
**MOHAMMAD IN ARCHIPELAGO: SPATIALIZING
SPIRITUALITY IN MAJELIS SHALAWAT SYUBBANUL
MUSLIMIN IN KALIKAJAR PROBOLINGGO**

Nurul Huda

[Universitas Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo]

kaconghuda@gmail.com

Abstract

Using Mohammad in Archipelago as a metaphor of the postmodern religious landscape, this article argues that Mohammad, a prophet of Muslim born in Mecca Saudi Arabia, has undoubtedly become a consumer item in shalawat council (Majelis Shalawat) practiced in many areas of Indonesia, including Probolinggo. This new religious phenomenon has been reproduced in line with the emergence of blurred negotiation between the profane and the sacred, and by the fact that religion is always posed in social life and in business life, shalawat practice also depends itself on the meaning and process making, or the certain socio-cultural context. This study sets the Majelis Shalawat Syubbanul Muslimin, located at Probolinggo, in relation with the ways they reproduced its penetration of religion vis-a-vis market economy. It also portrays how Syubbanul Muslimin produced a spatial order of certain followers since they have successfully practiced modes and techniques of production, consumption, and structuration of their own spiritual market. Additionally, it also contributes to the construction of charisma they have shaped by using the economic-political discourse of media.

Keywords: *Syubbanul Muslimin, Spatialization, Mohammad*

A Night *Safari* of Ramadan: *Syubbanul Muslimin* on the Stage

Saturday night, on June 24th, 2017, in the coming Maghrib, *takbir* has been commanded in the last night of Ramadan in all *mushalla* after the announcement of *Idul Fitri*, Syawal 1st, 1438 H, from Minister of Religious Affairs Lukman Hakim Syarifuddin. A different view is highlighted in this *Fitri* night than the previous years. A mainroad of Panglima Sudirman, connecting regencies of Kraksaan and Paiton, were usually jammed and crowded with thousands of people, but it does not happen at that time even though the fireworks still squibed. The places where the young man and woman hanged out are not as crowded as usual.

I continued to walk to the east, going to Paiton field, attended the night of *takbir* with Majelis Shalawat Syubbanul Muslimin. At the crossroads of Paiton, a traffic density seems to start. Dozens of public transports, including cars and pickups, parked along the roadside. Some officers, who used the green vest-clothes like as official policeman, seems to arrange thousands of people in entering the field.

Looking their costumes, I believed, a glorious event has started, an event of reading *shalawatan* under Majelis Syubbanul Muslimin. The officers of traffic are easily identified, using green vest, black jacket, with a big logo “Syubbanul Muslim: Security” on their back. Some of them use a white shirt *koko* and black jacket without any combination that also identified their own tasks.

On the edge of the field entrance, various attributes of Syubbanul Muslimin are displayed in the 4x4 small stalls. Many officers, with their own uniforms from the certain companies, guarded each of the stalls. They seem overwhelmed to serve many pilgrims who buy merchandise. However, the types of merchandises are not so varied, only perfume, stickers, *koko* shirts, caps, umbrellas, *sorban*, all of which are equipped with a logo “Syubbanul Muslimin.”

The most hunted merchandises are VCD albums of Syubbanul Muslimin, completed with information on themes and places of their activities, for sale IDR 10,000. Another marketable material is mineral water “SubbanQ” for IDR 5,000. A stall of the Syubbanul Muslimin cooperation is the only one operated at the field. The merchandises for sale only consists of single branding Syubbanul Muslimin in various products.

The field like as a football stadium has been crowded with thousands of people. As far as one looks at the stadium, there are only crowd of people using caps and flags with big logos Syubbanul Muslimin. The fluttering colourful flags around the arena are like famous band concerts or political party campaigns. Many of them are mothers with different ages and youths both from *santri* and *abangan*; they united to recite *takbir* and *shalawat*.

To identify whether they are *santri* or *abangan* is by looking at their performances. Although they commonly used the cap (*peci*), there are some pilgrims who have colored hairs, crushed ears, and fitted earrings. They used like these ornaments are not commonly from *santri*. Interestingly, they can unite and ignore the barrier of differences among them. During *shalawatan*, the pilgrims seem, for a moment, to be a shared community without differentiation and stratification.

Although thousands of pilgrims crowded into the field, the chanting recitement of

shalawat and Islamic songs, good advice (*mauidzah basanah*), and prayers of prayer are clearly heard. Some big sound system in every corners of the stage enlarged their live show. We can also clearly see the crowd of people everywhere, as the four projector screens are already installed in different corners of the stage. Similarly, thousands of pilgrims who patiently sit together are also clearly seen, since many neon lamps have been set up in different positions and occasionally they get a colourful radiance from the spotlights that keep moving on a regular basis.

Meanwhile, the 18x8 m stage is so well ordered, it is not like that this stage is large. The background colours, decorations, staircases, and lightings that are designed like staircases of mosques looks harmonious with colourful spotlights, providing enough rays for the stage. Similarly, many logos of Syubbanul Muslimin clearly appeared on several small tables that extend exactly at the front of the seats of special people (VIP). Among them are *habaib*, *gus* or *lora* (young sons of *kiai*), including chief of Muslim Shubbanul Haji Hafidzul Hakim Nur (or mostly known as Gus Hafidz), vocalists and drummers of *badrah*.

