

Governance of Prostitution through Collective Actions Leading to Uncertain Sustainable Empowerment: Experience from Surabaya, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Organized prostitution has been growing in Surabaya City, and it has contributed to the growth of informal economy, as the main source of income for thousands of local people for decades. Using in-depth interviews with diverse informants, observation, and secondary data, this study shows that despite the advantages, the Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars (MUI) perceives prostitution as an immoral attitude. On behalf of the Moslem community, they insisted the government remove it totally. Although the city government was doubted, with law enforcement supported by coordinated collective actions, it was finally able to close all the prostitution locations in the city in an authoritative manner. Subsequently, the city government provided empowerment programs for improving former procurers and prostitutes who were non-indigenous Surabaya residents, but it was unsuccessful, since it was insufficient and unsustainable to meet their needs, and it did not encompass all of them. Consequently, some of them still carried out their activities in secret, and many others moved out to other locations of the city and still conducted the same activities as prostitutes. The empowerment program for prostitution-impacted indigenous residents of Surabaya seems to be successful but it was in jeopardy since it was totally dependent on the policy made by the current mayor, personally. Therefore, their future might be at risk when she is not in the power anymore.

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INTRODUCTION

This study discusses how Surabaya Municipality in alliance with many other stakeholders removed prostitution since Mayor Tri Rismaharini (TR) got into the power. It asks to which extent Mayor TR

was successful in empowering the target group: indigenous Surabaya residents who were impacted by the prostitution for decades, and non-Surabaya residents, the migrants from the outside regencies. This paper also explores the ways procurers and prostitutes defend themselves from the policy. It is likely that in a democratic polity, the majority (including the government and elite stakeholders) would easily remove the minority (procurers and prostitutes), despite the collective action undertaken.

The purpose of this study is to find out how the Surabaya City government deals with practices of prostitution. The main focus is in the reform era that normatively put forward the ways of democracy and the implications for the future livelihood of local residents who relied for decades on the existence of prostitution in their neighborhood, and that of the prostitutes and procurers after their removal.

This study employs combined collective action and postmodern feminist approaches. The logic of collective action is that if everyone in a group of any size has mutual interests, then they will act collectively to accomplish them; and that the majority in a democratic country tends to be a dominant or powerful group who may tyrannize the minority (powerless group) (Olson, 1971). This theory is appropriate to analyze the relationship between the city governments which may be in alliance with other powerful groups who have similar interests to remove prostitution. This study also uses postmodern feminist

approach because it brings into question the indiscriminating recognition of modernity; it motivates development specialists or planners of the Surabaya City that power is not exerted merely at the level of the state, and it advocates a friendlier, more localized, and specific examination of women's strategies for survival. With its commitment to recognizing struggling global disparities, it provides reasonable areas for generalist analysis (proper when key points need to be created) and attentiveness to complexity and nuance (Bordo, 1990). Since prostitution is a very complex issue, the government's policy of governing prostitution needs to consider diverse interests and values, not only those of governments, elites, dominant religions, and certain groups, but also those of other communities, especially those directly affected by the policy. Any policy action or development plan will fail if it is unable to adequately accommodate the needs and values of the local community (Moser, 1989).

Surabaya City, one of the municipalities in East Java Province with many attractive characteristics, has tempted many people from rural regencies to migrate into the city seeking for jobs. Due to the lack of competence, desperation, and severe competition in the formal employment sectors, many poor and unskilled migrant women enter the realm of prostitution. Since the 1960s, it has been growing gradually in six locations: Dupak Bangunsari, Kremil Tambak Asri, Klakahrejo, Sememi, Dolly, and Jarak; the last two are in the city center.

There are diverse definitions of prostitution. It can be defined as expression of a pure hatred for the female body (Dworkin, 1997); domestic violence against women (Farley, 2008; Shaver, 2005; Weitzer, 2009), rape by payment (Raymond, 1995); sex purchase by men with no respect of women (Hughes, 2005); coercion and domination by procurers (Farley, 2007); sex batterers for women, sex offenders, or rapists (Macleod, Farley, Anderson, & Golding, 2008; Raphael & Shapiro, 2004); inherent exploitation and harm to workers (Weitzer, 2010); a cruel discrimination of the genders (Farley, 2004); and an establishment resulting in fatality and illness of women (Raymond, 2004). These definitions indicate that prostitution should be prohibited. However, this categorical terminology cloaks the empirically verified interactions between workers and customers, which are many-sided and diverse.

