

The Internalization of Religious Values in Prostitution Area

Almunauwar Bin Rusli,^{1*} Rukmina Gonibala,¹ Ahmad Fauzi,² Tarmizi Abbas,³

Sisi Monita Frisilia Kristi Mamahit⁴

¹Department of Islamic Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Manado, Manado – Indonesia; ²Department of Islamic Primary School Teacher Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Teungku Dirundeng Meulaboh, Aceh Barat – Indonesia; ³Anthropology Program, School of Culture, History and Language, Australian National University, Acton – Australia; ⁴Department of Law, Faculty of Law and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Manado, Manado – Indonesia

Abstract

The internalization of religious values within a prostitution area continues to grow despite remaining consistently misunderstood by the public in Yogyakarta. This study offers an alternative perspective to minimize the stigma that tends to generate horizontal conflict. Employing a qualitative method and phenomenological approach, this study reveals two key insights. First, Gus Miftah internalizes religious values among sex workers through three instructional concepts: the dichotomy between human actions and human dignity, spiritual evolution, and the commodification of religion. Second, the implications of this internalization process are manifested in the religious practices of the sex workers through alterations in sexual service activities during Ramadan, participation in *tarāwih* prayers and the recitation of the Quran (*tadārus*), and charitable acts (*sadaqah*) to assist fellow workers. The central analysis of these findings indicates that sexuality needs to become a new consciousness to reconstruct the concept of civil religion for sex workers, thereby fostering equal rights, identity, and participation free from the threat of moral majoritarianism. This study contributes to proposing the concept of a jurisprudence of prostitution (*fiqh* of prostitution) grounded in the paradigm of the sex worker's citizenship.

Internalisasi nilai agama di area prostitusi semakin berkembang namun selalu disalahpahami oleh publik Yogyakarta. Penelitian ini berupaya memberikan perspektif alternatif agar mampu meminimalisir stigma yang cenderung menghasilkan konflik horizontal. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan pendekatan fenomenologi penelitian menunjukkan dua hal penting. Pertama, Gus Miftah menginternalisasikan nilai-nilai agama kepada para pekerja seks melalui tiga konsep pengajaran yaitu: dikotomi antara perbuatan dan martabat manusia, evolusi spritualitas, dan komodifikasi agama. Kedua, implikasi dari proses internalisasi tersebut termanifestasikan ke dalam bentuk pengamalan Islam dari para pekerja seks melalui: perubahan aktivitas layanan seksual saat ramadhan, *tarāwih* dan *tadārus* al-Qur'an, serta melaksanakan *sadaqah* untuk membantu teman seprofesi. Analisis utama dari temuan ini adalah seksualitas perlu menjadi sebuah kesadaran baru untuk membangun kembali konsep agama sipil bagi kalangan pekerja seks demi menghasilkan kesetaraan hak, identitas dan partisipasi tanpa ancaman moral mayoritarianisme. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada penawaran gagasan fikih prostitusi berdasarkan paradigma kewarganegaraan pelacur (*the sex worker's citizenship*).

Keywords: Islam; practice; sex workers; teaching; Yogyakarta

* **Corresponding Author:** Almunauwar Bin Rusli (almunauwar.binrusli@iain-manado.ac.id), Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Manado, Jl. Dr. S. H. Sarundajang, Kawasan Ringroad I, Malendeng Manado, Sulawesi Utara 95128, Indonesia.

Introduction

The discourse regarding the internalization of religious values in prostitution areas has rarely received serious attention from the Indonesian Muslim community. On the one hand, prostitution is claimed to be evidence of economic inequality and gender exploitation (Lerum and Brents 2016), thus, prostitution and religion are viewed as mutually contradictory particularly following Law No. 44 of 2008, Articles 29–41, on Anti-Pornography and Pornoaction (Allen 2007; Hung 2023; Platt, Davies, and Bennett 2018), and Law No. 21/2007 on Human Trafficking Offenses, and Law No. 35/2014 on Child Protection.

In Southeast Asia, the potency of religious values contributes to shaping gender and sexual norms, serving as a significant factor in determining women's unique circumstances and experiences upon entering sex work (Lee 2024). In contemporary Indonesia, religious norms also continue to play a dominant role in shaping sexual attitudes, behaviors, and policy frameworks. In a nation where nearly 87% of the population identifies as Muslim, religious teachings, particularly Islam, serve as a central cultural authority regarding sexual morality (Diarsvitri et al. 2026). A study of 552 Muslim youth in Aceh and North Sumatra provinces demonstrated that individuals exhibiting strong religious commitment, such as performing daily prayers regularly and actively pursuing knowledge of Islamic teachings, were more likely to abstain from premarital sexual activities (Muhibbuthabry et al. 2023). These norms are not merely personal or spiritual; they increasingly permeate the legislative and regulatory spheres. For instance, the recent ratification of Indonesia's new Criminal Code (KUHP) in 2023 criminalizes extramarital sex, reflecting the codification of moral norms rooted in religious ideology (Butt 2023).

On the other hand, the relationship between prostitution and religion is perceived as capable of providing positive benefits to the continuity and balance of the overall social system, because prostitution can fulfill sexual needs that remain unmet within the institution of marriage without destroying the nuclear family structure. Furthermore, prostitution is also regarded as a social safety valve that prevents greater sexual crimes, such as rape, or marital breakdown, such as divorce (Davis 1937). In a study of Muslim sex workers migrating from East Javanese villages to Surabaya, Lee criticizes the dominant discourse that solely links sex work to economic necessity, ignoring Javanese Islamic cultural and religious meanings. This study explains their involvement in sex work as a process of fulfilling, negotiating, and restoring their identity and role as respectable women (Lee 2026).

In relation to this matter, knowledge of religious norms, state power discourse, and the identity of female sex workers constitute three primary factors constructing the stigmatization of prostitution in Java (Yudha, Rahmatunnisa, and Sumadinata 2025). In Yogyakarta, parenting practices within Muslim families residing in environments impacted by prostitution necessitate continuous adaptation and negotiation. These insights underscore the imperative of context-sensitive support systems to bolster the resilience of both children and parents living in similar high-risk communities (Nugroho and A'isah 2025).