A *safari* night of Ramadan strongly raised, since pairs of traditional drum (*bedug*) are positioned at the front of the stage. Its decoration is adjusted to the night-time of the event. An Arabic calligraphy *Allahu Akbar* is written in a large, but symmetrical screens. At the top of the stage, a big poster "Majlis Majlis Ta'lim and Shalawat Syubbanul Muslimin kindly welcomed Idul Fitri" is displayed.

Reciting *takbir*, escorted with music and fireworks, made it more attractive. *Shalawat simtuddurar* and some new songs created by Syubbanul Muslimin, either in Arabic or Indonesian, are rhythmically rebounded with *rabbana* music. In few moments, people joined recitation of *shalawat* texts they have memorized. The most live show is a moment when people loudly read lyrics of Syubbanul Muslimin with a very different arrangement from *rabbana al-banjari's* rhythm, made some young pilgrims have dance. Luckily, the security team is always ready to spot a flashlight to anyone who gets dances, so they only take shaking hands.

Nevertheless, a series of the event did not only consist of packaged lively recitation of *shalawat* and Arabic songs, but also fulfilled with full *badrah* musics to make a contemplated situation (*kebusu'*). During the event, they recite together a *munajat* in which no one speaks for a while. Some of the songs are categorized into Islamic genres, containing moral messages, such as *Rindu Ayah*. Not only the vocalist, but some of people also get cried.

Recently, organizing *shalawatan* events in the public sphere is more and more visible; it begins to shift music concerts, such as *dangdut*, pop music, and other famous bands. These events are almost crowded with visitors from diverse backgrounds. It gets stronger for the last decades since the establishment of *majlis shalawat* is increasingly considerable in many places, including Probolinggo.

Majlis shalawat continuously develops with increasingly number of followers. In Probolinggo, many *majlis shalawats*, such as Syubbanul Muslimin, Al-Waly, Nurul Mukhtar, Hubbun Nabi, Lahar Mania, Arrasul, Annur, and others are organized; the first two *majlis* are the oldest and largest. Both also have the most frequently performed routine activities at least 2 times a week, while others tend to be conditional dependent on invitations.

The target audience of *majlis shalawat* is young people with different backgrounds.

Every *shalawatan* held by the certain majlis, a number of young men commonly welcomed it by riding motorcycles together wearing uniforms, special clothes, caps (*peci*), and flags of majlis. The popularization and dissemination of *shalawat* through various majlis shalawat seems to have become a new Islamic trend along with the rise of pop culture in religion. This phenomenon complements a religious awakening trend that has recently become more popular in the world.

“Re-Presenting” Prophet: Reinterpreting the Sacred

In the circle of Majlis Syubbanul Muslimin, *shalawat* is re-presented in a new, but entertaining and fun performance. *Shalawat* is no longer to be a mere part of spiritual consumption; it has been performed on the large stage which requires a certain cost. Today’s expression of love, affection, to the Prophet under entertainment and commercialism which tends to be considered contrary to traditional, religious, and sacred values became a portrait of religiosity among followers of *majlis shalawat*. More broadly the paradoxes of these mixed values are common phenomena in other religious practices or all religions. In Christianity, for instance, this hybrid situation is well explored by David Lyon in his book *Jesus in Disneyland, Religion in Postmodern Times*.

Essentially, *Jesus in Disneyland* is a metaphorical term that derived from Harvest Day Crusade Celebration at Disneyland, Anaheim, California, which is able to attract 10,000 visitors.¹ This regular festival serve as attractions of Christian artists and gurus, and *Jesus* is re-presented in different images, such as in the forms of cartoons and side by side with monks and Hindu gods. These images are certainly very striking and different from the general images of ‘sacred’ *Jesus*.

Additionally, *Jesus in Disneyland* is defined as a meeting place of historically or culturally different values.² The sacred, mysterious, and private spiritual encounters are expressed with entertaining and joyful activities which some Christians regard as contrary to Christianity itself. Disneyization, for Lyon, is universal and became a religious portrait of postmodern times, so the publicized and displayed *shalawatan* with entertaining atmosphere also shares a common part of the disneyization (the ways religious followers express their religious practices) and disneyfication (the ways religious experience are displayed).³ Similarly, the Harvest Day Crusade Celebration at Disneyland that shows the phenomenon of swirling values, in which *Jesus* is freely painted based on the interpretation of Disney’s locality, can also be an example on the ways shalawat events have performed.

¹ Harvest Day Crusade in Disneyland, Anaheim, California, is a regular celebration for Evangelists began since 1996 to commemorate holy war crusade, but for the sake of this analysis it is used to describe its changing function as entertainment rather than historical events of it. David Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times* (UK: Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000).

² ‘*Jesus in Disneyland*’ is a metaphor used by Lyon to describe worldly aspects and religious situations in postmodern era. The term *Jesus* in the entertainment garden as Disney indicates democratic culture and commodification in which a faith has found a newly fresh basis. *Ibid.*, 1-2.

³ Phenomenon of disneyization and disneyfication are in the Europe, especially Northern America (in this term, Lyon is lecturer of sociology in Queen’s University, Ontario, Canada), while a religion under his study is Christianity. In *Jesus in Disneyland*, little attention is given to Christianity and other religions in non-European countries. However, the phenomenon as a result of religious ambiguity are adaptable with either modern or postmodern world, and universally applied in all religions.

