



Dangdut, *Saweran*, and Sexual Harassment: A Case Study on Female Dangdut Singers in Jakarta and Bandung

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Abstract. This article reviews the sexual harassment experienced by female dangdut singers as female workers. Research data was collected through in depth interviews with four female dangdut singers in DKI Jakarta. The collected data was then observed specifically in regards to the practice of *saweran*, and was analyzed through the perspective developed by MacKinnon (1979). The research yields result that the ideological background of dangdut music was dominated by the interest and taste of men, and as such was constructed and controlled by the desires of men. It was such situation built upon unequal power relations that served as the basis for the development of sexual harassment towards the female dangdut singers. This is why they need to negotiate, be it with themselves, their relations, or the conditions.

Keywords: Female Dangdut Singers · *Saweran* Practice · Sexual Harassment

1 Introduction

Sensuality and eroticism have long served as key element in the entertainment business, with aims of commercial success in the market. In an entertainment industry that is abundant with the exposure of women's body and sexuality, such as in dangdut concert, female dangdut singers often became targets of sexual harassment during work. According to Saptari and Holzner [1], dimension of sexuality is not only limited to marriage and prostitution only, but also in workspace. In dangdut concert, sexual abuse could emerge from every side, but the most potential one is through the practice of *saweran*.

Usually, *saweran* or a practice of tipping the singer with money in a dangdut concert was given by hand. In certain cases, however, it was indecently done by putting the money directly into the cleavage or even the underwear of the dangdut singers. This situation was often unavoidable and was cause of discomfort to the singers, despite their efforts to avoid it. In the perspective of the female workers, this was caused by unequal power relations, which results in either party feeling burdened. MacKinnon [2] calls

it “the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power” or in other words: sexual harassment. Usually, the victims here are the female dangdut singers.

This article aims to explain the sexual harassment experienced by the female dangdut singers as female workers based on the perspective of MacKinnon about sexual harassment of working women. This research utilized four in depth interviews with four subjects in DKI Jakarta and Bandung.

According to McKinnon, there are two forms of sexual impositions in workplace: quid pro quo and condition of work. In the case of quid pro quo, a woman or a female worker needs to appease a sexual demand given by her superior, or a person of authority, otherwise she would not receive an employment benefit [2]. According to McKinnon [2] this benefit can take any tangible forms of exchange, such as a demand for sex or physical contacts in exchange of job promotion, employment, raise, or other benefits in regards to the work and profession. There are three different conditions of Quid pro quo. In the first one, the woman decides to refuse or turn down the demands and thus the benefit she may receive would be withheld. It follows the pattern of sexual demand, then non-compliance, and finally retaliation from the withholding party. This retaliation may come in forms of giving threats or intimidation. The second condition is when the woman appeases the demand, yet the benefit is still withheld from her. And the third condition is when the woman appeases the demand and receives the benefits. MacKinnon actually proposes a fourth condition, which is when the woman refuses but still receives the benefit. She would then receive no further demand and work would continue as usual. It could be said to be a case of “no harm in asking.” According to MacKinnon, this condition should not be discussed further as it has no legal space.

In condition of work, MacKinnon elaborates that sexual attack or harassment or impositions can turn a workplace into an unbearable place [2]. It means that a woman become subject of sexual harassment at work for having a female body, and this may occur throughout her days at work. A woman “... might be constantly pinched, visually stripped and getting stared at, silently kissed, commented upon, and manipulated into isolation, then exploited at work [2],” only this time without any exchange of benefit in regards to the job or profession. In such case, there are only two choices for the woman: to keep working despite the frustrating working condition or to quit the job. Most women, according MacKinnon, have to tolerate sexual harassment just to keep their job.

Sexual harassment, especially ones that continue to happen at workplace, whether committed by the same or different person, can impact the psychological condition of women. Just like victims of rape, women who are subjected to sexual harassment feel humiliated, insulted, ashamed, and angry [2]. What is surprising is the fact women who are subject to sexual harassment often feel that what happen to them is their fault. They think that they have committed something that gets them treated that way. In the case of *saweran*, the female dangdut singers often respond with negotiation attempt, whether it is directed to themselves, relations, and conditions.

