
CULTURE-LED URBAN REGENERATION: HOW DOES MELUKIS HARAPAN CATALYST THE TRANSFORMATION OF DOLLY PROSTITUTION DISTRICT?

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Abstract

The position of cultural regeneration to develop social and economic growth in a post-black economy district like a former sex leisure business is becoming a thought-provoking investigation. This research focuses on a specific observation to find the relationship between regeneration and former prostitution in culture-led urban reinforcement to develop through the creative industry? What are the influences behind the rise of culture-led borough redevelopment in such a place of ex-prostitution? This research used the post-positivism paradigm with a qualitative method approach. Some of the opinions behind the growth of culture-led urban regeneration have linked cultural icon and urban identity and community consolidation to support the creative industry elaboration. Furthermore, the products of culture-led urban renewal, we can say youth movements, has the assumption to potentially advance the local cultural policy discourses within creative industry outcome. This research presents accepted place in Dolly, the ex-biggest well-organized prostitution in Southeast Asia located in Surabaya, Indonesia. Its implication is to show the result of observations and experiences conducted with the local youth community, Melukis Harapan, as a cultural flagship development subject that successfully transforms Dolly into an education-tourism-based creative village.

Keywords: Dolly; Prostitution District; Urban Regeneration; Surabaya; Melukis Harapan.

INTRODUCTION

The 2014 closing event of Dolly, the largest well-ordered prostitution region in southeast Asia located in Surabaya, Indonesia, attracted all people in Indonesia and Southeast Asian countries. This action changes the long-standing social interaction between the main actors involved (Daulay et al., 2018). According to BBC Indonesia (2014), the attention and expectation raise to examine and the best practice way to make a solution after locking this district from the local to the global perspective. All the Surabaya Government and the local creative community collaborate to elevate the population.

One of the well-known non-government organization is *Melukis Harapan* which try to promote the new branding of Dolly not as a black economy supply with fully supported from the policymaker. Rizzaki and Faizah (2019) argued that *Melukis Harapan* movement has a crucial role in helping ex-prostitute and affected people in economic recovery with a more lawful economic empowerment model.

According to Grodach (2013), one of the cultural economy developments to establish creative cities in advance is the cultural planning model. He stated that this maturity model focuses on home-grown arts, culture and tradition, and so-called

asset-based community development. Identifying local community cultural resources to reconstruct comprehensive planning procedures and construct community aptitude and social relationships is more among societies. Therefore, existing cultural assets, including non-government organizations, are one of the best practices to uplift Dolly branding.

Further immense knowledge is also persuaded by Comunian and Mould (2014) about the Flagship Cultural Regeneration concept. It is said that this contemplation gives more attention to the image branding of the city that contributes a positive role performed by so-called culture-led urban regeneration. It results from a positive impact between flagship development on the local youth creative community, society, and their improvement of economic efficiency. Regarding Dolly and *Melukis Harapan's* case study, it can be seen that the youth movement appeared to answer the expectation of empowering society in ex-prostitution.

This research is based on the creative village of Dolly as former sex leisure business can be developed well with the concept both of cultural economy developments by Grodach (2013) and the flagship cultural regeneration model by Comunian and Mould (2014). Those

figures can be applied as an applicable outline to examine the role of Dolly as an ex-prostitution district in the culture-led urban regeneration of Surabaya, Indonesia. In this research, the author addresses the first point to search the connection between the Cultural Icon of Dolly as an ex-prostitute and creative city image branding. Second, the author examines the correlation between urban identity and ex-prostitution as a catalyst for developing urban regeneration. Furthermore, the author also emphasizes the third idea, observing the relationship between community consolidation and the contribution of ex-prostitution through the new creative economy.

METHODS

This study used the post-positivism paradigm with a qualitative method approach, this paradigm is well known as methodological pluralism (Morris et al., 2009). Therefore, the author used methodological pluralism for the research to examine the role of *Melukis Harapan* as the promotor of Dolly's new branding as a contemporary creative business, not a black economy big business.

