



Examining social policies in homelessness issues: Insight from Indonesian grassroots

Ahmad Izudin*
UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

* Corresponding Author. E-mail: ahmad.izudin@uin-suka.ac.id

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Abstract: This article seeks social protection for people with homeless problems under Indonesian regional policies. My observation demonstrates although the social policies changed that help us comprehend homelessness concerns containing identification issues, urban bias, poverty validation, the cycle of change, quality of life, and prosecution, an identification issue on homeless remains a dilemma. Social policies should create integrated systems as the most important in urban alleviating poverty, social protection and empowerment, and referral mechanisms. Norms and principles of human dignity must provide to people who are trapped social vulnerable, while social protection should be combined between public and government support.

Keywords Social Policy; Protecting Homeless Issues; Local Shelters; Urban Bias; Standard of Poverty Validation.

Abstrak: Artikel ini mencari sistem perlindungan sosial bagi penyandang masalah gelandangan dan pengemis di bawah kebijakan daerah Indonesia. Pengamatan saya menunjukkan meskipun kebijakan sosial berubah yang membantu untuk memahami masalah tunawisma yang berisi masalah identifikasi, bias perkotaan, validasi kemiskinan, siklus perubahan, kualitas hidup, dan penuntutan, masalah identifikasi gelandangan dan pengemis tetap menjadi dilema. Kebijakan sosial harus menciptakan sistem terpadu sebagai bagian terpenting dalam pengentasan kemiskinan perkotaan, perlindungan dan pemberdayaan sosial, dan mekanisme rujukan secara jelas. Norma dan prinsip kemanusiaan harus diberikan kepada orang-orang yang terjebak oleh kerentanan sosial, dan perlindungan sosial harus dipadukan antara dukungan publik dan pemerintah.

Kata Kunci: Kebijakan sosial, Perlindungan gelandangan, Shelter, Bias Perkotaan, Standar Validasi Kemiskinan

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, homelessness has received considerable attention in social policy research concerning Indonesia as a developing country ((Fateh, 2013; Hall, 2010; Irfan, 2022;



Pawar, 2014). Homeless issues have provided more attention than acknowledging people with social problems divided into two opposite views. On the one side, the homeless are following the housing right (Charkhchi et al., 2018; Chinchilla et al., 2021; Kourachanis, 2019; Minnery & Greenhalgh, 2007; Watts, 2014), on the other side, it has concerned the fulfilment well-being within the job insurances (Jensen, 2017; Makiwane et al., 2010). To respond to these controversies, many countries in developed countries have applied social care within the universalism paradigm incorporating the opportunity for job employment, housing and modelling the welfare provision for vulnerable groups. By identifying the relevant references to these people with homelessness problems, the regulation made to take segmented, residual, particular and limited commitment to social citizenship (Yuda, 2019a). As such, the study on this subject would consider the welfare regime modelling debate, and it has regarded the political culture as a critical aspect of welfare production.

Therefore, the research aims at the social policies for homelessness issues that should be modified to the Indonesian local shelters. The researcher seeks Indonesia's homelessness divided into two reasons. First, the mainstream social policy approach is mainly concerned with public administration, bureaucracy affairs, and project-oriented, partial, and residual methods. Decentralization limits the responsibility of local government to fostering people with social problems is associated (Gibbons et al., 2020b; O'Regan et al., 2021b; Shinn, 2007). Empirically, the project reducing people without a 'permanent place to stay without an identity card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*–KTP) is also low of state commitment and obligation toward the necessity of citizens' social rights (Crane & Warnes, 2010; Daly, 1996; Main, 1996). Second, Indonesia is a Southeast Asian country impacted by its Islamic legacy in the process of writing legislation, although it does legally not an Islamic state (Fossati, 2019; Mohd Nor et al., 2018). These two reasons are adequate to extend understanding of social policy for homeless issues, in which it is stigmatized and rejected in society's lives.

