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Punk Activism and Its Repression in China and Indonesia

Decolonizing "Global Punk"

Jian Xiao and Jim Donaghey

Introduction: Punk Is Dead, Long Live Global Punk

Despite punk's rapid transmission beyond its nascent scenes in major cities of the United States and United Kingdom, most writing on punk focuses on those places exclusively and is historically limited to the period of the mid-to-late 1970s, with some examples extending as far as 1984 for its Orwellian resonance (see, for example, Ogg; Robb; McNeil and McCain; Reynolds; Heylin; Miles; Savage). In direct contradiction to punk's own emphasis on do-it-yourself (DIY) cultural production, this narrow place-specific historical focus is dictated by periods of interest from the mainstream press and corporate music industry. As an indication of this sharp rise in commercial interest and its even more rapid decline, the combined coverage of punk from 1976 to 1981 in mainstream music magazines in the UK (*NME*, *Melody Maker*, *Sounds*, *Zig Zag*, and *Trouser Press*) was: "22 articles in 1976, 77 articles in 1977, 88 articles in 1978, 39 articles in 1979, 22 articles in 1980, and 3 articles in 1981" (Donaghey 2013, 143). In concert with the mainstream press, the major record labels had also mostly moved on to other newly trendy music genres by around 1980, and it is this commercial "death" that is so often uncritically regurgitated by scholars as the existential endpoint of punk.

Of course, the myriad contemporary manifestations of punk evidently refute this "death," but the first declarations of punk's demise actually came from countercultural sources as early as February 1977 when the *International Times* declared PUNK IS DEAD and, also in 1977, anarcho-punk progenitors Crass coined the slogan "Punk is dead. Long live punk" (Rimbaud, 85; and see Crass "Punk Is Dead"). As Barry Miles puts it, the "commodification of punk . . . had taken about nine months from start to finish" (371). Crass, the *International Times*, and their countercultural ilk decried this sellout of punk to the major labels. To those inspired by punk's

radical statement of DIY production, scorched earth iconoclasm, and anarchist(ic) political rhetoric, this sellout was understood as a "death"; however, on the other side of the "punk is dead/long live punk" dualism, Holtzman et al. argue that "punk's 'death' brought new life to the counterculture" (47). This "symbolic" death (Masters), marking a decline (or at least interruption[1]) in the corporate co-optation of punk, was a lesson for subsequent generations of punks, who distilled and expanded the key impetuses of early punk and continued punk's global spread on a more thoroughly DIY and decentralized basis.

Punk arrived relatively late to Indonesia and China—in the very late 1980s and mid-1990s, respectively. This article briefly traces the histories of punk's emergence in China and Indonesia, in the years leading up to and following transitional periods of the authoritarian regimes in those places and then discusses and compares forms of punk resistance and activism in each context, especially focusing on DIY gig organization and manifestations of punk space (distros, hangouts, and info-houses), before highlighting the continued repression from state and para-state institutions in the contemporary "post-authoritarian" context of Indonesia and "softened authoritarian" context of China. The anarchist-informed aspects of this "global punk" cultural production, activism, and resistance are key but also highly contingent on their local contexts, and these global and local influences are in creative tension with one another. The concept of "critical regionalism" (Frampton) provides a pertinent intervention here, as it "asserts the need to be critical of the local and regional . . . while at the same time being critical of an overly prescriptive 'universalism'" (Campbell). In the context of trans-Asian scholarship, this is echoed in Iwabuchi et al.'s embrace of the "contradictory forces [of] . . . global-local, homogenization-heterogenization and sameness-diversity, [which] operate simultaneously and interpenetrate each other" and this creative tension specifically counters the idea "that globalization just facilitates homogenization of the world based on Western modernity" (2).

While the core argument of this article is that a "global punk" perspective (Dunn) facilitates an understanding of punk culture's contemporary manifestation in "other" places, this may also risk masking the persisting unevenness of that global cultural terrain. Manifestations of the Indonesian and Chinese punk scenes' connections to the global punk network include numerous "split" and compilation record releases with bands from elsewhere in the world[2] and numerous international bands touring in Indonesia and China, especially from North America, Europe, and Australia. But, of course, examples of Indonesian or Chinese bands touring in North

America, Europe, or Australia are notably rarer. Exceptional cases include Indonesian band Krass Kepala, who have toured twice in Europe (once along with KontraSosial) while Chinese band Demerit have toured twice in the U.S. (with the international Pyrate Punx network, discussed below [see Moog, 42]) and twice in Europe, and Misandao have toured in Europe once. The *Punk Aid: Aceh Calling* (2012) benefit compilation provides an indication of the continued marginality (or marginalization) of bands from "other" places. The compilation, produced in San Diego in the U.S., aimed to raise funds for punks in Aceh, Indonesia, who had been abducted at a gig by Sharia police and interned and tortured for ten days (discussed in more detail below). This compilation is a rare example of a record featuring Indonesian *and* Chinese bands (from Indonesia: For Trash, Brigade of Bridge, Cheapness, The Oversuck, The Borstal, The Kuda. From China: The Bricks, No Name). However, thirty-nine out of seventy-two of the bands on the compilation are from the U.S., plus one from Canada, with seventeen European bands, five Latin American bands, one other Asian band (from Japan), and none whatsoever from Africa or the Middle East. This U.S.-centrism might be explained by Punk Aid's location in California, but the outright dominance of U.S. bands is jarring in the context of an "international" benefit for Indonesian punks. Other recent exchanges between punks in Indonesia and China have included communication via a WeChat public account called "the alternative voice," introducing Indonesian bands including Hitcock and Turtles.JR to a Chinese audience in the form of interviews, and Chinese punks have also been planning to invite Indonesian punk bands to China to play at festivals. In the other direction, Chinese punks who travel to Indonesia carry zines with them and, of particular relevance to this article's focus on repression, Chinese punks donated DIY cassettes from their local punk scenes to the punks of Banda Aceh as part of the "Mixtapes For Aceh" campaign by Aborted Society Records (separate to the Punk Aid compilation, but again coordinated in the States). In several cases, the connections between China and Europe are shaped not only by the flows of musicians from the latter who joined Chinese punk bands[3] and thus became part of the punk community but also continuous interactions such as Chinese musicians being invited to Europe, or opinion sharing and exchange through emails[4] between the two. In this way, a global sense of punk community that is beyond punk music is formed. As Xiao puts it, local, virtual, global and translocal punk scenes are "a form of networking" (2018, 44).