Krauss (2005) added the post-positivist perspective that it is said not everything is identifiable. The analysis method of analysis uses a study case approach so that the author can see this

unique phenomenon entirely. The author conducts an in-depth interview with several key people of the *Melukis Harapan* movement and how it impacts the Dolly transformation. Besides, the author grabs the opinion of a policymaker in the Dolly closing event.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The awareness of culture-led regeneration as a policy view began to appear. The UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2005) issued the policy report *Culture at the Heart of Regeneration*; it stated that there are three approaches of culture-led regeneration to extend the societal, commercial, and environmental effect of (urban cultural) transformational developments: cultural icons and landmark, urban identity, and community alliance.

Dolly Cultural Icon and Landmark as a Black Economy

The Bilbao Effect has affected the new world construction in the last decade (Giordanelli, 2020). Many cities worldwide compete to build trends in the architecture landscape and establish the brand-scape concept to impress the worldwide that they have already started becoming creative cities. Many skylines and urban landscapes were created to make a symbol of identity in a particular region. The image was

created and became the branding of them. According to Skot-Hasen et al. (2013), the branding itself will transform into a lifestyle and cultural icon. Based on his concept, there are four items to be included in the definition of cultural icon; different and unique, famous (or at least projected to be acknowledged), have aesthetic and symbolic characteristics. The last, it should be part of urban branding.

Former Prostitution as Cultural in Global and Local Icon. Many notable campaigners are allied with governments dedicated to eliminating the entire sex leisure industry. According to Weitzer (2011), there are two main ideas why many people oppose this issue. The first fighters come from the radical feminist thinking that makes oppression ideal and beached in the precise branch. Dehumanizing women in prostitution always have an imbalance command issue. At the same time, the user that so-called sex predator has the social and financial power to rent them like a sexualized toy. It can be addressed that prostitution excludes any mutuality of freedom.

The second thought is from a religious view. It is much different from feminism's opinion. It is said that the primary purpose of sexual commerce is a threat to marriage and family concepts, especially to build society's moral

construction. Jorgensen (2018) argued that religion is the main factor that shapes one's view of prostitution. In the framework of Dolly as the largest prostitution district in southeast Asia, many organizations in Indonesia committed to exterminating this black economy, not only from the local government but also from several non-profit organizations that stand against moral issues. What unites them was their faithful in the tyranny paradigm and political pledge and prohibition of all sexual business and adult amusement. This framework cannot be separated from the fundamental value of Indonesian people to hold in high esteem of moral and eastern culture.

The Surabaya local government's desire, according to VOA Indonesia (2010), is to close this largest prostitution area that arose in early 2010. The sex industry, which is well-organized and based on evidence, is difficult to remove—so many unseen supporters against this subject. The city major, Tri Risma Haryani, officially closed this district in June 2014. It is said that the primary purpose of approaching it is to keep the moral value of their people. Further, besides the moral value, the procedure of rewarding a creative city with a high esteem of goodness should be achieved with a decent impression of Dolly as a future local icon.

Dolly District Placemaking Raises the Societal Change

Cultural societies have always been part of the growth of creative cities. Cultural institutions such as theatres, museums, music halls, sports stadiums, and public libraries are vital to building a lively, vibrant place. According to Skot-Hasen et al. (2013), the place maker and urban identity in the public library can be seen as three schemes. Firstly, the lively sector of urban strategy; secondly, contributes to urban multiplicity in mixed-use districts; the last is generating “public domain” and new phases for the experience. Even though his conceptual context is an examination of the public library's role in culture-led urban regeneration, this is also suitable with the framework of the Dolly district. Does it raise the first issue of how ex-prostitution role as a catalyst for renovating the urban development?