Conversely, some other scholars define prostitution as sex working women (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005; Kurtz, Surratt, Inciardi, & Kiley, 2004), escorts, or providers (Weitzer, 2010). Others prefer using the terminology of prostitute customers instead of rapist or sex offenders (Monto, 2004; Monto & McRee, 2005). They tend to recognize that prostitution is a complex issue, caused by many factors, including poverty, homelessness, abuse, low self-esteem, poor educational achievement, and other indicators of deprivation (Magesa, Shimba, & Magombola, 2013; Raphael, 2015; Scoular & O'Neill, 2007; Tugume, 2015). Therefore, law enforcement and

other regulations unrelated to the root of the problem might be insufficient to resolve the problem of prostitution.

Generally, prostitution is a relationship for economic gain: a trade for money or almost anything that has a monetary value (Raphael, 2015). For the purposes of this study, prostitution is defined as the practice of sexual relations between females and males, carried out beyond wedlock, to obtain compensation of money or other material forms for the female.

The Indonesian government perceives that prostitution violates the values of the community at large, mainly women's dignity, family, and children's future. Therefore, prostitution is prohibited and conceived as a social problem. Since it is seen as wrong behavior that disgraces and degrades a woman (Raphael, 2015), this common standpoint has strengthened moral repression through the criminalization of women in prostitution (Phoenix & Oerton, 2005), and paints women as guilty for the social problems they committed, warranting a penalizing response when they continue with their engagement in prostitution (Phoenix & Oerton, 2005).

Surabaya Municipality has issued the Regional Regulation No. 7 of 1999 to prohibit prostitution. The Indonesian government has issued some regulations consisting of Law No. 7 of 1984, Law No. 23 of 2002, and Law No. 21 of 2007; all are intended to ban and control the practices of prostitution. Recently, the Ministry of Social Affairs urged that all regencies

and municipalities in the country should be prostitution-free until 2019. However, tolerance is effective in preventing and managing conflict (Rochon, 1999), so the government sometimes tolerates brothels and women-purchase for commercial and sexual exploitation. It is doing so to prevent conflicts in densely populated urban areas with religious and cultural difference, like the city of Surabaya.

Although the city government issued a local law in 1999, as the basis for fighting prostitution, it is not surprising that the number of prostitutes and brothels increased. Until the end of 2011, the Surabaya government did not consistently implement the regulation because of tolerance. The lack of the state's control and the tolerance for prostitution within local communities contributed to the growth and sustainability of prostitution practices (Cho, Dreher, & Neumayer, 2013).

There have been a range of current studies on prostitution. Some focus on the legal issues (Aronson, 2006; Kohm, 2005; Valor-Segura, Expósito, & Moya, 2011); causes of prostitution (Alobo & Ndifon, 2014; Magesa, Shimba, & Magombola, 2013; Qayyum et al., 2013; Raphael, 2015; Tugume, 2015); or the effect of prostitution on the spread of diseases (Bhunu, Mhlanga, & Mushayabasa, 2014; Lowndes, 2016; Tugume, 2015). Others focus on prostitutes as victims of violence (Beckham & Prohaska, 2012; Carline, 2009; Farley, 2008); the basic improvements of women's lives (Aronson, 2006); the social responses to prostitution (Wahab, 2002); or

the main aspects of the work environment (Weitzer, 2007). Despite these diverse studies, the perceptions provided by earlier theoretical, empirical, and case-study work on prostitution, none address the collective actions made by the city government that cause conflict with the groups of local people who defend prostitution. Nor do they address the local government empowerment programs for the powerless groups.

METHODS

The study is a descriptive qualitative research that uses in-depth interviews, observation, and secondary data. The fieldwork research was undertaken in two 6-month stages (July–December 2016 and January–June 2017). It targeted brothels, street traders, procurers, prostitutes (both current and former), and government officials. The informants were asked about their roles, actions, and attitudes regarding the six prostitution-prone locations in Surabaya (Dupak Bangunsari, Kremil Tambak Asri, Klakahrejo, Sememi, Dolly, and Jarak). This approach was designed to get an insight into their viewpoints and the ways they comprehended the interactions between groups and individuals. This included a triangulation, using several moves towards people from different courses, selected based on purposive and snow-ball sampling techniques. Finally, detailed content analysis of secondary research and local newspapers was combined with interviews with the local people, encompassing former parking attendants, former mediators, leaders of

local associations, heads of neighborhood and citizen associations, former security officials (thugs), and the Islamic Scholars. The validity of the research is maintained using multiple sources of data and information (triangulation of data sources), multiple methods of data collection, and interpretation.