Considering various research of scholars around the globe (Kourachanis, 2019; McCarthy, 2013; Paat et al., 2020), the study re-examines of protection model to cover the basic needs of homeless people. Like most scholars, they emphasize economic, political, and social change as a general factor in the dynamics of social protection for the homeless, not local cultural factors as a means to create a social safety net (Sukenari, 2019). This paper also assesses social protection for the homeless by using the local cultural view as part of a

scheme to reduce this phenomenon. Based on the literature review, this paper is presented as an alternative means to reassess the social policy model for homelessness.

Homelessness Issues: Debating from Existing Studies

Homeless terminology refers to terms of landed property, identity recognition, security, and others (Amore et al., 2011; Habitat, 2000; McCarthy, 2013; Toro, 2007). Furthermore, homelessness in refer to homeless is relatively defined as a person who has temporary housing due to the social problems related to marginal communities recognition (Farrugia & Gerrard, 2016). Hence, the marginal group belongs to homelessness issues classified as a new sub-urban group. In this case, homelessness is defined as a complex problem of experience people who are in the pattern of family relations, friends, parents, and social environment.

Discourses on homelessness issues have often been based in the mainstream of poverty and decent housing, currently, it challenges against violence, discrimination, the liberation of expression, marginalisation, and others (Anderson & Ytrehus, 2012; Makiwane et al., 2010). Considering research conducted in developed countries, such as Portugal, Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States of America (Hanson & Toro, 2020; Minnery & Greenhalgh, 2007; Okamoto, 2007), there are denote to reform of social policies in implementing social service with housing provision. This situation also is in line with (Gaboardi et al., 2018), which indicates that a home is a dream for everyone to build a family, friendship, live together, and dream for the better in the future. Nonetheless, social protection for homeless groups is addressed in rehabilitation programs ((Deluca et al., 2013; O'Regan et al., 2021a). This gap raised a different overview of terms between 'home' and 'homeless', which occurs disparities in various countries.

Some scholars have identified homelessness issues, the idea of expanding religious beliefs, and local cultural influence on the social services provision (Paat et al., 2020; Watts et al., 2018a). In a broader sense, Mackie (2015) defined the homeless communities as representing lower-class society who violate social norms, drugs addict, street children, the victim of sexual abuse, and street violence. Simultaneously, Cherlin (2005) and Sassler (2010) also discovered that the homeless in shelters temporary have been intensively trapped within child neglect cases. Regarding the terms under issues, Speak (2013) has promoted re-conceptualizing to handle homelessness issues divided into five main factors: political tools, non-citizenship, disparity driven by poverty, empowerment access, and

values by cultural barriers. The homeless are sensitively addressed by political tools, which represented a changing form of social policies for better social intervention. Furthermore, Lawreniuk (2021) amended the homeless concerns belong a new paradigm for resolving this issue in Cambodia. Citizenships card are also an unfinished problem for the homeless community, which causes them to be isolated from conditional cash transfer programs (Chinchilla et al., 2021). This circumstance influenced the people with homeless issues trapped on the poverty line and limited to empowerment access (Byrne et al., 2013). Regarding the area under investigation, the homeless phenomenon is not only looking at reforming social protection in government assistance but also it must be categorised to the level of cultural barriers.

In the study area, I showed that people with homeless face various problems in implementing social rehabilitation (Izudin, 2022, p. 121). To date, the government cannot be accurate in statistical data on rates of homelessness. Two case studies from Montgomery et al. (2020) and Watts et al. (2018) initiate in line with Indonesian grassroots circumstances, such as validation of program benefactors, standardization of social protection, limited shelter function, camp assessment, and others. In many cases, the homeless are also trapped in a cycle of change caused by the lack of awareness of becoming ordinary life. It occurs due to the meaning of homelessness terms is still debating in implementing the right of housing provision. People with homeless problems have decided to become beggars and buskers identified as a homeless group in the Indonesian context due to limited job opportunities. Regarding this phenomenon, debating terms in homelessness terminology, need to redefine concerning to refer in local context. As the definition of homelessness terms initially, most of the individuals homeless in developing countries, there are many approaches to give social services that are missing targeted. Social rehabilitation is still limited to address-based services (van Leeuwen, 2018). An illustration described in the previous literature, I found that the expansion of the paradigm in solving the homeless problem is not only in aspects of primary needs such as food, clothing, and cash transfers but also secondary needs, particularly decent housing and job opportunities.

