Under the Radar: The Everyday Resistance of Anarchist Punks in Bandung, Indonesia

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Under the Radar:
The Everyday Resistance of Anarchist Punks in Bandung, Indonesia

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

by

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Abstract

Amidst a current resurgence of hypernationalism across the globe, resistance movements and counterhegemonic ideologies are becoming increasingly visible and more common elements of broader socio-political discourses. While high-profile protests have ignited public interest in resistance movements—turning relatively unknown groups such as Antifa and Black Bloc into household names—little attention has been paid to the behind-the-scenes networks undergirding many of these organizations. Translocal do-it-yourself (DIY) punk rock networks are spaces in which alternative and subversive ideologies are enacted through the everyday implementation of anarchist philosophies and DIY ethics. Here, ‘under the radar’ modes of resistance are found in the lived realities, subjectivities, and transnational interactions of punks. Indonesia’s burgeoning punk scenes offer fertile ground for the exploration of such forms of resistance, and the nation’s status as a post-authoritarian, emergent democracy amplifies the ramifications of their enaction.

Based on fieldwork conducted with a punk rock anarchist collective in Bandung, Indonesia, this dissertation considers the implications of DIY and anarchist ethics enacted through both routine interactions and global translocality. I argue that anarcho-punks in Bandung are resisting hegemonic power dynamics, in part, through co-opting the very structures they seek to circumvent. Taking the ideologies and epistemologies of those with whom I worked seriously, this work incorporates anarchist anthropology as both a theoretical and methodological imperative. I demonstrate that using a perspective that does not privilege the primacy of the ‘State’ reveals the formation of translocal identity as challenging and reshaping dominant sociopolitical and socioeconomic power.
Acknowledgments

I had every intention of keeping this short, but that did not work out so well. There are a lot of people to thank as this dissertation is group effort. First and foremost on the thank you list is my family. Thanks to my wife, Jamie, who has been there since the inception of this arduous academic trek. She has read more of my nonsense than anyone and has put up with more than is fair. I must thank my parents, Bill and Denise, for…well…everything. I could write a whole dissertation on the ways they have helped me; suffice it to say they did it all, and I am very grateful for everything. Thanks to my brother, Will, he has been my biggest cheerleader throughout my academic pursuits, and I have always appreciated it. My best pal Loogie gets thanks as well; he seems to always pop-up when he is most needed. Lastly on the familial acknowledgments, my good dogs, Sadie and Benny, both have provided much needed love and laughs.

It is traditional to thank the people on your committee, but in this case, I actually mean it. My advisor, Jonathan S. Marion, met me when I was an undergrad and has mentored me ever since, which I am sure was easier said than done. I have gotten to write this dissertation because he gambled on me, and for that I am eternally grateful. JoAnn D’Alisera has provided invaluable guidance regarding my scholarship but has also looked out for me throughout my time at the University of Arkansas. Ram Natarajan has gone above and beyond his role as a committee member and has provided both feedback and inspiration. Brent Luvaas’ work has provided a catalyst for my thinking about anarcho-punk in Indonesia, and he was kind enough to be part of my committee. Thanks everyone, I really appreciate everything.

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Dedication

For the punks
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Introduction:

Welcome Under the Radar

*Bandung: A city of punks and prayer...* - Lonely Planet 2017

Well, the cat is out of the bag. Even Lonely Planet knows that Bandung, Indonesia is a hotspot for punk rock. Over the years, I have talked with different people all over the world about my research, and many are surprised that punk still exists. Punk is not dead; in fact, it is alive and thriving in urban Indonesia and has been for some time. If you are tuned in to the visual cues of punk, it is difficult to wander around Bandung, Jakarta, Denpasar, or other major cities without seeing markers of the scene. I bumped into some teenagers who were misbehaving in the Dago area of Bandung, and one of them was extremely excited that the band shirt I was wearing and the backpatch on his jacket were both representing the same obscure punk band from Portland, Oregon.\(^1\) Indeed, the punks in Indonesia are numerous *and* plugged into the broader global punk rock scene.

In fact, punk is so big in Indonesia that it would be absurd to talk about ‘punk’ as though it were a nice, neat homogenous cultural blob. I do not mean to suggest there are competing punk gangs or something of that nature. In my experience, punks identify as punks, broadly speaking. I have yet to come across groups of punks who refuse to associate with one another. There are, however, discernable cliques differentiated by musical style or interpretations of punk ethos and ideologies. It is one such group, a very particular segment of the broader Bandung punk rock scene, which I am examining in this dissertation. As such, they are not representative of the entire scene; although, as I will be explaining, they actually play a critical role within this larger

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1. We were both sporting Defiance stuff, if you were curious.
sphere. The punks I work with operate along lesser-known channels, so to speak, and finding them—even for other punks—can take some doing. When I first started exploratory work in Bandung in 2017, I was invited to a show by punks associated with this group.

A young man, clad in a studded jacket, met me in the center of town to take me to the show for which the advertising flyer cryptically said “come under the radar” where a location would normally be disclosed. Despite being invited, no one actually told me where the venue was; my contacts arranged a ride for me. The combination of steep terrain, a road riddled with massive potholes and fissures, and two grown men on a one-person motorcycle equipped with a pull-start made for uncomfortably slow going on the way to the secret venue that was some 45 minutes outside of Bandung. We crested a hill and idled down a small dirt road that ended at a brick wall. Walking through the gate, I made my way into a compound comprised of several buildings, gardens, fishponds, and an orchard, all of which made it increasingly clear that this was something more than simply a do-it-yourself (DIY) music venue. The inside of the main house was plastered with flyers and leaflets promoting both subversive causes and gigs which included bands from across the globe. This compound was Rumah Pirata, a punk rock anarchist collective.

This dissertation is an ethnographic analysis of Rumah Pirata and the translocal networks with which the collective is intricately intertwined. As I will show, Rumah Pirata’s story is a complicated one to tell. DIY punk is not something merely done on the weekends or a music genre enjoyed from the comfort of home. The ‘do’ component of DIY is the critical word. It is through the process of ‘doing’ that punks exert their power to actively resist hegemonies. Through building and maintaining relationships based on DIY, geopolitical and cultural borders are transgressed and blurred, lived realities are complexified, and international connections both
reflect and refract pervasive power dynamics. It is messy and nonlinear—as effective resistance always is.

Figure 1 A banner inside Rumah Pirata's music venue. People are welcome 'under the radar,' so long as they do not fall within the prohibited categories. The number '1312' frequently appears at the collective. It stands for ACAB—All Cops Are Bastards. Taken by author.

Why You Should Keep Reading

Amidst a current resurgence of hypernationalism around the world, resistance movements and counterhegemonic ideologies are increasingly visible elements of broader socio-political discourses. Anarchist groups such as Antifa and Black Bloc who were relatively unknown a decade ago have become household names, in part through violent confrontation and direct action. One might expect an ethnography focused on a punk rock anarchist collective to contain accounts of fiery protests in the streets or clandestine paramilitary missions to destroy the capitalist system. I am sorry to disappoint you.
As I came to learn through fieldwork conducted between 2016-2019, Rumah Pirata is challenging pervasive power dynamics through unexpected means. It is apropos that the collective uses variants of the motto “come under the radar” on signage and promotional flyers as it is under the radar practices and interactions that are central to how they enact resistance to hegemonies. Thirty-five years ago, James C. Scott (1985) wrote about the “weapons of the weak,” acts which are often overlooked yet over time have the power to disrupt oppressive power structures. Throwing a brick through a Starbucks window in the name of anarchism may garner attention to your cause, but does it affect the change the thrower desires? As the saying goes ‘the nail that sticks up gets hammered down.’ Branches of social theory have long noted the utility of everyday practices and interactions for challenging and changing power (e.g. Scott 1985, 1990, 2009; Graeber 2004, 2007, 2009), especially in instances where overt rebellion will be swiftly stamped out.

I argue that it is everyday practices enacted by the Rumah Pirata punks that serve as mechanisms of resistance to dominant power dynamics. I came to learn that Rumah Pirata punks use a specific interpretation of DIY ethics as a framework for daily interactions and relationships. To them, DIY is a form of practiced anarchism. Their understanding of DIY is framed around interactions based on mutual aid, non-hierarchical organizational practices, and deep-seated anti-capitalist sentiments. To them, doing-it-yourself means doing-it-with-friends and doing-it-without-profiting. This specific implementation informs both local and transnational relationships.

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2 My in-country fieldwork unfolded over the summers of 2016 and 2017, and from January through August of 2019. I was also in constant contact with participants of and continually collected data through a collaborative visual ethnography project conducted with Rumah Pirata punks from 2016-2019.
Some theorizations of everyday practices as resistance have faced critiques (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1990; Mitchell 1990). Finding resistance in everything has the potential to discount agency and impose intentions, which may or may not exist. The question of intentionality is not an issue for this study. While the punks of Rumah Pirata may not be conscious of their everyday action’s potential for undercutting hegemonies, this interpretation directly aligns with their overarching anarchist worldview and ethos. The outcomes of the everyday resistances I discuss here are often sought by punks who are part of the collective through other means (direct action, other forms of activism) and in other arenas.

Indonesia is a nation undergoing rapid urbanization and significant shifts in class structure. Throughout most of the Suharto regime’s reign (1965-98), class distinction was popularly conceived as being delineated by a stark contrast between wealthy elites, who were often involved in bureaucracy, and poor commoners (Dick 1985). In post-authoritarian Indonesia, a new middle class began to rapidly expand, causing both tension with old class structures and a redefinition of class categorizations (Klinken and Berenschot 2014). The punks at Rumah Pirata come from varied backgrounds and social statuses. Some are university educated while some have very little formal education at all. Some of the punks have familial connections to high-ranking civil servants (see Chapter 2), and some of them make money through directing traffic for pocket change. I only know of a portion of the broader social stratifications that punks are embedded in through careful observation. For anarchist punks, class is a concept that is antithetical to their principles; thus, it is not openly engaged with or discussed. There was often a marked avoidance of such discussions.

Still, while I argue that relying on place or ethnolocality (Boellstorff 2002) as an analytical lens for understanding anarchist punks is a mistake, inevitably Rumah Pirata punks are
also inseparable from their demographic positionalities in Bandung, Indonesia. As far as their self-identification, Rumah Pirata punks are first and foremost punks. Similarly, and in keeping with their anarchist beliefs and values, concepts of geopolitical borders, nationality, and socioeconomics are of little consequence in terms of their chosen identities. It is because these “external” identifiers are not of interest, or even discussed, among the Rumah Pirata punks that such markers of identity are infrequently and only vaguely referenced throughout this dissertation. Yet these demographic considerations inform the punks’ backgrounds and contextualize their social articulations with non-punks.

Demographically, participants of the collective span a range of ages from toddlers to people in their 50s, with most being in their mid-20s to late 30s. I am aware of what most people at the collective do for a living, with occupations including everything from drone pilot to self-employed street traffic director, but I only include specific references to outside livelihoods when these better orient the reader. It would be naïve to suggest that age and occupation do not matter in concrete ways. Yet any robust understanding of the collective must acknowledge that, from the collective’s perspective, how many years someone has been alive and how they pay their rent do not determine people’s demonstrated commitment to DIY/anarchist ethics; thus, they are rarely discussed at Rumah Pirata. In traditionally anthropological parlance, age is ascribed, and even if occupational success is achieved, that is not domain-relevant. Those markers are based on hierarchical social organization. Instead, what matters to the Rumah Pirata punks is their achieved identities relative to the collective’s take on DIY as anarchic activism.

Using frameworks and lines of inquiry aimed at elucidating people’s lived realities that do not reflect how they understand themselves is problematic. As I see it, an anthropology of anarchism necessitates an anarchist anthropology. If we take the ideologies, epistemologies, and
perspectives of those with whom we work seriously, then incorporating those into our research becomes imperative. I do not entirely disregard other approaches. I do, however, find that initially approaching anthropological research from as close to an insider’s perspective as possible is often the most illustrative and ethical method.

An anarchist anthropology does not begin with the assumption of the ‘States’ primacy in people’s lived realities. As my research makes clear, punks at Rumah Pirata conceptualize themselves as part of a global punk scene. Instead of being the ‘Indonesian punks,’ they recognize themselves as ‘punks in Indonesia.’ Their primary identification resides in commonality with other punks, not their nationality. This self-identification is wholly in keeping with anarchist ideologies. Rather than dismissing this perspective, I embrace it throughout this dissertation, and it has provided valuable insight into people’s lived realities and the consequences of their actions.

Incorporating an anarchist anthropological approach privileges insider’s perspective and lays clear the points of friction created by enactments of everyday resistance. A major theme interwoven throughout this work is the tension between ‘local’ and ‘global.’ Indeed, punks’ primary self-identification resides in a translocal and global imagined community (Anderson 1983), yet is constrained by their lived realities within their local contexts. This project would be significantly simpler if punk in Indonesia was merely a matter of glocalization (Robertson 1995) in which Indonesians were modifying a global cultural phenomenon to fit local tastes and values. Instead, punks in Indonesia are transcending geopolitical and cultural borders through their identification, participation, and central position within global anarcho-punk networks.

It is through conceptualizing, organizing, and connecting themselves to global DIY punk networks that Rumah Pirata punks are enacting resistances through everyday practices. The fact
that I have sat here scratching my head, trying to make sense of global connections versus embeddedness, proves the point that seemingly mundane acts such as how one constructs a chosen identity has the power to blur lines and reconfigure understandings. Everyday acts of resistance have the ability to change, if ever-so-slightly, pervasive power dynamics and hegemonies. The rest of this dissertation is dedicated to demonstrating how that works and what it means.

This Dissertation

As noted, this dissertation is an ethnographic account of the Rumah Pirata collective and their role in translocal anarcho-punk networks. The primary modes of data collection were participant observation and informal interviews. While there were occasional instances when I asked participants specific open-ended research questions, most of my ethnographic data came from extemporaneous conversations (i.e. informal interviews) while sitting around between bands’ sets and the like. This approach was a deliberate choice since informal interviewing methods are (1) especially well-suited for learning about lived experience, and (2) appropriate in situations where formality is frowned upon (Bernard 2006: 213). As I discuss in detail in Chapter 3, I also made extensive use of visual ethnographic methods such as participatory photo-taking (Winton 2016; Davidmann 2014), photo-elicitation (Collier 2009; Harper 2002; Pink 2001), and visual story-telling and photovoice approaches (Bowles 2017; Delgado 2015; Edwards 2009). Through these research methodologies, I have come to understand that Rumah Pirata enacts resistance to hegemonic power dynamics through everyday interactions and the implementation of DIY/anarchist ethics. To demonstrate this, I have broken this work into chapters designed to reveal these under the radar enactments of everyday resistance and theorize their implications.
In Chapter 1, I survey the pertinent literature (a) theorizing contemporary punk rock scenes, (b) concerning the scholarly debates and uses of anarchism, and (c) engaging with discourses surrounding globalization and translocality. Throughout, I examine the utility of these materials for understanding Rumah Pirata. Perhaps most importantly, I argue that the sociological approaches using subculture and post-subcultural theories regularly used in scholarship on punk are inadequate for understanding global punk today. Simply stated, we need to move on from this worn-out paradigm once and for all.

Chapter 2 then introduces my project and the specific group at the heart of my research. I situate my project and the people I worked with into the global anarcho-punk scene, the city of Bandung, and Indonesia more broadly.

In Chapter 3, I explain and examine the collaborative visual ethnographic project that I conducted with the Rumah Pirata punks. Starting with the rationale behind the project and the process involved, I present the findings and analyze the data and the project itself. I also articulate how my collaborative project with the Rumah Pirata punks operated as anarchist ethnography, highlighting the benefits and significance for research within the context of anarcho-punk scenes—including community buy-in, developing rapport, and unpacking insider-understandings.

In Chapter 4, I use the case of Rumah Pirata’s annual music festival, Libertad, as a springboard for discussing the complexities of resistance within the anarcho-punk scene. I consider how I initially interpreted the music festival as a screwed up neocolonial mess but came to recognize the ‘under the radar’ implementations of resistance. It is entirely incorrect and far too easy to use the messiness of translocal anarcho-punk networks to dismiss their relevance and
impact. It is against this backdrop that I introduce the concept of ‘co-optive resistance’ as a means for explicating the complexities of such resistance.

I offer further analyses in Chapter 5, arguing that focusing on punks’ dislocation and deterritorialization provides significant new insights into contemporary Indonesian popular culture, and into translocal networks more broadly. Just to forewarn you, if you are looking for an ethnographic piece on Javanese or Sundanese people, you came to the wrong place—which is itself telling about today’s Indonesia. In this chapter, I argue that how punks conceptualize self is representative of broader social patterns in Indonesia. I also discuss how this project contributes to anarchist anthropologies and social theory more broadly. Lastly, I engage with my research’s utility for understanding global punk, its continued relevance, and its predilection for fucking up the system.

A Note on Style

As I am sure you will notice, some of this work does not read like your average dissertation. This was a deliberate choice, as it struck me as tremendously disingenuous to linguistically gentrify an ethnographic account of anarchist punks. Punk is well-known for its crassness, so not throwing in some snark, sarcasm, and foul language would be misrepresentative of the very people at the heart of this work. The flipside of this, however, is that I want Rumah Pirata’s story and my theorizations to be understood and taken seriously. As such, I meander between hardcore scholar-speak and flippancy. I have gained valuable insight into the deliberate and evocative use of non-academic language and prose from two sources. First, I draw from Shane Greene’s scholarly article on Peruvian punk, in which he mockingly refers to Dick Hebdige as “Dr. Dick” and chastises the Birmingham School approach to cultural studies as “an
academic circle jerk” (2012: 579). He demonstrates that writing like a ‘punk’ can facilitate understanding. Second, I benefited from Kathleen Stewart’s much more eloquent ethnography set in rural Appalachia, *A Space on the Side of the Road*, in which she contends that her deviations from Standard English are meant “to evoke some of the density and texture of expressive forms that voice a cultural poetics embedded in a way of life and the politics of its constant subversion and reproduction in the face of national and transnational forces…” (1996: 10). While I will not try to claim that my use of unorthodox prose rises to the level of Stewart’s utilization of ethnopoetics, my writing in this dissertation is informed by her line of thinking.
Chapter 1:

Theoretical Approaches for Understanding Contemporary Punk

Don’t worry, I am not going to drone on *ad nauseum* about the history of punk and which band influenced whatever and whatnot. There is a plethora of excellent scholarship that already does that (see Cogan 2010). It is necessary, however, to have an in-depth discussion of the theoretical trajectories which have shaped our understandings of punk rock culture over the last 40 years—the good, the bad, and the ugly—and that is part of what I do here. First, I begin with an overview of scholarship that situates my positionality in all of this. Then I critically engage with sociological approaches to punk, move on to theorizations of DIY, anarchism, and resistance, and conclude with a discussion of pertinent discourses regarding globalization and translocality that ground the rest of this dissertation.

A Note on Positionality

While I discuss my story and how it intersects with this project in greater depth in Chapter 2, it is necessary to acknowledge my positionality as a punk from the outset as it informs how I interpret the literature that I discuss in this chapter. Anthropology has a long-standing history of including reflexivity as a mechanism for situating and interrogating ethnographers’ research and interpretations (Marcus 1994). Jay Ruby argues, “To be reflexive is to be not only self-aware, but to be sufficiently self-aware to know what aspects of self are necessary to reveal so that an audience is able to understand both the process employed and the resultant product and to know that the revelation itself is purposive, intentional and not merely narcissistic or accidentally revealing” (1977: 4). I certainly do not wish to be narcissistic, yet it is based on my
positionality as a punk that I consider how some theoretical trajectories have engaged with punk in problematic ways.

Being a punk studying punk provides both obstacles and opportunities. Although I am uncomfortable to making parallels between indigenous anthropologies and my experiences studying punks—obviously equating the two experiences is ridiculous—have found my understandings spurred on by Native American anthropologists negotiating their positionalities. Specifically, Bea Medicine’s insightful book *Learning to Be and Anthropologist and Remaining “Native”* offered a useful starting point. She writes:

> Many tribes are writing their own tribal histories in an attempt to present their experiences from their own unique point of view. Native Americans often believe that most anthropologists already have a theoretical framework when they enter an indigenous social system and collect and report data in support of this prior formulation. (2001: 10)

Medicine’s writing served as a catalyst for my thinking in regard to a vastly different context. Although not entirely an insider in this case—yes, I am a punk…but also a white guy from the US—my intimate familiarity with the context I am studying presented unique opportunities for privileging insider epistemologies and practices within my ethnographic research. This privileging has been foundational to my theoretical and methodological approaches. Does it make me too close for critical scrutiny? Well, you decide.

**Subculture Theory: The Turd that Won’t Flush**

Since its publication in 1979, Dick Hebdige’s seminal work *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* has been foundational to academic inquiries into punk. Hebdige’s analyses of ‘subcultures’ (including teds, skinheads, mods, etc.) in England in the late 70s were cutting-edge, particularly so for punk whose inception occurred only a few years before the book’s publication. Hebdige
argues that punk in the late 1970s was a subculture comprised of white working-class youths who stylistically drew from a multitude of sources, including some less obvious ones such as reggae and Rastafarianism (1979: 29). His work serves as an excellent contextualization of punk’s roots and early manifestations. The problem arises insofar as Hebdige’s analyses of punk as ‘subculture’ has become reified and subsumed into most scholarship on the movement ever since, largely without critical engagement.

What is subculture? Good question. Hebdige is not much help in finding out; he contends, “The word ‘subculture’ is loaded down with mystery” (1979: 4). He then proceeds to spin a complex web of semiotic analysis, mixed in with Althusser, crossed with Gramsci, which ends in an unconvincing shoulder shrug and a jump straight into case studies. Twenty years later, in The Subcultures Reader, scholars argued that “Subcultures’ have come to designate social groups which are perceived to deviate from the normative ideals of adult communities” (Thornton 1997: 2). It is here that the historical underpinnings of sociological approaches to ‘subculture’ rear their ugly heads. There has always been anchoring in “youth” and “delinquency.” Both categories are suspect.

Hebdige himself notes the problematic origins of subculture theory born from the theoretical lineage of the Chicago School of Sociology, writing:

Though it is important to distinguish between the delinquent gang and the subculture which is altogether broader, looser… and less literally involved in law-breaking, there are obvious connections. Moreover, the two terms are virtually synonymous in the popular mythology. Unfortunately, the confusion that follows from this association has all too often been reproduced in academic work because…the analysis of subculture grew in large part directly out of the study of delinquent street gangs. (1979:180, original emphases)

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3 Here, I am talking about subculture as used in scholarship, specifically based on works from The Birmingham School of Cultural Studies. The term is used more broadly in everyday settings, and that is fine with me. I have a problem with the sociological usage as applied to punk scenes.
Of course, this excerpt is buried in the endnotes of the book. A decade later, this same mishap is occurring. Take Stephen Baron’s audacious 1989 article on Canadian punks in which he laughably contends that there were precisely 35 punks in Victoria, Canada (295) and that “scamming, rolling (i.e., mugging), panhandling, and violence” were common among subcultural members (311). No other studies that I am familiar with before or contemporaneous to this would lend any credibility to his conclusion. Perhaps the Victoria punks of 1989 were, in fact, hardened criminals. I find that doubtful given the assumptions and foredrawn conclusions in Baron’s methodological approach in which he found participants for his study by merely walking up to ‘punks’ on a street corner, which he already knew was ‘punk turf” (293). Baron’s work stands as the most blatant example of conflating what had been termed the punk subculture with criminality, and it is discernably rooted in the longstanding trope initiated in subculture theory.

The other issue with subculture theory is its seemingly inextricable connection to “youth.” Like Hebdige’s contention that ‘subculture’ is shrouded in mystery, so too is the term ‘youth.’ Sometimes youth is given a number, something between the ages of 15-24, though social scientists often hedge that by noting the category of youth is a cultural construction tied to broader social institutions, such as the economy (Swedenburg 2007; Murphy 2012). Swedenburg has argued that youth is a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, which often concludes when a person gets married, though he notes these lines blur when socio-economic realities complicate situations (2007:4).

While I will concede that for early theorizations of punk, most people did fit into the category of youth, this is not true from at least the 1990s onward. From a pure numbers standpoint, Charlie Harper, of the preeminent street punk band U.K. Subs, dispels that myth by still touring at the age of 75. Moreover, from a qualitative perspective, the notion of punk being a
youth movement does not stand against the evidence, both directly from participants and academically (see Lindberg 2007; Davis 2006; Bennett 2006). There are a lot of old-timer punks with families and careers. Their identities as punks and their other obligations and identities overlap; it is not as though they occasionally call a time-out to revisit their youth.

I find the moniker of youth less problematic for punk as opposed to ‘subculture’ because it is less dismissive of punk’s potential. In Indonesia, we can find examples of “youth movements,” which have dramatically impacted society more broadly. I am thinking specifically of the overthrow of Suharto in 1998, which was spurred on by massive student protests. Nonetheless, for academic inquiry, it is simply inaccurate to describe contemporary punk as a youth movement/subculture/scene/community, or anything of that nature.

By confining theorizations of punk to ‘youth’ and ‘subculture’ paradigms, academics are effectively saying that the movement is just teenagers misbehaving. That conclusion would be fair if there were any ethnographic (or even anecdotal) evidence to substantiate it. As this dissertation demonstrates, that notion is complete nonsense. It is not just this dissertation that takes issue with this fiction. Yet despite others having made similar arguments against ‘youth subculture’ (see Leonard 1997) this framework is still used all the time (Moran 2010; Moore 2007, 2009; O’Connor 2003; Lewin and Williams 2016). Because of its tendency to obfuscate rather than illuminate and because of its dismissive undertones, I do not use the term “subculture” or “youth” (or any combination of those) to discuss contemporary punk.

I do, however, use the word “scene” frequently throughout this dissertation. The concept of scenes, as I am using it, comes from post-subcultural theory. While I mostly understand post-subcultural theory as a rebranding of a tired and antiquated paradigm (subculture theory), it does offer a few concepts and some terminology I find helpful. Post-subculture studies arose from the
growing recognition that ‘subcultures’ could no longer be understood as independent and autonomous in relation to one another (Bennett 2011). Indeed, where punk ends and ska, or metal, or psychobilly begins is indistinct and highly contested. To account for this, post-subcultural theorists proposed several new models to engage with such ambiguity. Will Straw, for example, describes what he terms music ‘scenes’ as being a “cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation…” (1991: 273). While this definition leaves something to be desired, it does recognize overlaps and ongoing negotiations as central to the concept. Here, I use the term “scene” in a comparable manner, as a way to describe a community in process that can be defined and knowable, yet is in flux and emergent.

What the Hell is Punk, Then?

The simple fact that my research involves punks in Indonesia presents something of a quagmire for old-fashioned subculture theory. For Hebdige, punk was a post-war, white, working-class subcategory. For punks in Indonesia, none of those classifications apply. Yet, it is not as though Indonesians dreamt up punk rock independently. There is, obviously, transmission of something other than socioeconomic and racial identity markers from the places of punks’ origins to the myriad of locations around the world with thriving punk scenes today.

Many scholarly works have focused on independent cultural production (e.g., Bourdieu 1984, 1996; see also Hesmondhalgh 2006) and anti-consumerism as punk rock’s unifying ethos (Dale 2016; Dunn and Farnsworth 2012; Greene 2016; Moore 2007, 2010). Indeed, this independent do-it-yourself (DIY) approach to cultural production often is seen as the hallmark of punk rock (Dale 2016; Dunn 2016; Wallach 2008b). Even Hebdige recognized the DIY ethic’s
importance, having gone as far as to argue—albeit incorrectly—that when punk rock symbols and styles became commodified by mainstream capitalism, the culture would disappear (1979: 96). Even though DIY ethics are a central concept for contemporary punk rock, there is often little consensus as to what actually constitutes ‘doing-it-yourself.’

Here, it is critical to note that the implementation of DIY ethics in punk scenes are done almost exclusively as choice rather than necessity. In her book *DIY Detroit*, Kimberley Kinder is careful to make this distinction as well, pointing out that many self-provision because there are no other options, whereas other forms of DIY entrepreneurial endeavors come “with a countercultural cache” (2016: 27). This is not to suggest that necessity and conscious political statements cannot intersect; they most certainly do, especially in the poverty-stricken urban centers of Indonesia. Indeed, the popular anarcho-punk band Marjinal, from Jakarta, provides an excellent example of this intersection: through their collective, they teach homeless children how to play instruments so they can busk as a means of making money and providing for themselves. The distinction between necessity and choice is also not meant to imply that practitioners of DIY punk all have the luxury of deciding when and where they live by these ethics. For example, I befriended several artists associated with Rumah Pirata who can only afford to cram six people into a small one-bedroom residence in central Bandung, yet refuse to make art for those who do not share the DIY ethic—no matter how much outsiders are willing to pay.