Sex workers in Pasar Kembang, for example, possess low levels of educational attainment. The highest level of education among them is primary school; indeed, many failed to complete elementary education. Multiple factors account for their remarkably low educational background, with family poverty serving as a primary driver. Another underlying factor is prevailing socio-cultural traditions that do not support

female education. Within traditional frameworks, women are not expected to pursue higher education, as they are presumed to remain within the domestic sphere following marriage (Setiawan 2020). However, only a small proportion originate from the region, as the majority hail from various regencies in Central Java, including Demak, Pati, Magelang, Solo, Purwodadi, and Sragen (Fauzi 2012).

In Yogyakarta, serving as a bastion of puritanical Muhammadiyah Islam, Muslim perspectives on prostitution are not uniform. Between 2011 and 2016, vigilante actions were widespread in Yogyakarta. The primary targets of this vigilantism were typically categorized into several groups: 1) Christian religious activities; 2) events perceived as promoting communism; 3) Shia, Ahmadiyya, LGBT, and Sapto Darma groups; 4) interorganizational violence; 5) human rights and press freedom activist events at universities; and 6) raids on vice locations (Ahnaf and Lussier 2019). Nevertheless, the government and law enforcement tended to adopt an ambiguous approach. While arresting and prosecuting pimps and sex workers for disturbing public order, they simultaneously protected and managed red-light districts, such as the Pasar Kembang area in Yogyakarta.

Within the context of urban society, prostitution has been subject to multifaceted reinterpretations. As observed by Inglehart and Giddens, the erosion of tradition in the modern era is indicative of a profound cultural transformation. Contemporary society is no longer strictly anchored to religious values or traditional conventions; instead, it increasingly prioritizes individual autonomy, material achievement, and practical rationality. Nevertheless, this shift does not signify the deterioration of morality, but rather its fundamental redefinition. The concepts of right

and wrong concerning this phenomenon are now evaluated by examining an individual's personal circumstances, their social reality, and the ensuing consequences of their actions, rather than relying exclusively on historical doctrines or past majoritarian norms (Gluck and Giddens 1993; Hout and Inglehart 1998). Pasar Kembang Malioboro possesses a distinct status that sets it apart from other prostitution sites disbanded by the government, such as those in Jakarta (Sholeha and Nugroho 2025), Semarang (Hull 2017), and Surabaya (Lee 2024).

The prevalence of the sex work phenomenon is closely linked to the internalization of social welfare issues across economic, psychological, and social dimensions (Abidjulu, Marini, and Idris 2026). From an economic perspective, many individuals engage in sex work in response to structural constraints, including economic vulnerability, limited access to formal employment, disparities in livelihood opportunities, and a scarcity of job prospects, particularly among those living in structural poverty. Psychologically, individuals involved in sex work—who are frequently positioned as victim-survivors—endure social stigma, exposure to violence, and the burden of trauma resulting from discrimination, which collectively compromise their mental health and overall quality of life. Socially, this phenomenon intersects with prevailing cultural norms and public perceptions surrounding gender, sexuality, and morality, reflecting a persistent tension between public moral expectations and socio-economic realities, interpersonal relationships, and perceptions of the body and sexuality.

Generally, previous studies have focused primarily on the legal frameworks regulating prostitution, the actual impact of these regulations, and the existential reasons leading individuals to become sex workers. However,

existing literature has not fully addressed why the local community can tolerate prostitution within the framework of Islamic teachings and practices in contemporary Yogyakarta. Addressing this research gap, this study offers a novel perspective on the importance of revitalizing the jurisprudence (*fiqh*) of prostitution in the public sphere by positioning sex workers not merely as “victims,” but as “laborers.” It aligns with contemporary citizenship paradigms that emphasize human rights, identity, and participation based on autonomous life choices.

This study was conducted in a small Muslim village at Jalan Sosrowijayan Kulon Gang 3, Pasar Kembang, Yogyakarta. Fieldwork was conducted from February 21 to March 21, 2025. Daily over the course of a month, we routinely visited and occasionally stayed near the neighborhood, consistently conducting an in-depth examination of micro-level contextual details. This study’s focus remained on the roles of individuals and the community at a micro scale rather than a macro scale, enabling an accurate documentation of the perspectives and daily lifestyles of each group within a concentrated timeframe.

Primary data were gathered from key local figures: Mas Edi (head of the local neighborhood association/*Rukun Tetangga*), Haji Rudi (a religious figure), and Mas Dani (a resident). Female key informants included Mbak Sarmi (a former sex worker), alongside Mbak Nia and Mbak Anna (hostesses/karaoke singers in the venue). These three women maintained strong networks with active sex workers who generally preferred to conceal their true identities. Secondary data sources comprised frequent clients of commercial sex transactions in Pasar Kembang, academic journals, newspapers (print and digital), social media, and focused discussions with small groups of academics and human rights activists.

This study employs hermeneutic phenomenology (Suddick et al. 2020), a feminist approach (Jackson 1999), and the theory of the social construction of reality (Miller and Nowacek 2018). Hermeneutic phenomenology assisted this research in five key areas: a) capturing the lived experiences of subjects in the prostitution area, religious scholars, and the surrounding community regarding how they experience, internalize, and assign meaning to Islamic teachings and practices; b) analyzing how Islamic doctrines are reinterpreted and contextualized within a social environment directly contradicting ideal norms, thereby establishing a circular interpretative process between religious teachings, socio-economic realities, and daily religious practice; c) understanding how Muslim sex workers maintain their Islamic identity, negotiate sin and merit, and interpret religious teachings amid an environment formally deemed contrary to Islamic law; d) identifying interpretative intersections where Islamic values are transformed to remain relevant and acceptable without excluding individuals within the area; and e) uncovering ambivalence, symbolic negotiation, and existential experiences of the subjects without rushing into moral judgment.

Meanwhile, the feminist approach facilitated the study in four ways: a) examining how Islamic teachings are interpreted, taught, or utilized in the area—either as a moral disciplinary tool by religious authorities or as a survival mechanism for women; b) observing how sex workers demonstrate religious agency through prayer, almsgiving, worship, or interpreting divine forgiveness despite engaging in a profession deemed deviant by society; c) analyzing intersectionality, specifically how poverty, gender marginalization, and religious stigma operate simultaneously in shaping or restricting

women's access to Islamic teachings; and d) evaluating how religious educators navigate proselytization (*da'wah*) methods in the area and whether these teachings adopt an inclusive-emancipatory stance or reinforce moralistic sentiments.