METHODS

My first encounter with homeless groups occurred in 2014 as a postgraduate student through my involvement in wide-ranging policy research for social protection. As I attended

to meet various vulnerable groups, such as transgender, punks, street children, women with vulnerability, and people with disabilities, I noticed a new insight into homelessness issues that encourages me to do something. I efforted belong to search for issues on social protection, and decided to work with employed ethnography study within solving the homeless problems. Although I graduated from the master's program in the last years of 2014, I am going to back the social protection problem that was carried out to attend some of the homeless groups in 2019. I visited the local shelter in Panti Rehabilitasi Sosial Bina Karya Yogyakarta and met the apparatus state at the regional government of Yogyakarta. Since then, the data presented results from observation participatory and interviews with the homeless communities.

During my involvement with the homeless communities, I had little contact with the group for several years. After completing my lecturer career, I always shared social policy with my student at the class meeting and the rising homeless topics. I also asked my student to observe and do short interviews with the homeless group around Yogyakarta. It was carried out to be my assistance research on the meaning of homeless. The setting's background academic and my interest led me to take on this opportunistic research situation. My four-year absence from the case allowed me to approach the setting with a rising fresh perspective. At the same time, my knowledge of homelessness enabled me to gain entrance into the local scene rapidly.

I collected data through the longitudinal participant-observer with homeless groups from 2014 to 2021. Most of the homeless I studied were beggars and buskers from different backgrounds. My relationship with the additional homeless occurs in the Yogyakarta of metropolitan cities. My interaction with these groups was relatively attended to field research conducted in my class meeting to learn the homeless phenomena based on fieldwork. This fieldwork has been carried out in some areas, such as Malioboro, Maguwoharjo junction, and Wirobrajan crossroads traffic lights.

My complementing participant-observer, I went to in-depth interviews on an unstructured pattern with homeless groups—to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I use a pseudonym to describe research informants. While understanding individual behaviour, I choose shelter to promote social rehabilitation as a setting for research intensively, including interaction with managers, social workers, and therapists. I lay on the line for in-depth interviews with the shelter's management to thoroughly research the

location. I also asked to permit informants to record all of the interview transcriptions in each session. Despite the interviews on thematic issues, I have given the informants unstructured discussions to explore their experiences about the meaning of family. I also permitted the informant to show me other information with snowball sampling; however, I realized that they are enough representatives to get accountable data. With various feedbacks of input data from the informant, I constantly checked the research report and searched for based evidence regarding the purpose of this study. Still, I checked the informant's behaviour through participant-observer to understand their views when I directly interviewed them. I avoided my personal subjective view unrelatedly criticism overviews on these phenomena and undoubtedly consulted with my colleagues for getting expert feedback on another different perspective. Hence, all the collecting data processes determine pattern variation in the research theme.

To expand my understanding of the homeless issues, I sought more comprehensive information by interviewing scientific experts. In another way, to comprehend this issue, I also spent a few days in Piyungan, Wirobrajan, Malioboro, and Kotabaru, where many homeless groups are easy into taking field notes and conducting informal interviews. To participate in observer and informal discussions, in addition, I sought various sources from newspapers, the internet, journals, books, and social policy draft. All of that is used in coding the theme to find relevant information that fits the research topic. To the range of data, I formed a brief note about the homelessness topic when I visited the research place on the homeless groups congregated. I can ultimately expand the field note into the PC with such methods. After complimenting commentary on this topic, I generated coding data that suited the issue and particular concern—from the organizing data process to an extracted piece. Throughout this research, I searched the pattern and typology of available data for the research purpose. Results of interviews and field notes, thus transcript to analyse some of the themes, including the meaning of family, referred to the homeless views. Of course, I continuously perfected the topic and issue into research so that much data could be analysed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Homelessness and the dilemma in its identification