2 The Development of *Orkes Melayu* into Dangdut and Dangdut *Koplo*

Dangdut is among the biggest and most popular music genre in Indonesia. Its development is quite rapid as it is open to the influence of other genres like *keroncong*, *gambus*, pop, rock, reggae, and more. The word “Dangdut” has been used since the early 1960s to refer to *Orkes Melayu* (Malay Orchestra) which had undergone a metamorphosis due to the influence of Indian music. In 1954 since there were not enough Indonesian movies for the entertainment market, Indian movies became popular, and with it Indian music. The name “Dangdut” was likely an onomatopoeia of the sound made by the *gendang* (a percussive instrument), “dang” and “dut” [3]. There was a significant difference between Dangdut and other music genres, especially the sound graft of the singers and the use of flute and *gendang* primarily as background instruments.

According to Weintraub [4], dangdut is the result of global intercultural dialogue, a product of the pop music of India, Middle-East, Europe, and the US that was appropriated, translated, transformed, and spiced up with Indonesian local sensibility centered around the urban areas in Jakarta and Surabaya during the 1950s and 1960s. Due to this intercultural identity of the music, it has also been named a hybrid music. The result of commixture becomes the new musical identity that has since become unique in dangdut. The hybrid characteristic of dangdut serves as the main argument that dangdut is a result of cultural appropriation that is developing in Indonesia.

Dangdut underwent a quite drastic transformation around the 1970s by the dangdut star Rhoma Irama. Earning the moniker as “the King of Dangdut,” he was able to transform and package dangdut into an interesting, entertaining, and classy music. It was then that dangdut found its way to popularity in the country, catering not only to the taste of the lower-middle class, but even the upper class. Eventually, dangdut became the music enjoyed by everyone of all social strata.

However, this was not its last phase of metamorphosis. Another breakthrough came during the early 2000 around the coastal area of East Pantura. The dangdut musicians there developed a variety of the music that would later be known as dangdut *koplo*. This time, what colored its new transformation were elements from *campursari*, also Jaipongan of West Java, *jaranan*, and *kendang kempul* of Banyuwangi. Another prominent aspect of the *koplo* is that it is often performed by singers with energetic, spontaneous, and sensational dance choreography [3]. This easily sets the dangdut *koplo* concerts apart from other musical performance.

Up to this date, dangdut group still call themselves “Orkes Melayu” (lit. Malay Orchestra) or often abbreviated as OM. In East Java, some of the more popular groups are OM New Pallapa, OM Monata, OM Sagita, OM Sera, and OM Sonata. Despite colloquially referred to as dangdut groups, none of the groups actually call themselves a Dangdut Group or Dangdut Orchestra. Even the popular “koplo” name has never been used officially by any of the groups.

The catchy and entertaining music, in conjunction with the rhythm of the *gendang* that may stimulate the listeners to dance along, make dangdut a widely popular genre. In its later development, the widespread popularity and huge market of the music could not escape the influence of the television industry, as television channels incorporated dangdut into their list of programs. However, while the original habitat of dangdut is in

folk festival and open stages, television version of dangdut was an in-studio entertainment, with smaller stage and without erotic dance. According to Rianto [5], television dangdut seeks to offer not only entertainment, but also ideology.

Undeniably, dangdut occupies a special space in the hearts of Indonesian people. This is also why every time an event is held which features dangdut performance, it would almost always be guaranteed a crowd. Political parties understand this completely, and as such often use dangdut to attract people to attend their campaigns [3, 6]. Political campaigns in regional or rural stages were always lively with dangdut concert.

When it comes to the singer, the stage in dangdut has been dominated by female singers. If the line-up of a dangdut concert consists of six singers, it is quite likely that there would only be one or two male singers among them. During the early stage of the music, the popularity of dangdut singers would be attributed mostly to the quality and character of their voice. Some notable examples of popular dangdut singers in the past are Elvy Sukaesih, Rita Sugiarto, Iis Dahlia, Ikke Nurjanah, and Evie Tamala. These singers accentuate their performance with moderate and “acceptable” dance performance on stage. It was not until the rise of Inul Daratista as a star that dangdut began exploring and incorporating more body movements and “out of the ordinary” elements into the dance [7]. Inul’s dance move was a subject of controversy and headlines, known as *goyang ngebor* or “drilling dance.” It should be noted, however, that based on my interview with one of the research subjects, such dance move was never anything new, as rural stages had long been graced by dangdut singers with sensational dance performance. There had never been significant opposition to this, but as Inul became a viral sensation on television, religious and conservative groups began citing the erotic dance moves as means to repress women’s creativity and freedom of expression.