Furthermore, the theory of the social construction of reality provided analytical utility across three stages: a) at the externalization stage, analyzing how Islamic teachings are introduced and adapted within the prostitution environment, observing non-judgmental proselytization strategies formulated by preachers and how sex workers express spiritual needs; b) at the objectification stage, examining how these religious negotiations crystallize into habits, informal institutions, or a new objective reality within the area; and c) at the internalization stage, examining how individuals internalize these reconstructed religious norms into their self-consciousness, facilitating an understanding of psychological-spiritual phenomena such as using worship as a coping mechanism, negotiating guilt, and cultivating hope for repentance without self-alienation from the local social structure.

Data collection involved participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. All collected data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Houston and Mullan-Jensen 2012). To ensure research rigor, trustworthiness criteria were established through tests of credibility (triangulation checks), transferability (generalization control), dependability (consistency evaluation), and confirmability (transparency audit).

This study addresses two fundamental questions. First, how is the concept of Islamic teaching conveyed by Islamic preachers (*da'i*) in Pasar Kembang, Yogyakarta? Second, what are

the forms of Islamic practice among sex workers during the month of Ramadan in Pasar Kembang, Yogyakarta? At a minimum, there are two assumptions that we can propose from the aforementioned research question. First, the Islamic preachers (*da'i*) employ a persuasive-humanistic (*bil-hikmah*) Islamic teaching approach focused on foundational material regarding morality (*akhlāq*), creed (*'aqidah*), and practical jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in a gradual manner (*tadrīj*), by adapting language and emotional, inclusive communication methods to suit the socio-psychological conditions of the Pasar Kembang community. Second, the religious practices of sex workers during the month of Ramadan experience an adaptive and reflective increase in intensity, manifested through participation in foundational ritual worship (fasting, prayers, Islamic study sessions, and almsgiving) as well as a temporal reduction in commercial work intensity as a form of spiritual identity negotiation amidst the dynamics of their social environment.

Islamic Teaching of NU Kiais in Pasar Kembang, Yogyakarta

This study reveals that Mushalla al-Hikmah, Nurul Huda Mosque, and the *Balai RW* (RW Community Hall) serve as central venues where female sex workers typically receive Islamic teachings. Their participation is shaped by regulations and mutual understanding between local residents and nightlife entrepreneurs in Pasar Kembang, Yogyakarta.

A Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) cleric named Miftah Maulana Habiburrahman (popularly known as Gus Miftah) stepped forward to deliver Islamic teachings within the red-light district. Born on August 5, 1981, in Jabung, East Lampung, Gus Miftah established *Ora Aji* Islamic Boarding School (*Pondok Pesantren*) in Sleman,

Yogyakarta, in 2011. The institution aims to provide religious education to marginalized groups seeking spiritual engagement, particularly sex workers operating in nightlife venues and red-light areas. Initially, he regularly performed midnight prayers (*tahajjud*) at a small prayer room (*muṣalla*) in Pasar Kembang, which eventually led him to initiate Islamic proselytization (*da'wah*) in the area. Haji Rudi, Dani, and Edi noted:

“... Gus Miftah’s religious gatherings (*pengajian*) have provided immense enlightenment to the sex worker community. Utilizing a humorous delivery, he makes them feel comfortable practicing Islam while still engaging in sex work. Gus Miftah seeks gradual, rather than instantaneous, personal transformation, maintaining that one cannot judge experiences one has never undergone. His proselytization efforts here were recommended by the Laskar Jogja organization. In his view, performing religious worship and engaging in sexual intercourse are not mutually exclusive, as they do not occur simultaneously. We fully support this approach to *dakwah*.” (personal interview with Haji Rudi, Dani, & Edi, 2025)

Gus Miftah’s religious sermons (*tausyiah*) targeted at female night workers in Pasar Kembang are documented on his official social media channel @GusMiftahOfficial, titled “*Pekerja Sarkem Minta Dimualafkan Sama Gus Miftah, Masyallah!!! Gus Miftah Terbaru 2024*”. First, Gus Miftah emphasizes patience (*sabr*), framing the primary hardship faced by sex workers as periods of low client volume; hence, he advises them to pray for clients. Second, he underscores reliance on God (*tawakkal*), asserting that if clients do not materialize, God will provide sustenance through alternative means. Third, he encourages sex workers to transcend physical and material constraints when doing good deeds, internalizing empathy

and social care as central religious practices in daily life. Fourth, he instills the courage to persist in good conduct even within sex work, suggesting that divine guidance (*hidayah*) might manifest through clients. Fifth, he obligates them to conceal personal sins and avoid public disclosure (*mujāharah*). Furthermore, Gus Miftah’s accommodative Islamic approach—accessible to a broad online audience—is intertwined with personal drives for digital engagement (likes, comments, followers, and subscribers), generating income through digital platforms such as Meta.

Gus Miftah’s accommodative Islam is also driven by an awareness of acute social inequality and collective poverty in Java, which compels women into sex work. Poverty in Java can be conceptualized culturally and structurally. Cultural poverty refers to poverty influenced by cultural factors that inhibit individuals from transcending socio-economic limits. Conversely, structural poverty stems from individual disenfranchisement within an inequitable social system, depriving individuals of the bargaining power needed to escape poverty traps and restricting access to factors of production. Cultural poverty occurs when communities fail to utilize these production factors effectively. Under these conditions, sex work is perceived as a concrete, practical, and lucrative enterprise; indeed, the sex industry offers certainty amidst pervasive insecurity (Warr and Pyett 1999). Through an accommodative Islamic strategy, Gus Miftah aims to reconstruct their consciousness and knowledge via family, community, and innovative approaches. While total transformation remains unrealized, several commercial sex workers have exited the trade, transitioning into roles as laborers, social workers, or food stall vendors.

Poverty remains one of the primary challenges in realizing inclusive and sustainable

development in Yogyakarta and other regions of Java. Individuals and communities living in poverty generally face limited access to basic services such as education, healthcare, adequate housing, and opportunities to improve their economic standard of living. In September 2025, the poverty rate in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) was 10.08%, with 422.79 thousand residents living in poverty. The poverty rate in rural areas was 10.37% (Wahyu Pratiwi and Habibie 2025).