During *shalawatan* events, Mohammad is also "re-presented and enlivened" in accordance with the local interpretation of the majlis. The values of Mohammadean, including his stories, activities, teachings, and miracles are produced in *shalawat* texts; they are sang in a certain rhythm and musical arrangement. This finally became an event to welcome a "re-birth", "re-presence", of Prophet Mohammad in the local religiosity of Majlis Syubbanul Muslimin.

Majelis Syubbanul Muslimin: "Behind the Scene" ***Originality and Syncreticity***

Shalawat (*durūd*), an expression of prayer or praise for Prophet Mohammad, is basically rooted from Surah al-Ahzâb (33): 56, cited that Allah and His angels are reciting *shalawat* for Prophet and every believer is encouraged to praise for him. The simplest form of *shalawat* is by saying shallâ *al-Allâh alaiih wa sallam* (may Allah blessed praise and greetings to him [the Prophet]). This expression is usually spoken every time when people hear a call for Prophet's name.

Today, many good and beautiful ways to praise Prophet increasingly raises up. Types of *shalawat* are continuously produced—to mention a few—such as *shalawat ma'tsûrah*, *ibrâhîmiyyah*, *fâtîh*, *qathb al aqthâb*, *ummî*, *nariyah*, and others. Some of them have even been well documented, such as *dalâ'il shalawat*, *bakriyah*, *al-dibâ'i*, and *simthu al-durâr*. The last two written *shalawat* are regularly read at the *mauludan* ceremony (birthday of Prophet) with certain rhythms and sometimes escorted with *rabbana* music.

In the treasury of Islamic scholarship, there are different views about the law and ordinance of pronouncing, reciting, or reading *shalawat*. Some *ulama* argues that it is obligatory to say *shalawat* once throughout our life, and others agreed that a word *amr* in Surah Al-Ahzâb means a suggestion unless it has been suggested as *shalawat* in five Islamic daily prayers (*shalat*). The different decision from *ulama* about reading *shalawat* does not suffer from conflict, as it differs only in the level of necessity.

The controversy over *shalawat* in Islam is more specifically applied in the procedure of reading *shalawat*. Today, people tend to integrate certain cultural elements, such as art, belief system, thinking system, and so forth, in reading *shalawat*. Their acceptance to cultural elements (syncretism) in reading *shalawat* can be seen in the ritual celebration of Prophet's birthday (*mauludan*) and of *selamatan* events. These rituals are organized not merely to read *shalawat*, but also to commemorate birth of a child and other *selamatan*.

The most rigorous rejection comes from puritan groups, such as Wahhabism and Muhammadiyah, who commonly do not accept a cultural invention of worship. The practice of reciting shalawat in various cultural activities is regarded as a heresy, strictly prohibited in Islam. This attitude is easily found in some works of Wahabi scholars in official site <http://asysyariah.com> or in journal *Ajy Shariyah*.

One of Wahabi figure from Purwekerto, Saifuddin Zuhri,⁴ said:

⁴ Saifuddin Zuhri is a Wahhabian from Purwokerto; a leader of Yayasan Ar-Royyan Al-Islami Purwokerto who led to Ma'had Al-Faruq Al-Salafy li Tahfidz Al-Quran. More information on his studies may be accessible in alfaruq.net.

"Our love for Prophet was not realized by celebrating his birthday. This celebration is a practice of worship that was 'invented' in Islam ... Therefore, celebrating the day of birth is an act of heresy because it is a new practice of religion, Rasulullah and his companions, like Abu Bakr, 'Umar,' Uthman, 'Ali, and others, never did it. Similarly, it is never celebrated by the next best generation of *tabi'in* and four *imams*: Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi'i, Ahmad, and Ahlus Sunnah priests *rahimabumullah*."⁵

Abu Karimah Askari Makassar⁶ also argues that celebration of Prophet's birthday (mauludan), some practices of *shawalatan*, and all kinds of *wiridan* are forms of heresy. Moreover, those practices are considered to preclude Muslims from getting closer to God.⁷

However, for traditional Islamists (Islamic groups who under certain circumstances tend to accept religious and cultural mixture), innovation (*bid'ah*) is acceptable as far as it does not concern *mahdhab* rituals whose ordinances and times have been established. It means that except for five prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, and other *mahdhab* worships, the modified practices of *ibadah* are never forbidden even if they are never commanded or performed by Prophet. For traditional Islam, reciting *shalawat* in various *selamatan* events has not an impact on religious merit of that practice although it is accompanied by certain traditional music. Thus, reading *shalawat*, such as *al-dibâ'i* and *simthu al-durâr*, in various customary ritual events become a part of traditional Islamic religiosity.

Nevertheless, a cultural mixture in reading *shalawat* as a new cultural product has historical foothold in the period of Prophet. In traditional Islam, the use of music is based on behaviors and traditions since centuries ago. *Rabbana* music, for instance, has evolved since the period of Prophet, and he never forbade it. The most obvious example in history of Islamic music is a moment when Prophet arrived in Medina, he was greeted with *rabbana* wasps. Similarly, getting to stand while reading *shalawat* is also based on practices of the Companions, including Fatimah, in welcoming Prophet's arrival in Medina. This practice is regarded as a tribute to the Prophet.

