

# The complexity of genre and discourse in Indonesian popular music: a systematic literature review

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## Abstract

As a large Asian country with the world's fourth largest population, Indonesia is known for its rich and diverse culture. The potential value of its modern culture is also reflected in its popular music culture, which has been developing since the 1950s. A number of researchers and experts have studied and analyzed this phenomenon, but a complete and systematic description of the results of such research is still missing. The purpose of our Systematic Literature Review is to fill this knowledge gap. Through the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method, 958 records of journal articles, scientific papers, and music magazine publications were examined. From there, 48 records were selected and analyzed in the final stage. Specifically, frequencies/percentages were calculated for (a) output within a five-year period; (b) type of publication; (c) methods used and; (d) topics found. A content analysis was also conducted on the topics covered. We found that there has been a steady increase in Indonesian popular music research output over the past 20 years. These studies mostly examined the topic of dangdut genre. The majority of the research uses a qualitative approach with interviews, observation and document analysis as its data collection techniques. An important topic covered in them is the complexity of Indonesian popular music genres. There we also discussed the key findings of studies that used historical, case study, ethnographic, discourse analysis and sociolinguistic designs. From this literature review, most of the existing studies are more interested in the political and social discourses of Indonesian popular music in the 1950s, 1960s, 1980s and 1990s. Thus, we suggest a number of Indonesian popular music researchers to focus on the 2000s to the present decade on top of the technological advancement of its music industry.

## Keywords

*dangdut genre, Indonesian popular music, PRISMA, systematic literature review*

## Introduction

Indonesian popular music is known to have developed industrially from the 1950s to the present (Blauch, 2020:14; KS, 2013:6; Mulyadi, 1999a:20; Sakrie, 2015:4). In terms of its diversity, dangdut can be said to be one of the popular music hybrid genres in Indonesia that is quite widely consumed by the people (Weintraub, 2006: 414). This has been shown by the Indonesian Survey Scale institution in its 2014 research on the type of music that is most preferred by the Indonesian public. The results of the research show that dangdut is the type of music that is most in

demand by the Indonesian people, which is 58.1%, surpassing other types of music such as pop genre (31.3%), regional music/songs (3.9%), keroncong (2.6%), kasidah (1.2%), jazz (0.4%), rock (0.3%), and other types (2.3%) (Indonesian Survey Scale: Political Research and Consulting, 2014).

The value of dangdut popularity has then attracted a lot of interest from popular music researchers in Indonesia to study and analyze it from a variety of topic choices and methodological perspectives. In fact, the topic of dangdut music can be said to have dominated the existing research

topics in analyzing the problem of popular music in Indonesia, which is actually very rich and complex. However, as far as can be determined, there has been no published study that attempts to document, review, and present the overall landscape of Indonesian popular music studies which is assumed to be quite complex in terms of genre richness. This kind of study is important because it can provide insights and point to new directions. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to review research on Indonesian popular music whose industry growth is known to have existed since the 1950s until now. However, based on considerations of novelty and analytical ability, this study is only limited to the publication of research or studies over the last 25 years, namely from 1999 to 2024. In order to show what issues are necessary and interesting to analyze, we will briefly discuss the development of Indonesian popular music in this section.

### **Indonesian Popular Music and Its Development**

Before independence, Indonesian popular music in the colonial period was dominated by European classical music. This can be seen from the existence of many orchestras in big cities such as Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya. In that era, orchestral groups were not only a means of entertainment for the upper class, but also had a major influence

on local Indonesian music. One of the striking acculturation outcomes of this period is the *keroncong* music genre, which is a fusion of Portuguese music and traditional Indonesian elements. Keroncong went on to become one of Indonesia's iconic forms of popular music, symbolizing the cultural mixing that took place during the colonial period (Yampolsky, 2013). After Indonesia gained independence, its musical landscape underwent a significant transformation.

The 1940s-1950s were the earliest times of the growth of Indonesia's popular music industry with the emergence of a number of recording companies, one of the most influential being the Lokananta company established by the government in 1956 (Zakaria et al., 2016). In the 1960s, popular music became more diverse with the emergence of new genres such as folk pop. These genres enriched Indonesian music culture and began to dominate the national music scene. Some of the iconic singer-musicians of this period are Dara Puspita group, Titiek Puspa, Bing Slamet, Ernie Djohan, Lilis Suryani, Elly Kasim and Ellya Khadam. These artists played a major role in shaping the identity of Indonesian popular music in the 1960s (Adhiatmaka, 2021). A period that marked the beginning of a long journey of Indonesian popular music until now.



Figure 1. Left: Titiek Puspa (center) with two popular female singers of the 1960s (web 1); Right: Vinyl Covers of Iconic 1970s Group, Koes Plus (web 2)

The Indonesian music industry in the 1970s was characterized by significant progress in the rise of the pop music genre that dominated record sales and the music performance industry. This era saw an explosion in the popularity of music through the use of the medium of cassette tape recording and the role of radio broadcasting. Some of the big names that became icons of this era, such as the Koes Plus group, Panbers, as well as singers Bob Tutupoly, Broery Marantika, Chrisye and Ebiet G. Ade, not only achieved great popularity but also left a legacy of memorable songs that are still remembered today. For most of today's Indonesian popular music audience, they are considered pioneers for their contributions in creating songs that became classics and can be enjoyed across generations (KS,

2013; Mulyadi, 1999b; Sakrie, 2015). One of the important musical moments in this era was the holding of "Lomba Cipta Lagu Remaja Prambors (LCLR)" (youth songwriting competition) in 1977. This songwriting competition acted as a catalyst that broke the deadlock in the popular music industry, paving the way for the birth of new talents of young musicians and songwriters who would influence the Indonesian popular music landscape in the following years. In addition to the dominance of the pop genre, the 1970s also saw the rise of dangdut music spearheaded by Rhoma Irama, whom the Indonesian public dubbed the King of Dangdut (Weintraub, 2010), as well as the rise of the hard rock genre through the era's most popular rock groups, AKA and Godbless.