RESULTS

Soon after TR was inaugurated as the Mayor of Surabaya (September 2010), she presented her plan alongside Soekarwo, the Governor of East Java, at the Naval Command Education forum on fast-breaking. During this meeting, the chairman of Islamic Scholar Assembly (MUI) was critical on the slogan: “Budget for the people, prosperous and noble East Java, in the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia”, claiming it was just a political jargon. He assessed that the motto did not meet reality, since East Java was the real nest for the bulk of prostitution. These critiques could mean a demand, an order, or a form of pressure on the government, keeping in mind that the Islamic scholars were influential among stakeholders. Due to the critiques, Governor Soekarwo issued Decree No. 460/16474/031/2010 (30 November 2010) on prevention and control of prostitution and human trafficking. A year later, he issued decree No. 460/031/2011 (October 20, 2011) containing a plea for an East Java freed from immorality. These two decrees were practically an order for Mayor TR to entirely remove prostitution

from Surabaya. Since then, the total closure of all the prostitution-prone locations in the city became her institutional policy agenda.

Finally, the local government implemented the program of prostitution closure for the period of 2012-2014. In 2012, 61 brothels, with 50 procurers and 163 prostitutes, were closed in Dupak Bangunsari. A year later, city authorities shutdown 198 brothels, with 183 procurers and 781 prostitutes at three separate locations (Kremil Tambak Asri, Klakahrejo, and Sememi) followed by the two remaining locations (Dolly and Jarak) in 2014.

During the first 2 years of the process, the procurers and prostitutes tried to resist; however, they were helpless, since they had no sufficient support from other stakeholders, including the heads of neighborhood and citizen associations, local residents, or any military or police personnel. Moreover, most of the procurers and prostitutes were not very well organized; they were migrants from outside Surabaya, with very few links within the local population. Instead, they acted individually, renting indigenous people’s houses to use as brothels. The number of local people renting their houses for brothels gradually decreased, due to the intensive Islamic teaching in these neighborhoods. Finally, the city government was able to close all the brothels within the four locations quite easily.

On the other hand, although the city government claimed that its program was successful, this was not always the case. The closure should have been followed by 3,000,000 rupiah compensation (at

the time, close to 300 USD) per person, yet the attempts were insufficient. The compensation was too late, and many procurers and prostitutes did not even receive it. The city authority urged them to shift toward a legal occupation accepted by the community at large. Indeed, many of them followed and become clothes or food sellers, while others disregarded this encouragement. It also provided short courses to empower former prostitutes, but many of them remained unskilled. Thus, the government's policy on the closure of the four locations still left some problems unresolved comprehensively. Consequently, many of them moved to other locations (Dolly and Jarak) and continued their old occupation as prostitutes or procurers.

These two prostitution-prone locations became well-known and recognized by the general public. As the number of demands increased, the supply of prostitutes increased as well. So, the illegality did not eradicate the market, given the strong demand from the clients and the willingness to supply prostitution services, including those that involve underage girls. Since the closure of the first four locations of prostitution, Dolly and Jarak remained as the only prostitution locations. In 2014, there were 250 procurers managing over 300 brothels with 1028 prostitutes.

The prostitution at Dolly and Jarak was very well organized. Procurers and prostitutes had strong links with the heads of neighborhood, citizen, and local residents' associations, as well as the street vendors, parking attendants, local government

officials, and politicians. Most brothels provided alcoholic beverages, and many people suspected Dolly and Jarak were the main areas of drugs-trafficking as well. This was an issue that might be used to remove prostitution immediately, justifying the actions of the city government, in coordination with police and anti-prostitution interest groups.

Most prostitutes from Dolly and Jarak were migrants from outside Surabaya, mainly from the provinces of West Java, Central Java, and other regencies in East Java. Many of them were young females less than 18 years old. The predominant reason for them becoming involved in prostitution was poverty. Some were even sold by their intimate friends. Many others were willing to find jobs to fulfill the economic needs of their family, or to pay the education costs for their relatives. Moreover, in 2013, the city government detected 127 prostitutes suffering from HIV/AIDS in Dolly and Jarak. A few months later, 91 new cases were found in May 2014, and the total number of individuals with HIV/AIDS reached 218.