The sex worker population in Indonesia reached approximately 71,000, a figure that continues to escalate alongside volatile socio-economic conditions (Sagala et al. 2020). While the criminalization of prostitution escalates, state protection over sex workers' socio-economic well-being diminishes. Financial hardship, inadequate education, and familial pressure continuously propel women and subsequent generations into the sex industry, which operates fundamentally under market dynamics of supply and demand (Hung 2026).

The phenomenon of Islamic teaching in this prostitution area offers several conceptual insights. First, it demonstrates the decentralization of sacred space (Gilmore 1998). Traditionally, space is strictly divided between the sacred and the profane, with sex workers often positioned as profane subjects isolated from sacred spaces. However, when the al-Hikmah Prayer Room, Nurul Huda Mosque, and the RW Community Hall are transformed into study venues, a process of reinterpreting spatial functions takes place. Local public spaces surrounding the prostitution district are repurposed into a bridge between the sacred and the profane. The utilization of these local facilities dissolves spatial boundaries, enabling sex workers to access religious learning without leaving their daily environment.

Second, it illustrates the mobilization of social-symbolic capital (Mead 2021). The presence of Gus Miftah and his congregation—who bring religious authority into these spaces—provides social legitimacy for sex workers. Consequently, Islamic teaching at the Al-Hikmah Prayer Room, Nurul Huda Mosque, and the RW Community Hall successfully builds a bridge of interaction among sex workers, religious figures, and the surrounding community, potentially narrowing the gap of social alienation.

Third, it highlights the phenomenon of identity restoration (Hayes-Smith and Shekarkhar 2010). The religious stigma attached to sex workers is reframed through Islamic teaching sessions that emphasize an inclusive approach. Religious learning within a familiar environment ultimately enables the re-socialization of identity, allowing sex workers to internalize religious values without feeling intimidated by societal moral judgment.

To enrich these findings, we also identified several juridical and pragmatic reasons why the prostitution area in Pasar Kembang, Yogyakarta, remains difficult to dismantle. Haji Rudi, a local community leader, responded:

“... Eradicating prostitution in this place is extremely difficult; it requires a lengthy social process. In Pasar Kembang, specifically Sosrowijayan Kulon Gang 3, there is no designated red-light zone (*lokalisasi*) like Sangrahan or Giwangan. It is a legally certified residential area adjacent to the bustling Malioboro district. Consequently, there are many tourists, lodgings, and entertainment spots. Under national law, we cannot be relocated or evicted by the government unless they purchase our property at prices we determine ourselves. The police frequently raid vice activities here, but not systematically, as they fear wrongful arrests that could lead to defamation charges. It is because the sex

workers here blend in with local resident daughters who are not prostitutes. Distinguishing them is difficult; even their attire is nearly identical—some wear the *hijab*, while others do not.” (Personal Interview with Haji Rudi, 2025)

Haji Rudi’s view points to a reciprocal relationship between nightlife establishments, prostitution, and the daily livelihood of local residents in Pasar Kembang. This dynamic is bolstered by their strategic location near Malioboro, which has spurred massive commercial development alongside illegal sex tourism. The sex industry consistently exhibits generational, global, and functional dimensions (Amrozi et al. 2022). Mbak Sarmi and Mbak Nia shared:

“... Initially, Pasar Kembang was not a prostitution center, but merely hosted inns (*losmen*) for tourists, operating under official government permits. Over time, as Yogyakarta became increasingly crowded with newcomers, social control in Pasar Kembang waned. Nightlife venues (karaoke lounges) and sex services subsequently expanded throughout the neighborhood. When illegal activities occur atop legal properties, the government faces immense difficulty in dismantling them.” (personal interview with Sarmi and Nia, 2025)

Their experiences illustrate how the transformation of social space in Pasar Kembang unfolded alongside shifts in social control. Haji Rudi and Sarmi also acknowledged engaging in heated debates and fiercely resisting conservative Islamic mass organizations in Yogyakarta—such as the Forum Umat Islam (FUI), Front Jihad Islam (FJI), and Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI)—when these groups attempted to forcefully shut down the Pasar Kembang neighborhood due to intensified nightlife activities and prostitution services. These three religious organizations tend to engage in morality racketeering downward

while establishing political patronage upward. Nevertheless, they do not champion the implementation of Sharia-based bylaws (*perda syariah*). While highly critical of the central government, their resistance toward the Yogyakarta Royal Palace (*Keraton*) is virtually non-existent (Ahnaf and Lussier 2019). Rumors suggest they maintain distinct political communication channels with the Sultan. Furthermore, a 2010 social survey of 1,500 Indonesian Muslims confirms that the dissemination of Salafi-Wahhabi proselytization (*da;wah*) through social media has fostered a conservative Islamist citizenship framework seeking to police vice according to Islamic morality (Fauzi 2012; Sakai and Fauzia 2014).

Prostitution in the Sosrowijayan Kulon residential area has become an intergenerational fixture. Statistically, in 2016, sex workers originated from Jepara 23%, Semarang 18%, Jakarta 11%, Surabaya 10%, and Bandung 9% (Artosa 2018). Interacting with local residents within the settlement revealed that a substantial majority of their homes have been rented on a monthly or annual basis by nightlife entrepreneurs at exorbitant rates to be converted into inns. Specifically, RT 14 contains 23 inns, RT 15 has 9, RT 16 has 16, and RT 17 has 17. Overall, the settlement’s building breakdown comprises 61% inns, 11% grocery shops, 15% food stalls (*warung nasi*), 2% community halls, 9% private residences, and 2% condom outlets (Artosa 2018). The financial yields derived by Muslim residents from these rental consensus agreements are funneled into establishing trade or service businesses both within and outside Yogyakarta City. Mas Dani, a native resident of the area, explained:

“... My house has indeed been leased to a nightlife business owner for quite a lucrative sum. I now live in another rented home. Previously, FUI, FJI, and MMI wanted to

permanently close down this red-light zone. However, as native residents, we united to resist this persecution. It is a legitimate residential village, not an illegal settlement of squatter structures. We can accept the presence of sex workers provided they do not cause social unrest and adhere to Islamic moral codes in public spaces. Frankly, we need each other. Capital from prostitution entrepreneurs bolsters our economy, while renting out our properties provides economic subsistence for sex workers, who generally come from lower-middle-class families ...” (personal interview with Dani, 2025)