So what, exactly, are the ethics of DIY? It is difficult to say. For example, I went to one “DIY” punk rock show in central Bandung which had a large stage, elaborate lighting setup, and an impressive sound system all ‘brought to you by’ the shows commercial sponsors. Since the sponsors were mostly DIY and indie clothing companies (see Luvaas 2013) and record stores, many still considered this to be a DIY gig. *The punks at Rumah Pirata would beg to differ.*
The punks at Rumah Pirata have a specific interpretation of DIY ethics that distinguishes them from the broader scene. To them, DIY is practiced anarchism. Indeed, they frame their definition of DIY around interactions based on mutual aid, non-hierarchical organizational practices, and deep-seated anti-capitalist sentiments. To them, doing-it-yourself means doing-it-with-friends and doing-it-without-profiting. Whereas indie company-sponsored events fall within the realm of acceptable DIY practice to some segments of the broader scene, the Rumah Pirata punks will only collaborate with other collectives and anarchist groups. Thomas Frank (1997) argues that capitalism often coopts counterculture and turns it ‘hip,’ palatable, and marketable, thus rendering its resistant qualities useless. In maintaining strict adherence to anarchist principles, the Rumah Pirata punks actively and deliberately resist the commodification of their rebellion and challenge the hegemonic capitalist order.

Just because anarcho-punks avoid overt consumerism does not mean they do not like nice things. Here, I take a brief ethnographic detour from the literature to provide an ethnographic example of Rumah Pirata utilizing DIY methods in the everyday. The indie-company sponsored gig I previously mentioned was amateur-hour compared to Kekesed Fest, a music festival held in central Bandung put on by a conglomeration of collectives including Rumah Pirata. They procured a sizable venue complete with expensive sound and lighting equipment for an all-day punk rock gig. The difference between the two shows was that Kekesed did not rely on sponsors to finance the festival. They pre-sold t-shirts and tickets to come up with enough money for a deposit to secure the venue and then collected the rest of the funds at the door and merch table — no sponsors, no advertisements, just DIY, by their definition.

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4 It must be noted, that for the most part, punks in Bandung get along and it is not as though different interpretations of DIY lead to conflict.
As demonstrated by Kekesed Fest, though, this approach comes with plenty of risk. Capitalist investment legitimizes questionable activities to outsiders and certainly makes things less susceptible to unscrupulous interventions from the authorities. In the case of Kekesed Fest, the police came snooping around even though the event was held at a legitimate venue and in the middle of the day. It became necessary to pay off the cops, which presented a significant problem for the collectives involved. The police essentially wanted all the proceeds collected from the door and merch table. Losing that money meant there would not be enough to pay for the venue and associated costs. There was not much of a choice, though, so they gave the scandalous cops the money who then took off. Panic began to set in as bands continued to play. News of the shakedown spread until one concertgoer started making some calls. This guy was

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5 Indonesia is notorious for its corrupt police. Extortion and bribery demands are fairly common.
the deputy mayor’s nephew. Within an hour, the same cops came back to the festival, returned
the money, and, believe in or not, apologized to the organizers. A great day in punk rock history!

Anarchism

Though not representative of all interpretations of DIY in punk rock, Rumah Pirata’s
version of DIY requires further explication as it is predicated on anarchist ideologies. My
intention here is not to provide a definitive overview of anarchist philosophy (to which this is
nowhere close) but to introduce some of the debates and issues navigated by anarchist thinkers
and practitioners. In Chapters 3 and 4 I will discuss Rumah Pirata’s interpretation and
implementation of anarchist principles which, while not necessarily grounded in either the 19th-
century or more contemporary anarchist philosophies discussed here, typically grapple with
some of the same issues.

Perhaps appropriately, the term anarchism defies concrete and agreed-upon definitions.
“Anarchism never hardened into a creed or into a closed body of doctrine” argues historian of
anarchism Atindranath Bose (1967: 7). I tend to defer to David Graeber, who asserts that
“anarchism has tended to be an ethical discourse about revolutionary practice” as opposed to
Marxism which tends “to be a theoretical or analytical discourse about revolutionary strategy”
(2004: 6). The key difference, to me, is that anarchism is about practice. I use ‘practice’ in line
with the larger scholarly trajectory of practice theory, perhaps best summed up by Ortner, who
contends “practice theory…[accepts]…that society is a system, that the system is powerfully
constraining, and yet that the system can be made and unmade through human action and
interaction” (1984: 159). This is not to say that anarchism is not highly theoretical and complex,
but that contemplating it as an intellectual tradition tends to happen through direct implementations rather than academic debate.

In this way, anarchism already begins to realize one of its fundamental goals of breaking down hierarchy. Anarchism is not a philosophy based on high theory for well-educated folks alone: it can be practiced by anyone. James C. Scott has gone as far as to argue that “if you put on anarchist glasses and look at the history of popular movements, revolutions, ordinary politics, and the state from that angle…anarchist principles are active in the aspirations and political action of people who have never heard of anarchism or anarchist philosophy” (2012: XII). As Scott has long contended (2012; 2009; 1990), whether or not they believe what they are doing is anarchism, people around the world enact anarchist practices in attempts to escape domination.

At its essence, anarchism is the rejection of authority and hierarchy. The outspoken Pierre-Joseph Proudhon famously quipped, “The government of man by man is servitude. Whoever lays a hand on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant. I declare him to be my enemy” (quoted in Guerin 1970: 15). Certainly, anarchists are against the “State” and formal government. They also tend to reject other forms of domination as well. Mikhail Bakunin, for instance, wrote: “If God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him” (1882). Of course, with no set doctrine, there are infinite understandings of what anarchism means and how it should be implemented. The very premise of Christoyannopoulos’ book Christian Anarchism (2011) underscores the notion that anarchism encompasses a wide variety of interpretations of what “non-hierarchical” and “anti-authority” mean.

A frequent charge against anarchist thought is that without a rigid structure, there would be widespread disorder. Indeed, in popular usage, anarchy and chaos are often used interchangeably. That drives most anarchists nuts. A central concept of anarchism is the notion
of mutuality. Though mutuality is a fundamental concept for anarchist thought, unsurprisingly, its implementation is driven by divergent interpretations. Anarchist scholar Daniel Guerin contends that anarchism is synonymous with socialism (1970).\(^6\) He makes this assertion because anarchism, at its core, relies on mutual aid. This sentiment is seen in Proudhon’s famed statement that “property is theft.” Property, in this case, refers to private ownership of land, which Proudhon sees as robbery. People cannot own land as it takes away from society's access to it.

Conversely, Proudhon was also a believer in private property borne of labor. If you make it, it is yours. Not everything belongs to everyone. Proudhon once asserted, “Communism is inequality, but not as property is. Property is exploitation of the weak by the strong. Communism is exploitation of the strong by the weak” (2010: 132). Though a believer in communal ownership of land, Proudhon also recognized the autonomy of the individual.

Max Stirner, an intellectual dueler with Proudhon, took a hardline individualist approach to mutuality. To Stirner, association was to be entirely voluntary (Guerin 1970). Asserting that anarchism and socialism are synonymous is difficult within Stirner’s approach. Stirner contends that people should practice mutuality because it is mutually beneficial and makes for a better world, but not because of a vague, values-based contractual obligation. If one chooses to no longer associate, that is their prerogative. He states, “I am and will always remain, with regard to myself, more than the State, than the Church, than God, etc., and thus, infinitely more than the association also” (quoted in Guerin 1970: 16). In this construction, the individual always takes precedence over the collective, with the caveat that, generally, collectivism is often most beneficial for individuals.

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\(^6\) He goes on to clarify that, as he sees it, all anarchists are socialist, though not all socialist are anarchists.
Guerin (1970) suggests that anarchism’s stigma comes, in part, from the acts of anarchist terrorism perpetrated in the early 20th century. Certainly, anarchism’s direct contestation of power structures and the status quo also challenges the comfort of not only those in power but those who are complicit and complacent within it. This is a point that should not be overlooked and helps situate the often-visceral reactions evoked when discussing anarchist sentiments. Anarchism is suggesting a complete dismantling of the organizational methods with which many people are most familiar (and hence comfortable).

**Resistance and Revolutionary Acts**

Dimitrios Theodossopoulos argues that resistance goes through processes of exoticization and, moreover, pathologization (2014). He contends that exoticization and pathologization are “two processes that distantiate the resisting experience from its actual context, to Otherize subaltern struggle as a matter out of place (and time) or delegitimize discontent as impulsive, illogical, or representative of disorder” (2014: 426). Interestingly, Graeber (2004) has argued that the lack of acceptance of anarchist theory within the academy stems from the glaring contradictions found between the two. Academics are, in many ways, the poster-children of elitism and, thus, it becomes difficult to reconcile this with anarchist perspectives.7

Foucault argues that power is everywhere (1978). It is everywhere, discursive, and permeates every facet of human interaction. Because of its pervasiveness, I wonder if power is inherent to being human? Are domination and subordination a faculty8 that is essential to societal

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7 Though the elitism is difficult to reconcile with anarchist perspectives, it must be noted that many academics critically engage with their positions of power and use their status to effect positive social change. Nonetheless, academia remains a massive ivory tower.

8 I use the term ‘faculty’ here, in the same way Michael Taussig does in *Mimesis and Alterity* (1993)—i.e. an innate human predilection.
interactions? Nietzsche certainly thought that there was a “will to power” that drove people towards domination (2008 [1883]). Anarchists disagree with this position. It is quite challenging to promote and enact non-hierarchical relations if you believe that power is inherent to human interactions.

As Graeber points out, anarchists often look to anthropology for proof that hierarchy is a social construct which, by definition, can be undone or remade (2004). Ethnographies of peoples from egalitarian societies offer a glimpse at what social interaction and organization look like beyond oppressive power structures.\(^9\) Anthropologists, of course, will shout and wave their hands, insisting that even within egalitarian societies, there are all sorts of power dynamics and social constraints. Nonetheless, these societies offer stark contrasts to ‘state’ power structures and demonstrate the culturally constructed nature of power relations. Though Foucault asserted that power is everywhere, he also challenged the concept that power was an innate human faculty. He writes, “To say that one can never be ‘outside’ power does not mean that one is trapped and condemned to defeat no matter what” (1980:141). Though power is pervasive, there are opportunities to circumvent, subvert, and resist and these acts may well prove fertile. Moreover, resistant acts need not be undertaken as attempt to wrest power for yourself but can be done solely as a means of avoidance.

Antonio Gramsci makes a distinction between two types of power and control. First, he contends that there is ‘domination’ which is the exertion of power, without consent, through forceful coercion. Second, and more effective and insidious, is what Gramsci termed hegemony (Gramsci 1971; also see Adamson 1980). Hegemony is control through consent. Rather than threatening people directly with violence to assert power and control, those in the hegemonic

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\(^9\) Richard Lee’s work with the !Kung San (1979) comes to mind.
position construct and reaffirm their authority through the consent of the ruling class and those complicit with it. While Gramsci is speaking directly to political structures, his concept of hegemony has been expanded upon and is often used to unpack power structures across several cultural realms. For instance, the notion of gender hegemony posits that gender constructions considered normative maintain the top position in the gender hierarchy because those who fit into the category consent and reaffirm its position of power. By the very nature of power, though, there are people who do not reap its benefits.

As both Graeber (2004, 2007, 2009) and Scott (1985, 2009, 2012) have made clear, subversion of hegemony often manifests in more discreet and daily revolutionary acts rather than via cataclysmic Revolution. For Graeber, it is small-scale revolutionary acts, such as consensus decision-making, non-hierarchical organization methods, that facilitate long-term change (2004). While some anarchists have cultivated notoriety through throwing bricks through Starbucks’ windows during protests, from Graeber’s perspective, how they organized themselves to have a protest in the first place is the more revolutionary behavior—which underscores how the actions of a small punk rock anarchist collective can be so significant.

In Weapons of the Weak, Scott argues that modes of everyday resistance are found “in ridicule, in truculence, in irony, in petty acts of non-compliance, in foot dragging…in resistant mutuality, in the disbelief in elite homilies, in steady-grinding efforts to hold one’s ground in overwhelming odds” (1985: 350). Such weapons have the power to shift, even if ever-so-slightly, the dynamics of domination and subordination. Scott’s other works provide excellent historical and ethnographic examples of people circumventing power imposed on people who wish to avoid it. In The Art of Not Being Governed, Scott discusses the tactics employed by people in the highlands of Southeast Asia, an area termed ‘Zumia,’ to avoid forced assimilation into
hierarchical/governmental systems. While they likely would not consider themselves anarchist, they are, in that they do not want to be governed and have been mostly successful at avoiding governmental domination. They have done so by being mobile and actively engaging in tactics that make them unclassifiable such as avoiding identifying by ethnic group.\textsuperscript{10} If people can avoid classification, then they can hypothetically prevent the placement of levels of control through such processes.

I use the term ‘tactics’ purposefully and in the theoretical lineage of de Certeau, who defines tactics as:

\begin{quote}
A calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power (1984: 219).
\end{quote}

The employment of tactics within the confines of power aligns with Foucault’s assertion that residing within power structures does not mean there are no means of recourse. Everyday tactics are forms of such recourse.

Approaches to resistance such as Scott’s have been critiqued, perhaps most notably by Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) who argued that such frameworks obfuscate power dynamics by romanticizing acts which may or may not effectively be “resistant” (also see Mitchell 1990). There is a danger in assigning meanings, such as declaring practices as resistance, if they are not based on insider perspectives to practices. Assigning meaning is a form of domination in and of

\textsuperscript{10} Frantz Fanon (1967) and others (e.g. Aspinall 2009) have talked about classification systems as mean of exerting power and domination, particularly by colonialists.
itself. There is also a danger in erasing the resistant qualities of people’s actions; people do not need to have fully articulated and justified reasonings for actions to be resistant.

Informed by the critiques leveled against this type of resistance theory, I draw from Scott’s later works, which complexify the nature of resistance. Specifically, Scott discusses what he terms the “hidden transcript” of “discourse that takes place ‘offstage,’ beyond direct observation by powerholders…[which] consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript” (1990: 4-5). In this construction, the hidden transcript is a ‘place’ where power dynamics are not merely challenged but also (potentially) reaffirmed. This perspective better reflects punks’ lived realities, accounting for the complex nature of their subjectivities. Punks are not simply anarchists hell-bent on smashing the system; they are also people who navigate and negotiate broader social contexts. The concept of the hidden transcript situates the subjectivities of punks in Bandung, accounting for the often divergent and contradictory actions that, as I will argue, amount to active resistance to hegemony and domination.

**How Did Punk Get from Point A to Point B?**

As previously mentioned, it is not as though punk rock magically manifested or independently congealed in Indonesia. The ethos, ideologies, music, and aesthetics came from elsewhere. Here, I discuss important frameworks from globalization theories and related discourses to situate contemporary punk both in Indonesia and within the broader global scene.

Globalization discourses have forced anthropology, as a discipline, to reconceptualize many of its key theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding culture. Indeed, anthropological inquiry often stresses the importance of the local because of its reliance on
participant observation. There is an inherent emphasis placed on the local by sitting in one spot and observing a place (Lewellen 2002: 30). An anthropology of globalization requires understanding culture in a much broader context—how the local is connecting with the global and vise-versa. Ted Lewellen defines globalization as “the increasing flow of trade, finance, culture, ideas, and people brought about by the sophisticated technology of communications and travel and by the worldwide spread of neoliberal capitalism, and it is the local and regional adaptations to and resistance against these flows” (2002, 7-8). While incredibly broad, this definition situates globalization in the context of global versus local.

While Lewellen’s definition is innocuous enough, globalization theorist Anna Tsing has offered critiques of such approaches. Tsing contends:

we might stop making a distinction between ‘global’ forces and ‘local’ places. This is a very seductive set of distinctions, promising as it does to give both focused detail and the big picture…But it draws us into globalist fantasies by obscuring the ways that the cultural processes of all ‘place’ making and all ‘force’ making are both local and global, that is, both socially and culturally particular and productive of widely spreading interactions. Through these terms, global ‘forces’ gain the power to cause a total rupture that takes over the world (2000: 352) [original emphases].

Tsing’s argument is critical to conceptualizing the contemporary punk scene. Rather than understanding the local as being a passive actor at the mercy of larger global forces, it makes more sense from an anthropological perspective to conceptualize globalization as a dialogic process between global and local. Tsing’s perspective stands in contrast to Lewellen’s definition wherein he posits that the local and regional either adapt to or resist globalization, which conceptualizes the global as a force and the local as a place. As Tsing points out, place-making and force-making are “both local and global.” Indeed, it is the interconnectivity of local and global that is globalization.
Almost all contemporary globalization theorists agree that globalization is directly tied to neoliberal capitalism (e.g. Harvey 2007; Lewellen 2002; Ong 1999; Tsing 2000). Neoliberal policies are, as David Harvey contends, “economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (2007: 2). Essentially, neoliberalism is the notion that unabated free trade benefits everyone and provides wealth to all. Harvey also points out, “there has everywhere been an emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970s” (2007: 2). For many post-colonial areas, however, the ‘emphatic turn’ was enacted through coercion.

Indeed, the adoption of neoliberal policies has ushered in the frequency and speed of global connections the world has seen since the 1980s. The systematic obliteration of domestic economy-protecting tariffs and other ‘barriers’ to free-trade has perpetuated flows of currency and people at a scale never before seen (Harvey 2007). It is the predatory nature of neoliberalism which creates massive disparities and fuels the need for large scale migration further mobilizing and intertwining cultures, amongst other results.

How then did/do anthropologists make sense of the intensive interconnectivity perpetuated by the global capitalist agenda? An initial effort towards a framework for social science was Arjun Appadurai’s still central 1990 essay “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” in which he called for a new line of theorization about the exponential expansion of globalization. Appadurai argues against the older core-periphery models of explaining economic and cultural flows. These models—such as dependency and world-systems theories (e.g. Wallerstein 2004)—suggest that global flows occur much like colony-metropole
systems of the past. Appadurai insists, however, “for the people of Irian Jaya, Indonesianization may be more worrisome than Americanization” (2009: 588). Perhaps, then, there are multiple cores and multiple peripheries. As Appadurai argues:

The new global economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models. Nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull, or of surpluses and deficits, or of consumers and producers. Even the most complex and flexible theories of global development that have come out of the Marxist tradition are inadequately quirky…The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics that we have only begun to theorize (588).

Here, Appadurai argues that core-periphery models are much too simplistic to account for the complexities of globalization. Rather than using these models, he suggests a different framework from which to begin analyses. He introduces the concept of “-scapes” that are better suited for understanding the overlapping and disjunctive nature of globalization. For instance, Appadurai presents the notion of the “ethnoscape” which he contends is “the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree” (589). Rather than conceptualizing the object of study for anthropologists as a singular culture encapsulated in some remote village, Appadurai argued for the formation of avenues of inquiry which account for the overlapping and complex ethnoscapes of the globalized world.

As many globalization theorists have made clear, Appadurai’s notions call for a reconceptualization of basic anthropological practices. Appadurai himself asserts:

There is an urgent need to focus on the cultural dynamics of what we now call ‘deterritorialization.’ This term applies not only to obvious examples such as transnational corporation and money markets, but also to ethnic groups, sectarian
movements, and political formations, which increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities. Deterritorialization affects the loyalties of groups, their transnational manipulation of currencies and other forms of wealth and investment, and the strategies of states. The loosening of bonds between people, wealth, and territories fundamentally alters the basis of cultural reproduction” (1991: 192-193)

The deterritorialized nature of people and culture in the globalized world necessitates several shifts in thought. Liisa Malkki contends, “the recognition that people are increasingly ‘moving targets’ of anthropological enquiry is associated with the placing of boundaries and borderlands at the center of our analytical frameworks, as opposed to relegating them to invisible peripheries or anomalous danger zones” (1992: 25). The concept of identity, culture, and place being inextricable from one another was/is deeply embedded in many anthropological approaches.

Gupta and Ferguson, for instance, critically engage with some basic tenets of anthropological fieldwork from the perspective that it may be inadequate for contemporary studies of globalized culture. For instance, how do anthropologists study deterritorialized culture when, by its very nature, there is no singular location? They posit that “de-centering” the field is a possibility in which “we might emerge …with less of a sense of ‘the field’ (in the ‘among the so-and-so sense’) and more of a sense of a mode of study that cares about, and pays attention to, the interlocking of multiple social-political sites and locations” (1997: 37). While Gupta and Ferguson were not calling for a complete abandonment of traditional ethnographic methods, they did suggest that the discipline of anthropology should critically engage with methods in a way that prioritizes the complex overlappings of the five scapes.

Several anthropological works have successfully studied the complex nature of deterritorialized and transnational cultures, which are foundational for unpacking the global punk scene. For example, Anna Tsing’s 2005 work Friction examines global connections and the link between local and global in Kalimantan, Indonesia. Using the metaphor of friction to describe
the interactions between global and local entities, Tsing posits, “cultures are continual co-produced in the interactions I call ‘friction’: the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across differences” (4). Tsing goes on to assert “Rubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is a just a stick. As a metaphorical image, friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power” (5). The argument, of course, harkens back to Tsing’s early contention about not conceptualizing the global as a force and the local as a place but rather theorizing both in multiple ways.

Other scholars have also examined deterritorialized cultures and developed concepts that are pertinent to this dissertation. Aihwa Ong’s 1999 book *Flexible Citizenship*, for instance, explores the dynamics of upper-class Chinese migration to the US and how transnational communities navigate national boundaries and regulations. Ong’s concepts of ‘flexible citizenship’ and ‘graduated sovereignty’ are both foundational to the notion of co-optive resistance, which I describe in chapter 4. Ong argues that citizenship is flexible and less connected to national identity and political alignments and more defined by economic forces. For those who have the means and the desire, navigating citizenship can be done for economic reasons. Thus, nationality becomes, at minimum, a second-order concept in constructing citizenship. The reduced importance of nationality is germane to the anarcho-DIY punk scene because it further disrupts the idea that the nation, and ‘place’ more broadly, are essential to socio-political identities. Moreover, the concept potentially elucidates how punks navigate and negotiate between their anarchist principles and the need to be able to circulate in their translocal (and in this instance, transnational) networks, which require interactions with ‘the state.’
Ong’s concept of ‘graduated sovereignty’ also informs to my understanding of punk in Indonesia. Ong argues that sovereignty, particularly in the so-called Asian tiger nations/economies, resides along an ever-shifting gradient dependent on nations’ responses to global economic pressures and variance. Ong states, “the shifting relations between market, state, and society have resulted in an assemblage of governmental practices for treating populations in relation to global market forces. The experiences of how these small, relatively open Asia states thus present an instructive case of how interactions with global forces have produced a variety of outcomes, leading to the state’s flexible experimentation with different forms of sovereignty” (2000: 56). Graduated sovereignty is a useful notion here because of punk’s genesis in Indonesia and its continued existence being predicated, at least partially, on an expanding consumer and middle class. In this way, global economic forces and neoliberal policies directly affect how Indonesia, as a state, engages with pop culture scenes.

Where Are We? Who Are We?

Here, I outline theoretical approaches central to unpacking the global perspectives and lived realities of participants of this project. Building from discourse such as those described above, Brent Luvaas examines indie music in Java as a global cultural form. Describing an indie pop band from Bandung, Luvaas contends:

Their ‘local’ is not the ‘local’ of a continuous indigenous tradition, a conception of space and place passed down from one generation to the next. Instead, theirs is a conception of ‘local’ reinvented and reimagined by contemporary Indonesian youth, a ‘local’ dissociated from the classificatory schema of nation-state and colony, and built instead from the tropes and typologies of transnational popular culture. (2009: 248)

Luvaas argues that in the indie scenes of Java, participants are attempting to be identified not by nationality, region, or ethnicity but rather by their connection to global cultural networks. As I
have argued along similar lines elsewhere (Moog 2015), it is not an issue of Indonesian indie musicians but, rather, indie musicians in Indonesia. It is a seemingly small variation in syntax, yet it represents an important distinction that recognizes an imagined community (Anderson 1983) that subverts the hegemonic narratives of nationality. Other scholars studying underground music in Indonesia have made similar assertions (Baulch 2003, 2007; Wallach 2008a, 2008b).

It is necessary to note that life is not that simple. Throughout this dissertation, I contend that punk is the primary facet by which the people I worked with identified. They are punk rockers, through and through, which permeates all facets of their lives—albeit with the caveat that there are, indeed, other facets of these lives. Within their lives as anarchist punks they embody and enact traits and ideologies that actively subvert the nation-state while simultaneously living in and navigating through social contexts which reinforce dominant socio-political structures. For instance, some of the normative daily practices in which Rumah Pirata punks also participate include taking kids to soccer practice and buying them all the newest gear, participating in traditional Sundanese weddings, and having jobs to support their families.

I am writing about real people. Their lives are complicated and, sometimes, contradictory. Keeping this in mind, I use the term ‘subjectivities’ to describe the multiple identities and overlapping realities that comprise punks’ lives. Kleinman and Fitz-Henry argue, “To understand human subjectivity…we need to reaffirm the variability, heterogeneity, and contingency of our subjectivities as they unfold within the realm of experience” (2007: 53). This position emphasizes the multiplicity of human experience as foundational to subjectivity and, in doing so, argues that subjectivities are idiosyncratic and tailored solely to the individual. Kleinman and Kitz-Henry challenge that conclusion by contending:
Experience is intersubjective inasmuch as it involves practices, negotiations, and contestations with others with whom we are connected. It is also the medium within which collective and subjective processes fuse, enter into dialectical relationship, and mutually condition one another... Experience, then, has as much to do with collective realities as it does with individual translations and transformations of those realities. (2007: 53)

Though individuals experience and navigate life differently, broader social/cultural contexts and milieus shape these experiences.

Having just railed against pathologizing resistance and alterity, I hesitate to use studies of mental illness as examples of how I use the term ‘subjectivities’ in my dissertation about punk. Nonetheless, both Rahimi’s work on schizophrenia in Turkey and Lemelson’s visual ethnographic work on mental illness in Indonesia both serve as prime examples of the concept of subjectivities. As Rahimi contends, “Human subjective experience is constructed fundamentally of cultural fabrics woven of warps and wefts of power and meaning by the hands of politics and through the process of history” (2015:1). Similarly, Lemelson’s Afflictions series also explores how history and abstract global processes may manifest in the experience of mental illness.

I am certainly not contending that being a punk is a mental illness (which has already been done by the authorities in other parts of Indonesia; see Hasan 2011). Rather, punks’ subjectivities too are crafted by ongoing negotiations with broader social contexts. These contexts are shaped by histories as well as local, regional, and global power dynamics that must be understood not as contradictory but as intersecting elements of peoples’ lived realities. This perspective complexifies theorizations of resistance by refusing to smooth over the cracks.

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11 This series is comprised of ethnographic films which engage with mental illness and its intersections with social histories and contemporary issues in Indonesia.
Translocality and Translocal Subjectivities

Much of the scholarship on transnationalism is inextricable from theorizations of neoliberalism and global economics, which are tied intrinsically to notions of the ‘State.’ Entrenched in and building from discourses of transnationalism are concepts of translocality. Many approaches to translocality acknowledge and grapple with many of the same issues as transnationalism; however, they also engage with the notion that movement, migration, and interconnection happen beyond reasons of global economics. Freitag and von Oppen contend that transnationalism might be understood as a “special case of translocality,” with transnationalism being a specific form of translocality rather than vise-versa or two separate notions. Translocality is a relatively emergent theoretical notion that encompasses several different trajectories and implementations that are interested in unpacking movement and mobilities beyond their relation to the nation. Freitag and von Oppen also argue that translocality “assumes a multitude of possible boundaries which might be transgressed, including but not limiting itself to political ones, thus recognising the inability even of modern states to assume, regulate and control movement, and accounting for the agency of a multitude of different actors” (2010: 12).

Over 20 years ago, Appadurai’s conceptualization of translocality (1997) made clear that the deterritorialization of culture inherent in such frameworks does not mean that locality becomes insignificant in peoples’ lived realities. Conradson and McKay’s notion of translocal subjectivities accounts for this in positing that “translocal subjectivities [emerge] through both geographical mobility and multiple forms of ongoing emplacement” (2007: 168). The same argument could also be true of transnational flows, but Conradson and McKay go on to assert that translocal subjectivities often operate wherein “national citizenship…is typically a second-
order framing of identity that comes to the fore when dealing with immigration officials, employers and relative strangers in international settings” (2007:169). In this way, the transnational aspects of people's lived experiences are merely one part of the process. Shifting the analytical lens away from nationality, if it is not overly relevant to identity in peoples’ daily lives, seems like a logical step for which translocality accounts.

Work both on translocality and transnationalism focus, primarily, on migrant and diasporic communities. Focusing on such communities is of note because often such groups, while no longer embedded their places of origin, have ties to and are commonly rooted in ‘place.’ Conradson and McKay, for instance, pose a hypothetical situation in which a nurse from the Philippines is working in the UK. To her coworkers from the UK she may be seen as ‘Filipino’ yet to her coworkers from the Philippines she may be known by the town she is from or by other markers of identity from the Philippines. They use this to exemplify their point about nationality being “second-order framing of identity” (2007: 196), but it also begs the questions of how theories of translocality account for social phenomena that are not rooted in place.