One of the most visible differences between developed and developing countries lies in the responses to reducing homelessness. In developed countries, such as the UK, Japan, the US, and some European countries (Kourachanis, 2019; Okamoto, 2007; Paat et al., 2020), homelessness arose as a result of a surge in urbanization. However, the phenomenon has been able to be controlled by housing service mechanisms and preventive measures through homecare services. Meanwhile, Indonesia, which is one of the countries that has the fastest average urban population growth in ASEAN, is facing a dilemma in identifying homelessness. Indonesia's population growth is projected to reach 73.7% in 2025—for the record, Indonesia has a population of 275.77 million as per 2021 (BPS, 2021). Regarding the density and population projections, there are arguments supporting that urban communities have been faced with various problems, such as access to education, health, housing, clean water, and other forms of social services. On the other hand, the structure of rural communities has also changed, as reported by SM in an interview session (15 September 2019). Rural social ties are loosening as the economy becomes more consumption-oriented. This has defeated the social solidarity that has long been an important element of local communities' social safety net (Yuda et al., 2020). Such social change has encouraged the acceleration of rural communities to migrate to urban areas (Bharoto et al., 2019).

Based on findings in the 2019 research location, and based on the recapitulated figures of the Yogyakarta Social Affairs Agency, the homeless population is between 199 and 242 people—this figure is projected to increase every year (*Unpublished observations*). The figure may not be accurate because so far, identifying the homeless has encountered difficulties. This is due to the trouble of views in defining “homeless”. The issue is that not everyone identified by the local government as homeless lives on the streets and has no place to live. Some also confirmed that “they decided to live on the streets just to work for a living” (Interview with TY, 14 June 2019). This situation creates a dilemma in identifying the homeless because for the said group, it is not appropriate if they are categorized as homeless (Amore et al., 2011). The phenomenon of vagrants and beggars is also not necessarily permanent. Many of those who beg for a living do so temporarily. This phenomenon appears to be seasonal; during school holidays, there tends to be a surge of beggars, street children,

and other communities who live on the streets of Yogyakarta City. (Jaya & Izudin, 2022) confirmed that Yogyakarta as a tourist destination center will be an attraction for migrants to make money by begging even though they have to become vagrants temporarily.

This condition is in sync with this study's field data, which shows that most of those living on the streets are migrants from various regions on the island of Java and outside Java. They have pitted their fate to find a source of sustenance in the big city of Yogyakarta. This study also confirmed that those people chose to live on the streets only temporarily. In the case of RW (Transgender, 38 years old) for example, he feels excluded from the family and has no option to work except to become a busker at a traffic signal, and the busking job is only temporary before landing a decent job (Interview, 13 March 2019). Another example is NRU's experience (32-year-old, Broken Home), as he pointed out below,

Since my father passed away and my mother remarried, I have only lived and been nurtured by my *bude* (mother's sister). However, my *bude* kept encouraging me to get a job, so I decided to go to Bekasi to become a construction worker. I didn't have the ability to work in construction, so I finally decided to live in Jakarta as a vagrant. (Interview, April 11, 2019)

All this time, the homelessness phenomenon has always been identified with two conceptual categories, namely being roofless and houseless (Amore et al., 2011). First, the roofless category has always been associated with people who have no place to live and usually sleep in front of a store. They are often captured by authorities. Second, the houseless category is often pinned to people or communities with temporary accommodation, those staying with peers, those staying in shelter accommodation for women, those staying in accommodation for migrant workers, and others. These two categories being the references to define homelessness tend to face contradictions in rehabilitation and protection programs. Based on what I found on the field, authorities only capture vagrants and beggars, but have yet to run any long-term programs to solve the issue. The vagrants and beggars are identified, have their identities recorded, and have their matters intervened on a temporary basis. Undoubtedly, definitions and criteria of being homeless serve no alternatives to solving the case. Uniformization of interventions for homeless communities, as commonly found in the cases I studied, has proven to be less effective in accommodating the needs of the homeless subgroup. For example, they have a house and family in the village, but choose to live in the city of Yogyakarta, as stated in an

interview session with UG (Interview, 17 April 2019). This condition poses a dilemma, while the government tends to formulate social protection policies with uniform programs.