For traditional Muslims, reading *shalawat* under any circumstances still provides an unhindered benefit. Ibn Qayim al-Jawziyah,⁸ who is widely regarded as a leading expert for those who believe the benefits of reading *shalawat*, contains 39 advantages of reading

⁵ Saifuddin Zuhri, "Maulid Nabi, Bukti Cinta Rasul?" <http://asysyariah.com> (26 April, 2012). See also *Jurnal Asy Syariah*, 078, 26 April 2012.

⁶ Abu Karimah Askari ibn Jamal al-Bugisy is one of the greatest salafi ulama's in Makassar. He studied to Yemen, and in 2002 he moved to Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, became a religious teacher (*guru*) in Pesantren Ibn Al-Qayyim. One of his controversial works is *Bid'ahnya Dzîkîr Berjamaah: Bantaban terhadap Dzîkîr Jamaah Arîfîn Ilham*.

⁷ Abu Karim Askari, *Shalawat-shalawat bid'ah dalam* <http://asysyariah.com> (14 November, 2011). See also *Jurnal Asy Syariah*, 007.

⁸ Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah is nickname for a child of school guard Jauziyah. His real name is Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr ibn Ayyub ibn Sa'd al-Zar'i al-Dimashqi. He is Sunni with having many works, such as *Jalâ'ul Afhâm Fî Fadl al Shâlat Wa al-Salâm Alâ Khair al-Anâm* consisting of advantages of *shalawat*. Ahmad Mâhir Mahmûd al-Baqarî, *Ibn al-Qayyim min Athârihi al-Imâyah* (Beirut, 1984), 4. Cf. Burhân al-Dîn Ibrâhîm Ibn Muflih, *Al-Maqsad al-Arshad fî Dhîkîr As "h "âb al-Imâm Ab "mad*, ed. 'Abd al-Rah "mân ibn Sulaymân al-Uthaymîn (Riyadh, 1990), 1:265. Cf. Bakr ibn 'Abd Allâh Abû Zayd, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah: Hayâtuhu Athâruhu Mawâriduh* (Riyadh, 1412/1991-92), 17-36, 202-8. Cf. Iwad Allâh Jâd Hijâzî, *Ibn al-Qayyim wa-Mawqifuh min al-Tafkîr al-Islâmî* (Cairo, 1960), 26-27. See also Salahud Din Ali Maujud, *The Biography of Imam Ibn al-Qayyim* (Darussalam, 2006).

shalawat, including improving memory, eradicating poverty and hunger, reducing difficulties of life, solving problems, providing security in the world and the hereafter, compensating for 10 sins, abolishing evils 200 years, rewarding merit equivalent with charity, rewarding profit equivalent with mount Uhud, and so forth.⁹

The belief in benefits of reading *shalawat* makes it continuously enduring in Islamic civilization. The commemoration of Prophet's birthday (*maulid*) which was originally initiated by Saladin al-Ayyubi by simply reciting Prophet's prophecy to arouse a fighting spirit of Muslim in the crusade, continuously develops into a routine activity in every prophet's birth. Since the 13th century CE until now, especially after great scholars Imam al-Diba'i and Habib Ali succeeded in compiling book *Al-Dibā'i* or *Simthū Al-Durār* containing a collection of *shalawat* and stories of Prophet, the commemoration of Prophet's birthday was carried out by reading those books.

Reading these books continuously develops and integrates with cultural backgrounds in different times and places. *Shalawatan* was firstly a mere part of routine activities 1 or 2 times a week in *tablilan*, *yasinan*, *sarwaan*, Islamic regularly recitation for every Tuesday (*Selasaan*), etc., *istighāshah*, *manaqiban*, and other religious traditions, but lately developed into a large and entertaining activity as organized by some *majlis*, such as Syubbanul Muslimin.

Consuming Shalawat

Perhaps, for some Muslims, a faith must be consistently private and mysterious, since publication and popularization of *shalawat* by integrating values of commercialism and consumerism is actually considered ambivalent. However, whatever paradoxically it is, a duality between spiritual and economic elements in *shalawatan* activity seems inevitable today.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, a duality between spiritual and commercial dimensions figures out that production of religiosity is always characterized by social exchange which involves a portrait of ambiguities, i.e. economic and religious mixture itself. This ambiguity, for Bourdieu, is simplified as an economic offering, in which exchange is transformed into self-sacrifice into a kind of transcendental entity.¹⁰ This expression demonstrates that economic interests have always been a major factor in any production of religiosity, such as *shalawatan*. Although *shalawatan* produced by Syubbanul Muslimin is not merely based on reasons of economic interest or advantages of *majlis shalawat* or economic offerings, but its process which is designed in such a magnificent and entertaining performance makes it more exchangeable. It is a reason that *shalawatan* become a not spiritual, but financial commodity with its exchange rate in order to get spiritual and economic advantage at once although it is not necessarily a main purpose.

Commodification is described as a way of capitalism to bring about accumulation of capital goals. It can also be described as changing value and function into an exchange

⁹ Ibn Qoyyim al-Jauziyah, *Jalā'ul Afbām Fī Fadl al Shālat Wa al-Salām Alā Khair al-Anām* (Kwait: Dār al-Urūbat Li al-Nasyr wa al-Tauzī', 1987), 445-447.

