Université de Montréal

Hey! Ho! Let's Go [Back to Islam]!
Exploring the Interplay of Punk and Piety in Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

During the 1990s, punk music made its entry into Indonesian society. Coinciding with a nationwide political struggle against President Suharto's New Order regime, punk was quickly adopted as a rallying point for expressing discontent towards the current repressive government. In 2018, two decades after the fall of Suharto, punk continues to entice with its unapologetic attitude, nonconformist style, and independent ethos. Yet in Java, Indonesia's central island, punk has gained a new and rather unexpected function: proselytism. The Muslim Punk trend reveals that conservative religious groups are adopting punk ethos and imagery for proselytism, that a growing number of punks are becoming religious authorities, and that a thriving market is rendering both punk and Islamic symbols into commodities. The curious interplay between the realms of punk and Islam raises numerous questions about what it means to *be punk* and *be Muslim,* not only in the age of consumer culture and globalization, but also in the wake of the Islamic Revival.

Drawing on the results of a three-month ethnographic sojourn in Java, I question how Javanese punks articulate the individualism of punk with the normativity of Islam. In sum, the Muslim Punk phenomenon invites us to reassess the discursive boundaries we commonly use to circumscribe the rhetorical worlds of 'punk' and 'Islam', and opens up a new debate about the parameters and paradoxes of punk proselytism. My thesis analyses and confirms the dynamic interrelation between religion, market economy, and popular culture in the 21st century.

Keywords: Punk, Islam, Java, Indonesia, Popular Culture, Piety, Conservatism, Neoliberalism, Consumerism, Islamic Market

Résumé

Dans les années 1990, la musique punk fit son entrée dans la société indonésienne. Coïncidant avec une vaste lutte politique contre le régime du Nouvel Ordre du président Suharto, le punk fut rapidement adopté comme plate-forme de ralliement pour exprimer une insatisfaction collective envers ce gouvernement répressif. En 2018, le punk continue de séduire par son attitude rebelle, son style non conformiste et son esprit indépendant. Pourtant, à Java, l'île centrale de l'Indonésie, le punk détient récemment d'une nouvelle fonction: le prosélytisme. Au sein de ce nouveau mouvement, on trouve des groupes religieux conservateurs qui adoptent la philosophie et les emblèmes du punk à des fins de prosélytisme, d'anciens punks qui deviennent des autorités religieuses, et un marché prospérant où des symboles punk et islamiques se voient transformés en marchandise. L'interaction curieuse entre les domaines du punk et de l'islam soulève de nombreuses questions sur ce que signifie d'être punk et d'être musulman à la suite du renouveau islamique.

En m'appuyant sur les résultats d'un séjour ethnographique de trois mois à Java, je m'interroge sur la façon dont les punks javanais articulent l'individualisme du punk avec la normativité de l'islam. Ce phénomène nous invite à réexaminer les limites que nous utilisons pour circonscrire les mondes rhétoriques du punk et de l'islam. De plus, il suscite une réflexion sur les paramètres et les paradoxes du prosélytisme punk. C'est un cas parmi plusieurs qui témoigne de l'agencement dynamique entre la religion, l'économie de marché et la culture populaire au 21e siècle.

Mots-clés : Punk, Islam, Java, Indonésie, Culture populaire, Piété, Conservatisme, Néolibéralisme, Consumérisme, Marché islamique

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List of acronyms

CCCS: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies

DIY: Do-It-Yourself

FAF: Front Anti-Fasis

IPWD: In Punx We Drunk

JAFNUS: Jaringan Anti-Fasis Nusantara

JIL: Jaringan Islam Liberal

KOTD: Keepers of the Deen

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), and Others

NU: Nahdlatul Ulama

NYIA: New Yogyakarta International Airport

PCA: Popular Culture Association

List of abbreviations

Alt. Alternative
Ust. Ustad

Dedicated to Java's punks.

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Introduction

i. Thematic

> *Yogyakarta, Ramadan 1439.*
>
> *In a small, dusty café, a group of young men sporting leather jackets, ripped jeans, and combat boots bang their heads in unison to the beat of a local street punk band. As I notice the sun setting outside, the band promptly ends their set, and the crowd disperses. Meanwhile a familiar sound resonates overhead: it is the maghrib call to prayer. The punks hop on their motorbikes and head to a nearby mosque. They return within the hour with local delicacies to collectively break the fast. The next band sets up their equipment and eagerly resumes the concert. The shifting soundscape, from rowdy to ritual and back again, embodies an unexpected yet fluid articulation between the discursive fields of 'punk' and 'Islam'.*

Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population but also to a thriving underground music community. In the 1990s, punk music emerged as a platform for political protest towards a repressive state regime. Across Java, Indonesia's central island, punks have long found ways to reconcile their controversial punk lifestyle with Islamic norms, but the recent emergence of a conservative Islamic punk movement merits particular attention. The central focus of this thesis, therefore, revolves around the complex and somewhat polarizing Muslim Punk phenomenon.

Throughout the text, I will demonstrate how this trend emerged, whom it affects, and why it matters. In the age of consumer culture and rapid globalization, religions increasingly interact with new media and neoliberal dynamics as it becomes more accessible and prevalent among its adherents: this thesis is a case study that examines this dynamic. The Muslim Punk phenomenon is not only a response to the global Islamic Revival, but it also represents a growing Islamic market in developing countries like Indonesia. Moreover, it blurs the lines between sacred and profane in a context where religion is part and parcel of national identity. While it does elicit some noteworthy contradictions, the punk-Islam amalgam invites us to reconsider

the power of popular culture, the meaning of piety, and the ways in which today's contemporary Indonesian youths negotiate identity through engagement with alternative lifestyles.

The aim of this thesis is not to argue that punk and Islam are easily reconcilable nor to summon a theological debate on whether or not Western music is *haram* (forbidden or sinful). While it is certainly valuable to reflect on the changing practices of Muslim piety in the 21st century and the creative strategies of consumer-oriented youth cultures, the purpose of this thesis is to analyze how established socially constructed categories intersect with local manifestations of global tendencies and processes.

Upon arrival on the island of Java, the site of three months of ethnographic fieldwork, my intention was to study punk with a peripheral interest towards religion. However, I ended up studying religion through the lens of punk. Before delving further into the themes of this project, some key terms must be defined. The definitions below are not meant to be restrictively determinative but rather serve as departure points for launching the enquiry.

Punk: Punk was born during the summer of 1976 in London, England (Hebdige 1979:25). Hebdige describes the emerging style as a Do-It-Yourself combination of the 1940s and 1960s fashions, as well as R&B, reggae, glam rock, and American proto-punk (Ibid). In addition to its hybridity, the aesthetics also had a nihilistic and counter-hegemonic character. Beyond shocking the dominant public, punk was intended to upset all relevant discourses at the time (Idem: 108). It is also said to have emerged as a response to the mainstream rock acts of the 1970s that had become too commercial (Bennett 2001:61; Moore 2007:446). In contrast to well-produced albums and polished concert appearances, punk boasted an image that was unapologetic, raw, and provocative.

It is difficult to argue whether punk has more weight as a musical genre, as a lifestyle, as an aesthetic or as an ideological anchor. While all these dimensions mutually interact with one

another, their individual importance varies from one punk person to the next. Punk historically tends to be aligned with subversive left-wing ideologies: "As punk emerged it frequently set capitalism as a target for derision and lyrical attack. This led to a number of early punks self-identifying as anarchists, with some failing to understand the nuances and differences between anarchy and socialism as ideologies" (Stewart 2017:8). Conversely, punk was also linked with right-wing politics, predominantly during the late 1970s in Britain (but also elsewhere in Europe) and appeared in the United States' hardcore punk around the 1980s. Certain bands disseminated their extremist views aligned with white supremacy and neo-Nazism through hateful lyrics and imagery.

There are particular musical elements that distinguish punk from other alternative and extreme genres (e.g. metal, hardcore, prog rock, etc.), but they are not relevant for the present analysis. My focus here is on punk operating as a trend or a socially constructed identity rather than on the technical aspects of the music itself. I am much more interested in elucidating the ways in which individuals interact with the culture of punk and the meanings that they associate with it than I am in attempting to reproduce and bind the category myself. Punk scholars are in constant debate over the structures, practices, and aims of the scene. Stewart offers that punk was "more than social commentary or teenage angst; punk in its earliest incarnations was arguably a new way of understanding or articulating power in a technocratic, capitalist society" (Idem: 21). Dunn postulates that punk can offer "resources for participation and access in the face of the alienating process of modern life", and an opportunity for personal empowerment (2016:28). While there is no one way to describe what punk *is* or what it *means*, it is useful to look at the socio-economic and political conditions surrounding it to understanding its inherent purpose. In the context of this thesis, it is crucial to step outside the view of punk as a Western-only product frozen in 1970s Britain:

> While the British punk scene had all but disappeared by the beginning of the 1980s, elsewhere in the world punk grew in popularity, often becoming a coherently politicized movement combining aspects of the British punk style and ethic with an outlook framed by local issues and concerns. (Bennett 2001:68)

As a musical genre stemming from social margins, punk is often perceived by its own members as a suitable refuge for marginalized people who feel discriminated against by the state or abandoned by other institutions. In theory, the punk scene is very tolerant, open and inclusive, but in practice it is much more exclusive:

> Even though punk […] is articulated as resisting the homogeneous and restrictive mainstream, the consequence of the emphasis on an intrinsic difference is the reproduction of punk as deeply homogeneous and restrictive. The combination of inclusion and exclusion means that the marginalized groups in terms of ethnicity, sexuality, and class were largely exempted from subcultural inclusion. (Hannerz 2016:180)

The punk audience par excellence in 1970s Britain was composed of young white men of the working class. Today, white men continue to dominate this scene, despite the reluctance of many punks in recognizing this evidence, lest it shatter the utopian idea that punk operates without borders, structures, and discrimination.

Punk has a contested history, but its present is even more difficult to define. It is something that is embodied, appropriated and utilized by people in highly distinctive ways, while simultaneously offering a common denominator that brings people together. The fluidity between genres, styles, and scenes further complicates the task of tracing punks' boundaries. I acknowledge that my own understanding of punk in Java is but a situated and subjective interpretation that has developed throughout fieldwork, shaped by conversations with friends and daily observations. In this thesis, I try as much as possible to only use the term 'punk' when it specifically refers to a person, a band, an event, a style, or a practice that had already been identified as such by active members of the scene. There will always be disagreement as to what constitutes the *real* punk, and where to draw the line between the punk scene and others. That being said, it would be interminable and frankly unproductive to dwell on this issue of representation.

Underground: To avoid semantic battles over the definition of 'punk', I use the term 'underground' to account for all the overlap of music-based scenes at concerts and other events. I follow Dunn, who defines underground as "spaces that firstly are outside of the formal domain of commercial life, or secondly use aspects of the formal domain for ways they were not intended" (2016:89–90). The imagined realm of the underground constantly opposes the realm of the dominant public, which is commonly referred to as the mainstream. In this sense, it appears to be a counter-hegemonic space. Further, it holds "a long association with subversive movements and expresses the notion of marginal individuals and social groups gathering secretly in full knowledge that their viewpoints and beliefs may contravene 'normal' social practices" (Clements 2017:3).

While some people may self-identify as punks, many prefer not to be categorized since they circulate between many music scenes such as hardcore, metal, grunge, indie rock, doom, rap, etc. Thereby, the term underground is useful when referring more broadly to people or situations marked by a noticeable crossover in music scenes, whether this is represented through fashion, attitudes, artists, or vocabulary. Some shows, for example, do not explicitly target the punk audience but still attract members of punk scenes. On the other hand, events organized by punk collectives in university towns like Yogyakarta draw in heterogeneous crowds, including art students who embrace DIY principles but who don't consider themselves to be punk since they don't listen to the music or fit the aesthetic.

Popular culture: Gary Burns of the PCA (Popular Culture Association) affirms that popular culture is quite simply the culture of the people (Burns 2016:4). I agree with the PCA that popular culture studies are valuable and worthy of academic attention, despite a generally negative connotation. Heryanto explains: "Pop culture's often close and unashamed association with crude profit-making in the entertainment industry has made it difficult for it to gain respectable status among elites of otherwise varied political outlook. For this reason, the pejorative term 'mass culture' has occasionally been used to describe it" (2008:4–5).

While popular culture is a product of industrialized society and its raison d'être revolves around profit and entertainment (Idem: 8), it also offers valuable insight into the daily lives of its consumers. Given their accessibility and omnipresence, forms of popular culture like music, TV, radio, literature, fashion, etc. have long "offered young people a form of political expression. It was not 'mere entertainment', nor was it consumerist propaganda; it was a means of articulating and resolving the contradictions of advanced capitalism" (Robinson et al. 2017:5). Popular culture, with its many contradictory messages, is central in understanding social tensions and public unrest (Idem: 10). In the Javanese context, the study of popular culture is an effective way to understand Islam, "as a lived practice rather than a split between literalist and liberal, urban and rural, pure and hybrid, or any number of other dichotomies" (Weintraub 2011:12). Rather than depreciating religion or other aspects of social life, popular culture is an important form of communication that both shapes and is shaped by its target audience.

Neoliberalism: Neoliberalism is first "a theory of political economic practices" (Frisk and Nynas 2017:59). However, it would be more appropriate to treat it as a dynamic than a theory. It began gaining momentum with the foundation of the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947, led by philosophers and economics such as Milton Friedman, Karl Popper, and Friedrich Hayek. It emerged at the global scale around the turn of the 1980s, and it is commonly associated with both Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of the United Kingdom, and Ronald Reagan, former president of the United States (Martikainen 2017:75). Stemming from Western liberalism, neoliberal dynamics or principles prioritize individual freedom in the interest of free-market capitalism. Therefore, in a neoliberal framework, "[t]here is no idea of a common good in terms of some essential and collectively endorsed moral goal or purpose in society" (Frisk and Nynas 2017:60). This is important for the rest of the thesis because it is a powerful ideology that not only creates paradoxes in both the realms of punk and Islam, but it also plays a role in the materialization of the alternative rhetorical world that is Muslim Punk.

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Throughout the text, I use the word 'Javanese' solely as an adjective in referring to something exclusive to the island of Java. This is important because the term Javanese also refers to an ethnic group: while the Javanese are the dominant ethnic group in Java, there are many other ethnic groups on this island (e.g. the Sundanese, the Betawi, the Madurese, and so forth). Thereby, the term Javanese in this thesis refers specifically to the geographic location or to something Java-related, but not the ethnic group. I will also point out that in my attempt to illustrate 'Java's underground music community', I run the risk of homogenizing it. I found it important to visit cities in West, Central, and East Java to diversify my view of the punk phenomenon across the island. However, I do not have sufficient space to unpack all the differences between the cities. That being said, participants referenced in the thesis are identified with their city of residence (see Table 1 in Appendix A).

I use the term 'Islamic' (not Islam*ist*) in referring to matters related to the doctrine of Islam. I also choose to use the term 'conservative' primarily to describe the ideological shift in Java and within the underground music scene because: a) it is a recurring term in literature, and b) it is more open-ended and arguably more fitting than the terms radical or fundamentalist. I refrain from using the terms radical or fundamentalist (unless I am citing authors or paraphrasing my participants) because these terms are much more politically charged—especially in the Muslim context.

Further, I wish to point out that the left-right dichotomy elucidated in this thesis is used to exemplify an ideological shift and to attribute certain patterns of behaviours with certain groups. However, I do not mean to portray individuals strictly as left-leaning or right-leaning without considering the nuances between these categories nor without acknowledging the problematic nature of these terms. During the New Order regime in Indonesia[1] from 1966 to 1998, the state amplified the figures of the communist, an example of extreme left (*ekstrim kiri*), and the Islamic

[1] The New Order (*Orde Baru* in Indonesian) is the name used to refer to President Suharto's regime. It evokes a contrast with the rule of the previous president, Sukarno, termed "Old Order".

group, an example of extreme right (*ekstrim kanan*), to help position themselves in the centre (Danusiri 2014:348). Therefore, this extreme left-right dichotomy was historically exploited by Suharto as a political tool to empower his regime.

Lastly, I must present the differences between three similar terms that are frequently used throughout the thesis: Muslim Punk, Punk Muslim, and Muslim punk(s). **Muslim Punk** refers to the overall movement of conservative Muslim punks in Java (and more broadly in Indonesia). Adherents to the Muslim Punk movement claim an identity that is explicitly Islamic while retaining an affiliation to punk, which is different than a **Muslim punk**, i.e. a punk who is culturally or religiously Muslim but does not affiliate with the aforementioned label. Within Java's underground community, there are many Muslim punks, but only a portion of them are affiliated with the specific Muslim Punk movement. There is also **Punk Muslim**, which is the name of a specific group belonging to the larger Muslim Punk trend. Punk Muslim was founded in Surabaya by Mas Aik, a former punk who is very influential in the local community, and it is arguably the most well-known (and widely branded) collective of the larger Muslim Punk movement.

ii. Research Questions

While some express that 'punk rock is a religion' and others that 'religion is a pop culture', we are faced with the difficult—and perhaps impossible—task of deconstructing what these terms and identity constructs mean for different people in different contexts. Rather than merely contrasting and comparing the realms of 'punk' and 'Islam' in the Javanese context, I ask the following questions:

How do different generations of Javanese punks articulate the perceived individualism of punk with the perceived normativity of Islam? How are Java's punks responding to the effects of the

Islamic Revival[2], to rising global conservatism, and to transnational Islam? What new trends have emerged from the underground music scene in reaction to, or in adaptation with global shifts and local movements? At the nexus of popular culture, piety, and neoliberal dynamics, what does Muslim Punk reveal about the state of Islamic identity in Java?

I propose to accomplish this by analyzing the perspectives and experiences of Java's punks across different generations, illustrating: a) the ideological shift that has led to the emergence of Muslim Punk; b) hijrah[3] as a pious alternative for aging punks; c) the expansion of the Islamic market into the underground community.

iii. Justification

The study of popular culture is valuable to academia because it provides an alternative lens through which to study human behaviour, social dynamics and cultural phenomena. Subcultural activity not only reflects trends and shifts in society, but it also offers an accessible and relatable way to explain rather abstract concepts. Scenes and alternative lifestyles impact on and are impacted by socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious dimensions. I contend that this approach is salient in the study of religion because it offers us a direct pathway into the daily lives of popular culture agents. Since forms of popular culture are constantly evolving, this kind of research accords considerable significance to its immediate temporal and spatial environment.

> Popular culture must […] be viewed as constituting an important area of investigation when aiming to make sense of how contemporary religion is experienced, practised, and lived. This principal focus on the 'contemporary' should not, however, distract us from

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[2] The Islamic Revival broadly refers to the global wave of Islamic resurgence beginning in the 1970s.

[3] Hijrah is the Arabic word for migration. In the Islamic context, it refers to a physical or moral journey, departing from an impure place or lifestyle to a physical abode of Islam or a life revolving around Islamic devotion.

> acknowledging the historically close relationship that has always existed between religion and broader particular cultural climates at different points in time. (Moberg and Granholm 2017:105)

In studying religion through popular culture, we are attending to the adaptability, resourcefulness and cognizance of religious actors. Music and art can provide a "non-dogmatic, empathic, embodied, and imaginative space for encountering the other, […] a scene for understanding and solidarity beyond the conventional lines of faith" (Illman 2012:43). In the Indonesian context, the focus on popular culture is highly pertinent because it reflects the successful interaction between Islam and consumerist principles since the Islamic Revival. In the last two decades, beginning with the post-Suharto reform era, "[p]opular forms of expression such as music, films, literature and fashion shape the image of a 'modern' Islam" (Lücking 2014:130–131). This research project demonstrates how conservative ideologies are becoming more commonly enmeshed in alternative scenes. It reminds us, furthermore, of the subtle yet immensely influential power of merchandizing, branding, and consumer culture. It yields patterns to help us better understand the hijrah phenomenon, while also documenting the response of Javanese punks to the current political climate.

My primary goal with this research project is to demystify Western tropes about Islam and demonstrate that religion can—and often does—reflect modernity, innovation, and versatility. The Muslim Punk phenomenon is only one case to substantiate this. Another goal is to amplify the voices of members of the punk community who are often misunderstood by mainstream society. Punks can encounter discrimination in various forms: difficulty obtaining employment or accessing higher education, targeted by police, stigmatized by local authorities, etc. Despite the fluid and subjective nature of punk music, the scene remains highly relevant for our understanding of contemporary youth (Bennett 2001:72). The fact that I chose to study punk and Islam means that I found something contradictory and arguably sensational about the pairing: I cannot guarantee that I have not fallen into the same trap of essentialization and exoticism for which Western anthropologists are often criticized. However, this thesis can be a departure point to deconstruct popular discourses on Islam and punk respectively, broadening perceptions of what it means to be Muslim and be punk.

iv. Overview

Chapter 1 presents both the research context and the theoretical framework that will inform the rest of the thesis. Here I offer first a concise history of Java and explain some of the particularities of Javanese Islam. Next, I discuss the arrival of punk in Java and describe some of its noteworthy characteristics. I then briefly detail the conservative turn among some of Java's punks and close this section with remarks on the structures of inclusion/exclusion within punk communities. Subsequently, I introduce my theoretical framework and the conceptual tools that will later orient my analysis.

Chapter 2 focuses on methodology. In chronological order, it illustrates the different steps that I followed before, during and after fieldwork. I start by explaining how the project was developed and how I prepared for my three-month trip through Java. Next, I detail the multiple aspects of the data collection procedure: I include here a travel itinerary, an overview of my daily activities, and an introduction to the research participants. Thereafter, I clarify how I treated my research data upon returning from the field. To conclude, I offer some ethical reflections and acknowledgments regarding my position as a Western female researcher.

Chapter 3 presents the first part of my data and analysis. I share the opinions and experiences of my participants, focusing on the issue of political engagement among punks. Throughout the sections, I highlight the emergence of the conservative Muslim Punk movement by contrasting the viewpoints of punks across different generations and comparing the patterns of punks with different ideological affiliations. The data elucidates a new purpose among conservative politico-punks, which I analyze by drawing on the concepts of transnational Islam and the Islamic market.

Chapter 4 presents the second part of my data and analysis, focusing here on religious outlooks among different punks. I first offer a range of perspectives concerning piety, and then address

the emergence of an Alternative Brotherhood among conservative punk scenes. I use examples from my field data and from other sources to argue that this brotherhood embodies the reconciliation between punk and piety through DIY ethos and Islamic pop icons. Next, I deconstruct the Punk Hijrah trend and propose that it be viewed as more than just a matter of religious reorientation.

Chapter 5 offers some final remarks on the many paradoxes that the Muslim Punk movement elicits. For example, it appears to simultaneously reject and embrace Western imports, neoliberalism, and individualism. Moreover, it evokes important questions about the purpose of punk, prompting a reassessment of the long-standing idea that punk is explicitly counter-hegemonic. I propose some preliminary ideas to reflect upon these questions.

In the conclusion, I summarize the premises and outcomes of the thesis. Next, I briefly reiterate the relevance of this study, and its major limits due to insufficient data. In sum, I return on the key points of the text and round off the section with a final closing statement on the subject.

Chapter 1: Research Context

In this chapter, I will briefly present the context of my research, notably the historical, political, economic and religious dimensions in Java that create a cultural and institutional framework within which people lead their lives. I begin with a historical overview of Java, the most populous island of the Indonesian archipelago and the site of my field research. Second, I will discuss the particularities of *Islam Jawa*, a rich and complex form of Islamic practice that distinguishes itself from orthodox Islamic doctrine elsewhere. Third, I will situate the arrival of punk as a cultural field and as a popular fad with social overtones in Indonesia in the 1990s, while considering how the aforementioned historical, political, economic and religious factors shaped its reception among youths.

Beyond the initial wave of punk in Indonesia, the ideology, lifestyle and aesthetics of punk were adopted to become a thriving scene among other newly emerging underground music genres. Owing to the central role that punk occupies in this thesis, I will take the time in this section to elaborate on a few aspects of Indonesian punk that are relevant for context. In the fourth section, I present my conceptual framework, which will be the primary backdrop against which I will conduct my analysis in subsequent chapters. I will advance the conceptual tools that are most useful in structuring the arguments that I put forth, while also positioning myself in relation to other scholars of the discipline.

1.1 Brief History of Java

As a friend explained to me over dinner one night in Kemang (South Jakarta), social life in Java is regulated by two factors: familial values and religious values. The participation in communal life is key in embodying collective virtues, and it is considered expressly Javanese (Mulder 1989: 40, 92). Social life is further organized around the idea of a hierarchized moral

order in which ‘superiors’ are conferred a legitimacy and authority over ‘inferiors’ (Idem: 44). Such a structure is exemplified not only in the parent-child relationship but also in the teacher-student relationship, relevant both in pedagogic and religious contexts. Public dissent and open expressions of disrespect towards order, institutions and authority are considered typically ‘un-Javanese’ behaviours (Idem: 47). *Adat* (custom) is recognized by all and practiced by most; it instills holistic moral order among adherents of Javanese society (Headley 2004:429). As the central island of the Indonesian archipelago, Java was subjected to many forms of authoritarian and colonial rule over centuries. These inevitably shaped the character of daily social life, framed institutionally enforced codes of conduct, and produced forms of overt and covert rebellion that developed throughout different generations, some of which still echo today.

Until 1500, the Hindo-Buddhist kingdom Majapahit dominated Java, and was succeeded by the Islamic kingdom of Mataram, which lasted until the 1700s (Laksana 2014:30). Rather than constituting a rupture between religious currents, the Buddhist and Hindu influences fused to form a kind of Javano-Islamic practice. The latter, called Islam Jawa or Islam Nusantara[4] (Indonesian Islam), has a syncretic and mystical character, and ensures continuity between the two kingdoms. I will expand on the character of Javanese Islam in the following section.

The Indonesian archipelago as a whole was subjected to Dutch colonial rule from the early 1800s until 1949. During this period, religious practices and the perception of piety underwent transformations, some of which are still noticeable today. The presence of capitalist modernity in Indonesia had a major impact on the production, function, and expression of ritual arts. Affected by this modern ethos, ritual forms underwent a process of secularization, rationalization and standardization (Cohen 2016: 59, 117). In addition to introducing a range of novelties to Indonesians that has certainly contributed to the hybridization of many beliefs and

[4] Nusantara is the Javanese term for archipelago and refers, in the Indonesian context, to the Indonesian archipelago, though it is also used in Malay.

practices, the colonial presence has also had the effect of strengthening local pride and intensifying the idea of cultural boundaries among certain individuals.

Between 1942 and 1945, during the Second World War, Japan occupied the Indonesian archipelago. Several traditional practices which had been banned or had disappeared under Dutch colonialism reemerged fervently under the Japanese occupation (Idem: 187). One of the political strategies used by the Japanese was to restore Asian essence to Indonesian ritual practices. Later, in 1949, Indonesia officially proclaimed independence. Given the break with the Western world under Japanese rule, President Sukarno, the country's first president, implemented a plan to 'catch up' to global powerhouses and restore a proud image of Indonesia (Idem: 240). Between 1966 and 1998, President Suharto's New Order regime took over, during which the modernization of the country was of great importance. In 1998, following the Asian economic crisis, the dictatorship of Suharto was overthrown by a vast reform movement led by student activists. 1998 also marked the beginning of the reform era, known as Reformasi, which went hand in hand with a contemporary democratization movement seeking to promote democracy and human rights across Indonesia (Brenner 2011:478).

> Indonesia, at the crossroads between continental Asia, Australia, and the Western Pacific, in a region as culturally motley as it is ethnically miscellaneous, found itself less torn by the claims of neighbours upon its national loyalties than beset by virtually every major ideological force at play in the world: Communism, Soviet and Chinese; Islamism, radical and accommodative; Third World nationalism; Japanese neo-mercantilism. (Geertz 1995:93)

In this passage, Geertz remarks upon the archipelago's complicated history with authoritarianism, and the centuries of political instability that Indonesians have endured. From colonialism to Japanese occupation and communism to dictatorship, the authoritarian modes of governance in Indonesia have everything to do with the current—and ongoing—problem of nation building. Based on his observations, Indonesian society resembles an assemblage of people and status groups loosely connected by some institutions, rather than an integrated national community (Geertz 1992:57). Although Reformasi is considered the beginning of the

‘post-authoritarian’ era, long-standing political and tyrannical leadership have left a serious mark on Indonesian history. The crisis of Indonesian identity is not easily resolved: appointing religion to national identity, however, has proved effective in providing a point of unification to Indonesians across significant geographic, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries.