Despite the controversy and the criticism, Inul was undeterred. She instead grew even more popular. Following her footsteps and template of success, female dangdut singers after Inul like Dewi Persik (*goyang gergaji*, hip movements resembling the movement of saw), Zaskia Gothik (*goyang itik*, resembling the duck tail wiggle), Annisa Bahar (*goyang patah-patah*, seems like twerking but only with one hip), Uut Permatasari (*goyang ngecor*, hip movements resembling the movement of drilling with one leg crossing the other), Duo Serigala (*goyang dribble*, resembling ball dribbling but with breasts), and the most recent and phenomenal one, Rosa Meldianti (*goyang ular/mendesis*, imitating how snakes move, with hiss), would become popular through sensational dance performance that explores the movements of the body. By their iconic dance moves, each of them rose to popularity along with a growth in their earnings. However, achievement-wise, an issue thus emerged; as female dangdut singers become more reliant on erotic dance performance, they are often viewed as “easy,” “cheap” or “of low taste.”

The sensual stage act, along with the festive music, made every dangdut performance along the Pantura area a crowd-magnet. Audience would often consist of both locals and people from out of regions who come specifically for the dangdut performance. Today, dangdut, especially dangdut *koplo*, is the main source of livelihood for the musicians and the singers. It has also been viewed as part of the culture by the people. This means that an entire industry of outdoor dangdut performance has been rapidly developing and growing across the regions, especially in Pantura.

Dangdut *koplo* performance nowadays is identical with energetic musical rhythm, sexy and sensual female singers, and sensational dance moves that would arouse the audience to dance as well. During the performance, both the audience and singers can just sing to the rhythm, freely, unbound by any aesthetic conventions. As told by Weintraub [4], the singer can dance, sing with sensational moves or rousing voice and singing songs with provocative theme or lyrics to get the crowd to sing and dance along.

In regards to the circulation of dangdut *koplo*, Weintraub [4] elaborates further that the music gets us to think about circulation differently from the one-way national-regional model of the Old Order. The performance of *koplo* has its roots in the ronggeng dance in rural Java. The music retains a lot of influence from other musical genres, including metal, house, dangdut, and jaipongan. Moreover, Weintraub added that the intercultural relationship among ethnic groups has led to the development of even more new styles. *Koplo* became popularized by Inul Daratista (formerly a rock singer from East Java), that combined her signature *goyang ngebore* or drilling dance with dangdut music. Weintraub's analysis underlines the speculation on the spread of *koplo* as merely a one-way change model. He views it as a hybrid room for the genre of dangdut *koplo* in particular, and ethnic dangdut in general.

Dangdut, especially *koplo*, risks going up against certain resisting parties. A common form of resistance is downright banning. Ban against dangdut *koplo* performance is nothing new. In 2016, a ban against *koplo* was issued in several regions. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission of West Java Region (KPID Jawa Barat), for example, took issue with 13 song lyrics, among others: *Paling Suka 69* (by Julia Perez), *Wanita Lubang Buaya* (Mirawati), *Simpanan* (Zilvana), *Hamil Sama Setan* (Ade Farlan), *Mobil Bergoyang* (Asep Rumpi and Lia M.J.), *Mucikari Cinta* (Rimba Mustika), *Satu Jam Saja* (Zaskia Gotik), *Cowok Oplosan* (Geby Go), *Merem-merem Melek* (Ellicya), and *Gak Zaman Punya Pacar Satu* (Lolita). The broadcasting commission banned those songs in local radio and televisions as they deemed the contents too sexually explicit, suggestive of extramarital sex, degrading women, and for containing too many expletives [8].

The ban against the songs appears to be based on the moral standard of the locals. "Indecency" became the primary point of consideration for a ban, not the musical character or quality of the songs. It was difficult to defend the banned songs, as it was not easy to explain the positive contribution of the songs to the public. Straightforwardly, the sexual connotation delivered by the songs has the potential to "corrupt" the moral of the public. Dangdut *koplo* is indeed significantly different than the mainstream dangdut, lyric-wise, musical color-wise, and in the representation of the singer.

Yampolsky [9], Lockard [10], and Weintraub [4], believe that the spirit of dangdut is channelled not only through its musical elements, as the lyric of every repertoire is a representation of the lower-middle class society. The logical reason why this music is loved by most people is because dangdut is thought to embody the "pain" and "toils" of the lower class society. As such, it is often received divisively. Some view the lyrics of the *koplo* as indecent and not educating, while others see it as the music of the poor, and the theme in the lyrics reflect the naivety of the lower class.