Lee and Cho suggest that "East Asia now seems to occupy a semi-imperial position vis-à-

vis parts of Southeast Asia" (604), but this is evidently *not* the case in punk, where connections with bands from the Global North echo the major cultural flows of neocolonialism. But while this "Western" (and especially U.S.) lopsidedness persists and is recognized, the "global punk" perspective remains a useful frame for discussing and comparing punk scenes in Indonesia and China, especially since direct interconnections between these punk contexts are limited—the few examples given here are far outnumbered by their connections with punk scenes in the Global North. This approach, and especially its comparative aspect, has been termed "inter-Asia referencing" (see Chen; Ong), and this is decolonizing in its "epistemological shift" away from interpreting Asian contexts through an Anglo-American lens, toward "a horizontal comparison of inter-Asian locations . . . thus generating different forms of knowledge" (Chua, 78). The case of punk, historically rooted in the Anglo-American West, could be considered to present a particular challenge to this "inter-Asia" rejection of the Anglo-American lens. But the key argument here is that "global punk" can decenter and disrupt the Anglo-American lens, and this is an important aspect of each punk scene's own self-reflexive cultural activity. This "inter-Asia" comparison, then, contributes to the process of decolonizing "global punk." As Jeremy Wallach notes: "Popular music scholarship has underemphasized the sociopolitical impact of rock music in the decolonized world, due to outright ethnocentrism, misguided preoccupations with cultural authenticity, and the outmoded 'cultural imperialism' thesis" (2020, 469). Wallach points specifically to the examples of China and Indonesia (among many others) as places where on-the-ground research confounds the dismissive attitude of "anti-'rockist' scholars" (2020, 471).

A "global punk" concept is necessary to understand the contemporary experience of punk in supposedly "other" places, and indeed, the lived experience of the punks is given primacy here, describing and analyzing the punk culture and its practices in each place, especially in terms of their context-specific forms of punk activism, with a focus on DIY production practices and "punk spaces," as well as discussing repression and/or co-optation by the state or para-state institutions. As Kevin Dunn notes in his explication of "global punk": "Local punk scenes are discreet spaces for political resistance; resistance in *everyday life*" (63; emphasis added). The everyday, then, is key, and so too is *resistance*, and Dunn argues that it is "DIY punk's *global networks and flows* [that] provide the potential for counter-hegemony and political resistance" (111; emphasis added), and he points explicitly to anarchism as the informing reference point for this resistance (205). The analysis and comparison of punk scenes in China and Indonesia in this

article are similarly framed by this conception of "global punk" and its anarchist-informed modes of cultural production, activism, and resistance. The ethnographic research that informs this article was carried out by Donaghey in Indonesia in 2012, 2015, and 2018 and by Xiao in China in 2013 and 2017, based on interviews and participant observation, as well as ongoing dialogue with punks in each place. The interviewees have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Emerging Punk Scenes in Transitioning Authoritarian Contexts

The first punk bands in Indonesia emerged as late as 1989, with a proliferation of punk bands and scenes in the early 1990s, during the latter years of the "New Order" regime. While more open to Western cultural influences than the anticolonial Soekarno regime (1945–1967),[5] the militarist, crony capitalist, and totalitarian aspects of Suharto's "New Order" (1966–1998) have led some commentators to describe the regime as "pseudo-fascist" (Vltchek, 39), and targeted cultural repression was part and parcel of maintaining Suharto's political domination. The "red scare"[6] that was foundational to Suharto's seizure of power in the mid-1960s also underpinned cultural repression throughout his regime's rule, and this legacy of cultural repression has directly affected the punk scene there.

In both Indonesia and China, the earliest transmissions of punk were via punks traveling from the West to these places—particular individuals can even be identified, such as Bart from the Dutch band Antidote, who also provided the nascent punk scene in Bandung with anarchist political literature and Dave O'Dell from the U.S., who formed the band Brain Failure in Beijing in 1997 (O'Dell). In Indonesia, the weakening of the New Order regime in the 1990s opened up the transmission of Western entertainment sources (Sen and Hill). As Sean Martin-Iverson writes, "Underground music gained in popularity during the 1990s, in the context of increased access to global media and the decline of the authoritarian New Order regime's cultural and political hegemony" (2012, 383). The broadcasts of MTV Indonesia from 1995 were a key point of exposure for the early Indonesian punk scene, in addition to "leaked" radio signals from Australia (Prasetyo 2017). Punk emerged in China in a comparable social context. The 1978 reforms not only opened up the country economically but also exposed Chinese people to a wide variety of values, particularly those shaped by Western culture. The suppression of 1989's

Tiananmen Square movement led to an elevation of economic goals over social ones, and a "soft authoritarianism" (Selden and Perry) emerged after 1989 that has allowed space for expressing new interests. The song "Nothing to My Name" (一无所有, literally "I own nothing") by the rock musician Cui Jian had become the anthem of the protestors for this incident. It can be interpreted as a declaration of rejecting tradition and an expression of confusion in the face of the dramatic postreform societal change. Together with other musicians, this rock movement carved out a new space for youth culture. This period thus witnessed the sublimation of revolutionary discourse in music and art forms. Juchuan Li, commenting on this era in China, writes that "at this moment, people suddenly gain[ed] a great deal of 'freedom'—bodily, sensational, materialistic, becoming 'individualistic', etc.—but at the same time, political suppression still exists and takes on new forms." Alongside the emergence of apolitical pop music, punk kept the revolutionary spirit alive despite being marginalized (Field and Groenewegen).

Punk's primary political companion is anarchism, especially for "activist" manifestations of punk, which are the focus of this article, and this is reflected in the emergence of punk in Indonesia and China.[7] Punk in Indonesia has been heavily influenced by its development alongside and within the opposition movement against the Suharto dictatorship, which was ultimately toppled in 1998. The (re-)emergence of anarchism[8] in Indonesia "came together with the arrival of punk music . . . at that time anarchy was synonymous with punk" (Anonymous). Chinese punk musicians, especially those following a DIY ethos, take an antigovernment and antiauthoritarian stance, insisting on individual freedom and expression, demonstrating a political position that reflects key tenets of anarchism. This is reflected in the lyrics to songs but also in their performance practices (though this is arguably more clearly evident among the "old school" members of the punk scene in China). However, because the aesthetic variety within these punk scenes is so diverse, it is not the case that particular stylistic elements of punk subgenres are indicative of discrete political emphases—a pop punk, d-beat, ska, grind, street-punk, Oi!, or post-punk musicality (ad nauseam) is no less likely to be associated with anarchistic politics or DIY production politics than an anarcho-punk or crust musicality. As Steve Moog puts it in his ethnography of the punk scene in Indonesia: "Picking apart punk music means nothing if we do not understand punk culture more broadly" (56). As such, this article focuses on that more fruitful inquiry into the cultural production and activist practices of these punk communities.

