# Enliven Urban Life Through Third Places With Homelike Experience

Nisrina Muthi Meidiani*, Achmad Hery Fuad

*Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Indonesia, 16424, Indonesia*
*Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Indonesia, 16424, Indonesia*

## Abstract

In an urban life, third place was considered to be the heart of a city, making a little part of a city as a source of comfort and alive. This paper aims to reveal the composing aspects of homelike quality that attracts people to come and stay in a third place. The case study was done in Hema Resto KemangPratama in Bekasi City through defamiliarization (Presscott-Steed, 2013) and interviews. The result shows that the reasons of people coming are because of the interaction and the interiority inside a third place that resemble a typical house. The case study shows that the interiority plays a bigger role in composing the homelike quality in attracting people to come to a third place through the borders from the study of space programming, accessibility, placements and arrangements.

## Keywords

Third place; homelike; places-for-things; borders; urban life.

## 1. Introduction

In the modern era, people tend to finish their work in the most efficient way. They focus only on their everyday tasks—working, studying, waiting for the bus, running errands. These activities are called *necessary activities,* activities that are mostly would happen throughout everyone's days (Gehl, 1987). However, doing only this activity might lead to an individual life, dispersing the lively urban life that takes place in the city through the willingness of the citizen to gather around and simply connect to each other.

Chavis and Wandersmen (1990) said, that the quality of an environment depends on how well the citizens participate. They would watch over their neighborhood, preventing crimes and enhancing the social life. It is understood that the presence of people are playing a great importance in enliven the urban life.

Although Gehl (1987) agreed that people always attract other people, he and Oldenburg (1999) believed that there was something beyond that in which people tend to come for. It is the place. The inviting and easily accessible places encourage people to move from the private into public (Gehl, 1987). According to Oldenburg (1999), that place is called a *third place.*

---

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +62-812-9908-6680
  *E-mail address:*nisrina.muthi@ui.ac.id

## 2. Material and Methods

A *third place* is a runaway place between the *first place*—home—and the *second place*—working places, such as school, office. It has the characters such of being on neutral ground, easily accessed, has regulars, being a leveler and low profile (Oldenburg, 1999).

According to Oldenburg (1999), a *third place* was considered as the heart of a city. It gathered people with or without reasons. They went there only to spend their time, making new *friends-by-set* and doing some conversation. They do not have to be someone else to impress other people, in *third place* it was a privilege to be themselves and still be accepted (Oldenburg, 1999). The feeling of freedom by being oneself without fearing to be judged was the reason why people want to come out of their places, they do not have to serve anyone else nor to be taken advantages of. This feeling was derived from the *homelike* quality that a *third place* possessed. It gives the regulars feeling to be back and to linger in the place (Campbell, 2014; Hickman, 2013; Matsuno, 2012; Oldenburg, 1999).

The theory of *home* was discussed for a long time in architectural field. Oldenburg (1999) stated that based on Heidegger's idea of *home* being the place where we dwell, a place with the quality of *home* is comfortable and has a congenial environment. A place that also has a similar character as a *home* is called *homelike* (Merriam-Webster, 2016) and is identified by the feeling of *at-homeness* as Seamon (1979) said.

*At-homeness* is made out of a *center* inside oneself, a feeling that occurred after being in a specific place regularly it then became part of one's identity (Seamon, 1979). When someone has found his *center,* he is more likely to keep hanging around the area and staying there to spend times. He will remember the object around the place and marking them in their memories, showing the tendency of *places-for-things.* The forming of *center* and *places-for-things* shows that the place is emitting the feeling of *at-homeness*(Seamon, 1979)*.* Thus indicating the *homelike* quality of the place itself.