While translocality problematizes the Eurocentrism of using transnationalism as a primary framework for approaching globalization, the concept still often seems to rely on ‘place’ as an analytical imperative. For instance, in Ma’s (2002) work on ‘translocal spatiality’ in Hong Kong’s alt-scene, he contends that translocality infers a local-to-local spatial dynamic (see also Rogers 2011). In this form, translocality looks like some kind of edgy way to talk about connections between point A and point B without referencing the nation. Moving beyond rootedness, Jonathan S. Marion’s work on competitive ballroom dance offers a more compelling use of translocality. He argues that an activity-based approach to anthropologies of globalization provides “a more robust understanding of location by situating such understandings relative to
human practices, an activity-based orientation facilitates research into and understandings of less finite arenas of human activity and interaction” (2006: 7). Moreover, Marion argues elsewhere that ballroom competitors can be seen “‘at home’ in circulation” (2010), meaning that in some scenarios the act of movement can supersede notions of ‘place.’ In this configuration, translocality denotes the transcendence of location rather than merely acknowledging place-to-place connections which are not attached to nationality.

In the following chapters, I explicate the intersections of these theoretical trajectories within the DIY punk scene of Bandung, Indonesia. While seemingly disparate, the everyday workings and interactions of Rumah Pirata punks with their broader networks provide fertile ethnographic ground to interrogate the entanglement of concepts such as translocality, resistance, and subjectivities. Through unpacking these intersections, I add not only to the respective theoretical frameworks but offer insights into new avenues of inquiry that were previously unexplored.
Chapter 2

The Only Good System is a Sound System:
Introducing the Project and Situating the Rumah Pirata Collective

I can imagine readers quickly skipping a section in an ethnographic piece that begins with “when I was child,” but I am going to do it anyway—because it is entirely pertinent to this project. So… when I was a child, my parents worked at the US Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. My family and I lived there for four years at the tail end of the infamous dictator Suharto’s reign (more on him later). It was around 1997 in Jakarta that I had my first encounter with punk when I met a young Indonesian man at the Senayan skatepark decked out in a Dead Kennedys shirt, a studded denim jacket, and spiky hair. It did not mean much to me at the time but, in retrospect, I was a witness to a very early manifestation of the punk boom yet to come.

Independent of my encounter in Jakarta, after leaving Indonesia, I got into punk rock. During my late teens and early twenties, I played in several bands and established myself as part of the punk scene in San Diego, California. I had a lot of good times playing gigs and getting into mischief, but more importantly, I forged friendships and built relationships with people who, unbeknownst to me at the time, would be vital for future endeavors. Eventually I became interested in finishing college, and when I asked what I wanted to major in, I ran my finger down the list, skipped accounting, and pointed at the first thing, which happened to be anthropology.

As I got deeper into anthropology, I realized that many of the issues and topics discussed in my classes were on full display in unique ways in the San Diego punk scene. Anthropology also offered ways to engage critically with the scene in insightful and ethical ways. The more I observed and theorized the punk scene from a social science perspective, I began to see that

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12 It is common in Indonesia for people to go by one name. They may have other names but, often, people will only go by one even in formal settings. Suharto is neither his first nor last name, it is just his name.
punks were enacting resistance to many normative and hegemonic behaviors and expectations, but they were doing so in relatively covert ways. My interest was certainly piqued, so I came to the University of Arkansas and got a master’s degree, using my MA thesis to explore gender resistance and alternative femininities in the San Diego punk scene.

I recount this now because my master’s thesis work helped establish this dissertation in two ways. First, I realized that actions which looked like acquiescence or conformity on the surface could actually be resistance to hegemonies in powerful ways. Sociologist Mimi Schippers made this clear with her concepts of ‘gender maneuvering” (2002) and ‘pariah femininities’ (2009). Using Schippers' notions, I argued that punk women’s constructions of alternative femininities may look like accommodation to masculinity but are often exertions of gender resistance which are actually reshaping, even if only ever-so-slightly, the gendered landscape of the San Diego punk scene (Moog 2015). This theoretical trajectory was foundational to the concepts I introduce in this dissertation.

Second, my earlier work established me in the San Diego scene as ‘Steve-o, the guy from such’n’such band, the one who is doing research on punk.’ Having these two pieces of my identity combined proved to be crucial. I do not think my dissertation project would have happened—and certainly not in the way it was able to—without both my punk credentials and my academic background being accounted for and accepted within punk social circles. When the time came for this research, I had very little trouble making global connections via the relationships I had established in the San Diego punk scene.

One relationship I built—both through years of making epic punk rock with various bands and my research endeavors—was with a group known as the Pyrate Punx. They are a quirky and loose association of folks dedicated to supporting and facilitating DIY punk music
and various other activities they deem appropriate.\textsuperscript{13} There are several chapters in the US, mainly on the west coast, and some in international locations as well. Effectively, the organization is a network that—for those tapped into it—sets up shows, organizes tours, and does what they can to facilitate DIY punk music. In its heyday, DIY bands could play mini Pyrate Punx tours by traveling from chapter to chapter playing gigs at each of their lowkey venues.

Circa 2009-2014, the San Diego Pyrate Punx had a great venue called The Yard. It was literally in a house’s yard, but they built up a permanent stage, sound system, and lighting, making it a beloved spot for DIY shows. While conducting my master’s research, I went to a show at The Yard featuring a band called Demerit, from Beijing. They were doing a west coast Pyrate Punx tour, and they had come all the way from China. I had to do a bit of mental double-take to fully comprehend that four guys made the long journey from China to play at a few crappy dilapidated DIY venues for crowds of perhaps 40 people. From that moment on, it was clear to me that there was something interesting going on, and ample room for ethnographic inquiry into international DIY punk networks.

Concurrent to my budding interest in scholarly approaches to punk, something of a human rights disaster befell our punk compatriots in Aceh, Indonesia. In late 2011 and into 2012, the local government in the city of Banda Aceh decided to round up local punks and ‘re-educate’ them. The deputy mayor declared punk “the new social disease,” which needed to be eradicated (Hasan 2011). Punks were detained, abused, forced to have their heads shaved, and made to pray. The global punk scene was disgusted and spurred to action with several benefit shows and records being produced for both direct aid and as symbols of solidarity. One such effort was a

\textsuperscript{13} The San Diego Pyrate Punx once held a benefit show to raise money for the Autism Society of San Diego. They raised a few hundred dollars and decided to donate it by showing up to the charity’s office with a giant cardboard cheque. The pictures of these disheveled crusty punks presenting a novelty sized giant check to unsuspecting volunteers was one for the books. They really did donate the money, by the way; they are good people.
A compilation album put together by Evacuate Records titled *Punk Aid: Aceh Calling* for which my band at the time was proud to contribute a track (I am not trying to toot my own horn, this comes up as pertinent later).

Participants in the global DIY punk networks I witnessed at The Yard, coupled with the ongoing friction in Aceh fanned my scholarly interests. It seemed like some sort of whacky planetary alignment in which my history in Indonesia, love of punk, and desire to anthropologically interrogate my surroundings all matched up. My Ph.D. work would focus on punk in Indonesia from that point forward, starting with the need to do some exploratory fieldwork to begin figuring out what the hell was actually going on, and where, in order to best focus my inquiry.

I chatted with one of the guys behind the *Punk Aid* effort, and he gave me the contact information for several people in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, putting in a kind word to them on my behalf along the way. It was these contacts which I hoped would establish me in the punk scene in Indonesia. I also tried to make some friends via social media, knowing that Jakarta had a considerable punk scene as bands were easy to find online and academic accounts indicated punk was well-established in the sprawling metropolis that by the early 2000s (Wallach 2008b).

Equipped with some broad questions about the intersections of Islam and punk, I set off to Jakarta over the summer of 2016 to do some exploratory fieldwork. I quickly figured out that I had screwed up: Jakarta was not the place for my research. Jakarta consists of about 10 million people in the city proper, and 30 million in the broader metro area. Indeed, the punk scene is enormous, but it is also diffuse, spread across an urban area that in times of heavy traffic (which is all the time) can take a solid five to six hours to traverse by vehicle. Beyond those logistical
concerns, the contacts I had there did not pan out. The people I was able to meet up with were friendly enough but disinterested. (While I find myself to be quite charming, apparently they did not.) Several people who I thought would become key informants were never available or unreachable for various reasons. Yet my time in Jakarta was not completely wasted as, somehow, I scored an interview with a member of the commercially successful pop/alt-rock band Nidji,\textsuperscript{14} who then put me in touch with a guy from \textit{Rolling Stone Indonesia} and an indie record company owner/alt-music historian who gave me incredibly insightful information about Indonesian alternative music.

Before I had left for Jakarta, I had also got in touch with some of my old Pyrate Punx friends in San Diego. I knew there was a Pyrate Punx chapter in Indonesia, so asked if anyone could put me in contact with them. It turned out that the chapter was located in Bandung, a city about three hours away from Jakarta by train.\textsuperscript{15} Since it was tough going with my research in Jakarta, I decided to pop up to Bandung for two days to scope things out. As it was the middle of Ramadan, the train station was not busy, and it was an easy trip.

My friends in San Diego put me in contact with a Pyrate Punk in Bandung named Joko.\textsuperscript{16} Joko sent me the address of his record store via social media and instructed me to meet him there at 1 pm. I got to the address a few minutes early and strolled around the building, which sat on the bank of the Cikapundung River in central Bandung. The building was reminiscent of a storage unit facility with rows of small stalls with rolling doors on them. The stalls housed

\textsuperscript{14} They are sometimes referred to as the Indonesian Coldplay.
\textsuperscript{15} Most of the time it was about 3 hours by train. Sometimes I would be forced to travel between Jakarta and Bandung by car, which also takes 3 hours...hypothetically. It once took me 10 hours.
\textsuperscript{16} That is neither his real name nor the ‘punk name’ he goes by. All my interlocutors from Indonesia are referred to by pseudonyms in this dissertation. I have done this to protect people for any unforeseen consequences of participation. The pseudonyms were chosen by me, are not associated with my collaborators at all, and are actually the names of various cab drivers I had over the several years this project took shape.
different stores, most of which sold and repaired electronic equipment. At about 3 pm, Joko finally showed up with his young daughter in tow.

Joko is a man in his mid-40s. He tends to wear a hat from which his matted dreadlocks hang out the back and swing down to the middle of his back. His hands reveal familiarity with manual labor, and faded tattoos that go up both arms indicate that he has been in the punk scene for some time. Over the years, he has become a good friend of mine and I have learned that he is a fascinating guy, though he rarely boasts about himself, if ever. Joko would probably protest at my assertion that punk coalesced in the mid-90s in Indonesia. He claims to have been a punk since the late 1980s. At some point, Joko was supposed to go to college in the UK. He visited England for some time, but never got a visa to stay as a student, which ended his academic career. Though certainly not a native speaker, he can easily converse in English it without a problem. In the late 90s, he spent several years squatting and engaging in political activism in Yogyakarta, a city in central Java. He once confided to me that he was getting a bit old for sleeping on the floor, and now has a wife and two children that he loves dearly. That does not necessarily mean he has settled down; he has just shifted his tactics.

The first time we met, it was like we were long-lost friends. Joko went downstairs, bought us some iced teas, and we sat in his shop and talked at length about all our mutual friends and what they were doing. He was keen to find out about his Pyrate Punx compatriots from southern California. “Is Buddha\textsuperscript{17} as cool as he seems?” Joko asked. I assured him that, indeed, Buddha was as cool as he seems on social media. During our conversation, Joko mentioned that I had been vouched for and vetted by the Pyrate Punx network long before I arrived in Indonesia. He said, “Sleeper told me you are a good guy, and that you are doing research, and to help you

\textsuperscript{17} It is fairly common in the punk scene to have a ‘punk name’ that you go by. With their permissions I have used the actual ‘punk names’ of punks in the US.
out if I could, so what can I do?” Later conversations would reveal that it was not just Sleeper who vouched for me, but several other Pyrate Punx had been consulted and had also signed off on me.

I told Joko that I was looking into punk in Indonesia broadly, but that I was focusing on Islam within the punk scene. While I was blabbing, he reached into his jacket and pulled out a small pouch of tobacco, rolling paper, and a small filter. He fashioned himself a cigarette as I droned on about my interest in piety and whatever-the-hell. As I finished, he leaned back, took a swig of iced tea followed by a long drag from his overstuffed cigarette, and as he slowly blew the smoke out, responded, “well, obviously I don’t give a fuck about that.” We both laughed, recognizing that it was the middle of the day during Ramadan and that smoking and drinking iced tea certainly do not conform to the norms of fasting. Joko went on to say that a lot of people seem to be interested in the intersection of Islam and punk, but to him, it is not much of an issue.

Continuing our conversation, Joko remarked, “You really need to come to our venue, but right now, we aren’t having many gigs, because its Ramadan.” I tried not to look too flustered after his insistence that the intersection of Islam and punk was not much of an issue while saying they do not have many gigs due to Ramadan only 30 seconds later. Obviously, something was going on. Nonetheless, I was excited to learn about the Bandung scene and how things worked. Joko explained that the Pyrate Punx chapter in Bandung is based out of, what he termed, their ‘project house’ appropriately named Rumah Pirata (pirata is Spanish for pirate, rumah is Indonesian for house, so it translates to Pirate House).

Joko was excited to tell me about Rumah Pirata, and, specifically, about all the great bands that had played there over the years. He said, “Maybe two months ago, Tragedy [a hardcore punk band from the US] played at our project house, I really like Tragedy, fucking
brutal man.” Joko went on and on some more about bands from all over the world who had come to Bandung to play at their venue. It was clear that the relationships he and his crew were building with the international punk scene was a story worth telling, especially as it was precisely these types of relationships that had caught my attention and interest regarding the band from Beijing who had played at The Yard in San Diego.

Unfortunately, nothing was going on over the few days I spent in Bandung before I needed to return to Jakarta to head back to the United States. Still, Joko introduced me to some friends who showed me around town the next day, and Joko and I decided that there would be some benefits for everyone if we collaborated on a project. We hastily made some rudimentary plans about a visual collaboration (we did not have a firm idea of what we were doing yet), and I vowed to return the following year and spend all my time in Bandung (Chapter 3 details this collaboration).

Heading home after that preliminary research trip, it was clear to me that Bandung should be the location for my dissertation research. First, my connections to the Pyrate Punx was invaluable in terms of access and congeniality. Indeed, having the credentials to navigate the process of vetting and vouching through the Pyrate Punx network is what made this project possible—end of story. I do not mean to paint a picture of Rumah Pirata as a kind of secret society, with mysterious handshakes and shady back-alley rendezvous. Yet as I discuss later, there is good reason to be cautious about who has access and to what degrees for Rumah Pirata punks. Having Pyrate Punx connections from San Diego, who all vouched for me, provided the credibility needed to gain entry to the collective.

Second, Joko and the few others I met on my first brief trip to Bandung were genuinely interested in facilitating scholarship about the Bandung punk scene. Education is embraced at
Rumah Pirata and people were eager to be a part of knowledge production. Joko was quickly on board with my piecemeal ideas for collaboration and everyone I met at this juncture enthusiastically answered questions and made suggestions. Lastly, the city of Bandung and its broader punk scene were much more accessible in terms of ease of movement and the centrality of (i.e. less dispersed) punk events. Bandung is a huge city but, for my purposes, had more easily accessed locations of importance to the punk scene. The ‘ins’ I had, the willingness of my interlocutors, and a centralized location from which I could conduct research convinced me that the Bandung scene was where I needed to focus my fieldwork to best answer my emerging questions.

My exploratory questions regarding intersections of Islam and the punk scene did not seem to be particularly well-received, even if Joko and the other punks I met did not seem to oppose it as a line of inquiry. Yet despite the disinterest during my brief visit to Bandung, I witnessed some interesting things in Jakarta that suggested the Islam-related line of inquiry was worth further exploration. In Jakarta, for instance, I went to a large, commercially promoted punk show headlined by a big-name headlining band from Bali called Superman is Dead. I got there early for the show slated to begin at 6 pm, and saw groups of mohawk-sporting, tattered clothed punks hovering patiently over plates of KFC. The instant the evening call to prayer had ended and the days fasting was over, they devoured their meals, and the show then quickly commenced with these pious punks thrashing around and having a good time with non-punks looking on, visibly confused. While scholarship on contemporary Islam often notes the religion’s compatibility with a broad range of other social arenas in Indonesia (see Jones 2007; Kato 2014; Education is seen as a means to self-sufficiency at the collective.

For reference, Superman is Dead is sometimes referred to as the Indonesian Green Day. Although they are popularly perceived as and commercially marketed as a punk band, no one I work with would consider them to be a real punk band.
Rudnyckyj 2010; Weintraub 2011), the juxtaposition of piety and punk rock in popular perceptions remains fertile ground for inquiry with the Aceh case of 2011 providing ample evidence of serious potential clashes. Prioritizing research questions that had little community buy-in, though, was counter to the ethos and principles of the people I was working with.

Starting to rethink my project and the questions I wanted to explore, the collaborative visual project Joko and I had haphazardly hashed out began producing data. The punks I had met in Bandung were sending me images which they considered representative of their scene. Interestingly, a significant ratio of the media shared with me early on depicted not only Bandung punks at Rumah Pirata, but also both (1) punks from elsewhere at Rumah Pirata, and (2) Bandung punks elsewhere in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. As both a scholar and a fan of punk rock, seeing big name bands (for underground punk that is) like MDC and The Restarts (from the US and UK, respectively) playing DIY gigs in Bandung was something to behold.

The more pictures that came in, the more apparent it became that there were some serious questions to be asked concerning how these connections were being made, maintained, and enacted. Interestingly, these connections seemed to flout the conventions and reasoning typically attributed to other types of globalizations. Instead, there seemed to be a specific interpretation of do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics guiding these interactions, with no one in the scene making any money off any of this, including the internationally touring bands. These are not some sort of rock-star global tours, with bands staying in fancy hotels and drinking fine wine. The punk bands in question are drinking warm beer and homemade liquor just like the rest of us, and they have come from the other side of the world to do so.

This is where the story circles back to where I began this chapter. In 2017, I returned to Bandung to conducted further exploratory pre-dissertation fieldwork. Once I was shown where
the Rumah Pirata collective was, I became a regular at gigs and events and quickly figured out
that the most immediate and gripping story was the implementation of DIY/anarchist ethics both
in how the collective operates on a daily basis and in how they interact with the global anarcho-
punk scene. Anarcho-punks are associated with direct action movements and resistance to
hegemonic power dynamics. They are activists. Across more than three years of working with
the Rumah Pirata punks, I came to realize that the forms of resistance with the most potential for
promoting change were those enacted through seemingly mundane and routine interactions.

At no point while I was conducting my research did the punks set out on missions to
smash Starbucks’ windows or tag shopping malls with anarchy symbols. What they did do was
participate in translocal networks and independent cultural production guided by anarchist
philosophies. Through my research and time spent interactions with the Rumah Pirata collective,
I have come to recognize this as a powerful act of resistance to dominant social, economic, and
political power dynamics. That is what this dissertation is about: (1) how the Rumah Pirata
collective engage in everyday acts of resistance and (2) the broader implications provided for our
understandings of globalization, subversive cultural practice, and Indonesia as an emergent
democracy.

**Background on Indonesia**

When theorizing about Indonesia it is critical to remember that the very concept of
Indonesia is relatively new. The current nation-state is comprised of thousands of islands which,
until circa the 1940s, did not conceptualize of themselves as a cohesive political entity. Indeed,
much of the contemporary localities in Indonesia stem from colonization methods implemented
by the Dutch in the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries (Aspinall 2009; Luvaas 2009). For
example, Edward Aspinall contends, “Acehnese identity as a category of practice emerged only during the early twentieth century, under the impact of colonial modernity” (2009: 20). He goes on to argue that the Acehnese resistance to colonialism was unified not by a common ethnicity or nationalistic drive, but rather by Islam. Rather than a fight against the Dutch by the “Acehnese,” it was a fight against the non-believers by the pious (Aspinall 2009: 20-22). Well delineated ethnic groups in Indonesia were a consequence of colonialism.

The nationalistic push for a united Indonesia comes from decolonization movements that attempted to undermine Dutch rule by reconfiguring identities from being rooted in locality to nationality (Anderson 1972; Luvaas 2009). Indonesia’s first president and independence leader, Sukarno, recognized the importance of establishing a decolonized national identity. In his influential and foundational 1926 essay “Nationalism, Islam, and Marxism,” Sukarno argues that these three seemingly disparate ideologies can work together and should be the foundation of an independent Indonesia. In her introduction to the 1970 translation of Sukarno’s essay, Ruth McVey demonstrates that the rationale behind this approach was purely functional. Rather than truly believing that these three ideologies could coalesce harmoniously, Sukarno understood the need for a unified nation. Indonesia would have to figure out a way for it to work whether perfectly or not. As McVey notes (1970), before the publication of this document populist support for the nationalist party was at high levels, anti-colonial communist rebellions were taking place, and the majority of Indonesians were Muslims. Rather than these three ideologies being part of Sukarno’s grand scheme for Indonesia, this combination was pure necessity.

In his essay, Sukarno spent a great deal of time making the case that Islam, nationalism, and Marxism are interrelated and virtually the same but then begins to undermine his argument by writing, for example, “I am convinced that we can bring Moslems and Marxists together,
although basically the two groups differ widely in their principles” (Sukarno 1970: 50). The essay became more of a rallying cry for cooperation rather than a well-structured argument for how these critical ideologies could naturally move forward synergistically. What is clear is that Sukarno’s notions became the foundations of the Republic of Indonesia as evidenced through the national ideology known as *Pancasila*, which essentially merges religion (Islam), nationalism, and Marxism into an all-encompassing creed.

Unsurprisingly, these three ideologies have not operated harmoniously throughout Indonesia’s history. Complicating the political landscape of Indonesia during the Sukarno era (and still to this day) is that the military has played a central role in national politics. Partially in response to Islamic rebellions, the Indonesian army began to align itself more and more with Sukarno’s nationalist principles and were proponents of a strictly secular government (Federspiel 1973). Combining this with Sukarno’s movement towards hardline Marxism, in the political realm Islam was relegated to the margins. Enforcing this marginalization further, Sukarno formally disbanded and actively suppressed political Islamic organizations (Dahm 1969). With Sukarno increasingly aligning himself with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), the military pushing for secular nationalism, and Islam being actively forced out of politics in a Muslim majority nation, the stage was set for political upheaval.

Indeed, a political upheaval did take place in 1965. Though the facts surrounding the events remain uncertain to this day, on September 30th, 1965, six Indonesian army generals were kidnapped and executed, and media outlets in Jakarta seized, by a group that became known as *Gerakan 30 September* (G30S) (Vittachi 1967). Due to the rising tension between the military and Marxist political movements, the blame for the kidnappings immediately fell upon the PKI and because of Sukarno’s communist leanings he was also implicated. Ultimately, it was never
clearly established who was behind the maneuver and to what end, however, the events led to General Suharto mobilizing the army to repel the Gerakan 30 September movement and remove Sukarno from power. After doing so, Suharto assumed the presidency of the Republic of Indonesia.

While the PKI were implicated as the instigators of the G30S movement, that link was never clearly established. However, declassified information (Blanton 2001) suggests the CIA was meddling in the political affairs of Indonesia around this time. There was increasing concern in the United States that Sukarno was becoming too communist for comfort. These declassified documents indicate Suharto and other high-ranking military officials were being courted by US intelligence personnel. Further revelations suggest that the CIA, rather than the PKI could have been the orchestrators of the G30S movement (Blanton 2001).

Regardless, to establish his regime (often referred to as the New Order) and eliminate the potential for dissent, Suharto led a mass purging of the PKI and suspected communists throughout the archipelago. Once again, the CIA played a significant role in this as well, and there is ample evidence showing that US intelligence agents were involved in supplying names of suspected communists to the Indonesian paramilitary death squads who were carrying out the mass killings (Blanton 2001).

Suharto reigned from 1965-98, with the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis ultimately leading to Suharto downfall. Massive student protests, largescale rioting, and a shocking devaluation of the Indonesian Rupiah\(^\text{20}\) were all substantive factors leading to Suharto’s resignation in May of

\(^{20}\) In the course of a few month in 1997-98 the exchange rate for rupiah (IDR) to dollars (USD) went from around 2,000 IDR to 1USD to 18,000 IDR to 1USD. Imagine saving a hundred-dollar bill and a few months later when you go to spend it, it is only worth about $11. Pretty messed up.
Suharto was replaced by his vice president, B.J. Habibie, which marked a transitional period from the New Order regime to a post-authoritarian Indonesia.

By some estimates, during his tenure Suharto managed to become the most corrupt person in modern history, embezzling $15-35 billion (Hodess 2004). After the New Order regime’s demise, the Indonesian government attempted to combat political corruption and establish democratic institutions during the period known as reformasi. There is uncertainty as to whether reformasi is over. Law scholar Tim Lindsey notes, “the term is still used today…even though the spirit of radical reform that drove democratisation is now distant…a new label to define what replaced reformasi has not yet emerged and this reflects uncertainty among Indonesians about recent social and political change, and where their country is heading” (2018). Indeed, corruption still plagues Indonesian politics with wealthy oligarchs dominating and manipulating democracy (Winters 2014).

This quick historical overview mentions Islam, communism, and uncertainty which are all germane to the contemporary punk scene in Indonesia. For instance, I ran into several punks in both Jakarta and Bandung (not at the Rumah Pirata collective) sporting patches that read, “I am not a communist.” More broadly, the punks I work with subscribe to alternative and subversive political ideologies, affiliate with collectives, and broader public are generally wary of them. As history has shown, it is legitimately dangerous to be labeled as or suspected of being a communist in Indonesia. If the 1965 massacres were not enough, ethnic Chinese people were targeted in the 1998 riots in part because of their perceived association with Chinese communism (Budianta 2000).

In a notable family tie-in, my family left Indonesia in May 1998 when the US embassy was evacuated because Jakarta was both figuratively and literally burning. Those were dangerous times and many people died awful deaths. There is a much more complicated history about distrust and persecution of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Budianta (2000) argues that it stems from Dutch colonials using Chinese as tax collectors during the colonial period.
This brief historical overview also demonstrates the long-running ambiguity regarding Islam and the nation-state. Sukarno recognized Islam as key to Indonesia, but certainly did not see the nation as an Islamic state. Suharto, by popular accounts, was not even a Muslim until he went on the Hajj in the early 90s (Ibrahim 2018). In fact, he banned Islamic political parties until after his ‘born again’ moment. From reformasi onward, there have been ongoing debates and movements regarding Islam and sociopolitics. Public discourse surrounding interpretations of Islam and its place in social, economic, and governmental institutions has been a focal point of ethnographic inquiry in Indonesia for the past twenty years, reflecting its widespread importance to the broader social fabric of the nation-state (see Ibrahim 2018; Hefner 2000; Hoesterey 2015; Kato 2014; Rudnyckyj 2010; Hicks 2011; Aspinall 2009; Boellstorff 2005; Effendy 2003).

Ultimately, post-authoritarian Indonesia is an emergent democracy that still struggles with widespread corruption and the remnants of dictatorship. Additionally, Jeffrey Winters contends, “Indonesia is following the classic pattern of capitalist development: as living standards at the bottom and middle of society gradually improve, a small number of ultra-wealthy citizens at the top are rapidly pulling away from the rest” (2014: 11). While I would agree that living conditions in urban areas of Indonesia have improved over the past 20 years, there is still abject and widespread poverty.

My research revealed that anarcho-punk in Bandung is involved in practices that dislocate and deterritorialize the scene. I theorize the Rumah Pirata collective as part of a translocal network, in that, in some ways, it transcends locality. The theoretical position is not meant to completely neglect the fact that the collective is firmly embedded in the broader social milieu of Indonesia. While I will not, for example, directly theorize anarcho-punk and its intersection with Islam, it is critical to note that everything happening at the collective is, in part,
directly tied to the complicated histories and ongoing social, economic, and political discourses of Indonesia.