Punk Activism

As a long-lived, evolving, and amorphous phenomenon, punk can be regarded as a music genre, cultural moment, political movement, and aesthetic form; punk's diversity makes it open to many different interpretations. Beyond our focus on punk's relationship to activism and anarchism, punk is also about myriad other issues (including contradictory themes such as masculinity and femininity and queerness, or commodification and imitation and authenticity). No doubt, any number of other lines of inquiry into the punk scenes and cultures in Indonesia and China would make an interesting basis for "inter-Asian" comparison, but the particular political contexts of punk's emergence and development in these places lends itself to a focus on activism, countercultural production, and resistance practices. While both China and Indonesia have long histories of anarchist movements, the repression of political dissent for much of the latter part of the twentieth century has meant that punk has been a key factor in the reintroduction, or reinvigoration, of anarchist ideas in both contexts.

Anarchism has been firmly ingrained in the development of punk, from the shock tactic deployment of "anarchy" by punk bands in the mid-to-late 1970s (see Donaghey 2013) to the codification of anarchist philosophy as punk's primary political companion from the late 1970s onward. The interrelationship between anarchism and punk has been a defining feature of punk's global spread. Imagery and lyrics are one manifestation of anarchism's influence in punk (and as mentioned above this stretches across punk subgenres, regardless of musical style), as is the key emphasis on DIY production practices (see Kaltefleiter; Glasper; McKay; O'Guérin; Worley; Cross; O'Hara). This interrelationship works in both directions, so the anarchist movement has also been shaped by punk in terms of the political socialization toward anarchism that punk frequently entails and the cultural backdrop to the anarchist movement that punk has often provided (see Portwood-Stacer; Jeppesen 2011; Cohn; Steinhardt Case). Activisms that are particularly associated with punk include squatting, Food Not Bombs, and antifascism, but "bottom-up" trade unions such as the IWW (Forman) and anarcho-syndicalist activist groups (Smith and Worley, 4) have also been closely associated with punk.

This interrelationship between anarchism and punk has been strongly evident in Indonesia. As interviewee Rusanti in Indonesia describes it, the culmination of the movement against the Suharto regime was influential in the further politicization of Indonesian punk:

> During the fall of the Suharto regime . . . like ’96 until ’98 . . . that was also the time where the punk movement start[ed to be] more active in many scenes. . . . It contribute[d] also with anarchism, even though it was still [at] a very, very basic level, and I think that’s the period where people start[ed] to be more critic[al] and get more access.

Martin-Iverson, too, notes this growing politicization, writing that “[d]uring the *Reformasi* (Reform) period in the late 1990s, in the context of a wider youth revolt against the authoritarian New Order regime, this scene became associated with radical political activism and especially anarchism” (2011, 2). Interviewee Gilang’s group in Bandung, Indonesia, were responsible for producing what he described as the first political punk zine in Indonesia, in mid-1996, titled *Submissive Riot*. Joanna Pickles points to the availability of explicitly anarchist punk zines from the U.S., such as *Profane Existence*, articles from which “were translated and published in the Indonesian fanzine *Kontaminasi Propaganda* in 1999” (51). One early manifestation of this anarchist activist influence was the “Chaos Day” of New Year’s Eve 1996, inspired directly by an account of a similar “Chaos Day” in Germany. Rioting targeted corporate advertising hoardings and vehicles used by government officials, resulting in dozens of arrests. A Chaos Day planned for the following New Year’s Eve was violently repressed by the increasingly embattled Suharto regime. However, punk and anarchist involvement in the opposition movement extended beyond rioting. Martin-Iverson writes:

> *Reformasi* was the highpoint for anarcho-punk in the Indonesian underground, a combination of militant anarchist politics and aggressive punk music which gave voice to newly assertive identities and politics of youth [. . .] Indonesian anarcho-punk took the ascendant liberalizing tendencies of the *Reformasi* era to an extreme, emphasizing a radical and disruptive form of individual autonomy against the disciplining powers of the state. (2012, 385)

The opposition movement was framed explicitly as antifascist, struggling against the militarist, capitalist, and totalitarian aspects of Suharto’s regime. Gilang’s *Submissive Riot* zine sprouted into an organized group called “Front Anti-Fasis” (FAF, or Anti-Fascist Front) in 1997. Gilang pointed to the popularity of the group among punks, but FAF also had wider influence and membership:

> At the time, we were like “working,” not just in punk community. We also spread it to local youth, urban youth, and then to the workers’ organizations. . . . We even organized the factory’s strike, and they did it. And many urban people . . . joined FAF at the time. . . . Many actions [were] done by the anti-fascists, like to take over the government’s radio station and making statements, because at the time we couldn’t say any statement on air.

After the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998, FAF joined with other antifascist groups across Indonesia to form "Jaringan Anti Fasis Nusantara" or JAFNUS (the Archipelago Anti-Fascist Network). As interviewee Arief described it, "The people inside the groups . . . some of them were punks. So they [were] also organizing DIY gigs or DIY exhibition[s] and squatting buildings." He described the kinds of activities the anarchist-punk groups were involved with in the post-Suharto *Reformasi* period:

> We still held street demonstration[s]. In Bandung there's also a vandal collective called Keras Kepala, which [was] hitting city walls [with] paint. There's also many collectives based on info-housing and litera[ture] publication. The first info-house collective in Bandung was Kontra Kultura. They publish[ed] zines and litera[ture] and sometimes [did] a record label.

This apparent shift toward a more "cultural" activist focus was framed as part of a wider depoliticization by Arief: "After 1998, the political awareness become less and less not only on the punk culture but for the Indonesians [generally]." Martin-Iverson also notes that "anarcho-punk as a distinct political and subcultural current has declined . . . [and that] in the 2000s the underground as a whole became much less politically active, reflecting broader trends among Indonesian youth towards lifestylism and political pessimism" (2012, 385). Somewhat countering this impression of decline, however, many interviewees spoke of *growing* political consciousness in the punk scene in Indonesia, and this is borne out in the high-profile May Day demonstrations in Yogyakarta and Bandung in 2018 and 2019 in which anarchist protestors have featured prominently (see Prasetyo 2020. As discussed below, these protest actions have led to the specific targeting of "anarkos" by the police). Despite Arief's reservations about cultural activism as "depoliticization," he also asserted that the connection between anarchism and punk "is growing. There [are] still many punks with [an] anarchist point of view, and they seek each other [out]. And there are anarchists who feel connected to punks." Martin-Iverson points out that "[p]olitically-active punks have been influenced by the resurgence of the Indonesian labour movement during the decline of the New Order, and especially in the aftermath of *Reformasi*," and that "Indonesian punks also participate in class-oriented political action, from solidarity with striking workers to participating in May Day demonstrations" (2014, 3). In terms of class analysis, Martin-Iverson considers that "punk repositions and rearticulates class rather than transcending or displacing it" (2014, 2), and, indeed, this déclassé conception is prominent (though not ubiquitous) across punk-inflected anarchisms. As Moog writes of the Bandung Pyrate Punx, they "come from varied backgrounds and social statuses" (5), and further, because

"class is a concept that is antithetical to their principles . . . it is not openly engaged with or discussed" (5) (some punk sub-genres such as Oi! or street punk place firm emphasis on the performance of working-class subjectivities, but this often has little bearing on their "sociologically defined" class backgrounds). The protests against the abduction of sixty-four punks in Banda Aceh in December 2011 were more events that coalesced anarchist sections of the punk scene in Indonesia, and punk in Indonesia continues to be closely associated with anarchist-informed activisms such as antifascism and Food Not Bombs.