As the author mentioned above about the desire to transform Dolly as one of the cultural icons from the largest ex-prostitution in Southeast Asian countries to the culture-based district with the high value, they keep from the degradation of morality. It is closely related to the active part of urban planning. The black economy dying makes the local government and community hardly think about recreating the new model of the already established economy. Besides, the fine-tuning image

branding of the city transforms into one of the city's most extensive agendas. According to Ooi (2011), identity and urban planning are vital objects in city branding. It stated that as the city is quite extensive, densely peopled, and socially varied, many strategies can be applied to build the labeling. However, among those strategies, four interconnected boundaries should be conducted.

1. The city brand will always present only the affirmative characteristics of the place. A city brand selectively borders the metropolis and lures people's consideration to constructive pictures of the urban milieu. They ignore many aspects because of the negative image or just not considered gorgeous parts by the branding specialists, such as crime and corruption. Dolly district is well-known for preceding prostitution before reflecting a negative branding of Surabaya should be replaced with a better appearance later.
2. The city brand drives to modify civic perceptions about specific places. For the case study of the Dolly region, the closing of prostitution is challenging the public perception that Dolly is a dirty place of sexual industry, a spot of crime, and full of social faulty. It

is arguable whether the public perception of Dolly has changed or remain the same. However, the city's significant action bravery successfully gained attention and transformed it into a better region.

3. The indirect bond between the city brand and the city's identity also becomes a city identity indirectly. Branding is an accumulation of portraits and perceptions of the place itself.
4. The city brand can assume people's understanding of the location. Therefore, the trademark will deliver experiences about the origin place with the framework of public society.

Those four factors drive any city branding to make "societal changes". Ooi (2011) identified that both city branding and society process are not stagnant. They present a perception of a current place and also ongoing. It results in social change that affects paradoxes among city branding applications. Ooi added that three central paradoxes might have happened.

1. The first paradox is about "being equally special". As per the explanation above that city branding constantly update and continue modification. It is

contradictorily with the primary purpose, branding change, so does the city, especially when establishments should adjust to gaining the attention of visitors and stockholders.

2. The second paradox is approaching "the bottom-up and top-down tension". Ooi emphasized that city branding should include the participation of local communities in making societal transformations. On the other hand, when the city branding has been established well, it is undeniable that it will influence native people. Thus, theoretically, city branding reflects society and also forms them – top-down.
3. The last paradox is about the contradiction between "residents' and non-residents' interpretation". Sometimes, city branding cannot be satisfactory for both of them. The taste and culture of local society are not always the same as that of non-residents'. Therefore, it challenges a lot to deliver the message of branding.

From the paradoxes above, it can be atoned that the brand dispatch, the public creativity, and the actuality may not happen. According to Tempo (2014), 58

Islamic mass organizations support the local government to close the Dolly district prostitution. The critical message of time as a vital element can be examined that affected the social changes. City branding practices can become something new, a whole different city that forges from other's character. In the framework of the Dolly region, the closing event force both the city branding and society to make a change. It results in some movement of local communities to bring resolutions for a better Dolly.

Community Alliance

The UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2004) reported that the notion of community consolidation is a vital part of the culture at the heart of regeneration. According to Skot-Hasen et al. (2013), the description of “community vitalization” contains three main actions; first, boosting local identity and cohesion; second, addressing social and economic challenges; and the last is initiating local innovation, creativity, and cooperation. Rahmat and Savirani (2020) argued that social movements that are born and grow directly from society, in general, bring resistance to change. Melukis Harapan, as a new community alliance, expects to change the new face of Dolly District image branding conduct several activities mentioned by Skot-Hasen et al.

The first activity boosts local identity and consistency in an intensive meeting venue to meet people with various exciting backgrounds. Skot-Hasen et al. (2013) stated that local people need an arena that provides heritage value and positive social communication across generations. An excellent arena that offers a variety of individuals in different cultures quickly. In the context of the Dolly district, it has been already an outstanding venue to meet before it was closed, although it has a different value earlier.