Figure 2. Godbless in action during a 1975 show in Bandung (web 3)

In the 1980s, the Indonesian popular music industry was not only dominated by whiny songs, but the decade also saw the emergence of more creative and progressive pop genre songs, where the lyrics began to be more diverse and focused on various life themes, not just about love and sadness (KS, 2013). Apart from pop, rock and electronic music genres also began to gain importance. The trend of disco music influenced by electronic music became one of the most prominent at that time. This genre brought a new, more energetic and modern atmosphere to Indonesian music. Two big names such

as Fariz RM, Arie Wibowo, Gombloh and Iwan Fals managed to gain popularity and recorded brilliant achievements in the world of Indonesian music. In addition, this era also marked the form of Indonesian rock that was getting stronger with the driving force of a rock competition called Djarum Super Festival Rock, which was driven by the famous rock promoter, Log Zhelebour (KS, 2013; Sakrie, 2015). Entering the 1990s, this era is often considered by the Indonesian public as the golden age of peacock music, where the creativity of musicians has reached a peak by producing works that last long in

people's memories. Various music genres flourished during this era, from alternative rock to dangdut remixes. Even so, the pop genre remained the most dominant, with many music groups and singers who managed to steal the public's attention and such as Dewa 19, Slank, Gigi, Kahitna, Nike Ardila and Anggun.

The 2000s era of Indonesian popular music was initially dominated by the pop genre, with a number of well-known music groups such as Sheila on 7, Kerispatih, and Naif. A major phenomenon that emerged in the mid-2000s was the rise of indie music. This movement gave birth to many independent musicians and music groups that offered a different sound and style of music from the mainstream (Tapiheru & Anshaari, n.d.; Wallach & Clinton, 2013b; Yampolsky, 2013). Bands like White Shoes and The Couples Company, Sore, Seringai, and The Adams became representatives of the indie spirit

that emphasized creativity and freer musical expression. The 2000s also saw an evolution in dangdut, especially with the rise of dangdut koplo, which became increasingly popular among music lovers in the country. The phenomenal Inul Daratista of this era is considered the pioneer of the dangdut koplo trend, offering a new color in dangdut music that was previously dominated by the classic dangdut style. In the following decade, Indonesian popular music became more open to new genres such as EDM, hip hop and indie. Some popular indie musicians in Indonesia are Mocca, Efek Rumah Kaca, and Payung Teduh. In the late 2000s, Indonesian popular music became more open to the influence of foreign music, especially Western and Korean music. K-pop and J-pop became very popular among Indonesian youth, with the emergence of music groups such as Super Junior, Girls' Generation, JKT48, and Red Velvet who has many teenage fans in Indonesia.



Figure 3. Red Velvet fans (left) and Super Junior fans (right) expressions at the performance in Jakarta, 2022 (web 4)

This briefly describes the growth of Indonesian popular music that has taken place since the pre-independence era, the 1950s until now. The summary can be visualized as in Figure 4 below. This long musical phenomenon has pointed to musical facts about the richness of musical forms and genres, the creativity of musical invention and the search for fresh themes or issues voiced in Indonesian popular music. These musical facts and phenomena of Indonesian popular music can then be seen more analytically with the help of an appropriate theoretical framework. In

the following, we will present a theoretical framework of music sociology that is relevant and can explain important issues in explaining the phenomenon of Indonesian popular music through neo-Gramscian concepts of hegemony and cultural domination.



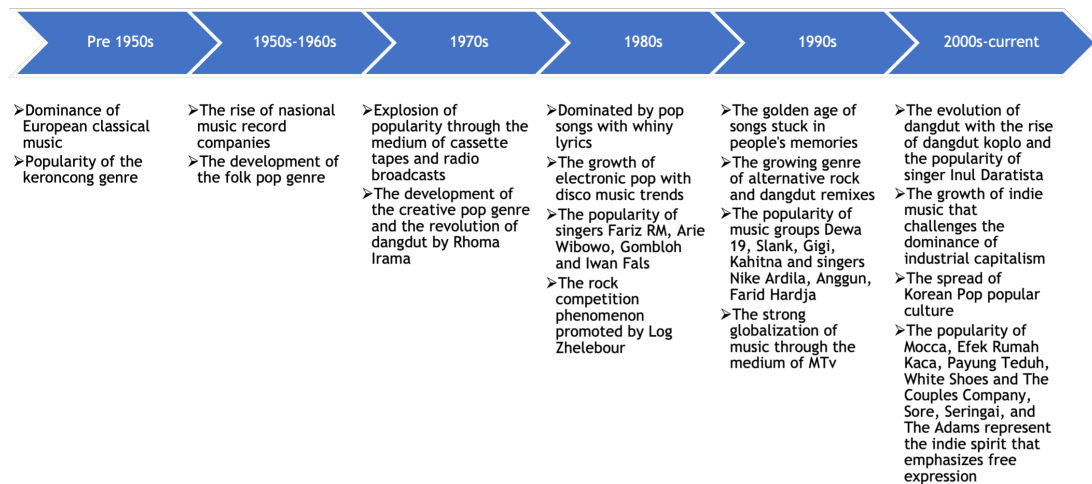


Figure 4. A timeline of the growth of Indonesian popular music

From the facts of the development of Indonesian popular music over the years, it appears that changes in the form, genre, and creativity of music creation along with a number of contextual issues are always filled with the dominance of certain popularity. The emergence of iconic singers and music groups that dominate the music industry in each era is interesting to find the support of its social structure. It is for this purpose that the neo-Gramscian framework of cultural hegemony becomes necessary.