Contemporary Indonesia was deeply marked by the Islamic revival of the 1970s (Howell 2001:701). Since then, observance of religious laws in Java has increased in value and is strongly associated with elitism (Hasan 2009:247). As Indonesia was recovering from the economic and political crisis of the 90s, popular culture boomed at an unprecedented rate (Heryanto 2008:5). In fact, the rapid expansion of popular culture in Indonesia coincides with the Islamic revival. Over the last few decades, forms of mass media supporting and depicting Islam, largely targeting urbanized youths, have played a key role in Islamization (Weintraub 2011:4).

The New Order regime fostered the emergence of new political parties, schools, and Sharia banks, thus amplifying the role of Islamic institutions despite Suharto’s efforts to stifle political Islam (Lapidus 2014:744). During this period, Islam became more politically institutionalized, symbolically omnipresent and ideologically pluralistic (Weintraub 2011:4). As Indonesia became more integrated into the world economy in the 1990s, the influence of transnational Islam increased: books, leaflets and cassettes from the Middle East penetrated Indonesia, conveying new and different ideas about what constitutes appropriate Muslim behaviour (Lapidus 2014:744; Rinaldo 2008:26).

The emergence of the ‘new’ Muslim came in parallel with the early consolidation of a new bourgeois class between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s (Heryanto 2008:14). With its own social aspirations, this new group of middle-class Muslims fuels what one could call ‘Islamic chic’: a cosmopolitan lifestyle characterized by new media and consumerism that advocates Muslim piety (Barendregt 2006:10). This is how an Islamic pop culture developed in Indonesia, where Islam has become part of the extensive consumer culture and offers not only a marker of

identity but also a sign of social status and political affiliation (Hasan 2009:231). The ongoing expansion and widespread popularity of an Islamic marketplace in Java (and in many other parts of Indonesia) will be key in understanding the bridge between punk and Islam.

1.2 Islam Jawa

Indonesia is home to approximately 235 million Muslims, the largest population globally (Menchik 2016:19). Several denominations of Islam are practiced across the myriad islands of the archipelago; Indonesian Islam is far from monolithic in terms of interpretation and practice of faith (Ramage 1995:16). The most common distinction that is made in literature to categorize Islamic faith in Indonesia is between modernist and traditionalist Islam. Although this classification may be overly simplistic, it is necessary to acknowledge these categories and the debate that they generate. Two major Muslim organizations embody this divide: Muhammadiyah, the modernist organization founded in 1912 in Yogyakarta, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the traditionalist organization established in 1926 in Surabaya as a response to the modernist movement (Azra 2013: 71; Solahudin 2013:25–26).

> The most critical divide was that between 'old group' (*kaum tua*) traditionalists committed to the study of the Islamic sciences and jurisprudence by way of classical commentaries […] and 'new group' (*kaum muda*) reformists or 'modernists', who downplayed classical commentaries in favour of a scripturalist return to the Quran and traditions of the Prophet (*Sunna*). The traditionalists tended to be more accommodating of local customs (*adat*) and ritual festivity than were the modernists […]. (Hefner 2018:10)

Moreover, Muslims of the traditionalist group accept rituals and practices of previous generations while modernists tend to view these as prohibited *bid'ah* (inventions). Traditionally, Javanese experts and figures of authority of Islam, such as the *Kyai*[5], encouraged ritualistic practices that the modernists forbade (Dhofier 2014:168–169). Some Javanese Muslims are

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[5] The Kyai are leaders of Islamic schools called pesantren.

known to engage in the tradition of the *Wali Songo* (Nine Saints) pilgrimage, which leads them to the various tombs and shrines of revered Islamic saints across the island (Laksana 2014; Quinn 2008), a practice that is controversial amid more orthodox adherents of Islam. Many scholars characterize traditionalist Islam as Sufi, since Sufism played a key role in the initial Islamization of the archipelago and became strongly bound in Indonesian tradition (Bisri and Nadjib 2013: 161; Dhofier 2014:xix). Additionally, traditionalists are seen as more tolerant towards women's inclusion in the public sphere (Rasmussen 2010: 239) and more lenient towards religious pluralism (Bisri and Nadjib 2013: 172). As seen in Figure 1 below, traditional Islam is most common in Java, whereas modernist Islam is dominant on the islands of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Lombok, Flores, etc.

Figure 1. Map of religions across Indonesia, Marshmir, https://commons.wikimedia.org/, 2011.

Until the 1980s, the majority of Muslims living on the island of Java subscribed to this traditionalist form of Islam, characterized by "a spiritualistic blend of Javanese traditions" (Smith-Hefner 2007:390). This syncretistic and mystical practice of Islam, as I mentioned earlier, is often referred to as Islam Jawa (Lücking 2014:134) or Islam Nusantara, depending on

the context. However, due in large part to globalization and the circulation of transnational Islam, Indonesia has been increasingly susceptible to outside influences promoting rigorous purification of faith and more orthodox practice, such as Salafist ideology (Hasan 2018:426). Given its large population of Muslim adherents, the Indonesian archipelago has been of great interest to Arab nations, particularly Saudi Arabia (Idem: 248). The interrelationship between Indonesia and the Middle East is one that merits our attention: "While the Middle East is regarded as the 'centre of Islam', sub-Saharan Africa and Asia are regarded as the 'Islamic periphery'" (Lücking 2014:132). Thus, there is a constant tension between what is considered adequate Muslim behaviour, especially when such ideas are advocated by authorities hailing from the Middle East.

It is commonly argued that much of the diaspora of Middle Eastern Muslims can claim moral authority because they originate from the birthplace of Islam. Furthermore, some scholars of Islam engage in the discourse that the Javanese are inferior Muslims due to their perceived unconventional and unorthodox practices (Burhani 2013: 25; Dhofier 2014: 179). Even among key Indonesian scholars, there is ongoing debate about the authenticity of Indonesian Islam in comparison to 'High Islam' of the Arabian Peninsula. Adburrahman Wahid, a noteworthy spokesperson for traditional Islam as former president of Indonesia, argues that Indonesian Islam reflects a positive cosmopolitan attitude and supports the incorporation of traditional culture in Islamic practice. Meanwhile, Muslim intellectual Nurcholish Madjid suggests that Indonesian Islam is weak compared to other countries: he refers to it as 'Islam Pinggiran' meaning that it is not only geographically peripheral, but that its progress is also marginal (Burhani 2013: 28, 41–43). The growing influence of orthodox practice coming from the Middle East will be important to keep in mind when considering the recent rise of conservatism among Java's punk scenes.

Religion and politics are inextricably linked in the Indonesian context, making it impossible to address the matter of national politics without talking about Islam. In theory, the Indonesian

archipelago is neither religious nor secular. The state follows the philosophy of Pancasila[6], which stipulates belief in a singular God along with ideals of social justice and harmony (Rinaldo 2008:26). In the constitution of the republic, the Pancasila ideology was enshrined as the symbol of the New Order (Lapidus 2014:741). It does not include any direct reference to Islam and rather emphasizes secular concepts. In practice, however, there is clear favoritism when it comes to religion, and this is especially noteworthy in the political realm. Unsurprisingly, the role of president in a country with a vast Muslim majority is likely—perhaps guaranteed—to be filled by a Muslim (Menchik and Trost 2018:402). Although the Pancasila ideology stipulates that the state will not prioritize any faith over another, it is stated in Article 2 of a 1965 law that, "beliefs in the recognized religions and a single God are superior to mystical or syncretic faiths" (Menchik 2016:162), thus reinforcing the pre-eminence of monotheistic religions.

Suharto's New Order was perceived by many as anti-Islamic (Solahudin 2013:6) and contributed to a yearning among Indonesian Muslims to reaffirm and reclaim their religious identity in the public sphere. Suharto sought to marginalize political Islam in the interest of foreign policy (Hoesterey 2018:406) and discouraged public expressions of piety (Smith-Hefner 2007:392). The occultation of Islam during the New Order plays a significant role in the success of political Islam from the end of his regime until today. Religion is not only politicized, but also regulated by the state. A palpable example is the administrative obligation to have one's religious affiliation publicly displayed on their national identity card. Citizens must choose from a list of six officially recognized religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism (note that atheism, agnosticism and Judaism are not options). A partial explanation for this is that the public subscription to one of the aforementioned religions

[6] Pancasila is the state ideology in Indonesia. It is based on five principles: belief in God, nationalism, humanitarianism, democracy, and social justice.

would allegedly negate one's affiliation to communist ideology[7] (Mulder 1989:114). As many of my research participants suggested, this tactic is another method by which the state can politicize religion, manage its citizens, and maintain a certain level of control over the politics of identity.

In sum, religion occupies a central position in all aspects of social life in Indonesia. It is inextricable from the political realm and plays an important role in shaping the moral order. Furthermore, it simultaneously breaks down and erects borders between Muslims, whether they be Javanese, Indonesian or originating from other parts of the world. The particularities of Indonesian Islam form the backdrop against which Java's Muslims situate themselves amid their peers and in relation to popular discourses of transnational Islam. It is part and parcel of national politics, interacts actively with popular culture, and develops alongside neoliberal ideologies.

1.3 *Punk belum mati di sini*! (Punk's not dead here yet!)

While Western pundits repeatedly proclaim that punk is dead, Indonesia's thriving punk communities have been a loud reminder that punk is still alive. Over the following paragraphs, I analyze the arrival of punk to Indonesia and how punk culture has developed in Java, considering particularly the ideological shift that has polarized the scene and the way punks are perceived by the dominant public. It is important to stress the particularities of Java's punk communities, since they are far from homogeneous.

[7] According to Mulder (1989:114), the state-enforced practice of displaying one's faith on identity papers became mandatory after the 1965 coup events, in which case communism was considered to be an outstanding national threat. The practice has since remained mandatory.

1.3.1 The Arrival of Punk: A Western Import with Political Purpose

Thanks to globalization, technological progress, and modernization efforts sustained by presidents Sukarno and Suharto, Western popular music infiltrated Indonesian society throughout the second half of the 20th century. Punk, however, did not arrive until the 1990s.

During the last decade of President Suharto's New Order regime, independence became strongly associated with expressions of juvenile rebellion against the state (Martin-Iverson 2016:106). Having endured the Dutch colonial rule, the Japanese occupation and the dictatorship of Suharto, it was unsurprising that youth of the nation came to distrust forms of authority and aspired for a reversal of traditional structures (Cohen 2016:238). Youths played an instrumental role in the struggle for independence in the 1940s: half a century later, they put themselves at the frontline of change again, urging political and economic reform (Budiman et al. 2012:51). Punk music entered Indonesian society during the 1990s as the reform grew more strident, thanks in part to a digital revolution that facilitated both music consumption and production (Mangoenkoesoemo 2017). This was initially catalyzed by exposure to commercially successful Western bands such as Green Day and the Offspring (Wallach 2008:99). Punk was utilized as a platform of empowerment by many Indonesian youths involved in the struggle against Suharto, whose regime was eventually toppled by students—some of which were specifically involved with politically engaged punk communities (Dunn 2016:84). Voices from the underground fearlessly spoke out about the crimes of the New Order regime through music (Idem: 321). While this tumultuous period also gave birth to other scenes, punk served as a particularly effective means to process and boldly respond to the tensions in the immediate socio-political environment (Pickles 2007:223). In a society where a repressive institutional force has long dominated and influenced the construction of identity, participation in the punk scene could be interpreted as a pragmatic way to regain control over oneself, the shaping of one's identity, and the construction of one's own symbolic universe.

The expanding punk scene offered not only an opportunity for solidarity and musical creativity but notably for activism spurred by a renewed consciousness. This was largely attributed to a newfound anti-establishment mindset that "had its roots in 'subversive' left ideologies which ranged from socialism to anarchism" (Saefullah 2017:265). Urban youths started to build their own grassroots networks of musicians while also creating zines and setting up independent record companies, concurring with punk principles (Wallach 2008:99). Some scenes went further, however, by establishing explicitly political collectives and organizations, feeding off the momentum of the reform movement. At the end of the 1990s, the Anti-Fascist Front (FAF) was created in Bandung as the first punk collective with a political agenda. They were allied alongside a plethora of left-wing collectives in the Anti-Fascist Network (JAFNUS), a collaboration of activist punk groups hailing from urban milieus across Java (Pickles 2007:239–240; Saefullah 2017:266). This was arguably the height of politico-punk activism in Java, as many groups quickly became disengaged from political militancy before the turn of the century.

1.3.2 Embodying DIY: Aesthetics, Participatory Culture & Collectives

> Becoming part of the scene requires both an invitation and knowledge of the regulation of dress, appearance, action, and the foreground script of subcultural development. The sacred can only be reached through hard work, subordination to the rules, and a respect of the protective measures regarding the scene. (Hannerz 2016:169)

Which values are core to being punk? What is distinct to Java's punk scene that distinguishes it from similar movements in the West? In this section, I aim to provide some insight on the punk codes and practices that help structure scenes and often serve as a reference point for authenticity. Although punks tend to revel in the concept of freedom and anti-structure, groups tend to enforce rules and codes to a certain degree in order to maintain their existence: punks need to put up walls in order to retain a distance from the mainstream and preserve their

integrity.[8] Thus, there are some elements that all or most punks in a given scene will deem fundamental in order to claim affiliation with this identity.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY), notably, is the punk scene's principal ideological pillar. It stems from the working-class roots of the genre and is organized around ideas of anti-establishment, autonomy, rejection of mainstream society, and nonconformity. I will attempt here to trace the embodiment of DIY by Java's punks as displayed through aesthetics, participatory culture, and the formation of collectives.

Style is arguably the most effective way to publicly display one's affiliation to punk and its values, especially to mainstream onlookers. According to Wallach, some Indonesian punks aspire to conserve punk as a kind of living tradition by transposing elements of Brit-punk fashion onto their style (2008:111). In punk spaces, it is common to spot members adorning emblematic symbols of British punk: military boots, leather or denim jackets, plaid trousers, popular band logos (e.g. The Sex Pistols, The Ramones), studded belts, and so forth. They complete the look with a typical punk hairstyle, either tinted in bright colours or shaved into a mohawk. Instead of recontextualizing the symbols crafted by British punk, it is more common to see punks appropriating them to avoid stripping their authentic potential. Dunn argues that "being DIY punk has little to do with what you are wearing or listening to and everything with how you choose to interact with the world around you" (2016:12), but this statement overlooks the potential of utilizing DIY methods in the fashioning of punk styles.

On the contrary, I propose that the way one looks *does* precisely reflect *how* a person chooses to interact with the world, as it publicly showcases the conscious decisions that were made by choosing specific apparel and accessories over others, substantiating their symbolic power. Among scenes, style functions as an active signifying practice (Hebdige 1979). The abundance of DIY merchandise that circulates among Java's underground networks attests to this.

[8] Erik Hannerz explains the punk paradox beautifully in his 2016 book "Performing Punk". I highly recommend his work for further insight on the topic.

Conscious fashion choices bespeak not only of individual agency, but they also advertise the extent to which punks support 'meaningful' DIY producers over 'shallow' commercial ones. Whether punks admit it or not, aesthetics play a considerable role in the presentation of oneself to their peers, which could be likened to the concept of performance in Goffman's sense[9]. Additionally, aesthetics has a powerful capacity for shock value; fashion may be the most conspicuous method to demarcate oneself from the mainstream and to provoke a swift sense of intimidation or disgust amid members of the non-punk dominant public. In this sense, style and aesthetics are far from superficial; they are laden with symbolic potential.

> In a world where media employ the rhetoric of democratic 'choice' but are in fact owned by only a handful of multinational conglomerates, the most subversive element of punk may be that its methods of production give mavericks and heretics a chance to scream from the margins of popular culture. (Moore 2007:468)

Beyond style, DIY is embodied through methods of production, granting virtually anyone the chance to become a producer of cultural goods. Various forms of participatory culture are utilized among punk communities, offering an occasion for unheard voices to be broadcast. These may include radio shows, blogs, or podcasts, but the most prevailing form in punk is the zine (see Figure 2). Smaller and lighter than a magazine, the paper zine appears as the ideal vehicle to circulate information, opinions, and artistic contributions, while also remaining cost-effective—and thus sustainable—for punks. They are often found in punk spaces, locales such as bars, independent coffee shops, record stores and venues. For youths or marginalized groups faced with overarching oppressive forces, zines can be perceived as tools for self-empowerment: "Zines challenge the accepted order by providing material examples of alternative ways of thinking and being" (Dunn 2016:170). They have been particularly effective among networks of punk women whose thoughts and creative outputs have historically been sidelined by the male majority (Schilt and Zobl 2008:189). Individuals and groups who create and circulate zines

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[9] Goffman defines performance as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (Goffman 1956:8). The presentation of oneself, in this sense, is a conscious performative effort to control the impression of others.

through DIY methods consequently transform themselves from passive consumers into engaged cultural producers (Dunn 2016:196).

Figure 2. **Left:** Local zines available to read at the Habitat Café & Library in Malang, **Right:** Collection of Sisa Kertas zines from Sidoarjo. Pictures by author, June & July 2018.

While DIY may stipulate individualism in its very appellation, Java's punks place high importance on the collective aspect of the punk scene. Considering widespread social inequalities, hostility towards the state and mistrust of institutions, local scenes are highly community-oriented. The infrastructure of the punk scene provides alienated youths a space for socialization that is a better alternative than fundamentalist religion or criminal gang membership (Wallach 2008:113)—although these categories may in fact overlap. The collectivist ethos that fuels local punk scenes in Java is generally positive, but I suggest that it can also create increased peer pressure and even a gang mentality among youths. This tight-knit and co-dependent structure of a punk community can provoke negative effects such as increased deviant behaviour. Based on my own findings, this is more common among street punks whose only network is their punk community.

Hannerz explains: “Collective work creates a collective space based on its separate rules that sets it apart from the mainstream. To protect and serve the scene is to show commitment to a higher cause. It is thus rather doing-it-*ourselves* than *yourself* that DIY points to in relation to this background.” (2016:127) I will use the example of veteran punk band Marjinal to illustrate this point. Since their beginnings as a band over 20 years ago, Marjinal has worked to find accessible ways in which to benefit their community while progressively de-stigmatizing negative conceptions of punk culture in their neighbourhood. Their grassroots collective, Taring Babi, offers free workshops such as woodworking or silkscreen printing to members of the community and passes on practical skills such as busking to street kids, thus inciting them to live more autonomously (Dunn 2016: 217; Fiscella 2012: 265). By prioritizing the needs of the community over those of the individual, Marjinal effectively transforms the principle of ‘Do-It-Yourself’ into ‘Do-It-Together’. In fact, the band has recently incorporated DIT into their vocabulary[10], thus reconfiguring the core value of punk to suit a more collectivist approach.

DIY, in sum, is embodied and practiced in various ways among adherents to punk. Despite its evolution over time, it appears that the punk scene continues to revolve around this principle. While perceptions of style, participatory culture and collective engagement certainly diverge from one context to another, DIY remains central.

1.3.3 Conservative Punks: The Recent Shift from Left to Right

Underground music scenes tend to be perceived as safe havens from institutional pressures and constraints. This is part of the reason why we might be inclined to oppose the categories of punk and religion. This idea has been invalidated time and time again through the consolidation of music scenes that incorporate religious symbolism, such as the vast category

[10] Marjinal has been using the DIT hashtag (#DoItTogether, #DIT) on social media since 2017.

of Christian metal, and the controversial Taqwacore movement[11]. In Java, the vast majority of punks identify as Muslims—whether religiously or culturally—but this does not mean their scene is inherently 'Islamic'.

> In 'the West' punk opposes religion, even if religion is far less concerned with punk. In Indonesia the 'opposition' flows predominantly in the other direction, with religious groups actively repressing punks, while punks seek to maintain affiliation to a religious identity or culture. Any sense of an expected or 'ordinary' relationship between punk and religion completely breaks down. (Donaghey 2018:165)

Indeed, one of the justifications used by mainstream society—particularly religious groups as Donaghey expresses above—to reject punks is on account of their perceived incompatibility with religion. I will draw upon this aspect in the following section. What I am more interested in detailing here is the way in which some of Java's punks have, on the contrary, succeeded in reconciling piety and underground culture.

A number of internal and external factors have contributed to an increase of religious intent within the underground world. As I mentioned earlier, punk initially held an explicitly political purpose for Java's engaged youths. However, political activism declined considerably after the 2000s due to discontent with the new political system, punk's problematic affiliation with criminal activity, and growing apathy towards the scene (Pickles 2007:241). Alongside personal motivations, the ongoing reverberations of the Islamic revival and the global spread of conservatism, punk has appeared to gain a new direction for some of its members. But why now? Saefullah explains that religious identity was "irrelevant in the context of the anti-authoritarian struggle" (2017:264).

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[11] Taqwacore is a 'Muslim punk' scene which emerged around 2004 in the United States. It gained valuable attention in the media until the 2010s and then declined. This scene was meant to offer a space for people who did not fit in with the traditions of their conservative background but who also felt alienated by mainstream American society and found a voice for their marginal position through punk music.

We are now seeing the principle of DIY applied in a new context, one in which conservative Muslim groups are bridging the gap between youth cultures and a particular standard of pious practice: this will be explained in the analysis. This shift to conservative punk is embodied in the movement I term **Muslim Punk** through groups such as Punkajian, Punk Muslim, Punk Hijrah, Hijra Core, etc. These groups draw close similarities with the One Finger Movement, an underground group affiliated with the metal scene that strongly advocates Islam to its members. These groups offer services and support to youths in order to promote a more rigorous enforcement of Islamic practice in their daily lives, all the while seeking to destigmatize the image of punk in the eyes of the dominant public. These community-based movements have gained valuable traction and popularity among youths through merchandizing and commercialization. To be clear, the emergence of these groups does not signify that they are turning away from politics; activism remains an important practice for many members of the underground scene, and religion continues to be inherently politicized in the Indonesian context. What is important to note, however, is the shift from a progressive leftist ideology to one that is predominantly right-leaning (Saefullah 2018). I will expand on this topic in subsequent sections of my thesis.

1.3.4 Punks as Social Outcasts & Outcasts Within Punk

Elements of punk fashion and lifestyle represent something that is not only foreign to Indonesian culture, given that punk is a Western import, but they also symbolize a practice that undermines the longstanding values of order and conformity implemented to regulate social life. In this sense, punk is “immediately controversial” (Pickles 2007:230). On the one hand, punk lifestyle bears the ‘sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll’ slogan that is widely perceived as incongruous with Islam. On the other hand, punk aesthetic incorporates body modifications such as tattoos and piercings, which have a profound affiliation with criminality across Indonesia. Through displaying such practices, punk members further distance themselves from the dominant public and establish themselves as a marginal ‘Other’. Beyond social stigma, however, “[b]eing punk

is *officially* recognized as transgressive" (Donaghey 2018:155), which has led to legal altercations with the state and fundamentalist religious groups, such as the FPI (*Front Pembela Islam,* Islamic Defenders Front). Anti-punk raids have been documented in different parts of Indonesia, the most notable case occurring in Banda Aceh in 2011, though there have also been incidents in the cities of Bandung and Yogyakarta.

One of the most brazen punk practices that contributes to the scene's marginal image is the consumption of alcohol. Despite a country-wide ban on the sale of alcohol in 2015, punks come up with a number of alternative methods to ensure there is always a generous supply of it present during shows and other scene-related events. The most popular method is making DIY liquor such as *arak*, *mili*, and *intisari* through a homemade fermentation process of local tropical fruits. These drinks, which resemble hard liquor, are passed around and consumed before, during, and after concerts. Though small communities of straight-edge punks[12] do exist, and some individuals abstain from drinking for personal reasons, the majority of people that I encountered at events across Java would regularly consume alcohol, and they often did so to a point of considerable intoxication. Since drinking is seen by many to be a staple component of punk practice, intoxication is an almost omnipresent reality in punk spaces.

The underground space is seen not only as a shelter from the mainstream but also as a refuge from the stratification of social life: "Money and education are not barriers" (Pickles 2000). While the punk scene is often advocated by its own members as an inclusive and tolerant community, open to all misfits and rejects of mainstream society, there are forces at play that create outcasts from within punk circles.

> Subcultures are typically male-dominated and masculinist, revolving around masculine concerns, interests, and norms, glorifying traits commonly associated with maleness such

[12] Straight edge means the rejection of alcohol, drugs, and casual sex. It began as a movement in the United States as a response to the reckless behaviour of intoxicated punks. It is often affiliated with other activist causes, such as animal rights.

> as toughness, daring, and delinquency while denigrating everything *feminine*. (Haenfler 2012:124)

Women continue to suffer forms of discrimination, sexual harassment and judgment from their male peers within the punk scene and throughout various spaces of the underground music community more broadly. This is not to say that women are absent from Java's punk scene: on the contrary, there are various examples of female punk musicians, tattoo artists, zine makers and mosh-pit[13] warriors, not to mention a handful of anarcho-punk feminist collectives. Nevertheless, masculinist norms are repeatedly reproduced and reinforced within punk spaces, thus continuously rendering the scene problematic—and at times unsafe—for women and other minority groups[14]. This issue extends far beyond Indonesia, as many women in punk globally are forced to compete for an equitable spot within the scene. The social pressure in Java to uphold cultural and religious standards is arguably more restrictive on young women and potentially contributes to punk's inaccessibility. They are expected to embody Islamic virtues like modesty: participation in the punk scene would contradict such a virtue. Additionally, engaging with alcohol can tarnish a young woman's reputation, a trend noted among punk and metal scenes in Bali (Baulch 2007:8). Despite their small numbers, greater attention should be given to the female actors who circulate among underground spaces in order to diversify the accounts of punk experience across gender boundaries.

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[13] A mosh pit is a space formed in the front centre of the crowd at concerts (usually punk, metal or hardcore) in which audience members engage in a form of 'slam-dancing' i.e. jumping around, swinging their arms, slamming into others: this highly physical and energetic practice is meant to reflect the crowd's appreciation for the band's music (Tsitsos 2006).

[14] Generally speaking, discrimination against or exclusion of minority groups within punk circles also affects the LGBTQ+ community, ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will define the concepts that I find relevant for subsequent analysis. These tools will allow me to position myself and orientate a critical evaluation of the data at hand. I will also offer definitions for a few terms that will recur throughout this thesis. I draw primarily from authors in the fields of religious and cultural studies to define these key concepts.

Considered together, these concepts are crucial in reaching a multilayered and coherent understanding of the punk-Islam interrelationship. To properly grasp how punk and Islam mutually affect one another in the context of Java, we must be attentive to the structures of punk scenes, to the evolving function of DIY ethos, to the shifting patterns of practice among aging punks, to the influence of consumer culture, and to the expanding role of religion across Java. These tools will invite us to think about both punk and Islam in a way that acknowledges their fluidity and their ever-mutating presence in the lives of individuals. The terminology at hand provides, first, a baseline to talk about the structure of the punk collective and the facets of punk identity, and second, a stance from which to elaborate an academic analysis.

1.4.1 Conceptual Tools

The terms subculture and scene, resistance and hegemony, DIY, and transcendence drawn from the field of cultural studies will be addressed below. These concepts are useful to help contextualize aspects of punk, but they must also be scrutinized in the Javanese context. Some of these terms are considered fundamental to the study of popular culture and music scenes. In referencing them, I am inevitably drawn to compare their structure and their functions in different geopolitical settings, where members are faced with alternative daily realities. Many of these terms are complementary and must be considered together in order to present a coherent portrayal of the underground community. I complete the theoretical framework with the concept of Islamic market.

Subculture & Scene: The notions of subculture and scene are arguably necessary in talking about music-based subcultures, but they are often misinterpreted or used interchangeably, which causes further confusion as to their meaning. These terms offer a way to delineate punk as an entity without necessarily invoking arbitrarily restrictive boundaries. However, I argue here that scene is the more appropriate term to use in the Indonesian context.

The notion of subculture was initially coined by the Chicago School and later developed by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). It is pivotal in the field of popular culture, though it has also been subject to widespread debate for decades. Members of the CCCS describe subculture as a subset of a dominant culture—also known as the parent culture (Hall and Jefferson 1976:13)—though the existence of a 'dominant culture' is in itself debatable. Subcultures were perceived as sites of resistance towards oppressive structures. This outdated concept, while it continues to be used by authors today, poses a considerable problem in the Indonesian context.

