

# The Influence of Social Change on the Transformation Process of Traditional Houses in Brayut Village

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## Abstract

Social change is a common phenomenon. The change of traditional society to modern society was caused by modernization. The change of lifestyle, needs and family growth become the trigger of houses transformation. This phenomena also occurs in many rural areas. Traditional house as a local identity of traditional society has transformed as the response to, this condition. Local identity is reflected by social status. The change of local identity also reflected the change in social status, so this paper aims to examine how social changes affect the traditional house transformation. Well-preserved traditional houses in Brayut village represent its complete transformation process. It was examined through a case study approach. This study found that the change the social status of the owners becomes one of the decisive elements across generation. The heirs from middle and upper-class ancestor tend to keep their ancestor's legacy by slowing down the physical transformation. On the other hand, the heirs from low-class ancestor tend to speed up the physical transformation to show their social class improvement. The uniqueness of physical transformation in Brayut village is obedient of traditional value, so the transformation occurs in an appropriate level based on Javanese social stratification.

**Keywords:** Transformation, Javanese house, traditional architecture, social change

## Introduction

Javanese traditional house has transformed since a long time ago. Traditional architecture as a part of the transformation process of vernacular architecture is an effort to meet the human need surrounding the environment. (Cuthbert, 2013). The oldest document of Javanese traditional house was found in Borobudur relief and showed the *limasan* form of Javanese house. (Prie, 2016). There are five types of Javanese traditional building based on roof form, i.e: *Joglo*, *Limasan*, *Kampung*, *Tajug*, and *Panggang Pe*. (Ismunandar, 1990). Three types among them are used for residential function, i.e: *Joglo*, *Limasan*, and *Kampung*. (Ismunandar, 1990). The type of Javanese traditional house represents the owner's identity, so it can be a symbol of social class in their society. (Widaningsih and Cahyani, 2015), (Setyoningrum *et al.*, 2015). Javanese traditional stratification based on heredity origin and occupation, divide the society into noble class, *priyayi* (middle class) and *kawulo alit* (worker or lower class). (Raffles, 2016). This stratification is simpler than common social stratification which divided the society into the upper class, middle class, working class, and unemployment. (Cuthbert, 2006).

A house in the Javanese society not only become a shelter but also represents the owner's human lifestyle. (Cahyono, Setioko, and Murtini, 2017), (Santosa, 2000). This socio-cultural value has more meaning for the owner who built the house than to the owner who inherits the house. *Pendopo*<sup>1</sup> of *Joglo* house as the symbol of strength and power, represented by its high and wide of the roof. (Kusno, 2006). In

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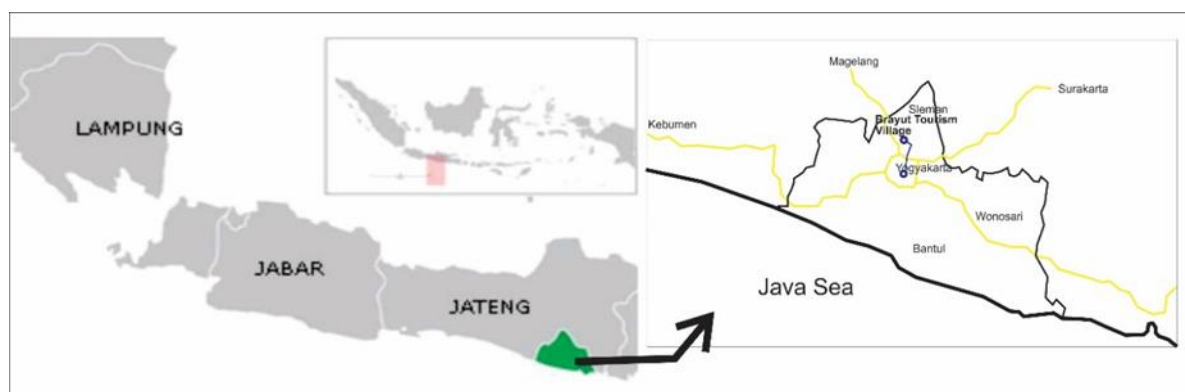
<sup>1</sup> *Pendopo* is an enclosed open space in front of the main house. *Pendopo* function as a meeting room or an entrance to meet the guest and also to held a traditional even or ceremony in traditional Javanese society. (Ismunandar, 1990).