Dani’s stance during the discussion clearly indicates an embrace of secular values within social life. To him, religion is a private matter, whereas economics is a public domain to be collectively managed; the two must not be conflated, as financial crisis serves as the primary driver of criminal behavior—nothing more, nothing less. In Indonesia, conservative Muslim groups opposed to prostitution continuously strive to secure symbolic-political control over public morality by blurring the boundaries and meanings surrounding public versus private rights within society (Brenner 2011). Mas Edi, the head of the neighborhood association (*Ketua RT*) in the red-light district, added:

“... Prostitution here has evolved into a distinct business model protected by local consensus. Sex workers adhere to the principle of respecting local customs wherever they reside. Regarding accommodations, I have long rented out rooms in my home to tourists seeking entertainment in Pasar Kembang, charging between IDR 100,000 and 200,000 per day. Property values in this district appreciate annually, so no residents are willing to sell their houses, preferring to lease them instead. Annual rent typically reaches IDR 100 million or more, depending on the building’s size and structure. We derive substantial financial benefits from nightlife enterprises, fostering

a mutually beneficial symbiotic dynamic ...” (personal interview with Edi, 2025)

Edi’s experience resonates with that of Haji Rudi. During an in-depth conversation at his private residence, he shared:

“In the past, a nightlife entrepreneur offered to rent my house for karaoke and prostitution services at roughly IDR 30–60 million per month. Although I declined on religious grounds, I still operate daily and monthly homestay services for visitors coming to Pasar Kembang. It is undeniable that the main driver for tourists visiting this area is sex commerce, and I, too, profit from this reality.” (personal interview with Haji Rudi, 2025)

Based on their perspectives and experiences, it is evident that the emergence of the illicit sex sector in Pasar Kembang was fueled by urbanization. Hotel owners occasionally act as procurers (pimps), sourcing clients for sex workers and receiving gratuities directly from them. Sex workers set relatively high rates to cover medical treatment, hotel rental fees, and savings to send back to their hometowns. Simultaneously, they compete with fellow sex workers to attract male clients (Setiawan 2020). In Yogyakarta, each operator maintains their own territorial domain, adhering to a tacit agreement of non-interference. Investors who fund venue rentals have established mutually advantageous arrangements, reflected in concessions in public service delivery and commercial operations in Malioboro. Clients include diverse groups, ranging from civil servants to police officers. Reflecting on this, Sarmi recounted:

“... I was born in 1967 in Kulonprogo and entered sex work in 1994 at age 27, following a divorce from my husband due to his lack of emotional and financial support. Over 16 years as a sex worker, I once serviced up to 20 men in a single day.

Despite the exhaustion, I realized my family's financial needs had to be met. I had three children, though two have passed away. *Alhamdulillah* (Praise be to God), I have not contracted HIV/AIDS. Once, I was detained by the police for providing sex services during fasting hours; I received counseling and was subsequently released. Following that incident, Pasar Kembang residents began warning one another whenever raids were imminent. Throughout my working years from 1997 to 2013, many male clients were civil servants and police officers, though they wore civilian clothes when visiting to avoid detection." (personal interview with Sarmi, 2025)

A key insight from Sarmi's experience is her initial belief that formal marriage was a social imperative women must fulfill, and that a wife's absolute obedience to her husband was the key to genuine happiness. Gender discourses in Indonesia generally legitimize and dominate this moral framework. In reality, however, her expectations were unmet; Sarmi realized that finding an ideal marital partner is deeply complex, leaving her with invisible emotional wounds. Despite enduring prolonged trauma, Sarmi has since remarried a man who was once her client in the red-light district.

The involvement of Sarmi, Nia, and subsequent generations in prostitution has elicited animosity and disrespect from pro-Sharia communities. At the same time, the spectrum from biological fulfillment to physical exhaustion in brothels directly affects their bodily vitality. Sex workers here mandate condom use for all male clients; however, earlier studies note the social reality that condom insistence can be interpreted as a lack of trust toward regular patrons (Novianti* and Waliadin 2023). Negotiating pleasure and physical health remains an ongoing, natural process in Pasar Kembang to this day. Although serving as a locus for sexual transactions, they view the female

body as a sanctuary to be safeguarded, lest viral infections render them unproductive. Service rates vary, ranging from IDR 250,000–450,000 for short service (sc) to IDR 500,000–650,000 for full service (fc).

Islamic Practice among Sex Workers in Pasar Kembang, Yogyakarta

First, during the month of Ramadan, their sexual services typically open at 18:00 WIB after breaking the fast (*iftar*) and close at 02:00 WIB in the early morning before *suhoor*. During Ramadan, a complete shutdown of sex work activities may last between 5 to 7 days, after which operations resume during specific hours. Sarmi, Nia, Anna, and several of their peers acknowledged this. Their willingness to restrict sexual services reflects an internalization of the socio-religious Islamic values that dominate the red-light district. However, this study has not yet verified whether online sex work via Video Call Sex (VCS) continues inside their lodging rooms (*losmen*) during Ramadan.

Furthermore, Law No. 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE Law) does not impose criminal sanctions on private online sex work. Article 27 Paragraph 1 only criminalizes acts that distribute content violating public decency to the public, such as images, videos, and conversations containing sexual intercourse and genitalia (Novianti and Waliadin 2023). Consequently, those using online sexual services can freely express their desires virtually.

Second, during Ramadan, they cannot roam around freely and are restricted to private spaces. Nevertheless, several female sex workers at this location admitted to continuing their observance of the pillars of Islam normally. For them, sex work is a means of surviving trauma, debt, and poverty, rather than an act to distance themselves

from God's commands. Although many condemn themselves, Sarmi, Nia, and Anna remain confident that God is merciful to His servants.

In Yogyakarta, they aspire for social policy decisions by the government to account for the voices of those with lived experiences of poverty and prostitution. In this way, their civil rights are not invalidated by the arrogance of majoritarianism (Riswanda, McIntyre-Mills, and Corcoran-Nantes 2017). Conversely, Javanese Muslim cultural practice holds that sexual behavior should be grounded in Islamic morality; hence, religious belief is expected to play a role in preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS (Fauk et al. 2021). The sex workers in Pasar Kembang commercialize sexual services due to heartbreak and trauma inflicted by their partners (husbands/boyfriends). The loss of their primary support system triggers a financial crisis. This economic panic sustains prostitution, as each worker frequently invites peers from their hometowns who share similar fates to join them in Pasar Kembang. Finally, the ethical dilemma experienced by sex workers in Pasar Kembang stems from being forced to replace men as the primary breadwinners for their families (Setiawan 2020). On the other hand, some parents in Java accept their daughters working in prostitution areas (Bennett 2007). They hold distinct moral standards: as long as personal activities do not cause social harm, prostitution is deemed acceptable (Webster 2010).