According to Seamon (1979), there were five characters to satisfy the feeling of *at-homeness.* Those arerootedness, appropriation, regeneration, at-easiness, and warmth. It was shown that the aspects were much of the spatial one. However, based on a research conducted by Campbell (2014), physical choice also gave off the feeling of *homelike.*Both Campbell (2014) and Oldenburg (1999) agreed that avoiding formal appearances and making a place seemed like being taken care of would attract people to come. If the place looked worn but in good condition, it would gave off the feeling of many people have come there and spend their times (Oldenburg, 1999).Gehl (1987) would agree on Oldenburg's (1999) statement, as he said that be it in neighborhood or a building, people and human activities would attract other people.

The finding of composing aspects of the *homelike* quality is shown in Table 1, where the discussion of the literature studies was done. The discussion was to find the aspects that could identify the *at-homeness* of a place as the form of *homelike* quality.

Table 1. Composing Aspects of *Homelike*(source: Author's, In Proceeding of IMC 2016)

| Theorist | Character of Home | Composing Aspects |
|---|---|---|
| Seamon | Rootedness | A repeated experience of objects |
| | Appropriation | Time |
| | Regeneration | Territory |
| | | Security |
| | At-Easeness | Marks |
| | Warmth | Another individual |
| | | Memory of an object |
| | | A taken care well of place |
| Campbell | Warmth | Lighting |

| | Centralized Activity | Placements |
|---|---|---|
| | Free to Interact | |
| Oldenburg | Informality | Decorations |
| | Taken care of | |

The discussion was necessary to know the basic aspects to be focused on the observation of a *third place,* so that it could be known what aspects are related to the study. Table 1 shows that the repeated experience has an important role in making the *home* quality. It indicates that the *homelike* quality is actually happened because of interiority in a place itself. Using the lighting, decorations and placements as the critical point to make the memories experienced by the regulars is very important. They can intrigue the *places-for-things* inside the regulars. For example, the brighter side would be attracting to one regular or the seats in the back area are more comfortable for the large family because they rarely noticeable by other regulars. The study on those placements and program seem to be trivial, but it could build up the territory and marks so that people would feel comfortable around the area—thinking that it was their *place.*

The repeated experiences someone could get from the objects stated above are the one that identify the *center* and *places-for-things* of people and making them feel the familiarity. However, a familiarity could decrease the level of critical attitude that people have on their surroundings (Presscott-Steed, 2013), thus making them oblivious to the ones playing the important role in composing the *homelike* quality that attracts them to come to a place.

The observation was done in Hema Resto in Bekasi City with defamiliarization as a method. Defamiliarization was applied to enhance my sensitivity to the surroundings in order to find several important aspects to form the *homelike* quality in a *third place*. In everyday living people are accustomed to let things just happen in their ways, they somehow take the reasons behind them for granted. Since the *homelike* quality is formed through the familiarity over things, people tend to get comfortable and think that everything is supposed to be so. Ergo a critical way of deducting the composing aspects is needed.
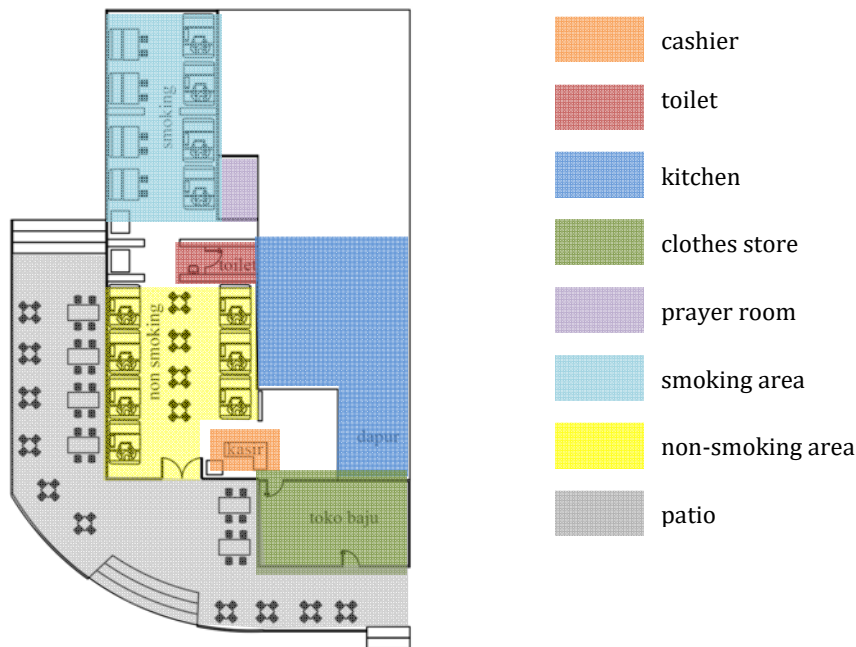


