



# Commodification of Religion and Capitalism in Popular Culture: Religious Pop Music Industry in The Month Of Ramadhan

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## Abstract :

Today's widespread cultural phenomenon has primarily the characteristic "commodity" of being dominated by exchange rates rather than utility values. Music as part of popular culture indeed becomes part of society's commodity, where the cultural desires of society now more dominate the music industry. As for Indonesia is now born in pop religion music that starts in a community-centred culture, where people want to listen to religious music as a form of expression about themselves, especially in the month of Ramadhan. For some people listening to Islamic songs or music can influence their emotions to become better acquainted with the Islamic religion. It is mainly made up of Ramadhan, and many societies use religious music as a religious edification during Ramadhan. From such a consumptive culture was born the komoged religion and capitalism in the religious pop music industry in Ramadhan. The perpetrators of the music industry turned the moment Ramadhan as momentum to capitalize and use Islamic religious symbols into the Muslim industry. The avalanche of Islamic music by Ramadhan must be part of the capitalist strategy for making a profit by flexing the symbols found in the Islamic faith.

**Keywords :** *Commodification, Popular culture, Religious Music*

## INTRODUCTION

Music is a cultural expression and experience. Music represents the expression of everything about human beings and can accommodate various things such as politics, religion, existence and love. When individuals listen to a production of music, all elements of the music play a role in the representation of the listener's personal and social identity. Music is also able to cover various backgrounds in public life. Music is also an advanced level of pleasure than modern society, especially pop music[1].

In general, music is integrated from language as an expression and sound play of rhythmic tones, which can then be characterized by how the player produces music so that a particular genre or type is formed, such as pop, rock, metal, reggae, dangdut, jazz, and so on[2]. Genre in music is a label used by individuals to describe and classify music, and there are also no strict boundaries in the genre because the emergence is a very complex phenomenon of social interaction in society both in terms of marketing, history and cultural factors.

Like other popular culture products, music also has a very significant impact on the development of music in various circles. It can be said to be an expression of the social conditions of a particular group of individuals because music is a part of the culture. In other words, music is a form of embodiment of culture.

Popular culture has finally become a very complex conversation that cannot be separated from the term "popular" label, which means broad and complex. Some focus on aspects of the dissemination and marketing of pop culture and those that focus on the consumption aspects of pop culture to the assumption of social change in individuals regarding popular culture.

*Popular culture* is a culture that arises from the association with the media. In a sense, the media can produce a form of culture so that the public will automatically absorb it and make it a form of culture. Popularity here cannot be separated from the consumptive behaviour of the community towards the emergence of mass media[3]. Pop culture is a form of culture that is more concerned with the popularity and superficiality of meaning or values. If popular culture is born because of the hegemony of the mass media in public cultural spaces, then popular culture ideas are born from all lines of culture, both from high and low cultures. Cultural ideology is channelled through mass media and other supporting devices. [4]

Along with its development, how music becomes a product of popular culture is related to daily problems that all people or certain circles can enjoy. A culture can be adopted into a lifestyle because it places popular elements as the main element, which shows more of the entertainment side, which brings a consumptive impression[5].

In Indonesia, the music industry is mainly owned by foreign record companies with a capitalist ideology. They produce music with a clear motive, namely economic motives. Their principle is to spend as little capital as possible and get as much profit as possible. In order to comply with these principles, of course, they produce music by considering the existing market in Indonesia[6]. By considering the market, this is following the rational instrumental action proposed by Max Weber, where the music recording entrepreneur pays attention to the effectiveness of acting. [7]

Islam as the majority religion in Indonesia is undoubtedly a consideration for music industry entrepreneurs in Indonesia. This has led to the emergence of the commodification of religion in the music industry and made it a commodity that can be traded to Muslims in Indonesia. The month of Ramadan is also a consideration for capitalists in publishing their recordings, the month of Ramadan is a very effective time to gain greater market profits. During the month of Ramadan, many Muslims in Indonesia are looking for Islamic pop songs to consume. Islamic pop music itself is one of the expressions of Muslims in Indonesia is welcoming the month of Ramadan.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is library research. This research is conducted by collecting literature and studying them. [1]. Literature research is a type of research that is used to collect in-depth information and data through various literature, books, notes, magazines, other references, as well as relevant previous research results, to obtain answers and theoretical foundations regarding the problems to be studied. This study uses a Discourse Analysis approach, namely the study of the structure of the message or the various functions of language (pragmatics). This discourse analysis is used to find out the content of the text through the messages conveyed through the words, phrases, sentences, and metaphors that are conveyed. Discourse analysis looks more at how the content of the message will be studied.

The discourse analysis used is the model Van Dijk's discourse analysis. Discourse analysis analyses the text and looks at the social structure, domination, and power groups that exist in society. Teun A Van Dijk's discourse model prioritizes three dimensions: text, social cognition, and social context. Discourse analysis looks more at the "how" question of a discourse (story, text or word), then it is arranged and packaged in such a way to produce a sentence or paragraph. [2]

The literature data that we are looking for is about commodification and capitalism in religious pop music in the month of Ramadan. From the literature data obtained, a discourse analysis is carried out, which is then arranged according to the focus of the discussion on commodification and capitalism in popular culture, religious pop music in the month of Ramadan.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Music as popular culture has become a part of capitalism's political economy, guided by the principles of progress, profit, and expansion of production. This is undoubtedly a sign that music has entered into the commodities of popular culture ridden by the interests of the perpetrators of capitalism. Music in the context of capitalism can be interpreted as a form of commodification, where music business actors indeed consider the effectiveness of the market by commodifying a value that develops in society.