Chiming with the decolonizing emphasis of our "inter-Asia" comparison, campaigns against the impacts of globalized neoliberalism/neocolonialism are another particular focus for punk-associated activists in Indonesia. For example, the Unrest Collective, who describe themselves as "a media collective disseminating information . . . about human rights and justice for all life destroyed by the industrialized capitalist system" (The Unrest Collective website) produced a punk-style zine in 2012 detailing the effects of corporate iron mining in the Kulon Progo area near Yogyakarta and the struggle of the *Paguyuban Petani Lahan Pantai* (PPLP or Society of Coastal Land Farmers) to protect native farming methods and their community. The zine also reported on the abduction of a PPLP activist known as Tukijo by local police acting on behalf of the mining corporation. In Bandung, some of the punks involved in the antimining struggle sabotaged an ATM/cash machine with a small amount of explosives and issued a statement in solidarity with the PPLP's campaign, demanding the release of Tukijo.

The absence of similar confrontational activism in China can be attributed to a change in forms of resistance—a more confrontational and direct approach was employed to challenge the authorities before the 1990s, while thereafter individual resistance at the symbolic and artistic level was more viable (Selden and Perry). One Chinese punk interviewee lamented that "direct/confrontational protest" in China is regarded as ineffective—instead, increasing political consciousness in day-to-day life was argued to be a more effective path to follow. For instance, one punk musician, Mr. Deng, produced an article titled "the alternative education of a punk" aimed at equipping people with an anarchistic mode of thinking. While spectacular "punk riots" have not been a feature of activism in China, punks will join less confrontational protests related to urban conflicts. An example is resistance to government plans to fill in Wuhan's Donghu Lake for commercial development by taking photos and submitting them to a dedicated website. This action has been shaped by its repressive context, and not only have the motivations of the

organizer of the Donghu Art Project been articulated very carefully but the resulting feedback has been recorded in detail. In a space called "Youth Autonomous Center," built by Mr. Deng, workshops or group discussions often happened during the artistic protest,11providing a space to organize, plan, and execute ideas.

Punks also attend antidiscrimination events such as those organized by pro-LGBT groups and organize gigs themed around issues such as LGBT rights. Homosexuality remains a controversial subject in mainstream China, so communicating such a cause in performance is extremely problematic. As Miss K said:

> People have different opinions on homosexual relationships. We had our own values and deep respect for homosexuality. My friend and his partner had a great passion and affection for each other, but they had to separate because of the social pressure. I have great sympathy for this couple. I don't think it is wrong or right, but people around me despise it. Therefore I decided to organize a performance to encourage them to seek for the true love.
>
> At that time, I consulted different people about organizing the performance with the theme of homosexuality such as having a film discussion or seminar. But they all told me that it would be very difficult when applying for it with this theme. The location was very difficult to find since live houses [gig venues] were afraid to hold this kind of performance.

Punks in China are required to be subtle in pursuing political aspirations, with a strong sense of protecting oneself from potential punishment by the government. Nevertheless, the "Donghu" artistic protest and organizing gigs around LGBT rights can be understood as macro-oriented resistance (Williams) with subcultural group members joining a wider social movement. While the overlap between punk and LGBT campaigns or resistance to urban relocation is not ubiquitous, there are clear parallels between activist subcultures and "non-official" organizations in their constant confrontation of government interventions into their activities, and the subsequent constraints on their political aspirations. This shared marginalization leads punk communities in China to express their sympathies toward these groups and to support them through musical practices.

So the activist histories that are associated with and feed into punk in Indonesia and China are quite distinct, and this has an abiding influence on the opportunities available to organize politically or otherwise express dissent. While punk-associated activisms in Indonesia and China are shaped by local particularities, these sets of activisms are informed by anarchist political values (autonomy, direct action, support for the marginalized and oppressed, and a creative tension between the individual and the communal), which, as noted above, inform the

predominant organizing principles of "global punk." This local particularism, within a "global punk" framing, also plays out in DIY punk cultural production and manifestations of "punk space" in both China and Indonesia.

DIY Gigs

Sandra Jeppesen argues that DIY "is arguably the quintessential practice of anarchist politics, bringing together other anarchist concepts such as prefiguration, anti-capitalism and horizontalism that are foundational to anarchist organizing and cultural practices" (2018, 203), so punk's everyday DIY production practices can be understood as an extension of its activism into the realm of culture. Dunn, likewise, highlights that "it is through DIY punk that transgressive political ideologies, such as anarchism and feminism, can gain traction with the politics of *everyday life*" (198; emphasis added)—DIY, like anarchism more generally, is about "doing" and "being" in the here and now. As Jeppesen puts it, DIY creates "counterhegemonic cultural forms and practices," and is the "active creation of anarchist culture" (2018, 203). For Jeppesen, a defining feature of DIY is that it "keeps the production, distribution, and consumption process as separate from capitalism as possible" (2018, 203) (for example, by keeping prices very low and using "pay no more than" notices, avoiding alienated labor, establishing alternative distribution networks and so on). Yet while this clearly resonates in the acutely neoliberalized capitalist context of Indonesia, the economic pressures on production practices are felt (somewhat) differently in "communist" China. However, punk DIY production practices in Indonesia and China are both impacted by cultural repression, and in such contexts resistance to (or evasion of) state interference and corruption is at least as important a factor as separation from capitalist modes of production.