**Punk in Indonesia**

For many people, “punk” references a brash music genre. These people would probably be surprised by this dissertation since—while my work reflects years of ethnographic study on punk—I barely discuss music at all. The diversity of contemporary punk rock music presents difficulties for delineating specifically what is (and is not) punk rock music and, by extension, who is and is not a punk. Within scenes worldwide, debates scrutinizing and contesting the punk rock merits of both bands and individuals are commonplace. Rather than merely a music genre, though, it is the concept of DIY that is the backbone of punk. Insightful scholarship on punk has focused on independent—i.e. dissociated from large scale capitalist enterprises—cultural production (e.g., Bourdieu 1984, 1996; see also Hesmondhalgh 2006) and anti-consumerism as punk rock’s unifying ethos (Dale 2016; Dunn and Farnsworth 2012; Greene 2016; Moore 2007, 2010). Indeed, this independent do-it-yourself (DIY) approach to cultural production is often seen as the hallmark of punk rock (Dale 2016; Dunn 2016; Wallach 2008b). Dick Hebdige even went as far as to argue—albeit incorrectly—that when punk rock symbols and styles became commodified by mainstream capitalism, the culture would disappear (1979: 96). Though DIY ethics are a central concept for contemporary punk rock, there is often little consensus as to what constitutes ‘doing-it-yourself.’ I follow the classic ethnomusicological approach which argue that all musicological analyses must be first ethnographically situated and contextualized (see Feld 1984). Picking apart punk music means nothing if we do not understand punk culture more broadly.
Speaking of punk’s situatedness and contextualization, I need to discuss the roots of punk in Indonesia. In Indonesia, the state and dominant political ideologies have long shaped popular music scenes in the name of national unification. During Sukarno’s presidency (1945-1967), for example, Western-influenced music was systematically suppressed, perhaps best exemplified by the wildly popular band Koes Plus being jailed for covering Beatles songs in 1965 (see Farram 2007). In 1967, following a military coup, Suharto assumed the presidency and ruled Indonesia for 31 years. During much of the New Order regime’s reign, Indonesian media was heavily regulated and required to uphold the nationalist ideology of Pancasila (Heider 1991) in an attempt to cultivate a national identity in a newly-minted country comprised of a multitude of ethnicities that had no historic connections (Bruner 1972, 2005; Montolalu and Suryadinata 2007; Schefold 1998). In part bowing to neoliberal agendas, in the early 1990s Suharto eased media regulations and foreign companies could invest in Indonesian media markets (Baulch 2007; Luvaas 2009; Sen and Hill 2006). With multinational record companies slowly gaining access to Indonesian markets, big-name rock groups began to play concerts in Jakarta. Concerts by Metallica and Green Day in the mid-1990s acted as catalysts for the proliferation of underground music scenes in the urban centers of Indonesia. Following the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the ouster of Suharto in 1998, underground music continued to expand in Indonesia spurred on by political reforms and wider access to foreign media (Wallach 2008a).

While many theorizations of punk rock in Western contexts rely on Dick Hebdige and the Birmingham School’s approach to subculture as a framework for analysis, scholars of underground music in Indonesia note the complex global connections that shape such scenes. For example, in Emma Baulch’s work on metal and punk in Bali (2003, 2007) she argues that underground music scenes in Indonesia are constantly “gesturing elsewhere” borrowing style and
ethos from Western contexts to escape the local. Rather than “Indonesianizing” metal music, she contends, metalheads in Bali abandoned regional styles and mimicked Western metal. In the same vein, Jeremy Wallach asserts that underground music in Java is predicated on the xenocentrism of well-educated middle and upper-class Indonesians: “the belief, common in postcolonial societies, that a foreign culture (such as that belonging to a former colonizer) is superior to all others, including one’s own” (2008b: 69). It is because of this xenocentrism that there is a hierarchical structure to popular music in Indonesia with foreign genres often placed higher in the hierarchy.

Building from these perspectives, Brent Luvaas argues that the indie scenes of Bandung and Yogyakarta are “no longer willing to uphold the markers of ethnic, cultural, or national identity as an intrinsic part of who they are, and not yet fully integrated into a cultural economy of the global” (2009: 250). It is through eschewing the local and citing several genres of global underground music that indie scenes in Java deterritorialize themselves; although, as Luvaas points out, they also fail to integrate fully into the global indie scenes. I argue that the Rumah Pirata anarchist collective has moved beyond “gesturing elsewhere” and while it may not always be perfect, they have become an integral part of the global punk scene. Though constrained by politics and economics, punks from Bandung are physically going elsewhere, and more often, connecting through social media and other means not as ‘little brothers’ or quaint folks from faraway places, but as equals in the name of solidarity.

**Punk in the ‘Paris of Java’**

Bandung, as a BBC puff piece once claimed, “retain[s] that old world charm” (Vaswani 2011). Having the remnants of colonialism in the form of broad boulevards and some European
architecture is quaint, apparently, and has earned Bandung the moniker of the “Paris of Java.” Bisected by the Cikapundung River, the city sits in a valley surrounded by volcanic peaks. The Dutch colonialists were drawn to Bandung because of its climate in comparison to Jakarta23 (it tends to be around 10 degrees cooler, and often significantly less humid) and because of its suitability for large tea plantations (Soemardi and Radjawali 2004).

The BBC is right that part of Bandung’s importance as a city is directly tied to colonialism: but not in the quaint way they painted it. Instead, historians and people interested in decolonization will recognize Bandung as the location of the first Asia-Africa Conference (also known as the Bandung Conference) held in 1955. As historian Roland Burke notes:

The Bandung Conference was one of the most significant events in the emergence of an independent Third World. For the first time, the free states of Asia and Africa assembled to discuss common problems and attempted to formulate a united approach to international relations. It was a milestone in the decolonization process that reshaped both Asia and Africa, a process that would ultimately produce an almost unprecedented revolution in international relations. (2006: 948)

Indeed, the Bandung Conference was the foundation for what would become the Non-Aligned Movement, an enclave of postcolonial nations not directly aligned with any superpower. In short, Bandung’s history as a center for anti-colonialism cannot be overstated.

Contemporary Bandung has many faces. The city has long been a center for textile production. The allure of factory-direct goods has led to significant consumer tourism, with people coming into town to go on clothes shopping sprees. “Jean Street,” or formally, Jalan Cihampelas always housed factory outlet stores but has grown into something of a tourist attraction in and of itself. While buying some trinkets I spoke with a shop owner who claimed

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23 In colonial times, Jakarta was known as Batavia.
that there was a recent increase in flights from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Singapore to accommodate international shoppers. I am not sure if that is true, but that was the word on the streets. Nonetheless, opulent malls and shopping based attractions (e.g. the giant spectacle that is Trans Studio Mall) are a common sight in Bandung, reflecting a growing consumer culture.

Indonesians, broadly speaking, also often recognize Bandung as city for higher education. There are dozens of large universities with campuses scattered across the metropolitan area. There are both prestigious secular universities such as Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) and Universitas Padjadjaran, and Islamic universities such as Universitas Islam Bandung. I tended to hang out around ITB when nothing else was happening, and the nearby coffee shops and restaurants had no shortage of young people with laptops and notebooks out on their tables. Architect Clifford Pearson once wrote that Bandung was “part college town, part colonial hill station, and part industrial center” (1998:2). Some areas of the city are like a college town, other parts, not so much.

Like all urban centers in Indonesia, Bandung’s profound income inequalities are hard to miss. Corrugated metal shacks bunched together forming sprawling, densely populated communities are very common. Public access to clean drinking water is nonexistent. Pollution is a massive problem: even the rainwater can be poisonous (Budiwati et al. 2010). In 2018, a tributary to the Cikapundung River became so clogged with plastic refuse that the trash created an almost impenetrable dam that backed up the water flow and flooded portions of the city. The army came in to deal with the situation but, even with bulldozers, could not outpace the constant stream of new garbage. Instead of taking the trash out, they eventually managed to unblock the dam enough to send most of the plastic plug further down river—the guy in charge was satisfied
that it was no longer his problem (Shukman 2018). Bandung is a great city, but it has significant
issues.

I highlight all these aspects of Bandung to help situate the Rumah Pirata collective. While
municipal matters are outside the scope of this dissertation, Bandung’s history and current issues
are still broader milieus within which the punks are entrenched. As I discuss later, the punks
have a propensity for sustainability and anti-consumerism, both of which can only be fully
understood relative to their locality.

As I have noted, punk in Bandung is a significant part of the social fabric of the city,
which has not gone unnoticed by academics. Sean Martin-Iverson has written extensively about
the DIY punk scene in Bandung (see Martin-Iverson 2011, 2012, 2014). Martin-Iverson seemed
to spend significant time with the Balai Kota (BalKot) collective, a different anarchist-minded
collective which also operates in the Bandung area. In fact, there are several punk collectives in
Bandung and the surrounding regions, including Rumah Pirata, Southcrust, Tamansari collective,
Kekesed, and others. These collectives vary in size and activity, often share members, and they
regularly collaborate.

Martin-Iverson’s work has demonstrated the Bandung punk scene’s global
connectedness. He argues that punks are simultaneously territorializing and deterritorializing,
blurring the simplistic dichotomization of global and local (2014). Martin-Iverson stops short,
though, of recognizing the Bandung punk scene as being something more than a peripheral actor
within broader global punk. Although he notes that bands from elsewhere in the world are
playing in Bandung, he posits that Bandung punks’ connections to the broader scene mostly

24 I am not sure that BalKot still exists. I brought it up to the Rumah Pirata punks and they only vaguely
remembered. It very well may still exist, and this goes to show both the size of the Bandung scene and the
mercurialness of punk organizations—sometimes folks are in the center of everything, other times they are not.

Frans Ari Prasetyo argues, “The Bandung punk scene is a rather small and marginal community, but its participants are engaged in a project of autonomous cultural production that reveals political possibilities, desires, and contradictions of much wider significance” (2017: 209). Based on my research I strongly disagree with the first part of this quote, but wholeheartedly agree with the latter. By no measure is the punk scene in Bandung small, and as I will argue throughout this dissertation, “marginal” misrepresents Bandung’s many articulations with broader punk networks. Independent cultural production as an implementation of anarchist principles offers possibilities of wide significance. That is where my fieldwork and theorizations began, and this dissertation explores how Rumah Pirata’s participation in DIY/anarcho cultural production, and their connections to translocal networks present more than possibilities, are actively challenging hegemonies and disrupting global power dynamics.

**Rumah Pirata**

I cannot tell you the exact location of Rumah Pirata. Though nothing overtly nefarious happens there, local authorities would love to know exactly where a secretive anarchist enclave is hidden for extortion purposes. Also, the collective does not need unknown or problematic people wandering in (see Chapter 3). Suffice it to say that it is somewhere in the hills surrounding Bandung. On a motorbike, it takes about 45 minutes to get there from the center of the city. There is a significant elevation gain en route to the collective, and the air temperature is often noticeably cooler at Rumah Pirata than elsewhere in the Bandung area. If you stay after sunset, wearing a sweatshirt is not a bad idea.
Walking through the gate that separates the front yard/motorbike parking area, you will notice a small stocked fishpond. Behind the fishpond is a small structure that serves as extra sleeping areas for people to stay the night. To the right is the main house where there is a patio which offers spectacular views of the Bandung valley. Inside the house, the walls are plastered with posters, flyers, and stickers from past gigs, tours, and events that the collective helped arrange. The second story of the house is a large sleeping area for friends who need a place to stay. There is a window in the bedroom from which you can see the large garden planted in plot of land adjacent to the parking lot. On the opposite side of the house from the garden is a small play area for kids, complete with a swing set. Moving down the stairs from there is Rumah Pirata’s renowned venue called Klub Racun [Poison Club]. Abutting the venue is a small record store called Perompak [Pirate] Records, where the collective sells merchandise (tapes, t-shirts, patches) to help raise funds.25

The house and fishpond were already there when the collective began to rent the property. Klub Racun and the gardens were the collective’s additions. The venue sits atop what used to be a second fishpond. They drained the water and used the concrete slab as a foundation. Several collective members had some experience with construction, and they built the entire venue a DIY fashion—they did not hire anyone. From the concrete fishpond foundation, they erected bamboo support beams and a basic frame. Due to the venue’s proximity to the neighbors (the nearest house is only about 30 yards away), significant thought went into soundproofing. The wall which faces the closest neighbor was constructed with bamboo stacked up with the ends facing the inside of the structure. Various fabrics and materials meant to deaden the sound of live bands were stuffed into the openings of the bamboo. It works exceptionally well. From

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25 Tapes are the preferred method for physically distributing music. They are inexpensive and can be quickly duplicated. Of course, online music is popular but punks in Indonesia still regularly buy cassette tapes.
the road, which is perhaps 50 yards away, a live punk rock band sounds like someone has a stereo turned up reasonably loud.

Klub Racun’s roof consists of woven matting, but a military hospital tent (which looks like a leftover from the set of M.A.S.H.) covers the outside of the entire venue. Inside, the walls are covered in murals (see Figure 6) and hand-drawn posters and banners that get swapped out every so often. There is a sound booth that houses the soundboard, mixers, and recording equipment (see Figure 9). The stage consists of a platform which is raised approximately a foot off the concrete (see Figure 10). The venue has a PA system and backlines,\textsuperscript{26} guitar and bass amps, as well as a drumkit. Performers only need to bring their guitars. The sound was decent, considering the makeshift beginnings of the venue. There are many contributors to the collective that know how to maximize acoustics with limited resources.

For most of my fieldwork, the amp was actually been blown out; so, no matter what settings or guitar were used, the sound was hopelessly muffled. Fortunately, this worked for most of the bands that played because grindcore/d-beat is the most popular style performed at the venue.\textsuperscript{27} The guitar is supposed to be overly distorted and garbled for that brand of punk, so often no one noticed. However, if there was a different style band playing it became abundantly clear that something was not right. A few months before I finished my fieldwork, Klub Racun got a new (to them) guitar amplifier which made a world of difference to the venue’s sound quality. The new amp even made the d-beat bands sound infinitely better. The funds for the amp came mostly through selling “1312: Klub Racun” hats.

\textsuperscript{26} Backlining means the equipment is not moved during gigs, everyone uses the same amps.
\textsuperscript{27} “D-beat” refers to a drum pattern/subgenre of punk made famous by the legendary punk band Discharge. Discharge is what the “D” in D-beat stands for. If you would like to get an idea of what the subgenre sounds like check out Discharge’s album \textit{Why}?
Occasionally, the venue advertises a price for attending shows on their flyers; usually there is merely a request for donations. Suggested donation amounts were generally 10-15,000 IDR (.75-1 USD). I never saw anyone actually demand money, even if the flyer stated a price. Instead, there was usually an unattended cardboard box for donations left on the chair propping open the door to the venue. The punks regularly donated without overt coercion. While 15 people chipping in a dollar per show does not sound like a significant amount, and it is not, it still represents commitment by participants when that same amount of money can buy you a meal.

Figure 3 A graphic fixed to a wall in Rumah Pirata. The house and venue are covered with subversive messages. Other clever phrases included “Resistance is Fertile,” “Make Records a Threat Again.” Taken by author.
Figure 4 Bullshitting between bands. Though there is no need to move large pieces of equipment and not much time is needed for each band to set up, there were often extended breaks between bands so that everyone could hang out. Taken by author.

Figure 5 Inside Rumah Pirata's main house. Screens for printing shirts are stacked on the right, next to the library which is filled with books on anarchism and punk. Taken by author.
Figure 6 A mural inside Klub Racun. The last character in the evolutionary lineup is policeman. The punks are not particularly fond of the cops, ACAB. Taken by author.

Figure 7 Hanging out in Perompak Record Store. The store is stocked with merchandise screen printed by the collective, as well as tapes from local and international punk bands (pictured on the back wall). When I first wandered into the shop, I spotted the previously mentioned Punk Aid album on sale. Pointing out my band’s track immediately increased my credibility. Picture Courtesy of the Rumah Pirata Collective.
Figure 8 Domesticrust live at Klub Racun. Domesticrust is a crowd favorite d-beat style band that plays frequently at the venue. Note that they are a three-piece band, no frills needed. Taken by author.

Figure 9 The sound booth at Klub Racun. Someone is always in the sound booth, tweaking the settings on the PA when bands are playing. Towards the end of my fieldwork the sound booth also housed a computer used to record bands. Taken by author.
The stage at Klub Racun. The stage is only a few inches high; it is meant to accessible for crowd participation. Taken by author.

Hellcity at Klub Racun. One of Rumah Pirata’s goals is to be a place for new bands to play. You do not need to popular to play at their venue. This band was really good but only had a crowd that consisted of me and two other people, one of whom was their friend recording them on their phone (picture on the right). Side-note, there seems to be a shortage of bass players, several bands, including Hellcity, played without one because they could not find one. Taken by author.
While live music is promoted as the main attraction, I quickly came to see that people came to hang out with friends with the music being important yet secondary. I spent many afternoons simply sitting on a plastic Bintang beer crate in front of Perompak shooting the shit, telling jokes, and drinking moonshine with punks in between bands’ sets. Tellingly, sometimes people would continue to sit outside socializing even when bands were playing—although this behavior pissed off many of the key players of Rumah Pirata, including Joko. Although there were never any direct confrontations, Joko would often vent on social media about people not coming in to support the bands. “It’s about solidarity; don’t be an asshole” he posted on Facebook.

While I was there, Klub Racun hosted gigs regularly—at least once a week, often twice. Different people would come to different shows based on which bands were playing. There was, however, a notable group of regulars who showed up to most gigs. Among the regulars was a family (husband, wife, and young kid). Their kid was around three years old, and he loved coming to Rumah Pirata to hang out and listen to music. I cringed every time he came into Klub Racun, though, because he never had any ear protection. I held my tongue though. Rumah Pirata prides itself on its inclusivity. While numerically a male-dominated space, women also frequented events with some playing significant roles in the collective. On more than one occasion, groups of young women in hijabs would come listen to bands.

Amongst the regulars, there were those who I would consider to be core participants of the Rumah Pirata collective (i.e. those more involved with the logistical operations). I have already introduced Joko, who was at nearly every gig and event. There was also Bambang, a man in his late thirties. Bambang is rather short and of average build and almost always wore a baseball hat with the bill flipped up. He had a permanent pissed-off scowl on his face and his
eyes would shoot from side to side; I felt as though he must scare children. It turns out though that while a bit reserved, he is an extremely nice guy and can be exceptionally funny. When a band from Europe played at Klub Racun, without prompting he jumped up on stage and pronounced himself the evening’s emcee. He made an introduction for the band which turned into an impromptu comedy show. He did a tongue-in-cheek interview with the singer, all in good fun, and had everyone nearly in tears from laughter. When things needed to be done for the collective, by the time anyone else realized they needed to act, Bambang had usually taken care of the issue.

Afril was another key player at Rumah Pirata. In contrast to Bambang, Afril was always smiling. He was very interested in recording the performances at Klub Racun, and towards the end of my fieldwork, Rumah Pirata had gathered enough equipment to start recording and mixing the live music from the gigs. After the shows, Afril would sit in the sound booth rolling cigarettes and listening to tracks over and over again, making small adjustments to the levels each time through. He was also a keen negotiator, and always in the middle of discussions regarding travel arrangements or changes to schedules. He played a significant role in ensuring the Libertad festival went smoothly as problems arose (see chapter 4). Afril did not look quite as old as Joko, but his faded tattoos also revealed his age.

There was also Yudi, a younger man compared to the others. He was in his late twenties and had been ‘on the road’ for many years. He was rail-thin, and at around 5’ 9” could not have weighed more than 120 lbs. Yudi is a musician who plays in several bands and for a while had effectively been homeless, living in squats across Java. Speaking with him revealed that he was a well-educated man, and although he never said so, it was clear that he had spent time going to a university. Yudi was, by far, the most talented musician I came across during my fieldwork. D-
beat is not the most technically demanding genre of music, but this guy made it fine art. He always made time to chitchat with me, but we rarely got to have in-depth discussions because he was constantly on the move. We would make tentative plans to hang out whenever he got back from wherever, but we only occasionally got the chance. He was a central figure for the collective though, working tirelessly at events and a lynchpin for connections to other collectives and bands throughout Java and Bali.

Although often less visible than the others, Cinthia was also a crucial figure for the collective. She is married to Joko and, by my reckoning, they represented something of a punk rock power couple. Cinthia took care of the kids more often than Joko. I do not mean to paint Joko in a negative light; from my observations, he was an incredible father who spent most of his time with his children. If there was a gig, though, Cinthia was more often tending to the kids and not in attendance. Over time, though, it became clear that she contributed to the collective away from Klub Racun in ways that most people were unaware.

Rumah Pirata prides itself on inclusivity and being anti-sexist, and though Cinthia operated more behind-the-scenes, other women were part of the visible operations of the collective. Although in Cinthia’s case her role as the main childcare provider mirrored hegemonic expectations, more broadly gendered power dynamics and expectations were being challenged at the collective. Cinthia was a talented musician and has been in several bands. When I first started looking into the Bandung punk scene, one of her bands—an all-women band—was one of the first that I came across. They ripped and were my favorite band from Bandung. It actually took me a while to put two and two together and realize that she was in the band. I was very disappointed to learn that the band does not play gigs anymore, although my collaborative visual project with the collective (see chapter 3) revealed that they still practice. It
is also worth noting that Cinthia had significant input into the collaborative project and the fanzine which stemmed from our work.

Joko, Bambang, Afril, Yudi, and Cinthia were my main interlocutors throughout this project. There were many more who were at something of a second level of participation in this study, and while not as heavily consulted as the aforementioned folks, their insights were also integral to my research and are woven into this work as well. Overall, I would consider 18 people as being ongoing contributors to this ethnography, with the input and interactions of dozens of others also informing my understandings in important ways. Notably, the broader group who helped inform my research came from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Occupations ranged from a guy who made money by directing traffic at congested intersections (drivers tend to give a few hundred rupiah as they pass by), one worked as a drone pilot for film projects, another operated a roadside food stand, and someone else managed a bar.

While Rumah Pirata was a gathering point, we all also hung out at a variety of venues across Bandung including parks, bars, roadside food stalls, university collectives, and coffee shops. The punks were keen on practicing their English with me, and our conversations generally happened through a combination of English and Indonesian. Several Rumah Pirata punks would also occasionally speak in Sundanese, a regional language, and code switch between all three languages. While I can communicate effectively in Indonesian\(^2\), I never really got Sudanese despite my best efforts to pick it up, even taking a course in Bandung.

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\(^2\) While living in Indonesia as a child, I had formal language training at school. Since then, I have continued to practice speaking Indonesia, and in 2017 took a course in Bandung aimed at learning colloquial Indonesian and Sundanese.
Chapter 3

Everybody Say ‘Fuck Authority!’:

Collaborative Visual Ethnography with Anarchist Punks in Indonesia

In this chapter I explore a collaborative visual ethnography project I conducted with the Rumah Pirata Collective and what it revealed about how these punks incorporate anarchist principles into their DIY practices in Bandung, Indonesia. Through participatory ethnographic photography and the collective construction of a DIY photo-book/zine, I demonstrate that collaborative methods—in this case visual—offer a way to curtail the power dynamics inherent in ethnographic research and, thereby, facilitate well-rounded understandings of everyday interactions at a punk rock anarchist collective. The methods utilized non-hierarchical organization and were enacted in the name of mutuality, tapping directly into the ethics and moralities of the group. This approach yielded a significant amount of non-visual ethnographic data, community buy-in, and participant-produced data. I also argue that the collaborative visual research employed served as an anarchist methodology, an approach that was both pragmatic and ideologically appropriate.

Contemplating a Collaborative Visual Ethnography

A priority from the start was figuring out how anarchist principles and ideologies were being interpreted and implemented into the daily operations of the Rumah Pirata DIY punk collective. Early on it was clear that run-of-the-mill anthropological methodologies (i.e. standard participant observation, interviews, etc.) would be inadequate for conducting research within a community that places high value on ‘doing-it-yourself’ and generating tangible
cultural productions. Contemporaneous to this project, Donaghey (2017) contended that research on punk

Figure 12 "Education is for everyone, not only for yourself." A poster inside Rumah Pirata. Completely dispeling the myth of punks as ‘juvenile delinquents,’ Rumah Pirata punks promote education. Note the encircled ‘A’ in the word ‘edukasi.’ Anarchism and education are seen as intertwined at the collective. Also note the Antifa sticker below the poster, Rumah Pirata’s associations are not a secret. Taken by the author.

in Indonesia must utilize non-exploitative methods and, moreover, he argued for what in the past would be termed ‘native anthropology’ saying “if we don’t research and critique our own punk scenes/movement/culture, other people will and with far less concern for the effects that research

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29 Takami Kuwayama once wrote, “By definition, natives are members of the community under study. Since, however, anthropology developed mainly as the study of primitive society, the term tends to be used to refer to people in peripheral places far removed from the metropolitan centres of the West” (2003: 8-9). I dislike the term because of its ethnocentric and colonialist roots.
has” (2017: 310). I could not agree more and—as luck would have it—I am a longtime punk rocker myself. Donaghey and others have pointed out that misrepresentations by academia and research conducted in the name of scholarship—but with other nefarious purposes waiting in the wings—are constant threats of which punks are keenly aware, particularly in Indonesia (Donaghey 2017; Jauhola 2015). Because of this, punks can be tentative about allowing researchers access to their scenes despite a general affinity for education [see Figure 12]. Before ever showing up in Bandung, I tapped into punk networks with which I am involved, both through previous research and as a musician and active member of the scene. Being vetted and vouched for long before arriving in Indonesia, facilitated my research, assuaging potential misgivings and conferring significant credibility to my project.

To a limited extent, I was something of an insider, but this certainly did not alleviate my ethical concerns. If anything, with both my academic and punk rock credentials on the line, I felt extra pressure not to bungle the project. The people who had vouched for me are well-connected to global punk scene and, moreover, some have been my friends since I was 14 years old. Botching this project could leave both my PhD progress and valued personal friendships in tatters. God forbid I do something that jeopardizes the ability for Rumah Pirata to function, I would never show my face at a DIY punk gig again.

Putting ethics at the forefront, I critically engaged with the complexities of conducting ethnographic fieldwork with a group who predicate their identities on “doing-it-yourself.” The hallmark of fieldwork is participant-observation, but a substantial question mark surrounded what that meant in the context of a DIY scene and how to undertake that in a group which emphasized non-hierarchical organization. The ethnographer as an instrument of data

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I gravitated towards David Graeber’s (2009) work on the Occupy Wall Street movement as a foundation.
collection places significant power and authorship on the researcher. Talal Asad once asked: “to what extent do anthropological texts construct an essential system of meanings in their attempt to present the ‘authentic’ structure of social life and of discourse of the people studied” (1979: 613)?

Ever cognizant of the power dynamics in the ‘researcher/research subject’ relationship, I was wanted to alleviate some of the inherent inequalities of ethnographic research while brokering cultural understandings from insider perspectives.

After contemplating my general perspectives on ethics, I began to formulate a basic research plan. While it may seem counterintuitive to not foreground sound in a study on punk ‘rock,’ the performed nature of punk identity-formation mandates a primacy for visual data, including photography, audio-video recordings, and graphic design. Though marking something of a conundrum for a scene that shrouds itself in secrecy, visual markers and representations are often central to punk rock culture. Brightly colored mohawks and ornately decorated jackets not only hold meaning within the scene but are also now commonly associated with specific punk rock ethos and attitudes by outsiders as well (whether entirely accurately or not). Indeed, visual representations hold exceptional cultural salience in punk rock culture, with quality photographs and videos being highly sought after by bands and show attendees alike. In even broader contexts several scholars have highlighted the increasing salience of visual representations in youth and popular culture in Indonesia (Lee 2011a, 2011b; Spyer 2002; Strassler 2010). It was with these factors in mind that I first envisioned the ethnographic value and utility of implementing a collaborative visual research protocol.

Discussing filmic research, Sarah Pink notes the ability of collaborative approaches to democratize the ethnographic process (2001: 87). Such democratization was a primary motivation for utilizing a collaborative method. While there is an abundance of current
innovative scholarship which employs collaborative visual techniques (e.g. Chung, Young, Kerr 2019; Barley and Russell 2019), I found myself drawn back to Worth and Adair’s *Through Navajo Eyes* (1972) and their collaborative filmmaking effort as a point of reference. For my work with photography in punk scenes, and critically engaging with my positionality within those settings, I have always grappled with their concluding remarks:

> But, who makes these films? ‘We’ do. We do because it is the way we have done it since the motion picture camera was invented. We do because that is the way to be objective, scientific, and accurate. We do because we are anthropologists, scholars, researchers, or whatnot. We do because it never occurred to us that ‘they’ ought to be doing it, that ‘they’ can do it, and most importantly that when ‘we’ do it we are showing a picture of our world and salvaging a culture not of others but of ourselves. (Worth and Adair 1972: 254)

Though dated, Worth and Adair’s straight-to-the-point critique is something that has resonated with me. I did not gain access to Rumah Pirata’s rather exclusive enclave because I was an anthropologist, scholar, and researcher. To the contrary, I had access because was recognized as a punk; a status I achieved by spending most of my teens and twenties drinking beer, playing music, and becoming involved with underground punk networks. “We” and “they,” in this case, are more ambiguous. While I am a punk, I am not from Indonesia. It is advantageous that I am intimately familiar with the aesthetics and visual markers and expectations of the punk scene, broadly speaking. Yet my familiarity with the iconic imagery of global punk has the potential to obfuscate the idiosyncrasies of the Bandung punk scene. Having myself as the sole or even primary visual data collector, then, could potentially lead to the very pitfall Worth and Adair described—I would merely be showing a picture of my world. In this case, my world *looked* very similar to the one I was attempting to understand, though as my research showed, it was significantly different.
The Early Stages

The collaborative visual ethnography project developed in several stages. From the outset, it was clear that we needed to establish an ethnographic approach that not only acknowledged DIY ethics, but that incorporated the ideology. Many of my questions at the beginning of my research had to do with the Bandung punk scene’s connection to large transnational and translocal networks. From there, I started to formulate the basic idea for a collaborative visual project. I hypothesized that providing camera equipment to punks interested in participating would be ethnographically beneficial in two ways: (1) it would demonstrate a commitment on my part to the DIY ethics of the collective and (2) it would serve the practical purpose of generating ethnographic data whilst punks were circulating through their translocal networks. Based on mobilities theory, I envisioned this approach helping to deterritorialize the ethnographic process by emphasizing movement and circulation. Using the concept of mobile ethnography (Gottschalk and Salvaggio 2015; Merriman 2014; Sheller and Urry 2006) as a foundation, this approach facilitated the collaborative collection of ethnographic visual data while participants were navigating their interconnected local, regional, and global DIY networks. Unfortunately, cameras cost money, so, I scrounged up what I could and, in the summer of 2016, I provided the collective with three low-end point-and-shoot digital cameras.