¹⁰ Marc Askew, "Materializing Merit: The symbolic economy of religious monuments and tourist-pilgrimage in contemporary Thailand", *Commodification in Asia*, Ed. Pattana Kitiarsa (New York: Routledge, 2008), 92.

rate.¹¹ Simply speaking, *shalawatan*, originally organized for consumption of spiritual needs (functional), become commodification of an exchange rate (economical). As a commodified product, *shalawatan* is continuously contested with other religious commodities, such as entertainment, to get a high exchange rate. The exciting performance and design of *shalawatan* is absolutely necessary to attract followers as much as possible.

Using Mosco's analysis on forms of media commodification, this article attempts to investigate Syubbanul Muslimin under three forms of commodification, namely: *content*, *audiences*, and *labor*. In terms of commodifying content, its actors change *shalawat* messages through technological devices into a meaningful human interpretation system until it becomes marketable.¹² Syubbanul Muslimin became the only majlis *shalawat* in Probolinggo able to design events as interesting as possible to attract pilgrims's attention. All activities of Syubbanul Muslimin are designed in new performances, songs, practices, as it successfully served them with new nuances. The production of various VCDs containing various songs, musics, profiles of Syubbanul Muslimin have figured out the ways they provide marketable spiritual values.

Meanwhile, commodifying audience is a principal dimension of mass media strategies to attract as many advertisements as possible.¹³ Although Syubbanul Muslimin has not yet reached advertisements from various sponsorships, its diffusing images among large numbers of their followers indicates a reason of the ways they get interested to be member of Syubbanul Muslimin. The big banners of Syubbanul Muslimin in offline and online media, attracting new followers, became a factor contributing on the formation of commodification of audiences.

In terms of labor, workers are ultimate forces stimulating process of production and distribution activities.¹⁴ The comfortable and pleasant workers have important contribution on the development of industry. An indoctrination on how important all members of Syubbanul Muslimin devote their life for the sake of majlis activities is a way of their commodification. More than 250 administrators (including employee, workers, managers) are none paid; this situation plays important role in building a spiritual conduct of the members, so they are willing for self-sacrifice, paying transportation costs in order to involve with *shalawatan*. Moreover, they also routinely and voluntarily load a "running cash" (*kas berjalan*, a kind of donation box) during *shalawatan*.

The commodification of workers above gets a higher value, since some young *habaib* and *gus/lora* attended in the stage. In traditional coastal districts, such as Probolinggo, *habib*, *kiai*, and *gus* including Gus Hafidz had respectable honor, charisma, or—what Bourdieu said—*social cum spiritual* capital. In global economy of charisma, Weller argues that charisma is continuously produced as a form of commodification.¹⁵ In the case of majlis Syubbanul Muslimin, this charisma became a determinant factor in successful *shalawat* marketing. A social cum spiritual capital Gus Hafidz had from his genealogical linkage of *kiai* and *hadrami* ultimately increases a public confidence in *shalawat* blessing. It is a reason

¹¹ Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication*, (Singapore: SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific, 2009), 1.

¹² *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

¹⁵ Robert P. Weller, "Asia and The Global Economies of Charisme", *Religious Commodification in Asia, Marketing God* (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis, 2008), 15.

that *gus* and *habaib*, in a particular Islamic community, already have their own market share.

Financial and Symbolic Profits of Syubbanul Muslimin

The logical consequences of religious exchange, of course, are both symbolic and financial profits. By symbolic advantages I means the increased symbolic power which Bourdieu considers to be a typical power reinforced by authority. For Bourdieu, symbolic power is described as a struggle to win everything in social world, such as order of belief, praise and scolding, perception and appreciation, knowledge and recognition, and so on.¹⁶ The personal charisma of Gus Hafidz's as head of the majlis is widely known; his name became increasingly popular among majlis members. The people regard it as a charismatic and influential young *kiai*. "There is hardly a young kiai whose popularity is competing his own," said Muhammad Sholeh.¹⁷

Syubbanul Muslimin became the only majlis shalawat in Probolinggo with the largest income. In every *shalawatan*, this majlis can earn millions of rupiah. For local people of Probolinggo, it takes 4-7 millions depending on request for location, size, of the event. This cost is higher than other shalawat majlis which only ranges below 2 millions earning. Another advantage is a fact that Syubbanul Muslimin's cooperation always opens in every *shalawatan*; in 2017 the cooperation has reached 70 million profit. A profit from *kas berjalan* never less than 5 million; even it, under one occasion, reached more than 22 millions. Syubbanul Muslimin also gets financial profit from online media; their revenue from Youtube, for instance, during June 2017 are approximately 9 millions depending on number of people who subscribed to videos of Syubbanul Muslimin.¹⁸

Having such income, Syubbanul Muslimin is able to maintain and develop its existence much better than other majlis. All Syubbanul Muslimin's revenues have been generally devoted to equipping facilities, advices, equipments, or tools of performance, such as sound system, stage with various sizes, cameras, handycams, lighting fixtures, machines, and drones. The rest is spent for social activities, such as mosques, TPQ, and madrasah building. Recently, Syubbanul Muslimin has managed to build a mosque in a remote area in Gading district.