If the term subculture implies the existence of one homogeneous and dominant culture, then Indonesian national culture would need to be defined. The archipelago features more than 18,000 islands, and a huge variety of different ethnic and linguistic groups. One of the only elements that is capable of uniting (almost all) Indonesians beyond geographic, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries is Islam. Thus, Islam is offered as a solution for nation building, and Muslim identity is the closest thing that Indonesians can claim to a collective national identity. Punk subculture then would be opposing the homogeneity and dominance of Islam, but, as I will argue later, this is not the case in Indonesia. Conversely, if Islam is not a suitable marker of national identity, then there is no one factor that can provide the basis for a collective identity of the archipelago's residents. The subculture would itself be void, since it cannot oppose a homogeneous culture.

The term subculture has also been critiqued for being too restrictive, arguing for example that it is "essentially flawed due to its attempt to impose a hermeneutic seal around the relationship between musical and stylistic preference" (Bennett 2006:113). Alternatively, the notion of scene designates a particular set of social and cultural activities without specifying the nature of the boundaries that circumscribe it. Scenes can be distinguished according to their location or according to the kind of cultural production that gives them coherence (Straw 2004:412). The scene approach places more emphasis on specific locality and acknowledges the balance between individual agency and external environmental factors (Císař and Koubek 2012:4). While 'scene' does resemble 'subculture', the former designates a more flexible space, akin to a context, thus expecting less homogeneity between the behaviours and practices of its members (Kahn-Harris 2006:128–129). Additionally, the concept of scene is more appropriate when applied in the context of aging, as its fluidity allows us to better examine the "interplay between punk scene involvement and the realities of adulthood" (Davis 2012:106). This will prove valuable further along in the thesis.

I use the term subculture when referencing authors and participants, but otherwise use the term scene to talk about punk groups, collectives and imagined communities. These scenes that are discussed in my thesis are typically based on localities although some are also organized around a specific sub-genre of punk, a particular code of ethics, or a distinct style. In other words, scene refers rather to the things that hold together a localized culture and that are recognized by those who engage with it.

Resistance & Hegemony: As mentioned above, it is quite common to frame subcultures as a group which not only opposes but specifically *resists* the parent culture or the overarching mainstream, as theorized by the CCCS. To follow up on the concepts of subculture and scene, I offer here a critique of the 'resistance towards hegemony' model that is often attributed to punk. Resistance is an alluring concept and I acknowledge it can be fruitful when applied in the appropriate context, but it also presents a trap. Music, among other forms of artistic performance, is often theorized as a platform for resistance. This is particularly common when

dealing with genres that are perceived as overtly political and counter-hegemonic, such as punk. Many of the scholars that I draw from use this term.

Resistance, however, implies an uneven power dynamic in which one party is opposing another. The danger, therefore, of resorting to this notion is to conceive a situation of oppression and friction where there may not be one, or to falsely interpret not only the power relation but also the position of the actors involved. By interpreting alternative modernities through the lens of resistance, we risk missing the creative reappropriations and the new subjectivities that they bring (Göle 1997). Moreover, we must not reduce all movements as discourses in reaction to overarching structures.

In this context, the word resistance invokes hegemony. Crawling out from the margins of mainstream society, punk screams counter-hegemony. At least, it was (and continues to be) branded in this way. The CCCS perceived subcultures such as punk to be resisting hegemonic culture (Haenfler 2012:20; Hebdige 1979:80; Osgerby 2014:9). Hegemony is synonymous with dominance and points to a class-based struggle in which the dominating groups wield power and leadership over subordinate groups (Gramsci 1971). While this approach may be more appropriate in the context of post-war Britain, it does not necessarily translate to a framework that is a) contemporary and b) non-Western. I will demonstrate further in the thesis why the notions of hegemony and resistance need to be reimagined in the Javanese context.

DIY: Do-It-Yourself, as I have previously mentioned, is commonly regarded as the ideological pillar of punk, although it can also represent a habitus, a lifestyle, an aesthetic, a means of production, etc. Peers often judge each other's authenticity or commitment to the punk scene based on their embodiment of DIY. Punks are also known to engage in a DIY economy, which operates independently from the mainstream model of corporate economy and focuses on authenticity and artistic concerns rather than commercial gain (Haenfler 2012:36; Schilt and Zobl 2008:172). I place high importance on the concept of DIY throughout this thesis because it is one of the few common denominators that punks seem to agree upon. While it stands as a

core punk principle, DIY can easily be abstracted to fit many other mainstream contexts. Because of its affiliation with autonomous and creative practice, DIY ethos possesses considerable appeal and thus becomes easily appropriated through marketing and commodification. Further, this concept is also valuable because it serves as an ideological crutch to help maneuver a precarious social landscape. The popularity of DIY across Java reflects socio-economic obstacles and pervading hostility towards institutions, while also illustrating the persuasive potential of branding and consumer culture. DIY, finally, is one of the concepts that is utilized to bridge the gap between the socially constructed realms of 'underground' and 'mainstream' in the Muslim Punk movement.

Transcendence: Punk is often referred to as a youth culture, which is problematic since such groupings are now increasingly multigenerational (Bennett and Hodkinson 2012:2). Therefore, it is important to consider how individuals entering adulthood articulate their participation in a given subculture with the new demands or expectations that result from the aging process. The commitment to punk identity fluctuates over time: teenagers perform certain activities and aesthetics to demonstrate their allegiance to the punk subculture and these are likely to change when they become adults. Transcendence is perceived as the final stage of the 'punk career'[15] according to Andes and serves as a useful conceptual tool to understand how individuals negotiate their membership to a punk community as they age. During this stage, individuals internalize punk ideology and transcend aspects of punk lifestyle while detaching themselves, to varying degrees, from the punk community. While I disagree with the 'career' model in itself because it is too linear and rigid to account for the nuances of punk experience over time, I do think Andes's concept of transcendence is valuable.

> "They do not necessarily dress in the 'typical' punk style, listen to punk or hardcore music, go to concerts, or hang out with punks. Being a member of the punk community is no longer their most important concern. They begin to define punk as a system of values and

[15] The punk career is a model elaborated by Andes (1998:212–231), which is composed of three stages: rebellion, affiliation and transcendence.

> beliefs, and thus become concerned with expressing an ideological commitment to the subculture." (Andes 1998:226)

By abandoning some aspects of punk practice yet transcending punk ideals, aging punks remain engaged with the underground while responding to social, financial or domestic pressure. The concept of transcendence will be applied later to help make sense of the recent punk hijrah trend that is impacting Java's underground community. In order to understand the shifting patterns of practice and behaviour that occur among Java's punks, we must consider overlapping dimensions at the individual and collective level. While some movements may appear to us as explicitly religious, it is important to consider how perceptions of aging and personal socio-economic burdens play a role in the decision to embark on the path of piety. I suggest, therefore, that the concept of transcendence is not sufficient alone to explain these drastic personal shifts, but it is complementary to the notion of an Islamic market (see below) in reaching a holistic comprehension of the phenomenon.

Islamic market: The concept of an Islamic market is essential in this framework because it addresses the way in which religion interacts with forms of culture, new media, and economic practices. Thus, it serves as the ideal term to approach the synchronicity between the Islamic revival, capitalist dynamics, and punk ethos. I draw from the idea of a religious market (Gauthier and Martikainen 2013; Gauthier 2017; Martikainen and Gauthier 2013) to illustrate the intrinsic relationship between religion, consumer culture and neoliberalism. As Meintel notes, in an era of globalization, the new possibilities brought about by technological progress and increased access to information "expand the possibilities of religious agency for individuals" (2012:9). Religious agency, in this case, can be represented through the act of consuming and the participation in a non-traditional religious collective. Religion is subject to mediatisation through interaction with new media and popular culture, which consequently drives it further into the public sphere. In this framework, additionally, pious practices are increasingly made accessible while religious authority is fragmented and decentralized. As will be illustrated with the case study of Muslim Punk, "new media technologies have allowed novel religious forms to emerge" (Martikainen 2017:81). This concept aims not to depreciate the deep value and meaning

of religion itself, but rather illustrates how religion strategically applies neoliberal and consumerist dynamics in order to thrive.

Together, consumerism and neoliberalism blur the boundaries between the categories we consider 'religious' and 'secular' (Gauthier 2017). In other words: "There are no longer any sharp borders between the religious and the secular, between holy and profane. The profane is sacralized, and the sacred is rendered profane" (Frisk and Nynas 2017:56). Religion, moreover, is forced to adapt to the standards of entertainment, accessibility, and relevance that modern cultural products offer (Gauthier and Martikainen 2013:17). In the Muslim context, the religious market becomes an Islamic market, "an ideal site for the study of Islam as a religious tradition in constant motion and deliberation" (Echchaibi 2012:32). This concept is useful in understanding how Islam embodies modernity through interaction with popular culture, and how the neoliberal market contributes to the 'reenchantment' of pious practice in the 21st century. Furthermore, it is indicative of the way in which Muslim actors utilize consumer products as well as Western tools to meet inherently religious needs (Göle 2011:46–47). It is becoming more and more relevant—perhaps even essential—for scholars of religion to recognize the interplay between religion and market since "religious communities of all kinds have become increasingly both inclined and compelled to communicate and package their messages in ways that correspond to market imperatives and the consumption-oriented sensibilities and practices of modern populations" (Moberg and Granholm 2017:110).

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter, I will define the methodological procedure adopted in conducting ethnographic fieldwork. First, I discuss how I became interested in the topic of Javanese punk and how the research project developed. Next, I briefly describe the preparations that I undertook before leaving for the field. In the third subsection, I offer a detailed overview of the data collection procedure, which includes my travel itinerary as well as notes on daily activities. I then present the people and places that constitute my data sample. Next, I explain how I analyzed the data upon returning home from the field. Finally, I offer some baselines from which to consider the limits of my own positionality and the potential ethical dilemmas that could result from my unconventional fieldwork site.

2.1 Developing the Research Project

I became interested in studying the interrelation of punk and Islam after my co-supervisor sent me an article about Taqwacore, the North American Muslim punk movement, while I was wrapping up my undergraduate studies. Being interested particularly in the female experience in such spaces, I developed a research proposal that focused on the participation of women in Taqwacore. However, after meeting with The Kominas, flagship band of the Taqwacore movement in Montreal in October 2017, it became apparent that finding participants for such a study would be much more difficult than I anticipated. The band members suggested that I turn my attention towards Indonesia if I wished to continue on a similar wavelength. Reading about Indonesia's history, its recent political turbulence, and its rich underground music scene, I decided to change my focus and adapt my prospective research project accordingly. As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world and boasting one of the most active punk scenes, Indonesia appeared as a field site bursting with research potential.

I sought to build a preliminary network for myself through social media and begin informally learning Bahasa Indonesia, the archipelago's national language. I spent many hours every week scouring social media profiles (primarily on Facebook and Instagram) to complement the information that I was reading about Indonesian punk youth in books and scholarly journals. I also found that the use of these social media platforms was extremely popular among youth in Indonesia.

Indonesia is home to over 18,000 islands. I chose to limit my research geographically within the boundaries of the island of Java. I may be criticized for being 'Java-centric'[16] since I opted to focus on this island, but it was the most realistic option for me as a first-time traveller to Southeast Asia. The literature that I read between the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018 on Indonesian punk almost exclusively targeted cities in Java. Due to my unfamiliarity with the country, I decided it would be most logical if I stayed in the areas where punk scenes had already been documented. Situated more or less in the middle of the archipelago, Java lies in the centre of a global popular culture vortex (Mangoenkoesoemo 2017).

2.2 Pre-Fieldwork Preparation

Eager to start fieldwork as soon as my master's coursework at the University of Montreal was completed, I booked my flight from Montreal to Jakarta for mid-May 2018. This meant that I would be arriving just days after the beginning of the Holy Month of Ramadan. This would allow me to draw a comparison between the practices and behaviour of punk members during

[16] Scholars are sometimes criticized for being 'Java-centric' because they focus solely on this island and dismiss others. Despite being the most populous island and the centre of political and economic power, it is not representative of Indonesia as a whole.

and after the Holy Month, since the accent on religion might heighten the contrast with punk culture.

I signed up for a three-week intensive Bahasa Indonesia course in the city of Yogyakarta in my first month. Beyond gaining basic language skills, this course would provide me with some structure during the day while I attempted to develop my network and familiarized myself with the city's surroundings. My remaining two months on the island were left open for travel and reorientation, based on what the local punks would recommend.

As I mentioned earlier, I must acknowledge the indispensable contribution of social media to my data collection process. Social media platforms, namely Facebook and Instagram, allowed me to enter the inner workings of the punk scene from a distance and stay updated on all relevant events before I arrived and while I was travelling. I followed pages of groups such as Punk Muslim, Punk Hijrah, Punkajian Bekasi for months before arriving in the field, which I often referred to in my conversations with locals. This proved useful in broaching the subject of religion. By following the profiles and pages of well-known Javanese bands and collectives, I was able to familiarize myself enough to navigate discussions with locals about their music scene. The information I learned through social media prior to arrival also gave me a baseline for formulating a preliminary interview guide and alerted me to new trends that were not mentioned in the literature.

In the months preceding my arrival, I also made a serious effort to make myself known via these social media platforms to anyone who appeared involved in the punk scene. In English or broken Bahasa Indonesia, I would introduce myself and my research project, which earned me a few favourable responses. This method allowed me to get in touch with a few key members of the Yogyakarta underground music scene. Knowing that I would spend my first month there, it was absolutely crucial to have a lead established. Upon arrival, these contacts helped me integrate myself into the punk scene.

Additionally, I had reached out to a Jakarta-based punk scholar, Fakhran, through the 'Punk Scholars Network' Facebook page, who quickly became a very important research ally and good friend. He helped me find participants, facilitated translation when language barriers were obstacles, and provided a direct access point into the Jakarta punk scene. To put it simply, this thesis would not have been possible without him.

2.3 Data Collection: Navigating the Chaos of Punk

Throughout a three-month stay in Java, I carried out participant observation as well as informal interviews with members of the underground music community. I visited a total of 7 cities across the island: Jakarta, Bogor, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Malang, Sidoarjo, and Surabaya (see Figure 3). I found it important to explore the regional differences between local punk scenes in order to avoid homogenizing the particularities of punk throughout Java. The following offers a brief overview of my travel itinerary and the activities that were undertaken in each city.

Figure 3. Map of Java. www.charlesbuntjer.com, 2017.

2.3.1 Travel Itinerary

I arrived in Jakarta on May 18, 2018. I stayed there for three days, two of which were spent touring the city with Fakhran. I then flew to Yogyakarta (the locals usually refer to it as Jogja), where I spent the following four weeks. In the first week I explored the city, acclimatized to the heat and settled into my language course. Because of Ramadan, there were fewer shows than usual. However, an unconventional indie-rock festival held in a mall over the first weekend of June helped me gain my initial access to the scene, since a handful of Jogja's key music and arts scene members were present. Having already connected with some of them via social media, we easily struck up conversation. I exchanged contact information with new acquaintances and informed them of my research. This event, as atypical as it was, proved very useful in signalling my presence as a researcher among scene members, many of whom later became good friends. Thereafter, the majority of my days were spent at the language school while my nights were dedicated to data collection. Given the lack of concerts, I spent many of my evenings in Jogja engaging in the common practices of *nongkrong* (hanging out), *ngopi* (drinking coffee) and *ngobrol* (chatting) with local artists and musicians. The majority did not self-identify strictly as punks, but many shared their insights, opinions, and experiences pertaining to Jogja's punk scene.

In mid-June, I took the train to Malang, East Java's second-biggest city. I couldn't recall ever reading about the city of Malang in my literature review, but a friend in Jakarta had mentioned that it would be worthy of a visit. She was right. I spent just shy of two weeks there, in which time I attended four concerts, met with some of the scene's most prominent musicians and artists, and came upon many thriving DIY projects. The most notable venue of this city is the legendary Houtenhand bar. I also happened to be in Malang during the municipal elections, which constituted an interesting point of conversation among scene members. Next, I headed north to Surabaya, East Java's largest city. I only stayed a total of five days, one of which was

spent entirely in Sidoarjo, a regency[17] of East Java south of Surabaya. Although it was brief, my time there was an absolute whirlwind: I spent the first night at a chaotic street punk concert which ended in police intervention, while my third day was spent on a mountaintop in Mojokerto assisting in a ceremonial day of traditional Javanese rituals. Later in the week, I was invited for a special tour of Sidoarjo by a group of locals who I had met at the street punk concert a few days prior. They informed me about the cooperation between Sidoarjo and Surabaya's underground music scenes, despite their past rivalries, and took me to all the best hang-out spots in the area.

In early July, I flew back to the concrete jungle of Jakarta. I attended several more shows, ranging from indie pop to hardcore. I also had the opportunity to meet with a number of local scholars, who helped me situate some of my experiences in their appropriate socio-cultural, political and economic setting. Further, I had the pleasure of spending an evening at the Taring Babi collective house in Depok with one of Indonesia's most renowned punk bands, Marjinal. Fahkran and I then spent two days at a punk festival, In Punx We Drunk (IPWD), on an isolated mountaintop in Bogor, south of Jakarta.

The next stop was Bandung, another popular hub for students. Aside from attending a handful of concerts, I had the chance to visit the *Pyrate Punx* and *Rumah Cemara* collectives with a few close friends. After approximately ten days in Bandung, I returned to Jogja. I spent two more weeks there, as I was curious to experience the atmosphere of the city during a time other than Ramadan. As expected, there were far more events and concerts at this time—so many, in fact, that it was difficult to choose which to attend. There were multiple festivals organized throughout the month of August, including *Tattoo Merdeka*, an event hosted by a friend on Indonesia's national Independence Day (August 17th) that revolved primarily around a full-day

[17] A regency is similar to a municipality: it is a division administrated directly under a province, a system that stems from the colonial era.

tattoo competition. I spent one last night in Jakarta with Fakhran before flying back to Montreal on August 22, 2018.

2.3.2 Blending in with the Crowd: Daily Practices & Activities

Since punk spaces tend to be highly participatory, my credibility as a punk researcher required not only attendance but active participation. To gain greater access to participants, I chose to immerse myself as fully as possible without compromising the purpose of my research. I remained very transparent about my goals as a researcher and found that I was accepted rather effortlessly because I showed interest and conformed to the group's underlying codes, both in terms of dress and behaviour. To this effect, I will also point out that my existing knowledge of punk music and experience participating in the crossover punk-metal-hardcore scene in Canada as a teenager and young adult were favourable in helping me fit into the scenes across Java and further justified my academic interest on the topic. You don't need to be a punk to study punks—but it certainly helps.

Punks are active at all times of the day, but the most typical punk activities (i.e. concerts) are held at night. I found that I had to adjust my own sleep schedule to adapt to the rather nocturnal tendencies of my friends in the underground music scene. I would typically meet locals in the afternoon for coffee or a meal in a *warung* (small family-owned café or restaurant) and tag along for the evening's activities. If there was no concert or particular event happening that night, we would go visit a collective house, a friend's shop, or move to another warung where others had gathered and continue to nongkrong (hang out), sometimes until the early hours of the morning. After a concert, it is also common for people to head to a nearby warung for a late meal or hang around the venue, which similarly lasts until the early hours of the morning. Going to bed around sunrise was not unusual. I spent countless hours with members of the scene in warungs, and this time proved essential for data collection. It was the perfect opportunity to reflect upon recent events and lead open-ended discussions about the topics of my research. The informality of the

setting made for fluid, organically occurring conversations. Practically speaking, this was also much easier than conducting an interview during a concert, for obvious reasons. Though I did occasionally chat with people between band sets, I preferred to take observational notes and document with my camera during a show, keeping my questions for a later debrief.

The majority of conversations occurred in English, though some parts were spoken in Bahasa Indonesia, especially when the interview featured more than one person. In situations where the principal interviewee did not speak any English, I was always fortunate to have a friend around to help facilitate the translation. One of the recorded interviews was conducted completely in Bahasa Indonesia, thanks to the help of Fakhran. Despite my rudimentary ability to understand and communicate in Bahasa Indonesia, I had no knowledge of Bahasa Jawa or Bahasa Sunda, the Javanese and Sundanese dialects that are widely spoken and surprisingly different from Bahasa Indonesia. This constituted a communication barrier in certain situations that I had not anticipated.

2.3.3 Reconciling Punk & Academia: Adapting to the Field

As one might predict, my methodology did lack formality and was seldom consistent: the spontaneous and at times chaotic nature of my data collection process quite accurately reflects the attitudes and atmospheres of the punk scenes I found myself in. Informal interviews and group conversations revolved around intersecting questions of religion, DIY lifestyle, representation, gender disparity, community building, political issues, aesthetics, commercialization, concert dynamics, and personal interpretations of punk culture. I also inquired more generally about life in Indonesia to gain more insight about cultural customs, socio-economic divisions, the education system, and widespread social norms. At concerts and events, I took notes about the audience demographics, the behaviour of concert-goers, the atmosphere, and any details pertaining to the venue and organizer(s), if applicable. These notes

are complemented with photos and videos, which more accurately capture the energy of the show and serve as effective visual reminders for my analysis.

My data consists primarily of hand-written notes, as well as typed anecdotes on my phone and laptop, nine recorded interviews, thousands of photographs, and hours of video footage from concerts, festivals and other pertinent events. I carried around a notebook and recorder with me almost daily. I returned from the field with two full journals of written notes, but few audio recordings. Seeing as members of the punk scene are often quite critical of institutions and forms of establishment, I felt it inappropriate to conduct formal interviews. I adapted my approach, given my concern that too much formality would negatively impact my relationship with punks, and consequently limit my access to information. Additionally, I found that most locals with whom I spoke were quite self-conscious about their English—regardless of their proficiency—and seemed less inclined to talk with me under the pressure of their speech being recorded. I opted to let conversations occur and evolve organically, rather than to push a rigid interview format. The informality and flexibility of this method allowed me to develop valuable relationships with locals and gain a more personable insight into their world.

My role both as a Western academic and as a trusted ally to the punk scene placed me in a complex yet privileged position, thus granting me consistent access to the right events and helping me build an equally diverse network of informants. My status as a visiting student[18] in the city of Yogyakarta, furthermore, helped me gain access to professors, local scholars and graduate students who provided constructive feedback and valuable resources throughout my stay. Finally, the communication skills in Bahasa Indonesia I acquired during my language course were an undeniable asset in gaining the respect of locals by demonstrating an interest in their country, and proved useful in countless situations, both academic and personal.

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[18] I was granted "visiting student" status in the department of Media and Cultural Studies at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) for the duration of my stay thanks to Dr. Budiawan.

2.4 People & Places: An Overview

My stay in Java served as an introduction both to Indonesia and to the exercise of conducting qualitative research. In order to paint an accurate, coherent portrait of the underground music scene and its members—and to understand how these are positioned in relation to mainstream Javanese society—I sought to speak with as many people as possible. Every experience and each conversation, regardless of its length and its focus, constituted a piece to the overall puzzle. I rarely turned down the opportunity to attend an event or meet with someone, even if the connection to the punk scene was minor. Hence, the people who contributed to my data collection are socially heterogeneous. I spoke primarily with members of the underground music scene but also with artists, students, lecturers, professors, and other locals. Some self-identified as punks; some were identified as punks by their peers but did not self-identify as such; and others felt no personal affiliation with the scene.

As I mentioned earlier in the introduction of my thesis, punk is an extremely fluid and subjective category. Additionally, many members of the underground music scene navigate between more than one music genre and prefer not to be identified with a single label. Most of the people with whom I spoke were Indonesian, though a few were Malaysian, and a handful were Westerners (American, Australian, European) who lived on the island of Java. The age span was equally diverse. I spoke with older punks in their 40s and even 50s who were founding members of the original punk bands and collectives of the 90s. I also spoke with some people who composed the newer generation of Java's underground music scene, many of whom were students or young professionals in their early 20s. The majority of my participants, however, happened to be in their late 20s or early to mid-30s. Although I originally sought to prioritize female participants, the sparsity of women in the underground music scene made this goal difficult to realize. I did manage to conduct a few interviews with women, but not all of them identified as punk. I will elaborate on the issue of gender in the final section of this chapter.

In the table 'People and Places by City' (see Appendix A), I have indicated the number of men and women interviewed in each city as well as the key locations that I visited. The number of people listed in this table reflects the number of individuals (both punk and non-punk) who contributed formally or informally to my data collection process. As for the locations, I also included in the table the places that were used as the venues for concerts and events that I attended, as well as other spaces that were fruitful for participant observation and intimate conversations. Some of the most valuable interactions took place in the homes of my participants, but these do not figure in the list in order to respect their privacy.

2.4.1 The Actors

Almost every person that I approached agreed to speak with me on the topic of my research, though the length and depth of each interaction varied enormously. I consider all of these individuals as actors and contributors to my study. The few individuals who declined to speak with me should also count as relevant actors, because their non-participation in fact attests to something important, whether it be a sentiment of hostility towards Western researchers or disapproval of my study. As noted in the table (see Appendix A), I have referenced 36 participants in total, counting 7 women and 29 men. However, the full extent of my data collection counts a total of 118 distinct interactions, including 34 women and 84 men. The reason that only 36 participants are referenced is to not exclude the voices of other contributors, but rather because the other interactions focused on matters that are not central to this thesis; they addressed peripheral themes and issues such as aesthetics and the instability of venues, which are nonetheless interesting but less relevant for the present analysis.

Due to the informality of my methods, I do not possess demographic information for all of the actors involved in this study. In many cases, I did not know the real name of my participants, since it is very common for Javanese to adopt nicknames and substitute their given names with these. Although some of my data entries could be considered incomplete due to a lack of

demographic data, they remain pertinent. Since this study focuses primarily on lived experiences and perspectives, demographic information such as age, level of education, occupation, marital status, etc. is not fundamental, though it certainly could have been conducive to a more comprehensive analysis of the profiles and motivations among individuals based on their backgrounds.

2.4.2 The Places

The places listed in the table (see Appendix A) range from well-known music venues to public spaces. I attended many concerts in bars, cafés and other DIY venues. Given the precarity of venues in most cities, members of the underground music scene are forced to be highly creative in securing a viable location for shows. For example, in Jakarta I attended an outdoor show in a residential neighbourhood where half the band played on the street, and the other half played atop a stationary truck. In Jogja, I went to an avant-garde art and music event hosted by a local collective in an enormous abandoned factory, located right on the outskirts of the city. Music-based events organized by collectives of the underground community often take place in small bars or cafés, some of which are authorized to sell alcohol, and others not. Many of these venues feature art, posters, graffiti, banners, and other emblems reminiscent of the local underground community. Proper airflow and windows are rare, so these spaces quickly become hot, sweaty and smoky. There are nearly always merchandise tables on-site, selling a band's clothing, CDs, and other accessories. I also attended some corporate and state-sponsored events that took place in commercial locales, such as malls, parks, stadiums, and even once on a military base.

Aside from music-based events, I spent countless hours drinking *kopi dan es teh tawar* (coffee and unsweetened iced tea) in warungs across the island. Nongkrong is an integral part of social life in Java: punks and non-punks spend a considerable part of their day sharing food, drinks, and casual conversation with friends. While concert venues may have been the most beneficial

for participant observation, warungs and public spaces were the most fruitful for proximate person-to-person interaction and informal interviews (see Figure 4). I also spent time in museums, collective houses, record stores, markets, tattoo studios, municipal parks, hostels, etc. I find it difficult to circumscribe all the relevant places involved in this study, as some of these are rather boundless. I was rarely alone during my fieldwork, so I was almost constantly immersed in an ongoing process of data collection. I commonly found myself discussing punk with friends while walking down the street, standing in a parking lot, or sitting in the back of someone's car. That said, I am less interested in the spaces than in the people which give them meaning.

Figure 4. **Left:** Author and friends sitting outside Houtenhand, Malang, after a concert. Picture by Samack, June 2018. **Right:** A makeshift festival venue atop a mountain in Bogor. Picture by author, July 2018.

2.4.3 Media & Material Culture

I mentioned previously that social media was an indispensable tool in gaining access to and staying up-to-date on the activities of the underground music community. Social media further granted me access to people and places to whom and which I was denied access during

fieldwork. For example, a friend in Surabaya gave me the contact information of ust.[19] Aditya Abdurrahman (also known as Mas Aik), a key figure in the Muslim Punk movement, and attempted to facilitate a meeting between the two of us. I sent him a detailed account of my research, but I never received a response. Friends in the field who knew of him later explained that he seldom agrees to meet with Westerners. Fortunately, Aditya's public presence on social media meant that I was able to keep an eye on the activity of his different groups, including the sudden disappearance and reappearance of Punk Muslim's social media profile in early 2019. Through Facebook and Instagram, I have ongoing access to the online stores of Punk Hijrah, Punkajian, Muslim Unite, Hijra Core, Keepers of the Deen, and more. The merchandise produced by these outlets is extremely pertinent in the context of my analysis because it concretely showcases how consumer culture, punk ethos, political ideology and expression of piety come together in the material form.