the Javanese house configuration, *pendopo* is positioned in front of the main house to connect the authority and community, and to link the macro cosmos and the microcosmos in human life. (Kusno, 2006), (Wardani, 2011). *Pendopo* was built as a symbolic identity of the owner as a leader, so this type represents the upper social class in Javanese society. In a simple context, a traditional building that was used by villagers and built with local material, known as a vernacular building. The vernacular architecture also referred to as traditional, anonymous, native or indigenous to a specific time and place. It is the architecture of people. (Oliver, 2003). Vernacular transformation occurs as a response to social change, including social stratification. (Cuthbert, 2013). Vernacular architecture is generally characterized by a continuous process over time, it has been growing in response to actual needs with the available means of every place. (Philokyprou, 2005). For example, every room in the *Joglo* house is full of meaning that depicts Javanese culture. In the modern era, *Joglo* house began to transform into the modern style. Although the shape changes but the meaning do not just disappear. (Sarmini, Nadiroh, and Basriyani, 2017).

In the transformation process, internal factors such as the owner's need and economic improvement are more dominant than external factor such as government programme. (Vitasurya, Hardiman and Sari, 2018). The physical changes took place simultaneously with social transformations. (Mirmoghtadaee, 2009). It also claims that despite limitations the domestic spaces of these buildings are transforming mainly for economic reasons as a survival strategy of the occupants. (Al-Naim and Mahmud, 2007). The change of need and lifestyle in the modern era causes transformation of a traditional house. (Habraken, 1979). Family growth, inheritance system, and social change also become the triggers of transformation. (Tarigan, 2013), (Ju, Kim and Ariffin, 2015). Social changes that became the decisive element in the transformation process of the traditional house also occur in the rural area. The change of traditional society to modern society occur in traditional houses. Some of the social value in traditional society no longer exist in modern society such as traditional ceremony and traditional belief. So, this paper objective is to find how social change influences the transformation of traditional houses in the rural area, especially in the tourism village.

### Overview of Brayut

Brayut village is located in Sleman District, 10 km north from Yogyakarta (see Fig.1). This village is an old rural settlement and became a buffer area of Kasultanan Yogyakarta in the past. Coming from the word "Sumbering Rahayu" (source of prosperity), this village is surrounded by beautiful landscape and agricultural land. As a buffer area, this village has a close relation to the Kasultanan Yogyakarta. The local villagers of Brayut were wealthy and well educated, so the upper class and middle-class societies were dominant. The types of *Joglo* house and *Limasan* house, which represented these classes, are dominant in Brayut.



**Fig.1:** Location of Brayut village in Yogyakarta – Indonesia.

Source: author, 2017

There are several houses in Brayut village that represent all type of traditional Javanese houses. There are 3 *Joglo* houses, 19 *Limasan* houses, and 2 *Kampong* houses that are still well maintained and occupied. *Kampong* house is the most transformed houses now, social economic improvement and extinct material are the reason why this type tend to change. Transformation process involves tangible and intangible aspect which related each other. (Rudwiarti, Pudianti, and Vitasurya, 2017). The transformations of traditional houses in Brayut is partial, implying that the form is maintained as a whole, but the function changes. (Vitasurya, Hardiman and Sari, 2018). In line with the Brayut tourism program, which was

declared in 1999, traditional houses became the main attraction. This condition encourages Brayut villagers to preserve their traditional house. Family growth and the change of social status of the owner became the internal factors of the transformation process in Brayut. Tourism program became the external factor of the transformation process in Brayut. The internal and external factors influence the transformation process differently in each traditional house. The up and down transformation process was affected by the owner's response to the internal or external factor.