Shalawat and Spatializing Market

Kesuksesan malis shalawat Syubbanul Muslimin menurut Gus Hafidz tidak lepas dari tiga tahapan dakwah yang diajarkan gurunya sewaktu di Yaman, yaitu *ta'rif* (dikenal), *ta'lib* (dicintai), dan terakhir baru *taklif* (pemberian beban). Kesuksesan da'wah bagi Gus Hafidz sangat tergantung pada dua tahapan di awal yaitu bagaimana Syubbanul Muslimin dapat dikenal dan dicintai. Untuk mensukseskan dua tahapan ini, Syubbanul Muslimin menerapkan strategi yang menurut Vincent Mosco disebut sebagai spasialisasi, yakni pemanfaatan seluruh ruang dan waktu (*space*) untuk memperkenalkan berbagai produk kepada pasar dengan seluas-luasnya. Melalui spasialisasi ini Syubbanul Muslimin melakukan penawaran dengan memanfaatkan berbagai ruang-ruang pemasaran, baik virtual maupun

¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 251.

¹⁷ Muhammad Sholeh, *Interview*, Jamaah Syubbanul Muslimin, Paiton, 24 June 2017.

¹⁸ Hafidzul Ahkam Noer, *Interview*, Pimpinan Syubbanul Muslimin, Kalikajar, 24 June 2017.

real.

The incredible success of Syubbanul Muslimin, according to Gus Hafidz, can not be separated from three methodical stages of Islamic preaching (*dakwah*) taught by his teacher in Yemen, i.e. *ta'rif* (known), *ta'rif* (loved), and *taklif* (burden).¹⁹ The success of *da'wah* depends on two stages at the beginning of how Syubbanul Muslimin can be known and loved. To succeed these two stages, Syubbanul Muslimin adopted a strategy which Vincent Mosco describes as *spatialization*, using space and time to introduce products to the market as widely as possible.²⁰ Through this spatialization, Syubbanul Muslimin makes use of various marketing, both virtual and real, spaces.

Virtual Spatialization

For Lyon, one of main factors contributing on cultural change is the transformation of communication and information technology, in addition to consumerism. By using internet networks, communication between Internet users (netizens) has transcended spatial barriers.²¹ Although Syubbanul Muslimin located in a rural district, its use of virtual spatialization (Cyberspace) makes it a part of a global society, a society which transcends its local boundaries.

Some social media, ranging from Facebook, WhatsApp, until Instagram are used as a medium to inform any scheduled programs, to offer religious commodities of Syubbanul Muslimin merchandises. Gus Hafidz's activities, his eloquent words, his photos, are displayed in a big banner; also *habaib* and *kia's* photos, even memes, are widely spread by the official account of Majelis Syubbanul Muslim. Each uploaded postings on Facebook and Instagram, which already has more 60 thousand followers, also get thousands of people's likes.

Those who want to buy jackets, skulls, sorbans, and other costumes can make an online order/delivery without having to buy them at the shalawatan event. Similarly, songs of Syubbanul Muslimin is accessible via YouTube. According to Gus Hafidz, these songs which are uploaded in Youtube or other social media have been viewed by hundreds of thousands to millions of people and subscribed by tens of thousands of youtubers.

In addition, cyberspace also become a means of *silaturrahim* to intensify congregational relationships among members, pilgrims, administrators, leaders of majlis shalawat. This is the virtual space in which all members of Syubbanul Muslimin feel a so-called 'diasporic intensification';²² those who geographically dispersed from diverse backgrounds can share a similar feeling and interacting to (be a part of) global community. The utilization of cyberspace makes them in a space of intensive interaction in a global world.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*,

²⁰ Under analysis of political economy of mass media, Moco argues that mass media in relation with social interaction is a part of process of production, distribution, and consumption. By doing that, it became a medium of communication with having a contribution on the commodification. Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication*, (Singapore: SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific), 15.

²¹ Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times*, 67.

²² David E.J. Herbert "Theorizing religion and media in contemporary societies: An account of religious 'publicization'", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2011: 14(6), 626-646, 634.

Real Spatialization

In addition to cyberspace, a real space is also used by Syubbanul Muslimin through making use of alumnae/sympatizers network in Pesantren Nurul Qodim. Having more than 250 officers and tens of village coordinator (*Kordes*), Syubbanul Muslimin easily get spreading information of their activities. The coordination and mass-mobilisation goes so effectively and massively, as tens of thousands of members attended to this *shalawatan*. Until now the popularity of Syubbanul Muslimin is still the highest, even outside Probolinggo districts, such as Banyuwangi, Madura, Situbondo, Malang, and others.

The alumnae/sympathizers network of Pesantren Nurul Qodim is very easy to consolidate since Gus Hafidz is also a son of the caregivers (*putra pengasuh*). In a traditional society, a *gus* can be called as having ascribed status, because his honorable position is automatically obtained because of his heredity. A *keiai* is like a little king and *gus* is like a little prince who were born with privileges. In a religious society, a *keiai* is identified as *ulama* who in Islamic teachings is called a prophetic heir, then a *gus* is a clerical candidate.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, those who have top of a strata like *gus* finally produces a human disposition called *habitus*.²³ The common practices, such as *shalawatan*, consciously or unconsciously, can be a religious tradition of a particular community if it is formed, practiced, produced, reproduced by someone who has the highest strata in a particular social structure. It is true for the case of given the fact that Syubbanul Muslimin founded by Gus Hafidz easily gets support from the wider community of Probolinggo, especially *santri* and *alumnae* of Pesantren.