### Theoretical Framework

The neo-Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony interprets culture as a site of struggle between the resistance efforts of subordinated groups and dominant groups. In the context of popular music, popular culture is not a culture imposed by theorists or spontaneously emerging from below as an oppositional culture, but rather, as the scope of a transactional exchange, where the two will intertwine in the form of resistance and compromise. Thus, popular cultural texts and practices move in what Gramsci called a "compromise equilibrium" (Gramsci, 1971). The process is synchronic-historical and moves between resistance and compromise. This could explain the phenomenon of dangdut's popularity in Indonesia, which at

first tended to be considered "shallow", but over time it transformed into an artistic and aesthetically pleasing music. From the logic of this concept, Indonesian popular music is seen as an arena of ideological struggle between the dominant and subordinate classes. It is understood that Indonesian popular music can be constructed by the dominant ruling class to win hegemony on the one hand, while forming opposition on the other. Thus, this neo-Gramscian resistance approach means that dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultures still have values and ideological elements that can be mixed in a social change.

### Importance of the Research

Based on the introductory description above, which has shown the breadth and richness of values in the growth of popular music in Indonesia, as well as the importance of analyzing neo-Gramscian cultural hegemony, it is very important to conduct a systematic literature review. The need for a systematic literature review in scientific publications on Indonesian popular music is essential for, at the very least, researchers and enthusiasts of Indonesian popular music. This urgent argument underlies our work on this systematic literature review project.

## Problem of Study

The specific research questions were:

- How did the number of studies change from 1999 to the third quarter of 2024?
- What methodologies were used?
- What topics were covered in the studies?
- What are the implications of these findings for future Indonesian popular music research?

## Method

The objective of this study was to review Indonesian popular music research, which has been an industrial phenomenon since the 1950s. Specifically, the frequency and percentage of data analyzed were calculated for output in a five-year period, types of publications, methodologies used and topics found.

## Research Model

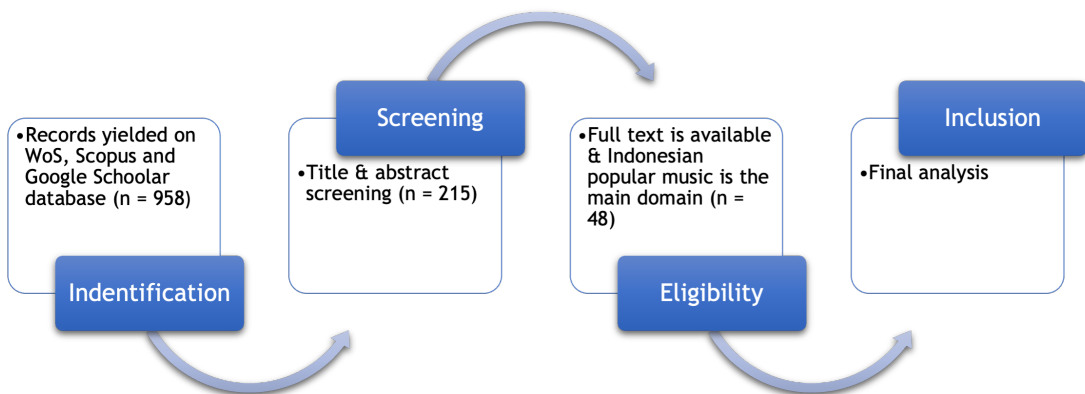


Figure 5. The PRISMA flowchart

We used the methodological guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses/PRISMA (Moher et al., 2009) in this review. Relevant literature published between 1999 and the third quarter of 2024 is searched in the Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, and Google Scholar database. The initial search was carried out on September 19, 2024 and resulted in 958. After the records were manually filtered by title and abstract, a number of records were eliminated as irrelevant (not related to Indonesian popular music), leaving 215 records. We (first author) then took the full text of the remaining 215 records and critically screened them for eligibility according to the following inclusion criteria: (1) the full text was available; (2) Indonesian popular music is the main domain studied;

and (3) written in English, Indonesian, or any language. From the full texts that met the three criteria, we obtained 48 records. Furthermore, the content of the 48 paper records was analyzed based on publication type, methodology, and topics covered (Andrés, 2009; Hart, 1998; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Tan & Sin, 2019). To reduce selection bias and meet the desired quality of papers, we did not consider the language used, gender and country of the paper authors, but rather the degree of scientific method and analytical results of the paper. To organize the references, we used the management system of Mendeley 1.19.8. This study includes the selected researches, which are organized in a table by author, year, research design, and topic (See Appendix 1).

## Results

The results of the research in a five-year period presented at Figure 6. As far as can be determined from the methodological procedures outlined, the first research published in which music is the main domain

studied is Mulyadi's (1990) research on the Indonesian popular music industry which has contributed significant economic-tax value to the country, as well as popular music becoming a political tool for the rulers.

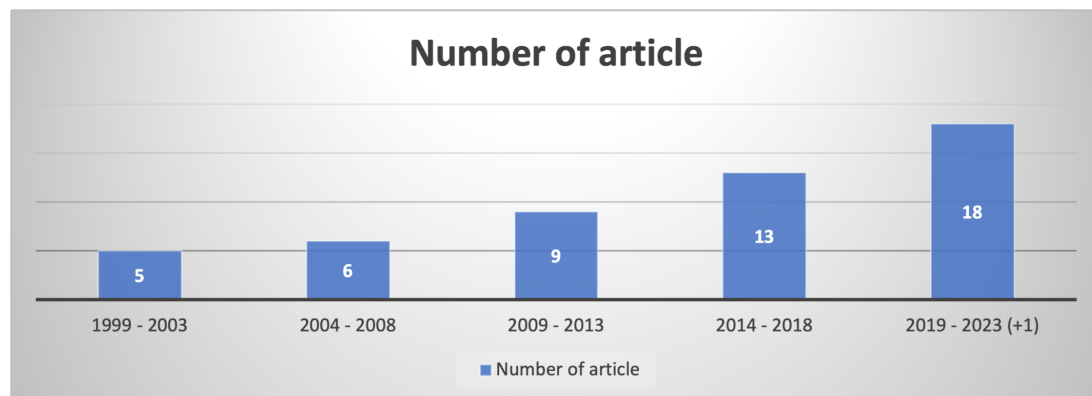


Figure 6. Research output in five-year periods

Following Mulyadi's work, we found a steady increase in the results of Indonesian popular music research, from 4 studies at the end of 2003 to 18 studies in the third quarter of 2024, indicating a sustained increase in interest over the past two decades. Of the 48 records, 21 (10.08%) were in the form of journal articles, while the others were in

the form of reference books (n = 9), book chapters (n = 4), conference/proceedings papers (n = 1), undergraduate thesis (n = 3), master's thesis (n = 3), doctoral dissertation (n = 2), academic research report (n = 1), and music journalist-magazine report (n = 4).