Urban Bias and Poverty Line of Standard Validation

Figure 1 demonstrates that the government should implement anti-poverty policies in line with accurate statistical data. This percentage of the poverty rate must be the basis for procedural intervention for homeless communities. In terms of direct intervention towards vulnerable groups, homeless people are still administratively unreachable by social protection. This condition often result in a failure because the intervention is based data and assumptions that are inaccurate and do not reflect the real situation of the homeless communities. This phenomenon has occurred not only in Indonesia, but also in other countries including developed countries (Edwards, 2021). Another difficulty in reducing homelessness lies in the outreach for accurate data of these communities. This happens because of the homeless' high mobility. On the other hand, poverty surveys tend to use conventional instruments. That is, statistical data is generated from direct surveys of people who settle in a place or have a definite identity card. As stated by AS (informant, 32 years old), we had difficulty recording the data of the homeless communities because they are temporary stayers; some even falsified their identities (Interview, 9 March 2019).

The poverty line is still determined based on the per capita income. The per capita income has been a standard in determining the directions of development and anti-poverty programs. Although statistical figures focus more on primary needs, some such as housing and other facilities are put aside. On the other hand, biased results are found in the surveys of per capita income when the results of urban and rural areas are compared. This is due to the use of the same poverty line on urban and rural populations to compare the income of the homeless. Such figures should not be taken at face value because the income level of the urban homeless is not directly comparable to those of the rural homeless. One of this study's findings shows that some of the urban homeless earn more than the farmhands in rural areas, as reported by ST in an interview session (Interview, 17 February 2019). Nonetheless, the research team is certain that such a finding means that rural farmhands have better well-being than the urban homeless. The figures would be much different the expenses of the urban homeless were taken into account, which would be higher than those of the rural farmhands.

As (Gibbons et al., 2020) argued, such a condition questions the validity of poverty standards that emphasize food needs without considering non-food ones, such as housing and accommodation costs for urban living. In some literature, this is called “urban bias” (Hidayat, 2020), in which poverty reduction programs focus more on the urban poor, as found in cases of the homeless. This reality shows that the urban homeless are more exposed in the media, so the government and nongovernmental institutions are more driven to show their urban-poverty-reduction measures to the public. The urban bias also reflects the assumption that poverty reduction in urban areas is faster than in rural areas.

In addition, other findings of this study show that urban poverty has not been accompanied by a balanced analysis of the access of the urban homeless groups to infrastructure and other public services. In fact, there are many homelessness phenomena that are not covered in home services, as well as the availability of access to health, education, and public services provided by the government. Therefore, statistical data related to the poverty phenomenon has an urban bias and many programs for the homeless have been neglected.

Policy Dilemma: Criminalization, Quality of Life, and Cycle of Change

Social policies have been implemented by the Indonesian government, both at the central and regional levels. Efforts to bring order to the homeless communities also demand attention, considering the various programs being implemented. The Yogyakarta Regional Government as a research case study also issued Local Government Regulation (*Perda*) No. 1 of 2014 on Vagrants and Beggars. However, the homelessness phenomenon has increased in quantity from time to time. Policies to reduce such phenomenon have resulted in new issues in the social protection formulation. Criminalization was chosen by the government as a measure to tackle homelessness. Although improving the quality of life was the government's goal, repressive approaches tend to dominate efforts to achieve the goal.

This study's findings show that violence and various forms of criminalization have not been able to tackle homelessness. Such measures have not addressed the root of homelessness. On the contrary, acts criminalization have escalated new problems faced by the homeless communities (Bharoto et al., 2019). They face increasingly complex problems and tend to be far from solutions to relieve them of street life. I confirmed that homeless people were arrested by authorities on charges of law violations; their criminal records will close their access to services and mentoring programs. This situation is synchronous with

that expressed by DT, who mentioned “negative stigma is always attached to us, so we cannot afford to access rehabilitation programs from the government” (Interview, 16 March 2019). The DT experience is counterproductive to the priority effort of social intervention for homeless communities.