Zines are also powerful sources of information. I collected more than a dozen zines thanks to generous members of the music scene who were kind enough to loan or donate them. The zines I gathered hail from Bandung, Malang, Surabaya, Kulon Progo, Sidoarjo, Solo, Palembang, and Bali. Some provide satirical social commentary, others serve as platforms for activist projects (i.e. NYIA, lumpur lapindo) or address gender issues. The majority, however, revolve around music, featuring album reviews and interviews with local bands. While zines mostly serve to complement my existing knowledge of Indonesian bands, they also offer some insight on the tangible aspects of DIY practice, and occasionally present interesting political standpoints through opinion pieces. They serve as accessible relics to echo the attitudes and the dynamics of their cultural producers, i.e. the members of the underground community themselves.

On the same wavelength, I consider woodcut art and band merchandise to be material evidence that supports my qualitative data. Woodcut prints are very common across Java, and they are often sold alongside merchandise during concerts and festivals. Renowned punk collectives of

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[19] Ustad: honorific title for a man, usually a type of scholar or teacher.

the 1990s Taring Babi and Taring Padi[20] both utilized woodcut art (see Figure 5) as a medium for social commentary, thus popularizing the technique amid artists of the underground community.

Figure 5. **Left:** Woodcut prints hanging on the wall at Taring Babi, South Jakarta. **Right:** Woodcut prints at Camp Punk Seni, Sidoarjo. Pictures by author, July 2018.

Woodcut prints can also be transposed onto t-shirts. Merchandise, in some cases, is the sole source of income for punk bands who do not get paid to perform. Custom band t-shirts are also extremely popular since many members of the underground community possess both the skills and the tools for silkscreen printing. Beyond promotion, some bands use merchandise as a platform to circulate and disseminate particular symbols and messages. Labels and merchandisers such as Lawless, Maternal Disaster, Masberto, Berak, Oh! Clubs, Covin, Dbiks, and Nonplussed circulate among members of the underground and mainstream community. The more successful companies occasionally act as sponsors for music-based events but aren’t viewed negatively as commercial mainstream businesses. It is interesting, therefore, to examine how merchandise and labels are received by members of the underground music community and how they, in turn, utilize this platform to propagate their own ideas.

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[20] [20] Taring Padi is an art collective and cultural activist organization formed in 1998 in Jogja.

2.5 Post-Fieldwork: Ordering Disorder

Upon returning to Canada, I began to organize my data. All the recorded audio files were transcribed, and all hand-written notes were typed. This data, along with miscellaneous notes stored on my phone or laptop, was then regrouped and sorted in one master document; one version is organized by date and the other by thematic. Photos and videos are all stored and backed up on a personal hard drive. The majority of this visual material shall remain confidential, as I do not have the written consent from all the people featured to use it publicly, but it is nonetheless useful for my analysis. Most names and identities are kept anonymous to ensure personal confidentiality. I only use real names in the case of people (bands or musicians) that are considered public figures and did not object to having their real name disclosed.

I remain in contact with many of the people who participated in my research via social media and communication apps (e.g. Whatsapp). I also continue to observe subtle changes in the underground music scene through posts and comments on social media, particularly through the public Instagram pages of the various groups in the Muslim Punk movement. Some of my participants or acquaintances from the field send me relevant articles or personal updates that could be used as supplementary data or evidence to support the ideas that I will put forth in this thesis. In sum, the data collection process is ongoing, despite the fact that I am no longer physically 'in the field'.

2.6 Ethical Considerations & Positionality

Throughout this thesis I advance a series of partial truths (Clifford 1986:7). Ethnographers have a responsibility to recognize their own positionality in the field and to reflect upon the consequence and significance of one's subjectivities in the collection and analysis of their data. In the next few paragraphs, I explore how different aspects of my

positionality and my relationship with participants could lead to a particular interpretation of the phenomenon at hand. The purpose of this section is to situate myself in relation to the partial truths borne in this thesis and problematize the intricacies that often derive from anthropologists' dual role as researcher and author.

Throughout the first half of my fieldwork, the punk scene was presented to me as a bastion of unity and solidarity, an all-inclusive community that provided support and purpose to its members. I was immediately lured by the collectivist ethos of the scene and fascinated by the punks' genuine commitment to DIY lifestyle. Many concertgoers and die-hard punk enthusiasts spoke about their community with great pride and gratitude; some referred to it as their family. It was not until an incident of sexual harassment occurred at the annual IPWD festival in Bogor that the proverbial bubble popped. I realized then that I had been so enthralled with the new and exciting experience of taking part in Java's punk scene that I myself had been somewhat blindly romanticizing it.

In the second half of my fieldwork, I urged myself to take a step back in order to acknowledge the good, the bad and the ugly of the scene. There is a notable shift in my field notes which accounts for this change of perspective. It is not surprising that members of the punk scene would want to showcase the best sides of their community, especially since punk remains stigmatized in the eyes of mainstream society, but this caused me to develop a blind spot in my role as a researcher. Despite recognizing this lapse, I still find myself instinctively wanting to defend the punk scene, precisely because it is so misunderstood. However, idealizing the punk scene and accepting its self-laudatory self-descriptions can hide tensions and morally dubious behaviour. In this thesis, I present all angles of Java's punk scene as I experienced them.

There are a few aspects of my positionality that undeniably impacted the nature of my research and I believe they are important to address. First, there is the fact that I am a female researcher. As a woman, I feel it is important to study the dimensions of gender. The majority of the existing literature on this topic is produced by men, and gender dynamics are often overlooked. On one

hand, being a woman gives me more access to female participants and allows me to ask sensitive questions about sexism; female participants generally felt comfortable enough with me to share personal experiences. The degree of relatability between female participants and myself allowed me to dig a bit deeper on this topic than my male counterparts. On the other hand, being a female also means that I am subjected to occasional discrimination and sexism.

Although it is disappointing to experience sexism in the punk scene, it also reinforces the value of studying the dynamics within this scene and identifying the elements that contribute to ongoing exclusivity and discrimination towards minority groups. It also forces me to be very outspoken concerning issues of sexism, both as a researcher and simply as a member of the punk community.

While some may believe that it is not my place to assert myself publicly on issues of sexism in Java's underground music scene, I would argue that this is part of my personal responsibility. To this end, I made conscious choices while I was in the field to speak out about incidents like the one which took place at IPWD and situations where I was myself subject to sexual harassment. My intent was to remind members of the underground music scene about the kind of behaviour that women are subjected to in their local scene and initiate what I hoped would be constructive discussions about sexism. I received backlash from a few male punks while I was in the field, but otherwise I found that it allowed for a productive dialogue between myself and a range of men and women in the underground music scene who likewise had witnessed or experienced acts of sexism. Unfortunately, due to a lack of data from female participants, the gender dimension will not occupy as great of a part in this thesis as I originally anticipated. While I did have the chance to meet and speak with some women who were involved in the punk scene at one time in their lives, I am unsatisfied with the amount of data collected in this regard and wish to push this query further in the context of my prospective PhD research rather than presenting an analysis here that is incomplete and under representative.

Second, I am non-Muslim. I was initially quite concerned that my presence as a non-Muslim woman in a predominantly Muslim country would restrict my access to potential participants. However, my evident Western appearance (I will address this in the following paragraph) excused this fact. My prior knowledge about Islam, albeit limited, was useful in navigating certain topics, recognizing terminology, and distinguishing between branches of Islamic teaching. I learned a lot about the particularities of Javanese Islam during my stay, but my understanding of beliefs and practices remains largely superficial. To my surprise, locals were much more open to broach the topic of religion than I had anticipated. I was extremely conscious about the fact that I, a non-Muslim Westerner, had little business or authority asking locals personal questions about their faith. That being said, most were nonchalant and others quite happy to discuss this topic with me, and I was rarely challenged on the premise of my own religious views.

On my second day in the field, in Jakarta, my friend Fakhran took me to a mosque. He invited me to go inside and check it out for myself: a generous offer, but one that I was vastly underprepared for. It goes without saying that my presence did not go unnoticed and arguably caused a bit of a commotion. This was the only time that I set foot inside a place of worship during my stay in Java. Otherwise, I tried my best to respect cultural and religious customs in my everyday life, especially during the month of Ramadan. I often participated in *buka puasa* (breaking the fast) at sundown with friends who were fasting during the day. Sometimes this occurred during music-related events, in which case the schedule was organized around ceremonial break-fasting, allowing enough time for prayer and to share food and drink after sundown.

Despite the heat and humidity in Java's cities, it is customary to remain modestly covered. An overwhelming majority of women wear the jilbab (or hijab) and many of them dress conservatively, although some young women are still seen wearing t-shirts, fitted jeans and short dresses. I often wore t-shirts and jeans and carried around a blouse to cover my arms if necessary. I mostly did this for reasons of modesty and respect, but also to protect my skin from the harsh

sun and air pollution. I was also quite conscious about hiding my tattoos outside of concert venues since they continue to be stigmatized throughout Indonesia—particularly among women—and viewed predominantly as haram (forbidden). Being non-Muslim did not prevent me from discussing the topic of Islam with participants, but it may have limited my access to certain spaces (e.g. places of worship, prayer rooms, religious events), and it likely limited my ability to understand particular Islamic references in conversations. It could also have incited participants to modify their responses or omit certain information.

Third, I am *bule*. Bule is the vernacular term that locals use to denote someone who is Caucasian or Western-looking. It usually refers to a tourist, though it can also refer to someone who is temporarily working or studying in Indonesia. It is mildly pejorative, but it is typically used to identify individuals rather than to insult them. For the whole time that I was in Java, I was perceived as a token bule. Friends used the term with humour or endearment, while strangers would at times yell it out to me in the streets. The term does not perturb me, although I'm certain a thorough post-colonial analysis could be done to deconstruct the underlying implications behind it. Being a solo female bule travelling in Indonesia already comes with its own challenges and notoriety. However, being the only female bule in an underground music event is even more anomalous.

The repercussions of my positionality are important to consider here: to what extent did my presence affect the natural order of things around me? This is not to say that I was always the *only* bule. During my stay I met a handful of well-established Western artists or teachers, and exchange students, who dabbled in the underground music scene. In Jakarta and Yogyakarta notably, I was more likely to come across another Westerner at a concert, although they would typically be male. The perceived prestige of fair skin and the association with the West placed me in an interesting position, which simultaneously celebrated and reduced me to my whiteness.

In my experience, what seemed to happen during events was a process of mutual othering, which I refer to as the 'bule complex'. I was subjected to stereotyping and represented by locals in

ways that could be advantageous to them. In a sense, they exploited me for their own benefit. Arguably, I was doing the same thing, though I justified my practices in the name of research. When I sought out participants to talk about the punk scene, most were eager to do so, but they often asked in return for a picture with me for their social media profile or requested that I attend an event with them, so they could introduce me to their friends. Some would even caption pictures online by referring to me as their 'Canadian girlfriend,' which earned notable praise and attention from their peers. Generally speaking, I did not feel troubled or bothered by these kinds of representations because I felt indebted to all of my participants and this seemed like a harmless way of showing a degree of reciprocity. The ramifications of this 'bule complex' evolved as I became more efficient in Bahasa Indonesia: my position on the outside of social circles shifted gradually to the inside. By the end of my stay, I was still a bule*,* but one who could speak Indonesian and who lived among the locals, which granted me enough credibility to be ranked a notch above the category of 'tourist'.

Being Western may have affected the data collection process both in positive and in negative ways. It is possible that some participants depicted a highly idealized version of the punk scene in their interactions with me, thus contributing to an overall romanticization of the field. This may have been due to the fact that my perceived position of power and authority as a Western academic would give me a platform to spread a bright and positive discourse about Java's punks. It is also possible that my appearance, which always caused me to stand out from any crowd of locals, drew intrigue and curiosity, thus helping me to recruit participants. This also varied considerably depending on the city. My presence as a bule caused more commotion in Surabaya, for example, than in Yogyakarta where there is a much higher concentration of Western tourists and exchange students.

The last aspect that I will address before moving forward to the presentation of data concerns an ethical debate regarding my methodology. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, it is no secret or surprise that many punks drink alcohol. However, it begs the following question: how does one negotiate the inevitable reality that participants are likely to be drinking when they are

being observed or when they agree to participate in an informal interview? To my surprise, this issue has seldom been raised by researchers who have conducted ethnographic fieldwork with punk communities in Indonesia.

During informal interviews and group conversations, regardless of the time of the day, people often passed around a bottle of whisky or *anggur merah* (red wine) as this is a common custom for social gatherings among members of the underground music scene. I acknowledge that consent for data collection is subject to scrutiny in this context, which could be seen to compromise the ethical standpoint of my methodology. One way that I tried to work around this issue was to revisit certain points from a given conversation at a later time, either in person or via the Internet, to gauge the validity of the data and to confirm whether or not my participant still felt comfortable with our prior conversation. It was also difficult to discern, from my personal standpoint, a person's intoxication level, especially if we were not yet familiar with one another. This said, if I had opted to avoid all individuals who were drinking, and all spaces where alcohol was being consumed, my impression of the underground music scene would have been largely misrepresentative and incomplete. As I experienced it, alcohol consumption is an eminent reality within the underground music scene throughout Java.

Chapter 3: Politico-Punks, From Left to Right

In this chapter, I draw examples from my data to exemplify the ideological shift from left to right among politico-punks and activists, beginning with the punk veterans of the 1990s and culminating with the conservative punk groups that have emerged more recently. I start with the left-leaning politico-punks because they were the dominant group back when the scene first emerged in the 1990s. These 'punk veterans,' as I call them, also constitute the older generation of punks. To contrast and compare with this group, I then present the political engagements of the more conservative, right-leaning punks. I also feature some of the strategies used by newer generations of punk activists, as well as the political causes that unite them. By presenting the data this way, my goal is to highlight the differences in perspectives and practices between: a) left- and right-leaning punks, and b) older and younger generations of punks. The gender dimension is incorporated throughout these sections, albeit minimally, because there is not enough data to properly contrast the female versus male experience.

To close this section, I discuss the role that transnational Islam and the growing Islamic market have played in the emergence of the Muslim Punk phenomenon. My analysis of Muslim Punk begins by situating residents of Java within a framework of global and local tensions. Specifically, I address the worldwide trend of rising conservatism, and the ways it has impacted Java's urban centres. I then draw on the notion of the Islamic market to better understand how new media and merchandizing, among other factors, have boosted the popularity of the Muslim Punk movement, giving it not only a name and a face but also a brand.

3.1 Left-Leaning Punk Activists Then & Now

I begin with some outlooks of left-leaning punk activists who were active during the 1990s, and the subsequent wave of politico-punks that they inspired. Some punks evoke a

nostalgia for the days of protest, echoing a disenchantment[21] with today's punk scenes, while others insist that punk can still be a useful tool for political expression and activism. I also include the views of younger punks regarding the scene's veterans, which helps to illustrate a gradual process of individualization among youths of the underground community. Next, I present the punks' new imagined enemies. Since the fall of the Suharto's regime, some punks are left searching for a worthy cause to focus their united efforts. I recount the different social threats that punks identify as important, thereby demonstrating how some of Java's politico-punks have adapted alongside evolving social trends.

3.1.1. Spirit of Reformasi

The heydays of political punk and activism in the 1990s serve as a common reference point to contrast and compare the activities (or lack thereof) that are taking place in today's punk scenes. Many Javanese punks express a sentiment of nostalgia when they talk about punk and long for a rekindling of the 1990s seminal Reformasi spirit.

According to a veteran of the Jogja punk scene, punks are considered the "first respondents" to crises and carry an ongoing responsibility to help their community (Y5). Black Boots[22] is widely referred to as the first anarcho-punk band in Jogja, and according to Heru, a member of Taring Padi, they remain highly engaged in political struggles today (Y9). During the 1990s, "music was a weapon" used by Black Boots and Taring Padi, a tool through which their message "became more accessible to the public" and whence the public began "to recognize the new age of people: the punks" (Y9). Hendra explained that during the Suharto regime: "We were very, very focused. We want to have peace, no military, no fascism. After 1998, people start to understand anti-fascism" (B1). According to Angga, an active member of the Survive! Garage collective, Taring Padi also offered free schooling to street kids and punks to help them gain

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[21] I am inspired by Weber's use of the word disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) (Weber 1918).

[22] Black Boots is a punk band from Jogja that has been active since 1995.

practical skills (Y12). Non-punks, such as the Kulon Progo farmers of Central Java, could also benefit from their experience in political protest: “The Kulon Progo farmers aren’t punks—they went the legal route and it didn’t work for their fight—but then they found anarchists and wanted to see if they could get involved in the struggle, and they were on board. They got involved with Taring Padi” (Prida, Y11). Among the underground community in Jogja, Taring Padi and Black Boots are quintessential examples of left-leaning groups that were active during the 1990s and continue to promote anti-state activism and anti-individualism through their art and music.

As Heru said to me, “punk is beyond the music,” explaining that the essence of the scene should be anchored in something more than just music, such as activism (Y9). Music is the medium, but it needs to draw from a substantial antecedent. Black Boots facilitated the JAFNUS conference in the 2000s, while also “recogniz[ing] independence of Timor-Leste and West Papua” and “acknowledge[ing] issues in the LGBTQ+ community” (Y9). Heru shared with me a metaphor: “It’s not about drinking the beer fast, but what you can do with the empty bottle. Is it a piece of art, or a weapon against the status quo?” (Y9). In other words, he explained, it’s not about the vehicle, but rather the ends to which it can serve.

Drawing inspiration from the works of Taring Padi, the Anti-Tank project was launched in Jogja in the 2000s to further fuel political awareness around the city through a DIY approach. Andrew, the creator of Anti-Tank, promotes anti-fascist and anti-capitalist ideas through provocative street art, the designs of which are available to the public for free download online, conform with DIY ethos (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. **Left to right:** Anti-Tank posters 'Dancing for the justice of women', 'God love the bomb?', and 'Block fascism', antitankproject.wordpress.com.

There is also Nobodycorp, a similar platform offering politically motivated posters founded by Jakarta activist alit Atbara in the 1990s. These almost exclusively focus on political matters, from denouncing corrupt politicians and criticizing labour laws, to raising awareness about Indonesian activists who were censored and even killed by the state (see Figure 7). According to a member of Taring Padi, online platforms such as these are useful tools for revolutionary thinking and provoke necessary reflection about political issues (Y13). Though these two platforms are not explicitly linked to the punk scene, they circulate among underground spaces and they were mentioned to me by members of the punk scene.

Figure 7. **Left to right:** Nobodycorp posters 'Stop criminalizing the workers' struggle', 'Fight to vote, vote to fight', Suharto 'Errorist', nobodycorp.org.

Taring Babi, the collective of punk band Marjinal, similarly performs social commentary through music and woodcut art. The walls of their collective house are covered in woodcut prints (see Figure 8), featuring messages such as ‘Protest and survive’, ‘No racism, sexism, fascism’, ‘Stop exploiting nature’, and ‘Tattoos are not criminal’. When I met with Marjinal’s frontman Mike, he argued that capitalist ideology has infiltrated all individuals, even those who appear to reject it: “Because everybody [has] a potential to be capitalism [sic]. To be a danger for everybody. Like that. […] If you think about DIY, [it has] to be coming from ourselves first. So, if you want [to be against] capitalism, [be] against yourself. Because the big enemy is yourself.” (J3) This is echoed by the lyric “your inner voice and your life in the world, do it yourself against capitali[st] culture” in Marjinal’s song “Do It Yourself”. During my stay at Taring Babi, the band spent hours at night playing punk ballads sung in both English and Indonesian, promoting collectivity and denouncing ongoing corruption. Their song “Boikot” revolves around class struggles and cultural boycotts, while “Go to hell with your aid!” criticizes colonization and pervading socio-economic injustice across the country. Despite the general decline of political punk, Marjinal addresses the grim realities of life in a developing country once dominated by colonizers with songs like “Negara Dunia Ke-3” (third world country). They also offer social critiques of capitalism, the education system and labour laws with songs like “Aku mau sekolah gratis” (I want free school), “Marsinah”, “Buruh Migran” (migrant workers), rooted in a leftist perspective.

Figure 8. **Left:** Portrait of Javanese labour-law activist Marsinah at Taring Babi. **Right:** Several woodcut prints at Taring Babi. Pictures by author, July 2018.

In Sidoarjo, punk teens created a zine to raise awareness about the 2006 *lumpur lapindo* tragedy, a drilling-induced mud flow that devastated local villages and infrastructure. In Jogja, multiple zines tackle the New Yogyakarta International Airport (NYIA) debate, which threatened the lands and livelihoods of Kulon Progo farmers. “In Pati, they make an activity for mining,” said punk veteran Hendra referring to the activists who fought against the construction of a cement factory in South Pati, “some punk scenes are still active for that” (B1). “The real punk,” says punk musician Rama, “is passion over fashion” (J8) asserting the idea that authentic punk requires action, like activism, and that aesthetics should not be the main concern.

Another example involves Rumah Cemara, a collective house and organization aiming to reduce stigma and improve the quality of life of people with HIV-AIDS and of drug consumers. One of the well-known activists engaged in this collective was Ginan Koesmayadi, vocalist of punk band Jeruji, who passed away suddenly in June 2018. Although the organization in itself is not considered ‘punk’, it engages with many members of Bandung’s underground community and by extension helps to circulate discourses of tolerance throughout the scene, primarily around the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized groups. Rather than boasting anti-capitalist or anti-institutional ideals, Rumah Cemara serves as a safe space for women, queer folk and those suffering from addiction, while advocating for progressive policies against the pressure of mainstream stigma.

Following the notion of anti-establishment, corporate sponsorship is one aspect that remains highly contested among punk members. According to Ahmad, the tour manager for a popular Jogja band, some punk bands will outright refuse to play any festival or event that is government-funded because it would mean taking part in something institutionalized and regulated, while also showing support to the state (M2). He explained that Superman Is Dead, a 90s punk band from Bali, has trouble performing now because they have stood firmly against the sponsorship of big corporations—namely cigarette companies (M2). They are also heavily involved in the *Tolak Reklamasi* movement which opposes the reclamation of Benoa Bay in

Bali. Hendra, who owns an autonomous underground venue in Northern Bandung explained: “Some friends [are] working with cigarette companies. But it’s meant to be for friends and for fun, not for profit. We’ve done it four years without sponsorship” (B1). He keeps his DIY venue alive through donations, refusing to lean on sponsorship or commercial endorsements.

An interesting intergenerational dynamic became apparent during conversations, reflecting at once the respect that younger punks hold towards their elders in the scene, and the desire of a ‘return’ towards culture and tradition among older punks. Doni, a Bandung-based punk musician stated that:

> DIY and collective movement is strong here. It started from the older people before us, they were willing to experiment and make records with nihilist lyrics, and they inspired the new generation to do better than them. […] Some of our senior, elder people in the scene, some of them still keep the look up and nothing has changed and the lifestyle is still the same. They never worked a 9-5 job, they work independently. (B5)

Rizzy, co-founder of a Bandung youth collective agreed: “I think, we need to look back and see what the older bands are doing for the scenes. They make gigs, they make zines, they make media” (B3). On the flip side, Hendra who belongs to an older generation of punks, says:

> Before, people were busking on the street singing about Reformasi and about the oppression of the government, the military. Busking on Ankot, on public transport. It was really quite strong. […] Now, there’s a lot of people wearing spikes, who look very punk but don’t know the meaning. But that’s more with the young kids. It’s less problematic with the older punks. (B1)

As a veteran of the scene and someone who was highly engaged during Reformasi period, Mike from Marjinal also expressed frustration about newer punk generations appropriating DIY without understanding its true value. He describes the DIY ethos as “making maximal from minimal” (J3), a philosophy that is not understood by all young punks. He also expressed concern about the overwhelming influences coming from the West and from the Middle East,

threatening the dissolution of Javanese culture. Mike critiqued the lack of depth and anchorage in tradition among the new generations:

> The philosophy is go back to your home and learn from it. You can learn so much from your home. For me it's very important to learn about tradition. There's a difference between tradition and culture. Tradition is something that exists since long long time ago, something deep-set, where the older generation is connected to the nature. So, the tradition is very small, it's a minority. Culture is rather the dominant, the majority, what is created by the authority. The problem is, if the generation doesn't know anymore about the tradition, the culture will then control it. The culture of the generation is the millennium culture, with all the things. The tradition is about [ethics] and attitude. It's basic. That's very important that we adopt this spirit. (J3)

Bands like Malang's Begundal Lowokwaru consciously advocate aspects of East Java through their music. According to punk musician Rehan, who has been active since the 1990s, there is a pressing need to represent local culture and language because the majority of Indonesian bands sing in English and appear too Western (M5). He also mentions that in Java's punk scene today, it's a matter of "quantity over quality", reproaching the fact that "everyone has a band", which ends up depreciating the value of the music itself (M5). Many people active in the scene echoed this statement throughout my fieldwork, attesting to the fact that the music scene is highly competitive because there are so many bands. Consequently, Julian explains, this reduces the chances of economic viability or commercial success for local bands, and it's even more difficult for musicians outside the big cities like Jakarta and Bandung (M4).

3.1.2. Who Is the New Enemy?

Many of the older punks to whom I spoke, aged 30 and over, recognized that the function of punk had changed since the 1990s. While some lamented about how apolitical and mainstream punk had become, others found a new motivation to fight for. In this section, I present what punks conceive of a new enemy, two decades after the struggle against Suharto.

A member of Black Boots admitted that there are growing obstacles in the punk scene nowadays given the perpetual threat of authority, whether it be represented by the state, the police, the military or radical religious organizations (Y5). In a sense, these are all 'enemies' to rebel against, but the lack of convergence around one figure or singular event makes it difficult to unite individuals in a coherent movement of dissent. Angga explains that the generation today has no clear and concrete cause to fight for, unlike the punks back in the 1990s: "If there are no more common enemies, then punk has no more purpose" (Y8). Heru suggests that "punk is still alive, but it has lost its teeth," since it has become mainstream. Hence, it is not perceived as a threat anymore. "Punks on the street are now in the office. Today, who is the enemy?" (Y9).

Indeed, some of Java's punk veterans had difficulty identifying a distinct purpose to unite them. However, others expressed a different viewpoint, suggesting that punk now served as a platform to resist against the threat of radical ideologies. Jakarta-based musician Jojo explained that the current enemy to confront is "the radical religious ideology that is spreading like wildfire among Indonesians, primarily through religion" (J2). He says that music and art are tools to raise awareness about this threat, since "the culture of following and the absence of critical thought" render the situation more delicate and precarious (J2). Mike also acknowledges rising conservatism amid scene members: "So many left side punks in here, they think they are revolution[ary], but they now become conservative too." (J3) He expresses concern for the widespread absence of critical thought among Java's youths: "For me, the new generation become[s] victim. Because they [are] reactionary. They just hear, not think." (J3) Rahadian says: "The critical thinking is very low in Indonesia, especially when it comes to religion. Some of my friends are still religious people but they can still accept difference, they are tolerant and open-minded. But [in] college, there are a lot of fundamentalists" (B7). He echoes similar concern about this issue becoming a widespread social threat.

Beyond growing conservatism and the lack of critical thinking, some older punks have also recognized that a process of individualization is shaping the new generation of millennial punks.

> Everything has already changed. The values, the activity. Back in the 1990s, punk was more than just music. The kids are angry at the system, angry about their social life. They make music and talk about how they're feeling with lyrics. I think it's getting blurred now […] since the Internet and social media has become bigger and bigger. There's so much information available. So, the kids who are turning to punk music or culture, they have too many options. In 90s, when someone liked punk music, they are concerned about the culture. But now, they have too many options. (Rizzy, B3)

> Here in Indonesia, we lost some media to learn about the culture. When I was a teenager and I was into the punk and hardcore scene, we had zines and distros[23]. At that time, we were sharing information about new bands, about what happened in our scenes. But now, it has already become individual. You just need to open your phone and you can get what you need. And what I see here in Indonesia, kids don't really know what they're doing at events, they just follow. When I asked what the culture or the essence is in hardcore or punk that bands wrote in lyrics—most of them don't know. (Yudi, B4)

> The reality is that we already lose communication about the kids from one to another. We have the same interests, but we don't have emotional contact. That's the capitalism threat! That's why people are more individualistic. So, we have to fight capitalism. Maybe just a little, but it's better than nothing. (Rizzy, B3)

These brief statements exhibit a certain disenchantment around the new punk generations. Older punks perceive the youth to be over-saturated with options due to social media, and to be growing increasingly individualistic due to capitalist dynamics. As a result, they are considered to follow trends without understanding the cultural meaning behind them. Online platforms and social media networks are regarded as contributors to the problems. "So many people nowadays are getting information, especially from Instagram, and they just take it and accept it without questioning it. They don't think critically" (Asep, B8).