It is expected practice at DIY gigs in Indonesia for bands to provide some funds to cover hire fees for the venue, sound system, guitar amplifiers, and drums. This is termed "making a collective," with the rationale that all costs are covered upfront and spread over a large number of people, so that if the gig goes wrong (for whatever reason) then neither the coordinating organizer nor any traveling bands are left out-of-pocket. In many contexts globally, the practice of gig promoters asking bands to "pay to play" is fiercely opposed, especially by those involved in DIY, and it is typically viewed as an exploitative practice. But in Indonesia, with its particular financial and logistical pressures, "making a collective" is understood as an empowering practice

that shares the burden. The Pyrate Punx collective in Bandung is unusual in that they own all of their own equipment. Drum kits, amplifiers, sound systems, and mixing desks were partly funded by donations from other collectives in the Pyrate Punk network[9] (particularly in Oakland, California, in the U.S.) and from punks in Switzerland. The Bandung Pyrate Punx have recently established their own venue (discussed below), but even prior to this they avoided using commercial bars for their gigs. Such venues typically insist on taking 70 percent of the gig proceeds as venue hire, so Bandung Pyrate Punx sought out alternative venues to avoid the pressure to raise money from admission fees, making their gigs accessible to people with little or no money: this was explicitly informed by their anarchist political grounding. Gig proceeds are often shared among various "benefit" causes. For example, at one gig money was donated to a local family who had lost their home and possessions in a devastating fire and to a member of the Pyrate Punx collective who had been incarcerated for a solidarity action with farmers struggling against corporate mining (mentioned above). Discussing the Bandung Pyrate Punx specifically, and echoing Jeppesen, Moog writes that "to them, DIY is a form of *practiced anarchism*. Their understanding of DIY is framed around interactions based on mutual aid, non-hierarchical organizational practices, and deep-seated anti-capitalist sentiments" (4; emphasis added).

Not all gigs in Indonesia are organized in this way, and these DIY production practices can be readily contrasted against commercial gigs, often sponsored by cigarette corporations. Interviewee Mr. Hostage discussed the growing influence of tobacco companies:

> They know what they're doing . . . thinking about a new way of marketing . . . a few years [ago], they started to sponsor gigs, not just for punks but for everything else that they see [as] cool. Eventually they got into the underground movement, and now it's pretty common to see a show that is sponsored by a tobacco company.

Interviewee Agus, a member of the Bandung Pyrate Punx, expressed wariness of associating with corporations: "If we have sponsors, maybe we are under control. . . . [sponsors] can do whatever they want . . . and that's why we don't have any sponsor—because we're on our own. DIY, pure DIY." The issue of control is important. Engaging with corporate capitalism in the guise of major labels or cigarette-manufacturing sponsors may (and often does) mean loss of artistic control, but it *always* means loss of economic control. As Jeppesen puts it, engaging with "corporate production or control" and being "co-opted or recuperated by the mainstream . . . takes the powerful message out of punk . . . and sells it back to people, emptied of its former meaning" (2011, 29).

However, in addition to DIY resistance to capitalist production practices, organization of punk gigs in Indonesia is also hampered by state authorities. Before Bandung Pyrate Punx established their own venue, Klub Racun (Poison Club) was the advertised venue for all their gigs, no matter where they were being held, as obfuscation against the authorities—the actual gig location was disseminated by word of mouth in the few days prior to the gig to limit the chances of it being preemptively disrupted. "Police is problem," said interviewee Taufan, "really big problem." Putri said: "We call it ACAB" (All Cops Are Bastards). The core difficulty is that gigs and other public events in Indonesia require a permit from the local police. The police ask for details of the gig, including which bands are playing, along with the songs that will be played and lyrics that will be sung. Putri explained the repressive, censoring consequences of this: "If the lyrics contain [references to] military whatever, police bullshit, [that] kinda thing, 'no' they will say. . . . There is no freedom really." Bandung bands Krass Kepala and KontraSosial are both blacklisted by the police, and a band that Gilang played with circa 2001 "couldn't play, [on the order of] the police . . . they thought we are communist band [so we were] prohibited everywhere." Even if a license is acquired, the gig will be plagued by police seeking bribes, on threat of shutting down the gig. Putri explained:

> When we have [a gig] in the middle of town, in like a bar or café . . . cops will always come, and then they'll ask for money and they'll leave, but they tell their friends "oh, there's this show" … Different people come [and] ask for more money, and then they'll tell their other friends and then more cops come and then ask for more money.

On one occasion, when the bribes must have been considered insufficient, a gig featuring Australian band PissChrïst was "closed down" before the band even got to play:

> They can just go inside the bar, or the café where we play . . . and they just say "shut this down," for whatever reason . . . just because they think there's punks here, they're gonna create "chaos," whatever. We weren't doing anything! Just listening to music, just hanging out with friends, but [when] they say "shut it down," we have to shut it down.

Putri explained that in order to evade police harassment some promoters hold gigs on the numerous military bases in Bandung:

> Because the cops can't come in and touch them. . . . Which is stupid in my opinion, because . . . the army's just the same. Police/military base, whatever! . . . KontraSosial refused to play there . . . and I think Krass Kepala refused to play there as well. And my band as well, I said we were never gonna play there.

Interviewee Aulia, a member of the Bandung Pyrate Punx but originally from the U.S., perceived punk gigs at army bases as “anti-anarchist,” since the army is obviously an especially oppressive arm of the state, and in the context of Indonesia the military is also heavily involved in government. Yet the other option is to use a commercial venue and ask permission from the police—then face police harassment anyway. Neither option offers much in terms of autonomy, and this situation highlights the level of repression of punk in Indonesia (discussed in more detail below). To evade this interference, Bandung Pyrate Punx have hosted regular festivals in remote mountain areas or on far-flung islands. The thirteenth Libertad Fest was held in 2020 and is an explicitly anarchist punk gathering (the island on which the festival was held in 2015 had its Indonesian national flag replaced with the anarchist red-and-black flag for the duration, for example). However, as testament to the level of repression and corruption in Indonesia, during the 2015 Libertad Fest, despite its remote island location in the Java Sea, police arrived by boat to extort bribes (the festival attendees included a significant number of punks from the U.S., Europe, and Australia, which may have represented a lucrative prospect for the police).

Chiming with the anticapitalist impetus identified in Jeppesen’s definition of DIY, Chinese punk musicians also make efforts to reduce the commercial influence on punk performances. However, in the particular economic context of China, this is expressed as seeking “punk authenticity” in performance and a perception of “authentic” punk culture from the audience. For instance, after experiencing other music festivals, interviewee Mr. Li and his companions decided to establish a punk music festival, aiming to avoid the commercialism of mainstream music festivals and to encourage people to learn about punk culture. In Mr. Li’s articulation, music festivals in China are based on a

> fake prosperity. The audience in the music market is bigger than before. But people who know the music have become fewer than before and they just like the crowd or pretending to be trendy.
>
> I was previously interviewed by international press and asked about the differences between the lyrics in China, Britain and America . . . I said that what we sang about was our true lives while foreign lyrics were just lyrics. I wrote about resisting this society because the government was unfair. . . . In foreign countries, the government will support you to hold a music festival. This is not the case in China. Chinese resistance is the authentic one.