Vincent Mosco defines *commodification* as "the process of turning goods and services, including communications, valued for their usefulness, into commodities valued for what they will provide in the market." Commodification is the process of transforming goods and services that were initially valued for their use-value into valuable commodities because they can generate profits in the market after being packaged for commercial broadcasting. Commodification, in general, is to make something that was not originally a trade turned into a product that can be traded. The goal is cash only. Commodification concerns all areas of the economy, starting from production, distribution, and consumption. Nowadays, not only ordinary objects, places, sacredness, secrets, even religion are commodified. [1]

The pop music industry, which is included in the culture industry, is required to always look at the market in fulfilling the commodities offered to consumers. So there is a need for commodification that will have a significant impact on the market. Religion as the highest belief value in society, of course, attracts capitalists to commodify religion. The emergence of religious pop music can be said as a form of commodification of religion; it can be seen how religious symbols are the sacred entering the music culture industry is undoubtedly part of the commodification of religion.

In the 1970s, in Indonesia, religious music was not only about gambus. Before that year, Islamic religious music was very thick with gambus music. Until 1976 the Bimbo band appeared and was the first to dare to come out of the grip of religious music, which is identical to Gambus. Previously, religious music was enlivened by Roma Irama, which appeared in 1973. Rhoma, who carries dangdut music, of course, still uses gambus in some of his musical arrangements. In 1975 Nasida Ria also came to enliven Islamic religious songs in Indonesia, although initially offering kasidah gambus music, but in its development, it also combined it with a modern style. The songs or music they offer certainly have a place in people's hearts, at least it can be seen from the repeated playing of their songs in the month of Ramadan. [2] Even though the public accepted it, the boom in

religious music was not as big as it is now, and it is a natural thing because at that time, the media to promote it was not as much as it is today.

Religious music emerged as popular culture in 2004, in which year appeared the album *Get Victory* which was brought by Gigi, who was successful in the market, which was published in the month of Ramadan. Since then, many musicians have previously concentrated on the lyrics of love, but in Ramadan, they publish songs that are Islamic. The Islamic religious pop music industry seems to have become a capitalisation effort with the emergence of many religious songs in the community. The capitalist logic as the owner of capital here is the owner of the record label. That is, if it has become a trend, it will make something similar to the trend so that it can be used as a commodity in the market. [3]

The emergence of many religious songs in society, especially during Ramadan, indeed cannot be separated from the market strategy of the capitalists, namely standardisation and homogenisation. **Standardisation** means everything that has been standardised based on general criteria. The everyday things will be readily accepted by society for granted. It is a normal part now when religious songs appear in the month of Ramadan, and this is readily accepted by the community so that it becomes part of the market strategy. Homogenisation means uniformity aimed at tastes, attitudes, styles, and mindsets built by an extensive industrial system. The religious songs that appear in the month of Ramadan, if one observes one song with another, are almost similar in terms of both the tone structure and the lyrical themes used. [4]

Another very effective market strategy is **commodification**. One of the commodifications of religion, in this case, is to use the sanctity of the month of Ramadan as the moment of publishing songs. Music industry players, especially record label owners, are targeting the month of Ramadan as an incredible moment to be used as a market for higher economic returns. The sales figures for Islamic religious pop music fiction albums in the month of Ramadan can be said to be fantastic; they can sell albums that can penetrate thousands of copies.

People are delighted to welcome the month of Ramadan by listening to the strains of religious pop music. By listening to Islamic music, they want to increase their spirit of worship in the month of fasting. That is what drives people to look for CDs or cassette albums religious pop music and became a factor in boosting the sales figures for the physical album. The soothing lyrics of the song are also included in the commodification of religion, where the lyrics contain calls for da'wah that encourage listeners to do good things. The attributes used in the video clip also characterise religion's noble values, which are another form of religious commodification. Unfortunately, most of the musicians gave up their religious values when the circulation period was also over, which coincided with the end of the month of Ramadan. [5]

The relationship between the music market and the commodification of religion is nothing but a form of capitalisation that occurs in popular culture. According to Adorno, the music contains social contradictions in its structure, although its relation to social reality is problematic. As is the case with all widespread culture phenomena that occur today, music is characterised mainly as a commodity, which is dominated by exchange value rather than use-value. According to Adorno, the fundamental dichotomy is between market-oriented music and non-market-oriented music. [6]



## CONCLUSION

The conclusion from the above discussion is that the popular music industry certainly has capitalist interference in it. They produce music with the existing market in mind. After considering the market, they have a market strategy that they will use to spend as little capital as possible and try to get the maximum profit. Before 2004, Islamic religious music was often played by Muslims in Indonesia, which is what is considered by the religious pop music market in Indonesia.

From 2004 until now, many pop music albums of Islamic religion have emerged in Ramadan. The emergence of many religious songs in society, especially during Ramadan, indeed cannot be separated from the market strategy of the capitalists, namely standardization, homogenization and commodification. The prominent market strategy is commodification, which gives rise to the commodification of religion in the religious pop music industry in Indonesia. They commodify religion by using the month of Ramadan and Islamic views as their market strategy.

The relationship between the music market and the commodification of religion is nothing but a form of capitalization that occurs in popular culture. As is the case with all widespread culture phenomena that occur today, music mainly has the characteristics of a commodity, which is dominated by exchange value rather than use-value. Music has become a flashing and emerging cultural commodity with the interests of capitalism.

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