Mayor TR was doubted as to whether she would be able to successfully implement the policy in these two locations, keeping in mind that, in 2014, there were many conflicting issues to consider. First, the total prostitution closure in Surabaya would have serious social impact, since the prostitutes might then conduct their activities everywhere beyond the government's control. Secondly, all the other informal economic activities that followed

prostitution (including laundry services, cafés, food courts, karaoke bars, mini stores, street vendors, parking spaces, and intermediary services), and that thousands of people depended on, would also be at risk.

The Mayor even felt that her life would be at risk, since prostitution was backed up by quite diverse stakeholders who attempted to reject any governmental policy to remove prostitution. Also, she was involved in a conflict with the Vice Mayor, with whom she had a misunderstanding regarding the way the prostitutes and the procurers should be treated after removal. She believed that prostitution had a psychological effect on teenagers in the area, following the government's finding that many local high-school students were at risk of getting involved in prostitution. She felt that she had obligation to save the new generations from prostitution.

Nevertheless, the city government encountered difficulties executing its policy in the two locations, mainly because of the strong rejections of influencing procurers and prostitutes, backed up by local association leaders and residents, some of them with strong relations to military and police personnel, city officials, and local politicians. All actors and their activities in this area were interconnected and interdependent. Moreover, at the time the Vice Mayor seemed to side with the Dolly and Jarak communities.

As the city government was in doubt, again the MUI and 53 Muslim mass organizations of East Java, designated as the United Islamic Movement (*Gerakan*

Umat Islam Bersatu), went to the Mayor's office. They included the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Laskar Arif Rahman Hakim (Arif Rahman Hakim Militia), United Madura Forum, Al-Bayyinah, Indonesian Da'i Young Association, Indonesian Muslim Youth, Anti-Deviant Sect Front of East Java, and others. They met the Mayor on May 14, 2014, and strongly urged her to execute the program and entirely shut down the prostitution in Surabaya. They claimed that if the Mayor failed to implement her policy, they were ready to fight against those who opposed the closure of prostitution.

However, TR had also a bad experience with the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), the party nominating her as Surabaya Mayor. She was suppressed by the PDIP and several political parties that attempted to depose her from her position as Mayor at the beginning of her administration in 2011, because she passed a law on advertising that was detrimental to some employers and elites. Only the Islamic party and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) maintained TR as the Mayor of Surabaya.

Despite the conflicting issues and many reasons to consider, the city government finally defined the prostitution in Dolly and Jarak as a public problem and decided to act on it. The definition was based on three main reasons. First, the prostitution in Dolly and Jarak was against the local law no. 7/1999, which prohibits having brothels in private residential objects. Second, prostitution degrades women's dignity. Third, it damaged the morale of the local

youth. The city government then encouraged prostitutes and procurers to change their current occupations to new jobs that are morally accepted.

Finally, the city government consulted many elements within communities, mainly Islamic groups in East Java, local legislators from different political parties, the army, and the police for their support to close the prostitution activities. Due to the supports, the city government was finally able to declare the closure of the locations for prostitution on 18 June 2014, which was the last day that the prostitutes could reside there. At that time, the 2015 Mayoral election was approaching. The closure declaration ceremony was held in the Islamic Center, which was only 300 m away from the areas of prostitutions of Dolly-Jarak. Various government representatives attended the ceremony: the Minister of Social Affairs Salim Al Jufri, the East Java Governor Soekarwo, Surabaya Mayor TR, the Chairman of Regional People's Representative Assembly of Surabaya Macmud, the Chief of East Java Province Police Garrison, Chief of Surabaya City Police, legislators, and heads of government divisions of Surabaya City. The local NGO groups and the Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars (MUI) presented as well. The city government mobilized heads of neighborhood and citizens associations, representatives of prostitutes and procurers, and nearby residents. All were asked to show public support and their desire to remove prostitution. However, most procurers, prostitutes, and brothel owners did not show up.

The declaration for closing prostitution – supported by elites and other stakeholders and coordinated by the city government – was nonetheless rejected by thousands in the Dolly and Jarak communities who protested the actions. Procurers, prostitutes, brothel owners, street vendors, parking attendants, intermediary persons, and some local associations expressed their opposition by collective prayer. Organized in the so-called Prostitution Worker Front, they blocked the access to Dolly and Jarak, and burned the invitation letter to the declaration ceremony they received from the city government.