As a founder of a punk music festival since 2004 in Beijing, Mr. Li not only hopes to expand the punk circle, as mentioned above, but also demands the audience’s appreciation of punk music as opposed to the musical ignorance he identifies in mainstream festivals. His later posts online encouraged audience members to learn about punk music and to talk on stage about

their criticisms of the Chinese government; speaking out about grievances against the government is an essential feature of the festival. Mr. Li considers the act of holding a punk festival as authentic Chinese resistance compared to punk festivals elsewhere in the world, which he claims are funded by the state (though this is *very* rarely the case, in fact). This claim suggests that Chinese musicians place particular emphasis on negotiating the limits of political restriction as the crucial criteria to judge the authenticity of their performance. However, other aspects such as the commercialization of the music scene or the negotiable space between the music scene and the political environment are ignored. This is reflected in Mr. Li's struggle and his actual success in organizing a festival. Mr. Li has received several warnings from the government and has suffered difficulties in acquiring the permit to hold the festival. The cost of organizing a punk festival is oppression and potentially severe punishment from the government. The punk festival is a collective experience, but from Mr. Li's perspective, insisting on organizing a punk festival can be seen as a form of individual resistance that manifests itself politically and culturally: this is because fighting for permission from the government to organize a punk festival can be seen as a political move to resist cultural control by the Chinese government.

Although DIY punk gigs in China have not suffered from the effects of police corruption to the same extent as Indonesian gigs, they are subject to draconian surveillance by police or government officials. This is manifested in interference with performances, especially when musicians are expressing dissent to the audience, whether at government-sponsored events or punk-only performances. It can also be seen also in "complete enforcement"—that is, cancellation of performances. Even relatively small punk-only events can be hampered by the authorities. Interviewee Mr. Fang's experience illustrates how troublesome it typically is to negotiate with the government about organizing a punk performance:

> The government didn't allow me to organize a music festival. It was not only because of the American bands but also because of a lack of networks with the government. More importantly, the political messages brought by those American bands would particularly bother the Chinese government. At that time, I told the police that they could detain me temporarily. I had a good relationship with the police, and they promised to release me after the music festival finished. But this plan still couldn't be actualized, because somebody didn't earn money from this.

So, the government stopped Mr. Fang for two reasons: one was the potential political harm that could be wrought by the arrangers of the music festival inviting politically outspoken American bands; the other stemmed from lack of material profit for the government. Simply put,

commercial results are usually the deciding factor and the justification that compensates for the political flaws in the government permitting a punk performance—this inducement was apparently lacking in Mr. Fang's case, and the proposed event was not held. Despite the overriding impact of state interference, DIY punk in China is then to some degree *also* beholden to the "commercial" challenges faced by punks in Indonesia, in keeping with Jeppesen's emphasis on the anticapitalism of DIY.

While punk bands with a certain degree of popularity sometimes get opportunities to perform at a commercial event for a wider audience, control over punk performance via exclusion from performance spaces is the norm in China, and the Chinese authorities are arguably more effective in this exclusion process, which is implemented at multiple levels of government, than their counterparts in Indonesia, irrespective of similarities in licensing and censorship-related restrictions. Manifestations of state power are somewhat disparate in Indonesia, as exemplified in the ability to circumvent police licensing procedures by holding gigs at military bases. Since religious institutions[10] (or fundamentalist mobs) and numerous paramilitary organizations are also influential in the civic sphere, the implementation of censorship is diffuse and unevenly spread across various actors without coordination. Furthermore, Mr. Fang's case illustrates that maintaining "friendly" relations with police in China, often through giving them money or buying them dinner, can be a path to successful organization of a gig. In this sense, similar to the Indonesian context, corruption is endemic, and censorship and licensing usually function less as systematic repression than as just another method for authorities (of whatever stripe) to extort payment.

The conflict between the government and punk musicians is centered on the political aspect of punk performance, and, with the scarcity of performance opportunities available, punks in China seek every opportunity to organize DIY gigs, just as Indonesian punks do. For instance, punk performances can take place at a musician's flat or in a public playground in the suburbs. As Jeppesen writes: "DIY culture creates oppositional spaces for anarchist production and lifestyles" (2018, 215) and, as such, manifestations of "punk space" are crucial in China and Indonesia as an expression of the everyday culture of punk, as discussed below.

The comparison between DIY cultural production in the punk scenes of China and those of Indonesia is revealing, and exemplifies the usefulness of a "global punk" (and in our case "inter-Asia" comparative) framing. Despite the ostensibly distinct economies of Indonesia and

China (neoliberal and state capitalist, respectively), the outworkings of anarchist-informed DIY principles in each context bear striking similarities. This provides a critical complication to analyses of DIY production that are limited to Anglo-American contexts: the distinct forms of repression experienced in Indonesia and China and the particular economic systems that have to be negotiated to hold punk gigs in these places help to identify the core underlying ethos of DIY culture. By moving the discussion away from how "Western" norms are being reinterpreted in these "other" contexts, to instead compare the manifestations of DIY in the punk scenes of Indonesia and China, *anticommercialism* and *freedom of artistic expression* emerge as the key animating factors of DIY production.

"Punk Space": Hangouts, Distros, and Info-houses

As mentioned above, Bandung Pyrate Punx have established their own venue, Rumah Pirata (Pirate House).[11] The project is very much inspired by the aesthetic and organization of European squats: the collective house operates along the same anarchist, collective, direct democratic lines, and posters are displayed there from famous punk squats such as Köpi in Berlin. The Taring Babi (or "TarBi" ["pig tusk"]) collective house in Jakarta, run by the band Marjinal, is another example (see Wallach 2014; Frreeyya), and these spaces are also essential as "hangouts." The spaces for hangouts in both Indonesia and China not only build a sense of community but also exhibit a particular sense of political meaning, which often leads to micro-level resistance against the government, mainstream lifestyles, or the authoritarian system through appropriating space.

In terms of "hanging out" and socializing, many punks in Indonesia simply congregate on street corners or in specific public areas. Some hangouts become established over a period of prolonged use, such as PI in Bandung, which interviewee Taufan described as a variation on a "Reclaim the Streets" action, emphasizing the political significance of this publicly visible occupation of space by punks. Similarly, Martin-Iverson notes that the Kolektif Balai Kota (BalKot) "gather weekly on the steps of Bandung's City Hall [and] sometimes adopts the name 'Reclaim the Stairs' as a reference to the Reclaim the Streets movement—there is a self-consciousness to their appropriation of government space" (2014, 8). "Distros" are another key example of punk space in Indonesia. These are shops that often emerge as an outgrowth of particular hangouts. For instance, interviewee Felix described how an informal hangout in

Medan developed into a distro space called “Ammunition” (see also Prasetyo 2017). Distros emerged from punk DIY production and distribution practices; however, in many cases they have come to be co-opted by neoliberal entrepreneurialism in what Martin-Iverson describes as “the gentrification of punk spaces” (2014, 9). Nonetheless, some distros remain resolutely DIY and also function as meeting places and activist information points.

