

Cultural Da'wah and Public Policy in Urban Prostitution Management: A Case Study of the Closure of Dolly in Surabaya

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Abstract

This study examines a new model for addressing urban prostitution through a collaborative framework that integrates cultural da'wah and public policy, using the closure of Dolly District as a case study. Employing a descriptive qualitative method based on literature analysis and policy documents, the research traces patterns of interaction between culturally grounded religious approaches and governmental interventions. The findings suggest that cultural da'wah plays a significant role in shaping the community's moral awareness, while public policy facilitates the necessary structural changes. Their collaboration generates a more effective mechanism of social transformation compared with administrative closure alone. The study concludes that the synergy between cultural da'wah and public policy offers a new paradigm for tackling prostitution: one that goes beyond shutting down localisation sites by fostering a humane and sustainable social transition. This model has the potential to be replicated in similar urban contexts.

Keywords

Cultural da'wah, Public policy, Urban community empowerment, Surabaya city government

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1. INTRODUCTION

Prostitution is one of the persistent social problems in urban communities, generating intertwined social, criminal, and even economic challenges. Addressing this issue requires more than economic, social, political, or legal measures; it must also involve approaches rooted in da'wah, social welfare, and cultural transformation. Prostitution has long been a recurring issue, especially in urban environments, appearing either openly or discreetly. Several well-known prostitution centres in Indonesia—and even abroad—illustrate this pattern, such as Saritem in Bandung, Sarkem in Yogyakarta, Dolly in Surabaya, and Macao Po in Jakarta, along with numerous others in major cities. In Surabaya, the Dolly complex—one of the oldest prostitution areas dating back to the 1960s—was officially closed by the Mayor of Surabaya on 27 February 2014 (Andriyani & Mar'iyah, 2019).

The process of closing Dolly could not rely solely on public policy, moral–religious arguments, or a narrow legalistic judgment of what is permissible or forbidden. Given the complexity of the problem, such limited approaches would not suffice. The Mayor of Surabaya, therefore, combined policy interventions with securing the approval of religious scholars (ulama), particularly amidst strong public pressure and opposition from groups whose livelihoods were threatened. Despite these challenges, Mayor Tri Rismaharini remained resolute. For her, closing Dolly was not merely a policy



choice but a moral obligation; she believed that allowing it to continue would burden her with accountability in the hereafter.

Resistance to the closure escalated into direct threats. According to various reports, the mayor and her staff received death threats; yet, she held firm in her leadership—embodying the Javanese educational maxim "*ing ngarso sung tuladha*": leading from the front through moral courage and exemplary conduct (Sutriyono & Hidayat, 2023). Her determination encouraged her subordinates to adopt similarly bold positions, motivated by the pursuit of a better city and a safer future for the next generation.

Various forms of resistance emerged. Reporting from *The Jakarta Post* indicated that sex workers, pimps, and residents were determined to oppose the closure of Dolly (I. H. & A. Rohmah, 2014). Residents living near the area feared economic decline, while political actors worried that shutting down Dolly would create new social problems (Study et al., 2018). The challenge, therefore, was not simply eliminating prostitution but also addressing the livelihoods of surrounding communities that depended on the local economic ecosystem. Many residents were not directly involved in prostitution. However, they relied on their visitors and inhabitants for income through food stalls, beverage vendors, laundry services, boarding houses, convenience shops, parking services, motorcycle taxis, and other means (Andriyani & Mar'iyah, 2019). Thus, closure posed serious risks to their economic security.

Approaches to tackling this multidimensional issue cannot rely solely on public policy or legal frameworks, as seen in several European contexts. A study by Norma Hotaling in Sweden revealed valuable insights: educating and "warning" buyers, combined with enforcing penalties against the consumers of prostitution, significantly reduced demand for sexual services. Sweden's strategy—comprising public education targeting men, parallel support services for women as victims, and strict sanctions including mass arrests—proved effective. It also correlated with declines in domestic violence and suicide incidents among couples. The evidence suggests that reducing the demand by holding buyers accountable is a highly effective solution (Health, 2015).