Despite the official closure, many procurers still operated their sex business stealthily. The city government made an ultimatum that any procurer, prostitute, intermediary, or any other sex worker who disobeys the local government regulation will be cracked down upon. To keep the ultimatum, the city government recruited hundreds of individuals from civil service police units, the police, and the army to secure, oversee, and control the two locations. As the result of both pressure and intimidation from the city government, the prostitution in Dolly and Jarak was finally closed. The city government promised that the closure would be followed by the program of empowerment, not only for the impacted local people but also for the former prostitutes and procurers, who were mostly non-Surabaya residents.

The TR administration empowered local people by providing various courses in tailoring, shoe repairing, and *batik* making. It also developed a center of *batik*

to accommodate local products. The city government recruited hundreds of former informal security staffs in Dolly and Jarak and their adult sons, offering the security position in formal sectors, with monthly salaries of 3,200,000 rupiah, which is considerably higher than the previous 1,500,000 rupiah, without health insurance. Their children were provided with schooling tuition for elementary and high schools. All the impacted families were granted health insurance. However, the sustainability of these measures was uncertain, since eradicating prostitution in Surabaya was exclusively the program of Mayor TR.

The empowerment for the prostitutes and procurers came in the form of compensation. The budget was provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs (total assistance of 7 billion rupiah, awarded to 1,449 prostitutes from Dolly and Jarak) and the East Java Province (amounting to 1.5 billion rupiah for 311 procurers). Each former prostitute and procurer received 5.05 million or 5 million rupiah, respectively. Not all the prostitutes and procurers agreed with the policy. Many of them rejected the compensation, expecting that the prostitution activities would continue. The city government's sole concern was that prostitution was removed entirely. As the city government enforced the local law 7/1999, alongside the implementation of the Governor Decree No. 460/16474/031/ 2010, and Decree No. 460/031/2011, it strictly banned the use of houses and villas for brothels. Following the closure in Dolly and Jarak, many brothels that used to belong to the procurers were

then sold to the city government and used as training and education centers for shoe production and other economic activities, in which thousands of women from Surabaya participated. The communities of Dolly and Jarak continued to be under the supervision of the city government, police, and military.

DISCUSSIONS

Prostitution in Surabaya was related to complex issues (Raymond, 2003) embracing law, economic, moral, politics, and health concerns. Factors, including poverty combined with trafficking and other indicators of deprivation (Magesa, Shimba, & Magombola, 2013; Raphael, 2015; Scoular and O'Neill, 2007; Tugume, 2015), contributed to the growth of prostitution in Surabaya. However, among the many factors contributing to prostitution, 'poverty' has been the most 'significant force behind the growing number of prostitutes' in many developing countries (Li, 1995; Raphael, 2015; Scoular & O'Neill, 2007).

Even girls younger than 18 years of age were prostituted in Dolly and Jarak, thus becoming victims of human trafficking. It was in fact an economic action by traffickers seeking to generate earnings (Salt, 2000; Salt & Stein, 1997). Traffickers sell people for sexual exploitation when market conditions make it profitable (UNODC, 2014). Although prostitution is illegal, most people living in locations of prostitution were tolerant to it, since many of them obtained positive economic impacts from the activities. Thus, it was difficult to stop

the trafficking and sex business, since the people around the area were permissive to prostitution (Aghatise, 2004).

Although some countries have legalized and/or decriminalized systems of prostitution, which includes decriminalizing procurers, brothels, and buyers (Raymond, 2003), the Surabaya city government did not legitimize it. There was still a debate whether prostitution should be “legalized,” as the community of Doly and Jarak expected, or “banned”, as the Islamic community strongly urged (Outshoorn, 2005). Some argued that legitimizing prostitution as work makes the harm of prostitution to women invisible, expands the sex industry, and does not empower the women in prostitution (Raymond, 2003). However, although prostitution is entirely illegal in Surabaya and those involved in prostitution including sex workers, their procurers, and clients will be indicted if they are seized, it does not always remove the market, because there might be a strong demand from the clients and willingness to supply prostitution services (including girls younger than 18 years of age). The equilibrium quantity of prostitution will be a function of supply and demand, just as in any other market (Cho, Dreher, & Neumayer, 2013).