Nevertheless, Syubbanul Muslimin is not entirely derived from Gus Hafidz's initiative idea which is, according to Bourdieu, able to produce a habitus.²⁴ According to Gus Hafidz, *shalwatan* activities in Syubbanul Muslimin are selected by members of the majlis itself which mostly consists of young people, something different from other religious activities, such as *yasinan*, *istighosah*, *manaqiban*, etc.²⁵ It means that *shalwatan* of Syubbanul Muslimin is the result of consensus, while many *majlis dzikir* even founded by a *gus*, *keiai*, or *lora* get a minimal response from the young members of a certain community.

It argues that a religious activity coordinated or reproduced by a *gus* is not simply accepted by a social community. According Anthony Giddens, an individual (agent) can indeed affect a social structure with his/her ability, but the structure can also transform the agent's orientation. None of the most dominant parties can affect one of them. This is what Giddens termed as duality, a reciprocal relationship between agent and structure.²⁶

A *gus* has significant opportunity to influence the structure of society at large.

²³ Bourdieu argues that habitus consists of hexis (body stance), ethos (moral, value), eidos (cognitive), and aesthetics (linguistic competency in relation with beauty and taste). Elizabeth B. Silva, "Habitus: Beyond Sociology," *The Sociological Review* 2016: Vol. 64, 73–92, 76. Bourdieu used habitus as process of structuring and reproducing social structure. For him, habitus is a structured structure to function as structuring structure. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logics of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), 53.

²⁴ Menurut Bourdieu, social agents construct social reality, both individually and collectively, . . . The subjective structures of the unconscious that carries out (sic) the acts of construction, . . . are the product of a long, slow, unconscious process of the incorporation of objective structures. Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 29.

²⁵ Hafidzul Ahkam Noer, *Interview*, 24 June 2017.

²⁶ Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication*, 16.

Having a social or intellectual or spiritual capital, a *gus* can be an influential agent. However, a structure is formed not solely by agent's determination, but also the relations, interactions, and contributions from various parties in a social structure, even the legitimacy of the state. In this case, media, state, and public arena accordingly interact among each other in the certain time and place. Based on this perspective, *shalawatan* is a result of the interaction of various parties inseparable from one another.

Therefore, a *gus*, with his supreme leadership in the certain majlis shalawat, is not enough with having only scholarship and intellectual capital; in order to gain public interests, a public figure needs a personal attitudes conforming to the public's positive outlook. Even if it is impossible to meet various public's taste and desire, she/he will be a person who has an accordance with the majority's point of views. In this case, a *gus* or spiritual agent needs to have a rationally and socially acceptable messages and behaviors.

By rationalization I mean it is an action of agent in encouraging public desire and interest into the public sphere. In terms of social structure, desire/ motivation is defined as reflective monitoring.²⁷ An agent Gus Hafidz needs to rationalize his spiritual messages to the public through various actions. If this rationalization and reflexivity are continuously contested and reproduced, people will gradually have lots of motivation in accordance with his personal willing.

This rationalization has an important contribution on successful spatialization held by Majelis Syubbanul Muslimin. According to one of the followers, Gus Haidz is known as egalitarian person. He does not position himself as the only religious agent at the top of the strata in Probolinggo. "When rainfall is suddenly down, *shalawatan* still takes place, but Gus Hafidz stepped off the stage gathered with the followers until they were wet of the rain," said Su'eb (35).²⁸ This attitude is certainly a part of rationalizing the messages or—in religious terminology called—*dakwah bil hâl*.

The logical consequence of the successful spatialization process is a fact that Syubbanul Muslimin goes to the end goal of burden (*taklîf*). From 2005 to 2017, this majlis has been able to embed its values of piety into the followers. The leaders and hundreds of administrators worked without having a payment. They do believe that by devoting themselves to the majlis, and of course reciting *shalawat*, they will obtain unlimited spiritual virtues as promised by Prophet.

The shared belief in such values also began to be embedded into members of Syubbanul Muslimin. Their self-sacrifice to attend a *shalawatan* event is an example, since the subsidies from the majlis for their transports are continuously reduced. Gus Hafidz said, "a total of subsidy was firstly around IDR 60,000 for each car, but now only IDR 25,000 and will be reduced to IDR 0 in the future."²⁹ Instead of it, they are willing to spend money for their own transportation. Some members of the majlis attend to the event not merely because of meeting friend's invitation or looking for entertainment; but also of getting God's guidance (*hidayah*).³⁰ One of them, Shalehuddin (40), recognized that he was present not because invited by anyone, but because of willing to get *hidayah*.

²⁷Iswandi Syahputra, *Rezim Media: Pergulatan Demokrasi, Jurnalisme dan Infotainment dalam Industri Televisi*, (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2013), 158.

²⁸ Muhammad Su'eb, *Interview*, Jamaah Syubbanul Muslimin, Kalikajar 27 June 2017.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Shalehuddin, *Interview*, Jamaah Majelis Shalawat Subbanul Muslimin, Paiton, 24 June 2017.