In Indosiar TV channel, there are two dangdut singing talent show programs called Dangdut Academy and Bintang Pantura. Both programs give honorable position to dangdut *koplo*. No distinction is made between *koplo* and mainstream dangdut in these

programs. In fact, *koplo* is a sort of orientation for the two programs. This can be seen as legitimacy for dangdut *koplo*. Apart from those two programs, Indosiar also houses other dangdut talent show programs like Kondang In and Stardut, while MNCTV channel has KDI (Kontes Dangdut Indonesia) and Primadona. Over the years, these talent shows have produced some young and talented dangdut singers to bring more color to the Indonesian music industry.

3 The Erotic Tendency of Dangdut Music

In the entertainment industry, aside from sensuality, eroticism has become a central element to package entertainment so to sell in the market. Because of that, the emergence of eroticism and sensuality in a performance stage is not something natural, rather a construction through planning and preparation. Such is the emergence of both these elements in a dangdut performance.

One of the characteristics of dangdut, dangdut *koplo* especially, according to Weintraub [4], is that it is a performance that tends to be erotic. This is indeed something very commonly found in *koplo* performance around the *Pantura* (Pantai Utara or Northern Coast) area. Inul Daratista as a singer who came from a *koplo* background only accentuated this erotic tendency in her show. Sensuality and eroticism present themselves through the outfit worn during the show that reveals the body curves of the singer, their dance moves, and the improvised erotic moaning sound made by the singer. These components are attached to a dangdut performance, especially *koplo*.

Eroticism in a dangdut performance is built by the female singer through an outfit that reveals the body curves and accentuates certain body parts of the singer, the dance, and the improvised erotic moaning sound made by the singer [11]. A singer with a sensual appearance, in a minimal and revealing outfit, dancing erotically with an expressive moaning sound, all are integral to a performance stage; an entertainment package presented and delivered to the audience. All of which actually have little to do with the real life of the singer. And yet in the minds of the common public, the characteristic of female dangdut singers is one which promotes sensuality and eroticism. Especially when viewing a live dangdut show, the audience's attention would focus at the singer as a representation of sensuality and eroticism.

It is somewhat of a public secret that musical performance which sells mainly sensuality and eroticism risks bringing a polemic to the community. This does not mean that the community rejects sensuality and eroticism in itself, only that presenting it openly is still considered a social taboo. The majority of Indonesian public, specifically the Javanese community, are still predominantly those who promote a culture of decency and politeness, where women are always viewed as the main holder of the torch of decency and morality. As such, erotic and sensual performance by women will be met by criticism and repressed.

4 Becoming a Female Dangdut Singer

A person becomes a singer usually as an extension of a singing hobby, before getting enough recognition to appear in celebratory events, such as the marriage of family

members. Only when faced with economic and financial demands that a singer might choose to go professional. It means that a profession or career as a singer is not one planned or dreamed from the beginning. After deciding to make singing a professional career, be it on television or with an *orkes* (orchestra, or dangdut group), a singer needs to think about a lot of things, including stage presentation and outfit or costume.

It is not clear what sort of agreement determines the dress code of a dangdut singer, especially female. What is often found in dangdut shows is sexy outfits worn by the female singers, ones that reveals their body curves. Other details include vibrant colors and glitters on the outfit or costume.

Sometimes what is being primarily sold in a dangdut music show is not the quality of the singer, rather the pretty face, the sexy outfit, in addition to the energetic moves of the body under the rhythm of the music, and stage acts that can attract the attention of the audience. When a singer chooses a more sensual and erotic appearance, she raises the chance of being favored by the audience. However, it comes with a risk to her own social life as sensual and erotic appearance may result in a particular public image or perception upon herself. Some audience are attracted, but try to act normal. Some are infatuated by the sexy appearance of the singer. Outside these two camps, there are also viewers who are too busy with their own worlds: drunk and tend to cause commotion. It is in such moment that a singer faces the challenge to make a decision: act professionally or being swayed by the condition.

5 The *Saweran* Practice and Sexual Harassment

When working, women cannot escape the threat of sexual harassment. It can come anywhere, everywhere, and from every corner. I would like to underline once again that MacKinnon [2] defines sexual harassment as “the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements”. Furthermore, it happens in the context of unequal power relations. According to Sofyan [12], money that serves as currency is capable of breaking the existing structure and public perception about dangdut performance stage. In a dangdut show, such relationship may be established between the singer and the client, between the singer and the audience, the singer and the *penyawer* (the one performing the *saweran* practice), the singer and the musicians, or between the singer and the manager. All of whom are parties in position of authority with respect to the singer. The female dangdut singers who become subjects of this research admit that they have experienced at least once of those “unwanted nuisances or impositions.” In other words, they have all experienced sexual harassment. Based on the category of sexual harassment by MacKinnon, as elaborated above, the types of sexual harassment experienced by the subjects can be categorized into two: *quid pro quo* and condition of work. The first category, *quid pro quo*, is a situation where a person of authority makes a sexual demand in exchange of a work benefit. While in the second category, condition of work, a worker is sexually harassed or forced to perform sexual favors without any work benefit or privilege.