Although the spirit of homeless regulation is an effort to improve the living standards of marginalized people on the streets and public spaces in urban areas, the policy is commonly known as the ‘*quality of life*’ policy. This study’s data shows a clear picture that most homeless people who participated in this study feel hopeless and lack self-esteem. GH (Female, 57 years old), for example, said that it was not her choice to be a beggar. It was the circumstances that made her choose the profession even though she, in fact, felt ashamed and humiliated by it,

‘I was forced to become a beggar because I had nothing else to offer the public—my belongings had been robbed, my husband had filed for divorce, and my life was in shambles’.

Therefore, it is appropriate that all steps taken to handle this homeless communities refer to the principles that prioritize efforts to respect their dignity. It is unfortunate that in reality, repressive approaches tend to be more dominant, as reflected in forms of criminalization in some countries including developed countries.

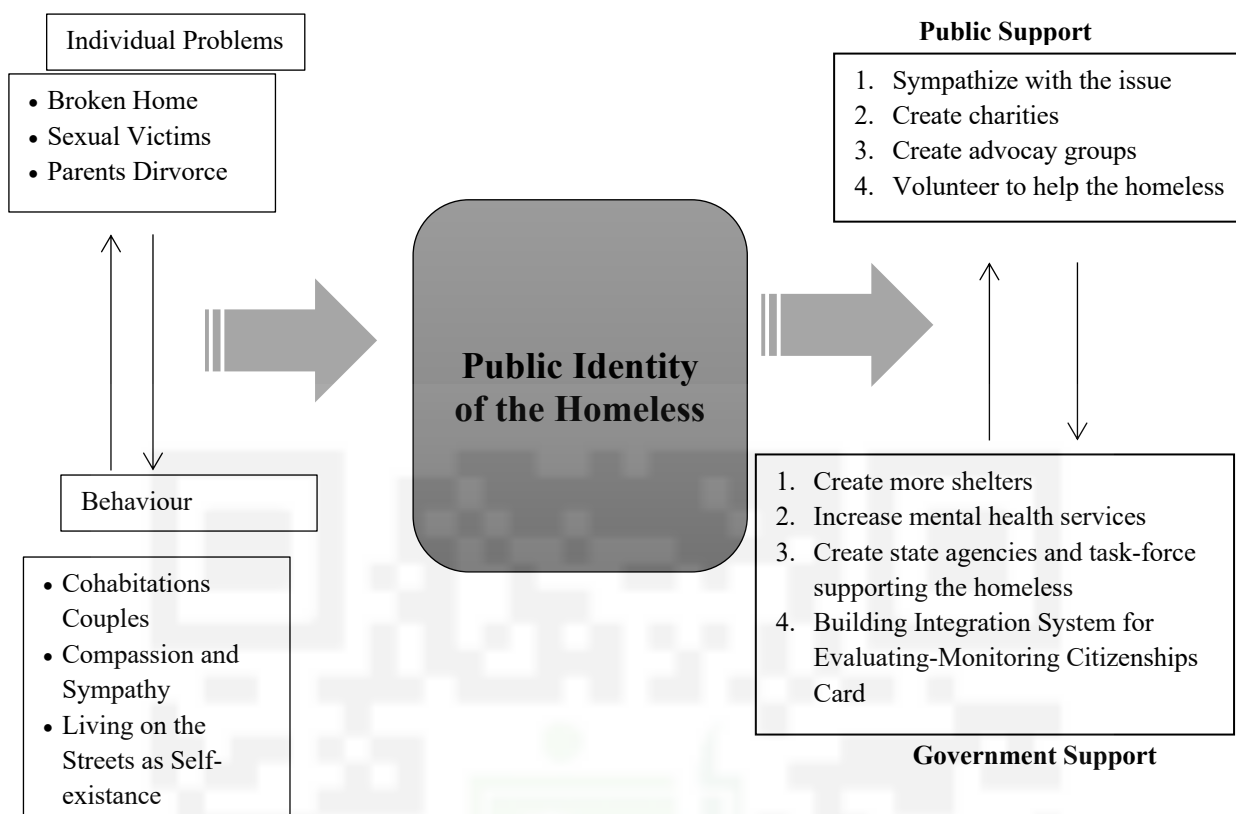
CONCLUSION

In response to social policies for homeless communities, the government has faced various problems in the social protection model, as previously described. These problems demand to further promote changes in rules and policy coverage for the homeless' social protection. This occurred because of the social policy model that tends to be co-opted by the patrimonial legacy system in developing countries, such as Indonesia (Yuda, 2019b). Although the social policy model has undergone positive changes, there has been no perfect implementation of protection for homeless communities. The homelessness phenomenon is a symptom of poverty that causes one to have no choice but to find a source of income other than being homeless. This indicates that anti-poverty programs may have been implemented. However, anti-poverty programs tend to face a dilemma between statistical data and the real situation of the homeless communities, resulting in disparities in the

figures. To date, the Indonesian government has not been able to record the number of homeless people in real terms (van Leeuwen, 2018).

To overcome this problem, the design of a protection model for the homeless requires a new roadmap as well as preventive, persuasive, and rehabilitative measures. As a preventive measure, the government needs to encourage urban poor reduction through social policy rearrangement. As a persuasive measure, social protection systems for the homeless need civil society's support to empower the homeless. On the rehabilitatives aspect, the government must also ensure a definite and integrated case referral system. Such steps are taken to reduce the cycle of change whereby homeless people tend to come in and out of the shelter as a temporary self-protection attempt by the homeless (see Table 1 for the details).