## Method

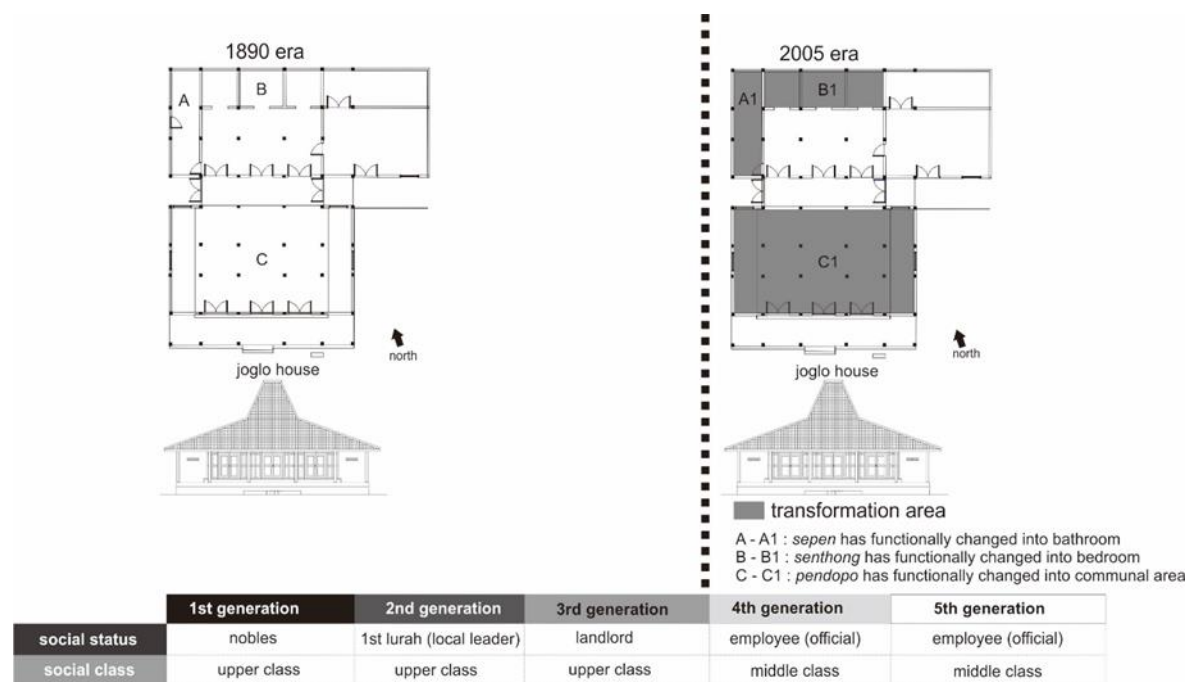
This research used three cases as a case study to examine the transformation process. Investigation through chosen cases was done by mapping and reconstructing transformation process based on interviews with the owner. The social change was investigated through the social class and social status across generation of the owner by deep interview technique. The interview result was analyzed with the physical transformation reconstruction to find the influence of social change in the transformation process of the traditional houses. Case study method is suitable to answer research questions of how and why. (Yin, 2003). The cases are chosen by considering the conditions of the houses representing the 3 types of traditional house i.e. *Joglo*, *Limasan*, and *Kampung*.

## The transformation of traditional houses in Brayut Village

The 3 types of traditional houses examined based on the original style that was built first by the ancestor. Those 3 types represent the owner social class across generations. *Joglo* house transformation is represented by *Joglo 1*. It is the oldest traditional house that was built by a local leader. *Limasan* house transformation is represented by *Joglo 2*. It was built as *Limasan* house from the beginning. *Kampung* house transformation is represented by *Limasan 18*. It was built as *Kampung* house.

