

Kraton Tegal Flats and the Struggle for Equal Housing Rights in Urban Indonesia

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Abstract

This article discusses the role of Kraton Flats in Tegal City as an effort to provide housing rights that are equal to those of the lower class (MBR). In the context of urbanization, limited land, and social inequality, the construction of flats is an alternative solution that not only answers the need for housing, but also strengthens the dimensions of social justice and inclusion of urban space. Through a normative legal approach, this article analyzes how flats function as a state instrument in carrying out the constitutional mandate to provide decent, safe, and affordable housing. Kraton Flats provide basic facilities, collective living spaces, and access to social and economic services, which encourage an increase in the quality of life of its residents. However, its effectiveness is influenced by a number of supporting factors such as policy support, infrastructure quality, and citizen participation. On the other hand, there are also challenges that need to be overcome, including limited maintenance budgets, weak literacy of residents regarding rights and obligations, and social conflicts between residents. Therefore, a community-based management strategy and sustainable policies are

needed so that flats truly represent the right to fair and humane housing amidst urban dynamics.

Keywords

Flats, housing rights, low-income communities, social justice, Tegal City.

A. Introduction

In the midst of the progress of the modern era which brings various changes in human life, the existence of a house as a place to live is no longer just a secondary need, but has developed into one of the essential basic needs for every individual or family. A house is not merely a physical building for shelter from weather and the environment, but it is also an important part in forming someone's social, psychological, and spiritual life. The existence of a decent and comfortable house plays a big role in improving human dignity, status, and quality of life.

Therefore, house ownership should ideally become a basic right that can be accessed by all families without exception. In line with this, the government and various parties continue to push efforts to build housing and settlements sustainably. The goal is to answer the community's need for a safe, decent, and affordable place to live. However, major challenges arise along with the very rapid population growth over time. This significant increase in population is not matched by adequate land availability to support the construction of new housing.¹

Land that is increasingly limited, especially in urban areas and other strategic locations, causes an imbalance between demand and the supply of housing. This limitation of physical space is one of the main obstacles in developing inclusive and equitable housing. Even, under certain conditions, the available land is more often converted for commercial and industrial purposes, thereby narrowing the space for

¹ Ali, Zainuddin, *Metode Penelitian Hukum*, Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2011; Effendi, Alwaahab Agirda Nugraha, and Akhmad Darajati Setiawan. "Legal Certainty on Land Ownership Rights Above Management Rights." *Ikatan Penulis Mahasiswa Hukum Indonesia Law Journal* 3, no. 2 (2023): 194-205.

providing community housing.² As a result, the need for housing remains an urgent and critical issue that must be resolved immediately, considering that the house plays an important role as the foundation in building a prosperous and just community life.

The right to decent housing is one of the basic human rights recognized internationally and in the national legal system. In the context of Indonesia, the right to a decent place to live is stipulated in Article 28H paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that "*Every person has the right to live prosperously physically and spiritually, to have a home, and to obtain a good and healthy living environment as well as the right to obtain health services.*" This right is also guaranteed in various other legal instruments, such as Law Number 1 of 2011 concerning Housing and Settlement Areas and Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights.³

However, in practice, the fulfillment of the right to decent and equitable housing in Indonesia still faces various serious challenges, especially in urban areas. Rapid urbanization, limited land, population increases, and economic inequality cause various forms of inequality in access to housing. Low-Income Communities (MBR) are often the most affected group, because their limited purchasing power makes it difficult for them to access decent formal housing. This pushes them to live in informal settlements or slums that do not meet health and safety standards.

As a response to this problem, the government, through various development programs, is trying to provide more affordable housing alternatives, one of which is through the construction of simple rental apartment buildings (*rusunawa*). Apartment buildings are not only expected to be a technical solution to land limitations, but also become a social instrument in realizing justice in access to housing. Tegal City, as one of the cities in Central Java experiencing population growth and

² *Ibid.*

³ *See* Yuniyanti, Salma Suroyya, and Frency Siska. "Enhancing legal certainty for consumers in apartment unit trade: A comparative analysis of dispute settlement agreements in Indonesia and the Netherlands." *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 5, no. 1 (2024): 333-360; Djanggih, Hardianto, and Salle Salle. "Aspek Hukum Pengadaan Tanah bagi Pelaksanaan Pembangunan untuk Kepentingan Umum." *Pandecta Research Law Journal* 12, no. 2 (2017): 165-172.

high housing needs, has also taken similar steps. The construction of Kraton Flats in Tegal City is part of the government's strategy in meeting the housing needs of the MBR while also overcoming problems in slum areas.