An interesting example in initiating and supporting the improvement of the governance of handling homeless communities emerged from Yogyakarta, as cases were found in other Indonesian grassroots. (Izudin, 2022, p. 190) analyzed that the problem of homelessness arose as an impact of dysfunction of the social safety net, causing difficulties in life. As an effort to enforce justice for the homeless communities, I recommend a review of camp assessment, expansion of shelter functions, and involvement of citizenship (more details in Figure 2). First, the capacities of the shelters available are not sufficiently representative to carry out social rehabilitation programs. Second, the shelters as temporary homes have been unable to select and channel the social functions of the homeless as an effort to educate non-productive residents. Third, the emergence of urban biases and anti-poverty validity standards is a critique the government's failure to uphold justice for urban marginalized groups in the political dimension (Tipple & Speak, 2005). The three problems at least confirm that there are many homeless people who cannot receive the benefits of the Family of Hope program, health and education services, employment opportunities, and the Joint Business Group (KUBE) program. Therefore, many homeless communities are unable to harness the benefits of the National Social Security System (SJSN).



Problems Solving based on Pshycological Treatments

Source: Adaptation from (Edwards, 2021).

Based on homelessness cases and phenomena that have been discussed so far, the government must improve the governance of the homeless handling by adhering to five principles. First, as explained in the policy dilemma section, the spirit of regulations on homelessness seeks to improve the standard of living of marginalized people on the streets, so all measures should necessarily refer to principles that prioritize respect for human dignity. Second, the experience of implementing policies towards homeless communities categorized as community limitations (*powerless*) that are victims of discriminatory policies should be reduced. Sweeping, for example, tends to be applied discriminatively and repressively; some victims were caught merely because of their physical appearance and social strata. Third, policies on homelessness must apply the principle of non-violence; so far, its implementation has tended to prioritize criminalization without touching the actual root of the problem. Fourth, policies must uphold the principles of protection and welfare because the people are basically aware that busking and begging are only temporary while

they are in between jobs. Fifth, the government needs to push for a policy model that applies an 'out of sight, out of mind' approach. This is a mentoring effort that refers to the principles of empowerment and legal certainty. Therefore, mentoring and protection efforts for the homeless need to refer to existing principles and norms.

I expect that these social policy recommendations will increase public confidence in homeless community protection mechanisms. Combining public and government support will form a new system that is more integrative and prioritizes the principles of humanity.

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Notes on contributors

Ahmad Izudin is an assistant professor at the Department of Islamic Community Development, Faculty of Dakwah and Communication, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta – Indonesia. He has taught social policy planning and social advocacy to undergraduate students. His focus of interest is in social policy, social movement, and community development for developing countries. He published in books and international journals.