However, gaps remain in the Indonesian scholarly landscape. Existing studies on Dolly largely discuss its economic impact on residents (Andriyani & Mar'iyah, 2019), policy dynamics (Study et al., 2018), or community resistance and prostitution networks (Rohmah, 2014). There is still a lack of research examining the role of cultural da'wah as a mechanism of social transformation during the closure of prostitution sites. No integrative theoretical model has yet been formulated that combines cultural da'wah and public policy in a single framework for addressing prostitution. Furthermore, insufficient attention has been given to the communal economic ecosystem affected by the closure.

Research is yet to explore how cultural da'wah can collaborate with public policy as an integrated model for managing urban prostitution. Da'wah is often narrowly understood as preaching about what is lawful or unlawful, whereas cultural da'wah encompasses moral transformation through education, culture, economic empowerment, social communication, and spiritual reinforcement (Zainuddin, 2021; Hidayat & Fajar, 2022). This study offers a new paradigm by proposing a collaborative model that integrates cultural da'wah, moral and cultural transformation, public policy, structural intervention, empowerment-based approaches, and economic recovery for affected communities. This integrative approach contributes not only to the administrative closure of prostitution sites but also to fostering a more humane and sustainable social transition.

The present research makes several contributions: a new conceptual model for understanding prostitution as a multidimensional phenomenon; an integrative framework for collaboration between cultural da'wah and public policy; practical implications for local governments in designing closure

policies without exacerbating residents' economic vulnerability; and scholarly contributions to the fields of da'wah studies, public policy, and urban sociology. In doing so, this study situates the closure of Dolly as a form of *social ijthad*. This endeavour combines the moral force of society with public policy to comprehensively address prostitution.

2. METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the dynamics surrounding the closure of the Dolly localisation as a complex social phenomenon involving moral dimensions, public policy interventions, community resistance, and practices of cultural da'wah. A descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to explore meanings and social processes as they naturally occur, without numerical reduction, while providing an in-depth contextual understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The data used in this study are entirely secondary, consisting of several categories. First, policy documents, including reports from the Surabaya City Government and official policy papers related to the Dolly closure programme and community empowerment initiatives. Second, journal articles and academic studies, such as research on urban prostitution (Andriyani & Mar'iyah, 2019), studies on social resistance (I. H. & Rohmah, 2014), and works examining cultural da'wah within the context of social change, provide valuable insights. Third, media coverage, which includes national and local news reporting on the closure process, emerging conflicts, threats, and religious narratives involved in decision-making, is also a key factor (The Jakarta Post, Kompas, Tempo). Fourth, documents from organisations and local communities, including reports produced by NGOs, Islamic organisations, and community groups discussing empowerment programmes implemented after the closure of Dolly. The selection of these data sources was based on their relevance, credibility, and direct connection to the research focus.

Data collection techniques included: literature study, particularly on public policy, cultural da'wah, and urban social issues; document study, covering official documents, academic articles, NGO reports, media coverage, and digital archives; and online media tracing, which involved examining recordings of interviews with government officials and religious leaders as well as investigative reports about Dolly. All data collection followed qualitative documentary procedures as suggested by Bowen (1997). Data validity was ensured through source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from government documents, media reports, and academic studies (Patton, n.d.). Method triangulation was employed by combining a literature study, document analysis, and content analysis to ensure information consistency (Tarnoki, 2019). In addition, an audit trail was maintained by documenting the entire data collection process, categorisation stages, and analytical decisions to ensure transparency and accountability in the research process.