Similarly to the Indonesian context, punks in China have particular places for hanging out, often in bars or small businesses that the musicians have opened, or in public places such as parks. Those spaces also host interaction between the older generation of musicians and the younger ones, where a contrast in terms of the relationship between the different generations can be found in different regions. For instance, the group in Wuhan believed that no hierarchy or subgroups were present in their punk group, especially in comparison to the punk circle in Beijing. Indeed, the older punk musicians have shown comparatively great enthusiasm in guiding and encouraging the young generation of punk musicians and supporting them in many ways. This has become a norm in some respects, serving as a reason for Wuhan punk musicians to “resist” Beijing punk musicians. Since punk musicians regard pursuing equality as an important standard for judging the authenticity of being a punk, their act of distancing themselves from the Beijing punks also becomes a way to maintain their own sense of authenticity. The Wuhan punk circle can be seen as being formed through the process of both previous and current punk musicians identifying themselves as punks. In this connection, working and hanging out together creates an opportunity to form a framework supporting punk musicians involved in resisting the mainstream, as well as subgroups on the larger punk scene that are deemed problematic. In this sense, although Chinese punk musicians do not explicitly discuss anarchist philosophy, it is valued and manifested in the daily lives of those musicians. Seeking a structure without hierarchy can be regarded as pursuing anarchistic organization of personal life.

Meanwhile, there is a clear contrast in that the politics of place in China get manifested not only in the process of punks talking about politics, particularly with antigovernment sentiment but also in the anxiety that is generated by displaying punk clothing or styles of behavior to the public. There is arguably a certain element of this in the Indonesian context as well; in terms of repressive actions against punk in general, however, many Indonesian punk hangouts have enjoyed considerable longevity, including those on government property, demonstrating that these punk spaces are usually tolerated.

A "global punk" influence can be seen in the Chinese punks' process of establishing communities based on anarchist philosophies, and as in Indonesia, the European anarchist squatting tradition provides a model. However, squatting is not feasible in China, so analogues have been created, such as "Our Home": a legally rented space established by a punk musician with the idea of "trying to organize daily life in an anarchistic manner in order to form a life recognized by everyone." With similarity to Rumah Pirata in Bandung, this space may be accessed by anyone who agrees with living an anarchist lifestyle, accommodating artists or anarchists from the local area or other cities in China. Within such a space, residents can intervene in the perceived unfairness resulting from the process of urbanization or organize workshops to discuss and share their alternative thoughts. Mr. Deng, the space's founder, indicates his reasons for establishing the community:

> Like the boundless affection I felt for punk music when I first encountered it, I developed a similar enthusiasm for all kinds of activism related to social resistance. I sought out and began to translate whatever materials I could get my hands on, about "new ideas" such as "direct democracy" and "autonomy," and through comparison, I began to clarify my own positions. Eventually, the social propositions of pacifist-anarchists, and the concept of "I" promoted by certain media activists, left the biggest impression on me. Inspired, I decided to explore the possibilities of peaceful acts of resistance.

For Mr. Deng, establishing an autonomous community not only serves the purpose of providing relatively free vocal expression and discussion but is also a practice to resist government control and the wider authoritarian system. Mr. Deng is influenced by radical educationalists such as John Holloway, and describes himself as a follower of punk DIY philosophy. After contemplating different sorts of activism, he has formed a belief that the world can be changed through revolutionizing daily life and relying on an individual's self-consciousness and power. Maintaining an autonomous community is seen as resistance to the authoritarian system's hierarchy and control of speech. As such, the flow of meaningful discussion and conversation in "Our Home" has the capacity to design and promote small-scale social movements.

Other spaces are established with a much more specific activist focus. These are known as info-shops or info-houses. Needle 'n' Bitch, an anarcha-feminist initiative based in Yogyakarta, is an example of an info-house with roots in the punk scene. Interviewee Rusanti from Needle 'n' Bitch described its role:

> Needle 'n' Bitch could be considered kind of like the first anarcho feminist proclaimed group . . . [We have] ma[d]e workshops, campaigns, and starting from there other groups or individuals are

> starting to . . . have their own initiatives. So it's about spreading the spirit to other girls . . . we try to promote and introduce values through activities together.

Needle 'n' Bitch "provide free education and other resources dedicated to [the] community and people who can't access it" and hold "talks and discussions, workshops, campaign and education on women issue, gender equality, reproductive health and sexuality and politics (environmental issue, land and agrarian struggle)" (Needle 'n' Bitch, 6). The collective was forced to vacate their previous house, having been "targeted by Yogyakarta local cops" with a concerted campaign against them in their local neighborhood (Needle 'n' Bitch, 11) in the wake of the 2018 Mayday riots in Yogyakarta, during which a police station was burned down, resulting in the trial of six anarchist activists (ActForFreedom). Indeed, repression has been a key feature for punk activists in Indonesia and China, as discussed below.

So, once again, while the local manifestations of "punk space" in China and Indonesia are distinct, they can be sensibly understood in comparison with one another through a "global punk"/"inter-Asia" framework, and as with DIY cultural production, anarchism and anarchist-associated activisms are the key influences that inform these local manifestations.

Repression of Punk

The campaign of repression against Needle 'n' Bitch is symptomatic of a step-change in the Indonesian state's understanding of anarchism (and punk). The authorities' previous ignorance of anarchism had somewhat insulated the movement from the effects of the ongoing "red scare" in Indonesia, but having been overlooked and misunderstood by the authorities for decades, anarchist-informed activisms and now on their radar, with "Anarcho Syndicalism" being denounced by the National Police of Indonesia as a "new 'ideological [specter]'—after Communism and Islam extremists" (Needle 'n' Bitch, 11). This is not to say that anarchism is now well understood by the powers that be nor by scholars. Indeed, Andreas Wimmer makes the absurd characterization of contemporary anarchists in Indonesia as "militant Marxist urbanites" and part of "the growing Marxist-jihadist collaboration" (14). Of course, the authoritarianism and statism implicit in Marxism contrasts sharply with anarchism's emphasis on freedom and antistatism, and the suggestion of anarchism as somehow being conflated with jihadism, rooted as it is in an oppressively hierarchical and fundamentalist religion, is either very poor scholarship on Wimmer's part, or is deliberately disingenuous. As evidence of the repression now faced by

anarchists, during the Mayday event in Bandung in 2019, a "peaceful action by [an] estimated 1000 participants" (Needle 'n' Bitch, 10), police "arrested 619 protesters for vandalism and destruction of public property" who were then "beaten, stripped and bullied" (Needle 'n' Bitch, 11, see also Prasetyo 2020). "Arrests of alleged anarcho-syndicalists" have also been made in "West Java . . . South Sulawesi, and . . . East Java" (Tehusijarana and Dipa).