## The transformation process of Case 1 (*Joglo 1*)

*Joglo 1*, belonging to the first *Lurah* (village leader) of Brayut who was the heir of *Panji*. *Panji* also was known as *Wedana* (regional leader in Kasultanan Yogyakarta before 1920 era) in Sleman District. *Panji* was appointed by Sri Sultan (the king of Yogyakarta). In a rural area, this position was the highest class among villagers. *Joglo* house was built to show the position and also the identity of the owner. *Pendopo Joglo* becomes a public area from the house to connect the leader and the villager. (Kusno, 2006)



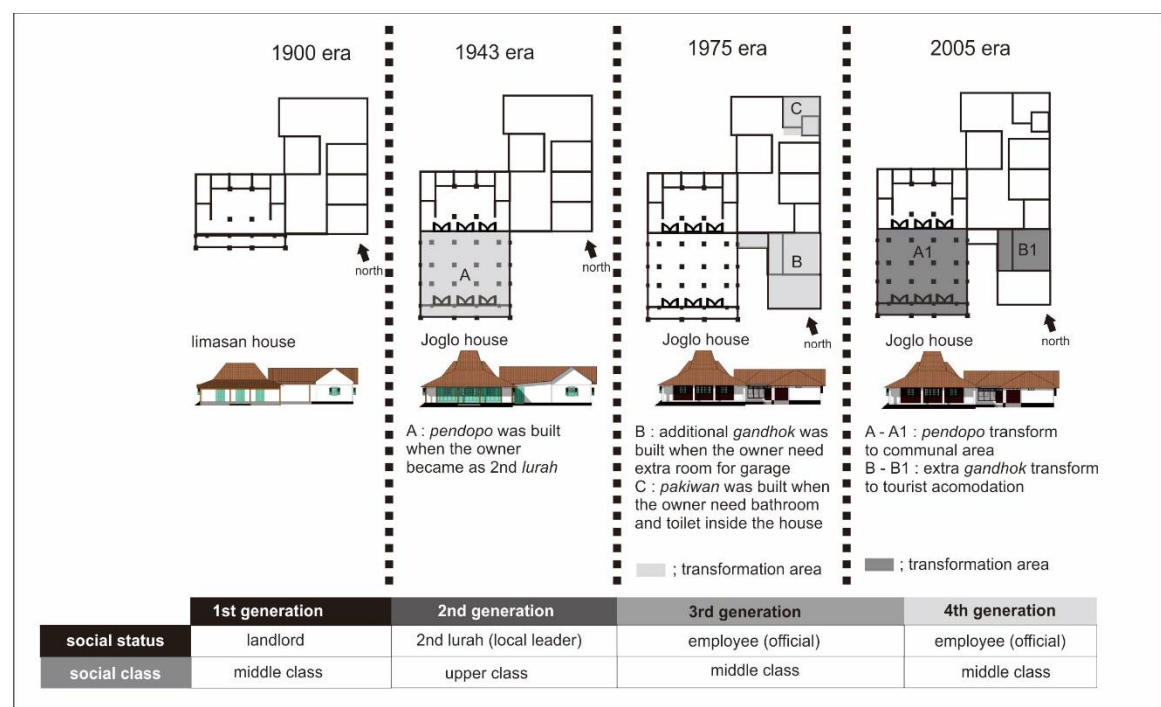
**Fig.2:** Transformation process in case 1 (*Joglo 1*).

Source: author analysis, 2018.

Built as a complete *Joglo* house in 1890 era, this house form was preserved by the heirs. The transformation only occurs in functional aspect (see Fig.2). This house no is longer occupied by the heirs. To support the tourism programme, this house became the main attraction for the tourist. The *Joglo* 1 became the tourist accommodation and administration office for Brayut's tourism board. The concept of the Javanese traditional architecture could also be adapted to the function of modern buildings, in the form of spatial development, the shape, and the scale of the building. (Ardiyanto *et al.*, 2014). In line with that statement, transformation process in Joglo 1 only happened in functional aspect. The builder's generation that was the first local leader (the upper-class position), became the family pride for the heirs. The downgrading class in the next generation didn't affect the physical transformation. The heir preserves this house to keep the ancestor legacy as the first local leader. The social change from the old generation to the young generation didn't affect physical transformation but affected in the functional transformation to meet the modern need and lifestyle.

### The Transformation process of Case 2 (*Joglo 2*)

*Joglo 2* belong to the second *Lurah* of Brayut, who was a relative of the first *Lurah*. Built as *Limasan* house by the owner (parent of the second *Lurah*) in 1900 era, *pendopo Joglo* was added in 1943 era. This house transform into *Joglo* house when the second generation of the owners became village leader. So, in this generation, there was an upgrading class of the owner. In the third generation, this house transformed some traditional part and element into modern function and element in 1975. The transformations were adding toilet area at the back and replacing some traditional building material (such as bamboo and wood) into modern material (such as concrete wall and glass window). The transformation process can be seen in figure 3.