Table 1. Statistics on study design (research methods)

Study design	Number of literature	Percentage
Historical/historiography	18	8.64%
Discourse/content/text analysis	9	4.32%
Ethnographic/field research	6	2.88%
Case study	5	2.40%
Sociolinguistics	1	0.48%
Experiment	1	0.48%
Library/literature research	6	2.88%
Book editorials	2	0.96%

From the Table 1, it appears that three types of study designs that are widely used (besides investigative/journalistic study methods) are historical studies (18), followed by discourse/content/text analysis (9), field research and literature research (6 each), and case studies (5). The rest use a number of study designs such as field research, sociolinguistics, literature studies, and discourse and textual analysis.

## Dangdut Genre

In the last two decades of publication of Indonesian popular music studies, collectively, the results of a fairly interesting study of the genre can be seen in a special issue of the *Asian Music Journal* in 2013. Namely their publication entitled *Constructing Genre in Indonesian Popular Music: From Colonized Archipelago to Contemporary World Stage*.

In the introduction of this edition, the value of diversity and complexity of discourse in the history of Indonesian popular music is highlighted, which is rooted in three macro genres, namely music: dangdut (including folk songs and children's songs), pop, and *underground/indie* which includes the rock genre (Wallach and Clinton, 2013:14). If read in its entirety, the articles in this journal show the fundamental importance of understanding Indonesian popular music which has a complex relationship with the values of modernity in its society (Wallach & Clinton, 2013:21-22). One interesting topic from the journal is an article about the dangdut music genre discussed by one of the most diligent dangdut researchers, Andrew N. Weintraub. Through the (postmodern/poststructuralist) approach of Derrida's deconstruction, he succeeded in analyzing the concept of counter-genre dangdut in the koplo type, whose musical nature and practice collided with the classical dangdut type which has a more established position (Weintraub, 2013: 55).

Through Weintraub's perseverance in dangdut, the quantity of Indonesian popular music studies is clearly gaining weight. In addition to the writing *Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia's Most Popular Music* (2010)—which offers a study of dangdut in relation to issues of gender, class, ethnicity, and media, Weintraub also shows how popular dangdut music has become an aesthetic and ideological practice as well as a real reflection on the politics of modern society in Indonesia (Weintraub, 2010: 13-38). He has also analyzed the dangdut singer Inul Daratista as a popular social phenomenon in Indonesia in the early 2000s (Weintraub, 2008:22). Observation of gender discourse in dangdut was also carried out by A. Decker in 2010. There, he highlighted the influence of religiosity and social panic on the perception of the Indonesian public in viewing the phenomenon of male dangdut singers' performance on television (Decker, 2020:20).

Study from Bader & Richter in 2014 criticizes *the general stereotype* of the immorality of dangdut genre performances on the phenomenon of *nyawer* in West Java (Bader and Richter, 2014: 18). Then there is also an analysis of dangdut music as a medium of cultural diplomacy in Indonesian International relations, namely the use of dangdut songs as the Theme Song of the 2018 Asian Games (Fitriyadi & Alam, 2020). In 2021, Dewi Kusumaningsih wrote a dissertation on linguistic science about sexual exploitation in the lyrics of dangdut songs. The results of the analysis, the psychological aspect that shows women as male sexual objects that still always appear in various kinds of interactions between men and women, the social aspect shows that there is still a nature of gender inequality, where women as partners are still an inferior group and men as superior, while the cultural aspect shows the existence of urban culture (Kusumaningsih, 2021). Then the research of Natasya et al. (2024) in their publication entitled "The Development of Interest of Teenagers in Bandung Towards the Dangdut Koplo Music Genre" shows that nowadays the popularity of popular dangdut music among young people/adolescents in big cities in Indonesia is increasing significantly (Natasya et al., 2024:1245-1246).

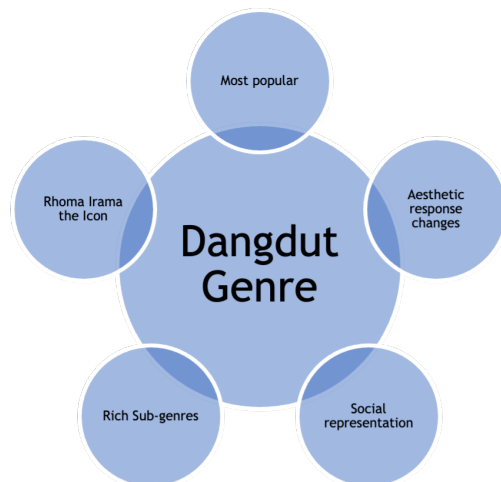


Figure 7. Dangdut genre predicate based on literature review



As shown in Figure 7, our literature review has explained that dangdut is the most popular music genre in Indonesia. Its iconic figure, Rhoma Irama has based dangdut into a number of musical revolutions and evolutions so that it becomes a rich music genre. In addition, the position of dangdut can also represent the dynamic social conditions of Indonesia's multicultural society, so that dangdut gets a dynamic aesthetic response from its public (Weintraub, 2010; Decker, 2020; Fitriadi & Alam, 2020; Natasya et al., 2024).