As an initial step, my ramshackle attempt proved highly successful despite the limits of the low-quality equipment I was able to provide. Collaborators were eager to participate, and the images they shared with me showcased high degrees of mobility with pictures taken all over Southeast Asia and showing punks from across the globe. Beyond the tangible data that was collected, this demonstrated that a participatory and mobile methodology would be an insightful way to approach research in this context.
Building on this initial success, I returned to Bandung in 2017, and using funds provided by the Society for Visual Anthropology/Robert Lemelson Foundation Pre-dissertation Fellowship, expanded my project, including providing higher-end camera equipment to my collaborator-participants. During the second iteration of this exploratory phase, the true value of this collaborative process became increasingly evident. Yes, mobilities and the importance of transnational movement were highlighted, with much of the visual data collected showcasing the interconnectedness of punk scenes around the world. Even more importantly, however, the visual data proved secondary to the community’s buy-in to the project. In many ways, the collaborative-participatory approach to data collection is DIY ethnography in line with their ethos. Indeed, while the punks at Rumah Pirata initially seemed interested in the project for the sake of academic inquiry, the collaborative approach tapped directly into their DIY ethic and bolstered interest. Not only was I asking punks to participate in independent cultural production but the collaborative process began to democratize the ethnography by shifting editorial authority to participants.

The issue of community buy-in was on full display right after I had dropped off one of the higher-end cameras. Around a week after I left, Rumah Pirata was raided by the police. As relayed to me, the cops had been tailing a suspected meth dealer who happened to be friends with people at the collective. This character spent the day tootling around Bandung stopping in various places to visit his pals. Unfortunately, one of those stops was at Rumah Pirata. Soon after the guy left, in came the cops, searching everything and detaining everyone. All they found were a few cases of beer, which is entirely legal. Nonetheless, the police needed to be paid off or else someone was going to jail. I assumed this story was being told to me in part to say that the camera was part of the bribe. That would have been fully understandable, and I would have been
happy to have helped keep someone out jail. “Oh no”, Afril stated, “we stashed the camera right when they showed up.” The thieves (police) made off with about $1,000—which is close to what the collective pays in rent for an entire year—but the camera, worth a few hundred dollars, was safe!

From the summer of 2017 forward, participants began generating an abundance of higher quality images and videos with the equipment I provided. They also expressed interest in producing something that highlighted the activities at the Rumah Pirata collective. While they were uncertain what they wanted to produce, they were sure about distributing whatever was produced to other DIY punk rock groups via their transnational networks. In short, they wanted their colleagues around the world to see what they were doing at Rumah Pirata. Our visual work was already collaborative in the sense that participants were contributing to my ethnographic pursuits, but this added another level as the collective saw me as a collaborator creating and producing their yet-to-be-determined creation.

Including me in the creation and dissemination of whatever ‘the project’ was to be served as a significant methodological opportunity, with (a) this dissertation being guided by anarchist philosophies and theories, and (b) this new collaboration functioning as an entirely non-hierarchical collectivist cultural product. Being involved in creating a product provided firsthand experience in the DIY/anarchist philosophies employed by Rumah Pirata punks, including participating in interactions based on collectivism, mutual aid, and non-hierarchical organization. The collaborative visual project, and my direct participation in producing the next phase, would help unpack how their core principles shaped the subjectivities and lived realities of punks at this Bandung collective. Moreover, participants desire to distribute whatever we fashioned through their connections to larger networks presented an opportunity to understand how DIY ethics
work in transnational interactions, as well as how others in their broader network perceive the efforts of Rumah Pirata punks’ self-presentation.

The Collaborative Project

Like many ideas, the initial plan for our collaborative visual project looked great on paper and should have been highly successful. The collective seemed genuinely interested in producing media that was mutually beneficial, and they now had the means to generate quality images and videos. I had to temper my expectations, though, as the punks at the collective are not just punks at the collective—they have jobs, families, and other obligations and interests. In short, they are busy people, which became apparent early in the project. We had come to an agreement that a Dropbox would be set up expressly for those involved to store and share the media they chose to include as part of the collaborative effort. Adding this procedural step served both logistical and ethical purposes. We needed an easily accessible place to store data. Perhaps more pressing, though, the collaborative visual project presented a veritable minefield of ethical concerns. I envisioned the Dropbox process as adding a layer of consent for the use of images in this project. The Dropbox idea did not last very long. It was too cumbersome to upload large files to their social media outlets as well as Dropbox (and wherever else they were keeping them). Quickly jettisoning the Dropbox, participants told me to check out the pictures they posted on Facebook and Instagram, which presented some obstacles to my research interests. The “grab whatever off our Facebook pages” approach left too much ethical ambiguity for my liking. One of the contributors to the project, though, assured me that he was uploading the majority of the media, directly from the cameras, onto an external hard drive which he would share with me when I came to town. If true, this would begin to alleviate some of the ethical concerns surrounding consent for images to be part of my research project.
Heading into my dissertation fieldwork proper, I was a bit unnerved by the failure of the Dropbox plan and worried that the collaborative project might end up being a bust. I arrived in Bandung in early January 2019. This was a busy time of year for the collective as they were preparing for the significant undertaking of hosting their annual anarcho-music fest, Libertad. Knowing this, it did not seem appropriate to bring up the project immediately. At the first event I attend, a Libertad kick-off show in central Bandung, I was encouraged by seeing some of the equipment that I had provided still in use. I was even more encouraged when the person who claimed he was collecting media onto an external hard-drive, without prompting, excitedly exclaimed: “I’ve got a shit-load of pictures for you!”

After Libertad, I brought my laptop to Rumah Pirata and downloaded the collaborative materials from the hard drive. I was delighted to find that the file transfer took more than an hour, and ultimately, there were over 5,000 images and dozens of video clips spanning two years from all over Java and even Europe. It took a significant amount of time to work my way through all the media provided. Approximately half of the 5,000+ images depicted bands performing, mostly at Klub Racun. The remaining photographs spanned a wide swath of topics and locations. There was a group of pictures from previous Libertad festivals and folder containing images of a Bandung punk band’s tour through Europe.
Figure 13 A Rolling Stone tribute band playing a Klub Racun. It is not always about politically-minded anarcho-punk bands, punks need a good wedding band too. Courtesy of the Rumah Pirata collective.

Quite significantly, however, there were also many images that most outsiders probably would not expect to see from a punk rock anarchist collective. There was, for example, a folder containing images of a beautiful wedding reception held at Rumah Pirata for a couple involved with the collective, complete with a Rolling Stones tribute band (which is decidedly not punk rock) [Figure 13]. There were images of families and children hanging out at the collective, of people gardening and maintaining fishponds, punks painting the main building, fixing stairs, and people teaching silk-screening. There were also images of bands performing at other collectives and music festivals not directly associated with Rumah Pirata. Having spent time at the collective and in the broader Bandung punk scene, I understood there was much more to Rumah Pirata than solely what occurs in Klub Racun. Live music is a piece of what Rumah Pirata does,
but it is by no measure the only thing, and the multitude of activities occurring at the collective were reflected in the variety of images shared.

My initial worries of a collaborative visual project not gaining traction proved to be misplaced, and the collective seemed to be genuinely interested in proceeding with whatever it was that we would eventually make. They did have a ‘shit-load’ of pictures, but they were not only for me. We began to discuss what we would do with all the media. Following a long-standing tradition in punk rock, we decided that producing a DIY ‘zine’ would be an excellent way to showcase the media and present the work undertaken at the collective to those with whom they wanted to share.

We began with some lofty expectations that we quickly realized were unrealistic. The collaborative effort garnered images, videos, sound clips, and graphic design, and there was a desire to incorporate all of these into some form of a multimodal zine. Making a zine with all those features on a minimal budget with the result being accessible (both physically and financially) to all of those interested in a DIY manner, was effectively undoable. Ultimately, we decided a printed photo-book, including links to both YouTube videos and Soundcloud audio, would be the most practical route to take.

The process of producing the zine proved invaluable to my dissertation research for several reasons. First, it provided ample opportunities for in-depth photo elicitations of participant-produced images. The value of photo-elicitation has been demonstrated time and again in ethnographic inquiry (e.g. Harper 2002; Rayment, Swainston, and Wilson 2019; Samuels 2004), and this project was no exception. Explanations of and arguments for (or against) certain pictures to include in the zine opened the door to conversations which ultimately provided the foundations for many of my broader theoretical assertions. For example, Figure 14,
depicting punks from the collective painting the main house, led to a lengthy discussion from which I learned about the ongoing negotiations with neighbors and the landlord that present small but ongoing opportunities for the collective to incorporate anarchist principles into their broader social interactions.

Figure 14 Members of the collective painting the main building. During this maintenance session, the Rumah Pirata punks also poured concrete for a new stairway. Again, they do not own this property but have a good working relationship with the landlord. Courtesy of the Rumah Pirata collective.

Rumah Pirata does not own the property where the collective resides; they lease it one year at time. Figure 14, and several other photographs, showed collective members doing maintenance work and painting the buildings. There were pictures of punks pouring concrete to make a new set of stairs—something I would consider far above and beyond routine upkeep. During the photo-elicitation, Bambang contended that the collective fixes up the property in a bid to maintain good relations with the landlord. Indeed, the landlord was initially apprehensive about
leasing his rental to the group. Through maintaining and improving the property, however, the Rumah Pirata punks have demonstrated a commitment to both being good tenants and a mutually beneficial association. “He likes us,” Bambang contended, “we have already paid a years’ rent, and we keep everything nice.” In cultivating a good relationship with their landlord, the collective has a level of security in knowing that they are welcome for the foreseeable future.

In a related vein, the collective’s continuing ability to hold shows and events at their venue also hinges on their relationships with the neighbors. While Rumah Pirata is some distance from the overcrowded streets of Bandung, there are plenty of people living within earshot of the venue. I cannot imagine that being ideal for people who are not interested in punk rock, but the collective employs several tactics to maintain relationships.

First, flyers advertising gigs at Klub Racun always include the words “come under the radar”. When the collective first began to host punk shows, the neighbors were concerned that so many tattooed,^31^ weird-looking people were milling about the area. So concerned, in fact, they called the cops, which was a problem. Making sure that punks were not loitering became imperative to the collective.

Second, all of the gigs at Klub Racun occur during the day with live music ending promptly at 5:00pm. Even with this self-imposed curfew, the collective has gone to great lengths to sound-proof their venue. From the street, which is 50 yards or so above Klub Racun, a live band sounds like a stereo playing at a high volume. This is done out of consideration of others nearby (but also helps the acoustics inside). Third, the collective regularly holds events specifically intended to foster community with those in the vicinity. It is a rural agricultural area and the collective invites nearby farmers to participate in Lapak Gratis [Free Market], an event

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^31^ Though the perception is changing, in Indonesia tattoos are often linked with criminality.
in which people trade and giveaway homemade wares. Although they do not advertise it as such to the neighbors, *Lapak Gratis* is done in the spirit of anarchism and is based on concepts of anti-capitalism and mutuality. All of this information came from the conversation elicited by Figure 14, and is merely one example of key information garnered from photo elicitation and our collaborative process.

**The Photo-Book/Zine**

As a researcher, my primary concern was learning from the process of making this zine, not necessarily the end product. At the time, I was slightly dismayed as we began to formulate the zine, as it seemed the onus of producing it fell squarely on me. The vibe seemed as though the collective felt they supplied the pictures, so it was on me to make something interesting with them. In retrospect, that expectation was entirely fair and in keeping with how most things functioned at the collective and was representative of how our collaborative relationship operated. I made a few drafts that included mockups of zines that included between 10-15 pages of photographs, captions, and a write-up of an introductory and concluding paragraph. Being mindful that we were physically printing the zine, I assumed that keeping the page count down would be cost-effective. It quickly became clear that what I was designing was not what they were wanting.

I had included several images per page, but the collective seemed to want even more pictures and at larger scale for easy viewing. The number of pages and the size of the photographs increased until we ended up having just one large captioned image per page. The collective was also discernably disappointed with only one-paragraph of text for the introduction and the conclusion. While they noted it was supposed to be a photo-book, they also wanted some text. I was hesitant to be the sole text-writer, as it felt like an abandonment of the anarchist
methodology I was attempting to utilize. I made that clear. Bambang a main contributor to the project replied, “Dude, you’ve been coming here for a long time, you know what is going on, you are a part of it, just write.” Being acknowledged as part of the group was a feel-good moment for me, despite Bambang’s admonition being delivered somewhat sternly.

I also interjected, matter-of-factly, that we might want to keep the verbiage down because it would effectively double once we translated it and had the Indonesia version side by side with the English. To my surprise, this was met with several ‘what the hell are you talking about’ looks. Joko was adamant that we did not need to include Indonesian at all. “They [people at the collective] need to be able to talk with bands and communicate with our friends not from here,” he argued. Not including Indonesian was certainly not an unprecedented move, as much of the signage and gig flyers at Klub Racun are in English. As I see it, it reflects what Luvaas (2009) argued about indie and underground music having marginal status in the global scene. For the collective, “de-Indonesianizing” their self-representations serves as a mechanism to shed that marginality. Including Indonesian in a zine meant for global distribution could ‘self-other’ the collective and stymie their efforts for recognition.

Although many people were early collaborators, once we began formatting the photo-book the project was spearheaded by myself and Joko, one of my key interlocutors. Meeting frequently, we changed designs, added text, and swapped out pictures. At a certain point, as things were coming together, I asked whether we should be running the photo-book ideas by the rest of the collective for approval and feedback. I was told, “No, we don’t need to. People know what we are doing, and we are doing this for the good of the collective, so we don’t need to get everyone involved, we can just do it.” The longer conversation we had stemming from this was a watershed moment for my understandings. One of my initial questions revolved around how DIY
punks in Bandung were implementing anarchist principles in their daily interactions. Up until this point, I was having a hard time seeing much anarchism at all. There seemed to be two people who oversaw things at the collective. The making of the photo-book, and the conversations which came about during the process, painted an entirely different scene.

Rumah Pirata is not some sort of hippie commune, in that there is not defined expectations for communal labor. In their brand of anarchism, individual impetuses are key to success. There is no central leadership, taskmaster, or even consensus decision-making body that determines how tasks will be divvied up. Collective participants recognize jobs that need doing or opportunities to support the collective and act upon them. “Well that must turn into a shit show from time to time, I’m sure there is all kinds of drama from that” I remarked. “Not really,” Joko shrugged. He went on to explain that the “shit show” had already been played out. Rumah Pirata has existed in various forms and locations for six years (the last four at its current location). According to Joko, the infighting and ideological dustups have already sorted themselves out and he suggested, effectively, things run rather smoothly.

Rumah Pirata has now established its ideological and practical identity through trial, error, disagreements, and ultimately consensus. Joko gave me an example of things ‘getting sorted.’ He recounted that several years ago there was a guy who was very active at the collective, but kept screen printing t-shirts and the like with hyper-sexualized women depicted all over them. “It’s actually pretty clear that we are not about that” Joko quipped as he gestured towards the banner inside Klub Racun [Figure 15]. It was brought to the attention of the individual that sexism was not welcome at the collective and that if he had a problem with that, he was not welcome either. Throughout my fieldwork, several such instances were recounted, demonstrating the jostling and maneuvering that the collective has undergone as part of
establishing its identity, parameters, and boundaries. Inevitably this identity construction is by no means complete: it is an emergent process and there is still drama. As Joko contended, however, the major drama seems to be behind them.

Figure 15 A banner inside Klub Racun. Sexists are not welcome. This photograph also shows the sound-proofing measures taken during construction of the venue. Note the bamboo wall stuffed with materials. Taken by author.

While it was not necessary for anyone else in the collective to sign-off on our construction of the photo-book, as Joko and I continued our work the subtle mechanisms of Rumah Pirata’s anarcho-collectivist approach began to reveal themselves. Although we had collectively been working on this project for years, we had yet to produce anything tangible as my fieldwork end-date was quickly approaching. With a foreseeable deadline, work progressed at a more rapid pace. Participants and others tuned into what was happening at the collective were all well aware of this ongoing project. But as the photo-book began to take a more solidified shape, our work became more visible to those unaware of or who had forgotten about
it, and interest began to grow. Joko and I started meeting more frequently, and towards the end we met almost exclusively at places where other members of the collective were hanging out. I did not read this as a coincidence. Once we had a rough layout of the book, it became subtly necessary to elicit feedback from others invested in the collective. People were asked for and gave input on our drafts, though not directly or formally. There was genuine interest in and excitement about the photo-book. The growing attention led to an “uh-oh” moment when Joko and several others involved in the production realized many people in the target audience would be expecting to see themselves in the book, and they were not. That revelation led to the last-minute inclusion of pages with multiple smaller images of bands playing and people hanging out at Klub Racun.

Once we had settled on a layout and finalized the captioning and image formatting, it was time to print. The collective is well-connected and seems to have friends everywhere, so we were able to find a fellow punk who worked at a printing shop to help score us a reasonable price. As I was given carte blanch, so to speak, at the beginning of constructing this photo-book, I had sized it to be large. Retrospectively, that was dumb, and Joko sent me pictures of a test print which had the pages at an A4 letter size—oops. It would have cost a fortune to print anywhere near that size. I had to scale things down, which I did easily and quickly.

The next test print was at 18x23cm (7x9in), which looked great. The problem was that it would have to be bound by hand using some kind of gluing procedure, and it was not overly secure. The test print binding was already noticeably weakening after handling a few times. There was another option of printing at 15X21cm (6x8in) that offered a lower price point and, at that size, binding could be done mechanically, which produced a much higher quality photo-book. I was an advocate for the larger format with the weaker binding because I felt that
showcasing the images should take priority over the overall quality of the product. Everyone else involved with producing the photo-book unanimously disagreed with me. I changed my mind after seeing the final result in comparison to the test print. They were right, the quality was much better, and the images were still clear.

Titled “Come Under the Radar: The Photo-Story of Rumah Pirata,” the zine consists of images taken as part of our collaborative visual ethnographic project. The final version was a culmination of months of conversations, planning, drafts, and rewrites. Though there was a desire initially to include music and video, the final form did not stray far from conventional print-version zines that have been a mainstay of punk rock for decades. The zine did, however, include links (merely written out) in the text for those interested in seeing video footage, hearing music recorded at Klub Racun, and following the collective on social media. Please see the appendix which includes the entire zine/photo-book.

![Figure 16 The cover of the photo-book.](image)

Figure 16 The cover of the photo-book.
Hooray! We Made Something. So What?

Flipping through the completed zine, 50 pages of decent pictures and self-appreciative text may not look like a monumental accomplishment in and of itself. What it represents, however, is something worth considering in greater depth. Roland Barthes once contended that photographs “belong to a class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both: the windowpane and the landscape…” (1982:6). Indeed, our photo-book/zine was something vastly more than the images of which it was comprised. Interwoven into and contextualizing the zine was a DIY ethic inseparable from any visual analysis.

Though I have included the photo-book as an appendix, holding the actual product, flipping through the pages, and interacting with it as material cultural conveys meaning in ways different from viewing the images in other formats. Elizabeth Edwards argues, “Materiality is closely related to social biography. This view argues than an object cannot be fully understood at any single point in its existence but rather should be understood as belonging to a continuing process of meaning, production, exchange, and usage” (2002: 86). The zines continued exchange and usage are part and parcel to the images themselves and together they tell the story of anarcho-DIY as enacted at Rumah Pirata.

Over the three years during which this project evolved and ultimately came to fruition, the act of collaborating itself produced significant ethnographic data—both quantity and insight. The process was interactive and reiterative providing dialogue and new avenues unlikely to arise from participant observation and interviewing. The process of collaborative data collection acted as a form of mobile ethnography (Gottschalk and Salvaggio 2015; Merriman 2014; Sheller and Urry 2006). Although the project was ostensibly about the physical place, Rumah Pirata, it is
significant to note that 10 of the 39 image pages in the zine were of photos taken somewhere other than the collective. Rumah Pirata is much more than a locus or single node and extends well beyond the confines of Bandung. The zine, and the larger body of images that we drew from, foregrounded that the collective cannot be appropriately conceptualized using well-defined boundaries. That point was further reinforced by events like Kekesed Fest (discussed in Chapter 2), facilitated by the Kekesed Collective, primarily comprised of punks affiliated with Rumah Pirata. To them, they were putting a show on at a different place, so they used a different name; no big deal.

As Andrea Novoa contends, “Mobile ethnography is doubly entangled with and by mobility, seeing as it not only encourages a practical, physical movement by the researcher but it also requires the ethnographer to focus on the relevance of mobility itself. Mobile ethnography is practically and epistemologically linked with mobility” (2015: 100). Our collaborative visual project complexifies the concept of mobile ethnography as defined by Novoa. In my case, the researchers were the researched, further entangling mobile ethnography and mobilities. As implemented for my project, collaborative visual ethnography was mobile. With the cameras effectively attached to the participants, the equipment ‘came with’ as participants traveled to Europe with one image featured in the zine having been taken in Germany. In other words, not only did this method of data collection not detract from the movement and circulation in which participants were already involved, but it helped showcase these mobilities.

The punks at Rumah Pirata are keenly aware of the relevance of their mobilities and chose to showcase it in their zine. Beyond dedicating over a quarter of the photo pages of their zine to locations outside the collectives’ compound, they also included five full photographic
pages of non-local bands, as connections and mobility were topics that the collective specifically wanted to highlight.

*Refusal*

Just as important as what the collaborative visual ethnographic project showed, is what it did not show. Part of the elegance of my participatory approach is that I cannot be sure of what was not shown. Democratizing the ethnographic process means that I, as the academic researcher, never had complete authority over the data sets. Looking through the 5,000+ images and videos shared with me as part of this project, there are clearly sequences of images and even complete folders the participants had culled before sharing them with me. In other places, it is clear that all the images remained as shot. What did they delete? Chances are I will never know. It is certainly a bit frustrating that I am not privy to all the data collected as part of this project. Conversely, this represents a small upheaval of the power dynamics inherent in ethnographic research—which I find spectacular. In more academic terms, this collaborative methodology intrinsically incorporated opportunities for ethnographic refusal.

Anthropologists purposefully omitting details from ethnographic works with the intent to deflect negative ramifications for those with whom we work (ethnographic refusal) is an intriguing proposition. The American Anthropological Association’s attempt at disciplinary ethics guidelines begins with the commandment of “Do no harm” (AAA 2012). Hypothetically, excluding unflattering or undesirable information on people would be in keeping with that proclamation. The principle is more complicated, though, as Ortner argues in her essay “Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal” (1995). She contends that omitting details leads to ‘ethnographic thinness’ which is a disservice to all involved. As Ortner writes:
If we are to recognize that resistors are doing more than simply opposing domination, more than simply producing a virtually mechanical re-action, then we must go the whole way. They have their own politics—not just between chiefs and commoners or landlords and peasants but within all the local categories of friction and tension: men and women, parents and children, seniors and juniors; inheritance conflicts among brothers; struggles of succession and wars of conquest between chiefs; struggles for primacy between religious sects; and on and on. (1995: 176-177)

The danger that Ortner is warning against is sanitizing people’s lived realities. While it may make for a more compelling argument in instances of resistance, it also perpetuates a lack of thick description (i.e. ethnographic thinness). Ultimately, smoothing over the wrinkles that make people complicated obfuscates and distances people from one another. As Abu-Lughod (1990) argued, it romanticizes people, their practices, and perspectives.

Despite Ortner’s spot-on critique, interest in refusal as an ethnographic concept and practice has grown over the past several years. Indeed, Audra Simpson’s work *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014) has spurred conversations that have explored how and when refusals are used and the broader meanings they create. To be clear, contemporary theorists of refusal have moved beyond the narrow scope to which Ortner was speaking. Carol McGranahan outlines four aspects of refusal for ethnographic consideration, noting that refusal is: (1) generative; (2) social and affiliative; (3) not another word for resistance; and (4) is hopeful and willful (2016: 322-33). All four points are pertinent to the refusal involved in my collaborative visual project with Rumah Pirata.

If refusal is understood solely as omittance and avoidance, then ethnographic thinness can undoubtedly be a consequence. Refusal, though, can also be generative as was the case for our collaborative visual project. The potential for refusal happened at multiple stages. The camera equipment was a donation made to the collective without any contractual obligations to do anything. It was not as though I was going to rescind the gift (our even could) if they did not
produce media. Frankly, they could have turned around and immediately sold the cameras (or paid off the cops with it) without repercussions. Providing absolutely nothing as a viable option, making deleting images and videos, for whatever reason, certainly within the realm of reasonable.

Participants exercised the option to delete, but not very often, as far as I can tell (based on the cameras’ onboard image number sequencing). Indeed, looking at the numbering on the images, apparent gaps indicating the removal of a picture was rare. Interestingly, there were several images taken using the donated equipment that were posted on social media over the years, but which were not among the extensive collection shared with me from the hard drive. I could also tell where, approximately, they should have been in the set, but alas, they were not there.

Another instance which I categorize as refusal came about when we were working on the layout for the zine. In my early mockup I had included a picture from the “Alcohollympics” portion of Libertad Fest (see Chapter 4 for a description of that ‘fun’). After we had completed a substantial amount of work, Joko finally came out and said, “this picture shouldn’t be in here.” It was a picture that I had taken. He continued, “I just don’t think it looks very good.” No problem, I said. I browsed through some other pictures from the same event and found a few that I thought were more aesthetically pleasing. Finally, he just came out and said it: “My kids are in the background. We aren’t using these.” In the large cache of images shared with me, there were a substantial amount that included children. It turns out the punk rock anarchist collective is a family-friendly organization, and they wanted to be understood as such.

The collaborative photo cache included several pictures depicting drinking, and a number that included children, but none that involved both. It took a dad’s keen eye to pick out the kids
in the picture I had used in the mockup. In the image, the kids were barely visible, building a sandcastle some fifty yards down the beach with the adult who was watching them. Nonetheless, that picture was a no-go. While there was no demand that I get rid of images such as that one, there was an unspoken expectation that I not share pictures like that. So, I do not. I use this example to highlight the implications of making methodological space for refusal. Throughout the project, there were other similar instances which I will not be sharing.

An argument can be made, I suppose, that the missing information confounds or ‘thins’ the research project. I do not conceptualize it as ‘missing’ at all: rather, such deletions are a part of a generative process. Undeniably, demonstrating a commitment to genuine collaboration by participating in a non-hierarchical editorial process built strong relationships and is itself generative. Moreover, the collaborative editorial process shaped and allowed for a narrative less predicated on hierarchical research methods from a discipline mired in power structures.

Before delving into this point, I must state I am completely aware of how problematic it would be to contend that indigenous groups and anarchist punks are fighting the same fight. That would be wholly stupid and is not at all my claim. I am arguing, however, that there are theoretical overlaps which are useful for explicating domination and resistance. As indigenous anthropologist Audra Simpson writes:

In different moments, anthropology has imagined itself to be a voice, and in some disciplinary iterations, the voice of the colonised. This modern interlocutionary role was not self-ascribed by anthropologists, nor was it without a serious material and ideational context; it accorded with the imperatives of Empire and in this, specific technologies of rule that sought to obtain space and resources, to define and know the difference that it constructed in those spaces and to then govern those within (2007: 67).

Again, it would be absurd to contend that indigenous peoples’ and punk rockers’ experiences with ‘Empire’ are anywhere near relatable. If we take the ideologies of anarchists and like-
minded people seriously, though, we must confront the notion that, from their perspective, we are all oppressed and victims of unjust hierarchical power structures. From this viewpoint, and considering Simpson’s history of ethnography, it becomes crucial to interrogate methodology and mitigate the imposition of power dynamics by employing modalities that challenge the inherent colonialism in which anthropology is rooted.

Collaborative Visual Ethnography as Anarchist Methodology

Whether clearly stated or not, that is what comes through in the explorers’ chronicles and the work of researchers alike: society is inconceivable without the State; the State is the destiny of every society. One detects an ethnocentric bias in this approach; more often than not it is unconscious, and so the more firmly anchored. (Clastres 1977: 159)

As David Graeber notes, despite steady recent growth, anarchist theory is rarely utilized as an analytical tool by scholars (2004). Graeber argues for grounding anarchist social theory on two fundamental principles: (1) that there is no inherency of power dynamics in human relations; and (2) that theory should not serve ‘vanguardist’ pursuits but instead be based on direct democratic processes (2004: 11-12). These points are in keeping with Pierre Clastres’s contention, made by over 40 years ago, that models developed in capitalist and statist contexts have limited utility as frameworks for engaging with cultures not centered around those concepts (1977). To Clastres, the underlying notion of the State as a fixed and omnipresent institution is inherently ethnocentric. The ethnocentrism appears in how “stateless” societies are discussed as lacking or without government or political hierarchy. They cannot be lacking anything unless, of course, you come from a perspective in which hierarchical power is normative. An argument can be made that the punks of Rumah Pirata, despite what they profess, are still bound by hierarchy,

32 I do not mean for this to be an attack on ethnographic research writ large. Clastres’ contention can be reversed and understood as arguing that within contexts which the ‘State’ and capitalism embed themselves, standard anthropological theory and method are completely appropriate.
government, and numerous other power structures and, thus, must be understood through those lenses. That perspective erases agency and obfuscates complex subjectivities.

