

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the welfare vulnerability experienced by the middle class in Sleman Regency as a result of structural pressures that are often overlooked, even though this group is perceived as stable and well-established and contributes significantly to various sectors. This study aims to analyze structural vulnerability factors, how the middle class maintains and interprets its class status, identify inequalities in the distribution of affirmative policies targeting this group, and the accessibility and forms of exclusion from public policies. This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach involving eleven respondents consisting of middle-class people, academics, local government, and NGOs/NGOs. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, secondary data, and analyzed using Wacquant's middle-class theory and Mackenzie et al.'s vulnerability theory. The results show that the absence of explicit affirmative policies targeting the middle class in Sleman Regency has limited their ability to achieve optimal welfare, while middle-class status is dynamic and constantly negotiated in the relationship between agency and social structure, giving rise to multiple layers of vulnerability due to minimal state intervention. In line with this, there is a differentiation in the level of vulnerability within the middle class, namely the lower middle class is the most vulnerable, the middle middle class is relatively more stable but still exposed to structural shocks, and the upper middle class has stronger adaptive capacity even though it still faces the risk of welfare vulnerability.

Keywords: *Vulnerability, Welfare, Middle Class, Sleman Regency, Affirmative Policy*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis mengenai kerentanan kesejahteraan yang dialami kelas menengah di Kabupaten Sleman sebagai dampak tekanan struktural yang kerap terabaikan meskipun kelompok ini dipersepsikan stabil dan mapan serta berkontribusi signifikan dalam berbagai sektor. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis faktor kerentanan struktural, cara kelas menengah mempertahankan dan memaknai status kelasnya, mengidentifikasi ketimpangan pendistribusian kebijakan afirmatif yang menyasar kelompok ini, dan aksesibilitas maupun bentuk eksklusi dari kebijakan publik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi yang melibatkan sebelas responden yang terdiri dari masyarakat kelas menengah, akademisi, pemerintah daerah, dan NGO/LSM. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara *in-depth interview*, data sekunder, dan dianalisis menggunakan teori kelas menengah milik Wacquant serta kerentanan milik Mackenzie et al.. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiadaan kebijakan afirmatif yang eksplisit menyasar kelas menengah di Kabupaten Sleman terbukti membatasi ruang gerak mereka dalam mencapai kesejahteraan yang optimal, sementara status kelas menengah bersifat dinamis dan terus dinegosiasikan dalam relasi antara agensi dan struktur sosial yang melahirkan kerentanan berlapis akibat minimnya intervensi negara. Sejalan dengan itu, terdapat diferensiasi tingkat kerentanan di internal kelas menengah, yakni *lower middle class* paling rentan, *middle middle class* relatif lebih stabil, tetapi tetap terpapar guncangan struktural, dan *upper middle class* memiliki kapasitas adaptif lebih kuat meskipun tetap menghadapi risiko kerentanan kesejahteraan.

Kata Kunci: Kerentanan, Kesejahteraan, Kelas Menengah, Kabupaten Sleman, Kebijakan Afirmatif