Mbak Sarmi recalled:

"... Every Ramadan, my friends and I continue to worship like Muslim women in general without being burdened by the sins people accuse me of. My prayer space is separate from the sex work room, and I regularly recite the Qur'an."

Mbak Anna added:

"... In the karaoke room, I only serve customers outside the rooms. As for

Ramadan worship, my friends and I still pray, fast, recite the Qur'an, and believe in God. We regularly hold religious gatherings (*pengajian*) every 35 days in Pasar Kembang. During Ramadan, most sex workers in Pasar Kembang observe fasting in the localization, though some decide to return to their hometowns before Eid ..." (personal interview with Anna, 2025)

In an interview with Haji Rudi, it was revealed that some millennial sex workers were difficult to manage during Ramadan. Their behavior contrasts sharply with senior sex workers in the past, who were predominantly from Central Java. Some of those senior workers had completed reading the al-Qur'an (*khatam*) up to four times, yet chose sex work due to economic necessity. Today, sex workers in Pasar Kembang are dominated by Sundanese women from West Java (90%), originating from regions such as Garut, Indramayu, and Tasikmalaya. They are often described as having attractive features, fair skin, and alluring bodies. Evidence shows that their parents have capitalized on this prostitution.

Third, as Eid al-Fitr approaches, former and current sex workers in Pasar Kembang share a tradition of mutual giving (*sadaqah*) to assist less fortunate fellow sex workers. It enables them to send money to their families when returning to their hometowns. Mbak Sarmi and Mbak Anna reminisced:

"... In the past, some money earned from sex work was saved for family medical expenses or given as alms to peers facing financial hardship due to a drop in male clients. We were bound by a shared sense of fate and mutual suffering. I did not want them trapped in online loan schemes or predatory moneylenders. This solidarity persists even after my retirement from the red-light district ..." (personal interview with Sarmi and Anna, 2025).

Currently, Mbak Sarmi works at the Vesta Foundation Yogyakarta with a stable income. Established in 2003, the Vesta Foundation is a Civil Society Organization (CSO) actively engaged in education, health, culture, and humanitarian issues. They maintain favorable relations with the Sultan's Palace (*Keraton*), law enforcement, and other Islamic mass organizations in Yogyakarta. Setting aside her current profession, this phenomenon shows that practices of piety persist within red-light districts like Pasar Kembang. Pasar Kembang not only represents the reality of liberalization amid the dominant and religiously strict Muhammadiyah Islam, but also illustrates how "night butterflies" establish their religious sympathy within secular spaces. Nightlife entertainment venues serve as symbols of commercialization and the negotiation of women's bodies regarding their roles as sex workers, karaoke hostesses, or guest relation officers (Tadié and Permanadeli 2015).

During fieldwork in Yogyakarta, the authors identified the emerging concept of sex worker citizenship. First, women's experiences of sexuality do not stem from a monocultural source but a multicultural one; hence, they possess the right to ideological difference. Second, women's sexual experience is cosmopolitan and intrinsically linked to elements of religious spirituality, such as the meaning of life, emotions, and sympathy. Consequently, their identity is not purely genetic, but historical. Third, women's sexual experiences are generationally produced, global in diaspora, and functionally contribute to the political-economic realm. As a result, their participation in the public sphere consistently takes a compromise-driven rather than confrontational path.

The findings in this section offer several conceptual explanations. First, evidence suggests compartmentalization and respect for socio-

religious structures (Gilmore 1998). Sex workers reschedule their economic activities to avoid conflicting with primary worship times. This action serves as a psychological and sociological defense mechanism that reduces tension between religious faith and a stigmatized profession. Conversely, it shows that local religious values remain internalized and respected, even as these individuals operate in marginal spaces.

Second, the phenomenon of lived religion highlights that human religious practices in daily life often diverge from rigid institutional dogma (Knibbe and Kupari 2020). Participation in Tarawih prayers and Qur'anic recitations (*tadārus*) shows that religiosity does not erode because of marginal occupations. Religion functions as a flexible spiritual resource that sustains mental resilience amid life pressures. Their presence at local places of worship demonstrates individual agency in accessing the sacred without waiting for the purification of their social status, thereby asserting their right to a religious identity within their resident community.

Third, an organic solidarity system and moral-religious capital emerge within this context. Drawing on Durkheim (Cotterrell 1997; Lukes and Prabhat 2012), this cohesion stems from a shared consciousness of fate and mutual concern amid social marginalization. Almsgiving (*sadaqah*) serves as a local community-based social safety net. Applying Bourdieu's framework (Verter 2003), sharing sustenance enables the accumulation of religious capital, where *sadaqah* is conceptualized as an attempt to purify income deemed *ḥarām* (unlawful) before returning to their hometowns. Furthermore, following Goffman, individuals burdened by stigma tend to seek moral capital to restore their self-image (Aranda et al. 2023; Jensen and Sandström 2015). Helping peers send earnings

home helps preserve their status as responsible children or family members in the eyes of their communities of origin.

Conclusion

The dynamics of internalizing religious values within Yogyakarta's prostitution areas are inseparable from the roles of the Muslim community and Gus Miftah. In this setting, piety and pragmatism operate in tandem. Piety-based practices foster internal cohesion, while pragmatism extends beyond financial interests to encompass collective security. This study shows that the contemporary Pasar Kembang area retains social norms, mitigating the potential for conflict with, or forced closures by, puritanical groups.

This study has implications for formulating a paradigm for the *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) of prostitution. The *fiqh* of prostitution operates through three approaches. First, the distinction between the act and the perpetrator (*tafrīq bayn al-fi'l wa al-fā'il*), based on the legal maxim that rejection and reform are directed toward the act itself, rather than the deprivation of the perpetrator's fundamental human rights. Second, the gradual process of spiritual awakening and repentance (*al-tadrīj fī al-tawbah*), based on the maxim that what cannot be fully attained must not be entirely abandoned. Third, the comprehensive accessibility of religion (*shumūliyyat al-dīn*), grounded in the principle that spiritual needs in marginalized spaces must be addressed immediately, as in a state of emergency. The paradigm of the *fiqh* of prostitution serves to minimize the volume of transgressions or immoral acts, premised on the understanding that sex workers retain a foundational spiritual consciousness before God and possess an equal citizenship status.