The point here is that cultural context must be a key factor in selecting appropriate methodological approaches. This means going beyond merely excluding visual procedures when working with people who are not open to photography. If there is a fundamental disjuncture between ethnographic practices and the ideologies of the people you work with, you must consider different strategies. Taking Simpson’s argument that the foundations of anthropological thought and methodology reside in colonialism and oppression, how can anthropologists escape the confounding factors inherent within ethnographic research conducted with people who do not willingly subscribe to power dynamics? To be clear, I see this question as being related to but distinct from postcolonial critiques and decolonizing methodologies. Classic postcolonial scholars such as Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Edward Said (1978) revolutionized social science by revealing the insidious and pervasive Eurocentric power dynamics in conceptualizing the ‘subaltern.’ They stopped short, as it was beyond their purview, of engaging with the pervasiveness of power writ large. Using postcolonial perspectives as a foundation, fully engaging with issues of representation and their intersections with power dynamics (of all types) requires additional consideration.

An anthropology of anarchism necessitates an anarchist anthropology. If we take the ideologies, epistemologies, and perspectives of those with whom we work seriously, then incorporating those into our research becomes imperative. For Graeber, ethnography is part of the equation in achieving this goal of incorporation in an anarchist anthropology (2004). His interpretation of ethnography, however, leaves something to be desired. Graeber writes:
When one carries out an ethnography, one observes what people do, and then tries to tease out the hidden symbolic, moral, or pragmatic logics that underlie their actions; one tries to get at the way people’s habits and actions make sense in ways that they are not themselves completely aware of. (2004: 12)

That definition sanitizes and romanticizes ethnography far too much for my liking. It seems as though Graeber envisions ethnographers as Indiana Jones’s uncovering mysteries. He also neglects the disturbing roots of ethnographic research. Setting aside her ad hominem attacks, Natalia Buier offers an insightful critique of Graeber’s work and makes clear the shortcomings of this position. She contends,

That ethnography’s preoccupation with diversity and participant observation in the Malinowskian paradigm is a methodological revolution that was intimately linked both to the demands of the 20th century nation state and the ideological reproduction of the British empire is common knowledge among those ever so slightly interested in the history of the discipline. (2014: 78).

Acknowledging the history of ethnography is central to reconfiguring the approach. Upsetting the power structures historically embedded in social theory and social scientific methodologies is something that theorists have been doing for decades. Be it through post-colonial, postmodern, or feminist critiques, social theory has made significant headway in addressing power imbalances in research and knowledge production. While these approaches challenge power dynamics in research, they do not fully grapple with research as power. Does this lead us into postmodern oblivion? Perhaps, as I see it, it is necessary to go through the motions in the name of epistemological inclusivity.

To be clear, I am not arguing for an upheaval of ethnographic methodology. My use of a collaborative visual research approach is in keeping with a long-standing and ever-expanding tradition in anthropology of incorporating collaboration into methods and even interpretations (Gubrium and Harper 2013). I am arguing that the collaborative approach employed for this
project was an anarchist methodology which directly challenged some of the power dynamics of
traditional ethnographic research. Rather than merely a means to give repressed voices
opportunities for recognition (which is vital in and of itself), this methodology was designed to
implement anarchist ideologies. This implementation achieved several beneficial results for both
my research and the participating collaborators.

I am also not arguing for ethnographic research to be conducted only through
collaborative research protocols in an anarchist methodology. It was the individualist anarchist
Max Stirner who said: “I am and will always remain, with regard to myself, more than the State,
than the Church, than God, etc., and thus, infinitely more than the association also” (quoted in
Guerin 1970: 16). The association is almost always more beneficial, but a person must retain
individuality. This principle can apply to an anarchist anthropology in that an anthropologist
need not cede all knowledge production to the collective. One can have their own thoughts so
long as they do not silence or dismiss others, making ethnography well-suited for anarchist
approaches.

Conclusions

My incorporation of anarchist methodologies does not mean I achieved an anarchist
anthropology. Indeed, there was a reason Graeber titled his books on the subject Fragments...
and Possibilities: an anarchist anthropology is experimental and incomplete. Undoubtedly, my
use of collaborative methods was an attempt at leveling some of the inherent power dynamics of
research in the name of non-hierarchical organization. My approach, though, was not
comprehensive or authoritative (pun intended) and leaves much room for improvement.
Acknowledging that caveat, reframing and utilizing collaborative ethnography as an anarchist methodology still proved conceptually viable and ethnographically fruitful.

The collaborative visual process accomplished several beneficial results. First, the collaborative aspect garnered substantial community buy-in into my broader research. DIY ethnography struck a chord with DIY punks, and their enthusiasm for independent cultural production facilitated copious and significant insights. Second, grounding the project in mutuality legitimized the effort to participants and began to smooth out some of the inherent power dynamics of the researcher/researched relationship. Instead of an infantilizing approach wherein the researcher offers some kind of reward for collaborators labors, this project was predicated on all parties involved benefitting in their own ways. This was not an applied project wherein I was attempting to solve a problem (though the methods may prove to be useful for such ends). We worked together in the name of solidarity, which created a more equalized relationship. Third, and finally, it was only through collaboratively producing a tangible zine that I truly learned about the everyday implementation of anarchist practices. While participant observation can happen in many ways, based on the insights provided I am confident that the level of understanding into easily overlooked practices would have been far less sans a collaborative approach that directly tapped into DIY cultural production. Something needed to be produced collectively to understand the nuance of Rumah Pirata’s version of DIY.

What became apparent across all these facets was that Rumah Pirata incorporates anarchist principles into their daily interactions in many ways that are not overtly visible or obvious. It was a bit of an ‘aha’ moment when I realized that the true success of my visual anthropology project had little to do with the content of the 5,000+ images and videos produced. Instead, the success came in the insights facilitated by working with the media, alongside the
participants, to manufacture a DIY product. So long as the process of making the zine still occurred, the photos could have been of absolutely anything; the content was not the heart of the issue.

While the most significant insights came through the process, the media produced provided insights as well. Much of the ethnographic material in this dissertation came from photo elicitations and conversations stemming from what photographs and video clips depicted. The images and other media also demonstrated theoretical concepts such as punks’ mobilities and translocal identities. It was from both the collaborative visual project and through continued fieldwork that I have come to understand implications of these concepts, which I will discuss further in the next chapter.
“There are too many fucking Europeans!” Bambang said, simultaneously grinning and shaking his head. With every new Grab or Gojek\textsuperscript{33} arriving to drop off attendees, the number of tattooed, crusty, smelly European anarcho-punks grew. Bambang greeted them all, working his way through the crowd that had gathered at the designated meeting point. People exchanged handshakes and hugs, and everyone was in high spirits. It was time for Libertad.

I had been told to arrive at the meeting point at 11:00 pm, and that our transportation would be leaving promptly at midnight. I knew there was no chance in hell that timetable was happening, so I made my way to the group of art shops where we would be leaving from at about 11:45. Being one of the first people there, I witnessed the trickle of punks with camping gear and band equipment slowly engulf the little, dusty space which typically hosts small art tutorial sessions. Bambang’s comment about the Europeans confused me; it was not as though this was a well-advertised event or that strangers would even have access to participating. In fact, there was a prewritten list with people who had signed up, paid their 400,000 IDR\textsuperscript{34}, and were meant to be on one of the buses. If the Rumah Pirata punks were pissed off about there being too many Europeans, why did they let so many come?

Bambang and I chit-chatted for a few minutes before he had to greet a new batch of foreigners. “Are you ready for a long ride? It's going to take us about 9 hours to get there,” he said, chuckling as he sauntered away. Where ‘there’ was remained unclear to me. All I knew was

\textsuperscript{33} Grab and Gojek are two popular ride-share services in Indonesia. They are like Uber but you can choose whether a car or motorbike picks you up. Credit cards are not everyday things in Indonesia, so cash is used for ride-sharing.

\textsuperscript{34} That equates to around $28 USD.
that we were going to a two-day and two-night anarcho-punk music festival put on annually by Rumah Pirata called Libertad. It takes place in different locations each year but is always on a secluded beach or island on or near western Java.

By the time we were ready to leave, it was close to 2 am, and there were roughly 150 punks loaded on three full-sized touring buses. One bus was designated non-smoking, one for smokers, and the last bus carried the sound and stage equipment and whoever was leftover. I threw my backpack and tent into the storage space on the side of the non-smoking bus and jumped in—I could not imagine surviving nine hours in a poorly ventilated bus with people chain-smoking clove cigarettes.

While it was a non-smoking bus, it did not mean it was not a party bus. As the vehicles pulled away from the meeting point, boozing was in full swing. A drunken guy from Russia who sat across from me declared his intention to drink enough to pass out, so he did not have to anguish in the cramped bus for hours. He came equipped with vodka from the duty-free store at the Jakarta airport. It took an impressive amount of liquor (and in my opinion, way too much time) for him to achieve his goal. The rest of us had to endure his attempts at starting sing-a-longs to old punk songs for about three hours.

Other people were making new friends and passing around bottles of arak and homemade fermentasi. As the sun began to rise, people were dozing off, except for a few guys in the back, who continued to pound drinks. There were some locals from Bandung and two guys from Poland who were keeping the party going; the local guys were not nearly as intoxicated as the out-of-towners. To the un-inebriated, it was clear the local punks’ patience was wearing thin;

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35 In Indonesia, arak and fermentasi are types of alcohol/moonshine with a wide variety of interpretations. One of the guys at the collective makes fermentasi out of sweet potatoes. Arak in some cases is akin to Japanese sake, and other varieties are thick and like Jagermeister, but a bit less potent. These terms are catchall terms for liquor.
nonetheless, they humored their friends, while simultaneously trying to keep things under control. The charade went on for some time.

“We need to make scchttop,” one drunken punk from Poland slurred, over and over. “We need to schtop. Then I give you money, and you go buy me some beer,” he forcefully told one of the punks from Bandung. “Get up and go tell the driver to schtop, and you get me some beer!” he demanded. At first, the punk from Indonesia laughed him off, but this cringeworthy interaction persisted and kept getting louder and louder. “Ok, ok,” the local punk finally said as he got up and rolled his eyes as he moved up the aisle.

The drunken assholes’ request was not immediately fulfilled, but eventually, the bus stopped for a break, at which point no one bought the guy any beer, and he finally curled up in his seat and passed out. Hanging out at the rest area, I bumped into an acquaintance from the collective who told me about the drama on the smoking bus. Some European dude lit up a joint and the local punks (and others) freaked out on him. Pot is not taboo by any stretch of the imagination within the punk scene, but you certainly do not light up in a tour bus with a professional driver in Indonesia. That jeopardized everyone and not in an ‘oh no, we might have to pay a fine’ but an ‘oh no, we are all going to Indonesian jail’ way. Publicly losing your temper is generally considered bad form in Indonesia, but the pot-smoker got a stern talking-to from the Rumah Pirata punks.

Around hour eight of the journey, the passed-out Russian guy started to come around. His plan had been sound. Well, except for the fact that there was no way in hell the bus ride was not going to take far, far longer than the ‘estimated’ time. Hour nine came, and we were somewhere high in the mountains, slowly weaving our way around terraced rice paddies and lush jungle—beautiful, but quite a distance from any beach. The Russian guy’s hangover and motion-sickness
were made apparent through his ashen face and intermittent moans. Hours 10, 11, and 12 also came and went.

Finally, the bus caravan made its way down a small dirt road and stopped at a village on the Indian Ocean coast. It had taken us 14 hours to make it to a remote area that was some 120 miles from Bandung. That is right; by the most direct route this place was only 120 miles away, and it took us 14 hours. The buses were too large to travel the direct way, so we had to effectively circumnavigate the province of Banten (which included going directly through Jakarta, a city with some of the worst traffic in the world). Moreover, the 2018 Anak Krakatau/Sunda Strait tsunami, which had occurred mere weeks before had destroyed the quickest route to do that. It had been an arduous trip but arriving at the coast picked everyone’s spirits back up, and we were ready to set up camp.

Three busloads of punks from across the globe were enough to capture everyone’s attention in the small village. As everyone piled off the buses, a small crowd formed to investigate the spectacle. We quickly grabbed our belongs and started our trek. It was stiflingly hot, and the hungover, dehydrated, and road-weary punks were pouring sweat and cursing up a storm as we made our way through the village to a small trail that went up a steep hill. One clever punk gave a guy in town some money to take him and several cases of beer up the trail on a motorbike. With the cases of beer piled up on his lap, he laughed and flipped the rest of us off as he overtook us on the trail. After forty-five minutes of hiking up and over the hill, we arrived at a secluded beach, which only had a few small fishing boats and raised platforms with thatched roofs. I pitched my tent at the edge of the high tide mark in the sand, under a tree. Then I passed out from exhaustion.
Figure 17 Road-weary punks piling off the buses to begin our trek to the festival site. Taken by author.

Figure 18 The trek. It did not matter that it was 95 degrees, many punks made the hike in heavy studded jackets and vests. Taken by author.
Figure 19 Perhaps not what first comes to mind when you envision an anarcho-punk fest. This was the view from Libertad, camp site. Taken by author.

Figure 20 Pyrate Punx from Bukit Bintang in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia camping at Libertad. Those of us in tents camped right at the edge of the jungle. Taken by author.
I awoke an hour later, drenched in sweat as I laid in my tent. The shade of the tree had moved, and I was baking in a nylon hell. I walked down to the waters’ edge and I could hear Joko calling my name from further down the beach. He jogged over and gleefully declared, “Come up to the main tent at 6:00; you are the only person from the US, so you have to be there.”

I made my way to the main tent along with the rest of the Libertad crew. I was dubbed the American representative and placed in a group with guys from Japan, Germany, Nepal, Indonesia, and the UK. We comprised the first heat, and I then became aware it was a competition. After drawing a line in the sand, the six of us were told to take up our positions. As an air-temperature (~95°) Bintang beer and straw were thrust into each of our hands, an explanation of the rules was announced to both the contestants and the audience:

Stage 1: you must chug the can of beer through the straw, then you must bend at the waist and spin around five times before running to the next stage.

Stage 2: Down a glassful of arak through a straw, spin around five times, and run to the next stage.

Stage 3: Drink half a glassful of whiskey through a straw, run to the finish line and complete five jumping jacks.

…The first one to complete all of this ‘wins.’

I am not a newcomer to drinking, but as luck would have it, I had not had a drink in about a year before this point. Yes, I am making excuses.

3..2..1..Go! I cracked the beer open and jammed the straw into the foamy warm mess that was bubbling up. If you have never tried to down a hot beer through a straw, you do not know
the pains of my participant observations. It was rough. I was slurping, belching, sweating, and having beer squirt out of my nose all at once. I was cruising, though, and I was about halfway done with it. I looked up and noticed, unfortunately, that I was the last one still messing around with the beer. I cheated, which got big laughs from everyone, and just chugged the rest sans straw, before spinning and making my way to the next stage. The cup of arak was given to me, at which point I noticed that both the guy from Indonesia and Nepal had already finished and were on to the final stage. I took a big pull of syrupy arak through the straw which immediately made me gag. The arak combined with the hot, foamy beer in my throat making my eyes bulge, and it took everything I had not to puke all over the place. In my suffering, I glanced at the dude from Germany who was right next me. He had the exact reaction I did. I was determined not to be last. The German and I made eye contact, I hunkered down, and took another big gulp. His face turned bright red and spewed in the sand, to the delight of all the onlookers. I took one last sip before dramatically falling over and tapping out. The USA managed an embarrassing DNF at the ‘Alcoholympics.’ I outlasted the German, though.

The winner of the heat I was in, Yudi, was a Bandung local and singer of one of the bands that were to perform later in the evening. Believe it or not, the winners of each heat got the reward of doing the whole thing over again in the finals. Yudi won the final as well, where he was promptly hoisted in the air and paraded around until he puked. That was the end of Yudi for the evening; he did not make it back out of his tent to perform that night.

The drunken revelry continued while several people from the collective constructed the stage and assembled the sound system under the main tent—which was an old military medical tent. Around one of the thatched-roofed platforms, the kitchen was set up and was quickly serving food to everyone. The first night’s meal was nasi pecel (rice with vegetables and peanut
sauce) with little fried fish on the side. After dinner, people set up campfires in front of their tents and waited for the bands to start playing.

As I ambled around the festival site, I noticed Joko finally setting up his family’s tent. He had been on-the-go nonstop since the night before, organizing and problem-solving for the festival, in addition to minding his children. Joko, who is not a young man by any measure, looked exhausted. His young son was aiding in the construction of the tent while his wife and daughter were slumped over in the sand, awaiting a well-deserved nap. I noticed he had more than one tent, so I figured I would give him a hand.

Before I got over to them, one of the punks from Japan stumbled over and loudly declared, “ya, I don’t need that tent; I’m just going to sleep under one of those things,” as he gestured towards one of the thatched-roof shanties. Joko’s expression spoke volumes. His brow furrowed, and his ordinarily jovial voice was dead serious. Joko replied “uh, no, this tent is yours. I brought it all the way from Bandung for you.” “No, I don’t want it,” the Japanese guy scoffed. “I’ll pay you the money, don’t worry, I just don’t want it,” he dismissively said as he trotted back to his group of compatriots. A few days before the fest, the Japanese dude had realized he would not have enough time to arrange camping gear once he flew into Jakarta. Amidst the chaos and stress of getting Libertad organized, Joko offered to put up the money, pick up and haul the rental gear for him, and then they guy blew him off—a total asshole move.

**Behind the Scenes**

Day 1 of Libertad was disorienting. To be clear, this is an anarcho-punk *music* fest. It is meant to be fun and not predicated on activism or (a)political debates. Knowing this, I still found it striking to see how similar this event was to tourism common in other parts of Indonesia (i.e.,
Bali). There was music on the beach; food was provided, beer and liquor are plentiful, transportation was arranged, things were made easy for visitors. Locals did the arranging, organized logistics, and tried their best to be diligent hosts.

![Flyer for Libertad XII](image)

**Figure 21** The flyer for Libertad XII. Most Pyrate Punx flyers include the phrase ‘Year[s] of No Lord,’ it is an anarchist play on words with ‘in the year of our Lord.’ The flyer has the band lineups and also notes the ‘Disco Tyme’ will be provided by Miss flash van dance. She DJed after the bands. Also note the quirky “pirate lingo” at the bottom—they are Pyrates, after all. Courtesy of the Rumah Pirata collective

It is billed as an event to showcase solidarity with anarcho-punks and friends of Rumah Pirata from both Indonesia and the rest of the world. Indeed, there were attendees from across Indonesia, and the UK, Germany, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Japan, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Costa Rica, the US (me), and Canada. It was undoubtedly an international affair.
Indeed, the flyer (Figure 2) for the event states, “Let us celebrate our punx gathering with camping bands djs swimming food booze and most important friendship” [sic]. This made Bambang’s statement about “too many fucking Europeans” all that more puzzling.

Bambang clarified his statement during our conversations in the weeks that followed Libertad. While Rumah Pirata has been putting this festival together for 12 years, they are not professional event planners or coordinators. Libertad is a DIY event with transportation being the only logistical component outsourced. The anarchist/DIY ethic is the foundation of the fest. There are other punk music festivals all over Indonesia, but it is an adherence to DIY that helps distinguish Libertad. It also makes Libertad incredibly taxing and stressful on the Rumah Pirata collective.

The collective punks were genuinely excited to have so many friends from across the globe attending the festival. As we waited to load up onto the buses, Haris, a guy who hangs out frequently at Rumah Pirata, droned on about how delighted he was that his whole ‘family’ had come for Libertad. “Its all about family, man. These are all my brothers and sisters. I am so happy everyone is here; because this is what it all about, fam- family, man. It’s all about family and happy-happy-joy-joy.36 Oh, and hating the government,” Haris drunkenly declared and burst into laughter with his pals over the last part of his rant. Bambang was excited about all of the foreigners attending as well, even though he stated that there were “too many fucking Europeans.”

His statement was a manifestation of his anxiety. He and several others who were central to the logistics of the festival were stressed out. The local punks knew what to expect, where to go, and how to handle themselves. The out-of-towners were a different story. In the days leading

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36 I was a big fan of his Ren and Stimpy reference.
up to Libertad, people bombarded the organizers with texts and social media messages asking about every minute detail. People were flying in from all over, mostly into Jakarta, and then sorting out how to get to Bandung with varying success. Some folks had issues getting camping equipment; some had problems finding the meeting point. Everyone eventually got where they needed to be, which, of course, presented its own challenges.

Lighting up a joint, getting comfortable on the bus by removing a bra but not putting it back on at the rest stop and walking around a mosque, and being generally drunk and obnoxious in public were all part of the out-of-towners’ antics. These faux pas presented an ethical minefield for the collective. Policing everyone is not something that lines up with anarchist ideologies, but the collective punks had a level of responsibility to ensure safety. The visitors are genuinely considered friends, and the collective looks out for their comrades. The Rumah Pirata punks walked a fine line and did an admirable job in keeping the peace in a manner consistent with their anarchist ethics. A keen eye noticed several tactics to deflect and reroute people away from problematic situations. I saw one local punk instructing others to take shoes off and demonstrating how to wash up before entering the rest stop mosque, which housed the bathrooms. Direct interventions were almost nonexistent except for the reprimanding of the moron with the joint.

Corralling and babysitting the out-of-town punks was stressful and trying enough for the Rumah Pirata organizers. But that was not the only issues they faced. Our arrival at the small village whence we embarked on our trek to the Libertad site caused quite an uproar. Weeks after the fest, Joko and Afril told me about the debacle that occurred the first evening of the festival. As they relayed it, the villages’ imam was not entirely pleased to see busloads of odd-looking people piling into town. Looking disheveled and clad in all-black, the imam and other leaders
made the accusation that we were practitioners of *santet* [black magic]. That was a rather serious charge. In 1998, on the east side of Java, there was a purge of people accused of sorcery in which around 100 people were murder.\(^{37} \ ^{38}\)

The imam contacted the police, who were dispatched to investigate. The arduous journey to our remote camping site really pissed off the cops; thus, the bribe amount increased dramatically. Joko and Afril noted the severity of the accusation but also pointed out that the police had little in terms of practical recourse. We were in a hard to get to area and far removed from any large police force. They were satisfied with a hefty pay-off. Joko and Afril were able to laugh about the situation weeks later, but it was undoubtedly a terrifying moment of which most of the drunken revelers listening to the bands were totally unaware.

Bambang’s anxiety regarding the number of foreigners was not misplaced and, unfortunately, manifested in an awful way. Rumah Pirata usually organizes Libertad in concert with another punk rock anarchist collective in Jakarta (the Ponti Collective) who hold their annual music festival, called PontiFest, a day or so after Libertad. Coordinating the dates of the two festivals is done in the name of solidarity and simplifies the logistics for touring bands and fans from elsewhere. After Libertad, the buses stopped to let off the punks who were attending PontiFest in Jakarta before proceeding back to Bandung, making life easier for all involved.

Soon after being dropped off at the collective in Jakarta by the caravan returning from Libertad, a woman from Europe, Anna, suddenly and mysteriously passed away. I say mysteriously in that no one knew what happened to her; not that foul play was suspected. Anna’s

\(^{37}\) There is much more to this story. Some have posited that the literal witch-hunt was actually politically motivated and carried out by covert government death squads which became known as ‘ninjas’ (see Herriman 2006; Thufail 2005).

\(^{38}\) Also interesting to note, Afril claimed that sometimes death metal bands in Indonesia will bring sorcerers and *dukan santet* [black magic practitioners] to their shows where they perform feats of black magic, like putting swords through their arms and removing them to reveal no wound. Very metal.
death was shocking and sobering for everyone who had attended Libertad. We were drinking beer and having a great time on the beach mere hours before she died. She had been traveling with her partner, and now he had to sort out what to do. Eventually, a cause of death was determined by a medical examiner who claimed she died of alcohol poisoning.\(^39\) The Rumah Pirata punks all found this to be completely unlikely and believed that the medical examiner merely looked at Anna, noted she was a punk, and took a guess. Anna was not some inexperienced teenager pounding drinks. By my estimations, she was in her 30s, and those who knew her noted that she was well-traveled and knew how to handle herself. Regardless, she passed away, and it was heartbreaking for many people.

I talked to Bambang about Anna’s passing, and he was noticeably shaken. “That is like a nightmare to me,” he said. “I don’t know what I would do; I can’t even imagine that happening at Libertad. That is why there is so much stress during Libertad for us.” It was clear that Bambang’s distress did not stem from thinking about this occurring at Libertad and the ensuing legal and logistical mess; instead, it came from the responsibility he felt to his fellow punks. Everyone is meant to have a good time, and it is the collective’s duty to facilitate that. Dying is not part of the program. If something terrible happened to participants of Libertad, the organizers would be devastated.

**Here’s What’s Up**

Day two of Libertad was rather pleasant. The punks were mostly up and out of their tents by late morning and enjoying the beach and tide pools. There was a gnarly beach break where 6-foot wave sets would periodically crash, making swimming impractical. Fortunately, there was a

\(^{39}\) A medical examiner’s determination of a cause of death was apparently necessary for Anna’s body to be released.
coral shelf to the left of the main beach, which was protected from the surf but would fill up with water, where many attendees were hanging out. I found a nice pocket in the shelf about the size of a bathtub to lounge in and mingle with everyone.

I talked with two punk women from Australia who were also lounging on the shelf. They were university students from Adelaide who were on their summer break. One of the women complained about her job at Bunnings (an Australian hardware retail chain); the store manager gave her grief over taking time off. She did not give a damn though; she was dead set on camping, squatting, and traveling for ten days and participating in Libertad and PontiFest with her friends from across the globe in Indonesia. She had effectively spent all her money on airfare and was living on the cheap.

It was this conversation coupled with the Polish guy's drunken bus rant and the Japanese dude’s dismissiveness about the tent that made me begin to see the Libertad/PontiFest combination as some fucked up Club Med. Ostensibly, a bunch of punks come from higher-income nations to run amok in Indonesia and be catered to by their ‘friends’ in the name of ‘solidarity’ and ‘comradery.’ Solidarity, in this configuration, is a one-way street. It is highly unlikely that many punks from Indonesia will ever have the means to go on a backpacking vacation to Europe, North America, or Australia; thus, the prospects of needing to reciprocate are minimal. It was disheartening to note that this event—into which Rumah Pirata punks pumped so much time and resources in the name of anarchism, solidarity, and friendship—looked a lot like exploitation and colonialism by a different name. What was going on here, though, proved to be more complicated than it first seemed. Punks lounging in the surf of Java might be tourists, but not the same as the average Aussie vacationer on Kuta Beach, Bali.
It seems no one wants to be called a tourist even if it exactly describes what they are doing. To Dean MacCannell, “[Tourists] are reproached for being satisfied with superficial experiences of other peoples and other places” (1976:10). Early anthropological engagements with tourism and leisure, beginning in the 1970s, had a marked disdain for the practices. To MacCannell, tourists were people on quests for the ‘authentic’ (1976). For Nash (1977), tourism is a form of imperialism and neocolonialism. These understandings were harsh, but more importantly, as Bruner argues, produced “typologies of tourism and tourists but yielded few insights” (2005: 71).

More recent theorizations from the broader field of leisure studies complexify understandings of leisure and tourism that challenge the prevalent notion, both popular and scholarly, of tourism and leisure as trivial or innocent (Gilmore 2010; Green, Hebron, and Woodward 1990). Susan Shaw throws down the proverbial gauntlet when she asserts

The idea of leisure as a form of resistance is based on the assumption that leisure practices are linked to power and power relations in society. That is, leisure is recognized as one area of social life, among others, in which individual or group power is not only acquired, maintained and reinforced, but also potentially reduced or lost. Leisure as resistance implies that leisure behaviors, settings and interactions can challenge the way in which power is exercised, making leisure a form of political practice. (2001: 186)

Fun and games are not always just fun and games. Leisure as resistance is in keeping with the broader trajectory of resistance theories discussed in Chapter 2. The seemingly mundane activity of lounging around can be a substantial political act with significant repercussions (e.g. Scott 1985).

Nash and Smith have argued that a “satisfactory definition from the anthropological point of view takes tourism to be one form of leisure activity and tourists to be leisured travelers…” (1991: 14). In other terms, tourism is a subcategory of leisure. For the people showing up to
Libertad from across the world, they are undoubtedly leisure travelers. Even for the bands performing, this is not their job or even a source of income on their trip. They would not, however, consider themselves to be tourists. They are visiting friends and participating in DIY punk.

Traveling for the sake of maintaining connections and friendships was a central theme in many of the conversations I had with Libertad participants visiting from elsewhere in the world. It was, perhaps, more evident in the steady flow of punks from Europe and North America to Rumah Pirata for routine shows. Commodore 64, a punk band from the Czech Republic, for example, toured Java, making a stop at Rumah Pirata and playing at Klub Racun. They performed to an audience consisting of ten other people and myself. The members of Commodore 64 seemed genuinely stoked to be playing at Klub Racun, though.