### Complexity in Genres

Outside of dangdut, the rock genre in Indonesian popular music has also been studied by Martinus Indra Hermawan (2024), especially in the "noise" type of rock, there it is known that several interesting facts such as the historical origins of the musicians and the infrastructure of the music industry such as record labels, venues, communities, instrument makers, festivals, as well as the motivation of these noise music musicians to network and their desire to connect on a wider scale have supported the development or popularity of this music (Hermawan, 2024). Rock is an important music genre, besides two other categories of popular Indonesian music genres, besides dangdut and pop, which are oriented towards young people (Wallach, 2008:11-12).

The complexity of genres in Indonesian popular music has also been studied as the publication of a collection of articles entitled *Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music* edited by Andrew McGraw & Christopher J. Miller and published in 2022. The important value of this publication lies in its efforts to find and explore a methodical paradigm that is functional for the explanation of the complexity of Indonesian popular music. This book is presented by bringing together chapters on the fusion of regional music preferences with popular music aesthetics, the dynamics of underworld music that is developing, the growing interest of the American public in keroncong, and the

topic of music discussion in the mass media in Indonesia. From this publication, it can be seen that an academic effort is trying to develop a new paradigm in the study of popular music through the perspective of decolonization and the diversity of popular music practices in Indonesia (McGraw & Miller, 2022:8).

Regarding genres in Indonesian popular music, the publication of Tumimbang & Saliareng (2024) has nationalized a number of potential social functions in the Indonesian popular music scene such as pop, rock, and others genre music that can unite various social groups and melt cultural and religious differences (Tumimbang & Saliareng, 2024:45-54). Similarly, the richness of Indonesian popular music genres was studied by Esther Darlena (2024) who found its creative potential in the cultural values contained in it, and it is known its potential to create a new style using the rules of "musik nusantara" or archipelago music (Darlene, 2024:49-61). Salfredo Andrie & Elty Sarvia entitled "A Comparative Study: The Effects of Pop, Hip-hop, and No Music Music on Alertness and Driving Behavior" (2024) examines the impact of various types of music on alertness and driving behavior using three treatments, namely no music, hip-hop music, and pop music. The results showed that hip-hop genre music produced the highest number of violations, while pop music produced the lowest number of violations (Andrie & Sarvia, 2024: 98-110). These findings emphasize the importance of considering psychological aspects in addition to physiological parameters in evaluating the impact of music on driving.

### Historical Distribution

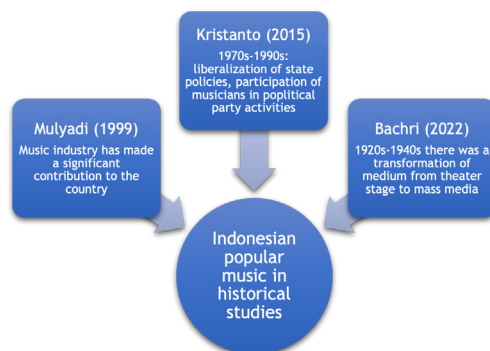
The thesis of History at Gadjah Mada University written by Nurul Afiah Ramadhani Bachri entitled "Transformation of Stambul Music Medium in Java 1920-1942: From the Theater Stage to the Music Industry" discusses Indonesian popular music in the keroncong genre, especially stambul songs. From this, it is known that in the context

of the 1920s, stambul is a popular culture that can be enjoyed not only as a theatrical performing art, but also as a popular music genre in the music industry in Indonesia. Stambul as popular music is also inseparable from the Indis cultural factor which in the first half of the XX Century became popular culture in Indonesia as well as the impact of advances in broadcasting and audio technology (Bachri, 2022).

Another historical thesis written by Yopi Kristanto entitled “Humming in Politics: The Existence of Music and Musicians in the General Election Campaign of the New Order Period (1971-1997)” has shown the work of political power in popular music in Indonesia. In this study, the New Order policy is known to be more liberating from the development of popular music adopted from the West, compared to during the Soekarno administration. This started from the existence of popular music used by the ABRI to integrate with the people after the G30S incident, with the aim of obtaining information and assistance in dissolving the PKI. This situation caused new hope for musicians and singers who had been banned from music during the Soekarno administration. Since the 1971 elections, popular musicians and singers have decided to join the Golkar supporter Safari Artist, which is a party that supports the New Order government. The existence of the Golkar campaign musical entertainment, which was considered successful in inviting a mass of sympathizers in 1971, caused other

parties participating in the election to make countermeasures. In the second election campaign of the New Order, musicians and singers began to creatively change the lyrics of songs that contained support for the party they defended (Kristanto, 2015:86-121).

Another historical perspective that is also used to study Indonesian popular music is carried out by several studies from Muhammad Mulyadi, On the topic of the industry, his study explains that the music industry has made a significant contribution to the country. The results of a historical thesis written by Muhammad Mulyadi at the University of Indonesia entitled “Indonesian Music Industry Pop, Jazz, and Rock 1960-1990” (1999)—which was also published in the form of a reference book entitled “Indonesian Music Industry: A History” (Mulyadi, 1999a)—show that, during the late 1980s, the record industry tax, as part of the music industry, has provided the state with revenues of nearly Rp 100,000,000.00 every year (Mulyadi, 1999:1), a large number in that era. In the early days of President Soekarno’s leadership, music did not make much economic contribution because of the many restrictions on creativity on music. In the 1960s, popular music in Indonesia seemed to function more as a political tool. Mulyadi’s seriousness on the topic of the history of Indonesian popular music was continued by writing an S-3 dissertation entitled “Koes Plus: Milestones and Characteristics of Indonesian in Pop Music (Mulyadi, 2014).



**Figure 8.** Resume of main results of historical research

It can be shown at Figure 8, the important results from a number of studies of Indonesian popular music from a historical perspective. The three main studies confirm that the Indonesian popular music industry made a significant contribution to the state (Mulyadi, 1999), the participation of popular music performers in political activities occurred due to the state's music liberalization policy from the 1970s-1990s (Kristanto, 2015), and at the beginning of its industrial growth in the 1920s-1940s there was a transformation of the popular music medium from theatrical performances to mass media (Bachri, 2022).