**Fig.3:** Transformation process in case 2 (*Joglo 2*)

Source: author analysis, 2018.

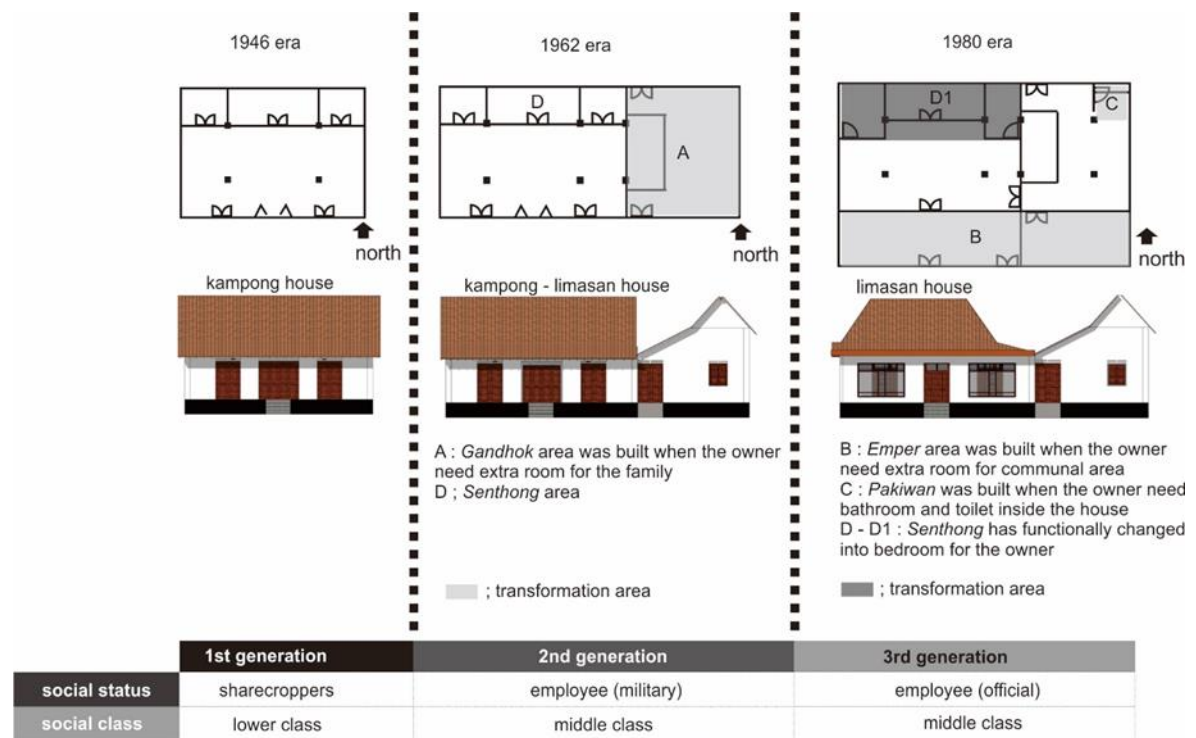
The transformation process occurs as a response to modern need and tourism program. The fourth generation transformed some area in *Gandhok*<sup>2</sup> into tourist accommodation in 2005. The upgrading class of the second generation in the first transformation follow by the upgrading house into the highest type of Javanese houses. *Pendopo Joglo* was built not only became a functional aspect as a public area to connect

<sup>2</sup> Additional building at the side of the Javanese house.

the leader and the villager but also became a symbolic aspect to show the upgrading of the social class. The downgrading class of the heirs in the second and third transformation didn't change the house. This house is still occupied by the heir now. Modernization has been conceived in term of technological advancement and its accumulating effects. The conception of modernization is especially useful in the present instance because it stresses the changes in the way that society is structured and transformed. (Saraswati, 2000). In this case, modernization only affects the functional and material aspect of the traditional house. The type of Joglo house is still being preserved, although the owner didn't become the upper social class anymore. The heir preserves the house to keep the ancestor's legacy. The social change from the old generation to the young generation didn't affect physical transformation but affected in the functional transformation to meet the modern need and lifestyle.