I spoke with the singer of the band, and he told me that he came to Indonesia the previous year to “check out the scene.” It was on this trip that he made several friends who were interested in having his band play and offered to help arrange a tour. To be clear, Commodore 64 is a nobody band—sorry guys—even in the microcosm of anarcho-punk. It is not as though punks in Indonesia were clamoring to have them play. Nonetheless, a tour was organized, and the band played a dozen gigs and stayed at collectives and squats across Java.

Similarly, Crutches, a band from Sweden who played at Libertad, was by no means the headliner. They merely played when it was their turn and participated in the festivities like everyone else. Bands from elsewhere in the world come to Libertad and Klub Racun/Rumah Pirata for something other than growing their fanbase or promoting an album. Undoubtedly, bands are coming for the experience. There is something pretty cool about saying you toured in
Indonesia. More than that, though, bands and other punks from elsewhere are coming to participate, and they do not conceptualize of themselves as passive participants.

Indeed, conceptualizations of active participation were apparent in the conversations I had both at Libertad and with other travelers and bands who came through Rumah Pirata. During our conversation, the punks from Australia said that it was important to them to “support the scene.” They were not talking about the Bandung or Jakarta scenes; they were referencing the global DIY/anarcho-punk scene. Their participation was not merely a consumption of experience; instead, they conceptualized their being there as integral to the perpetuation of the scene. It sounds egotistical, but we must recall Haris’ drunken speech about ‘family.’ It was all about the “happy-happy-joy-joy” with his family from all over. The ‘tourists’ were not the only ones consuming experience; the locals were as well. In this way, leisured travelers were not merely consumers but also producers in direct alignment with DIY principles predicated on independent cultural production.

Ultimately, it is immaterial whether we define punks from elsewhere as tourists, travelers, vacationers, or whatever. Those categories are, as Bruner argued, typologies but otherwise uninsightful. Instead, and as the ethnographic vignette at the start of this chapter is meant to foreground the reality of the anarcho-punk scene’s translocal interactions. As I see it, though, there are three vital components to anarcho-punks’ translocal networks and their implications: (1) punks’ translocal connections are predicated on cultural production and mutuality; (2) interactions create a translocal scene which challenge and undermine, if ever so slightly, the ‘State’ and conceptualizations of the nation; and, finally, (3) the enactment of translocal networking is intentionally subversive—the punks know damn-well what they are doing through their transnationalism. Below I expound on these three points.
Translocality Based on Cultural Production and Mutuality

Punks who are showing up to Libertad, on tour with their bands, or traveling through Java visiting friends conceptualize of themselves as contributing to and creating ‘the global scene.’ As they see it, they are cultural producers. Undoubtedly, they also consume along the way, but that is merely a byproduct of navigating the broader socioeconomics of global travel.40 Punks from other areas of the world come for the experience, but they are equally a part of making the experience as anyone else. The locals were not excited because an influx of foreigners was going to be an economic boon, or because their band would get more exposure, but because they were genuinely happy to see and make friends and be part of something beyond their local circumstances. Here, Marion’s (2010) notion of “circulation as destination” is useful for conceptualizing such interactions. Marion argues that within the competitive ballroom dance world, those who are actively part of the industry must be in constant circulation. It is the act of mobility that confers legitimacy within those social contexts. If a dancer is no longer on-the-move and participating in the competitive circuit, then they become significantly less relevant.

There is not a direct overlap between Marion’s concept and the contemporary global anarcho-punk scene, but it offers a springboard for understanding translocal connections not tied to geography. What is clear through my fieldwork is that the concept of DIY production is the backbone of punks’ translocal interactions. In this configuration translocality is not a place to place connection but, instead, denotes global interactions that transcend locality. As Appadurai noted when first discussing the term (1997), translocality does not mean locality is insignificant in people’s lived realities. Just as Marion argues that circulation serves as a destination in the global competitive ballroom dance network, I contend that the translocal anarcho-punk scene is

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40 Victor and Edith Turner made a similar argument when discussing pilgrims and pilgrimage (Turner and Turner 1978).
predicated on contributions to DIY cultural production that serve as the mechanism of acceptance and legitimacy. The act of creating within global punk networks is the ‘destination,’ so to speak, which confers belonging. It is not therefore enough to suggest, for instance, that the Bandung scene is connected to the Montreal scene because they share similar interpretations of DIY ethics, enjoy the same music, and have mutual friends on Facebook. Rather, there needs to be genuine collaborative production.

Shows at Klub Racun are the most common way of collaboratively producing with friends from elsewhere in the world. Libertad is a major undertaking, but bands from all over frequently play at Rumah Pirata’s small venue. Again, Commodore 64 from the Czech Republic played in front of approximately ten people at Klub Racun. The point of the show was not for the band to generate new fans, promote an album, or sell t-shirts, it was about playing a gig in collaboration with friends who value DIY production.

The Commodore 64 show also illustrated the notion of DIY production being central, in that Klub Racun was making a live recording of all the sets. While unaware of this before showing up for the gig, the band was excited to be a part of this new undertaking by the collective. After the show concluded, Joko, who was the sound engineer that afternoon, floated the idea that the recordings from that day of Commodore 64 and a band from Bekasi (a city close to Jakarta) called Gamelanoink! ought to be put together and released as a split record.41 This collaborative effort was an idea that met with enthusiasm by all involved. The split did not include a band that is directly associated with Rumah Pirata, but it did not matter. It was a demonstration of the collective’s dedication to DIY production and their commitment to the translocal scene—the fact that neither band was from Bandung was irrelevant.

41 A split record is an album which features songs from two bands.
Figure 22 A flyer for Krass Kepala’s European Tour 2018. Note how extensive the tour is: 3 weeks, 14 gigs and significant travel. Courtesy of the Rumah Pirata collective.

Though undoubtedly situated in Bandung, Rumah Pirata punks conceptualize themselves as part of a scene that transcends locality and they use mutuality as the guiding principle of their local, regional, and global interactions. Notably, the terms mutuality and solidarity were used frequently when members of the collective discussed the reasoning behind their efforts. As I noted previously, though, the whole mutuality concept seems suspect when considering that bands from Indonesia rarely go to Europe or North America, whereas the converse is frequent. Rumah Pirata facilitates gigs, tours, festivals, places for punk travelers to stay, food for out-of-town guests, and more, but it seems they rarely have the opportunity to go to faraway places where this hospitality is reciprocated. It looks a lot like exploitation.

I brought up this seeming inequity of ‘mutuality’ to Afril while we waited for a ride (which never came) to a Krass Kepala gig that was to take place in the town of Sukabumi, about
3 hours from Bandung. Afril was quick to point out that, indeed, their comrades in Europe do reciprocate. Krass Kepala had just gone on a European tour in 2018 (see Figure 22). Moreover, the trip was paid for (including flights) by fundraising efforts conducted by anarchist collectives in Europe. The band had places to stay, food to eat, and beer to drink, provided in the name of solidarity and mutuality.

“Cool,” I said, “but I am not sure one tour really makes things even.” Afril was quick to contend, “Ya, but that’s not their fault. It is all of this other stuff: politics, money, crazy Muslim bans.” He went on to tell the story of Krass Kepala trying to get their documents to go on the European tour. It involved the members of the band having to individually apply for visas at the German embassy in Jakarta where there were lengthy applications and interview processes. Eventually, only some of the band were issued visas; the others were out of luck. After a quick scramble, they found other friends, got them to apply for visas, and eventually had enough people approved to assemble a piecemeal version of Krass Kepala for the tour. The #novisatour was a success but not precisely what the band initially envisioned.

Afril also mentioned that for bands coming from elsewhere in the world, there is a significant financial investment to make the trip to Rumah Pirata. The commitment to undertake the journey was seen, at least to Afril, as an investment in the scene. Bands and other punks were coming to participate, which was viewed as a generative process. Thus, the notion that punks from North America or Europe were being exploitative by not having to reciprocate in the same fashion as Rumah Pirata was something of an alien concept.

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42 We met up at 7am to get a ride to the show. There were 15 of us including members of Krass Kepala. We finally gave up on the guy who was meant to give us a ride at 3pm. It was a combination of the driver being an “asshole” (according to Afril) and horrendous traffic which prevented the driver from reaching us. Krass Kepala, obviously, did not get to play the gig. This is typical in urban Indonesia. We all joked that my entire dissertation would just be about waiting for nothing.
Translocal Anarcho-Punk Scene Challenging and Undermining the ‘State’

The fact that Rumah Pirata punks are Indonesians is not negligible. Their political and economic status shapes how they can participate in the translocal DIY punk scene. The lopsidedness of travel opportunities is recognized as a constraint of the ‘State’ and seen as all the more reason to enact anarchist principles. The collective participates in translocal DIY networks in the ways it can, and when opportunities come about through solidarity efforts of friends elsewhere, they take them. Again, the point is that it is DIY cultural production—and not, as in Marion’s case, circulation—that counts as a marker of legitimacy.

Global anarcho-punk interactions based on mutuality present a direct challenge to ongoing nation-building in Indonesia. Following the theoretical trajectory put forth by scholars of underground music in Indonesia over the past two decades (Baulch 2003, 2007; Luvaas 2009; Wallach 2008a, 2008b), I argue here, that the Rumah Pirata punks are eschewing local and regional identities and connecting to global communities and scenes. Again, Luvaas argues that in Indonesian indie scenes, people are reinventing a local which is “dissociated from the classificatory schema of nation-state and colony, and built instead from the tropes and typologies of transnational popular culture” (2009: 248). My assertion here is that what Baulch deemed “gesturing elsewhere” (2003)—where metalheads and punks were attempting to escape the local by referencing global styles—has become full participation in global networks for anarcho-punks in Indonesia. Punks are coming from around the world to participate in cultural production in Bandung. Though constrained by politics and economics, punks from Bandung are physically going elsewhere, and more often, connecting through social media and other means not as ‘little brothers’ or quaint folks from faraway places, but as equals in the name of solidarity.
The punks’ full-fledged participation in global networks is, perhaps, best framed by Conradson and McKay’s concept of translocal subjectivities. As they assert, “translocal subjectivities [emerge] through both geographical mobility and multiple forms of ongoing emplacement” (2007: 168). As previously noted, punks’ translocal subjectivities are, indeed, being constructed through ongoing mobilities and emplacements. Conradson and McKay go on to argue that with translocal subjectivities, “national citizenship…is typically a second-order framing of identity that comes to the fore when dealing with immigration officials, employers and relative strangers in international settings” (2007:169). It is in this facet of translocal subjectivities that punks are exerting resistance to the ‘State.’ While I contend that this resistance happens everywhere, it is perhaps especially pronounced in Indonesia—a nation still attempting to unify disparate people under one national identity.

When discussing Indonesian identities, it is important to remember that the very concept of “Indonesia” is relatively new and that this nation-state is comprised of thousands of islands which, until the last hundred years or so, did not conceptualize themselves as a cohesive political entity. As noted in Chapter 1, the nationalistic push for a united Indonesia stemmed from decolonization movements endeavoring to undermine Dutch rule by reconfiguring identities from being rooted in locality to being rooted in nationality (Anderson 1972; Aspinall 2009; Luvaas 2009). Today, the nationalist ideology of Pancasila is still regularly evoked and nationalism is still pushed across various social sectors (see Subroto 2015; Głab 2017; Pujiastuti and Purwanti 2018).

When punks in Indonesia conceptualize of themselves primarily in terms of a global scene, and embed themselves in translocal networks, they contradict the ongoing nation-building

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process underway in Indonesia. If nationality is, as Conradson and McKay contend, “a second-order framing of identity,” and instead, punks are framing global identities based on ideologies which call for the erasure of the state, then choosing and enacting this identity undermines the government's attempts at national unification. Though the Rumah Pirata anarchist collective represents a relatively small blip in the broader cultural landscape, in keeping with resistance theorists, the “petty acts of noncompliance” (Scott 1985) and “revolutionary acts” (Graeber 2004), of punks still contribute to the ongoing discourses molding the shifting sociopolitical landscape of contemporary Indonesia.

_Translocal Networks as Intentional Subversion_

The key to all of this is that punks are _intentionally_ constructing identities that challenge broader power structures. They are entirely aware that efforts to maintain translocal networks are enactments of their anarchist principles and this is exactly why they are doing it. Rumah Pirata punk’s intentionality was showcased by Krass Kepala, who, in various conversations with me, contended that it was important for the band (even if it was not all of the original members) to go to Europe as this subverts political and economic barriers. In their individual interviews at the German embassy, band members made no mention of being in a band, that would require work-visas. They came up with bullshit claims about lifelong dreams of sightseeing in the Alps, and whatnot. According to the band, European immigration officials are worried that ‘extremists’ or poor people who will not return are coming from Indonesia. In this way, it is the ‘State’, global politics, and economics that are standing in the way of translocal punk’s movements. Any circumvention or subversion of these barriers is seen as a job well done.
I spoke with Wawan, a member who was denied a visa, and he said, “Ya, I was sad I could not go, but it is ok, it is important for the band to go. We need to take advantage of times when we can break through government for solidarity.” Wawan also talked about the prospects of someday getting to the U.S. “They [U.S. government] don’t care, we come from a Muslim country, so it doesn’t matter, we won’t get in. In Europe we have friends at different collectives, and they come up with fake documents and letters and things so that we can go on tour easily. They do it all the time, so it’s no problem.” According to Wawan, anarchist collectives in Europe have been forging documents and circumventing governmental restrictions to travel for some time. They have become so efficient at it that even bands from Indonesia can effortlessly move around Europe once they arrive.

Rumah Pirata does not have to go to these same lengths in assisting friends navigating through Indonesia. Most foreign passports holders are given 30-day tourist visas on arrival, with little hassle from immigration officials. With a quick and inexpensive roundtrip plane ride to nearby Singapore, passports will be stamped once again, which will grant another 30 days of hassle-free intranational travel. On occasion though, further steps are required. For example, Joko described how several years back Subhumans (a legendary punk band from the UK) came to play a show in Bandung. The band was on an Australian tour, and the collective convinced them to pop up to Bandung to play a gig. Joko exclaimed, “Ya! They played for free; they just wanted some arak and a place to stay! They are old-school anarcho-punks so they like what we do here.” While most punk visitors make their way into the country via the Jakarta airport, Subhumans flew directly into Bandung. The Bandung International Airport is relatively small and only receives international flights from Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, the band connected

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44 I am talking about a really legendary British punk band. A few years back I saw them play in Las Vegas in front of a crowd of ~5000 people. This was a huge deal in Bandung.
through one of those places. A group of haggard, old, filthy crust-punks from Europe toting guitars, garnered lots of people’s attention at the immigration and customs checks in the small airport. After negotiating for some time, the band eventually made it through.\footnote{The main problem was that the band had to bring their guitars with them. This made the immigration officials suspect they were a band that was going to be paid for a performance, which would require a work visa.} The local punks knew they would likely be tailed after raising so much suspicion. Joko recounted a rather amusing story reminiscent of a Hollywood action movie, which involved driving the band through back alleys and switching vehicles to lose the local authorities.

**Rethinking Resistance**

In this chapter, I have painted a complicated picture of the translocal interactions within which Bandung’s punks deliberately embed themselves. These relationships are messy, growing out of complex histories, unequal global power structures, and economic disparities. I have also shown, however, how the interactions and relationships of Rumah Pirata are anchored in cultural production, subversions of the ‘State,’ and intentional challenges to power. My ultimate question here is this: is what I have described here resistance? In short: absolutely. As I have made clear, in their everyday interactions the punks at Rumah Pirata deliberately implement tactics meant to directly challenge power. Their translocality—both physical and conceptual, in terms of identity—and their enactments of DIY principles stand in contrast to hegemonic sociopolitical and socioeconomic currents. Again, the question is: so what? What are the implications of Rumah Pirata’s enactments of everyday resistance?

James C. Scott provides a framework that is central to answering these questions. In *Weapons of the Weak* (1985), writing about the village in Malaysia where he worked, Scott contended:
It is no small matter that the village elite continues to control the public stage. The public symbolic order is maintained through outward deference, to which there is no open challenge... Those with power in the village are not, however, in total control of the stage. They may write the basic script for the play but, within its confines, truculent or disaffected actors find sufficient room for maneuver to suggest subtly their disdain for the proceedings. The necessary lines may be spoken, the gesture made, but it is clear that many of the actors are just going through the motions and do not have their hearts in the performance. (1985:26)

Indeed, compliance does not necessarily mean commitment. Scott’s concept complexifies understandings of resistance by foregrounding the multiple layers of lived reality. Things said in public may not reflect the attitudes and thoughts held by subjugated groups, but only what they must perform in front of powerholders since the consequences of not doing so are too detrimental (Scott 1985, 1990). In later work, Scott dedicates a whole book to complexifying his earlier theorizations and introduces the notion of the “hidden transcript” which is used “to characterize discourse that takes place ‘offstage,’ beyond direct observation by powerholders. The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript” (1990: 4-5). Everyday practices happening ‘behind the scenes’ have the potential to reshape power dynamics.

Scott’s work is foundational to the interpretations and theorizations I have made regarding translocal anarcho-punk. For the Rumah Pirata collective, though, there is something more complicated going on that has not been accounted for by previous theorists of resistance. Rumah Pirata punks are not only enacting tactics ‘offstage’; they are using the mechanism set up by hegemonic power to undermine the very same power.

We must recall that punk in Indonesia is a direct result of neoliberalism and global capitalism. It was Suharto opening domestic media markets to foreign investors that eventually sowed the seeds for alternative music scenes. Multinational media conglomerates sent Metallica
and Green Day to play in Jakarta so that they could sink their teeth into an untapped market and generate significant revenue. In the case of the punk scenes that gained traction in the aftermath, there was an underlying ethos and history of anti-capitalism and anti-authoritarianism that came along with the popular ‘flavor-of-the-month’ variety of punk being pushed by the major record labels. Brent Luvaas noted the “growing pains” of punk in Indonesia during the late 90s and early 2000s, where mohawk-sporting youth would slam-dance to crappy pop cover songs (2009: 251; also see Wallach 2008b for his discussion of swastikas in the Jakarta punk scene). Today, though, the anarcho-punk scenes of Indonesia are integrated into global networks, and often recognized as hubs for DIY ethics. Punks have gone from covering songs from Green Day’s *Dookie* album to setting up international tours by facilitated by forged paperwork and the circumvention of authorities. Again, the punk scene in Indonesia was borne from and facilitated by hypercapitalist trends and mechanisms. For contemporary anarcho-punk, though, there is an oppositional relationship between the factors that facilitated the scene’s growth and the anarchist principles that they enact.

While I contend that anarcho-punk is subverting and resisting hegemonies such as the ‘State’ and capitalism, we must acknowledge the ongoing symbiosis between these elements. Though I doubt that the Ministry of Tourism in Indonesia had anarchist punks (who spend little money while staying at collectives and camping on the beach) in mind when promoting tourism and ensuring easy access to visas, punks still spend money in Indonesia. There is thus some benefit to the ‘State’ and the capitalists. The punks need, for example, cheap commercial flights and inexpensive internet access to participate in their translocal networks; thus, benefiting from global capitalism.
When I began to theorize the complex interactions, I found the biological concept of social parasitism to parallel some of what I was describing. Biologists (writing about biological ‘societies’) define social parasitism as “a special case where the social mechanisms of one society are exploited by another whole society. One society then lives inside the social system of the other, deriving key resources from the host” (Powell et al. 2014: 500). Certain species of ants are known for exhibiting socially parasitic behaviors. To the untrained eye, host and parasite may seem to be one and the same—they are all ants doing ant things—but in reality, there is a parasitic relationship detrimental to the host. To me, using biological terminologies and theoretical paradigms for understanding complex cultural milieus tends to oversimplify rather than explicate. Yet the concept of social parasitism got me thinking that a more robust framework for understanding the complexities of resistance was needed.

As a framework of unpacking modes of resistance that rely on institutions of hegemonic power to facilitate subversion, I introduce the concept of co-optive resistance. Co-optive resistance is resistance, which is enacted, wholly or partially, through the very power structures which the resistance is attempting to counter. The framework of co-optive resistance goes beyond Scott’s concepts, which understand subversive actions and interactions as happening in different spheres which occasionally overlap, causing disjunction. Instead, co-optive resistance engages with instances where two separate epistemological worlds converge, and the subjugated social context uses its interaction with the dominant power to advance its own agenda.

The punks at Rumah Pirata engage in co-optive resistance through their participation in translocal networks and daily interactions based on anarchist ideologies. In chapter 2, I discussed my approach to the notion of subjectivities. Subjectivities are a critical concept in discussions of co-optive resistance. Punks at the collective are not merely anarchists hell-bent on smashing the
system; they have a myriad of other responsibilities, obligations, and interests which are simultaneously informed by and informing of their subversive ideologies. While jobs, familial duties, and everyday participation in consumerism could be viewed as contradictory to their anarchist principles, this new framework offers insights that complicate people’s subjectivities and does not misunderstand incongruencies between different facets of life as being self-defeating.

I view co-optive resistance as expanding our understandings of resistance through embracing the complexities of lived realities. Moreover, I conceptualize it as a framework that helps resistance theory move away from what Ortner describes as “dark anthropology” (2016). To Ortner, theory and ethnography since the 1980s focuses on “emphasizing the harsh, violent, and punitive nature of neoliberalism and the depression and hopelessness in which people under neoliberal regimes are often enveloped” (2016:65). In contrast, the concept of co-optive resistance seeks to facilitate understandings of resistance through enacting what Appadurai terms “ethics of possibility” or “those ways of thinking, feeling and acting that increase the horizons of hope, that expand the field of the imagination, that produce greater equity in what I have called the capacity to aspire, and that widen the field of informed, creative and critical citizenship” (2013:295). Rumah Pirata punks demonstrate the need for a new framework from understanding resistance that recognizes the capacity for change through unexpected means.
Figure 23 Co-Optive Resistance. I have been informed that dissertations cannot have 'decorative’ title pages. This title page was made by a punk artist in Bandung specifically to be the cover of this work. I must include it as a figure here to co-opt the standard conventions of dissertation formatting for my own goals. Yes, it is decorative, and there is no way in hell it is not going in my dissertation. This is in keeping with the concept of co-optive resistance that I introduced in this chapter. 1312! Artwork by CrustChaos.
Chapter 5

A.C.A.B

Academic Considerations & Applications, Broadly

Throughout this dissertation I argue that Rumah Pirata punks are enacting resistance through daily and often-overlooked means. What, though, does all of this mean for the bigger picture? What do complexifying approaches to translocal networks and the applications of an anarchist anthropology contribute to understandings of the human experience more broadly? Here, I argue that my work contributes to ongoing discourses surrounding anthropologies of Indonesia, social theory and methodologies broadly, and understandings of punk culture.

What All This Tells Us About Indonesia

Right in the middle of my fieldwork, Indonesia held elections. Political banners and posters promoting candidates for local and regional governmental positions lined the streets of Bandung. The president, Joko Widodo (Jokowi), was up for re-election, though polling suggested his challenger posed no real threat. Jokowi won by a significant margin, but his opponent, Prabowo, claimed election fraud, protested the results, and filed a lawsuit (Chan 2019). The election contestation played out over several weeks until the Indonesian Constitutional Court rejected Prabowo’s suits and upheld Jokowi’s re-election (Sapiie 2019).

None of this seemed to be any concern to the punks at Rumah Pirata. While on the surface it should come as no surprise that a bunch of anarchist punks paid little attention to government-related issues, it is not as though anarchists staunchly stay out of politics or political discourse. I tend to write about anarchists’ “(a)political” tendencies to emphasize a political that is divorced from partisanship rather than the apolitical—it is not as though they are disinterested;
rather, their ideologies exist beyond the normative political spectrum. Nonetheless, I found the lack of any discussion surrounding the election or regional politics surprising. I specifically asked Bambang about the political aloofness of the collective, and he quite bluntly said, “who fucking cares.”

Bambang was much more concerned with Brexit than any local or regional politics. There was a chance for one of the bands who frequently plays at Klub Racun to go on tour in Europe. I was unclear how everything was supposed to work out, but apparently their ability to get into the EU revolved around going through the UK. Brexit had the potential to ruin those plans. The only time I heard punks at the collective spoke about governmental politics throughout my entire fieldwork was a brief discussion about the implications of Brexit to translocal networking. I found that telling.

An anarchist anthropology, as I have implemented it, begins without supposing that the ‘State’ is a primary factor in how people order their social lives. I have argued that the ‘State’ constrains punks’ interactions and their abilities to navigate their translocal networks. However, punks are simultaneously circumventing national identity and political borders. This process has created a global scene that in many ways transcends the nation-state. Although I contend that the people I worked with ought to be considered ‘ punks in Indonesia’ rather than ‘Indonesian punks,’ the fact remains that I have been talking about Indonesians, technically speaking. The punks I work with have other facets of their lived realities and subjectivities that are rooted in place.

I am certainly not the first person to note the disconnect between taking anarchist philosophy seriously and simultaneously accepting that people are rooted in place. The historian Arif Dirlik, discussing historical approaches to anarchism in China stated:
The predicament that Chinese anarchists (and later Marxists) faced in the early 20th century may have something to say presently to the stateless social movements that represent the best hope out of the iron cage of global capitalism. The so-called new social movements need to be grounded in place so as to address problems of everyday life, but they also need to be part of something larger if they are to survive oppression and achieve their goals. Radicals committed to social change, be they anarchists, Marxists, or social democrats of one stripe or another, if they are to overcome the one-sidedness that has hampered social activity in the past, need to respond to the contradictory demands of the local and the translocal in which these social movements are embedded. (2011: 145-146).

Indeed, the translocal anarcho-punk scene is one of those stateless social movements that is grounded in place in significant ways. In chapter 3, I discussed lapak gratis that Rumah Pirata hosted. The event achieved two related accomplishments. First, it solidified relationships with neighbors of the collective by demonstrating a commitment to the local community. Second, lapak gratis is an event which enacts anarchist principles through interactions with the broader community, sans the sometimes-off-putting nomenclature of anarchism. Lapak gratis is becoming increasingly popular in Bandung as a community event that offers an alternative to the hypercapitalism encroaching on all facets of urban life in Indonesia. Anarchism is not commonly an underlying philosophy for these events, but when Rumah Pirata participates, it is because of the overlap between lapak gratis’ and anarcho/DOI ethics.

I see interactions and participation in community events (such as lapak gratis) as Rumah Pirata grounding themselves in place, which Dirlik contends is essential to achieving anarchist goals. In addition to these interactions—which I believe are the most significant in advancing anarchist agendas—the collective is also a place where people involved in direct action movements congregate. Although there was never a time throughout the several years I have been conducting research with Rumah Pirata when the collective was directly involved or associated with direct action interventions, regulars at Klub Racun (and others affiliated with
Rumah Pirata more broadly), have been involved with protest movements and various direct resistance efforts.

For instance, on grunge day at Klub Racun, while waiting for the next band to play poorly executed Nirvana cover songs, I struck up a conversation with a guy who told me about his rap sheet stemming from run-ins with police at protests. At a recent May Day protest, he and his pals were rounded up and detained overnight, though not formally arrested. He showed me bruises on his sides from getting beaten by the cops, which he laughed off as fairly standard.

If you are ever in the Dago area of Bandung, you will notice a lot of symbols of anarchism graffitied on everything. The encircled ‘A’ is a mainstay of graffiti everywhere it seems, but there are many more sophisticated anarchist symbols all over the city. Figure 24, for instance, depicts anarchist flags under the words “Happy Mayday” which was spray-painted on the side of a police post near Jl. Juanda, a major thoroughfare in the center of Bandung. Rumah Pirata does not have a direct hand in these activities; they do not organize any of this as part of their activism. However, people who are involved in the collective also engage in some of these activities. Though not directly involved, Rumah Pirata and Klub Racun are social spaces that foster connections between like-minded individuals. Facilitating these connections is another

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May Day is International Workers’ Day, but it holds special significance for anarchist because of its connection to the Haymarket Affair in 1886. The Haymarket Martyrs were a group of men who were accused of bombing policemen at a protest in Chicago. They were executed, without evidence or a fair trial, simply because they were anarchists (see Foner 1986; Green 2005).
way in which the collective embeds itself in place and indirectly participates in local subversive action.

Figure 24 A symbol of anarchism spray-painted on a police post in central Bandung. If you are not familiar with anarchist symbols, you may not recognize it as such. Taken by author.

Rumah Pirata undoubtedly embeds itself in the local, but it is their transcendence of locality that is most telling about contemporary Indonesia. Anarchist punks are not, by themselves, representative of broader social trends; it is not as though ten years from now I suspect there will be a widespread anarchist revolution in Indonesia. Rumah Pirata’s identity, which is linked into emergent translocal connections, demonstrate a long-standing deterritorialization of popular culture. Indeed, the research presented here extends a theoretical trajectory that complexifies notions of cultural hybridity and globalizations.