5.1 *Quid Pro Quo*

The conditions in *quid pro quo* are closely related to sexual demands or impositions to women with a prospect of benefit or privilege in her work. When put into the context of

sexual harassment experienced by the female dangdut singers, it can be understood how men as the more dominant party would demand women as the less powerful party to commit sexual acts or favors in exchange for benefit. McKinnon further classified quid pro quo in three conditions and one condition that Margruder considers as “no harm in asking.” In the first condition, the pattern that emerges is as follows: sexual demand, then non-compliance, and then retaliation.

This first condition is what Santi has experienced in the past. When asked if she has ever refused the demand made by a client that ends in a bitter note, she answered as follows:

“I have, and it’s like he could not accept it. He feels offended, like he thought, oh I can buy a woman far prettier than you. Some people are like that, they’d ask you out to go out for lunch or dinner, but they’d tell you not to bring anybody, so it’s like asking you to a date, but when I said no, he could not take it.” (Santi, personal communication [in-person interview], May 30, 2019)

In such case above, request to go out to a dinner date by a client, which can be understood as an opening attempt to other requests including invitation for sex, was refused by Santi. And as such, she was not given any extra benefit. Normally the benefit for compliance in such case would be extra fee or chance for more working opportunities with the client. Santi’s refusal is responded with retaliation from the client in form of an insult to her. By saying that he could “buy” women who are prettier than Santi, it means he puts into position women in general, and Santi in particular, as items or good that he can easily procure or buy. In such a relationship pattern, it can be observed that the client might have employed similar strategy or tactics to other women, so when faced with rejection, he felt capable of just repeating it with other women.

From all conditions of quid pro quo according to MacKinnon, I cannot found the second and third in the narration of my research subjects. In the second condition, the women who comply with the sexual demands are not given any benefit in exchange. This is indeed something quite rare in the entertainment industry, especially if *saweran* is considered a form of giving benefit. *Saweran*, which in this context I mean to be understood as additional fee to the standard fee of performing, is usually given at the early part along with the sexual demand. Otherwise, demands would be made along with the prospect of giving *saweran* as benefit once sex or any activities which involve physical contacts or any other forms of sexual demands have been fulfilled by the women. In the third condition, which also does not appear in the narration of my research subjects, the women fulfil the sexual demands and thus are given the promised benefit. From the narration of my subjects, none of them agree to the sexual demands made to them, mostly from the client. However, it has become somewhat of a common knowledge among dangdut singers and clients that many female singers are open to accept such demands or requests.

“I’d say that female dangdut singers, the average ones, maybe there are exceptions out there... but most of us would refuse such requests. Although, sometimes there are instances or companies that might think, oh this one dangdut singer must be like “this” or “that,” and they’d think they can book the singer for a one night stand or

something like that.” (Santi, personal communication [in-person interview], May 30, 2019)

Apart from the three conditions, MacKinnon also mentions the fourth condition, which is when a sexual demand is made with prospect of benefit, but the women refuses and still receives the benefit. MacKinnon explains this condition through cases that appear before the American court. In these cases, the women feel that they are victims to sexual harassment although they refuse it and still receive benefit. According to MacKinnon, who cites Magruder, the court is unable to take any action because there is no injury and the accusers still received the benefit, and there have been no follow-up demands made afterwards. It is how the statement “no harm in asking” came to be, when in fact the demand should have been enough proof that in a patriarchal world, women are only seen as sexual bodies, or subject to satisfy the desire of men, nothing more. Santi has had experiences with this condition.

In Santi’s experience, this sexual demand came implicitly, the client tried to ask for sexual favors in stages. First he tried to ask Santi out to go shopping. Santi realized that it would eventually lead to a sexual demand. And as such, she refused to meet the client if there were only the two of them; she only wanted to meet when her friends accompany her. The client then no longer made any demand because he knew Santi did not want to go out on her own, so there would be no opportunity to make a sexual approach. In this case, and other cases that pit her against a request for one-night stand, Santi still receives benefit despite turning down the request. The benefits she received could come in forms of *saweran*, money, gadget, and even weekly fees. There was also no change in the dynamics of the relationship between Santi and the client, still okay until today.