With an important presidential election set for April 2019[24], several of the older punks expressed concern that Java's residents lacked the tools and awareness to acknowledge the threat of right-

[23] A distro is an independent outlet for distribution (tapes, CDs, merchandise, and so forth).

[24] The presidential election took place on April 17th, 2019 between candidates Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo (incumbent president) and Prabowo Subianto. Results of the election were still disputed at the time this thesis was written.

wing ideology at the political level. According to Jojo, "there have been many efforts to promote the right-wing candidate [for the election] through prayer and in the media" (J2). Additionally: "It's incredibly difficult to convince Javanese Muslims that there's anything wrong with becoming more Muslim" (Ari, J6). Although there doesn't appear to be one common enemy uniting all punks in a movement of rebellion akin to the Suharto years, some left-leaning punks perceive rising conservatism, lack of critical thinking, and capitalist-induced individualization as intangible yet concerning social threats worthy of concrete action.

Before closing this section, I want to address the perspective of left-leaning punks towards rising conservatism and how it is linked with a perceived culture of compliance. Upon asking why individuals have internalized vastly different interpretations of appropriate Muslim behaviour, I received this reply from Doni: "They come from different denominations. Some people learn from different religious leaders. They have a different background. So, maybe it's [more orthodox] in Eastern [sic]. In Indonesia, it's different. But people don't study as deep, they only listen to what the religious leader says" (B5). I then inquired about the influence of the Middle East among Indonesians, to which Asep responded the following:

> [It has] a really big impact on social life here. People are more likely to be preoccupied with religion in the Middle East than here. There's still some injustice happening but their mind is turned far, to the Middle East. In the Middle East, maybe because it's majority Islam, we feel like brother, sister. When there's injustice there, we feel like we have to take care of them. *People are blinded by the concept of brotherhood, with Islam and the Middle East. They're blinded with that word.* (B8, emphasis added)

As noted here, the Middle East is not perceived with hostility or fear, but there is a definite awareness about its impact on Java's Muslims. We also start to notice the disdain towards a 'culture of following', which has already been mentioned. The notion of individuals being 'blinded' by religion and the imagined community of transnational brotherhood, echoed above by Asep, is important to keep in mind.

Political activism has proved an important element for left-wing punks in Java. Although the punk movement could be considered as more of an aesthetic revolution than an ideological one, many punk veterans expressed pride about their engagement in the anti-authoritarian protests of the 1990s. Among conservative punks, political activism is still present, but the undertones of their struggle are primarily religious rather than directed at the state. Generally speaking, religious activism in Islam has much to do with collective identity. Political pro-Islam movements are "adept at generating a sense of differentiation and loyalty among members, which enables these movements to endure and gain support" (al-Anani 2016:43). Blended with larger social issues (e.g. poverty, human rights, corruption, moral debates, etc.) religious causes become relevant to a wider audience, thereby fuelling the popularity of a given movement.

In a sense, adherents of the Muslim Punk movement are performing a type of religious activism through punk. Religious activism is defined as "the mobilization of contention to support religious causes" (Gregg 2016:342) but it is often connoted with violence, which is not the case among Muslim Punk groups in my observations. I would argue, rather, that conservative punks draw public attention to religious matters by mobilizing both DIY modes of production (e.g. zines, music, informal events) to spread their message, and punk imagery to simultaneously attract youths and conjure shock value. In a sense, Muslim Punk could be likened to a religious social movement because it is fuelled by its own religious resources, including leaders, networks, communications channels, material resources, and a moral framework (Idem: 344). In the following section, I explore how the right-leaning punks articulate Islam and politics, therefore demonstrating how a leftist anti-authoritarian movement has shifted into a religious social movement.

3.2 Preaching Politics: Politico-Punks & Activists on the Right

The rise of conservatism, populism, and right-wing ideology have affected countries across the globe in recent decades. A professor in Jakarta explained to me that the spread of radicalism in Java is part of a larger "ideological pendulum swing" along with a growing "fear

of liberalism" prompted by foreign affairs, mainly in the USA (Toni, J4). An Egyptian professor of Islamic studies at the State Islamic University in Jogja shared with me that more and more Javanese Muslims wish for Islam to become more orthodox, "like Arab Islam" (Marif, Y3). Concerned, he said that his students naively give legitimacy to figures and discourses originating from the Middle East: "They think anything in Arabic must be more Islamic, but most of them don't even understand or read Arabic. They pray in Javanese, not Arabic" (Marif, Y3). Ari, a scholar in Jakarta, agreed that Arab Islam is viewed by many as superior, and he expressed particular unease about the influence of Wahhabism infiltrating different types of institutions across Java (J6). He added: "Nowadays, middle class Javanese parents aren't afraid that their kids will turn to drugs or alcohol. They're afraid that their kids will turn to radicalism" (J6).

In Sidoarjo, punk artist Sandi told me that despite the principles of Pancasila, Indonesia's democracy is biased towards Islam, and this is becoming increasingly evident in 2018 (S1). Leaders of fundamentalist religious groups also occupy a more present role in politics. A friend in Jogja recalled: "The leader of [Islamic party] tried to run for *Wali Kota* (mayor) here. He lost, thankfully, but we were terrified. He was actively recruiting for his group during [that time]. He is terrifying" (Prida, Y11). This fundamentalist group, backed by the military and the local government, also raided the events of a local punk collective a few years prior.

As I mentioned earlier, religion and politics are deeply enmeshed. A few days before I arrived in Indonesia, there were multiple bombings in the city of Surabaya targeting three churches, an apartment complex, and the police headquarters. These were quickly claimed as terrorist attacks by a local branch of ISIS. This tragedy, according to a group of punks in Bandung, was extremely political.

> It's an election year, so, the bombing was very political. Yeah it felt very political because it happened right before the governor elections. (Doni, B5)

It usually happens when it comes to election years. When the bombings happened, I chose not to go to church. But the next week I go, and the priest say it's because of elections. It's not just a religious act. It's political. (Asep, B8)

The interrelation of religion and politics in Java is manifested both in the mainstream and in the underground. Members of conservative punk groups such as Punk Muslim, Punkajian, Punk Hijrah, and Hijra Core are very vocal in both their religious and political stances. Some accomplish this by showcasing their political views in a public way through merchandise. Selling merchandise is one of the common denominators throughout all these groups. The Punk Hijrah online store sells t-shirts and posters featuring punk icons coupled with anti-Zionist messages. Among these is also a picture of a veiled woman wearing a punk jacket with the slogan 'Hijab not dead', a patch with the words '*Sholat 5 waktu'* (pray five times a day), and the slogan 'Positive Muslim attitude'. There is also 'Bad Zionism', which is a play on the name and logo of American punk band Bad Religion. Muslim Unite offers similar merchandise, including t-shirts with the slogans 'Liberalism is a new form of Satanism', 'Boycott Zionist' and 'Making punk back to Islam again' (see Figure 9).

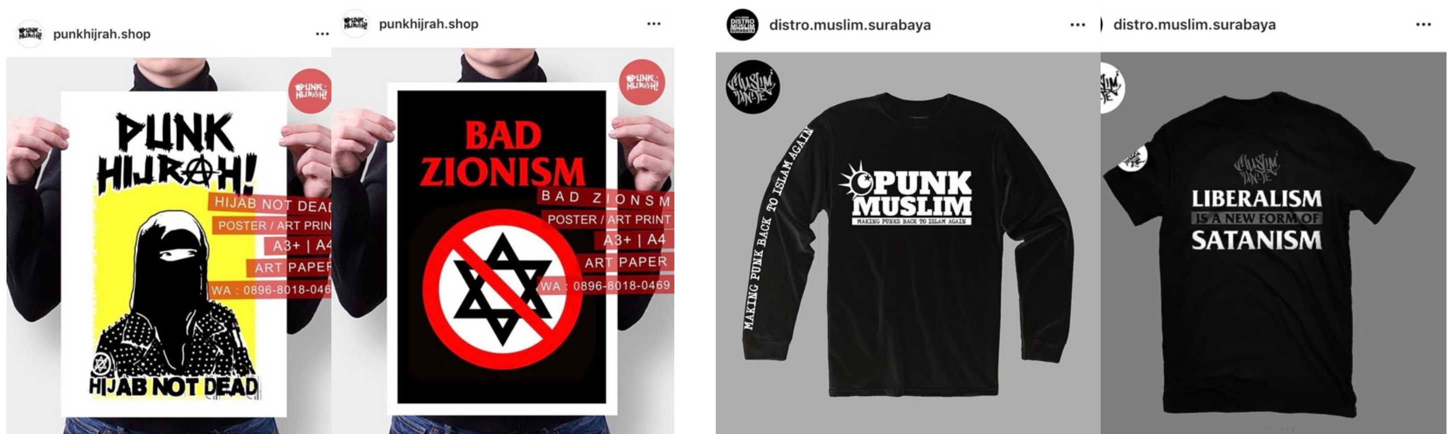


Figure 9. **Left:** Posters for purchase, Instagram.com/punkhijrah.shop, June 27, 2018.
Right: Shirts for purchase, Instagram.com/distro.muslim.surabaya, January 17th;
February 1, 2019.

Others show their devotion by participating in local demonstrations in a fashion similar to the punk activists of the 1990s. Members of the group Hijra Core, for example, took to the streets

of Jakarta for the *Aksi Bela Tauhid* 211[25] in November 2018, a rally to protest against the burning of a black flag bearing the Islamic creed (see Figure 10). This black flag with a white shahada is commonly regarded as a jihadist emblem. It has been used by different conservative Muslim Punk groups when staging protests and it has been incorporated in artwork, even at times combined with punk symbols to exemplify the reconciliation between the two (see Figure 11). It also appears in merchandise.

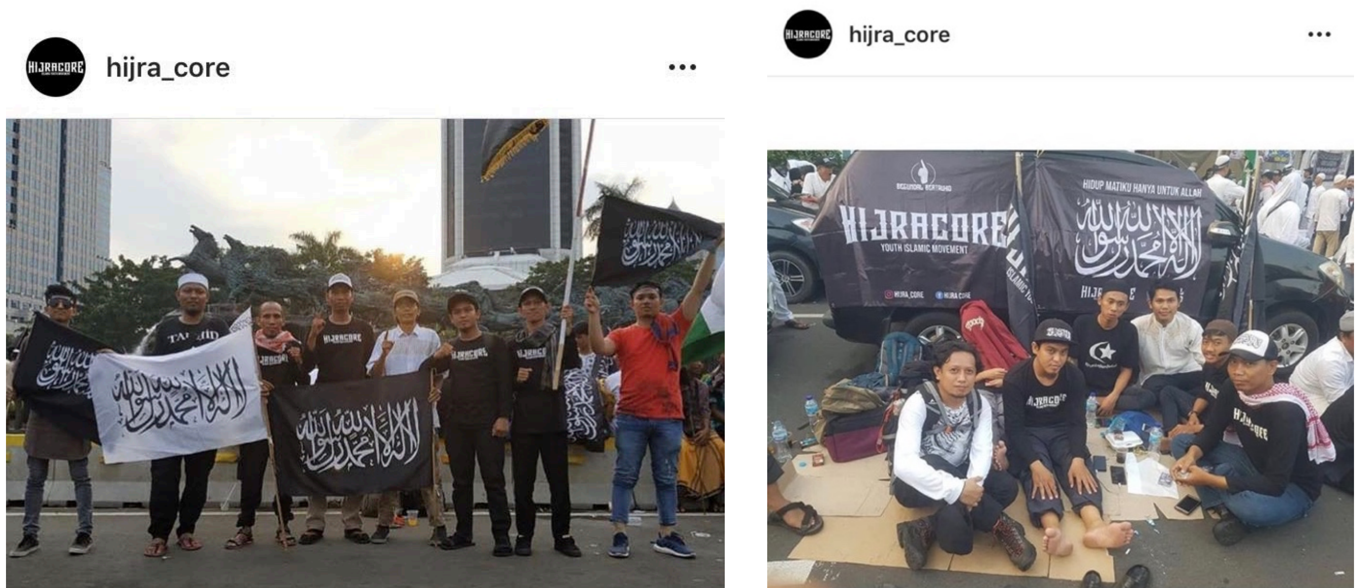


Figure 10. **Left:** Members of Hijra Core at *Aksi Bela Tauhid* 211, **Right:** Members of Hijra Core at *Aksi Bela Tauhid* 212, Instagram.com/hijra_core, November 2, 2018; December 3, 2018.

[25] This literally translates as: the act of defending tauhid. Tauhid means the oneness of God, and it is the central principle of Islam.

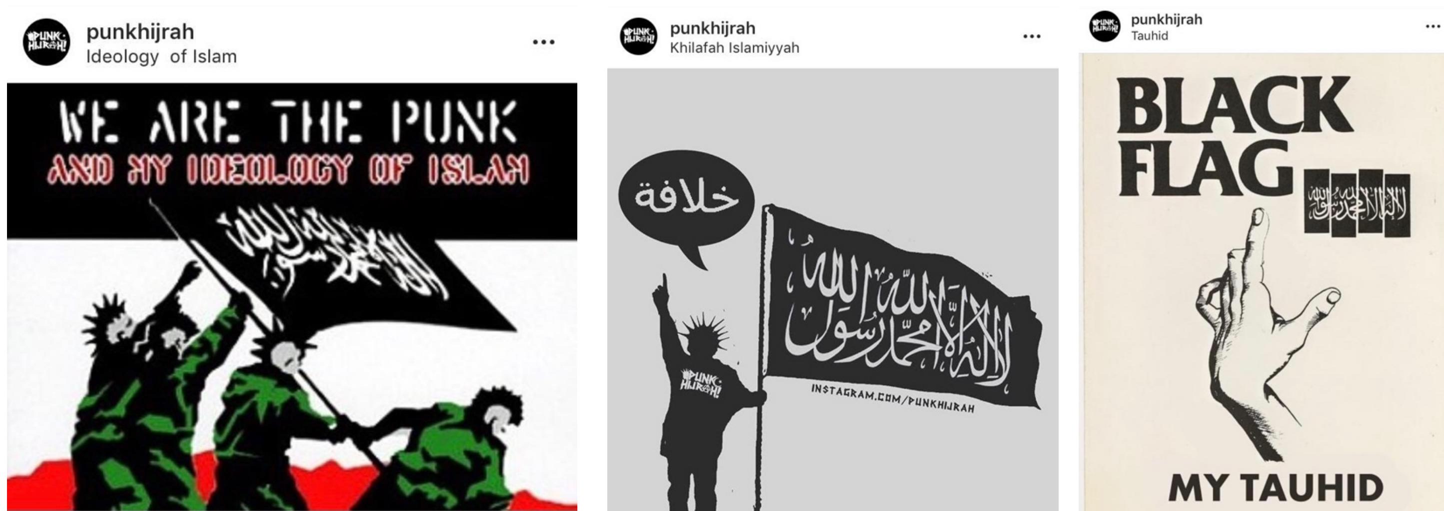


Figure 11. **Left to right:** Examples of the Jihadist flag used by Punk Hijrah online, Instagram.com/punkhijrah, July 3, 2017; July 23, 2017; May 19th 2018.

An aspect of this conservative punk phenomenon that merits attention is the dominant pro-Palestine anti-Zionist stance among these groups. It is perhaps unsurprising for residents of a Muslim-majority country to side with and support Palestinians, but it is nonetheless interesting to observe how conservative punks engage in this hotly debated conflict. During my interviews, the Palestinian cause was never mentioned. It did not seem particularly pertinent to bring it up during conversations at the time; I only became aware of the anti-Zionist sentiments shared by some rather conservative members of the underground community through social media after returning from the field. The Subchaos zines, another project by Mas Aik, are a perfect example. This form of media itself conforms to punk's DIY principles of production, and each edition features content ranging from band interviews to opinion pieces. Subchaos zine #11 comprises a manifesto titled *Kenapa kami peduli Palestina?* (Why should we care about Palestine?) written by Muslim hardcore punk band The Fourty's Accident. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Mas Aik is also the vocalist of this band. Among the ten reasons they offer in their manifesto, they mention the obligation of freeing Muslim brothers and sisters from tyranny, and further claim that Israel is a source of aggression and damage (Subchaos 2012:15–17). The zine also features the lyrics for each song on The Fourty's Accident's new album. Three examples are listed below:

Started in 1940s/Israel started looking for problem
Invades the land of Muslims/Killing and robbing without mercy
We really hate Israel/We want to kick that fascist!
Song: "Israel is A Fascist Nation That We Must Hate Together and Forever"

Equality, empiricism, nihilism, anti-authority
Pluralism, liberalism, feminism, multiculturalism…
Beware! Of westernization behind of your life!
Beware! Of postmodern culture behind of your life!
Song: "Beware of Postmodernism Behind of Your Life"

Sure you know what we're talking about/
A religion that some of you believe in/I say that you're in the good choice/
'Cause all of your problems can be solved by this/Islam is the right choice!
Song: "It's Not Difficult to Choose Islam as Solution for All of Your Problems"

Subchaos zine #14 features an opinion piece on the infiltration of Judaism in the punk scene, along with a report called "Understanding Jewish" that not only labels Jewish people as fascists and racists, but also claims that the Jewish doctrine is the "root of racism" (Subchaos 2016:2–4). The artwork enclosed is also particularly overt in displaying an anti-Zionist stance (see Figure 12). This zine series appears to contrast considerably with the vast majority of leftist and progressive zines that I collected throughout my fieldwork. Nonetheless, it evokes a quintessential punk attitude–one that is both innately unapologetic and provocative–and embodies it in form and content. That said, it should be duly noted that Subchaos references itself on each zine cover as "open-minded media through revelation".

Figure 12. **Left:** Subchaos zines #11, **Right:** Subchaos zine #14, both available for download at subchaoszine.wordpress.com, August 26, 2012; October 17, 2016.

3.2.1 Transnational Islam: Global Trends, Local Pressures

The rise of conservatism in Java is indicative of ideological shifts at the global and local level. It is partially both attributive of the Islamic revival that began in the 1970s, and a reverberation of rising conservatism in the Middle East, which seeks a return to scripturalist Islam. It is also linked to political turmoil and economic instability over the last decades of the 20th century across the Indonesian archipelago. I adopt a multidimensional approach to transnational Islam that is "highly sensitive to the interplay of global and local" (Mandaville 2005:321). It is important to situate the island of Java spatially and temporally before delving deeper into the analysis since this allows us to identify the structural shifts at different levels that have contributed to the emergence and success of the conservative Muslim Punk movement.

> Indonesia matters. The battle for its soul is taking place within a wider war in the Islamic world pitting progressive Muslims, who believe their faith can coexist with modernity and

> liberal Western influences, against fundamentalists, who want the religion to return to its more austere Arab roots. (Beech 2007:1)

Conservatism has been growing in Indonesia for decades since the onset of the Islamic Revival, but it began accelerating before this, due to fascist authoritarianism and widespread political instability. At the global level, rising conservatism is the result of a transnational effort to restore Islam to its former glory, and at the Javanese level, it is part of a nation-building effort in which religious identity is invoked to stabilize and enforce collective identity: "The great watershed for the Javanese *umat* was decolonization and its transformation in the maelstrom of nationalism" (Headley 2004:14). In some cases, it also provides a way to deal with economic instability. Surabaya-based Islamic scholar Muzakki (2014:7) states that four principal factors are responsible for the rise of radicalism in Indonesia: political repression, poor governance, global awareness, and Arabia. He contends that it is a matter both global and local: globalization has raised the consciousness of Indonesian Muslims to the injustices suffered by Muslim populations worldwide, thereby fuelling the anti-American sentiment, while local socio-economic deterioration has also brought religion to the forefront of identity construction (Muzakki 2014:9).

Many Indonesian Muslims believe that: "both Indonesia and the Muslim world are caught in a 'multi-dimensional crisis' [that] is economic, political, cultural, and moral" (Fealy 2004:106). This is driven by two main factors: on the one hand, a hostility towards the West, which is seen as corrupting the Islamic community, and on the other hand, a distance from the essential Islamic teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Ibid). The Islamic resurgence across the archipelago "cannot be separated from the global trend toward conservatism that has swept Islam since the 1979 Iranian revolution" (Beech 2007:2). Since 1998, Indonesian Islam has gradually shifted from a faith regarded as widely peaceful and tolerant to one that is progressively permeated by Salafist currents. This was concretized by the emergence of fundamentalist and radical groups (e.g. *Darul Islam*, *Jemaah Islamiyah*, *Front Pembela Islam*, *Hizbut Tahrir*, etc.) shortly after the beginning of the reform era. "In the case of Indonesian radical groups, the influence of

Muslim Brotherhood and Wahhabi thinking is especially pronounced. The desire to replicate Islam's 'Golden Age' is both Utopian and authoritarian" (Fealy 2004:107).

Scholars tend to agree that growing Islamization across the archipelago—marked notably by the infiltration of Salafist ideology, the dramatic surge in veiling practice among women, the increase in pro-Sharia endorsers—has much to do with the Middle East. A high percentage of the leaders of radical organizations across Indonesia are Arabic, and thousands of mosques and Islamic schools are funded by Middle Eastern groups mandated to advocate spiritual purification (Beech 2007:2). "The Islamization process in recent decades has led to even greater numbers of Muslims seeking a 'purer' form of the faith than that manifest around them, and many have turned to a more 'Middle Eastern-style' Islam for guidance" (Fealy 2004:110). The purification of Indonesian Islam typically subsumes an anti-liberal stance, well exemplified in a 2005 *fatwa*[26] declaring secularism, pluralism and religious liberalism to be incompatible with Islam (Bruinessen 2011:3).

As elucidated in the previous section, Islamic discourses, symbols and currents originating from the Arabian Peninsula have indirectly made their way into conservative Islamic punk. A tangible example of this is the anti-liberalist and very overt anti-Zionist stance that is promoted through zines, song lyrics, and merchandise. Also noteworthy are the groups who have appropriated the black jihadist flag in their punk-inspired artwork online, while others participate in public protests to defend the use of this flag in Java. Furthermore, many of the key figures in the Muslim Punk movement use Arabic script—a language that is inaccessible to the majority of the Indonesian population—and Middle Eastern imagery throughout their social media profiles to boost their own claim to authority as Muslim spokespeople. This brings me to my next line of analysis about branding Muslim piety through merchandise.

[26] A fatwa is a formal ruling on a point of Islamic law that is made by a recognized specialist or authority.

3.2.2 Articulating Politics and Piety Through the Islamic Market

In this section, I analyze how punk has developed as a commodity in Java against the backdrop of an Islamic market. I look at how merchandizing has borrowed from punk imagery to create an accessible but unconventional religious lifestyle with urban appeal.

How is it possible that punk, a scene whose very survival requires distance from the mainstream, could become a tool to increase the visibility, accessibility, and trendiness of Islam? The answer, I suggest, has much to do with the presence of a growing Islamic market in Java. Among Java's younger generations, particularly millennials, messages and ideas are constantly marketed to the masses through branding and merchandizing techniques, and consequently spread across multiple platforms of communication—both off and online. As active consumers, Java's youths also give new meaning to objects, symbols, and discourses by engaging with them in alternative contexts.

Islam in the Javanese context has thrived not *despite* capitalism but rather *because* it interacts with it. I concur with many contemporary scholars in proposing that the reciprocal relationship between religion and marketplace does not depreciate their inherent value, but rather stimulates new forms of religious agency: "[W]hat appears to be contradictory is often just as easily seen as symbiotic and creative" (Santana and Erickson 2016:80). In this view, I argue that religion is adapting to neoliberal structures and appropriating modern tools of communication not only to survive, but to prosper. "Religions are […] not mere bystanders, or victims, of the neoliberalization process. Whereas many feel uncomfortable about the rising power of economic reasoning, others rejoice in it." (Martikainen 2017:85)

While punks have long claimed to be anti-consumerist, the embodiment of punk was always intrinsically entangled with aesthetics—in some instances even reliantly so. For years, this very aesthetic has been exploited by corporations to fit a prepackaged image selling the illusion of

teenage defiance and nonconformity. Punks in Java, like elsewhere, are active consumers, but they prefer to participate in an underground DIY economy rather than a mainstream, commercial one. The boundary between these two realms is rather blurry, as some merchandisers gain enough popularity to establish their own brand in a rather commercial fashion while still conserving their punk credibility. Some bands may protest capitalism and consumerism through their music on stage, but, behind the scenes, their income relies heavily on the profits from their merchandise sales.

While the commitment to DIY varies greatly between individuals of different scenes, I argue that punk has never been fully independent from the structures of capitalism nor from the influences of neoliberalism. In a sense, punk continues to exist like religion does, not *despite* the market, but *because* of it. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that punk continuously needs to reposition itself accordingly to mainstream structures: if we consider it to be a 'sub-culture' of the dominant, mainstream, capitalist public, it would cease to exist without its parent culture. In other words, any anti-capitalist discourse needs capitalism to assure its survival. On the other hand, punk has been commodified by the market, precisely because it exemplifies an appealing alternative: "Youth 'rebellion' is a great marketing tool and fuels the ongoing innovation that capitalists need to sell us the 'hot new thing'. *Rebellion sells*" (Haenfler 2012:139). Granted, this idea is not new. What I want to analyze here specifically is the commodification of both sacred (i.e. Islamic) and profane (i.e. punk) elements through the processes of branding and merchandizing, which contribute in turn to the visibility, appeal, and accessibility of the Muslim Punk movement. Its success relies heavily on the importance individuals attribute to style.

> Style is a core aspect of religious aesthetics. Inducing as well as expressing shared moods, a shared religious style—materialized in, for example, collective prayer, a shared corpus of songs, images, symbols, and rituals, but also a similar style of clothing and material culture—makes people feel at home. Thriving on repetition and serialization, style induces a mode of participation via techniques of mimesis and emulation that yield a particular habitus. In a world of constant change, style offers some degree of continuity and stability. (Meyer 2011:167)

Style is part and parcel of identity whether this identity is rooted in matters religious, subcultural, or other. It is the "sine qua non of identity" (Ibid) because it provides a sense of collective belonging that people can accessibly identify through aesthetics. Individuals can candidly assert their affiliations by wearing certain garments or sporting specific brands. With several groups now offering an extensive line of merchandise, the Muslim Punk movement thrives off its own brand, supported by their target audience, i.e. trendy young Muslims with sufficient monetary resources to consume and display such an identity. Furthermore, by consuming such products and discourses, youths are playing an active role in the relegation of religious identity into the public sphere.

Using the example of dakwah radio in the Javanese city of Surakarta, Sunarwoto argues that popular culture provides a new space for Muslims to share their views on Islam (2013:200). He adds that dakwah radio, a fitting illustration of the religion and pop culture relationship, "has played a pivotal role in creating what is termed the Muslim public sphere, which is shaped by the contestation of the authoritative interpretation of Islamic symbols" (Sunarwoto 2013:201). A commodified good like a t-shirt or a poster can function like a technological tool for communication in the sense that it is both "an object of consumption and it facilitates consumption in its circulation of public meanings" (Barendregt 2008:166).

The meanings that are circulated through Punk Muslim or Punk Hijrah's merchandise are multilayered: they signal an Islamic identity while also referencing symbols or imagery that is quintessentially punk. In some cases, they also exhibit an explicitly political stance, such as pro-Palestine or anti-liberal. The 'dakwah streetwear' line Keepers of the Deen (KOTD) sells t-shirts with clever Islamic messages that parody punk bands (see Figures 13, 14), well-known streetwear brands like Vans, and institutions like the Hard Rock Café. *Deen* is the anglicized form of the Arabic word *din*, which means religion or faith. Aside from drawing on punk emblems, KOTD are also overt in showcasing their political stance as defenders of Islam, just as the name of the brand implies. Akin to Punk Hijrah and Hijra Core, their merchandise features

Arabic words and symbols, anti-liberal slogans, and pro-Palestine support. In 2017, their military-inspired jacket with the slogan ‘Defend Al-Aqsha’ (the mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem) sold out in just three days (see Figure 15).

Figure 13. **Left:** ‘Hijrah to strangers’ parody t-shirt sold at Keepers of the Deen online store, Instagram.com/kotd.muslimhood, August 15, 2015, **Right:** Minor Threat’s 1983 ‘Out of Step’ album cover, Dischord records, Wikipedia.org.