However, a fundamental limitation of this study was its inability to reach a broader range

of key informants in Pasar Kembang. Besides being difficult to meet, informants frequently hid their personal identities. Within a somewhat closed social system, they selectively filter who they speak with. Furthermore, the authors were unable to explore the extent to which local authorities, nightlife entertainment business owners, and law enforcement agencies in Yogyakarta maintain the local prostitution system. Although these are limitations of this study, the authors provide a solid preliminary framework to serve as a baseline for future sociological research on religion by social scientists.[]

References

- Abidjulu, Fitrine Christiane, Amos Kesi Shibuki Marini, and Usman Idris. 2026. "Social Construction of Online Sex Work: A Social Welfare Analysis of MiChat-Mediated Sexual Labor in Jayapura, Indonesia." *Frontiers in Sociology* 11. doi:10.3389/fsoc.2026.1756800.
- Ahnaf, M. Iqbal, and Danielle N. Lussier. 2019. "Religious Leaders and Elections in the Polarizing Context of Indonesia." *Jurnal Humaniora* 31(3):227. doi:10.22146/jh.49420.
- Allen, Pam. 2007. "Challenging Diversity?: Indonesia's Anti-Pornography Bill." *Asian Studies Review* 31(2):101–15. doi:10.1080/10357820701373275.
- Amrozi, Imron, Dicky Riandy Prasetya Sultansyah, Afifatul Millah Nurul Aulia Hidayat, and Amalinda Savirani. 2022. "Kelompok Milenial dan Tantangan Pembangunan Kota: Gentrifikasi dan Komersialisasi Ruang di Kota Yogyakarta." *Jurnal Studi Pemuda* 10(2):115. doi:10.22146/studipemudaugm.69230.

- Aranda, Ana M., Wesley S. Helms, Karen D. W. Patterson, Thomas J. Roulet, and Bryant Ashley Hudson. 2023. "Standing on the Shoulders of Goffman: Advancing a Relational Research Agenda on Stigma." *Business & Society* 62(7):1339–77. doi:10.1177/00076503221148441.
- Artosa, Odam Asdi. 2018. "Pekerja Migran dan Ekonomi Informal Ilegal (Prostitusi) di Wilayah Pasar Kembang, Yogyakarta." *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosiologi* 5(1):21. doi:10.22146/jps.v5i1.35400.
- Bennett, Linda Rae. 2007. "Zina and the Enigma of Sex Education for Indonesian Muslim Youth." *Sex Education* 7(4):371–86. doi:10.1080/14681810701635970.
- Brenner, Suzanne. 2011. "Private Moralities in the Public Sphere: Democratization, Islam, and Gender in Indonesia." *American Anthropologist* 113(3):478–90. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1433.2010.01355.x.
- Butt, Simon. 2023. "Indonesia's New Criminal Code: Indigenising and Democratising Indonesian Criminal Law?" *Griffith Law Review* 32(2):190–214. doi:10.1080/10383441.2023.2243772.
- Cotterrell, Roger. 1997. "Law, Morality, and Solidarity: The Durkheimian Tradition." Pp. 178–203 in *Law's Community Legal Theory in Sociological Perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Kingsley. 1937. "The Sociology of Prostitution." *American Sociological Review* 2(5):744. doi:10.2307/2083827.
- Diarsvitri, Wienta, Aline Lefebvre, Mireille Cosquer, Azimatul Karimah, Linda Dewanti, Lilik Djuari, and Izzatul Fithriyah. 2026. "Moving towards Liberal Sexual Practices and the Challenges for Sexually Transmitted Infection Prevention and Intervention in Indonesia: A Narrative Review." *Discover Social Science and Health* 6(1):83. doi:10.1007/s44155-026-00422-6.
- Fauk, Nelsensius Klau, Paul Russell Ward, Karen Hawke, and Lillian Mwanri. 2021. "Cultural and Religious Determinants of HIV Transmission: A Qualitative Study with People Living with HIV in Belu and Yogyakarta, Indonesia" edited by J. Telfair. *PLoS One* 16(11):e0257906. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0257906.
- Fauzi, Muhammad Latif. 2012. "Religious Symbolism and Democracy Encountered: A Case of Prostitution Bylaw of Bantul." *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 50(1):97–118. doi:10.14421/ajis.2012.501.97-118.
- Gilmore, Lee. 1998. "The Whore and the Holy One: Contemporary Sacred Prostitution and Transformative Consciousness." *Anthropology of Consciousness* 9(4):1–14. doi:10.1525/ac.1998.9.4.1.
- Gluck, Mary, and Anthony Giddens. 1993. "Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age." *History and Theory* 32(2):214. doi:10.2307/2505354.
- Hayes-Smith, Rebecca, and Zahra Shekarkhar. 2010. "Why Is Prostitution Criminalized? An Alternative Viewpoint on the Construction of Sex Work." *Contemporary Justice Review* 13(1):43–55. doi:10.1080/10282580903549201.
- Houston, Stan, and Christine Mullan-Jensen. 2012. "Towards Depth and Width in Qualitative Social Work: Aligning Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis with the Theory of Social Domains." *Qualitative Social Work* 11(3):266–81. doi:10.1177/1473325011400484.
- Hout, Michael, and Ronald Inglehart. 1998. "Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in