### The transformation process of Case 3 (*Limasan 18*)

*Limasan 18* belongs to a sharecropper in Brayut village and was built in 1946 era. The second generation, who becomes an employee, transformed this house in 1962 as a response to family growth. Economic improvement of the heir was followed by upgrading the typology of the house from *Kampong* type to *Limasan* type in 1980 era. They changed the roof to symbolize the upgrading status. To accommodate the modern lifestyle, an additional function, which is bathroom and toilet, was built at the back area of the house. This house is still being occupied by the heir.



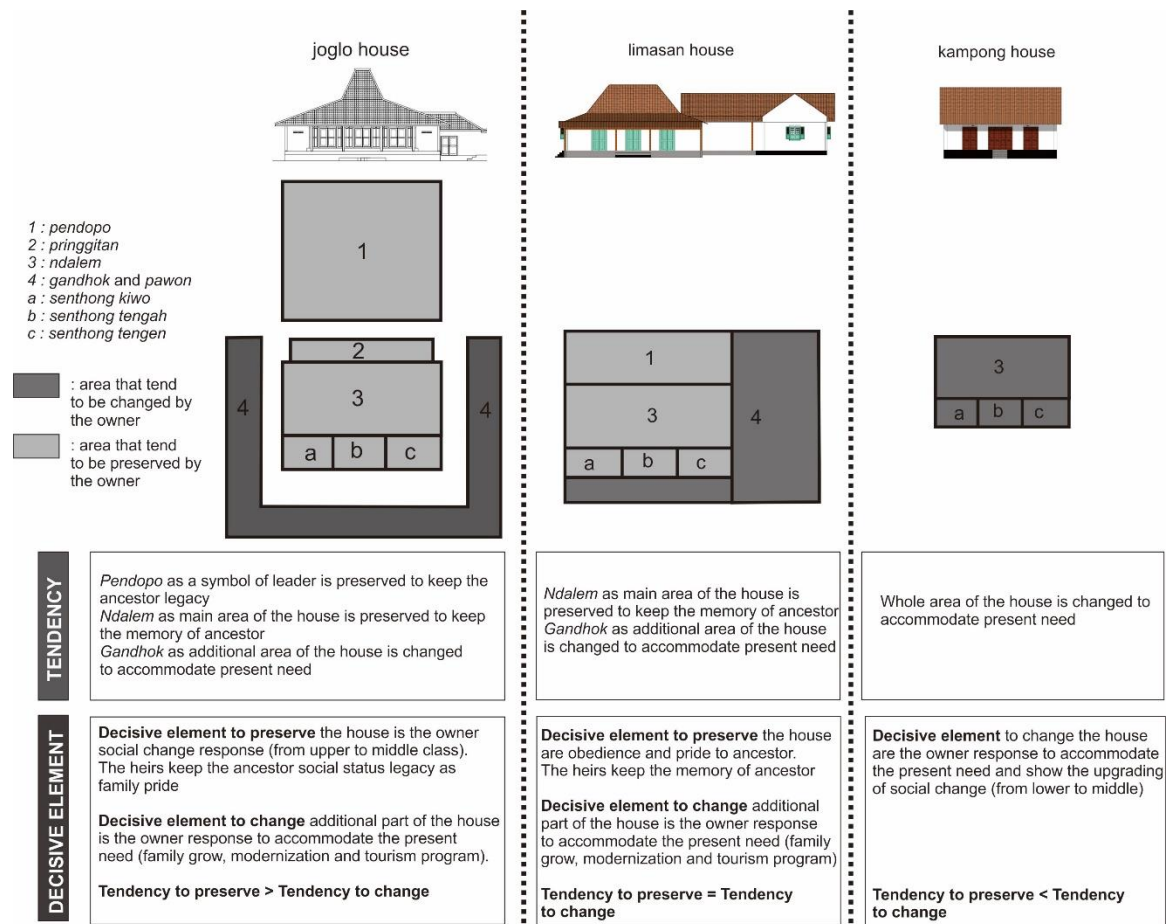
**Fig.4:** Transformation process in case 3 (*Limasan 18*)

Source: author analysis, 2018.