Figure 14. **Left:** ‘Khalifah’ parody t-shirt sold at Keepers of the Deen online store, Instagram.com/kotd.muslimhood, August 15, 2015, **Right:** The Ramones’ logo designed by Arturo Vega in 1975, Wikipedia.org.

Figure 15. ‘Defend Al-Aqsha’ jacket sold at Keepers of the Deen online store, Instagram.com/kotd.muslimhood, September 3, 2017.

To clarify, I do not mean to imply that consumption of religious products is new, but rather that the forms utilized to perform dakwah or to render religion more accessible have proliferated through their interaction with capitalist and neoliberal dynamics, a matter that has become all the more tangible in recent years.

> While consumption of older religious products may have been related to Islamic movements and their call for the preservation of virtues such as modesty, obedience, and piety, the emerging consumer culture presented here is also concerned with safeguarding the same virtues but it deploys new commodified cultural forms and spaces for this purpose. Increasingly, these forms and spaces are borrowed and inventively reworked from global (Western) consumer brands and practices. (Echchaibi 2012:32)

To recapitulate, branding is an effective strategy to capture the attention and interest of urban Muslim youths: it allows for the reorientation of traditional symbols and meanings; it refers to a collective identity; and it offers access into the public sphere. Furthermore, it serves as an indicator of class. Beyond its capacity to reveal a political stance and a religious identity, “consumption in the modern age is conceptualized as one of the most crucial, defining

experiences of the class" (Hasan 2009:241). This feeds back into the loop about the expansion of the urban Muslim middle-class in Java. While it is cool to be punk, it is also reputable to be Muslim, and prestigious to be a consumer. It is through merchandise and commodified goods that conservative groups of the Muslim Punk movement offer urban youths the possibility to buy into this multifaceted identity.

An important question arises from the reciprocal relationship between popular culture and religion: does this exchange lead to the individualization of religion? More specifically, is the marketing and commodification of the Muslim Punk movement contributing to the individualization of Islam in Java? Many scholars who have recently studied the rapport of popular culture and religion argue that neoliberal tendencies have shifted the axis of faith onto the individual. As such, institutional religions have become less of a collective affair. The proliferation of religious presence online, for example, may enable individuals to shape, contest, create and share different religious identities, while also allowing them to interact with new spiritual resources and alternative forms of religious governance (Meintel 2012).

The media and the market may disrupt conventional religious structures but they are also "privileged as effective agents to eventually enable a pious revalorization of the individual" (Echchaibi 2012:38). Despite evidence of this process affecting institutional religions, the collective remains a powerful aspect of religious sociality (Meintel 2014). Meintel argues that new religious collectivities form moral communities that "nonetheless transmit values, norms, beliefs and, just as important, principles that are implicit and taken for granted" (2014:199). Therefore, we could consider that the Muslim Punk movement at once forges a religious collectivity, since their primary function revolves around Islam, and also interacts with forms of media, technology and popular culture that subject religious identity to a process of individualization. I will further address the paradoxical interplay between Islam and individualism in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: The Many Faces of Java's Muslim Punks

The following subsections present the trajectories and the opinions of Java's punks regarding religion. I begin with a general range of outlooks towards religion offered by punks with varying levels of religious affiliation across Java. This is important in order to understand that there is a significant difference between people who claim specifically to be part of Muslim Punk and others who, in contrast, identify as punks who happen to also be Muslim.

Next, I continue with the idea of an Alternative Brotherhood made up of conservative punks, which echoes the shift from older left-leaning punks to younger right-leaning punks. I then analyze how Do-It-Yourself ethos has been appropriated to represent an entrepreneurial spirit, which further exemplifies the bonds between pop culture, religion, and neoliberal dynamics. I also discuss how pop icons of Islam have contributed to the growth and visibility of this movement among younger generations in their capacity to embody the reconciliation between two worlds through their celebrity personas.

I conclude with Punk Hijrah, the controversial trend back to Islam that has recently gained traction and grown surprisingly popular among the underground community. In this last subsection, I present the trajectories of some individuals who have undergone personal transformations from punk to Islam, while also including the opinions of other punks who have witnessed this trend in their social circles. Finally, I analyze how the Punk Hijrah movement results from more than just a religious reorientation. Far from being a strictly isolated matter of piety, I argue that the Punk Hijrah phenomenon is also a consequence of both aging and punk disenchantment. I invoke the concept of transcendence here to showcase how aging punks negotiate an ongoing involvement with punk while increasing their overall religious adherence.

4.1 Rupture or Reconciliation? Punks' Views Regarding Religion

Religion, albeit a highly personal affair, is rendered public in the Indonesian context. Within punk spaces, religion is sometimes opposed, but it is usually politely ignored or accommodated. Among the majority of the more left-leaning punks that I encountered, Islam is regarded as part of one's cultural identity and does not interfere with participation in the punk scene. A few punks that I met presented themselves as atheists, though this was quite uncommon. An aspect to consider is the difference between religion as an institution and individual spirituality or faith. Following the example of famous Western bands like Bad Religion, some punks are very critical towards institutionalized religion, but self-identify as Muslim nonetheless. For example, a member of Black Boots who is a practicing Muslim told me that he sees religion as a tool used by politicians to brainwash Indonesians (Y5). There is a difference here between religion as a system and personal piety.

Andi, a key member of the music scene in Jogja, was the first to explain to me the layered dichotomy of Islam and punk. According to him, there are three different categories of people. The first is the most common: people like him and his friends who participate in the punk scene and who are moderately religious (they pray, fast during Ramadan, maintain a personal relationship with God), and for whom the reconciliation between Islam and punk is natural. The second category comprises those who undergo hijrah and become very distant from their punk lifestyle, signalling more of a rupture between the two realms. The third category is that of Sufis, which he describes as people who are "hardcore punks by night and hardcore Sufi Muslims by day" (Y4). In this section, I will present a few statements from punks who fall into the first category, presenting on one hand their stance regarding the natural coexistence of punk and Islam and, on the other hand, their opinion regarding the second category, those of hijrah punks. I unfortunately did not discuss with anyone who identified as falling into the third category of punk Sufis and therefore do not analytically address this category.

According to the frontman of a punk band from East Java, there is no conflict between punk and religion, but some aspects should simply remain separate. For example, if you choose to sing about animal rights, it should be a type of "activism without involving religious motive" (Rehan, M5). Iwan, another Malang-based musician suggested that religion be a personal view while music is rather perceived as a hobby: "they have different functions" (M8). He admits that he is not consistent with his religious practice, but he considers spirituality to be crucial. As an adherent of NU, his background is more traditionalist, and he believes in peaceful practice and tolerance towards others. In his circle, he explains, they are taught to be kind to others, because the Sunnah tells them to love one another and not harm others even if they are outside Islam. His band used to have intentions to implement religious messages into their music, but then they decided that this would be too big of a responsibility. Instead, they choose to practice what they preach. Their lyrics are a form of social commentary, addressing issues of labour laws and job security. Despite participating in the local punk scene, he says that he takes some distance from the lifestyle aspects that are explicitly haram, such as drinking alcohol. There are occasions where he feels conflicted about whether or not to accept alcoholic drinks and admits that he feels remorse when he does. When the band is on tour, he makes an effort to find appropriate spaces to carry out ritual prayer, even though some of his peers find this odd (M8).

Mellani, a female punk musician from Jakarta, tells me that "punk and religion have different paths, different beliefs" (J7). However, she does not think they are irreconcilable. As a practicing Muslim, Mellani believes that: "Islam teaches us not to give up and punk teaches us not to give in to the systems and the status quo. They both teach you about the struggle" (J7). Julian, another Muslim who is very active in the underground music scene, explains: "We know we shouldn't do this, we say we shouldn't do DIY and be independent and be punk. But we keep doing it every day. In the day, we work at our job, but at night we're here [at Houtenhand]. We do both, it's about balance." (M4)

There is debate among individuals about what is considered morally acceptable in Javanese society. According to Yudi from Bandung: "Some don't use the underground merchandise, they say that's haram. But religion itself doesn't say that music is haram, or that using band

merchandise is haram" (B6). Mike, who is also a practicing Muslim, offered a critique of religion as an institution, speaking particularly about conservative youth who follow trends without questioning them: "During their life, they just want to be like a good person. So, they get indoctrination to be somebody else, to be more close with God [sic]. So, they become the society with the bomb" (J3). Inspiring himself from punk's DIY ethos, Mike reverses discourse about what is haram in Indonesian society: "Why is *babi* (pig) haram? It isn't: the human is. The human is very dirty. You have to think about yourself. Some people have the wrong mindset and view babi as haram: but no, the human is haram" (J3).

Alcohol also brings up a clash of opinions. Take Denda, for example, a passionate musician in his late 20s that I met in Jogja midway through the month of Ramadan. While he did attend many concerts during this period, he explained that he abstains completely from consuming alcohol during the Holy Month. He says he sees no problem with alcohol otherwise, but during Ramadan he finds it important to give precedence to his faith. Through this personal decision, he shows a commitment to Islam without removing himself altogether from the underground community (Y14). I later met other young men who undertook the same pact, abstaining from alcohol or smoking during the entire duration of Ramadan, but resuming these practices once the Holy Month had finished.

In Bandung, among advocates for the LGBTQ+ community, some of the more left-leaning female punks found that Islam as an institution was restrictive and intolerant. Marisa, a punk who was formerly Muslim but converted to Hinduism in order to get married with a non-Muslim, shared that Islam is a big obstacle for the acceptance of minority groups in Java, such as members of the LGBTQ+ community (B2). She still practices Muslim rituals, despite her conversion, but she criticizes Islam for its rising prejudice towards non-Muslims. As a strong advocate for women's rights, she also voiced apprehension and concern towards fundamentalist groups, especially those in favour of creating an Islamic state: "It would be bad news for women" (Marisa, B2).

Agata, a female punk whom I met in Malang, is one of the few people that I met who self-identified as Christian. She suggested that this faith affords her more freedom than Islam, explaining: "I can go to church and after drink alcohol and I don't think that's a problem. I don't think God would judge me, […] he put me in the place that I am now" (Agata, M3). In Jogja, I encountered Lydia, a female punk musician and activist who strongly upheld atheism and aligned her firm political stance with her rejection of God (Y6). One of her Muslim friends, Prida, a member of a local feminist collective, explained that intolerance had been gaining momentum in Jogja over the past few years, initiated by a particular fundamentalist Islamic group. She mentioned two events in the same year that were raided by this group, who was additionally supported by the state and local police. She added: "It's also the same year that the transgender Islamic school was shut down; like a bunch of things happened. It's all political. […] Queer business owners have been pushed out of Jogja quietly. […] This used to be such a safe haven for artistic creation" (Y11). Based on her experience, the rise of intolerance within the city is directly linked to the growing presence and power of fundamentalist Islamic groups, and it strongly affects underground communities as well as the rest of the dominant public.

Moreover, the normativity of Islam is seen as part of the reason why punk remains so stigmatized. I asked some punks about the responses of their friends and family when they became involved with their local scenes. Doni recalls: "In junior high school, I wore a t-shirt with the inverted cross, and my father, who is very religious, was very upset about it" (B5). Asep echoes the response of his religious parents when he first began attending punk concerts:

> There were a lot of people smoking at the gigs, so when I got back home, my mom was just shocked. What? Why do you look like that? Why do you smell like smoke? She cried. She thought I would turn out bad. But I was just attending gigs and I liked the music and enjoying my time. And then I wanted to make a band and play music. […] But after I graduated, [my parents] hoped I would stop, they thought it was just a phase. (B8)

Similarly, Rahadian explains: "Growing up in a conservative family, my parents were shocked. When I got my first earring, that stuff, and tattoos [were] looked upon as very criminal. You won't get a job if you have tattoos, that's the biggest concern. Parents always talk about that.

[It's] funny how we [as punks] encounter religious parents and religious society" (B7). Prida depicts the risks of participating in the punk scene: "Punk is still really considered as an interesting intersection of defiance. […] Like you can challenge a bit but if you go too far then maybe you can get kicked out of your religion and excommunicated from your family. Or arrested" (Y11). The common perception among self-identified punks is that they remain social outcasts in the eyes of the dominant public. Parents from conservative backgrounds are not always supportive of their decision to take part in the scene, since the look and lifestyle appear largely antithetical to Islam. Rama from Jakarta explains that he loves playing in a punk band, but he is careful to respect his parents' wishes when it comes to Islamic practice. Although he does drink alcohol during concerts, he hides this from his parents: "It's better if they don't know" (J8). Although he is in his mid-30s and works a respectable job, he still feels it important to conceal certain aspects of his punk lifestyle from his parents.

4.2 The Alt. Brotherhood

In this section, I begin by presenting some characteristics of the conservative punk Brotherhood. In order to understand the link between piety and punk in this context, I invoke the idea of DIY as an entrepreneurial ethos, situating this fundamental punk principle in a largely neoliberal framework. Finally, I address how pop icons of Islam have conferred legitimacy to the Muslim Punk movement through their own trajectories and explore how consumer culture contributes to their ongoing success as spokespeople of Islam. These concepts echo the idea of a growing Islamic market.

Conservative punk scenes in Java have already been documented in recent years (Saefullah 2017, 2018), but since these scenes are heterogeneous, it is problematic to define exactly *who* they are and *what* they stand for. Based on the data that I have collected in person and online, I elaborate here the idea of an Alternative Brotherhood—a term I have chosen intentionally to evoke both Islamic discourse and exclusivity to men.

The Brotherhood of conservative punks not only advocates Islamic practice but is also critical towards several aspects of punk lifestyle. Curiously, adherents of this Brotherhood retain their affiliation to the scene by utilizing the 'punk' appellation and some of its symbols but, at the same time, they distance themselves from behaviours and activities that contradict Islamic doctrine. In doing so, they appear more socially appropriate in the eyes of the non-punk dominant public. Further, this group tends to be exclusive to men. According to Jaya, a Malang-based musician, "it's less acceptable for Muslim women to go to underground music shows than men. Maybe their parents forbid them to go" (M6). Jojo agreed: "Muslim women perhaps want to be involved in the music scene but face more barriers than men because they are expected to fulfill Muslim values like modesty. That doesn't work with punk" (J2).

Women, already marginalized in the punk scene, are almost consistently absent from groups in the Muslim Punk movement. Over the entire year that I followed the online profiles of conservative punk groups, I have noticed that women are rarely involved. I asked around, wondering whether women are intentionally excluded from participating or whether they chose not to become engaged with such groups. While many expressed that this absence was likely representative of the gender divide in punk, one person replied that it is due to the fact that only men are deemed appropriate to assume the roles of Islamic leaders and scholars, thereby suggesting that women are consciously sidelined from the movement. These groups, he said, target males because they have the opportunity to become spokespersons for Islam later, in the form of an ustad, a Muslim scholar (Wahyu, M1). If producing Islamic leaders and scholars is indeed a conscious effort of the Muslim Punk trend, then it also goes without saying that Islamic proselytism is one of their primary goals.

On their public Instagram profile, Punk Muslim advocates community-bonding and a 'positive Muslim attitude' through activities such as discussion groups, seminars, and camping trips. They retain their affiliation to the punk scene by utilizing—and even *preaching*—DIY ethos as a life philosophy (see Figure 16).

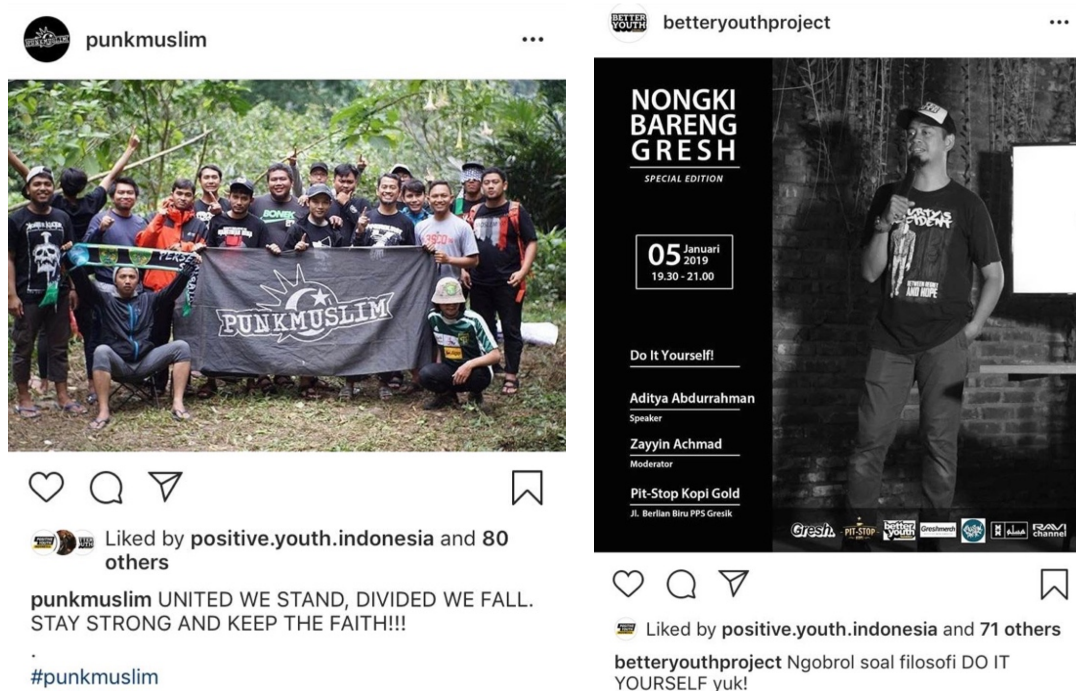


Figure 16. **Left:** Punk Muslim youth camping trip, Instagram.com/punkmuslim, February 24, 2019. **Right:** Poster for a discussion on DIY featuring Aditya Abdurrahman (Mas Aik), Instagram.com/betteryouthproject, January 4, 2019.

Better Youth Project and Punkajian do this as well. In fact, Punkajian Bekasi[27] provides a definition of DIY on their Instagram account (see Figure 17). The ethos is presented as an entrepreneurial spirit that should be embodied by Muslims to help sustain the dakwah[28] community. In the caption to the picture below, they even quote Imam Hassan Al-Banna[29] in the Book of Risal Ta'alim to anchor the notion of DIY in Islamic principles:

> "*Hendaklah engkau memiliki proyek usaha ekonomi betapapun kayanya engkau, utamakan proyek mandiri betapapun kecilnya, dan cukupkanlah dengan apa yang ada pada dirimu betapa pun tingginya kapasitas keilmuanmu.*"

[27] Bekasi is a city in West Java, on the border of Jakarta.

[28] Dakwah (or da'wa) is the transmission of a religious message, or rather the proselytization of Islam.

[29] Hassan al-Banna was an Egyptian imam best known for founding the Muslim Brotherhood.

> "You have to have an economic business project no matter how rich you are, prioritize independent projects no matter how small, and make enough of what you have, regardless of your scientific capacity" (Punkajian Bekasi, November 15, 2018)

Do It Yourself

As Muslims, we must start from ourselves to make a change. To finance a community, it is necessary to make an effort. This does not mean individualist, but rather independent, not dependent on others.

"Becoming good is a process."

Figure 17. Do It Yourself definition according to Punkajian Bekasi and translation (by author), Instagram.com/punkajian_bekasi, November 15, 2018.

In many pictures featured online, groups of young men are seen holding one finger up, which is an echo to *Salam Satu Jari*, the underground One Finger Movement. This gesture is a symbolic reference to Tauhid, the belief in one God, Allah (Ari, J6). In some photos, young men are seen wearing punk regalia, and in others, they adorn traditional Indonesian Islamic dress. In a few cases, punks of the Alternative Brotherhood are seen sporting military-like garments. One photo posted by Punkajian Bekasi particularly caught my attention; it features roughly 20 young men, half of them wearing green army-like vests (see Figure 18). The accompanying caption also alludes to a pseudo-military discourse or structure, as the text discusses the enemy of dakwah, the strength of cadres[30], and the spirit of sacrifice.

[30] A cadre is a group of trained personnel, typically forming a religious or political faction. It is often affiliated with a kind of military unit or structure.

Figure 18. A group of men at an event organized by Punkajian Bekasi, Instagram.com/punkajian_bekasi, January 30, 2019.

The Punk Hijrah account showcases artwork promoting personal transformation. The artwork below signals the ‘migration’ from punk to Muslim through physical appearance, by depicting a young man who has given up his punk mohawk to instead wear a *peci* or *songkok*[31], indicative of tradition (see Figure 19). It is accompanied by the slogan ‘It’s time to change’ and the caption ‘Hey Ho Let’s Go Hijrah’, which is a play on lyrics of The Ramones’ famous song “Blitzkrieg Bop”.

[31] A peci or songkok is a cap worn by Muslim men in Indonesia (and other parts of Southeast Asia).

127 likes

punkhijrah Sudah waktunya.. Hey Ho Let's Go Hijrah!

Figure 19. Artwork with slogan ‘It’s time to change’ posted by Punk Hijrah, Instagram.com/punkhijrah, July 4, 2017.

Some groups host events and activities in public places such as cafés, warungs, community centres and mosques to circulate information. Events like public discussions and seminars are often supported by Indonesia Tanpa JIL (*Jaringan Islam Liberal*), a community that opposes the Liberal Islam Network. The anti-liberal stance is a recurring one, embodied both in merchandise and in public discourse. The success of proselytism within the underground community is accomplished in part thanks to well-respected musicians who have themselves become spokespeople for Islam. Musicians from popular Javanese bands such as No Man’s Land, Jeruji, Tengkorak, Sheila on 7, Pas Band, and Betrayer are acclaimed for having embarked on the hijrah path and embodying a return to Islam despite their past (or ongoing) affiliations with the underground music scene.

According to Julian, a respected music expert living in Malang, these personalities help motivate some of the youth to make the transition themselves towards more rigorous Muslim faith (M4).

He drew a parallel with dangdut[32] singer Rhoma Irama, who himself became a famous spokesperson for Islam in the 1970s when he began advocating piety in his role as a celebrity, subsequently contributing to the popularization of Islamic popular music (M4). More recently, celebrities of the underground music communities like Donny Supriyadi (Jeruji), Yukie (Pas Band), Salman Al Jugjawy (Sheila on 7—see Figure 20), Derry Sulaiman (Betrayer), Ucay (Rocket Rockers), Ombat Nasution (Tengkorak) have served as icons to help direct Muslim youths towards a path of increased piety. On a similar wavelength, musicians from two different punk bands in Malang informed me that they became more interested in Islam—notably in reading holy scriptures—thanks to the guitarist of another popular local band who invited them to read the Qur'an and become more spiritual (M8, M9). Such figures are key to the maintenance and ongoing popularization of the Alternative Brotherhood.

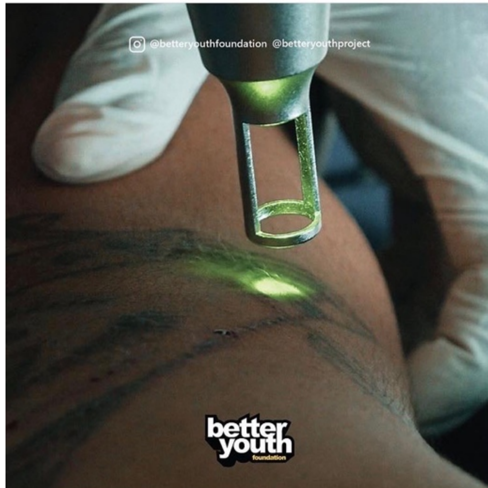
Figure 20. Ex-musician Salman Al Jugjawy wearing a shirt that says, 'Islam, my religion and yours. Grateful,' Instagram.com/salman_al_jugjaway, February 16, 2019.

[32] Dangdut is a popular form of folk music combining Malay, Arabian and Western influences.

These new spokespeople of Islam offer insight on appropriate Muslim behaviour, which is particularly interesting in the context of the underground music community. Some take a firm stance against alcohol and drug consumption, while others encourage musicians to use their art as a platform for dakwah. Additionally, some have become advocates for a free tattoo removal services in order to help 'purify' punks who wish to become 'better Muslims' (see Figure 21). This trend exemplifies how some punks can perform a double role as adherent and as critic of their own scene. While they embrace some aspects of punk, they also reject other aesthetic and behavioural norms based on a newfound scheme of what is and what is not morally sanctioned by Islam.

According to Andi, the free tattoo removal service that has recently emerged across Java is part of the collective movement back to Islam, prompted in part by growing influences of Arab Islam (Y4). When I asked different groups of punks about this service, one explained that: "Prayer is impure when you have tattoos. *Wudhu*[33] is not enough. The water cannot be absorbed and clean your skin if it is tattooed" (Tamara, Y1). Another suggested that it be haram to inflict pain on oneself and that is the main reason why tattoos are not acceptable in Islam (Jaya, M6). In Bandung, Doni clarified that: "It's actually not free, you have to pay for it by reciting a surah from the Holy Qur'an. […] It's a small price to pay to show your religiousness." (B5).

[33] Wudhu is the ritual cleansing or purification of certain parts of the body (hands, mouth, arms, head, feet) in preparation for prayer.



Liked by **adityaabdurrahman** and **93 others**

betteryouthfoundation PROGRAM HAPUS TATO

betteryouthfoundation PROGRAM HAPUS TATO
.
Menemani hijrah pemuda, telah menjadi tekad Better Youth Foundation. Seperti apapun kelamnya masa lalu, masa depan penuh berkah masih bisa diraih.
.
Program ini akan diberikan secara gratis untuk pemuda yang mempunyai tekad kuat dalam memenuhi panggilan agamanya...
.
ISLAM

Tattoo removal program.
Accompanying the migration (hijrah) of youth has become the determination of the Better Youth Foundation. As with any dark past, a blessed future can still be achieved.
This program will be made free of charge for young people who have a strong determination to fulfill their religious values to Islam.

Figure 21. Better Youth Foundation advertising the tattoo removal program on their Instagram page, including the caption and its English translation (by author), Instagram.com/betteryouthfoundation, February 5, 2019.

In broaching the debate of tattoos in Islam, I also learned about the controversial case of a young Muslim girl named Iskarandy. A former punk, this young girl has many tattoos: including a very visible one on her forehead (see Figure 22). In April of 2018, she posted a photo of herself wearing the jilbab[34] with a caption "*Minta doanya biar bisa tobat sepenuhnya. Amin*" (Ask for prayer to be able to repent fully. Amen), causing a stir among thousands of followers. Comments were divided between supporters applauding her decision to wear the jilbab and skeptics accusing her of fishing for 'likes'. Some commented that she should have her tattoos removed first before she commits to wearing the jilbab. This echoes a general sentiment about the perceived incompatibility between something as 'sacred' as the jilbab and something as 'profane' as a tattoo, consequently implying that one would automatically tarnish—or even invalidate—the other. I spoke with a few Muslim women about the Iskarandy case. Firda

[34] In Indonesia, the term jilbab typically refers to a headscarf worn by Muslim women. In other countries, it may denote a long garment, but in this case, it rather resembles the hijab.

explained to me that she respected the young girl's decision to wear the jilbab and does not view her existing tattoos as obstacles to her faith because if she has truly changed, Allah will forgive her. However, she believes it would be haram for her to get more tattoos now that she has committed herself to Islam (Y2).

Figure 22. Iskarandy's controversial first appearance on Instagram wearing the jilbab, Instagram.com/iskarandy, April 11, 2018.

4.2.1 DIY as Entrepreneurial Ethos

One of the aspects that particularly stands out in the data presented above is an appropriation of the punk Do-It-Yourself philosophy as an entrepreneurial ethos. I draw from Rudnyckyj (2009a, 2009b) who has extensively studied the interrelation of economics and Islamic virtues in the case of Indonesian spiritual reformers. I argue that groups like Punk Muslim and Punk Hijrah integrate DIY as a philosophy of independent entrepreneurial action to benefit the greater Muslim community, framing it not as a counter-hegemonic principle but rather as an Islamic virtue.

In his work, Rudnyckyj elaborates the concept of 'market Islam'. This ethos is utilized by some spiritual reformers in Indonesia to enhance Islamic piety while simultaneously benefiting the project of national development, since it "emphasizes an ethics of hard work, responsibility, and accountability as the means to economic well-being" (Rudnyckyj 2009a:187). Furthermore, the values of "[s]elf-discipline, accountability, and entrepreneurial action are represented as Islamic virtues," to guide moral conduct both in and outside the workplace (Rudnyckyj 2009b:106). The idea is to form subjects who can successfully navigate through turbulent economic periods and moral crises, which benefits not only individual practitioners, but the larger community as well (Rudnyckyj 2009a:187).

