The first-time housing represents a temporary sanctuary for people who have left their original home, family, and neighbours in a place where there is a strong sense of community in order to try to improve their life by moving to the individualistic city. This housing becomes their incubator, where they get to know and understand and learn to capitalise on every job opportunity without losing the spirit of a community. The kin or family provides them with temporary shelter where they can adapt and adjust before they go on to live independently as a bridgeheader. Moreover, it provides a sense and guarantee of their security for their family living in another city or village as the kin or family in Jakarta will look after family members. In order to have these benefits, first-time low-income migrants in Jakarta are willing to spend more on transportation and spend more time commuting as a consequence of having to live farther away from their workplace.

**Figure 1: Kindred Campers as the Pre-Bridgeheader Migration Stage of Low-Income Migrants in Jakarta**



According to Turner (1968a), low-income migrants will gradually go through 3 (three) stages of housing based on their financial capacity, which are: bridgeheader, land consolidator, and status seeker. Turner founded his argument on the economic aspect of housing preferences, determined by the limited financial means of low-income migrants.

However, the results of this research raise at least 2 (two) criticisms of Turner’s argument. The first criticism suggests rejecting the notion that a sense of community is a significant/the primary first-housing preference of low-income migrants in the city. The term ‘bridgeheader’ refers to first-time low-income migrants who usurp and occupy vacant land in the city centre to be close to job opportunities. Turner’s argument relied on the assumption that living close to job opportunities in the city centre would minimise transportation costs and monthly expenditures. However, this research demonstrates that first-time low-income migrants tend to live with or close to kin or family in the city for a period of brief adaptation and adjustment despite, as a consequence, having to live far from the city centre. The position of bridgeheader is considered risky for low-income migrants as they do not yet have the knowledge and experience they need to live in the city.

This stage is called the stage of kindred campers, which refers to the time when low-income migrants temporarily stay with or nearby kin or family members while they adapt and adjust to city living. Being a kindred camper is an effective way for low-income migrants to minimise the risk, but their transportation costs are then high. Moreover, living with or nearby kin or family also provides them with other benefits, such as financial assistance or shared services to reduce their monthly expenditures. Therefore, being a kindred camper provide more benefits than being a bridgeheader, as it enables first-time low-income migrants to minimise their living cost and other risks in the city.

The second criticism relates to the alternative first-housing preferences of low-income migrants. Turner’s argument emphasises the individual nature of the first stage of low-income migrants’ migration, which is another renunciation of their social network. Although there are respondents who were able to become a bridgeheader, most of them tended to be kindred campers, which allowed them to maintain their sense of community during the process of adapting and adjusting to living in the city. Because people have various reasons for moving to the city, most first-time low-income migrants need a transition space where they can adapt and adjust with the guidance of persons they know well. Therefore, Turner was oversimplifying the first migration stage and this research supports the idea that there exists a pre-bridgeheader migration stage for low-income migrants.

## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

This research has established that low-income migrants in Jakarta have various first-housing preferences. Although the research confirms the relevance of Turner's low-income migration stages in the city, it introduces several other first-housing preferences. Following one's parents, living close to kin or family members, and finding quick shelter after a disaster were found to be more important than living close to the city centre where there are many job opportunities.

Accordingly, this research challenges Turner's arguments, which reject the idea that low-income migrants have a variety of housing location preferences and alternative first-housing preferences. Although this research confirms Turner's theory of the migration stages of low-income migrants in the city, the criticisms are a humble nudge not to oversimplify the migration stages. The first-housing preferences of low-income migrants in the city reveal that housing has multiple meanings for these migrants. Housing is not just an economic asset for surviving in the city but is also a transitional space that provides low-income migrants with a spirit of community and a place to adapt and adjust to the different ways of life in the city. It is a safe incubator for them, before they go on to become bridgeheads in the harsh life of the city.

However, this paper research limited its focus to the first-housing preferences of low-income migrants in 5 kampongs in Jakarta with limited respondents. Additional research in more kampongs in Jakarta or other big cities with a larger number of respondents may provide more varieties of first-housing preferences of low-income migrants. This research will enrich the understanding of the migration pattern of low-income migrants in Indonesia, which will be useful for city and housing policy and planning amidst the massive wave of urbanisation.

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