**Figure 1. Hema Resto Floor Plan**

However, defamiliarization is a method based on a personal experience process, so it was important to do some basic talks with a few regulars and waiters as to justify the view. We can see from the Figure 1, that Hema Resto has a three separated area, the patio—outdoor area—is located for the smoking area, it is more public to its surrounding, allowing people on the street to

309

see what the regulars were doing. The indoor ones were also separated. The first room after the entrance is made for the non-smoking area—the intimate one—while the further area is made for the smoking area yet more private than the patio. The place was already established for more than ten years and has become a gathering place since then.

The regulars often hold events in Hema Resto. The relationship between the regulars and the waitress is not just for the business but they are also friends. This proves Oldenburg's (1999) statement, a *friend-by-set* and a leveler where people don't have to worry about their social status. This *third place* usually rent their non-smoking private area for the events such as birthday or school reunion. Even so, because there were borders between the areas, the differences do not affect the regulars in each place.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Seamon (1987) stated that before people could make a *center,* they needed to get to know the place first. It then would establish the feeling of rootedness. When they know the place well, they would not have to feel awkward in the place and could act as they desired. Oldenburg (1999) and Campbell (2014) also mentioned the freedom to interact within the informality in a *third place.* Thus, freedom was an important part in making someone get the feel of *homelike* quality.

Table 2. Composing Aspects of *Homelike* in HemaResto

| Composing Aspects | Hema Resto | *Homelike* Aspects in HemaResto |
|---|---|---|
| A repeated experience of objects | Lighting; Decorations; Parking Area | Placements; Programming |
| Time | No redesign | Design; Flexible borders |
| Territory | Flexible seating pattern | |
| Security | | |
| | One accessible door; Closed area; Cashier as overlooker | Fix borders |
| Marks | Flexible seating pattern; Decorations; Space Programming; Casual shirt | Flexible borders; Placements |
| Another individual | Lighting colors; Decorations; Well taken cared furnitures; Colors; Living room resembled; Waiter-Regulars relationship; No changing furnitures | Placements; Programming; Design; Borders |
| Memory of an object | | |
| A taken care well of place | | |
| Lighting | | |
| Placements | | |
| Decorations | | |