While the Muslim Punk phenomenon may not involve the same workplace dynamic, I suggest that some of the groups tied to the movement do in fact offer something that resonates with Rudnyckyj's idea of market Islam. They position DIY as an entrepreneurial ethos and a mandatory effort to serve the collective Muslim community. As shown earlier in Figure 17, Punkajian defines DIY on their Instagram as an entrepreneurial spirit sanctioned by the Sunnah. They also claim that it is mandatory in the dakwah community to *sustain* the collective and *finance* all its needs. They give further legitimacy to this idea with a supporting passage from Imam Hassan Al-Banna. Punkajian specifies that the DIY ethos is rooted in *independence* and not *individualism*. There is, once again, a conscious effort to ensure that the Muslim Punk movement is branded as community-oriented rather than individualist.

Punkajian's take on DIY resembles the definition offered by Mike from Marjinal's, who defines it as the practice of "making maximal from minimal" (J3). This idea not only stipulates independent action from establishments and corporations, but it also echoes an entrepreneurial spirit. In this sense, DIY ethos could be a way to reconcile economic prosperity and Islam whilst circumventing—at least symbolically—the perceived individualist pitfalls of Western neoliberal ideology. Another paradox emerges here, as Muslim Punk groups symbolically reject

yet inherently rely on the market and on capitalist dynamics to exist. I will further elaborate on this idea in the next chapter.

4.2.2 Pop Icons of Islam

Another important aspect to consider in the success of the Muslim Punk trend is the persuasive power of celebrity status. I contend that youths are susceptible to the influence of popular figures, like the celebrities of the Muslim Punk movement, who amass and influence crowds of followers thanks to their existing visibility and credibility as pop culture icons.

Drawing again on the framework of the Islamic market, I argue that the fluid articulation of punk and Islam is not only embodied through commodified goods, but also personified and sensationalized through celebrity figures. Part of the reason why merchandise is so popular among youths is due to their strategic endorsement by influential pro-Islam personalities and musicians-*cum*-ustads. Once again, this is not a new phenomenon. Since the Islamic revival, religion is "increasingly both mediated and produced outside the direct control of political and religious elites' power" (Martikainen 2017:82). Pop preachers, televangelists, Islamic musicians, and more have long exemplified a reconciliation between popular culture and Islam both within and outside of Indonesia. However, I am particularly interested here in looking at the influential power of ex-musicians from the underground community who have embarked on the hijrah path and who now serve as spokespeople for greater Islamic practice. I analyze how these celebrity figures have been cast as religious authorities and consider how this new role affects both the movement and its members.

Donny Supriyadi, formerly known as Themfuck, is the ex-vocalist of Bandung's hardcore punk band Jeruji. Many of my participants quoted Donny as a popular punk hijrah personality. He left his band in 2014 after becoming increasingly interested in religion, notably thanks to the sermons of Aa Gym, a renowned Indonesian pop preacher. For the past few years Donny has been sharing his story on social media, demonstrating how a once-famous punk rocker who indulged in the controversial aspects of the lifestyle (e.g. alcohol, drugs, tattoos) can be redeemed as a good Muslim in the eyes of his family and community. Nowadays, he endorses the tattoo removal project as well as the Keepers of the Deen line of merchandise (see Figure 23).

Figure 23. Donny and his daughter with slogan 'Based on Quran & Hadits' for Keepers of the Deen, Instagram.com/kotd.muslimhood, March 15, 2016.

At the nexus of Islamic piety, fatherhood, and trendiness, Donny embodies the possibility of religious redemption for Java's punks. His celebrity status bestows upon him an unconventional form of authority that is legitimized through fans, media presence, and marketing. This reflects a decentralization of traditional authority coinciding with the Islamic revival, which has consequently "generated new figures of public piety, and created new publics (and counter-publics) through which Islamic teachings are constituted and contested throughout the so-called Muslim world" (Hoesterey 2012:38). This is another process by which Islam becomes more accessible to youths. Instead of traditional religious leaders, Muslim youths can turn to modern

and approachable figures like Donny Supriyadi who have already developed a celebrity status following a career in the underground music community.

> Unlike traditional elites whose authority rests on specialized education or relations to political or religious authority, or charismatic leaders viewed as extra-ordinary, celebrities often achieve their celebrity based on their ability to articulate and represent ordinariness. (Clark 2011:116)

In bridging the gap between the profane world of punk and the sacred world of Islam, ex-punk rocker Donny embodies the idea that *anyone* can make the return to Islam, regardless of their past. This is effective not only in making Islam seem more approachable and forgiving, but also in illustrating that youths can be devout *and* cool, like Donny.

Religious authority is fragmented, in great part, by the plethora of technological tools and platforms made available for individuals to accomplish dakwah. The Subchaos zine series, for example, could be interpreted as an alternative medium for dakwah. Religious authority in this case is not conferred through specialized education or leadership status, but through visibility, accessibility, and—arguably—boldness. Furthermore, Islam becomes more participatory in the public sphere thanks to public debates and informal activities hosted by groups like Punkajian and Punk Muslim. Not only is there is a greater diversity in the types of 'authorities' who can partake, but there is also a possibility for greater interaction from the public: "it is not just religious specialists who debate religion, but other educated persons and public figures. The distance between authorities and their audiences is diminished, and claims to the mantle of authority become more open." (Eickelman 2005:49)

Mas Aik, founder of Punk Muslim and of Better Youth Project, is a recurring participant in public debates, and he benefits from a widespread following thanks to his multiple, highly mediatized initiatives. He was involved in the hardcore punk scene from 1997 to 2014, which makes him an ideal spokesperson as a punk-*cum*-preacher. Ust. Salman Al Jugjawy (Sheila on 7) and ust. Derry Sulaiman (Betrayer) are two among a plethora of other ex-musicians who have

gone down the hijrah path like Donny and who are now called upon to share stories and insights during events. Since I did not have access to those events, I am unsure to what extent the ideas conveyed during these debates diverge from traditional discourse. However, based on the publicity found online, I suggest that the unconventional format and presentation of these events—along with the choice of moderator—is conceived expressly to target an audience of young, urban men, including those who still oscillate between the realms of 'underground' and 'mainstream' (see Figure 24).

Figure 24. Event co-hosted by Punkajian and Brothers in Faith: a debate between Islamic culture (*Budaya Islam*) and Western culture (*Budaya Barat*), Instagram.com/tanpajil, February 17, 2019.

The decentralization of religious authority in new media environments can also lead to a process of democratization:

> In Islam, for example, there has been an inflation of sources of authority, since through some local and specific consensus, almost any local teacher or mullah can issue a fatwa to guide a local community. Because new media provide multiple channels of access and

> encourage discursive interaction […], they bring about a democratization of knowledge and religious lifestyles. (Turner 2012:150)

Individuals who become involved in the Muslim Punk movement do not need a formal Islamic education to participate. It is more valuable, perhaps, for them to be equipped with the resources and the skill to circulate efficiently in new media environments.

While alternative forms of religious authority are multiplying, so too is the concern that younger generations are caught in a cult of following. According to some older member of the punk scene, youths are inclined to heedlessly follow the ideas promoted by alternative Islamic authorities like Donny and Mas Aik, who consequently gain momentum as their popularity grows. As Ari declared: "It's incredibly difficult to convince Javanese Muslims that there's anything wrong with becoming more Muslim" (J6). Java's youths, including those who are involved in the punk scene, are perceived by older Javanese punks as being far more susceptible to trends. They are regarded by their elders as being "blinded by brotherhood" (Asep, B8) and to be lacking critical thinking skills (Rahadian, B7; Jojo J2; Mike J3), thereby impulsively latching onto authority figures without questioning them. This could also help explain why the recent Muslim Punk movement has gained so much traction. Rhoma Irama, who famously caused a stir when he began using popular music as a form of dakwah, states the following: "Fans will always follow the behaviour of their idols. If an idol gives a positive image in his songs, the people will follow; but on the other hand, negative lyrics will produce negative attitudes among fans. An artist has a great responsibility in shaping the way his fans behave" (Irama 2011:188). Drawing on this quote, I contend that Muslim Punk icons are playing a highly influential role in the circulation and the reception of Islamic discourse among their fans and followers.

4.3 Punk Hijrah

Hijrah is the Arabic term for migration. In Islamic doctrine, hijrah can entail either a physical or spiritual journey in which an individual 'migrates' towards an abode of Islam. According to one punk: "Hijrah literally means going to a state of nothingness, completely purified of the past life and ready to become a new person" (Ari, J6). In the spiritual sense, it means leaving behind a profane lifestyle and identity in favour of a newfound sacred self, one that is fully consecrated to the Islamic faith. In this section, I will present the personal accounts of some punks who have undergone personal transformations echoing the hijrah trend, and the voices of others who have been affected by it. I also include opinions from some members of the underground community as to why hijrah has been so popular among punks recently. At first glance, the Punk Hijrah phenomenon appears as a direct reverberation of the Islamic revival, an opportunity for Muslims to become more devout in their everyday lives. However, religious motivations are seldom isolated, and a sudden religious reorientation—as documented in conversion trajectories—often attests to other life transitions, such as a change of partner, a cathartic experience, or a death in the family. I argue, therefore, that the Punk Hijrah phenomenon must be analyzed beyond an exclusively religious lens.

I begin with the personal account of Abdullah in Jogja. This is a particularly interesting case since he embarked on the hijrah path for approximately one year, during which he completely distanced himself from the underground community but resumed participation in the punk scene in 2015. Abdullah had been active in the punk scene since he was a teenager. His parents allowed him to participate as long as he practiced *sholat*[35] (daily prayer) and refrained from drinking alcohol. He respected these conditions, but as time went on, he felt that his friends in the scene increasingly lacked respect for his abstinence from alcohol and that their behaviours created a rather distasteful environment for him. In 2014, with a baby on the way, he decided it was time

[35] Sholat (Indonesian), also called salah or salat, is daily ritual worship in Islamic, which is to be performed at five prescribed times during the day.

for hijrah. This was partially due to the fact that his wife was pregnant, and that he did not want his son to "grow up in the same haram environment of party, alcohol and drugs" that he had experienced as a youth in the punk scene. He also expressed that he felt less comfortable in punk spaces and he wanted to become a better Muslim, even if it meant alienating himself from his group of peers. Through hijrah, he says: "I was more critical of people who did not practice Islam." He also admitted being influenced by imams and scholars of Saudi Arabia. In doing so, he found himself dissociating not only from his social circle, but also from Javanese Islam, which he described in hindsight as being "more tolerant". Abdullah explains that most children who attend a *pesantren*[36] (Islamic school) like him are taught to follow their teachers and refrain from asking questions. This practice, he explained, is sanctioned by a *hadith*[37] that forbids the challenge of authority. Former pesantren students tend to lack critical insight about their religion if this notion persists into adulthood. In 2015, Abdullah returned to the punk community, explaining that hijrah had caused too large a distance between himself and his friends in the scene. That year, he even released an album in which half the songs address the topic of Islam. In itself, this album exemplifies a "compromise between two worlds" (Abdullah, Y7).

Most punks that I met in Malang expressed little concern about the hijrah trend. I did, however, speak with a young man at Houtenhand who was not against the idea. He justified his view by explaining that punk and other underground scenes have limits, and that, in the end, a good Muslim should always "choose family life and responsibility over music scenes" (Johan, M7). Punk musician Iwan in Malang explained that he is becoming more religious and taking some distance from the scene because he is "getting older and [wants] to follow this path" (M8). Similarly, musician Eko told me that he underwent a recent change, about a year ago, fuelled by a motivation to "learn more about [his] religion, to become closer to God" and develop a better understanding of religious texts. Despite participating in the scene, he understands the stigma about the underground community because it goes against cultural and religious norms

[36] Pesantren are Islamic boarding schools, common in Java.

[37] The words, action, and deeds of Prophet Muhammad.

(Eko, M9). Although these individuals did not claim to take part in the hijrah movement, they informed me that they were well aware of the trend.

In Jakarta, I met Bobbi, a young man who shared his recent life changes with me. He said he went through a tough depression in the previous year and he got through it thanks to religion and music. He said he had to give up punk and music as a primary activity when he was 29 because he wanted a steady income, so he could “make something out of [him]self”. He had quit drinking a few months prior and told me he plans to quit smoking soon as well. He says he still applies punk ideology in his work and in his life, but he is like the “common folk” now since he no longer dresses like a punk and he earns a steady income. He doesn’t go to gigs much anymore but still finds time to see some of his friends in the scene. He introduced me to his friend, a musician and DIY designer whom he criticizes for not taking up a stable job. Bobbi believes that his friend needs to “grow up” and get himself a “real job” so he can sustain his family, especially since his wife is about to give birth. Although he remains an active musician, he criticizes the punk lifestyle, stating firmly that “it’s not sustainable” (J5). Bobbi recognized that he was transforming from a punk into someone more respectable in the eyes of the dominant public. He also expressed that religion was occupying a much more central place in his life, but he did not mention the hijrah movement.

During my time in East Java, many musicians explained that hijrah is fine for those who wish to do so, but it is a strictly personal decision that should not be forced upon others. After a concert at the famous venue Houtenhand, punk enthusiast Jaya told me that many of his friends had recently embarked on the hijrah path, but he finds this unnecessary because “God created music, so how can it be haram?” (M6). In his opinion, it is no problem to “pray and play [music]”. Back in Jogja, Heru argued that, “the essence of punk is harmony: if people want to hijrah or not, that’s their own decision and that should be respected, in order to keep the harmony between people and within the community” (Y9). However, he believes that the hijrah phenomenon within the punk community is only a trend that will fade out or be replaced in the near future. Hendra, on the other hand, laments the recent presence of hijrah on social media:

> When you're in the scene here, you'll see on social media, many friends go to hijrah. On the media, I don't care what they do. I understand what they're doing, but for me, I don't care. It's personal. But the social media really makes it more dramatic, it's essentializing. They make a reminder that I'm going to die, that I should be praying. It's useful for spreading Muslim propaganda. […] People are making Facebook statuses about how to live, trying to control other people's lives. (B1)

The majority of Javanese punks that I encountered are Muslims who do not personally feel the need to hijrah. However, nearly all of them knew someone who had recently embarked on the path, usually within the last three or four years. Angga, for example, recalls how a member of a local post-rock band suddenly converted to what he called "radical Islam" a few years back. In doing so, this ex-musician burned all his music-related possessions and drastically cut off all ties to the music scene (Y10). Jojo discloses that one of the members of his old band decided to hijrah, consequently breaking up the band (J2). Arguably, this trend coincides with the larger Islamic revival and the rise of conservative ideology across the archipelago. However, there are other notable reasons pushing people to embark on the hijrah path that are important in grasping why this trend is affecting punks of a certain age group. These overlap with the motivations offered in the aforementioned accounts.

The first thing to consider is the socio-economic dimension. As Angga points out: "Bands tend to have a five-year expiry in Jogja because it's not sustainable to keep a punk band. Usually by the late 20s, people are more interested in stability and security" (Y10). The underground music scene, he suggests, is not economically profitable. Instead of remaining punk, people may instead go in the total opposite direction, even so far as hijrah, because they find themselves unfulfilled by the lack of opportunities offered by the music scene (Y10).

Another noteworthy factor is family pressure. As Wahyu remarks: "There is an important aspect of family ties in Java: if your parents don't want you to do something it's very difficult to go against their wishes, to disobey or disappoint them" (M1). He proposes that some punks, faced both with their parents' disapproval and the increasing pressure to belong to the dominant

society, are more likely to accomplish hijrah. Socio-economic factors and family pressures can of course be overlapping. Hijrah tends to coincide with a transition into a new life phase, prompted by marriage or children, which entails a new set of responsibilities and increased financial burden. Yudi, in Bandung, jokes that nowadays "punk is not dead: punk is *Dad*", which humorously accounts for the rising numbers of punks becoming fathers and the duty to adjust their lifestyle accordingly (B4). According to Hendra, this trend is triggered by conservative mentality along with familial pressures (B1):

> H: Punks who are feeling old, they go back to their parents' mentality. Some punks go to front, and others go the back, in looking for their identity.
>
> E: Yeah. What I'm finding through my research, concerning the hijrah phenomenon, is that it's not a religious thing only.
>
> H: It's not connecting only with the punk and metal scene, but also affects ordinary people. Punk goes to hijrah is a phenomenon right now. My sisters are still waiting for me to hijrah. It's a conservative thing brought to me from my parents, they're very conservative. […] My parents don't care about what I do, but they would be happy if I went to hijrah.
>
> E: Do you think it's just a trend?
>
> H: Something like that. The hijrah people, it's not the youngest kids. They start from 30. Maybe they have family.

Indeed, the age of 30 appears to be a standard point of transition among punks. But the trend also affects younger generations, especially those who are drawn in through social media and merchandise. Jojo affirms that "the market for Islam as a trend is huge," referring to the presence of Islam in all sorts of industries such as cosmetics, fashion, TV, and of course, music (J2). After all, he says, "religion doesn't only become intermeshed with popular culture: it *IS* a popular culture" (Jojo, J2, emphasis added). Doni also tells me that he has noticed a rise in pro-hijrah and pro-Islam merchandise around the underground music community (B5). Hijrah is so popular right now, he explains, "there's even a *Selebriti Hijrah*[38] series on Youtube" (B5). Angga points out that many Indonesian celebrities, like Rhoma Irama, embodied something similar to hijrah

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[38] Selebriti Hijrah (translation: celebrity Hijrah) is a Youtube series of profiles managed by Indonesian-based news portal Kumparan.

in the 1970s and 80s, but the context and the motivations for those accomplishing hijrah in 2018 are quite different: “It was a more personal, individual decision back then, but I think there is definitely more influence from outside and collective pressure now” (Y10).

Going back to religious motivations, Toni in Jakarta mentions that the decision to hijrah is partially based on the cleric (i.e. the local imam or ustad) that people have grown up following (J4). Wahyu also suggests that people who have a background in traditionalist Islam are perhaps less likely to hijrah than those who adhere to a more modernist school of Islam (M1).

4.3.1 Religious Reorientation or Consequence of Aging?

In the Islamic context, hijrah is indeed perceived as a religious reorientation in which an individual makes a conscious decision to embrace Islam as their central guiding force in life. However, the data presented in the previous section reveals additional layers to the Punk Hijrah trend. I consider here two major elements to show that the Punk Hijrah phenomenon revolves around more than just personal piety: the normativity of Islam in contemporary Javanese society, and the punk lifestyle becoming unsustainable for aging punks faced with new responsibilities. I will also employ the notion of transcendence, which is useful in exploring how individual agency and personal choice are deployed to articulate the worlds of punk, piety, and adulthood. It is a contrast to the previous sections, which focused on the ways that larger structures (e.g. transnational Islam, neoliberal ideologies, market strategies) impact and shape processes of decision-making from above.

Many participants concur that punk remains stigmatized in the eyes of the dominant public in Java. This is especially problematic when it comes to family, since most parents disapprove of punk lifestyle and aesthetics, pointedly due to its anti-normative character. In Java, Islam acts as the normative framing device that shapes the mainstream public opinion. People who adhere to a religion other than Islam or refuse to practice Islamic rituals are seen as deviating from that

norm. Since punk is a Western import that appears to promote an individualist, anti-conformist, and anti-institutional ethos, while also boasting an image laden with profanities, it is inherently deviating from the normative course of Javanese social order. If participating in the punk scene is an act of voluntary exclusion from mainstream society, then hijrah could perhaps be seen as the opposite; an act of reintegration into this same society. In this sense, a 'return' to Islam through the practice of hijrah would be an effective way to reshape oneself in order to fit the mould of mainstream Javanese society.

Many punks in Java express that their lifestyle and aesthetics are an obstacle in landing a good job and prevent them from being taken seriously by their non-punk peers. Living and working the DIY way independently of the commercial market is not always a personal choice to uphold punk philosophy, but is also sometimes the only available option. Tattooed punks often encounter biases and suffer discrimination in the job market. Event organizers have a very difficult time booking venues and hosting activities since municipal authorities commonly withhold the necessary permits due to an ongoing stigma towards the underground community, forcing members to hold activities illegally and thus perpetuating the same stereotypes of deviance and criminality.

Very few—if any—of the participants I encountered were able to make enough money with their bands to live comfortably without a day job or some kind of part-time DIY enterprise. As Julian (M4), Rehan (M5) and others point out, the underground music scene nowadays is over-saturated with musicians, which further weakens the possibility of reaching financial stability with a musical venture. In sum, punk livelihood, whether it entails playing in a band or working independently in an underground DIY economy, seldom provides financial stability. Although I met many young and creative folk who managed to get by with their freelance silkscreen-printing business or their DIY coffee shop, the punk lifestyle becomes increasingly unsustainable with age, especially with the added pressures of adulthood. I thus propose that financial insecurity, familial expectations and social burdens contribute to the disenchantment

of the scene among aging punks. Additionally, I suggest that this could be another motivation for punks to make the bold move to hijrah.

As Hendra pointed out during our interview: “The hijrah people, it’s not the youngest kids. They start from 30. Maybe they have family” (B1). This statement effectively demonstrates that the hijrah phenomenon is multifaceted: there is no reference to religion in this sentence, only age and family status are mentioned. The cusp of 30 years old seems to indicate a threshold of personal transformation from the category of youth into adult. Many of my participants shared the opinion that the late twenties and early thirties constitute a socially acceptable time for settling down, i.e. to get married and start a family. To meet new financial burdens, punks are expected at this time to “grow up” and “get a real job” (Bobbi, J5), and return to mainstream society full-time. In other words, the prospect of ‘settling down’ is the trigger leading some aging punks to reconsider their place within the scene.

Drawing from Abdullah’s testimony (Y7), hijrah appeared as the most appropriate option at the individual level (i.e. a commitment to improving his faith, becoming closer to God) and at the collective level (i.e. distance from the negative aspects of the punk scene so that his family not be tainted with these influences). Punk remains stigmatized in the eyes of the dominant public and continues to be tainted by notions with deviance, criminality and recklessness. Disappointment and apathy resonate in some of the conversations that I had with older punks about the state of today’s scenes. Mike (J3), Hendra (B1), Yudi (B4), among others, expressed concern about the newer generations being too individualized and not critical enough. Further, they denounce the younger punks for blindly following trends and appropriating aspects of punk culture without understanding the history and the meaning behind them. The decision to embark on hijrah, I suggest, is the result of a simultaneous process of disenchantment with punk and reenchantment with Islam.

In the field of cultural studies, a handful of scholars who focus on youth cultures and lifestyles have suggested new tools to talk about adults and the realities of aging within such collective

structures. The concept that I find particularly useful in this case is that of transcendence, coined by Andes (1998). In her usage of the term, transcendence is the process by which aging punks negotiate their membership to the punk community. She explains that punks crossing the threshold of adulthood may choose to *distance* rather than *disaffiliate* (i.e. completely detach) themselves with the scene, in which case they can relinquish certain aspects of the lifestyle or aesthetic while transcending punk ideology in other ways. I propose that the punk hijrah phenomenon be analyzed as a form of transcendence that specifically affects aging punks who are faced with new pressures and realities. It can additionally be regarded as a personal process of reconciliation, allowing older punks to retain a covert, internalized affinity with the punk scene while responding to the social and financial burdens that adulthood carries forth.

If "punk is Dad", as Yudi (B4) contends, then punk fathers in Java are faced with the complex task of articulating the codes and practices of 'punkness' against a framework of 'fatherhood' in ways that allow for the two to coexist. Javanese men who wholly embrace the hijrah path conserve very little of their punk affiliation and rather prioritize piety and social respectability. Why do these men align themselves with a group such as Punk Hijrah that engages with punk symbols and ideas, but whose main purpose is to promote a sacred 'return to Islam'? I believe that there is an inherent process here of transcendence that allows for an incorporation of the punk ethos and selective punk emblems into a new life stage marked by Islamic piety. The groups Punk Muslim, Punkajian, Hijra Core, and Keepers of the Deen do the same; they transcend particular facets of the punk scene but assure that these remain secondary to their fundamental goal, that of advocating greater Islamic practice.

Andes explains: "Commitment to an identity is a process which waxes and wanes over time for any given individual and may take different forms at different stages in the process" (1998: 215). Committing to the punk identity while aging requires a certain degree of fluctuation and compromise. Some Muslim punks continue to sport punk regalia, while others like Bobbi choose to dress like the "common folk" (J5). Those who identify with the explicit Punk Hijrah movement participate in activities that are punk-inspired, even though they target a different

audience and encourage vastly different practices. Hijrah Punks eliminate the facets of punk lifestyle that they deem problematic, but they conserve Do-It-Yourself ethos and certain symbolic and aesthetic features.

> Punks progress from *rebelling* against or resisting the norms and values of 'normal' others, such as parents and peers, to *affiliating* themselves with a punk community and lifestyle, then finally to internalizing punk ideology. (Andes 1998: 299)

In this sense, the decision to hijrah may be a way for aging punks to simultaneously internalize (what they perceive to be) the positive aspects of punk ideology and distance themselves from (what they perceive to be) the negative facets of punk lifestyle. In this sense, therefore, they remain *ideologically* (and somewhat aesthetically) punk, but keep enough of a distance from the scene to satisfy the expectations of the dominant, non-punk public. In so doing, they dilute the boundary between the spheres of 'mainstream' and 'underground' that are starkly opposed in Western punk discourse, without necessarily 'selling out'.

> Becoming a parent is a strong pull for older punks to accommodate some aspects of mainstream adulthood. This still doesn't mean that they necessarily lose touch with their scene-related ideals, 'sell out' or become absorbed into the system. But when it comes to making room for a child, for most folks the alternative lifestyle has to get flexible. (Davis 2012:113)

It would have been highly interesting to contrast and compare more personal accounts of 'punks gone to hijrah' but such participants were nearly impossible for me to find. To fully accomplish hijrah, in the sense of a total migration, a person would have to cut all their ties with the punk scene. If the person no longer identifies as punk, then they would no longer be considered to be 'Muslim punks.' This curious and complex negotiation thus makes it difficult to find participants who have accomplished a complete rupture with the punk scene because, in principle, such individuals would no longer frequent punk spaces or maintain links with other members of the punk community. The accounts presented in this section rather reflect trajectories of people who oscillate between different identities without necessarily committing

to the hijrah trend, thereby embodying the complex interplay between the realms of punk and Islam.

Chapter 5: Muslim Punk Paradoxes

In this final section, I will address some lingering questions that have emerged from my previous analysis. Due to insufficient data, I lack the necessary evidence to properly answer any of these queries, but they could serve as guidelines to orient future research ventures. The Muslim Punk phenomenon can serve as a valuable case study to reflect upon a larger set of questions about new forms of religiosity, specifically, to think about the different ways that individuals articulate piety within such alternative frameworks. It also invites us to reconsider the functions of punk, since it has long been considered to be a counter-hegemonic genre with institutional resistance posited as its driving force. The purpose of this last section is to tie together the previous chapters by looking at how the different facets of the Islamic market, the effects of transnational Islam, and the ethos of punk interact with one another, albeit somewhat incoherently.

5.1 Individualism vs Collectivism

Contemporary religiosity is theorized as being increasingly individualized. Among other theoretical paradigms, the post-secular theory[39] suggests that a renewed interest in religion and spirituality has shifted away from the collective, meaning a much larger focus on the individual. The Muslim Punk movement appears to follow suit since it draws on new media, interacts with capitalist dynamics, and creates new decentralized figures of religious authority. However, the movement also stipulates a rejection of individualism and chooses rather to boast a collectivist

[39] Post-secular theory broadly refers to the idea that there has been a resurgence of religion in our present, which marks a shift from a previous 'secular era'. This theory is only applicable to Western countries. Jürgen Habermas is coined as one of the major contributors to this controversial debate (see Habermas 2008).

and independent approach. In a sense, it goes against popular Western discourse, punk discourse, and neoliberal discourse—but remains aligned with predominant Islamic discourse.

> After thirty years of the Soeharto New Order regime the danger for Islam is no longer posed by provincialism or regionalism containing non-Islamic faiths. The threats to Islam now come from Western individualism and materialism imported under the cover of nationalism, and that, despite an enormous revival of Islamic practice among Javanese Muslims. (Headley 2004:14)

Headley argues here that Western individualism poses a risk to Javanese Islam, an idea that is neither confirmed nor denied in my observation of the Muslim Punk phenomenon. As a kind of new religious trend, Muslim Punk echoes many elements indicative of what we might call the individualization hypothesis. At the same time, it explicitly upholds a collectivist ethos. Can both these processes be at play simultaneously? I would argue that they can.