The Commodified *Shalawat* in Global Economy Market

A recent phenomenon of majlis shalawat figures out that a relationship between religion and modernity is not always contraproductive as commonly believed by proponents of secularism in Europe. The popularization of *shalawatan* argues that being modern does not have to leave religion, or to be a religious does not have to be isolated from modernity. The articulation of religious piety through *shalawatan* events in the public sphere by utilizing modern entertaining tools finally indicates that a grandnarrative of modernity could not be defined as in line with decline of the religion in public domain.

It is important to distinguish "religion" as a distinctive way of religious life formed by a purely spiritual-oriented belief system and "religion" as a more significant articulation of change as it spreads throughout social life.³¹ The developing process of *shalawatan* is an example on the ways such religious articulation are shaped. The practice of *shalawatan*, which is originally as a mere expression of praise and love for Prophet, is continuously interpreted, reproduced, until the written works on *shalawat* are published. Recently, *shalawat* is reborn with a new face in accordance with needs of the present day and place.

Nowadays, *shalawatan* is produced not merely with a spiritual identity, but also with an entertaining activity. This phenomenon complements a new trend of religious commercialization as a insperable character of contemporary religious awakening. An important feature of contemporary religious awakening is its adaptability to the global market economy, prioritizing religious supply rather than religious demand.³² Religious practices, such as rituals, rites, pious figures, religious symbols are increasingly reproduced in the spiritual market. The local *shalawatan*, at the same time, became a global experience; the privatized *shalawatan* became deprivatized; the original became syncretized; and the limited to a particular territory became deteritorialized or hybridized.

The emphasis over supply rather than demand as a feature of religious globalization is so-called disneyization. According to Alan Bryman, process of disneyization includes four elements, i.e. *theming*, *dedifferentiation of consumption*, *mechandising*, and *emotional laboring*.³³ Theming is aimed to create connections and thus give a certain atmosphere to a complete environment. Religious events will be relevant and contextual only if they have certain themes relating to certain big days, places, and communes. Syubbanul Muslimin is always contextual because in addition to have new songs in every event, they also have varied themes, such as "*Kraksaan Bershalawat*", "*Ulang Tahun Anak Embongan*", "*Berkorban untuk Meraih Cintanya*", "*Takbir Akbar*", so forth.

Dedifferentiation of consumption is a technical term that refers to different, but interrelated ways of consumption. The religious events, such as *shalawatan*, are increasingly indistinguishable whether for spiritual consumption or for simply seeking entertainment or instead just for shopping the various merchandises. The *shalwatan* events have provided complete shopping packages, either spiritual or entertaining ones.

Meanwhile, merchandising plays an important role in promoting all forms of

³¹ Meyer B. and Moors A., *Religion, the Media and the Public Sphere* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 2006), 16-19. Cf. Herbert, "Theorizing religion and media in contemporary societies: An account of religious 'publicization'", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 627.

³² Turner, "Religion and contemporary sociological theories", *Current Sociology Review*, 1.

³³ Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times*, 5-6

commodities by utilizing images and logos. The image and logo of Muslim Syubbanul displayed in products, such as *kopiah*, *sorban*, mineral water, VCD albums, and so on, has increased its power of marketing. Some members of Syubbanul Muslimin do not really need to have a cap, but they still buy it since it is special with a logo of the majlis.

The last is emotional labouring that serves as building a certain atmosphere through expression of the workers (administrators). The emotional expressions, such as smiling, greeting, handshaking, etc., are commonly practiced by employees in store, minimarket, and supermarket. Likewise with the administrators of Syubbanul Muslimin in which they acted as religious community who needs to express a full sincerity and consistency. The slogan "unlimited istiqomah" is a emotional value to describe their devotion for the majlis.

Today, when all international networks have become a market arena, it needs a global competitive market. Majlis shalawat, as a religious producer, depends its sustainability on financial factors. Syubbanul Muslimin are able to survive and develop, because they have an adequate financial power. *Shalawat* became a commodity to which Syubbanul Muslimin, and other majlis shalawat, wants to survive. Whether we realize it or not, today's *shalawatan* became an art of performance, contested with various other types of entertainment.

Media, religious events, and entertaining activities have a very close relationship, as some religious groups (such as, majlis shalawat) need sufficient resources to maintain and survive.³⁴ Thus, Syubbaul Muslimin and its complete entertainment packages also require financial supports, so transforming the spiritual value into the marketing one is a necessity.

Concluding Remarks

Spatialization of majlis shalawat is the possible process of its adaptation in global space. The rapid change of technology has a great contribution on the liberating 'traditional' *shalawat* into modern one. As a religious ritual regularly practiced in *mauludan* and other activities, the *shalawatan* has become one of the performance act which is marketable in certain place and time.

This transformation of *shalawatan's* values into the exchange values indicates a blurred boundary between the sacred and the profane. From this point of view, more tied they are, more materialized they are practiced. It is plausible that *shalawatan* needs a proper financial support in order to make sure the smooth function of entertaining practice.

Some people are seemingly ignorant against it, and perceived it as a disgrace to the sacred *shalawat*, but it implies the fact that more people seems like it. They are willing to expend their times and money to get involved with such activities. Syubbanul Muslimin is the best example of proclaiming a new trend of religious consumption, production, and distribution among middle and lower class society in Probolinggo.

³⁴ Herbert, 'Theorizing religion and media in contemporary societies: An account of religious 'publicization' dalam *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 630.

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