Data analysis employed content analysis, a qualitative analytical technique used to interpret the meaning of texts systematically (Krippendorff, 2019). The analysis was carried out in three stages. The first stage involved data reduction, which entailed identifying major themes, including morality, community resistance, public policy, *da'wah bil-hal*, and economic empowerment. The second stage was data display, presenting the findings in the form of relationship patterns, key narratives, and interactions between public policy and cultural da'wah. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and interpreting how public policy and *da'wah bil-hal* work together as strategies for social transformation and moral awareness in the context of Dolly's closure. This method was chosen because

it is effective for interpreting documents, media narratives, and policy texts related to this multidimensional issue.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural da'wah, also known as *da'wah bi al-hal*, refers to preaching carried out through concrete actions that include exemplary conduct and practical deeds which the mad'u can directly experience. This model is widely recognised as an *action approach* (F. A. Rohmah, 2023). Cultural da'wah remains grounded in the fundamental principles of da'wah, namely fostering and presenting awareness. Such awareness encourages individuals to do good, improve themselves, strengthen family relationships, and enhance their surroundings and broader society. This can take the form of tangible charitable actions whose outcomes are concretely felt by the community as the object of da'wah—whether through economic, educational, artistic, or other culturally embedded approaches (A. Syahraeni, 2014).

Cultural da'wah was exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad himself. Upon his arrival in Madinah, the Prophet built the Quba Mosque, uniting the Ansar and Muhajirin (M. Ghali, 2004). These real actions carried out by the Prophet can be categorised as cultural da'wah. In the contemporary context of the Dolly localisation, cultural da'wah is manifested through initiatives such as economic empowerment, education, entrepreneurial skills training, and efforts to erase the negative stigma of a former prostitution district by introducing various public policies and da'wah values centred on community welfare enhancement. Cultural da'wah and *da'wah bil-hal* share similar meanings. However, the term *cultural da'wah* refers to da'wah through non-political or non-power-based approaches—such as economic, educational, and cultural strategies. Meanwhile, *bil-hal* refers more specifically to the technical or operational forms of these actions, whereas cultural da'wah refers to broader non-political approaches. In essence, both concepts overlap and complement one another.

As a leader, the Mayor of Surabaya applied an approach rooted in exemplary conduct. This aligns with the concept of leadership by example found in Kouzes and Posner's framework, which highlights four qualities people expect from a credible leader. First, honesty: a leader is not only truthful but also lives by a clear set of ethical principles and standards. Second, forward-looking: an effective leader possesses a future-oriented vision for the organisation and is capable of linking this vision to the hopes and aspirations of others. When people share in this forward-looking perspective, they are more likely to follow their leader. Third, inspiring: inspiring leaders communicate a sense of enthusiasm regarding the possibilities of the future, accompanied by a consistently positive attitude (Kingsley-Jones, 2016). Fourth, competence: competent individuals typically demonstrate a track record of completing tasks effectively, which builds confidence in their leadership.

In this sense, public policy is not merely the implementation of rules; it must also accommodate diverse interests and perspectives. Exemplary leadership strengthens the legitimacy and acceptance of public policy implementation. In the closure of Dolly, the Mayor of Surabaya applied several models of policy implementation. One of these is policy standards and objectives, whereby clear goals for the closure of the Dolly localisation were established before the policy was enacted. Another is policy resources, in which the government provided various incentives such as economic stimulus, training for former pimps (*mucikari*) and former sex workers, and assistance in business development and capital access. This support was prioritised for residents who were originally from Surabaya, while those from outside the city were assisted in returning to their hometowns. The mayor also implemented interorganizational communication and enforcement activities (Irawaty Igrisa, 2022). This model

involved building intensive communication and engaging multiple stakeholders, enabling the closure process to proceed smoothly and minimising the potential for conflict within the community.