Kraton Flats are interesting to study because their existence directly touches upon the issue of fulfilling the community's basic right to housing. This research will explore how the role of these apartments in responding to housing access inequality challenges, how the management is carried out, and to what extent their existence provides benefits to residents in the short and long term.

The inequality of access to housing has become one of the strategic issues in sustainable urban development. The phenomenon of urbanization which is not matched by adequate spatial planning and housing supply causes the emergence of slum settlements in various cities in Indonesia. Tegal City, as a coastal city with developing economic activities, also faces pressure from increasing housing needs every year. Many residents, especially from the MBR group, are unable to buy or rent houses in decent areas, so they choose to live in riverbanks, along railway tracks, or in settlements without legality.

The central and regional governments have responded to this problem through various people's housing development policies, including the *rusunawa* program intended for the MBR. This program combines technical, social, and economic approaches with the main objective of providing affordable housing while reducing slum areas. Kraton Flats are one concrete form of this policy in Tegal City. However, although the apartment buildings have been physically constructed and put into use, questions still arise regarding how far these apartments truly play a role in guaranteeing equitable housing rights.

Based on the background of the problem above, the following problem formulation can be concluded:

1. How is the role of Kraton Flats Tegal in supporting the fulfillment of equitable housing rights for low-income communities?
2. What are the factors supporting and hindering the effectiveness of Kraton Flats in realizing decent and just housing?

The type of research used in this study is normative legal research (normative jurisprudence). In this study, there are three

approaches used: the statutory approach (statue approach) and the conceptual approach (conceptual approach). In this study, the author uses two kinds of legal materials, primary and secondary.

B. The Role of Kraton Tegal in Supporting the Fulfillment of Equitable Housing Rights for Low-Income Communities

The right to decent housing is part of human rights guaranteed in the 1945 Constitution, particularly Article 28H paragraph (1). The government is responsible for ensuring that every citizen has a decent, safe, and affordable place to live. Kraton Flats Tegal emerged as an implementation of the national housing policy targeting low-income communities (MBR). This program is in line with the objectives of the Medium-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN) which emphasizes the fulfillment of basic community needs. The Tegal City Government, through the Housing and Settlement Areas Department, plays an active role in ensuring the accessibility of this apartment complex. The main priority is given to residents who do not yet own a house and live in dense or slum areas. This shows an affirmative approach in the context of social justice for vulnerable groups. Apartment buildings are not only seen as physical buildings, but also as instruments for fulfilling constitutional rights.

The apartment building model as vertical housing is very relevant to the limited land in urban areas such as Tegal. By optimizing space vertically, Kraton Flats are able to accommodate more residents on limited land. This is an answer to urbanization and pressure on settlements in the city center. More than just a place to live, Kraton Flats are equipped with basic facilities such as sanitation, clean water, and communal areas. The provision of these facilities supports a better quality of life for residents. The presence of green open spaces, children's play areas, and worship rooms adds social value to the housing. All these facilities strengthen the principle that decent housing is not only

measured by walls and roofs, but by its social functionality. Therefore, Kraton Flats function as both a living space and a holistic life space.⁴

Tenant selection is carried out strictly to ensure that the beneficiaries truly come from the MBR group. Verification includes aspects of income, house ownership status, and other socio-economic feasibility. This approach ensures that the program is not misused by unauthorized parties. Thus, the distribution of housing becomes more equitable and precise. The Tegal City Government plays the role of the main filter in this selection process. Transparency and accountability are key to maintaining the integrity of the program. In practice, community involvement is also needed so that supervision of the selection process becomes more participatory. All of this makes rusun a form of measurable and responsible public responsibility.⁵

The geographical location of Kraton Flats in the urban area makes it strategic for the socio-economic mobility of its residents. Access to public transportation, markets, schools, and health facilities becomes an important factor in supporting family welfare. These apartments are not merely a place to stay, but also a starting point for integrating residents into the urban ecosystem. A location connected to economic activities has the potential to increase the income and welfare of residents. In addition, living in rusun expands social networks between residents. Harmonious neighborly life becomes part of improving urban social quality. This integration reflects that rusun is not a form of segregation, but inclusion in urban life. Therefore, the right to housing is inseparable from the right to the city.⁶

This program also supports the transformation of the lifestyle of the community who previously lived in dense or slum areas. Living in apartment buildings teaches norms of cleanliness, orderliness, and high social tolerance. Waste management, corridor cleanliness, and the use of shared spaces become part of collective learning. The government provides rusun managers who are tasked with maintaining order and

⁴ Oktaviani, D., & Putra, A. A. (2022). Vertical Housing and Social Justice in Urban Cities. *Sustainable Spatial Planning Journal*, 10(2), 135–150.