### Socio-political Discourse

In addition to the complexity of the genre, the discourse and practice of power politics is a topic that is often chosen by researchers or scholars of popular Indonesian music. For example, in the research of Riyanto & Baha'uddin (2015:1) on the development of Popular Music in Indonesia from 1950-1998, it shows a strong connection between popular music and the political world of the Old Order and New Order governments in Indonesia. That in the 1950s, it became a media in the search for national identity in the Soekarno government. The change of government from Soekarno to Suharto is known to bring "fresh air" to the development of popular music in Indonesia. Western music, which was previously banned during the Soekarno (Old Order) government, then became free to be played and expressed during the reign of Suharto in the New Order era.

Similar to the above theme is the publication of a journal article entitled "Music as Criticism in Indonesian Political History Post-Independence to Post-Reform: A Historical Study" which explains a number of socio-political criticism discourses in popular songs from the era of political power of the Old Order to the post-Reform in Indonesia. This article shows that a number of popular music works in Indonesia have played a role and function as a tool of social criticism, and interestingly, at the same time can be a tool in accommodating the political needs of the rulers (Dhesita & Sanjaya, 2024:97-104).

A similar study of political discourse, but with a wider range, produced by Citra Aryandari in her article entitled "The Indonesian Popular Music Industry" is contained in the book *Made In Nusantara: Studies in Popular Music* (2021:164-171) edited by Adil Johan and Mayco A. Santaella. This study has analyzed popular music in Indonesia which is intrinsically related to Indonesia's ever-dynamic political practices. Through the alternative historical perspective of Faucoult (*Madness and Civilization* 1964), the discussion is presented diachronically from the colonial period to the present day. From there, it is known that the musical and political constellation system in each era of Indonesian history displays complexity, but this pattern becomes clear when the history is read diachronically. During the colonial era, the national anthem "Indonesia Raya" had ignited the spirit of nationalism and was considered dangerous by the ruling colonizers, however, the growth of the music industry allowed the distribution of the national anthem and other regional songs so that the Dutch could not control their circulation. In the Old Order era, the period of identity search as part of the newly constructed ideology of the Indonesian nation became the reason for the rulers to ban global music, especially music from Western influences. Music from America and Western music in general are considered by the rulers to be not in line with Pancasila and Nasakom (Aryandari, 2021:170).

Specifically, political discourse during the Old Order period was studied by Steven Farram in the publication of his scientific article "*Ganyang! Indonesian Popular Songs from the Confrontation Era, 1963-1966*" in the journal *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* (2014). Farram's article highlights the meaning of many songs of that era and also discusses the reasons for their creation and aspects of their popularity. Through the analysis of popular culture theory and the views of Indonesian popular culture experts, this study succeeds in showing how popular music can reflect the conditions and situations of the political life

of its people, namely through popular songs that represent the social meaning of its directors/creators (Farram, 2014:1-24). This matter, in the context of the power of the New Order, was discussed by Abdul Firman Ashaf in the publication "The Government's Political Attitude in the Discourse of Popular Music in the 80s & 90s". Ashaf's analysis has shown that the rapid development of the popular music industry in Indonesia has provided a space for musicians or music artists to express their cultural experiences in life, even though the state formally does not want to accept this creative expression (Ashaf, 2006:352-353).

The issue of freedom of expression that is faced with the dominance of the power of the mass media in Indonesian popular music has also been studied by Abdul Aziz Turhan Kariko's S-2 academic thesis in literature entitled *Malay Pop: Mass Media Hegemony in the Realm of Popular Music in Indonesia* (Kariko, 2009). Through the perspective of critical theory and qualitative analysis of Malay pop songs, observations on music programs on television, and interviews with parties who have information about the phenomenon, this thesis concludes that Malay pop music has a strong musical uniformity so that it is a phenomenon in the context of the cultural industry, as well as its dominant nature because it is confirmed by hegemonic television music programs in Indonesia. The success of Malay pop music brings high profits to those involved in it, so that the spirit of capitalism is very dominant in the music discourse. This thesis also finds resistance from the indie label music movement to counter the dominance of Malay pop, to fight against the decline in musical quality and creativity confirmed by the mainstream mass media.

Relevant to the above academic thesis is a study by M. Jadid Khadavi in a publication entitled "Deconstruction of Indonesian Pop Music in the Perspective of the Cultural Industry" (2014:47-56). Through the use of Derrida's deconstruction analysis, Khadavi

has shown that Indonesian popular music has been polarized into two parts, namely *major labels* and *indie labels*. *Major labels* are profit-oriented, while *indie labels* are ideologically oriented to creativity and freedom. The *indie* movement must also be understood as an alternative in the deconstructive efforts of music creators against the ideology of cultural industry capitalism, namely by providing new nuances to popular music genres that are needed by society.

The problem of the dominance of discourse in industrial capitalism with popular music media in Indonesia, so far seems to have produced a paradoxical meaning. For example, the results of a study by Emma Baulch entitled "Alternative Music and Meditation in Late New Order Indonesia" (2002). From this study, it is known that alternative music, as a creative form specific to popular music, in various media can appear in Indonesia at a time when the dominant and official discourse is increasingly unsystematic and disorganized. There, he said that popular music distribution media such as television and print media are more open to state censorship and regulations when compared to recorded tape media, and easier to control when compared to music concerts. He also explained that the number of hours and page space devoted to alternative music seems to exceed the sales of music recordings of the genre. This shows that the system of dissemination of popular music in Indonesia at that time at the beginning of the Reform era had begun to approach the American model where MTV's television media program had become the main ideological force in determining what was popular (Blauch, 2002:219-234).