Cultural Da'wah

The mayor implemented several measures to mitigate the negative effects of closing the Dolly localization. These steps and policies included, first, conducting socialisation efforts to inform the community that having a prostitution area in the middle of a residential neighbourhood could have harmful effects on children and families. This can be considered a form of *da'wah bil-lisan*. Raising awareness is essential for behavioural change, and in Islamic teachings, behaviour is more easily transformed when individuals possess awareness of the moral significance of an action. Second, the mayor coordinated with the Regional Leadership Coordination Forum (Forpimda) regarding the steps required for the closure. Third, she provided an example to her subordinates when they felt hesitant. Tri Risma stated that she herself would stand at the front, holding a baton, and would personally go to close the localisation area. In leadership theory, leaders are expected to demonstrate exemplary conduct, provide examples, and make sacrifices—not merely issue commands without being willing to sacrifice themselves.

Fourth, she conveyed a message to her family, saying: "If tomorrow, during the closure process, I die, do not look for me and do not blame anyone, because I consider it martyrdom." This reflects a form of persuasive da'wah communication addressed to her family and to those who heard her testimony, encouraging them to join in supporting the closure of Dolly. As a leader, courage and sacrifice must be shown as a moral responsibility. This represents public leadership by example, in line with leadership theory, which emphasizes that a leader must display personal sacrifice and be the first to set an example (Sutriyono & Hidayat, 2023).

Fifth, with her authority as the Mayor of Surabaya, Tri Risma was able to allocate municipal funds (APBD) to ensure the success of the Dolly closure. Among the measures taken were: purchasing prostitution-related guesthouses, with approximately 27 billion rupiah used for these acquisitions; providing compensation to around 1,400 former sex workers amounting to five million rupiah each, encouraging them to leave prostitution and offering them skills training or assistance in returning to their hometowns; providing compensation to brothel owners or pimps of around five million rupiah, alongside training opportunities; recruiting parking attendants, cigarette vendors, and local informal workers into the municipal Civil Protection Unit (Linmas); providing free education scholarships for affected children; and opening training programmes in batik-making, sandal-making, tempe production, and other crafts, with assistance in marketing their products to hotels or in exhibitions organised by the Surabaya City Government. Sixth, she initiated efforts to beautify the kampung by constructing children's playgrounds, an English learning centre, and a training hall. Gradually, residents who initially opposed and resisted the closure began to participate in the training programmes, and many have now become successful entrepreneurs—for example, the "Bang Jarwo" tempe business (Kompas, n.d.).

In the analysis of public policy, according to Dunn, public problems are never neutral; perceptions, values, and interests shape them. In the Dolly case, the problem formulation was not as simple as stating "prostitution is forbidden or illegal." Instead, it involved various categories of issues—moral, economic, political, spatial, and related to stigma. Dunn emphasises that policy must predict the consequences of action and inaction (William N. Dunn, 2017). Thus, anticipation was needed to ensure

that the closure of Dolly would not lead to greater negative impacts. Consequently, the government incorporated cultural da'wah and economic empowerment as strategies to minimise these risks.

Dunn teaches that the best solutions must be evaluated based on criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. In the Dolly case, the government concluded that repressing prostitution alone would not be effective unless accompanied by tangible solutions, particularly addressing economic needs and removing stigma from individuals and their environment (William N. Dunn, 2017). A purely moral approach is insufficient to transform deeply entrenched economic structures.

The core economic problem in Dolly was the community's dependence on the nightlife economy. Many operated food stalls, parking services, motorcycle taxis and pedicabs, laundry services, shops, and other businesses. Some residents even rented out their houses for illicit activities. This dependency meant that when the localisation was closed, their livelihoods were severely affected. Therefore, in the Dolly closure strategy, the government also considered how the community could continue to survive economically even after Dolly ceased operations (TV, 2023).

From a social perspective, Dolly was burdened by profound negative stigma. A prostitution localisation is considered immoral by all religions, yet Dolly had become infamous nationally. In earlier years, a satirical phrase circulated: "You have not been to Surabaya if you have not been to Dolly." While Dolly operated, the social environment was not conducive: the area was associated with trafficking, alcohol consumption, women wearing revealing clothing, the sale of illegal drugs, and other deviant activities. Residents, especially youth, were exposed to these scenes daily, leading some to imitate harmful behaviours—drinking alcohol, experimenting with drugs, engaging in child prostitution, and trafficking (Kompas, n.d.).