⁵ Farhan, M., & Susanto, B. (2022). Distribution of Decent Housing and Urbanization Challenges. *Housing Policy Journal*, 14(3), 205–219.

⁶ *Ibid.*

providing social guidance periodically. Social activities such as religious study groups, skills training, and even posyandu services are carried out routinely in the rusun environment. This shows that apartment buildings are not only a physical solution, but also an instrument for forming a new, empowered community. These new norms support efforts to realize a disciplined, productive, and inclusive urban society. This change in settlement culture becomes added value from the vertical housing approach.⁷

From a policy perspective, Kraton Flats Tegal is a reflection of state intervention in ensuring the distribution of resources and opportunities. When the market fails to provide affordable housing for the MBR, the state must step in to close that gap. This policy is in line with the rights-based approach, where housing is viewed as a right, not a commodity. By ensuring access for the MBR to quality housing, the government also helps reduce their cost of living. The consequence is that expenditure allocation can be shifted to education, health, and family economic development. This program also reflects the principle of social solidarity among fellow citizens. The state acts as a guarantor, not just a facilitator. Within this framework, Kraton Flats become a manifestation of distributive justice in the housing sector.⁸

On the other hand, Kraton Flats have the potential to be used as a replication model in other areas with similar challenges. The key to its success lies in collaboration between the central and regional governments, as well as community involvement from the planning stage. In addition to technical aspects, it is also important to build an understanding that apartment buildings are not "shelters", but decent and dignified housing. Public education regarding the rusun concept can eliminate negative stigma that sometimes attaches. Equality in the right to housing must be reflected in the quality of buildings, services, and fair management. In this way, urban poor communities do not feel sacrificed by development, but become active subjects of urban

⁷ Kurniawati, L. R. (2023). *Right to the City and Inclusive Housing*. Jakarta: Pustaka Ruang Kota.

⁸ Ningsih, R. D. (2022). Social Change in Apartment Buildings: Case Study of Rusunawa in Central Java. *Urban Sociology Journal*, 7(1), 67–82.

transformation. The role of apartment buildings is important in shaping a new narrative of inclusive and fair development.⁹

In the context of urban spatial planning, apartment buildings also help reduce pressure on green land and urban infrastructure. Previously unregulated slums and slum areas can be relocated to more decent vertical housing. This opens up space for more environmentally friendly and sustainable city planning. In addition, structured rusun management makes it easier for the government to provide public services. Revenue collection, health services, and even education programs become more efficient because residents are organized in one area. With this approach, rusun not only solves social problems, but also supports the effectiveness of urban administration. Kraton Flats Tegal shows that social development and city governance can go hand in hand. This is proof that the right to housing does not contradict efficient urban planning.¹⁰ Overall, the role of Kraton Flats Tegal in supporting equitable housing rights is very significant. This program addresses complex urban challenges through an integrated approach that involves legal, social, economic, and spatial dimensions. Through rusun, the government shows its commitment to social justice and reducing inequality in access to housing. This strategy needs to be adopted by other regions with local context adjustments. However, the sustainability of the program must be maintained through regular evaluation, policy updates, and strengthening of community participation. Apartment buildings are not the final solution, but a stepping stone towards a fairer and more humane housing system. With commitment and cross-sector integration, rusun can become the new face of an equitable and civilized city. Therefore, Kraton Flats deserve to be used as a best practice in rights-based social housing.

C. Factors Supporting and Hindering the Effectiveness of Kraton Flats in Realizing Decent and Just Housing

⁹ Fauzan, I. (2023). *Housing and Urban Planning: Social and Infrastructure Synergy*. Bandung: Urban Insight Publishing.

¹⁰ Andini, A. (2023). *Rights-Based Housing Policy: Legal and Social Economic Perspectives*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada Press.