The selection of modern manufacturing materials with a permanent building material is considered more indicative of the socioeconomic status. (Widaningsih and Cahyani, 2015). So, in this case, in the modern era (1980), some part of building material was changed with modern material such as concrete wall and glass. This house was also being enlarged to meet the family's need. The transformation process can be seen in figure 4. The traditional house type is preserved by the heir to keep the memory of their parents. The social change from the old generation to the young generation affect both in the physical and functional transformation but the style of the traditional house was preserved to keep the memory of the family bond.

### Social change in the transformation process of traditional houses in Brayut Village

The Social change in Javanese society began since the new religions occurred in the Java island. (Geertz, 1957). Modernity and lifestyle also affect the traditional society in the rural area. The traditional belief such as ritual ceremony to honor *Dewi Sri* (the fertility Goddess in Javanese society), to plant and harvest the crop, traditional wedding, etc, didn't do anymore especially for the young generation. However, social stratification related to self-consciousness as a part of the tradition as the identity of the rural community still persists as a form of obedience to the ancestor. (Geertz, 1957). This condition is decelerating transformation process in the rural area.



**Fig.5:** Comparison of the decisive element and its tendency to traditional Javanese house transformation in Brayut village.

Source: author analysis, 2018

The development of tourism program in the traditional village also influences the transformation process. Modern society in tourism village preserves their traditional house also to get other income. With this income, the owner of the traditional house can maintain their traditional house independently. So, the traditional house transformation in Brayut village was affected not only by the social change as an internal factor but also by government program of rural tourism as an external factor. The external factor can slow down the transformation process by generating the villagers' awareness to preserve the tradition. Social change tendency of the traditional house's owner influences their response to preserve or to change. Family transition, followed by social change across generation of the house's owner, becomes the decisive element in the architectural transformation of the house. (Charles, Davies and Harris, 2008). This condition explains in figure 5. From the identification, transformation process indicates that the tendency to preserve and change is of the owners. This tendency occurs in the physical and functional element of the traditional house. The tendency of the owner explained as:

a. Tendency to preserve

The tendency to preserve occur in traditional houses that belong to a local leader in the past. The builder's generation came from the upper class in their era. The heir generation who inherit the house tends to preserve the house as their ancestor legacy with pride.

b. Tendency to change

The tendency to change occur in traditional houses that belong to sharecroppers and landlord in the past. The builder's generation came from the middle and lower class. The social economic improvement drives the next generation to change the house. The heir generation who inherit the house tends to change the house to show their new identity. This transformation is still in the traditional concept, to keep the memory of their ancestor.

There is a physical limitation in upgrading the housing typology in the transformation process of the traditional houses in Brayut. The social change didn't break the philosophical view of the society to stay in their limit. It means that even though they able to build the highest type of Javanese house but they didn't do it because of the self-consciousness of their ancestor in rural society. The Joglo house was only built for the leader. The tendency of the heir generation, who experience downgrading of social stratification, is to preserve the house to keep their ancestor legacy with pride. However, the tendency of the heir generation, who experience upgrading of social stratification, is to change the house to show their new position in society.

### Conclusion

This research finds that social change affects traditional houses transformation in physical condition. The downgrading social class from high to middle --- tend to avoid transformation, but the upgrading social class from low to middle or middle to high --- tend to speed up the transformation.

Social statues took its role as the limitation of traditional houses upgrading. Lower class cannot upgrade to high class, the middle class can upgrade to high if only became the local leader. Traditional value is still being maintained in the modern era, especially in Brayut which is close to Yogyakarta. Another aspect in traditional society such as kinship, gender, and inheritance system, is also important to be considered due to its influence in the physical transformation. So, extending research is needed to complete this finding.

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