Addressing social and economic challenges becomes the second activity following venue formation. Logically, after local communities gather each other intensively, this will encourage people to build the economy. According to Aminah (2017), many opportunities appeared next to this step, especially in building the new economy. Moreover, the last action boosts the communication arena, initiating local innovation, creativity, and cooperation. It appeared to encourage the local community to build initiations and deliver the aspirations. *Melukis Harapan* created *samijali* snack to contribute the local economy challenge.

Melukis Harapan, according to its local page (melukisharapan.org, 2016), a famous local young movement, focuses on community development for native people of the Dolly district as former prostitution.

It is a non-profit organization that answers the needs of community vitalization. Many local communities were dedicated to helping Dolly people for a long time before it was closed. Some of them have started actions before 2010. While prostitution closed in early 2014, some communities raised the intention of meeting and discussing making Dolly better. Those communities declared and launched the *Melukis Harapan* Foundation in September 2014.

According to their official website (melukisharapan.org, 2016), the *Melukis Harapan* foundation focused on four principal elements to rejuvenate the Dolly district. The first one is how to increase the economic growth of local people who lost their jobs. This community tried to find potentially hidden commerce. They created some home industries such as crafts development, traditional clothes (batik), and heritage food festivals. Secondly, they put more attention on health and environmental issue. As a former prostitution place, this region was close to unhealthy lifestyles and infectious diseases like HIV AIDS. Therefore, they made several programs based on public health to deviate people's lifestyles.

The third aspect was an education for unlucky children who did not get proper schooling (melukisharapan.org, 2016).

Some programs included Teach for Dolly, scholarship & mentoring program for elementary and higher education, creating religious village community, conducting tool for parenting, and art performance foundation. Moreover, the last issue was women's empowerment, more attention was given to women by providing intensive mentoring for prostitutes. Further, they made the women more aware of the three previous issues above. The main reason was that they believe that women's empowerment is a vital critical success.

After two years of ongoing, those programs transform into a new concept of city branding. *Melukis Harapan* foundation prepares to create Dolly district as an Edu-tourism destination based on culture and creativity reshaping local people creation. They make a travel route full of heritage views, cultural performances, and traditional foods. This action leads Dalu Nuzlul Kirom, the founder of *Melukis Harapan* Foundation, to become a winner of Indonesia's famous national television, the SCTV Award in Youth & Community Development (Liputan 6 News, 2016).

Furthermore, the local and national governments are interested in supporting local movements initiated by youth like *Melukis Harapan*. Some of their programs officially cooperated with the department and ministry related to economic growth,

health environment, education, and women empowerment. As such of Growth Model in the creative city by Pott and Cunningham (2008), this creative movement affects all commerce activity. As a result, Dolly grows, people change, the economy increases, and better prosperity is close. Finally, at the age of two years old, they launched the mega project of Dolly as an Edu-tourism destination in Surabaya and officially opened by the mayor in July 2016.

CONCLUSION

Former prostitution is a place that has so many critical issues to be solved. The voices have started from the gossip of the closing events following community development until in the spot of culture-led urban regeneration. The new concept for the new former prostitution in city branding is challenged to attract visitors and raise a creative urban generation. The main issues that should be tackled are remaking the ex-prostitution as a new cultural icon & landmark, creating urban identity, and community rejuvenation.

The Dolly district of Surabaya and Melukis Harapan Foundation is a best practice example of how the ex-prostitution role as a catalyst for creative urban movements. The closing event of the Dolly region encourages people to raise their voices and action. It brings stimulus to people increases economic growth through

creative industry. However, former prostitution has negative perceptions and contradicts the value of religious views, fundamental feminism, and Indonesian culture. As a result, Dolly should be rebranded in a better perception. While transforming former prostitution, the city's identity, image, and society also change. It results in societal change and some paradoxes of creative city branding. The most challenging thing to keep is to save the local identity and cultural value even though the city itself continually updates into something new.

Following the societal change, the local community creates initiative actions and creative groups for social and economic growth. However, city branding constantly updates from time to time, so do the people. Therefore, reshaping the local art society to face those paradoxes should be prepared.

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