In the case study, the freedom that people possessed is shown through the flexible boundaries as seen in the Table 2. The territory and marks possessed the overall composing aspects such as placements, decorations and lightings.
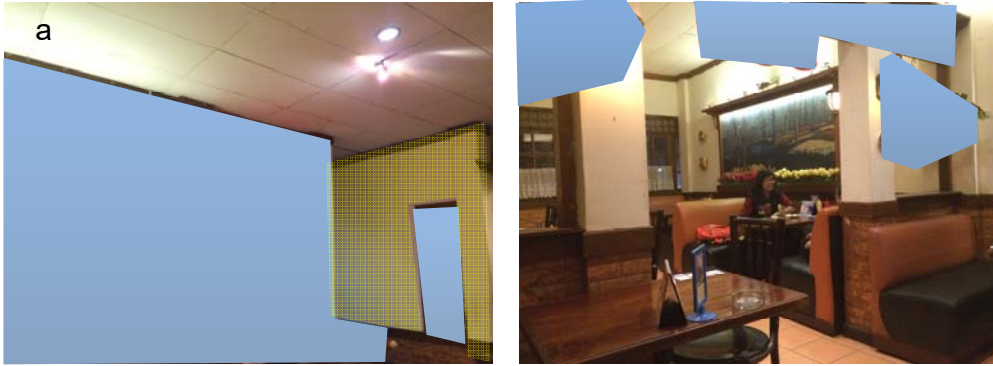
**Figure 2. (a) decorations as boundaries; (b) decorations as room divider**
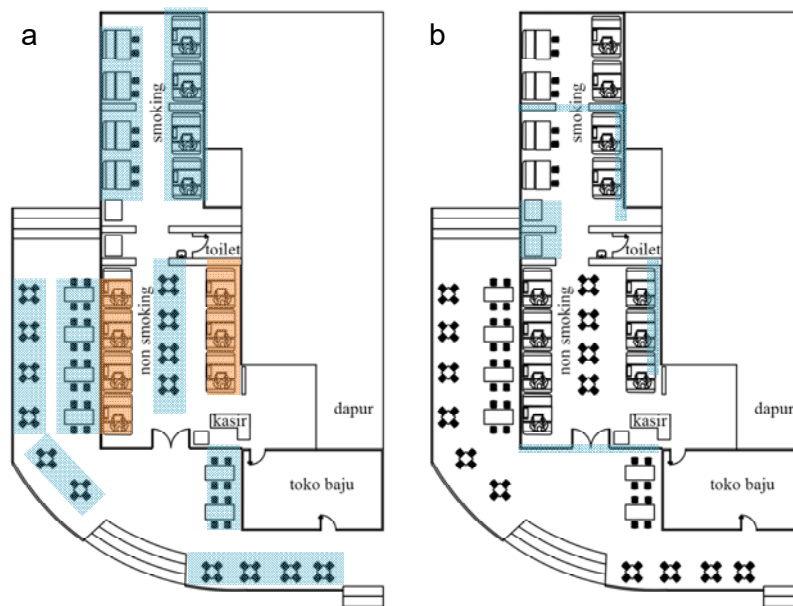


**Figure 3. (a) seating pattern; (b) placementsof decorations**

Figure 3(a) shows that the seating pattern itself creates a boundary between them. Those in orange shades are the ones permanently placed so it would be hard to be moved around. However, those in blue shades could create their own seating pattern. As one of the interviewees stated, that Hema Resto is likely to be a place for a gathering, so it is necessary to make the pattern flexible. By changing the pattern, the space could be more open and less dispersed. In that way, they also can centralize the activity as stated by Campbell in Table 1.

Figure 3(b) is backing up the fact that a placement can be the boundary. As seen on it, the decorations are mostly placed as the marks of each area. The front door decorations separate the outdoor and indoor area, and the decorations inside is separating the smoking and non-smoking area. The choosing of decorations tells the story of different space programming, where each decoration leads to another room with different character.
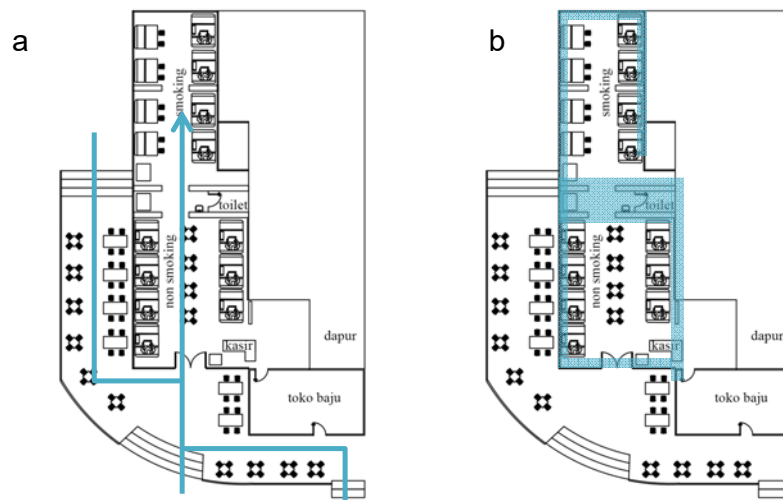
311

Figure 4. (a) accessibility; (b) divider

Figure 4(a) shows the only access the regulars could come inside Hema Resto and also how openly accessible the outdoor area is, while figure 4(b) shows the physical border is made inside the *third place*. While the indoor area is closed with walls, windows and doors, the outdoor one is in a form of patio so the border is blurred with the surroundings, making it connected to the streets in front and behind the place.