From a cultural perspective, prostitution localisations do not align with Indonesian local wisdom. Noble character, modest appearance, and refined manners are hallmarks of Indonesian culture. By contrast, prostitution areas normalise provocative clothing and intoxicated individuals shouting in the streets. Children living in these neighbourhoods were regularly exposed to inappropriate scenes. Such conditions affected their development in Kelurahan Putat Jaya, Kecamatan Sawahan. There were even alarming findings showing children engaging in inappropriate behaviour—imitating sexual acts, consuming alcohol, trying drugs, and becoming victims of trafficking (Kompas, n.d.).

The approach of raising awareness—conveying messages and narratives wrapped in religious, social, humanitarian, educational, and cultural values—became an essential component of cultural da'wah. Support from religious leaders and community figures played a significant role, particularly in inspiring individuals, families, and neighbourhoods to do good. Human awareness—explained through philosophy, psychology, social psychology, and history—shows that humans equipped with intellect and conscience continuously strive to improve themselves, others, and their environment, both physically and socially. Many scholars emphasize the importance of critical and reflective awareness in encouraging participation and collective action to improve economic, social, environmental, educational, and other conditions that affect well-being, equality, justice, and public well-being.

Awareness is needed to motivate communities to be courageous, to rise, and to address their situation, striving to improve their fate and well-being. Awareness motivates individuals and communities to pursue change—reflecting the Qur'anic principle that God will not change the condition of a people unless they themselves are willing to change.

Dunn stresses the importance of monitoring to ensure that policies are implemented as planned (William N. Dunn, 2017). In the Dolly case, implementation took place through Structural (state)

approaches, including official closure, removal of prostitution-related symbols, provision of business capital assistance, support for MSMEs through the Social Affairs Office, Cooperative Office, and DP5A, and law enforcement monitoring of underground prostitution activities. On the other hand, cultural (civil society) approaches include religious gatherings, spiritual counseling, *da'wah bil-hāl* to foster internal moral awareness rather than coercion, trauma healing for victims of exploitation, and strengthening family values. This collaboration between public policy and cultural da'wah constitutes a unique, modern, and humanistic model of policy implementation.

Post-Closure Community Empowerment

Providing capabilities to the community enables them to develop hope for rebuilding their lives, especially in terms of economic sustainability, after leaving the businesses that had long supported the prostitution economy. The community has become optimistic about the new creative economic ventures it has initiated. Counselling and training offered by the Surabaya City Government opened their eyes to the realisation that starting a business without relying on the local prostitution was not an impossible endeavour. There are now approximately twenty micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) under the guidance of the Surabaya City Government, and this number continues to grow. These MSMEs now maintain quality control, enabling them to compete effectively at both national and international levels. Their products continue to be promoted by the Surabaya City Government in various events and public forums.

The government also provided public facilities for community sports in the Dolly area, such as playgrounds and futsal fields. These playgrounds are equipped with slides, seesaws, and other recreational structures, located on sites that were once brothel buildings. The presence of these playgrounds and futsal fields gradually strengthened the image of Dolly as a child-friendly neighbourhood. In addition, a public library and community learning centre with a substantial collection were established. Various positive events have also been held in Dolly, including the inauguration of Dolly as the *Sentra Batu Akik* (Agate Stone Centre), the *Story-Rich Tourism Village*, the Dolly Mural Village with mural-painting activities attended by Mayor Tri Rismaharini, the *Anti-Hoax and Anti-Drugs Movement*, and the *Dolly Saiki Fest*, alongside the *Night Run* event, which invited international athletes to run at night through the Dolly area. Community life has transformed from a bleak existence into a far better one, with residents experiencing significant economic and social improvements (Ode Dedy Lion, Feky Manuputty, 2021).