The effectiveness of Kraton Flats in realizing decent and just housing is determined by various multidimensional factors. One of the main supporting factors is the local government's affirmative policy in providing housing access for low-income communities (MBR). This political commitment is reflected in the allocation of budgets and program priorities in the Tegal City Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMD). This policy support provides legitimacy and sustainability for the rusun program. In addition, synergy between the central and regional governments through the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing strengthens technical coordination and funding. This strong institutional factor creates relatively stable governance. In many cases, the success of social housing programs depends heavily on the continuity of political support across government periods. Therefore, consistent public policies become an important foundation in ensuring the effectiveness of Kraton Flats.¹¹

Another important supporting factor is the design and quality of the physical infrastructure of the rusun itself. Kraton Flats are designed taking into account the basic needs of residents, such as natural lighting, adequate ventilation, and the availability of sanitation facilities. Inclusive design also allows access for people with disabilities. Good construction quality guarantees the safety and comfort of residents in the long term. This distinguishes modern rusun from the dense and slum housing previously occupied by residents. The arrangement of communal spaces and green areas also plays a role in creating a healthy social environment. An organized environment encourages positive social interaction and prevents conflicts between residents. Therefore, the technical aspects of the building become one of the success indicators from the physical and psychosocial aspects.¹²

Active community participation in rusun management becomes an important social supporting factor. Communities involved in resident forums or rusun administrators feel more ownership and responsibility for their environment. This participation includes

¹¹ Ramadhan, D. (2022). People's Housing Policy and the Sustainability of the Rusunawa Program. *Public Administration Journal*, 19(2), 143–158.

¹² Sari, N. K., & Wicaksono, T. (2022). Vertical Housing Design for Urban Poor Communities. *Urban Architecture Journal*, 6(1), 101–117.

managing cleanliness, security, and drafting joint regulations. The presence of a responsive Technical Implementation Unit (UPT) also helps resolve daily problems quickly and fairly. In addition, involving residents in deliberations can strengthen social solidarity and reduce horizontal conflicts. The strong culture of gotong royong (mutual assistance) in Tegal society becomes a very valuable social capital. Community participation not only strengthens the operational effectiveness of rusun, but also creates community-based governance. This is in line with the principles of participatory development in people's housing.¹³

However, there are also a number of inhibiting factors that influence the long-term effectiveness of Kraton Flats. One of the main obstacles is the limited budget for routine maintenance and infrastructure renovation of the rusun. When buildings begin to age, without adequate maintenance, the quality of housing will drop drastically. This has the potential to create a negative impression of rusun and revive the stigma of "poor housing". Budget limitations also cause shared facilities such as elevators, water channels, or public spaces to be neglected. As a result, resident comfort and security decline, and increase the potential for conflicts between residents. Without sustainable fiscal support, long-term decent housing goals are difficult to achieve. Therefore, the aspect of financial sustainability must be a major concern in rusun management.¹⁴

Another inhibiting factor comes from social challenges that arise due to differences in residents' backgrounds. Small conflicts such as noise, differences in lifestyle, and use of shared facilities often cause tension. When there is no mediation or effective conflict resolution system, this situation can get worse and reduce the quality of life. In addition, some residents still bring old behavioral patterns from their previous environment which are not suitable for collective life in rusun. For example, littering or not maintaining corridor cleanliness. Lack of awareness of the importance of joint regulations often becomes a source

¹³ Ismail, M. (2023). *The Role of the Community in Community-Based Apartment Building Management*. Yogyakarta: Reka Cipta Urban.

¹⁴ Nugroho, A. H. (2022). Challenges in Maintaining Rusunawa in Indonesia. *Urban Infrastructure Journal*, 11(3), 220–235.

of social friction. Therefore, continuous education and community guidance are an absolute necessity. Without guidance, collective values cannot develop optimally in the rusun environment.¹⁵

Another constraint is the inequality in the maintenance fee or contribution system. Not all residents have the same financial capacity, so contributions are not evenly distributed. This causes social jealousy and worsens solidarity between residents. In some cases, rusun managers have difficulty collecting monthly contributions used for basic operations. Without sufficient funds, service quality declines and facilities become damaged or neglected. A cross-subsidy system can be a solution, but it requires the right policies to be fair and not trigger resistance. Transparency in fund management is also important to maintain public trust. With a fair and accountable contribution system, the effectiveness of rusun management can be maintained.¹⁶

In addition, the legal status of residents is also a quite crucial issue. Some residents live in rusun without official documents or through informal channels, making it difficult to enforce rules. This unclear housing status hampers efforts at arrangement and the formulation of internal policies. When managers do not have a strong legal basis, disciplinary actions are difficult to carry out. This problem also impacts injustice for residents who enter through official channels. The government needs to improve the digital registration and verification system to be more transparent and efficient. The validity of resident data is important for formulating policies based on real needs. Without legal clarity, the principles of justice and order are difficult to realize in rusun management.¹⁷