Similar experience was narrated by Reni. She once felt that her old manager lied to her. Without transparency about the venue and the fee she would receive, Reni had to show up in a nightclub without a stage that separates the singer from the audience. Reni also had to mingle, showing intimate gestures, with the audience so to receive *saweran*. It was also common after performance, especially if the venue of the performance is a nightclub, for the client or the owner of the nightclub to invite the singer to gather in a room or in one of the guest table. This is done to make an impression of intimacy or closeness between the owner of the club and the guest artists.

When sitting with the client, who was the owner of the club, Reni received a sexual demand. The question “what room number are you staying in?” is a common code phrase for sexual request. Reni turned down the request, not verbally, rather through gestures that shown her discomfort, by laughing sarcastically. As a result, the client responded with a gesture that shown his feeling insulted by Reni’s rejection. However, it did not lead to any threat, retaliation, or even offer to perform in the same club, notwithstanding the fact that she would not be willing to accept even if such offer does come in again to her table. However, she still received an additional *saweran* fee of five hundred thousand rupiahs.

5.2 Condition of Work

MacKinnon through her work discusses the cases of sexual harassment at workplace, normally in office environment, and includes them into the category of condition of

work. According to her, in this condition, a woman is “forced” to tolerate certain acts like touching, grabbing, pinching, silently kissing, lustful staring, comments, and even manipulations that are directed at her. These acts, according to RUU P-KS (sexual harassment eradication draft bill) is a form of sexual violence, specifically sexual harassment. All are actions taken merely because the victims have a female body.

In the context of dangdut, *saweran* practice has become somewhat of a fertile ground of *penyawer* to “gain favors” from the female body of the dangdut singers. It is quite a general perception that the body of dangdut singers can be touched, and even grabbed when given *saweran*. This does not only occur once or twice in the life of a female dangdut singer. This profession puts them into a daily occurrence of continuous sexual harassment. Some authentic proofs can be easily found on YouTube. There are so many video titles which illustrate the cases out there, an example would be “Dangdut saweran paling hot boleh pegang dan cium susu” (roughly translates quite explicitly as “hottest dangdut *saweran* audience can grab and kiss the singer’s breasts”). However, we can also see that most dangdut singers came from a lower class background, or commonly known as “dangdut kampung” singers. But what about singers from different backgrounds or social class? My research subjects admit that they have experienced it once, or at least witnessed other dangdut singers experiencing it. Reni is among those who has experienced it herself repeatedly, not only once.

“So when I was singing I felt a hand touching my back, he was like... like this (showing a hand gesture that caresses her right shoulder and moves towards her breasts). ... Seriously, I immediately did like this (showing how she quickly grabbed the hand of the perpetrator), I held his hand, like this, like this... and I punched his face on stage. I hit him with the mic, I hit him with my hands.” (Reni, personal communication [in-person interview], February 28, 2019)

Reni is a female dangdut singer under one of the biggest talent management in Indonesia. She has had hours of performing on stage. Even so, she could not avoid the uncomfortable working conditions. An audience who was dancing on stage, Bader [13] calls it dancing audience member, tried to grab her breasts. In different occasion, Reni’s buttock was grabbed by someone among the crowd when she was walking towards the stage. She responded by kicking the jaw of the audience member.

The case examples from MacKinnon are indeed different from the context of dangdut industry. According to MacKinnon, these nuisances and discomfort constantly come to the point where the working environment becomes unbearable. Obviously the two contexts cannot be regarded the same as the types of perpetrators and settings are different. Women in MacKinnon’s case were ones working in the office setting and meet pretty much the same set of people, with the potential of creating an uncomfortable workplace to women. Meanwhile in the context of dangdut, or entertainment industry in general, women are working in an environment that necessitates them to meet different kinds of new people, although in the end it may also create the same unbearable and uncomfortable working space through repeated and constant sexual harassments and advances.

According to MacKinnon, in the condition of work, it is as if women only have two choices, tolerating it or quitting the job entirely. Reni was also confronted with

the choices, though she decided to remain with her job, even tolerating that part of her profession, and acting as if nothing happens and carrying on with her job. However, she refuses to just let anything happen to her, as she put a fight against it.