Drawing from fieldwork conducted in the late 90s and early 2000s, Jeremy Wallach asserted that underground music in Java predicated itself on the xenocentrism of well-educated middle and upper-class Indonesians: “the belief, common in postcolonial societies, that a foreign culture (such as that belonging to a former colonizer) is superior to all others, including one’s
own” (2008b: 69). It is because of this xenocentrism that there is a hierarchical structure to popular music in Indonesia, with foreign genres often placed higher in the hierarchy. There is plenty of compelling evidence that supports Wallach’s assertion (see Baulch 2003, 2007; Luvaas 2009). Tapping into and perpetuating that xenocentrism certainly appears to be part of the business models of the multinational record labels that pushed commercialized punk in the mid-1990s. As I have shown, the anarcho-punk scene in Indonesia has moved beyond looking elsewhere for ‘coolness’; they have become integrated (albeit by no means seamlessly) into the broader global scene.

In her work on metal and punk in Bali, Emma Baulch (2003, 2007) argued that underground music scenes in Indonesia are constantly “gesturing elsewhere” borrowing style and ethos from Western contexts. Brent Luvaas contended that the indie scenes of Bandung and Yogyakarta are “no longer willing to uphold the markers of ethnic, cultural, or national identity as an intrinsic part of who they are, and not yet fully integrated into a cultural economy of the global” (2009: 250). I have shown that, for the relatively small anarcho-punk scene, this movement has continued to the point of full integration. While I am writing about Rumah Pirata in particular, and their translocal connections, my experiences in-country led me to believe that this trajectory is also applicable to other social domains within Indonesia.

In terms of situating my research in Indonesia, all of this is perhaps best framed by the work of Tom Boellstorff. Boellstorff coins the concept of ethnolocality, which he uses to “name a spatial scale where 'ethnicity' and 'locality' presume each other to the extent that they are, in essence, a single concept” (2002: 25). In Indonesia (where Boellstorff also works), the notion underscores the different scales which contribute to peoples’ subjectivities. In a similar argument to that made later by Conradson and McKay (2009), Boellstorff (2002, 2005) contends that
people in Indonesia often have ethnolocalities that, in certain circumstances, are more reflective of self-identity than the nation-state. He writes, “It is certainly insufficient to assume that persons within the nation-state of Indonesia see themselves as 'Indonesian' in all circumstances. However, it is equally problematic to fall back on ethnolocality as the default mode of representation for culture, naturalising a spatial scale that was not just a result of colonialism, but 'the very form of colonial rule’” (Boellstorff 2002: 38). Indeed, because of Indonesia’s ethnic diversity and expansive geography, anthropologists and other scholars have historically focused on ethnolocality (e.g., Javanese, Acehnese, Sundanese). As Boellstorff points out, though, those categories are just as fabricated as ‘Indonesian,’ it is merely a matter of scale.

Boellstorff also argues, “To critique ethnolocality is not to deliver an apologia for the nation, nor is it to deny the importance of the conceptual work ethnolocality performs in contemporary Indonesian life. It is, instead, to write against the foreclosure of debate, to open a space from which to imagine new geographies of identification, to equip oneself to better respond to an already globalised world” (2002: 38). In the case of the anarcho-punk scene, I do not see scale being the issue; rather, ‘geographies of identification’ are more paramount to understanding punks’ lived realities. The translocal networks Rumah Pirata are involved in help dissociate punk identities from place. When primary identities are dislocated and deterritorialized, issues of geographic scale are no longer paramount. As I have argued, I am not talking about Indonesian punks or even Sundanese punks. Instead, punk identities are conceptualized as transcending ethnolocality or geopolitical boundaries.

All of this sounds similar to theorizations of cosmopolitanism. Global anarcho-punk networks are not necessarily envisioning or working towards some utopic Kantian

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47 Sundanese are the ethnic majority in Bandung.
cosmopolitanism (Kant 1795 [1917]) or even more modern understandings that are situated in place and not universally applicable (Robbins 1998). The very notion of citizenship is antithetical to anarchist ideologies making the cosmopolitan concept of ‘world citizen’ inapplicable. Moreover, the punks at Rumah Pirata are not necessarily interested in punk rock or grindcore versions of ‘We Are the World.’ Their global connections are maintained with likeminded punk individuals and collectives; they are not overly interested in being associated with many groups that fall outside of that narrow scope. They are not showing up to college campuses trying to recruit people for their cause or anything in that vein. While carrying Rumah Pirata’s understandings of anarchism to their logical conclusions would promote global solidarity, they are living in the here and now.

In some ways, anarcho-punk translocal networks are akin to ‘communities of practice.’ Ettiene Wenger argues, “Communities of practice develop around things that matter to people. As a result, their practices reflect the members' own understanding of what is important. Obviously, outside constraints or directives can influence this understanding, but even then, members develop practices that are their own response to these external influences…communities of practice are fundamentally self-organizing systems” (1998: 2). Rather than being geographically bound or tied by general interests, communities of practice are predicated on doing something with other people. ‘Doing’ is entirely in keeping with DIY punk rock ethics; it is all about producing. DIY punk scenes, though, are more involved, in that they have an underlying ethic that guides practice. Anarcho-punk is not merely a music style that people practice together; it comes attached with (a)politics and moralities. Perhaps translocal anarcho-punk most nearly resemble a community of practice; however, the scene is more complicated than anything the model is capable of explicating.
I have briefly mentioned cosmopolitanism and communities of practice to highlight that the networks Rumah Pirata are part of are complicated—more so than theoretical constructions that appear applicable can handle. Are translocal punk networks manifestations of cosmopolitanism or international communities of practice? It would be convenient if they were either, but there is more to the story. I find these frameworks obfuscate more than they elucidate. In reflection, I found myself drawn to these concepts because they would allow me to situate my research in Indonesia more easily. I could understand translocal punk networks as being part of a broader affinity for cosmopolitanism in Indonesia. Ultimately, however, I cannot find ethnographic evidence for this in my research.

What is clear, though, is that my research situates itself within a longstanding, yet still emergent, theoretical trajectory on Indonesian popular culture which understands identities as increasingly dislocated from place. This dissertation tells little about “Indonesia” or “Indonesians” but undoubtedly contributes to understandings of the lived realities of people living within that nation-state. Rather than, as Boellstorff argues, a matter of scale, I see the distinction between studying Indonesians versus not as a matter of analytical lenses. Indeed, an anarchist anthropology changes the perspective of analysis but still provides accounts and theorizations of people and their interactions. What does this dissertation tell us about Indonesia? Not a whole lot, which is itself very telling about popular culture and movements in Indonesia.

What This Adds to Anthropology

Theoretical Contributions

Flipping the analytical lens from presuming the ‘State’ as critical to understanding lived realities to acknowledging the pervasive power of the ‘State’ without assuming its centrality has
the potential to uncover previously overlooked facets of global connections. In concluding that
hegemonies are the primary shapers of nonhegemonic cultural processes, one falls into a similar
trap as that which Anna Tsing warned about some 20 years ago. Tsing argued against “making a
distinction between ‘global’ forces and ‘local’ places…the cultural processes of all ‘place’
making and all ‘force’ making are both local and global” (2000:352). In a similar vein,
hegemonic power (be it government or religion, etc.) is not necessarily some kind of omnipotent
force; it is a process that is made—and in the case of anarcho-punk unmade—through ongoing
discourses and practice. As discussed in Chapter 1, as I initially formulated a dissertation project,
I assumed that there would be something interesting about Indonesian punk, which was an
assumption based on presuming the primacy of the nation-state in shaping cultural practices.
Later, I made the supposition that Islam must intersect with punk rock in Indonesia in powerful
and overt ways. This notion, too, presumed that hegemony would profoundly shape and shift all
facets of life.

Of course, assumptions going into the field and perspectives upon completing your
fieldwork are different; that is the point, after all. Upon returning from Indonesia, and as I began
to analyze, I found myself drawn to globalization discourses such as those I discussed in Chapter
2. Much of the previous scholarship and a significant amount of contemporary works dealing
with globalization issues approach it from the perspective of flows caused and shaped by global
political and economic forces. They also chart migration and flows across geopolitical borders. I
am not trying to argue that this is an error. To ethnographically account for mass migration,
diaspora, and other transnational movements is of the utmost importance within contemporary
times. What I am arguing, however, is that anarcho-punks in Indonesia and their connections to
global translocal networks demonstrate a globalization that begins to push the boundaries of current anthropological understandings.

Building from Conradson and McKay’s (2007) concept of translocal subjectivities, I contend that the global anarcho-punk scene is introducing intentionality into their global connections, and their intentions erode sociopolitical and economic hegemonies. The endgame may be to have greater mobility solely so they can play d-beat and grindcore music wherever they want, but ultimately, this is done with purpose. There is plenty of excellent scholarship which engages with translocality in which groups of people are making use of their transnational connections. For example, Thomas Ward, in his work *Gangsters Without Borders* (2012), discusses MS-13 and their use of links between El Salvador and various locations throughout North America in facilitating the transportation of illicit goods and people. The basis for these transnational relationships, though, resides, at least in part, to a shared connection through ethnolocality (in this case, Salvadorian identities). What I offer in this account of anarcho-punks in Indonesia, is that they have made connections across the globe based on an adherence to an ideology that implicitly undermines the nation-state and global capitalism.

The purposeful global connections made through anarchist networking add to anthropological discourses in two significant ways. First, it complexifies understandings of globalization and, more specifically, translocality. I have used the term translocality because it has utility insofar as it acknowledges embeddedness while grappling with concepts of dislocation. As I have noted in the previous section, punks’ embeddedness in Indonesia is not something to be overlooked. However, taking an anarchist perspective, it is clear that defining global anarcho-punk networks should not be based on their geographic or ethnolocal identities.
These are problematic frameworks for understanding connections which base themselves on ideologies rather than proximity and they reproduce oppressive colonialist constructions.

James C. Scott’s position—that “if you put on anarchist glasses and look at the history of popular movements, revolutions, ordinary politics, and the state from that angle...anarchist principles are active in the aspirations and political action of people who have never heard of anarchism or anarchist philosophy” (2012: XII)—is impactful and lays the foundation for many of my interpretations. While arguing that non-anarchists are actually anarchists whether they like it or not might be problematic to some, in the case of Rumah Pirata and their associations, viewing lived realities through ‘anarchist glasses’ is entirely appropriate. During Libertad, for example, anarchist principles were, at first, difficult to recognize through the pervasiveness of analytical lenses presuming the centrality the ‘State’, hierarchy, and particular socioeconomic viewpoints. Putting on ‘anarchist glasses’ revealed an alternative and, as I see it, more practical interpretation allowing for more complex and nuanced understandings. From a theoretical standpoint, my research has demonstrated the utility of anarchist anthropological frameworks for explicating cultural practices that exist, to certain extents, beyond or under the radar of hegemonic powers.

_Anarchist Methodologies_

As I argued in Chapter 3, an anthropology of anarchism necessitates an anarchist anthropology. I listened to a talk given by Tom Boellstorff at the American Anthropological Associations 2019 meetings in Montreal, Canada in which he stated, “ethnography, done right, is always tailored to context” (2019). Cultural anthropologists almost unanimously accept this concept, and yet I still feel somewhat self-conscious when discussing my version of anarchist
ethnographic methodologies. More accurately, perhaps, I get defensive about my approach and I often jump right into justifying it when presenting my research. Other anthropologists are generally receptive to an anarchist anthropology, but I have gotten significant flack from outside the discipline. I do not give a damn what they think and it has not deterred me. Through my project, I found utilizing collaborative visual ethnography as the means of constructing an anarchist anthropology to be highly successful and an ethical mode of conducting research in the context of punk.

The actual manufacturing of the collaboratively made photo-books took some time, and I did not get a hold of one until the day before I left for the States. Several people from the collective gathered at a bar/dim sum joint run by one of our friends to say goodbye, check out the photo-book, and have a couple of beers. People were genuinely stoked about the photo-book; in fact, Joko and I were asked to sign one. Joko also told me, that was the second one he had signed that day. He tried to downplay it but I could see it was a point of pride for him. Handing me the stack which I was meant to bring to the US to distribute to friends of Rumah Pirata here, he told me, “this has always been part of our dream, to be able to share ideas and information with our friends all over the world.” It was at that point that I felt my mission of a mutually beneficial collaborative ethnographic project was a success.

This method was employed not for the novelty of making a DIY product while researching a DIY scene. The collaborative visual project served as one mode for conducting a non-exploitative, insider-perspective driven research model for working with punks in Indonesia (Donaghey 2017). Moreover, it was the act of collectively producing images, and ultimately the

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48 I once had a distinguished professor from another discipline not only question the development of an anarchist anthropology but also disputed the Rumah Pirata collective’s “right to exist.”
photo-book, that tapped directly into the enactment of anarchist principles in everyday interactions at the Rumah Pirata collective.

As I have noted, I do not see the entirety of my project as anarchist anthropology. Instead, my attempts, both methodological and theoretical, to reconfigure ethnographic inquiry in a way that confronts the inherent power dynamics within are incomplete. What the project has shown, through the wealth of participant-produced data, is that anthropological practices based in anarchist ideologies are ethnographically rich and valuable ways to conduct and analyze ethnographic research. Long story short: anarchist anthropology works. To be clear, though, I do not envision anarchist anthropologies as universally viable. For working with anarchist punks, it makes perfect sense; in non-anarchist contexts, I am certain it also has utility.

What All of This Says About Punk

If nothing else, this dissertation obliterates the pesky notion that sociological subcultural frameworks contribute anything worthwhile to understandings of contemporary punk. I am not the first to critique subculture theory’s utility (see Leonard 1997), and am likely not the last; but, as I see it, there is no way this outmoded framework should still be in use. As I have made clear, global punk networks defy boundaries, cut across borders, and undercut hegemonic power dynamics in a multitude of ways and settings. Claiming the Rumah Pirata punks and their associated networks can be understood through their relationship with ‘society’ (however you want to define that term) tells us nothing about lived realities and the implications of people’s actions.

STOP USING SUBCULTURE THEORY TO ANALYZE CONTEMPORARY PUNK.
Stop it, dammit. I recognize that subculture theory, post-subculture theory (which is subculture theory in disguise), and other frameworks that simplify the dislocation of punk are enticing. They are enticing because they are overly simple, and they do not require critical thought. Punk deserves better.

I see anthropology as being capable of doing and providing ‘better.’ Studies of punk have historically occurred in sociology and cultural studies departments. I do not mean to disparage these disciplines’ approaches; they have produced a plethora of excellent scholarship on punk over several decades. I do argue, however, that anthropological perspectives are more easily adapted to the emergent cultural dynamics created by alternative global connections, such as those made by DIY/anarcho-punks. Anarchist anthropologies have been constructed for nearly two decades (Graeber 2004, 2007, 2009; Flexner 2014; High 2012; Robinson and Tormey 2012; Morgan 2015), demonstrating the discipline’s malleability and foresight. Anarchist sociologies have been proposed (Purkins 2004) but appear to be much less used than their anthropological counterparts.

It is anthropology’s pliability and acceptance of alternative frameworks that make it suited for studying punk culture. Indeed, where anthropology was once completely absent, today, anthropologists are making impactful contributions to theorizations of punk (see Greene 2012, 2016; Tatro 2013, 2014). These contributions demonstrate both the utility of anthropology for inquires on punk and punk’s continued relevance across the globe.

A Note for the Punks

The great news for punk is that this research underscores the continued and growing significance of the contemporary global scene. Keep in mind, I have just made several arguments
that contend punk is changing local, regional, and global sociopolitics. Punks are not curing cancer by participating in global networks, but they are undoubtedly shaping social fabrics in meaningful ways. These stories must be explored further.

Who better to do this exploration than punks? There is a growing number, it seems, of academic punks—or “punkademics” (Furness 2012). We must not forget that Milo went to college (and graduate college). Punkademic Jim Donaghey put it best, perhaps, when he wrote:

If we don’t research and critique our own punk scenes/movement/culture, other people will and with far less concern for the effects that research has. However, it is crucial that we don’t repeat the research methods that have already done so much to exploit punk – and the non-exploitative methodologies we develop as insiders can then be adopted by outsiders to enhance their research as well. (2017: 310)

People are going to research, theorize, and represent punk culture; it is imperative that punks are a part of this and help shape the narratives. We cannot let others be the only ones who speak for us. The impetus for my attempt to incorporate anarchist/DIY methodologies came directly from my experience and personal ethics, which I cultivated as a punk. Scholarship undoubtedly shaped the project, but it began because DIY is important to me, and my endgame is to demonstrate to people unfamiliar, that these methodologies are useful for undermining power dynamics. If more punks infiltrate the ivory tower, we can throw a giant monkey wrench into the gears of hierarchy. Small revolutionary acts are the Revolution.

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49 “Milo Goes to College” was a seminal album by The Descendents released in 1982. Milo, the band’s singer, really did go to college and earned a PhD in Biology from UC San Diego.
Conclusion

DIY Ethics of Possibility

As I wrapped up my fieldwork, I began to worry that I had not really done or learned anything. On one of my last trips to Rumah Pirata, I got a ride from one of the punks back to town on his small scooter. The guy told me there was a traffic jam on the main road and claimed to know a shortcut. As we whizzed along a tiny dirt trail in between two terraced fields, a thunderstorm over the Bandung valley began to break apart, and the sun radiated through the clouds as it began to set behind the volcanic peaks. The view was breathtaking and made all the more beautiful by shades of purple, orange, and pink cascading through thin wisps of clouds above us. For some unknown reason, I was especially reflective at that moment and I could not help but think of my mother envisioning me doing crucial anthropological work and uncovering important cultural practices. In reality, I was half-shitfaced on the back of a motorbike with a backpack full of anarcho-punk records and homemade booze that I was tasked with smuggling back to the States for friends of Rumah Pirata. Sorry, mom.

Upon my return to the US, I began to unpack my research and quickly discovered that I had, in fact, learned a ton and had incisive theorizations to offer. In this dissertation, I discussed the utility of my work for not only providing insight into some pretty cool peoples’ way of life but for forging new directions for social theory. I contend that my work contributes to ongoing discourses surrounding anthropologies of Indonesia, social theory and methodologies broadly, and understandings of punk culture. Mom can be proud again.
The Big Picture

Before delving into the specifics of this dissertation, I would like to briefly discuss my thoughts on the overarching theoretical impacts represented in my work. I am drawn back to Sherry Ortner’s observations regarding “dark anthropology” that she defines as “anthropology that emphasizes the harsh and brutal dimensions of human experience, and the structural and historical conditions that produce them” (2016:49). Indeed, the accounts that I have given throughout this work engage with the very elements that Ortner identifies as producing dark anthropology: neoliberalism, domination, socioeconomic inequalities. Ortner contends, “If neoliberalism (among other things) lies behind the rise of dark theory, then we can say that it also lies in front of it: neoliberalism and its effects have become both objects of study and frameworks for understanding other objects of study across a wide range of anthropological work” (2016: 51-52). The approaches that I have used and the frameworks which I have proposed engage with neoliberalism, domination, inequalities, and the like but offer different perspectives that highlight human agency.

My use and construction of an anarchist anthropology add to discourses which Arjun Appadurai has called “ethics of possibility” and describes as “those ways of thinking, feeling and acting that increase the horizons of hope…that widen the field of informed, creative and critical citizenship” (2013:295). How ironic—an ethnographic account of anarchist punk rockers clad in all black, who play heavy grindcore style music provides the basis for moving away from ‘dark anthropology!’ An anarchist anthropology shifts the epistemological lens away from the pervasive power structures (i.e. neoliberalism, nationalism) towards perspectives that highlight the ‘ethics of possibility’—perhaps a DIY ethic of possibility. This interpretation is not meant to
make everything a feel-good story but, instead, privilege people over oppressive power structures. It would be nice, in general, if anthropology what stop being so damn glum.

In Chapter 1, I argued for theoretical frameworks that account for punk’s global connectedness and provide springboards for understanding the implications of everyday actions. Chapter 2 introduced and historically situated the Rumah Pirata collective to contextualize the people with whom I worked. In Chapter 3, I described the collaborative visual ethnography project that incorporated anarchist anthropology that uncovered the everyday implementations of anarchist principles. Chapter 4 explores the nuances of messy resistance and I introduce the concept of BLAH as framework for understanding the intricacies of resistance in a globalized world. The final chapter explores the broader theoretical implications of this work.

The final product of these chapters is an argument that positions Rumah Pirata punks as resisting hegemonies through everyday interactions that have the power to change, if ever-so-slightly, pervasive power dynamics. It is through incorporating anarchist perspectives into social science that these ‘under the radar’ tactics of resistance become clear. These perspectives also foregrounded the need for a more robust framework for understanding complex resistance.

**Final Thoughts**

I regret to inform everyone that the future of Rumah Pirata, at least in its present form, is uncertain. I spoke with Joko, and he told me the landlord is increasing the rent. It is not an astronomical increase, but the collective was barely eking it out already. Rumah Pirata’s fate is not yet sealed, and perhaps they will find a way to make it work; they are incredibly resourceful. Uprooting the collective from its current location would be a disaster, but the punks have dealt with this many times before. During my fieldwork, Joko and I rode around Bandung on his
motorcycle and he had pointed out several spots where they used to put on DIY gigs but no longer could for various reasons. If the collective is displaced, it will not be the first nor the last time. DIY/anarcho-punk will live on in Bandung, regardless of what happens with Rumah Pirata’s rent situation. I, for one, hope they can keep their spot, it is a very special place into which they have dumped considerable effort and love, and it is ideal for their work.

Globally, punk has enjoyed a long tenure. Punk, as a social movement, has changed and gone through many phases, yet it has endured for over forty years. That is an impressive track record considering the ongoing attempts to destroy it, be it through commodifying punk ethos (Moore 2010) or stomping it out through oppression (Jauhola 2015; Jauhola and Bolong 2017). As I have demonstrated in this work, punk is actively ‘doing,’ it is not some gimmicky retro throwback style. Efforts to disrupt and destroy punk indicate the scenes continued ability to piss people off.

Famed literary critic Fredric Jameson contended, “someone once said that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism” (2003:76). Capitalism is so pervasive that we cannot foresee a future without it. Analysts of zombie apocalypse stories have regularly argued that critiques of capitalism and probing the possibilities of what a post-capitalist world may look like are frequently underlying tropes of the genre (Lauro and Embrey 2008; Boluk and Lenz 2010). For many people, imagining a post-capitalist world would necessarily include the end of times or a zombie apocalypse. What I have argued here, though, is that under the radar there are emergent and dynamic cultural processes that are reimagining and recreating social worlds in significant ways. They are happening concurrently with hegemonic processes like global capitalism and nation-state building and while these planes meet, they also diverge.
We do not need a zombie apocalypse to envision humankind beyond the crushing grip of capitalism, nationalism, other forms of pervasive power, we can look to the punks for guidance.

1312!

Figure 25 Peace from the punks at Pirata. Courtesy of the Rumah Pirata Collective.
Bibliography


Appendices

Appendix 1:
Come Under the Radar: The Photo-story of Rumah Pirata

Produced collaboratively with and provided courtesy of the Rumah Pirata Collective
COME UNDER THE RADAR
THE PHOTO-STOREY OF RUMAHPIRATA
Somewhere high in the volcanic hills surrounding Bandung, Indonesia, Rumah Pirata stands as a bastion of DIY ethics and underground music. For six years overall and four years at its current location, Rumah Pirata and its collectively-run venue—Klub Racun—have provided an independent space away from the prying eyes of corrupt police and predatory capitalists. For too long the local underground music scene suffered from having no reliable place for DIY gigs and certainly no dependable place for touring bands to be housed. Take a drive around the city and local punks can point out all the places where they used to have shows but no longer can, for various reasons. Rumah Pirata provides a much-needed space for bands, big or small, young or old, to play without the nonsense of pay-to-play, shady promoters, or the constant threat of cops busting down the door. Bandung is home to a thriving DIY music scene in no small part due to the efforts of the Rumah Pirata Collective.

And it is not just the local Bandung scene that is bolstered by Rumah Pirata. Bands from all over the world have played at Klub Racun and have stayed at Rumah Pirata, which houses touring bands and travelers. The collective provides a comfortable place to sleep, a meal sourced from sustainable resources onsite, as well as an intimate space for bands to play energetic gigs. All of this is done through DIY practices and in the name of solidarity with the worldwide DIY punk scene.
Rumah Pirata also promotes and participates in solidarity with other collectives and forms of activism through film screenings, Food Not Bombs events, and a free open-market (Lapak Gratis). They have a library because education is for everyone, and education is empowerment. The collective gets along with their neighbors and has relationships with local farmers.

What Rumah Pirata really is, is a collective of people who do everything they can to keep DIY music and ideas alive. If six years, 300+ gigs, over 1000 bands, people from all over the world, countless workshops, and a long-term demonstration on sustainability don’t convince you the Rumah Pirata is the real thing, I don’t know what will.

Not to be bought, not to be sold, the Rumah Pirata Collective runs solely on donations and funds raised through DIY distro. Klub Racun was constructed, by hand, by the Collective. The sound equipment, backline amps, drumkit, and lighting were acquired and are maintained through the Collective’s fundraising efforts. There are no corporate sponsors, no advertisements, just true independence.

No sexists, no racists, no fascists, no homophobia, no xenophobia, 1312!
Fish pond at Rumah Pirata
Rumah Pirata grounds including Klub Racun
Artwork in Klub Racun
Under the cover of a surplus army medical tent, Klub Racun has put on over 300 gigs featuring bands from all over the world in the past four years. Bands from Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, US, UK, Canada, Germany, Czech Republic, Australia, and many more places have all shared the stage with bands from across Indonesia as well as locally from Bandung. Recently the venue has begun recording performances live.

Go here to listen:
https://soundcloud.com/kunx-papinya-ciko
Kontrasosial (Bandung, ID)
Acid Rain (Penang, Malaysia)
Parasites (Montreal, Canada)
Krass Kepala (Bandung, ID)
Konflik:tion (Bandung, ID)
Dism (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
Terror of Dynamite Attack (Bandung, ID)

Powerpunk (Bandung, ID)

Goredath (Bandung, ID)

Moragrifa (Bandung, ID)
Moragrica (Bandung, ID)
Bobon – One of our fallen brothers, rest in peace
Kerberos (Bandung, ID)
Stroke (Bandung, ID)
At Annual 3 day ‘Chaos Klub Racun’ Festival
Discopunk
DIY

It takes a great deal of work to maintain and expand the collective and its many projects. Participants of Rumah Pirata do all of this work themselves. If equipment needs repair, if the house needs to be painted, if the stairs are broken; money is raised and friends chip in.

Beyond live music, Rumah Pirata provides live recording, film screenings, a library, and sustains gardens and a fish pond all through DIY practices.
Fixing the PA at Klub Racun
Welding some stage renovations
Perompak Records and Distro
Screening a documentary inside Klub Racun after a gig
Resistance is Fertile – gardens and education
Edukasi untuk semua, bukan untuk diri sendiri
Education for everyone, not for yourself
Once a year, in the name of friendship and solidarity, Rumah Pirata organizes a music festival which bands from all over the world come to play at. The festival, known as Libertad, takes place over several days and has been held at various locations around Java. There is camping, drinking, swimming, comradery, and of course live punk rock bands.
Preparing the Libertad Banner
Yoga at Libertad
Inside the makeshift venue at Libertad
Hanging out on the beach at Libertad
SOLIDARITY

Doing-it-yourself does not necessarily mean doing-it-alone. Rumah Pirata works in conjunction and solidarity with other DIY and anarchist collectives and organizations. The Collective has relationships with other groups in Bandung, elsewhere in Indonesia, and across the world.
Reject at Kekesed Fest in Bandung
Peace or Annihilation at SouthCrust in South Bandung
The Stocker at PontiFest in Jakarta
Bandung punks (Krass Kepala) in Europe
This photobook is a DIY production made by the Rumah Pirata Collective

If you would like to see more check out:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJ1BbgOD1eY

If you would like to hear more:
https://soundcloud.com/kunx-papinya-ciko

If you would like to keep up with gigs at Klub Racun:
www.instagram.com/klubracun
#klubracun

Always Come Under the Radar!
No sexists, no racists, no fascists, no homophobia, no xenophobia, 1312!
Appendices

Appendix 2:
IRB Approval
To: Steven Carl Moog  
BELL 4188
From: Douglas James Adams, Chair  
IRB Committee
Date: 12/10/2018
Action: Expedited Approval
Action Date: 12/10/2018
Protocol #: 1811156930
Study Title: DIY Ethics, Anarchism, and Translocal Punk Rock in Bandung, Indonesia
Expiration Date: 12/06/2010
Last Approval Date:

The above-referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.

If the research involves collaboration with another institution then the research cannot commence until the Committee receives written notification of approval from the collaborating institution’s IRB.

It is the Principal Investigator’s responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without Committee approval. Please submit continuation requests early enough to allow sufficient time for review. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study closure.

Adverse Events: Any serious or unexpected adverse event must be reported to the IRB Committee within 48 hours. All other adverse events should be reported within 10 working days.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, study personnel, or number of participants, please submit an amendment to the IRB. All changes must be approved by the IRB Committee before they can be initiated.

You must maintain a research file for at least 3 years after completion of the study. This file should include all correspondence with the IRB Committee, original signed consent forms, and study data.

cc: Jonathan Saul Marion, Key Personnel