Regarding the state policy that deals with the problem of popular music in Indonesia, in the context of Soekarno's power during the Old Order period, Ayu Pertiwi has studied it through a historical perspective in the publication "Soekarno's Prohibition of Western Music in 1959-1967". His analysis has



shown that popular music can be functioned by the state, the power of Soekarno, to carry out an ideology and political policy of the government. At that time, President Soekarno issued an Indonesian Political Manifesto, as a struggle to oppose imperialism and colonialism in Indonesia. This opposition to imperialism and colonialism was the basis for the Indonesian government's ban on western music at that time. This is because according to the government, Indonesian music must be music that reflects the personality of Indonesia, and can be used as part of a revolution that can awaken the soul and spirit of Indonesian youth (Pertiwi, 2014:334-345).

In the political context of the Reform era, an article by Bart Barendregt and Wim van Zanten entitled "Popular Music in Indonesia Since 1998, in Particular Fusion, Indie and Islamic Music on Video Compact Discs and the Internet" analyzes how popular music in Indonesia is used in the negotiation of the identity of certain communities, which plays an important role in the dialogue of power at the local level. national, and global. The phenomenon of political change in Indonesia (Reform) and the fall of President Suharto,

related to the development of popular music—as shown in the functionalization of VCD and internet media—is more dynamic than in the previous period (Barendregt & Zanten, 2002:67-114).

In the most recent period after the Reform era, the problem of using various online *platforms* through the internet as a medium for disseminating popular music has become important. This can be seen in the article from Resmadi & Baulch (2024) entitled "Indonesian Critiques of The New Musical System". This study has explored the criticism of Indonesian indie musicians towards the new system of distributing and listening to music, consisting of music *streaming platforms*, aggregator services, music industry personnel, collecting institutions, and copyright law. From this study, it can be seen that criticism of popular music dissemination media in Indonesia not only focuses on the platform's business model, but also on the shortcomings of other stakeholders that determine the royalty payment and visibility of music streaming platforms, including collecting agencies, copyright laws, and aggregators (Resmadi & Baulch, 2024:1-15).

Table 2. Socio-political discourse of Indonesian popular music

Socio-political discourse of Indonesian popular music	Social criticism function and state political accommodation tool
	Social reflections of songwriters and musicians
	The arena of the compromising balance of popular culture ideologies
	Industry polarization between major labels (capitalism ideology) and indie labels (freedom of expression ideology)

As we can Table 2, there are four important socio-political discourse factors in the Indonesian popular music industry. Starting from social criticism function and state political accommodation tool, social reflections of songwriters and musicians, industry polarization between major labels (capitalism ideology) and indie labels (freedom of expression ideology), to the arena of the compromising balance of popular culture ideologies.

## Archives and Documents

In addition to history, archival disciplines or topics about archives, Indonesian popular music seems to have appeared in a number of publications. Ignatius Aditya Ahiatmaka entitled "Indonesian Popular Music Archiving Groups: Value and Meaning Attribution to Popular Cultural Products" has discussed archiving groups to define, identify, document, preserve, and reconstruct the history of Indonesian popular music through archival activities (Adhiatmaka, 2018:130).

The archiving of popular music shows that archives can be a means of preserving memory and cultivating collective identity awareness because popular music records personal and communal experiences at an event (Darajat & Waluyo, 2022; Tapiheru & Anshaari, n.d.). A scientific article entitled “Memory in Songs: Understanding the Management of Popular Music Archives in Indonesia” written by Irfan Rizky Darajat and Waluyo Waluyo explains how each information institution in obtaining, collecting, and managing Indonesian popular music archives will provide an overview of how these institutions understand Indonesian popular music archives and the challenges in managing them. The article also provides an overview of the importance of managing Indonesia’s popular music archives as a continuous work between state information agencies, music lovers communities, and the music industry.

Noviana’s thesis entitled “Management of Audiovisual Archives in Lokananta: A Case Study of Music Archives as the Collective Memory of the Indonesian Nation” discusses the management of the Lokananta music archive which is not only carried out technically, but also non-technically which is reflected in the cultural value of the manager in managing the Lokananta music archive as the collective memory of the Indonesian nation. This study aims to describe the management of music archives in Lokananta. The results of this study illustrate that the management of music archives physically has been carried out but has not been maximized, then the cultural value of the manager which can be seen is a sense of belonging, the value of mutual cooperation, the value of responsibility to pass on to the next generation (Noviana, 2017). Regarding the Lokananta music archive or studio, the publication of a book entitled *Lokananta* by Fakhri Zakaria, Dzulfikri Putra Malawi, and Syaurya Qotrunadha has explained the history and work of Lokananta as a state-owned record label in the Indonesian music industry, especially in 2010-2015, as well as discussed

several archives found in Lokananta (Zakaria et al., 2016).

Regarding archives or documents of Indonesian popular music, the S-2 thesis in library science at the University of Indonesia written by Adista Nurfitri entitled “Preservation of Music Archives as Collective Memory: A Case Study in Irama Nusantara” (2021) discusses the management of preservation carried out by the Irama Nusantara institution in preserving popular music made by the Indonesian nation. Irama Nusantara is committed to collecting archives of popular music from the past and re-empowering them by digitizing archives. This kind of institution is useful for the public, so that people can be more aware of the existence of Indonesian popular music as part of the nation’s identity. Since 2013 until now, Irama Nusantara has digitized archives of 5,294 releases, 48,458 songs, and 253 music libraries (Tapiheru & Anshaari, n.d.).