Female dangdut singers are almost always faced by condition that would make them uncomfortable. Santi recounted of a time that made her feel uncomfortable was when she was dancing on the stage and someone tried to touch her. According to McKinnon, the confused and insecure feelings are prominent among women trapped in the condition of work situation. They are presented with dilemma as the work as important to their livelihood, and yet they always feel harassed; they are also upset, will the harassment after harassment ever stop? Santi experienced the same dilemma as she sat around with piles of money. She felt that the millions of *saweran* money that she got from her job could not possibly compensate for the touches and attempts made upon her body. What is experienced by Santi is expected to represent the dilemma of other female dangdut singers who had to bear with touches and grabs to receive additional *saweran* fee.

However, this is different with what Amel has experienced. She was not only hugged and kissed on the cheek, someone had even put *saweran* money directly into her bra cup, and grabbed her buttocks. Amel was even target of beating, scratching, and kicking as the stage became uncontrollable. This was her experienced from 3–4 years ago. In one particular event, she had to sing in front of thousands of people and she could no longer see who were harassing her. She could not accuse anybody, and she even had to tolerate it because she received another offer for work. Amel could not free herself from threats of harassment, but she built a self-defense by trying to make sure that at the next event she would not have experience something similar. Not only Reni, Amel, Santi, and Lisna also have similar experience. They also had to come face to face with sexual violence and had to force themselves out from such an unbearable situation.

“there was this person who came to give saweran, he spanked me, I was angry. I was angry but I think that, okay, this person is drunk. I could not blame him 100%... But my mother was on the stage at the time, so I just went to a chair and sit down. And my mother picked up the mic to continue singing where I left off.”
(Lisna, personal communication [in-person interview], March 25, 2019)

In most cases, someone who is drunk is almost always guaranteed tolerance with the excuse that they are not doing anything in sober condition. Lisna tolerated it but she also requested for help. And it was her mother, who happened to be on stage with her, who replaced her to sing. This event should be further observed, as it is reminiscent to MacKinnon’s idea of the substitutability of the women who are harassed in workplace, only unlike in Lisna’s case, the substitute acts not as savior, rather replacement and a new victim of the cycle to receive and tolerate all the sexual harassment as part of her daily profession.

From all the narrated experience of the subjects, similar pattern can be observed, namely that the perpetrators never asked for permission to commit the nuisances. This was also covered by MacKinnon that in condition of work, yes-no answers are not necessary, thus constant harassments, advances, and nuisances would continue to come. Even the refusal from the women would not have no impact to the perpetrators, so the women workers need to continue to tolerate the condition. When a woman finally decides

to tolerate and remain in such working environment, the reason must have something to do with her own financial situation. Santi and Amel said that they rejected sexual advances in gentle and soft-spoken manner, so the good relationship between them and their clients would not be harmed, and their image as a professional singer would be saved.

5.3 Mental Wound and Trauma

It cannot be denied that sexual harassment of any forms will leave scars and trauma to those who experience it. Especially if threats keep on coming from every corner and the perpetrators remain on the loose. Based on MacKinnon's findings from a survey on what the victims feel, I am certain that every woman who has experienced sexual harassment must bear their own scar and trauma. It turns out that women who are often deemed weaker are instead stronger and more capable of handling the psychological wound and trauma from sexual harassment. They are not overcome by their wound and trauma; they control them instead. It is this perseverance and strength that I found in my research subjects as they recounted the story of their experience with sexual harassment.

Reni is my research subject whom I noted as being able to control her trauma, although she recounted that she cried during the experience. As I already wrote before, Reni's manager once lied to her and made her perform in a nightclub out of Reni's prediction. In the club, she was not given a stage to perform, and instead had to walk around and mingle among the audience asking for *saweran*. *Saweran* is not really the part she enjoys from singing dangdut; it is in fact the aspect that makes her feel humiliated, like when she was asked for sex by the nightclub owner.

"I was crying... It felt like I had no dignity and self-respect, you know? Until this day I have yet to step my foot in a nightclub. Not even a café, it was the lowest point in my life apart from *saweran*." (Reni, personal communication [in-person interview], February 28, 2019)

Reni felt traumatized by her experience in the nightclub. For her, it should not be appropriate that she was asked to have sex, and as such it left a deep negative impression in her memory. She was also "sad," just like the victims in MacKinnon's work about the impact of sexual harassment to the female workers. Sadness, trauma, and psychological would made her did not want to accept similar job offer, in order to prevent it from repeating ever again. This was the impression I got as I was listening to her story. Reni was also "angry" and she expected that such thing would never happen to her again. But as she recounted, I could still hear laughter and jokes, indicating how she has control over her own feelings. Like Reni, Lisna was also "angry" when she experienced sexual harassment when receiving *saweran*.