Figure 4(a) and 4(b) also show the fact that the interiority has formed the boundary inside the place itself. The lightings and decorations also show that the deeper the area is, the more intimate the color gets. While the outdoor lightings are chosen to be bright, the indoor ones are more of *incandescent* and warm. Showing clearly of how the rooms are divided. It is set to distinguish the public and less public area, where the regulars can choose which place to spend their time.


Figure 5. (a) outdoor lighting; (b) indoor lighting

This study confirms the earlier study (Meidiani, 2016a) that founds object placements can form a *homelike* quality. Those placements then create a boundary in between, showing people which area is able to be interrupted and which is not.

Based on the study of what composed the *homelike* quality, it is clear that those borders that are made out of the interiority are much of the borders of a house. People tend to make their houses have a layer of boundary from less private to more private ones. The layers are shown on how they choose the programming, from the patio area where people can easily accessed, to the non-smoking area that resemble the welcoming to the house like a living room, and up to the smoking area where the closed gatherings are usually held and only those who are invited could come there.

This shows the tendency that people are able to spend their time more in the Hema Resto because it has similar layers of borders like a house does. Their memory of *places-for-things*

312

shows in the choice of place and lead them to choose the *third place* itself. They know where should they go to get more private and less private place inside Hema Resto.

Like living in a house, they have the control over the borders in Hema Resto. They are able to move around the chairs and make their own borders, not only physically but also spatially through the seating pattern. But the initial border that separate the outdoor and indoor is still there, making them feel secure like a house also does.

In conclusion, to make sure that the *third place* is *homelike,* as it is found in the case study, a *third place* should has the layers of borders that resemble a typical house. The flexible borders that can make them separate the public and private, yet can be rearranged to their needs. The flexible border can be made out of the seating pattern, divider, access, or even lighting choices. The forming of the flexible borders is important since it will remind them of the pattern in a typical house, thus making people want to spend their time and make that specific *third place* as their *center.* As stated before, a *center* would make someone to get the feeling of coming back. Thus, it could be the reason for the people to gather around and enliven the urban life around their area.

## Acknowledgment

## References

Campbell, N.M. (2014). Designing Retirement Community Third Places: Attributes Impacting Howe Well Social Spaces are Liked and Used.Juournal of Interior Design, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp.1-14. Wiley/Blackwell.

Chavis, D. M., &Wandersman, A. (1990). Sense of Community in the Urban Environment: A Catalyst for Participation and Community Development. American Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 18, pp.55-56.

Gehl, J. (1987). Life Between Buildings, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, New York.

Hickman, P. (2013). "Third Places" and Social Interaction in Deprived Neighborhoods in Great Britain. Journal of Housing and the Built Environmental, Vol. 28, pp.221-236.

Meidiani, N.M. (2016a). Aspects in Composing the Quality of Homelike in Third Place (Case Study: Hema Resto KemangPratama, Bekasi). In Proceedings of International Multidisciplinary Conference (IMC 2016), Jakarta, Indonesia.

Merriam-Webster. (2016). Homelike. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homelike. Last Accessed 18 April 2016.

Matsuno, H. (2012). Multi-Ethnic Third Place: Community Center in Wilshire Neighborhood of Los Angeles. University of Washington, Architecture. Ann Arbor: ProQuest LLC.

Oldenburg, R. (1999). The Great Good Place, Da Capo Press, Cambridge.

Oldenburg, R. (2001). Celebrating the Third Place, Marlowe&Company, USA.

Seamon, D. (1979). A Geography of the Lifeworld: Movement, Rest and Encounter, Croom Helm, London.