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Original Article

Social Inequality: The Reality of Life for Lower-Middle-Class Communities in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the phenomenon of the reality of the lives of lower-middle class people in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City in various aspects of their lives as lower-middle class people. This study uses a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach to explain the lives of people in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City. The data analysis techniques used are observation and interviews to obtain the research data needed to explain the phenomena that occur in the field. The results of the research obtained in this research can certainly be used as an evaluation for the government and related policy makers to pay more attention to the lives of their people.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia as a developing country cannot be separated from the gap that covers its society in terms of education, economics, health and other aspects which cause differences in access between the lower middle class and the upper middle class. Social inequality is inequality in people's lives in various aspects (Fabela & Khairunnisa, 2024). Previous research conducted by Dewi Nelly Simanuntak, titled "Analysis of Environmental Characteristics of Slum Settlements in Belawan Bahagia Village, Medan Belawan District," aimed to identify the characteristics of slum settlement environments. In contrast, our research focuses on understanding the lived reality of lower-income communities residing in environments that are unsupportive (Simanjuntak, 2022).

Based on the preceding discussion, this article aims to analyze the transformation of livelihoods and the socio-economic vulnerability of the community in Bakan Village following the closure or restriction of illegal gold mining activities. The analysis focuses on shifts in household income sources, the interlinkages between mining and agricultural activities, limited access to alternative employment, and the efforts made by the community to adapt and meet their basic living needs. Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of Chambers and Conway, Scoones, Ellis, and Bebbington, this article seeks to explain how changes in access to livelihood resources relate to the assets and capacities of the community in navigating and responding to such transformations (Bebbington, 1999; Chambers & Conway, 1992; Ellis, 2000; Scoones, 1998). It is hoped that the results of the study will enrich research on changes in people's lives in mining areas and become consideration for stakeholders in formulating steps to handle mining that pay attention to law enforcement, environmental protection, improving skills and expanding alternative livelihood opportunities.

The city of Makassar, as the capital of South Sulawesi Province, serves as a major hub for urbanization and commerce. A high-quality, healthy living environment constitutes the foundation of a nation and must be upheld as a state responsibility. Given that the living environment is the bedrock of any nation, it becomes an obligation for every individual regardless of whether they have successfully met their basic needs to contribute to the realization of general well-being. Such inequality leads to the alienation of individuals, resulting in suboptimal access to education, economic opportunities, and healthcare. This social gap is frequently experienced by the lower-middle class a segment of society characterized by low incomes that hover near the poverty line, where individuals may earn an income but possess minimal savings (Aswilin, 2023). This study focuses on the realities of life for the lower-middle-class community in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City. The residents there face limited access, as they live in a slum area characterized by narrow alleys and passageways conditions that prevent various government and public facilities from reaching the location or operating effectively.

This problem makes the community and environment in the area less than ideal because the place is very densely populated and cramped, making us unable to move freely or carry out activities. If we also look at the environment, it is not clean because rubbish cars cannot enter so the rubbish is handed over and the dirty water near the road causes an unpleasant smell so the place is not ideal for cleaning. High crime rates stemming from a lack of education and economic hardship force people to work exceptionally hard; consequently, children in these areas are compelled by the harsh reality of their circumstances to contribute to earning an income, just to meet daily survival needs. Such conditions clearly highlight a social divide, one that disproportionately affects the lower-middle class a group highly vulnerable to falling into poverty.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method; according to Bogdan and Taylor, a qualitative research method is one that produces descriptive data whether in spoken or written form obtained from the individuals or subjects being observed (Safrudin et al., 2023) a phenomenological approach was employed to explain the phenomena occurring in the field. This research was conducted in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City, with data collected through observation and direct interviews with an informant. There was only one informant in this study; this individual was selected because she is an influential figure in the area and possesses a deeper understanding of the actual lives of the local residents, making her a representative of the community in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City. The data obtained from her served as the primary information and research material used to uncover the realities of life among the lower-middle-class population in the study area.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Slum Settlements: A Reality

Slum settlements in Makassar often emerge as a result of rapid urbanization lacking careful planning. Many impoverished people from rural areas migrate to the city in the hope of finding employment and a better life. In reality, however, many are unable to secure decent jobs, forcing them to build dwellings on illegal land or in areas with poor infrastructure. The origins of this slum area can be traced back to the migration of villagers to the city a process that has persisted to the present day. Many of the residents share kinship ties; it is hypothesized that the first individuals to arrive in the area subsequently brought their relatives from the village, leading to the formation of a marginalized community in that locality.