Despite these developments, resistance from groups opposing the closure did occur—particularly from sex workers who had worked in Dolly for many years, pimps, brothel owners, nearby residents concerned about losing their livelihoods and the deterioration of their economic situation, as well as opposing politicians. However, through cultural da'wah and public policy measures—such as compensation for guesthouse owners, business capital for pimps wishing to transition to new livelihoods, training and mentoring for sex workers, dialogue with members of the city council, consultation with religious scholars, and training and capital support for affected residents—the government sought to address these issues. Narratives of da'wah were also used to raise awareness about the dangers of prostitution for children, adolescents, and the broader community.

Most sex workers were not Surabayans, but migrants from outside the city (Wahyuni et al., 2014). Their objections were expressed through demonstrations, death threats against the mayor, burning of compensation letters, and appeals to members of parliament—efforts made to maintain the existence of Dolly. However, public policy requiring the closure could no longer be negotiated. It had to be executed

promptly in light of the severe social impacts, including rising HIV cases, drug misuse, and moral degradation among children who had become familiar with prostitution from an early age (Wahyu Wibowo, Brodjol Sutijo Supri Ulama, Sri Pingit Wulandari, 2018).

The public policy of the Surabaya City Government, combined with cultural da'wah, sought to raise community awareness of the dangers and social impacts of prostitution through religious messages, moral education, and the importance of creating a healthy environment for children's development. Structural and economic empowerment efforts were also integrated, including entrepreneurship training, business capital provision, market access assistance, and efforts to rebuild the mentality and confidence of former sex workers, helping them return to dignified livelihoods based on lawful income and improved moral, psychological, and social well-being. The integration of public policy and cultural da'wah demonstrated significant relevance in addressing complex social problems, as shown in the closure of the Dolly localisation. This collaboration enabled the closure process to proceed more smoothly, with minimal social unrest and without triggering dangerous horizontal conflict. In other words, integrating these two approaches created a humanistic, preventive, and behaviour-change-oriented social transition model.

This approach has the potential to become a role model for managing various other social pathologies—such as prostitution, student brawls, gang violence, and community-based crime—because it positions public policy not merely as a repressive tool but as a transformational instrument aligned with humanitarian values, moral consciousness, and economic support. Public policy alone often succeeds only in removing the physical site, not the underlying problem. Cultural da'wah strengthens moral reconstruction, mentality, and economic capability at both the individual and community levels. The synergy between the two produces solutions that not only resolve technical issues but also transform the social structures that had sustained prostitution.

A Dunn-based analysis shows that the success of the Dolly closure did not occur spontaneously; rather, it resulted from a series of highly systematic policy processes: accurately defining prostitution as a multidimensional problem; realistically predicting economic, social, and moral risks; evaluating alternative solutions and concluding the need for closure, empowerment, and cultural da'wah; implementing the policy with strong social and religious monitoring; and conducting continuous evaluation. The synergy between government, religious leaders, civil society, and cultural da'wah makes this case an example of value-based public policy success.

Nevertheless, this study leaves room for critical reflection. Integrating public policy and cultural da'wah fosters a more rational and progressive understanding of religion among both policymakers and the community. This means prostitution is not viewed merely as a fiqh issue (lawful–unlawful) or moral deviance, but as a multidimensional problem requiring humane approaches, economic empowerment, social-environmental improvement, and mental-spiritual healing. Without these layered approaches, closure risks cause problem displacement rather than solving the underlying issue. Another challenge is how this collaborative model can be applied in communities whose social, cultural, and religious structures differ from Surabaya. Each region has unique characteristics that shape how the community perceives prostitution—whether as a source of problems, a source of livelihood, or even a part of local identity. However, this study confirms that the successful closure of Dolly—after more than six decades of existence—demonstrates that integrating public policy and cultural da'wah can be effective in large cities with complex social structures.