In addition to providing open access for the general public to listen to the results of the archive, Irama Nusantara also makes various other educational efforts. For example, Irama Nusantara released a mini album containing songs from the past performed by musicians in the present so that these songs can still be listened to. In addition, Irama Nusantara also compiles podcasts, conducts online seminars, and conducts broadcasts containing chats about music in the past and the stories behind these musics. The archiving efforts and educational activities carried out by Irama Nusantara are a form of returning their work to the community (Nurfitri, 2021). A scientific journal article entitled “Digitization as an Effort to Preserve Popular Classical Music Archives at the Irama Nusantara Foundation” shows that the Irama Nusantara Foundation is the only non-profit foundation that provides free access services to the digitization collections they have through the long [iramanusantara.org](http://iramanusantara.org) (Mediterraneo et al., 2023). Other educational work from Irama Nusantara is also seen in the book publishing program entitled *Dari Ngak*

*Ngik Ngok ke Dheg Dheg Plas* (Adhiatmaka, 2021) by Ignatius Adhitya Adhiyatmaka. The book is divided into three chapters: Chapter I Pre-1960s, Chapter II 1960-1965, and Chapter III 1965-1969, complete with a timeline, special interviews, album reviews and details of archival sources and further reading. The election of the 1960s era was not without reason. Because there are many popular culture explosions. Such as rock n' roll music, musical instrument innovations and many more. All of them have a direct impact on Indonesian music. Which was closed at the end of 1969 when Koes Plus released its first album, *Dheg Dheg Plas* which was influential for the development of popular music in Indonesia, especially the rock genre.

### From the Journalistics

The book entitled *Rock 'n Roll Indonesian Music Industry: From Analog to Digital* (2013) written by Theodor KS presents in detail what and how the music industry in Indonesia has developed since the era of vinyl records (PH), cassettes, CDs, to RBT. Including the

ups and downs of the recording studio and the outbreak of song piracy. This book has shown the importance of paying attention to music archives in Indonesia (KS, 2013). A similar book was also written by Denny Sakrie entitled *100 Years of Indonesian Music* (2015). This book tries the long history of Indonesian music ranging from jazz music, keroncong, dangdut, film soundtracks, rock and roll, folk, indie, to stage music. There were also discussions about record labels in Indonesia, to music creation and singing competitions that also stimulated the growth of music artists in Indonesia. Then the book entitled *Documentation of the History of Indonesian Popular Music 1967-1978* written by Hengky Purwanto and the Indonesian Music Museum team published in 2022 presents excerpts of the history of music in Indonesia in the period from 1967 to 1978. This book seeks to collect Indonesian popular music journalistic archives from a number of music magazines that have been published in Indonesia from 1967 to 1978 such as *Aktuil* magazine and others. After 1978.



Figure 9. Cover book *Rock 'n Roll Indonesian Music Industry...* (KS, 2013), *100 Years of Indonesian Music* (Sakrie, 2015), *Documentation of the History of Indonesian Popular Music 1967-1978* (Herwanto et al., 2020)

In addition to the topic of the history of Indonesia's popular music industry, from the perspective of journalistic research, *Rolling Stone Indonesia* (RSI) magazine has conducted evaluative research by gathering observers and music collectors to curate and

evaluate the works of popular Indonesian music albums. The result is a list of "150 Best Indonesian Albums" published by RSI in the 31st Edition in December 2007. The list contains Indonesian music albums that are considered to have the best quality.

The evaluators are Denny MR, Denny Sakrie, David Tarigan, and Theodore KS. Then in the 56th edition of December 2009, RSI also published the “150 Best Indonesian Songs”, and in December 2010 published the list of “50 Best Indonesian Singers.” This list of the best singers is made based on selection

criteria with the application of Indonesian singers who are considered to have inspired the next generations. In determining the list of the best singers, RSI Indonesia magazine also has a team of voters, as well as a categorization team.



Figure 10. Three covers of RSI magazine's evaluation edition of Indonesian popular music (MR et al., 2007), 2009 (Team, 2009), (Team, 2010)

Similar to the publication of RSI, in 2020 Elevation Books, a subdivision of Elevation Records which diligently publishes music books and local albums, released a new handbook in looking at Indonesian music, namely *This Album Could Be Your Life: 50 Best Albums Indonesia: 1955-2015*. Interestingly, this book presents a different list from RSI's. For comparison, if in first place on the RSI list is occupied by the soundtrack album *Badai Pasti Berlalu*, then

successively the album *Guruh Gypsy* and the compilation of the 1978 *Youth Song Creation Competition*, then the book *This Album Could Be Your Life...* put the album *Badai Pasti Berlalu* in fifth place. Instead, the first place was occupied by *Dheg Dheg Plas* from Koes Plus, the second place was the album *Ports of Lima* from the group Sore which was previously not on the list, and the Swami album from Swami as the top three.



Figure 11. *This Album Could Be Your Life...* book cover (Boer et al., 2020)



One interesting thing from the results of the journalistic evaluation, especially in RSI magazine, that can be concluded is the prominence and superiority of Indonesian popular music works in the 1970s compared to other decades (1950s to 2000s). From the list of “150 Best Indonesian Albums”, it is known that the ten best albums are dominated by albums (six albums out of ten) of Indonesian popular music in the 1970s. In terms of production, the 1970s were also the most productive era in terms of quantity.

## Conclusion

Finally, the results of this systematic literature review have prompted us to provide important notes. The first note is that while it is known that Indonesian popular music in the 1970s had a high quality of inspiration and productivity compared to other decades, there has been no specific study or research analyzing this phenomenon. Based on political issues with all their critical discourses, most of the existing studies are more interested in Indonesian popular music in the 1950s, 1960s, 1980s and 1990s, which had strong critical political discourses. Therefore, research on Indonesian popular music that focuses on the works and social settings of the 1970s is important.

Secondly, the dominance of the dangdut genre in Indonesia, which according to the neo-Gramscian perspective takes place due to the compositional balance between the ideological subjects of popular culture, and the absence of studies on the cross-genre phenomenon of Indonesian popular music has opened a wide door for interested academics to enter. As a final note, the tendency to use the perspective of humanities sciences in studying Indonesian popular music so far indicates a lack of educational disciplinary approach. Therefore, we suggest that educational perspectives can also be used to produce meaningful educational knowledge contributions about Indonesian popular music with its genre complexity.

## Limitations of Study

This study has limitations in terms of the literature data used so that a number of conclusions from the findings obtained may have a generalization gap. In particular, the data only covers literature after 1999.

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