- Forty-Three Societies." *Contemporary Sociology* 27(2):190. doi:10.2307/2654810.
- Hull, Terence H. 2017. "From Concubines to Prostitutes. A Partial History of Trade in Sexual Services in Indonesia." *Moussons* 29:65–93. doi:10.4000/moussons.3771.
- Hung, Jason. 2023. "Indonesia's Anti-Extramarital Sex Legislation: Why and How Should Policymakers Respond to Prostitution." *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice* 31(3):417–22. doi:10.1332/175982721X16911706077120.
- Hung, Jason. 2026. "Sociological and Policy Examination of Poverty-Led Crime in Indonesia: Case Study of (Child) Prostitution." *Journal of Poverty* 30(2):180–201. doi:10.1080/10875549.2024.2379766.
- Jackson, Stevi. 1999. "Feminist Sociology and Sociological Feminism: Recovering the Social in Feminist Thought." *Sociological Research Online* 4(3):43–56. doi:10.5153/sro.341.
- Jensen, Tommy, and Johan Sandström. 2015. "Normal Deviants and Erving Goffman: Extending the Literature on Organizational Stigma." *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies* 5(4):125. doi:10.19154/njwls.v5i4.4847.
- Knibbe, Kim, and Helena Kupari. 2020. "Theorizing Lived Religion: Introduction." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 35(2):157–76. doi:10.1080/13537903.2020.1759897.
- Lee, W. H. 2024. "Reclaiming the 'Good Women' Identity: A Case Study of Surabaya's Muslim Sex Workers Negotiating Islam and Sex Work." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 52(2):92–99. doi:10.1016/j.ajss.2024.04.002.
- Lee, Wooi Han. 2026. "Doing 'Good Women': Life Stories of Three Javanese Muslim Women's Pathways into Sex Work in Indonesia." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 55(2):649–62. doi:10.1007/s10508-025-03383-0.
- Lerum, Kari, and Barbara G. Brents. 2016. "Sociological Perspectives on Sex Work and Human Trafficking." *Sociological Perspectives* 59(1):17–26. doi:10.1177/0731121416628550.
- Lukes, Steven, and Devyani Prabhat. 2012. "Durkheim on Law and Morality: The Disintegration Thesis." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 12(3–4):363–83. doi:10.1177/1468795X12453270.
- Mead, Geoffrey. 2021. "Proper Recognition: Personhood and Symbolic Capital in Contemporary Sociology." *Current Sociology* 69(1):24–40. doi:10.1177/0011392120932943.
- Miller, Gale, and David Nowacek. 2018. "Social Construction of Reality." Pp. 1–8 in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. Hoboken: Wiley.
- Muhibbuthabry, Muhibbuthabry, Jailani Jailani, Putra Apriadi Siregar, and Evalina Franciska Hutasoit. 2023. "Qanun, Religious Education, Religiosity and Sexual Activity among Muslim Youth." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79(1). doi:10.4102/HTS.v79i1.8020.
- Novianti, Liza, and Waliadin Waliadin. 2023. "Online Prostitution in the Perspective of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 44 of 2008 on Pornography." *Riwayat: Educational Journal of History and Humanities* 6(1):262–69. doi:10.24815/jr.v6i1.31457.
- Nugroho, Aji Setyo, and Anita A'isah. 2025. "Parenting Strategies and Adaptation among Muslim Families in the Prostitution-Affected Area of Samas Beach,

- Yogyakarta." *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JSAI)* 6(2):156–69. doi:10.22373/jsai.v6i2.8202.
- Platt, Maria, Sharyn Graham Davies, and Linda Rae Bennett. 2018. "Contestations of Gender, Sexuality and Morality in Contemporary Indonesia." *Asian Studies Review* 42(1):1–15. doi:10.1080/10357823.2017.1409698.
- Riswanda, Janet McIntyre-Mills, and Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes. 2017. "Prostitution and Human Rights in Indonesia: A Critical Systemic Review of Policy Discourses and Scenarios." *Systemic Practice and Action Research* 30(3):213–37. doi:10.1007/s11213-016-9393-4.
- Sagala, Ermiyani, Natalia Sihotang, Zulmi Efendi, and Arif Febriyana. 2020. "Prostitution as Social Pathology: A Legal and Criminological Perspective." *Law Research Review Quarterly* 6(2):91–100. doi:10.15294/lrrq.v6i2.31109.
- Sakai, Minako, and Amelia Fauzia. 2014. "Islamic Orientations in Contemporary Indonesia: Islamism on the Rise?" *Asian Ethnicity* 15(1):41–61. doi:10.1080/14631369.2013.784513.
- Setiawan, Rahmadi Agus. 2020. "Building an Islamic Feminist Liberation Theology for Women in Prostitution." *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 20(1):73–93. doi:10.14421/esensia.v20i1.1556.
- Sholeha, Ahyaul Ahnafia, and Hario Aji Nugroho. 2025. "Contestation of Religion, Politics, and Social Identity: A Historical Analysis of Ali Sadikin's Policy Towards the Localisation of Kramat Tunggak in Jakarta, 1950-1999." *Journal of Islamic History* 5(2):174–90. doi:10.53088/jih.v5i2.2278.
- Suddick, Kitty Maria, Vinette Cross, Pirjo Vuoskoski, Kathleen T. Galvin, and Graham Stew. 2020. "The Work of Hermeneutic Phenomenology." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 19. doi:10.1177/1609406920947600.
- Tadié, Jérôme, and Risa Permanadeli. 2015. "Night and the City: Clubs, Brothels and Politics in Jakarta." *Urban Studies* 52(3):471–85. doi:10.1177/0042098014537692.
- Verter, Bradford. 2003. "Spiritual Capital: Theorizing Religion with Bourdieu against Bourdieu." *Sociological Theory* 21(2):150–74. doi:10.1111/1467-9558.00182.
- Wahyu Pratiwi, Evi, and Yanis Habibie. 2025. "Statistik Kemiskinan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 2025." Yogyakarta: BPS Prov. Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. <https://yogyakarta.bps.go.id/id/publication/2025/09/11/df9a87a4eb87787afc2bfa7d/statistik-kemiskinan-daerah-istimewa-yogyakarta-2025.html>.
- Warr, Deborah J., and Priscilla M. Pyett. 1999. "Difficult Relations: Sex Work, Love and Intimacy." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 21(3):290–309. doi:10.1111/1467-9566.00157.
- Webster, Tracy Wright. 2010. "The Glittering World: Female Youth and Nocturnal Dugem Space in Yogyakarta, Indonesia." *Gender, Technology and Development* 14(2):241–66. doi:10.1177/097185241001400206.
- Yudha, Teza, Mudiayati Rahmatunnisa, and Widya Setiabudi Sumadinata. 2025. "Unearthing Stigma About Prostitution Among Indonesian State Actors: A Critical Narrative Analysis." *Deviant Behavior* 46(11):1431–52. doi:10.1080/01639625.2024.2385927.