Many stakeholders affiliated with the city government perceived prostitution as a negative behavior with a different tone. The Islamic community took a firm ground that prostitution is indeed a sinful behavior, yet they did not provide any reasonable solution. Others believed that the locations

with prostitution were found to contribute to uncontrollable drugs trafficking and alcohol consumption, so that it created public fear of crime (Aggleton, 1999; Cusick, 2006; Hubbard, 1998). Public fear could justify the city government’s efforts to define prostitution as a public problem.

Importantly, the critiques that came from the Surabaya Islamic Scholars, combined with a reality that most brothels provided alcoholic beverages too, strengthened the Mayor’s position on prostitution as a public problem. The city government decided to remove prostitution, but it did not conduct sufficient analysis of the reasons behind the paid-sex market, prior to defining the problem, a definition that may be quite complex. The emergence of prostitution in Surabaya is a product of various location-based economies. It is closely linked with various economies of agglomeration, synergy, complementarity, and ‘laddering’, whereby an entrant to paid-sex consumption may progress from low-value added products to those of higher-value added (Cameron, 2004). The city government wasn’t well prepared when it comes to dealing with the prostitution. It acted in a hurry, wishing to secure supports from diverse stakeholders, regarding its desire to remove the prostitution. The city government asked not only the Islamic community and government elites for an alliance, but also the prostitutes, procurers, and leaders of citizen associations and neighborhood associations. The mobilization of resources and formation of alliances are key strategic activities to strengthen collective action

(Jenkins & Perrow, 1977). Collective action is the involvement of a group of people, with shared interests, who implement common and voluntary actions to pursue those shared interests (Marshall, 1998; Meinzen-Dick, Di Gregorio, & McCarthy, 2004; Olson, 1971). It refers to the understanding of the role of formal and informal organizations that co-ordinate and support such actions. Collective action may occur spontaneously, while in other cases institutions may play a vital role in creating and coordinating local action for a shared interest (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2004).

The collective action coordinated by the city government was opposed by the coalition of the prostitution community. They created a bonding social capital, a linkage of people with similar objectives (procurers and prostitutes), a bridging social capital, and a linkage of groups with others who have different views (owners of brothels, street vendors, intermediary persons, local associations, parking attendants and workers) that may strengthen the capacity of the group (Pretty, 2003; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Their social capital was represented in the form of protests: collective prayers, blocking the access to Dolly and Jarak, and burning the invitation letter to the closure ceremony. This is informal collective action, where local networks and local groups of people organize and coordinate local action to achieve specific short-term purposes (Ostrom, 2004). The two competing groups were making collective actions, but with different purposes and contradictory to one

another. They were in conflict because of different interests, due to the unacceptable government policy and the pro-prostitution community.

Although most of the communities who were pro-prostitution expected the legalization, the Mayor, and the leaders of Islamic community, who seem to be authoritative, strongly rejected such an idea. There were some reasons why these authoritative individuals were more likely to oppose the legalization of prostitution: (a) conservatism, or a strong regard to the *status quo* combined with an alienation for anything new or different, (b) a tendency to react in a punitive manner against individuals whose behavior disobeys the rules, (c) a great distrust and suspicion of prostitutes' nature, due to the belief that prostitution is inherently sinful and immoral, and (d) anxiety regarding sexual activities, the result of prediction of the authoritarian's intimidated sexual desires (Abrams & Fave, 1976; Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford 1950).

Increasingly, enforcement of the law has taken place as part of partnerships and multi-agency work among the police, local authorities, voluntary sector, and other agencies, but far less frequently the local community (Matthews, 1993).

Moreover, the Surabaya Municipality failed to see poverty as the core problem behind the prostitution, which should be resolved first. It even used local law as an instrument to overcome this problem. There was the common belief that this law enforcement to remove prostitution tended to

be driven by community complaints (Benson & Matthews, 1995; Hubbard, 1998), mainly the Islamic Scholars Board. Prohibiting prostitution also raised tricky “freedom of choice” issues concerning both the potential suppliers and clients of prostitution services (Cho et al., 2013). Moreover, this top-down approach by enforcing local law, pretending to be a “networked” participatory approach since many stakeholders were involved, failed to empathize not only with sex workers’ experience of exclusion, but also the complex routes of involvement in prostitution, based in gender politics, poverty, and criminalization (Scoular & O’Neill, 2007).