Another important factor is the low level of resident literacy regarding their rights and obligations as rusun residents. Many residents do not yet understand the rules for using shared facilities, contribution systems, or complaint mechanisms. This lack of knowledge makes some residents inactive in resident forums and not involved in decision-

¹⁵ Febriyanti, L. & Dewi, A. R. (2023). Social Tension in Collective Housing and Resolution Strategies. *Urban Sociology Journal*, 9(2), 165–180.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Prasetya, Y. (2023). A Fair Contribution System in Rusun Management. *Public Service Management Journal*, 12(4), 274–289.

making. The socialization carried out by managers is sometimes technical and does not touch on deep educational aspects. An educational approach that is communicative and participatory is needed to build collective awareness. Good housing literacy encourages more responsible resident behavior. When residents understand their rights and obligations, conflicts can be reduced and the quality of communal life increases. Therefore, resident education must be an integral part of rusun management.¹⁸

In general, the success of Kraton Flats in realizing decent and just housing is influenced by a combination of structural and cultural factors. Policy support, good design, and active community participation become important pillars of program success. However, obstacles such as funding limitations, social conflicts, and weak resident literacy must also be overcome systematically. Strengthening institutional and community capacity becomes a strategic step in maintaining the quality of rusun. Periodic evaluations of management and internal regulations need to be carried out so that rusun remains adaptive to social dynamics. Innovation in community-based financing and management models is also needed so that program sustainability can be maintained. Kraton Flats are not just about a place to live, but a representation of social justice in housing policy practice. Therefore, supporting factors must be strengthened and inhibiting factors must be managed wisely and sustainably.¹⁹

D. Conclusion

Kraton Flats Tegal plays a strategic role as a state instrument in realizing the fulfillment of equitable housing rights, especially for low-income communities (MBR) who previously faced limitations in accessing decent and affordable housing, by providing adequate basic facilities and an environment integrated into the city's social and economic system. Through an integrative approach that considers spatial, social, and economic aspects, this rusun becomes a concrete

¹⁸ Ayu, P. D. (2022). The Importance of Resident Literacy in Social Housing Governance. *Community Education Journal*, 10(1), 55–69.

¹⁹ Putri, N. A. (2023). *Strategies for Improving the Effectiveness of Community-Based Apartment Buildings*. Jakarta: Urban Development Study Institute.

representation of the constitutional mandate and the principle of social justice in the context of urbanization and pressure on land availability. Kraton Flats also play a role as a form of state intervention which emphasizes not only the physical aspect of providing a place to live, but also the process of community empowerment and the formation of collective living spaces that allow communities to live with dignity, safely, and productively. Therefore, the existence of this rusun is not only a technical solution to the housing backlog problem, but also becomes a symbol of the state's commitment in fighting for equality in accessing fair and sustainable urban space for vulnerable groups.

The effectiveness of Kraton Flats in realizing decent and just housing is influenced by a number of supporting factors, such as the commitment of central and local government policies, the quality of rusun infrastructure design, and the active participation of residents in managing a healthy and inclusive collective environment; these three form a structural and cultural synergy that becomes the foundation of successful social housing management in the face of urbanization pressure. A collaborative approach involving state actors and resident communities has proven capable of creating adaptive governance to the needs of residents and urban social challenges. On the other hand, this effectiveness also faces serious obstacles, such as limited maintenance budgets, social conflicts due to the diversity of resident backgrounds, weak resident literacy regarding rights and obligations in rusun life, and unclear legality of ownership or residents who enter through informal channels; this condition shows that physical construction success does not automatically guarantee long-term social and legal success. Therefore, a community-based management strategy and a more accommodating legal-administrative approach are needed, supported by adequate fiscal sustainability.

The government needs to strengthen social housing policies by allocating budgets sustainably for facility maintenance and resident empowerment in Kraton Flats Tegal. It is also necessary to create an accurate and transparent resident data system so that benefits are targeted correctly and misuse is avoided. In addition, the formation of resident forums and routine counseling about the rights and obligations of residents is very important in creating participatory and just rusun

governance. The government is also advised to continue involving the community in the planning and supervision process, so that the sense of ownership of housing becomes stronger.

For the resident community, collective awareness is needed to maintain cleanliness, order, and build social solidarity in the rusun environment. Active participation in resident forums and contributions to facility maintenance are key to keeping housing comfortable and decent. Residents are also expected to understand their rights and responsibilities, so that they can live side by side harmoniously and support the creation of fair and humane housing. With synergy between the government and the community, Kraton Flats can become a model of successful social housing in other cities.

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