"there was this person who came to give *saweran* and he spanked me, I was so angry. I was angry but I thought, okay this person is drunk. I can't blame him 100%. So at that time he ... Hit me with money." (Lisna, personal communication [in-person interview], March 25, 2019)

From the way she recounted her experience, I could sense restrained anger. On one hand, Lisna was “upset” because her personal space was invaded, but on the other hand she did not feel like she had the right to be “upset” because the person was drunk at the time. When a *penyawer* or person who gives *saweran* is under the influence of alcohol, he is often far more reckless, and as such doing indecent acts like spanking would not seem out of ordinary for him. Especially if in his mind the target for such act is a female dangdut singer who “deserves” the treatment.

Lisna also said that she once witnessed a female dangdut singer received *saweran* by putting it inside her bra. It seemed that Lisna’s understanding about sexual harassment made her think that the female victims also play a part in it. “But I think if they don’t show that they are mad or don’t try to fight, then that means they allow it to happen, don’t you think? Hehehe. In my opinion it is so.” (Lisna, personal communication [in-person interview], March 25, 2019). This corresponds with the MacKinnon’s view, she mentioned that one fourth of all survey respondents who admit to having experience sexual harassment thought that they were partly at fault for the whole incident. When a woman feels that way, she would blame her own selves because she was unable to prevent sexual harassment from taking place, and it only exacerbates the psychological wound.

This was also what Santi experienced. She was not only “angry,” she was also “scared” when she was experiencing sexual harassment. The actions of the *penyawer* who harassed her on stage once discouraged her from ever gracing the stage again. “So at first I was scared, and I did not feel like singing anymore. At first I didn’t want to sing anymore because there was always a guy who’d come and wrap his arms around me.” (Santi, personal communication [in-person interview], May 30, 2019). Eventually, the demand to act professionally as entertainer necessitates her to bear with it. The psychological wound and trauma that she felt did not remain as a haunting burden. Instead, she developed a strategy to negotiate.

Amel also admitted that she has been harassed before, from being grabbed and getting beaten and kicked, she was even crying immediately after the incident. However, when she was offered an opportunity to work in the same location, she needed to overcome her trauma. She tried to make sure that the same thing would not repeat by asking for safety guarantees from the client. And it appears that now she is able to control her wound and trauma completely by looking at it as the bittersweet part of her job as a female dangdut singer.

Indeed, women who worked in the entertainment business are closer to threats of sexual harassment. I learned from the subjects that when a woman is about to be overcome by sadness, anger, fear, and trauma, she would not be able to perform and commit to her job anymore. Furthermore, as entertainers they quite understand that sexual harassment at work is something that happens often. So they use their wound and trauma and look for ways to remain with their job, and to find guarantee that they no longer will have to go through sexual harassment again.

6 Conclusion and Recommendation

The ideological background of dangdut music performance is dominated by the interest and taste of men, and as such every aspect is constructed and controlled by what men

desire. The many myths and stereotypes about women are used as commodities for the entertainment industry, with men as the primary “buyers.” It is ultimately a commodification of female body as visual and fantasy object for men. The more indecent a singer dances, the better chances she has at attracting audience. However, not all singers rely on sensual dance moves, or on wearing revealing outfits. The last group of singers consist of those who have reliable voice qualities.

Dangdut performance show is the most hegemonic stage of the entirety of the self of a dangdut singer. It is there that her body is exposed and controlled to obey the corridor of patriarchy. The ideal standard of female body and all accompanying interpretations, including practice of *saweran*, all are produced by the narrations of men. When facing sexual harassment at work, female dangdut singers as subjects of this research cannot help but tolerate or negotiate it to be considered professional.

This research has reviewed the relationship between female dangdut singer and the practice of *saweran*, in regards to negotiating sexual harassment. However, one issue still remains and needs to be given more attention and space in order to review and understand female dangdut singers more comprehensively, namely the issue of commodification. Although some researchers have discussed the problem of commodification among female dangdut singers, commodification that is related with sexual harassment has yet to be recorded.

Acknowledgments. The authors would like to thank Universitas Indonesia’s Directorate of Research and Community Service (DRPM-UI) for providing research grant for this research. We would also like to thank Universitas Indonesia’s APRiSH Committees for the support for the publication of this article, and Universitas Indonesia’s School of Strategic and Global Studies, especially Gender Studies Graduate Program for the endless academic and administrative support.

Authors’ Contributions. All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Ullynara Zungga Vriscarinie Syahvira, L. G. Saraswati Putri and Mia Siscawati. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Ullynara Zungga Vriscarinie Syahvira and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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