Examples from my data and from social media help to illustrate that adherents of the Muslim Punk movement are undergoing a process of religious individualization. However, I suggest that this religious lifestyle not be understood as a kind of fragmented, syncretic form of spirituality but rather a means to reaffirm and solidify the boundaries of institutional religion. The shift towards religious individualization does create alternative spiritualities and different modes of 'being pious'. Yet, because this shift disrupts and weakens universalist principles, it can also prompt a strengthening of fundamentalist ideology as a response to the threat of individualism and alternative narratives. In this view, the need to embolden a collective—or an imagined 'Brotherhood'—becomes all the more important. So, has the Muslim Punk movement emerged as a creative and individualized alternative to the institution of Islam, or is it rather a response to the threat of Islam becoming too fragmented and individualized? I believe that both options here are partially true.

Following the reverberations of the Islamic revival, there is a conscious effort to restore and revitalize Islam in a transnational Islamic scheme, i.e. to render Islamic practice more orthodox and more similar to Arabic Islam. Furthermore, there is increasing awareness that the most

effective way to accomplish this goal is to reach a young urban audience through new media, consumer culture, and accessible forms of authority. Those who compose the variegated Muslim Punk movement seek to empower and invigorate the Muslim *ummah*[40], but their approach in accomplishing this is rooted in an independent and decentralized Do-It-Yourself ethos.

5.2 Counter-Hegemonic or Coefficient?

While punk may have effectively served as a platform to embolden voices of rebellion when it emerged decades ago, is it possible that we have placed punk on a romanticized pedestal of dissent and discontent, thereby narrowing our view of what else this genre can offer? Since the overwhelming majority of scholarship on punk is executed by Western scholars and focuses on Western scenes, punk discourse and the tools to study it remain largely ethnocentric. In my experience studying Indonesian punk, I found that the scene's functions are extremely heterogeneous, and that people offer many reasons, not all compatible, for being punk. Although some did express that punk provides a site to perform a kind of resistance (whether towards political structures or the status quo), others hinted at a reversal of the typical 'us vs them' scheme. What if punk could actually be utilized as a means to articulate a reconciliation between a perceived 'deviant' Other and a perceived hegemonic culture?

The idea may seem antithetical in the sense that a reconciliation with the mainstream might automatically invalidate the very essence of punk. However, I contend that the gap between the alleged mainstream and the so-called underground is being bridged by various means. Islam represents a normative aspect of Indonesian society, and as I have proposed throughout this thesis, punk can constitute a means of embracing mainstream Islam. Whether it is a case of punk adapting to Islam or of Islam adapting to punk is not necessarily important here. I argue, rather, that punk may not be counter-hegemonic after all. As Headley explains: "The non-normative

[40] Muslim community.

feels very uncomfortable in Javanese society" (2004:429). Thereby, Muslim Punk could be reinterpreted as a third space[41] to comfortably explore something non-normative like punk while sufficiently conforming with Javanese *adat* (custom).

On the other hand, Muslim Punk overtly opposes Western liberalism and individualism. I entertain the possibility that it is counter-hegemonic at the global level. It goes *with* the grain of a Muslim-majority discourse, but it goes *against* the grain of popular Western discourse. However, I abstain from framing this phenomenon uniquely as a form of resistance because that would be a vast oversimplification—and perhaps a complete misunderstanding—of the movement. Punk is decreasingly synonymous with teenage rebellion. I agree that "[c]ontemporary subcultures may be more about identity shopping and personal fulfillment than social resistance" (Haenfler 2012:9). This prospect arguably contrasts with the views of Java's punk veterans, who explicitly used art and music as a platform for political protest during the 1990s, and continue to see militant activism against capitalism, sponsorship, and repressive state policies as the most integral part of punk lifestyle. Citing Rama from Jakarta, punk for them is *passion* over *fashion* (J8). Heru in Jogja argues that "music was a weapon" during the 1990s (Y9). Punk may remain "a marker of difference in terms of identity formation," but today "it does not necessarily serve as a 'weapon' to attack mainstream culture, as suggested by older subculture theories" (Budiman et al. 2012:58).

Muslim Punk merchandise also evokes a curious interplay between cosmopolitanism and anti-Western sentiment. Most of the artwork and slogans use English language and feature emblems or symbols that are explicitly Western. On the flip side, some of them also feature Arabic script and imagery that explicitly refers to the Middle East. In his study on Islamic stickers in Indonesia, Lukens-Bull finds that these commodities "visually and linguistically […] tie Islamic practice and a preferred Islamic subjectivity to the Middle East and to the English-speaking

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[41] I use the term 'third space' as inspired by Lee since it elicits a realm beyond a standard binary scheme. He defines it as "an alternative material-cultural terrain of acting and living as citizen-subjects between and among the boundaries of existing frames and mores of citizenship" (Lee 2010:71).

world," therefore embodying a globalized and modern version of Islamic piety (Lukens-Bull 2007:226). The use of English, he argues, is a symbolic move to demonstrate that Islam is not excluded from dominant global processes, thereby making it more consistent with youth culture (Idem: 228). However, the stickers also incorporate Arabic text and symbols to illustrate an alignment with the Islamic world. In a similar sense, Muslim Punk merchandise stipulates that "Islam should be tied to the rest of the Islamic world, particularly in the Middle East, and that Islam should be, or at least is, tied to global processes" (Idem: 227).

It is thus still unclear to what extent the adherents of the Muslim Punk movement reject Western culture, since it appears to significantly rely on it both to promote its brand, and to heighten its appeal among urban youths—among which a cosmopolitan identity conjures prestige and modernity. This further complicates the question of what punk is meant to oppose symbolically. What kind of hegemonic forces are the members of Muslim Punk struggling against? Is it the West? Or, on second thought, is the claim that punk is counter-hegemonic itself erroneous and problematic? In this context, punk may be more effective as a symbolic tool to sell the fantasy of youth culture, independence, and self-assertion. The actual discourse of nonconformity in this case remains highly superficial—and perhaps illusory—since the goal is to bring people *away* from deviant circles and implement more orthodoxy into their daily lives. There is little, if any, impetus towards dissent.

5.3 Revising the Muslim Punk Structure and Terminology

The Muslim Punk phenomenon provokes a certain instability in both the worlds of punk and of Islam, respectively. Is this movement *authentically* punk if it is highly marketed, commercialized, and intentionally permeating the mainstream? Is this movement *authentically* Islamic if it is linked with something deviant, profane, and individualized? It is tempting to view Muslim Punk as a spectrum featuring a range of identity constructs spanning from *punk* to *Muslim* (see Figure 25), yet this schematic is flawed. The divide automatically presupposes that the two realms are incompatible to begin with, and that they are situated at opposite ends.

According to such a spectrum, culturally Muslim punks would be more on the *punk* side, while hijrah punks would be more on the *Muslim* side. Muslim punks who seamlessly balance both aspects would be somewhere in the middle. This would suggest that on the punk side, individuals are 100% punk and 0% Muslim, with the opposite being true on the Muslim side. The obvious problem is that this scheme positions 'being Muslim' and 'being punk' as two things that are mutually exclusive; one must abandon part of their 'punk' identity in order to increase their legitimacy as 'Muslim'. While this conception may hold true to an extent for some individuals, such as those who fully accomplish hijrah, I encountered many Muslim punks during my fieldwork whose personal trajectories and views could not be confined to this kind of spectrum. It's not about being one or the other, but simply living both in a way that is ill-captured in my data collection.

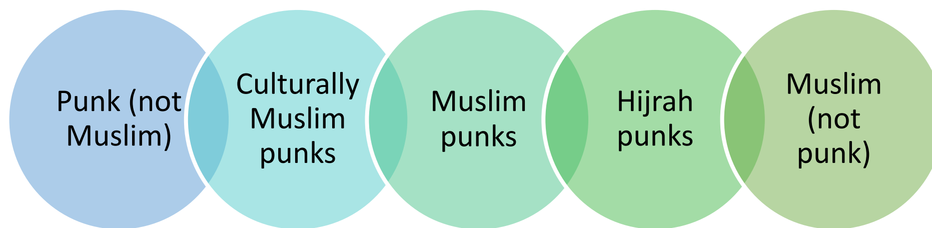

Figure 25. Hypothetical Muslim Punk spectrum, created by author.

I suggest that the fallacy here is in the attempt to treat Muslim Punk as a conglomerate of static punk and Islamic structures. Perhaps it is more appropriate to conceive of Muslim Punk as an entity in itself, disposing of codes, rules, values, and practices that have been shaped explicitly to serve the movement and the people who identify with it, even if they (necessarily) overlap with the socially constructed categories of punk and Islam. Otherwise, we risk constantly debating whether or not adherents of the Muslim Punk movement can be authentically Islamic and authentically punk simultaneously. Instead of viewing the Muslim Punk phenomenon on a spectrum that implies a natural incompatibility between these two worlds, we should see Muslim Punk as its own identity construct, independent of the tropes we automatically associate with both discursive realms. Being 'Muslim Punk' is not simply the sum of 'being punk' and 'being Muslim;' it is far more complex.

The ambiguous terms ‘trend’ and ‘movement’ may also be misleading. Could Muslim Punk be considered a type of religious subculture, or does it rather resemble a novelty fad? Perhaps a more adequate term to define this phenomenon would be that of religious lifestyle: “Religious lifestyles get modeled on consumer lifestyles in which people can try out religions rather like the way they try out a new fashion in handbags or shoes” (Turner 2012:152). Muslim Punk could effectively be framed as a religious lifestyle in this sense, because it is arguably based on a consumerist ethos, allowing individuals to circulate more freely between this form of piety and others. An individual could partake in the Muslim Punk movement for a limited amount of time without being bound to it.

Many of the Javanese punks I encountered believe that Muslim Punk is but a passing trend, which means that its own existence is rather precarious and fleeting. Not to mention, it is at the mercy of unpredictable market shifts and fluctuating global currents. I worry that the label of religious lifestyle with its consumerist connotation could depreciate the movement of its many complex layers. Further, I do not want to underestimate the weight and the potential of Muslim piety for Javanese punks (and non-punks), independently of the other dynamics that it interacts with. As a non-Muslim researcher, I understand that any attempt at categorizing something as deeply personal as religion is a highly sensitive matter, and the use of ill-fitting vocabulary could be interpreted as offensive. That said, my goal here is not to establish terminology or to categorize the Muslim Punk phenomenon, but rather to deconstruct it to better understand *why* it emerged, *whom* it impacts, and *how* it contributes to a reimagination of Muslim piety and punk practice in Java.

5.4 Prestige for the Rich or Refuge for the Poor?

Another remark that I find interesting, linking religion and socio-economic classes highlights a contradiction in my data. Sam, a musician from Jakarta, proposes, on the one hand,

that hijrah is more common among punks of the higher social standing because "the upper class is more religious and are more likely to hijrah" (J1). On the other hand, Toni argues that "the majority of people who are prone to radicalism are urban poor," and thus, he believes punks of lower classes are more likely to follow the hijrah trend (J4).

To understand the success of Islamization in Indonesia, it is valuable to consider the socio-economic climate since the beginning of the reform era. Given the stark contrast between classes across the archipelago, Islam was presented as a partial solution to ongoing financial instability. In the early 2000s, "conservative mosques […] attracted worshippers, in part, by promising to alleviate economic hardship and eradicate immorality" (Beech 2007:2). On the flip side, Islam was utilized by wealthy politicians and businessmen to increase the appeal of piety among intellectuals of the middle and upper classes (Bruinessen 2011:17). The rise of political Islam has proved beneficial to many urban-based and well-educated Indonesians since the economic crisis at the end of the 20th century (Heryanto 2011:61). After decades of suppression, political Islam "offered virtually the only available alternative model of modernity" (Idem: 66). As I have mentioned earlier, piety is part and parcel of prestige.

Conversely, punks are commonly believed to be of lower socioeconomic standing. As a genre and a culture, punk emerged from a predominantly working-class context, and many scenes today still comprise of street kids and impoverished youths. In Java, punk and religion can both serve as indicators of class, but they signal rather opposite socioeconomic ranks. The Muslim Punk movement, however, may be appealing to individuals of both lower and higher socio-economic classes.

For street kids and youths of lower socioeconomic standing, punk can offer not only a symbolic refuge, but also often provides a physical place like a squat or a collective house where punks can gather for activities or temporarily reside. The collective group structure also fuels sentiments of solidarity and contributes to a 'strength in numbers' mentality, which can be both positive (by offering a network of support) and negative (by normalizing certain types of

behaviour). Conservative punk groups can entice impoverished youths with the prospect of socioeconomic stability or with the offer to join an allied 'Brotherhood'. This attests to what Toni (J4) said about the urban poor being more prone to right-wing movements.

On the flip side, however, increased piety is seen as a marker of middle or upper class standing. As previously mentioned, urban Muslim youths "[need] religion in a sense more in keeping with their new social class" (Muzakki 2007:213). In this mindset, conservative punk groups appeal to urban, middle-class youths because they present them with a platform to showcase both their piety as Muslims and their agency as consumers. Associated today with wealth and modernity, Islam is situated "at the forefront of the production and consumption of popular culture" (Heryanto 2011:63). This echoes what Sam (J1) said about the upper classes being more religious and thus more likely to become involved with something like the hijrah movement. In both cases, we see that the recent Muslim Punk trend can in fact appeal to youths of different classes since it offers both a sense of stability for those who are socioeconomically vulnerable, and a pathway into the Islamic public sphere to those who already have the financial and intellectual resources to participate in the movement.

5.5 DIY Islam: Responding to the Crisis of Indonesian Identity

In this thesis, we are presented with a phenomenon that is neither sacred nor profane; neither mainstream nor underground; neither fully conformist nor anti-conformist; neither Western, Middle Eastern nor Indonesian; neither explicitly punk nor conventionally Islamic. It is unclear whether it is most compelling for the urban middle-class or the working class; whether it is an alluring trend for pious millennials or a militant religious social movement. Further research is necessary to unpack these ambiguities. In the meantime, I can offer one final hypothesis regarding the success of this movement, and what it yields for its members.

Understanding Muslim Punk, with all its quirks and contradictions, requires an understanding of Javanese society and recent Indonesian history. Indonesian identity has been unresolved for centuries. Despite evident progress towards democracy, the archipelago is still affected by the shadow of a not-so-distant authoritarian past, and nation-building remains a problematic feat for leaders. Indonesians are scarcely bound to a collective identity through a national culture, given the various geographic, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries that divide rather than unite them. If Islam is in fact one of the only elements representative of a cross-cultural Indonesian identity, then it is also the primary mechanism through which social conformity and nonconformity are regulated and embodied.

Muslim Punk, in this sense, could be reinterpreted as a response to the current crisis of Indonesian identity. If Islam is indeed positioned as the dominant culture by the state to create the illusion of homogeneous national identity, then participating in the Muslim Punk movement could be a way for individuals to deal with the tensions and uncertainties of this nation-building process. On the one hand, it allows people to subscribe to the idea of a collective national culture by way of Islamic adherence. On the other hand, it offers them a space to perform individual agency, thereby circumventing state-imposed homogeneity. Therefore, individuals involved with Muslim Punk are afforded the chance to play both sides of the field; they are conforming to a collective ideal without stifling their potential of agency. In other words, Muslim Punk opens up an intermediary space for individual action that does not contradict moral order in a context where this is typically not possible.

Despite its many paradoxes, Muslim Punk can be theorized as a tool for identity reconciliation rather than rupture. By framing Muslim Punk as a phenomenon narrowly concerned with the West or with the Middle East, it is too easy to overlook the role of Indonesia's recent history in the process of ongoing Islamization and the success of alternative lifestyles like punk. As I have proposed earlier, a multidimensional approach is imperative in order to unpack this trend, since it operates on various different scales simultaneously. Arguably, the popularity of Muslim Punk has much more to do with the larger crisis of Indonesian identity than it does punk music.

From the Mosh to the Mosque: Concluding Remarks

The Muslim Punk trend is one of many cases that invites us to reimagine Muslim piety in the 21st century. During my three months of ethnographic fieldwork, I found that conservative groups were gaining momentum among urban youths, utilizing branding, social media, and the punk philosophy of Do-It-Yourself to advocate greater Islamic practice. Embracing—rather than rejecting—the principles of consumerism, new media, and celebrity status, groups such as Punk Muslim, Punk Hijrah, Hijra Core, and Punkajian have developed effective strategies to preach Islam while remaining modern and approachable.

This thesis deals with the rather atypical idea of punk proselytism, which elicits both curiosity and concern since "[d]akwah in music […] is unconventional and controversial" (Irama 2011:185). This study, however, focuses on the possibility of dakwah through scene membership, style, and branding, rather than merely through music. I argued in previous chapters that the Muslim Punk phenomenon is a result of many overlapping shifts and influential factors, namely transnational Islam, the disenchantment with the punk scene, and the expansion of an Islamic market across Java.

Transnational Islam plays a significant role in this schematic because it has contributed to new discourses about what constitutes good Muslim behaviour in Java. It offers a standard of Muslim piety that differs from traditional Javanese Islam, thereby inciting individuals to engage with new forms of religious lifestyles and to participate in alternative religious collectives. The groups affiliated with Muslim Punk tend to advocate a much more conservative practice of Islam than what is typically enforced in Javanese Islam, although the distinction is far from clear-cut.

The Islamic market, I propose, is a salient conceptual background against which to position the Muslim Punk trend. It is useful in helping us grasp the role of neoliberal dynamics, consumer culture, and new media in shaping emerging religious lifestyles, transforming religious symbols,

and reconfiguring religious discourses. In the context of the Islamic market, I argue that popular culture offers new possibilities for dakwah, which are often subjected to processes of commodification, merchandizing, and branding in order to make Islamic proselytism more accessible and appealing. The Muslim Punk phenomenon is particularly interesting because it blurs the lines between a (supposedly) profane, underground community, and the sacred world of Islam.

The call to hijrah has enticed Muslims across Java to undergo a personal transformation to increase their piety. This practice is not new, but more recent—and surprising—is the extent to which it has impacted members of the underground community. Based on my data, the decision to accomplish hijrah does not appear to revolve solely around religion. Many aging punks gradually distance themselves from the punk scene as they become entangled with the hefty responsibilities of adulthood and the growing pressures of mainstream society. Rather than becoming wholly engaged in the Muslim Punk phenomenon, some of the aging punks that I encountered would give up certain aspects of a punk lifestyle in order to meet the demands of adulthood (and often parenthood) without completely disaffiliating themselves from the scene. In some cases, a process of religious reenchantment followed, thereby leading to hijrah, or smaller, gradual changes towards greater pious practice.

The Muslim Punk case can also be a departure point to think about the crisis of Indonesian identity due to centuries of political instability and authoritarian rule. For some Javanese youths, participating in the Muslim Punk movement could be seen as a way to balance the deep longing for a collective national culture with the desire for individual agency. Despite its rebellious attitude, punk has always implied a degree of conformity among its members, from 1970s Britain to today. Punk offers the possibility of individual freedom, but agency is consequently weighed against and limited according to social circumstances. In Indonesia, it is irresponsible to ignore how the country's history has inevitably complicated the ways in which youths forge identity, and how they achieve a balance between the collective and themselves.

The study of punk music may seem out-of-place in academia at first glance, but, in fact, it provides a highly effective lens through which to analyze social and religious dynamics. As a form of popular culture, punk serves as an accessible springboard for identifying and tracing the rise of conservative ideology, showcasing how this global tendency can materialize at local levels in rather unexpected places. The rise of the Muslim Punk movement is not only an effect of the Islamic revival, but it also reflects a growing Islamic market in developing countries like Indonesia. This research project consequently blurs the boundaries of popular dichotomies, such as 'religious/secular', 'normative/deviant', 'sacred/profane', and 'mainstream/underground'.

This thesis offers a particular approach to study the phenomenon, but it is by no means exhaustive. Since Muslim Punk thrives on popular culture and new media, is it highly dynamic and shows constant signs of mutation. Therefore, it is quite possible that Muslim Punk will have evolved into something different by the time this thesis is published.

As I have elucidated earlier, there are multiple limits to this study that warrant acknowledgment. Most prominently, there is a lack of data directly concerning Muslim Punk adherents. This is due to two factors. First, the focus of the study was in constant negotiation during fieldwork, which means that the target audience for interviews was quite arbitrary, and consequently, there was a lack of consistency in the topics broached during interviews. Second, my access was limited to certain places and people who would be considered key actors in the Muslim Punk movement, and I believe this is largely due to my status as a non-Muslim and Western female researcher. Although I collected data almost daily during my three months of fieldwork, the sum of my data is rather disparate; I accessed many voices to help contextualize and critique the phenomenon, but far fewer voices to illustrate the lived experiences of Muslim Punk members themselves. As such, I would like to point out some pertinent questions that remain unanswered due to insufficient data.

<u>Aging punks</u>: According to my data, there appears to be a divide between the paths chosen by aging punks. There are the punk veterans of the 1990s who remain anchored in a rather left-

wing militant spirit and who pursue a DIY punk lifestyle into adulthood (30s, 40s, 50s). On the flip side, there are those who embark on the hijrah path, choosing instead to transcend punk and to distance themselves from the scene. It would be very interesting to contrast and compare the backgrounds, motivations, and lived experiences of aging punks who remain 'punk' in a strict sense, and those who are drawn to the hijrah option. How do some punks successfully meet the demands of adulthood and the pressures of mainstream society without giving up their punk lifestyle? Do non-hijrah aging punks also undergo a process of transcendence, even if they do not experience as significant a religious reorientation? More data among self-identified aging or adult punks would be required to answer these questions.

<u>Muslim Punk youth:</u> It is unclear whether Muslim Punk's target audiences consist of youths who are already involved in the punk scene or if they use the 'punk' element to draw in youths who are intrigued by the prospect of punk. In other words, is the Muslim Punk movement composed primarily of punks who see this as an opportunity to be more pious? Or does it consist rather of urban youths looking to join a pious community—or Brotherhood—that is cool and unconventional? Perhaps Muslim Punk is appealing not only to punks who want to become more aligned with the mainstream, but also to Muslim youths who wish to demarcate themselves from the dominant public. Because Muslim Punk appears to belong neither entirely to the realm of the mainstream nor that of the underground, it is difficult to distinguish whether members are seeking a rapprochement or a distancing between themselves and the dominant public through their participation. It would be necessary to contrast the background stories of the individuals who join Muslim Punk to answer these questions.

<u>Left vs right:</u> I present a left-wing versus right-wing approach in this thesis to help exemplify a shift within the punk scene. However, there are various extents of political and ideological crossover throughout punk scenes. For example, pro-Palestine support is not by any means exclusive to the Muslim Punk movement since many left-leaning bands and collectives share this view, though they may choose to advocate it in a different way. Some will share support and solidarity for their Muslim counterparts worldwide (which is not surprising in a Muslim-majority country), but they are less likely to exhibit an explicitly anti-Zionist stance or present

themselves as defenders of Islam (a label that could imply Islamist connotations). I present this phenomenon as a case study to illustrate larger shifts, but I do not mean to imply that the reality is black and white between right and left-wing punks; this distinction is far more nuanced and complex.

Gender: I am disappointed to leave the gender dimension out of my thesis, but I simply did not have enough information to properly address it. Why are women so absent from the Muslim Punk movement? There are female punks in Java, and many of them are Muslim. However, I did not hear of any women involved in the Muslim Punk trend and I have still yet to see pictures or other evidence on social media to confirm their presence within the movement. Perhaps Iskarandy—the ex-punk with facial tattoos—could be seen as a female representative of Muslim Punk, given her past affiliation with punk and present devotion to Islam. Nevertheless, I have not seen her name or picture mentioned anywhere in conjunction with the recognized Muslim Punk groups, so I cannot assume that she is linked with it.

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For some, punk rock is a religion, and religion a pop culture. For others, these claims are simply blasphemous. One's relationship with the divine is far too personal, ephemeral and complex for determinative conceptual analysis. It cannot be grasped merely with words nor adequately represented in a study such as this one. I wish not to disrupt people or places; only stereotypes, dichotomies, and discourses. There is nothing 'spectacular' about the matters discussed in this thesis; if they appear so, it may be due to a natural tendency to trust too wholly in binaries. Although this thesis only marginally informs us about daily life in Java, it offers a glimpse into the dynamic lifestyles of a few Javanese punks and non-punks who circulate between alternative rhetorical worlds shaped by the same powerful, intangible forces that—directly and indirectly—impact all social life in the 21st century.

Java's punks reveal something greater than teenage rebellion. Whether they are involved in the Muslim Punk movement or they have found other ways to articulate punk and Islam in their daily lives, they are creating alternative stages and generating new audiences for religious performance. As bold right-wing and anti-liberal politics are becoming further entangled with pop culture and religion across Java, I suggest that we attend more seriously to the potential of this new religious lifestyle and the power of punk proselytism.

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Appendix A

People and Places by City

Table 1: People and Places by City		
City	**People**	**Places**
Jakarta	J1: Sam (male) J2: Jojo (male) J3: Mike (male) J4: Toni (male) J5: Bobbi (male) J6: Ari (male) J7: Mellani (female) J8: Rama (male) **Total: 7 men, 1 woman**	-Taring Babi (collective house) -Guitar Freaks (venue) -Ponti & Suka Sama Suka (collective house & venue) -Blok M (shopping quarter) -Rossi (venue) -Joglo Kemang (venue) -Pasar Santa (market) -Gelora Bung Karno Stadium (public stadium) -Warung (Wapress, etc.)
Bogor	N/A	- Gunung Bunder (mountaintop, venue for the IPWD festival)
Bandung	B1: Hendra (male) B2: Marisa (female) B3: Rizzy (male) B4 + B6: Yudi (male) B5: Doni (male) B7: Rahadian (male) B8: Asep (male) **Total: 6 men, 1 woman**	- Playhouse ID (venue) - Spasial (venue) - Rumah Pirata/Klub Racun (collective house & venue) - Rumah Cemara (collective house & venue) - Saparua Park (public park) - Lapangan Pussenif (military base, venue for Maker Fest) - Gedung Sate (public building) - Wodka (bar) - Upstairs Bar (venue) - Warung (Buih Kopi, etc.)

(continued on next page)

City	Participants	Sites
Yogyakarta	Y1: Tamara (female)	- DC Milk Cafe & Bar (venue) - Jogja Jamming Café (venue) - Survive! Garage (collective house) - Sesama (collective house) - Asmara (venue) - Jl. Malioboro (major shopping street) - Jogja National Museum (museum & venue for ArtJog, Indonesia Net Audio Fest) - Lippo Plaza Mall (mall & venue for Indie Kultur) - KUD Moyudan Gedongan (venue for Mangayubagyo Edisi Panca Para Kanca) - Bentara Budaya (art gallery, venue for Survive! Attack) - Planet Pyramid (venue for Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta) - Taman Budaya (cultural center, venue for Tattoo Merdeka) - Teater Garasi (venue) - Doggy House Records (record company & store) - Sae Sae Hostel - Universitas Gadjah Mada - Warung (Pier 14 coffee, Kedai Nyah Fan Li, coffee Wae, warung Merdeka, etc.)
	Y2: Firda (female)	
	Y3: Marif (male)	
	Y4: Andi (male)	
	Y5: Rudy (male)	
	Y6: Lydia (female)	
	Y7: Abdullah (male)	
	Y8, Y10, Y12, Y13: Angga (male)	
	Y9: Heru (male)	
	Y11: Prida (female)	
	Y14: Denda (male)	
	Total: 7 men, 4 women	
Malang	M1: Wahyu (male)	- Houtenhand (venue) - Loop Arena Malang (skateboard park) - Museum Musik Indonesia - Gajayana Stadium (stadium, venue for Gebyar Pilkada Kota Malang) - Safehouse Kalampoki (collective house) - Indonesia Old Cinema Museum (museum & venue) - Warung & cafes (Legipait II, 8 oz coffee, Habitat Cafe & Library, Ice ah!)
	M2: Ahmad (male)	
	M3: Agata (female)	
	M4: Julian (male)	
	M5: Rehan (male)	
	M6: Jaya (male)	
	M7: Johan (male)	
	M8: Iwan (male)	
	M9: Eko (male)	
	Total: 8 men, 1 woman	
Surabaya	N/A	-P-TWO Cafe (venue) -Jl. Bedadung (infamous street & hang-out spot) -Warung
Sidoarjo	S1: Sandi (male)	-Camp Punk Seni (collective house) -Warung
	Total: 1 man	