These slum settlements are characterized by densely packed housing, poor sanitation, and limited access to clean water. Research indicates that poverty is the primary factor driving the emergence of such settlements. The inability of individuals to access fundamental social assets such as productive capital, financial resources, and social networks leaves them marginalized within the process of urban development

Social Inequality in the City of Makassar

Social inequality in Makassar is clearly evident in the disparity in access to basic services between communities living in slum areas and those in more developed parts of the city. Many residents in these slum areas come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, often trapped in a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break. The Tamalate District is one of the areas with the highest concentration of slum settlements in the city. The primary cause of this social gap is closely linked to the population's level of education and skills (Lega & Hartanto, 2023). Many newcomers arrive in the city hoping to improve their lives, but a lack of skills and education makes it difficult for them to compete in the job market. Consequently, they are forced to live in substandard settlements with limited access to basic services. This creates an unhealthy environment that poses significant risks to public health.

Based on the data obtained through field observations and interviews, the researcher can propose a hypothesis a tentative assumption used to predict the outcome of the research (Dewi, 2021), there is indeed a social gap among the lower-to-middle-class population in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City. This gap manifests as unequal access to education, economic opportunities, and healthcare. The high crime rate in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City, suggests a low level of education among the local population. This lack of education may lead individuals to engage in actions that harm others; alternatively, there could be other underlying motives that drive the commission of these crimes. Criminality is a form of norm violation committed consciously, whether out of necessity or otherwise (Putra et al., 2021).

Economically, children in that environment are compelled by reality to work hard to support their families, helping to meet daily living needs and ensure survival. Children who ought to be focusing on their studies and play are instead forced into the role of laborers within their families—a necessity for them to remain in school. Naturally, this situation impacts their education, as they may be unable to pursue their studies as effectively as they otherwise could. They are expected to concentrate and learn well, yet that focus is inevitably divided because they must also work in order to continue their schooling (Edo & Yasin, 2024).

These two aspects are interconnected and mutually influential; therefore, individuals must strive to maximize both so that neither their education nor their essential life needs both in the present and for the future are compromised. As previously noted by the researcher, this situation impacts the well-being of the individuals involved, as they must exert extra dedication to manage all these demands effectively (Aisyah, 2023). The three aspects addressed by the researcher from the introduction through to the discussion are clearly interconnected, with social inequality emerging as the most prominent issue experienced by the residents of Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City. According to information provided by one of the research informants, Ibu Nurjannah, "After school, children here often head to the market to help their parents or acquaintances with sales, for which they receive some form of payment. This is because the primary livelihoods of the local community revolve around trading in the market or operating

bentor (motorized pedicabs). Furthermore, the area is highly vulnerable to theft; the houses are cramped and typically feature two doors, making it easy for thieves to gain access."

Furthermore, the area suffers from a shortage of clean water; due to the high density of housing and the prevalence of narrow alleys and passageways, the municipal water supply fails to reach individual homes, forcing residents to purchase water often at a higher cost than usual. Additionally, the environment is far from ideal, with significant amounts of trash and stagnant water collecting along dead-end streets, creating an unpleasant odor. Such is the reality faced by the lower-middle-class community in Pannampu Village, Tallo District, Makassar City, as described in this study. The social disparities most acutely felt by the local residents pertain to the realms of education, economy, and health. It is the author's hope that the government and relevant policymakers will take action to address these issues, paying greater attention to the community so that its members may lead prosperous, secure, peaceful, and tranquil lives during their time in this transient world.

Factors causing social inequality

Internal Factors

a. Low levels of education among the public present a challenge; while a degree does not strictly determine one's fate, it serves as proof that an individual has engaged with the world of intellect regardless of the actual quality of their learning experience. A low level of education limits access to opportunities that require higher academic credentials, effectively barring individuals from certain types of employment. This remains true even though some organizations or companies prioritize relevant skills over formal academic qualifications (Sinta & Iqbal, 2023).
b. Minimal business capital while the exact amount of capital does not necessarily dictate the ideal operation of a business, having an adequate sum serves as a foundation for acquiring the items required for one's venture. A lack of capital makes it difficult for individuals who also lack specific skills to adjust and adapt to an environment that demands financial investment. Consequently, this becomes a primary challenge for those without specialized expertise, ultimately preventing them from surviving in their business endeavors (Rosyadi, 2021).
c. Short-range social relations and extensive social networks assist us in accessing various resources whether related to education, healthcare, or other aspects of social life. It is often difficult for an individual to secure a particular position without an acquaintance who can help facilitate the process; while this offers no absolute guarantee, it at least provides an opportunity to compete.
d. Limited access to information: A lack of information acts as a factor contributing to social inequality, as it leaves individuals unaware of important job openings. Even if one possesses the necessary foundational skills for a particular field, a lack of information effectively means having no opportunity to secure employment in that area.