The city government promised to empower former procurers and prostitutes. Empowerment means helping people, individually or collectively, to gain control or greater control over their lives. It means providing them, often because they are disadvantaged in some ways, with opportunities and resources to develop knowledge, skills, and motivation to pursue positive change to their personal circumstances and/or to their communities, and being empowered can contribute to people’s physical, psychological, and economic well-being (Murphy & Cauchi, 2006). Unfortunately, the city government did not meet these empowerment requirements. It failed to maintain the former prostitutes’ welfare, since many of them rejected the city government’s compensation and other empowerment measures, since they were insufficient to maintain their future livelihood.

Furthermore, many former prostitutes were not covered by this program, because it was unsustainable. Thus, the value of a welfare state and, hence, governance of prostitution based on social rights and the sharing of collective risk have disappeared. Instead, the government presents only a modest safety net with narrower forms of conditional claim (Scoular & O’Neill, 2007). Whether the former procurers, prostitutes, and any other affected stakeholders would accept the city government’s offer is subject to the agreement between the affected stakeholders and the government; mutual commitments on the part of both the affected stakeholders and the government, if compulsory, compelled them to admire the city government’s concerns to provide welfare for them (White, 1999). Unfortunately, the city government did not make any significant effort to persuade former sex workers to accept the offer. They seemed to be satisfied merely by seeing the city prostitution-free, without any willingness to secure their future after removal.

To maintain the former-prostitutes’ survival and ensure that the empowerment program would be successful, the city government had obligations to provide a reasonable minimum standards of living; a realistic opportunity to be productive, with recognizable other forms of paid work, and a reasonable level of equal opportunities for all members (White, 2000). The satisfaction of the basic needs such as food, habitat, health, education, and security are a basic prerequisite for achieving empowerment

of prostitute women and procurers. The achievement of these objectives is dependent on basic structural transformations of societies. These transformations can only be achieved through good governance and sincere leadership (Fayemi, 2009).

The empowerment of many women has been recognized as a prerequisite for achieving effective and people-focused development and empowerment schemes (Agu, cited in Mukoro, 2013; Owolabi & O'Neill, 2013). However, the current spread of state-funded programs of empowerment must be considered with grave concern since the government's promise to develop women's dignity may be simply effusive (Cruikshank, 1994; Dean, 1999), aimed at the city government popularity to gain public sympathy. However, the relationship between the Mayor's preferences and spending can be understood as a mutual relationship (Hill & Hurley, 1999; Wlezien, 2003).

The timing of the prostitution removal in Surabaya overlapped with the upcoming Mayoral elections in 2015. It is likely that the incumbent Mayor's responsiveness to the wishes of political elites was caused by her power insecurity, or the worry of being overtaken in the next election in Surabaya (Ferejohn, 1986; Hobolt & Klemmensen, 2005). However, the Mayor had an interest in attracting public sympathy to show that she was powerful and capable of closing the practice of prostitution in the City of Surabaya. At the same time, numerous Islamic groups wanting prostitution removal were used by the Mayor to maximize

her political interests. The support of the powerful Islamic groups certainly gave her strength to implement the policy for closing the prostitution in accordance with her platform. However, Muslim social and political movements were pushed not only by political repression for many years under the Suharto's New Order, but also by religious responsibility, that to practice Islam in social interaction is part of Islamic preaching-*dakwah* (Zarkasyi, 2008).

For her interests to be considered legitimate, she used the Surabaya city regulation made in 1999 as the basis for her actions. Even the national regulation prohibiting the practices of prostitution had been in place since 1984. However, the regulations had never been implemented by the Surabaya Mayors before. This is because prostitution, a very profitable business that needs low-skills but is well paid (Edlund & Korn, 2002), was deliberately left as an activity that benefited many parties, including serving as one of the sources of income for some elites. This is the reason why prostitution was hard to eradicate from Surabaya City.

CONCLUSION

The city government realized that prostitution is a complex problem; many issues are related to it and conflicting reasons are required to be carefully considered. However, the city government preferred using law as the basis for defining prostitution as a public problem, instead of finding the root of reasons for people to get involved in prostitution in the first place.

Thus, the prostitution removal actions were a somewhat inappropriate solution, since they did not resolve the essence of the problem. Moreover, the empowerment program for former procurers and prostitutes failed, since it could create dependency, and it did not entirely meet the essence of empowerment.

Since prostitution is a complex problem, it requires collaborative governance, instead of a single action by the city government, which tends to practice an authoritative top-down approach. Although this kind of approach is believed to be efficient in dealing with prostitution, it failed to accommodate all conflicting stakeholders' interests; therefore, the problem was not entirely resolved.

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