The point of intersection between cultural da'wah and public policy lies in the utilitarian and social-protection principles: reducing public harm such as violence, sexual exploitation, human

trafficking, crime, moral decay, and territorial stigma. For some residents, Dolly was not perceived as harm but as a source of family income. Thus, closure policies must provide safety nets, including economic mentoring, training, access to capital, and new job opportunities. Here, cultural da'wah plays its key role: building awareness, shaping perspectives, and creating value change through dialogue, moral narratives, and concrete examples (*bil-hal*). Cultural da'wah operates on principles of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (moral purification), empowerment, accompaniment, and transformation. It aims to restore human dignity by strengthening people's ability to live a life free from harmful practices. In line with the Islamic concept of repentance, transformation requires supportive environments, including viable economic opportunities, social support, positive role models, and spaces where one can develop a new identity. Cultural da'wah ensures that moral awareness does not stop at knowledge but is realised through sustainable behavioural change.

Thus, the intersection between public policy and cultural da'wah rests on their shared objectives: creating social order, promoting the public good, and reducing harm (*mafsadah*). Public policy operates at the structural level through regulation and formal authority, while cultural da'wah works at the cultural-psychological level through awareness building, empowerment, advocacy, and accompaniment. These approaches do not contradict one another; instead, they are mutually reinforcing and complementary in building comprehensive social transformation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the closure of the Dolly localisation cannot be understood merely as an administrative action or a standalone moral policy. Dolly represents a multilayered social phenomenon involving economic, cultural, social-structural, psychological, and power dynamics; thus, it requires a multidimensional approach. In this context, the integration of cultural da'wah and public policy has proven to be an effective strategy with relatively minimal social resistance. First, the relationship between cultural da'wah and the Dolly phenomenon indicates that social change does not succeed through prohibitions, moral sermons, or religious legal approaches alone. Cultural da'wah works through mechanisms of awareness-building, dialogue, meaning-making, empowerment, and accompaniment. In the Dolly case, cultural da'wah provided a new moral foundation and value framework for residents, sex workers, and the surrounding community. This approach enabled individuals to transform economic dependence on prostitution into a new identity and livelihood that is more dignified. Cultural da'wah offered a humanistic dimension lacking in administrative approaches: it touches consciousness, reshapes mentality, and provides space for repentance and social reintegration without stigma. Thus, cultural da'wah functioned as a bridge between moral transformation and the community's socioeconomic needs after the closure.

Second, public policy in the Dolly case affirms the theoretical idea that the state must simultaneously perform regulatory, protective, and distributive functions. Conceptually, public policy operates within a framework of public interest, social protection, and harm reduction, whereby the government has the authority to mitigate public harms, including sexual exploitation, crime, human trafficking, and degradation of the social environment. The closure of Dolly was not only intended to halt prostitution activities but also to dismantle an exploitative economic ecosystem. However, policy alone is insufficient without cultural and moral legitimacy. Theoretically, public policy becomes more effective when reinforced by social legitimacy, cultural acceptance, and community engagement. In the Dolly case, the involvement of religious leaders, social organisations, and moral narratives generated

through cultural da'wah strengthened the legitimacy of the policy, enabling better management of community resistance.

Thus, the collaboration between these two approaches produced a more comprehensive model of social intervention. Public policy provided the structure of change, while cultural da'wah supplied the culture of change. Public policy drove transformation through regulation, facilities, and empowerment programmes, whereas cultural da'wah ensured that these changes were accepted, understood, and voluntarily embraced by the community. This synergy became the key factor behind the successful closure of Dolly after more than sixty years of operation. This study affirms that social intervention to dismantle prostitution practices cannot rely solely on legal or moral dimensions. It requires an integration of structural policy and cultural approaches that build awareness, capacities, and new identities. This model can be further developed as an alternative approach to addressing various other social pathologies in Indonesian urban settings.

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