External Factors

a. A lack of economic resources and limited livelihood opportunities prevent individuals from securing employment that would adequately meet their daily living needs. This situation gives rise to social inequality, as the number of people seeking work exceeds the demand for

employees by organizations; consequently, those lacking specific skills are left without job opportunities, unable to compete effectively.

b. Minimal development programs this differs from the first external factor. In this second scenario, while many jobs are available, the local population fails to meet the required criteria, leading to their rejection by organizations and, consequently, unemployment. A lack of development programs leaves the community further mired in a state of limited knowledge, preventing them from cultivating the competencies needed to meet the criteria for employment within a company.
c. An exclusive social structure and limited economic access accessible only to the elite or specific groups prevent individuals from the lower and middle classes from competing, even when they possess the capacity to be competitive (Nurul Huda, 2022).
d. A lack of government attention where the government and policymakers remain apathetic toward the lives of the people inevitably has a profound impact on the public. Communities that are not reached by government support face significant hardships, struggling both to access and to utilize public facilities, which are often reserved only for certain privileged groups.

Measures to be taken to minimize social inequality

Social inequality represents an undesirable state within a society, characterized by a lack of parity across various aspects of life. Consequently, solutions are required to address this issue, ensuring that all individuals can lead a decent life and that no one feels marginalized or alienated from the rest of society (Aisyah, 2023). The importance of learning is so that we have the provisions to interpret life and see the circumstances that occur and are expected to be able to adapt to this reality. As social creatures who are basically dependent on other humans, we as fellow creatures labeled human should strengthen each other so that we can cover up existing shortcomings and maximize the potential that we have and not vice versa, namely that there is a gap between poor communities and rich communities.

It is crucial for society to recognize that helping and supporting one another should be an ideal put into practice within our social lives. Such awareness can help minimize gaps or inequalities; by acknowledging that we may be living in inadequate, poor, or deprived conditions, we can work together to foster a better, more ideal way of life. Social awareness is the capacity to understand social issues, which in turn cultivates empathy for others in our community (Wahid, 2023). In conclusion, awareness is essential in social life, as it enables us as fellow human beings to be mindful of our own roles and to collaborate in any endeavor.

A democratic attitude leads us toward a clearer way of life, as we come to understand the true purpose of our existence and gain the ability to compensate for one another's shortcomings whether between individuals or among different groups within society. Through democracy, the aspirations of all members of society can be voiced; we become aware of the challenges and limitations faced by others, as well as the contributions we can offer to ensure that life in society functions as ideally as possible. Ultimately, this fosters solutions that remove barriers to access, ensuring that no one regardless of whether they are wealthy or poor struggles to obtain the resources or opportunities they need (Clarissa, 2023). As well as fostering a social spirit and building good relationships within the community.

As social beings, it is our inherent nature to require the presence of others a state of mutual interdependence. In the reality of life within a society, this allows us to assist one another and collaborate on various endeavors. Such cooperation is essential for fostering a healthy community, ensuring that no individual or group remains constrained by limitations, as we all fundamentally understand that human existence relies on the broader society. Consequently, maintaining positive relationships among members of society is crucial; it enables this vision to be realized effectively and optimally, while minimizing the risks of failure in its practical application (Atmayanti & Malthuf, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Social inequality refers to a condition of disparity in people's lives across various aspects—such as education, the economy, and health which prevents individuals from achieving an ideal standard of living. This is driven by a dichotomy between the poor and the wealthy within the community. In the Pannampu sub-district (Kelurahan) of Tallo District, Makassar, the reality of daily life is stark: children often head straight to the market to work after school; clean water is scarce because the municipal water supply (PDAM) does not reach residents' homes, forcing them to purchase water at higher-than-average prices; crime rates are high, fueled by low levels of education and insecure living environments; and the surroundings are far from ideal, characterized by scattered trash and stagnant, foul-smelling wastewater along the roadsides. Most residents earn their livelihoods through small-scale trade or by operating *bentor* (motorized pedicabs). Social inequality is shaped by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include low levels of education, a lack of business capital, limited social networks, and restricted access to information—all of which hinder residents from improving their employment prospects or pursuing other economic opportunities.

External factors contributing to social inequality include a lack of economic resources, inadequate government development programs, an exclusive social structure, and insufficient government attention toward the public. These factors leave individuals unable to adapt to the harsh realities of social life, ultimately resulting in a state of deprivation. The negative consequences of social inequality include the emergence of social jealousy which can lead to higher crime rates as well as the development of an arrogant attitude among some individuals toward those in lower socioeconomic positions, thereby undermining social harmony. Such dynamics inevitably have repercussions for both the government and the affected communities. Solutions to social inequality that we can implement in our daily lives include continuous learning, mutual empowerment, fostering awareness, adopting a democratic attitude, cultivating a sense of social responsibility, and building positive relationships within the community. God willing, if these practices are applied, they can help minimize the social inequality that exists in society. Regarding the writing of scientific papers, it is ideal to have intensive guidance from a mentor. This ensures that the content is presented effectively and coherently, allowing the research findings or arguments to be articulated in a structured manner and providing viable solutions to the issues being addressed.

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