This newly emergent repression of anarchism has clear echoes with recent repression campaigns specifically against punk in Indonesia, not least the December 2011 abduction and torture of sixty-four punks at a gig in Banda Aceh. The incident attracted international headlines and condemnation by human rights organizations around the world. The punks were subjected to a ten-day "Qur'anic bootcamp" during which their heads were shaved, their piercings removed, and their clothes burnt, before being dunked in a stagnant pond as a "cleansing" ritual and finally being awarded certificates for good behavior and released. It is noteworthy that photographs of the ordeal were taken and distributed by the local civil (Sharia) police themselves. Aceh is in many ways distinct from other parts of Indonesia, but the religious motivation of this campaign of repression against punk has clear echoes with repression of punk across Indonesia. Discussing the motivation for repression of punk in Jakarta, for example, Ian Wilson highlights the government's "deeply entrenched misunderstandings of what punk is and stands for" (1). Punk across Indonesia is repressed on explicitly religious grounds (and this also informs the "red scare" generally), and this repression is meted out by the state, religious fundamentalists, paramilitary groups, and segments of the wider public. The religious motivation was absolutely explicit in the Aceh episode: as Wilson points out, Banda Aceh's mayor, "Bunda" Illiza Sa'aduddin Djamal, insisted that "the raid was necessary and would be repeated as punk constituted a 'new social disease', a manifestation of degenerative foreign culture that was polluting Acehnese youth . . . punk was in conflict with the Islamic and cultural traditions of Aceh and Indonesia, and hence must be 'eliminated'" (1). Djamal even struck a genocidal tone: "We don't want it to spread to the next generation . . . if we're successful, we could *even prevent a punk from being born*" (Winn; emphasis added). Interviewee Mr. Hostage said that "the religious communities in Bandung didn't have special problems with the anarchists or the atheists. They had problems with how punks dressed and tattooing and [that they] pierced their body." Typically, the authorities and religious communities that exert influence over the state do not understand punk's political significance and repress it on the basis of outwardly visible

contraventions of Islamic doctrine. It is in these terms that they see it as an offense to Islam and as a "social disease."

"Bunda" Illiza's mention of "degenerative foreign culture" is key, and the anti-"Western" inflection to this religious opposition to punk is often expressed as anti-Zionism. Farid Budi Fahri of the FPI (Front Pembela Islam [Islamic Defenders Front]) speculated "that the underground music community . . . has been subverted by the Zionist movement to spread ideas that would contradict Islam" (Wardany), and in July 2012 a group of around thirty FPI members raided the Prapatan Rebel distro shop in Bandung, tearing down pentagram banners, which the distro used as its logo. The FPI defended the action as justified, misidentifying the pentagram as "the Jewish label" (Gandapurnama). Interviewee Gilang noted that "the religion is in all places in Indonesia like . . . fanatic[al]. . . . They refuse everything about West[ern] culture." This cultural anti-"Western" sentiment extends beyond punk, as exemplified in a controversial draft bill to the Indonesian national parliament in January 2019 that seeks to "outlaw . . . 'negative foreign influences' as well as blasphemous or pornographic content" in music (Lamb).

Punk has been actively repressed in both Indonesia and China, often as part of a wider repression of the perceived polluting effects of "Western" cultures. Kai Khiun Liew and Kelly Fu suggest that youth subcultures in contemporary Asian societies can invoke "moral panics" (Liew and Fu; see also Cohen), arguing that postcolonial societies struggle to reconcile the destabilizing effects of rapid industrialization and modernization, and, in response, authoritarian political leaders make a show of conserving national traditions and social structures from a perceived "Western" invasion—and youth subcultures derived from "Western" cultural references are often the victims. In the Chinese context, the state intervenes in punk performance through strict surveillance or direct violence. For example, at local government-organized festivals or performances, punk musicians who speak about political issues (such as urban relocation) from the platform of the stage, or even those who simply use profanity ("fuck," "shit," and so on) are likely to have their performance cut off or even be assaulted by government officials.[12] At punk-only performances, government officials occasionally attend to observe the musicians for purposes of surveillance. However, conflicts between government officials and punks, even those that escalate into violent incidents, are never publicized and certainly do not grow into international news concerns as has been the case in Indonesia. The main contrast in China comes from the state perception of punks as both laborers in the creative

industry and as sowing seeds of radical dissidence (Calluori). Rock music festivals are nowadays state-sponsored (Groenewegen-Lau) as a means for local governments to develop cultural industry. Indeed, for the punk musicians who are invited, these festivals provide opportunities to perform in the mainstream and gain recognition as “bottom-up” artists. However, the “punk performance” of antigovernment, political lyrics and aggressive interactions with the audience is repressed by the state. This attitude may be related to anti-Western sentiment in the 1990s characterized by tensions between China and the West, in which new left neonationalism emerged in China, arguing that the success of the West is derived from the colonial and exploitative history rather than its so-claimed democratic system, and that Western influence would spoil traditional culture in China (Modongal). From another perspective, compared to the singers with well-disciplined body stances displaying a denial of individuality and signifiers of the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party,[13] extravagant bodily behaviors such as pogoing, moshing, or shouting cause anxiety for the “people in charge.” Rather than recognizing punks as musicians who seek punk authenticity and pursue the rights of free speech, the government regards punks as nonconformist musicians intending to invoke chaos. Contrary to the depoliticized discourse of the entertainment industry, the moments of confrontation between the authoritarian representatives (police or government officials) and punk musicians shape punk performance into an ambiguous space, possessing the potential for repression and subversion.

However, anxiety about punk style in China tends to be more restricted to micro-level communities than in Indonesia. Peers, neighbors, or people with direct authority such as teachers, parents, and employers bring these interpersonal pressures to bear. Repression of punk in Indonesia does not rely as heavily on micro-level pressures, as is borne out in the experience of some of the interviewees in Indonesia who reported wearing punk attire at a mosque and not attracting hostility for doing so. The instances of active repression in Indonesia are most frequently at the institutional or para-institutional level, and the religious framing of that repression is symptomatic of the intertwinement of religious and state authority. This is not to say that Indonesian punks are actively supported by their peers, parents, teachers, employers, or neighbors—often far from it—but the experience of repression faced by punks in Indonesia is substantively different from that experienced by punks in China.

There is a clear divergence in the character of repression of punk between the contexts of Indonesia and China, which contrasts with the close comparability identified in the cases of DIY

production and "punk spaces." Of course, the repressive actions of the Indonesian and Chinese states are emphatically *not* concerned with any "global punk" conceptualization, preferring to focus on the "Western" roots of punk in their rejection of it. Part of the decolonizing significance of "global punk," then, is in its emphasis of a locally contingent counternarrative to the authorities' own neocolonial perception of punk as a "Western pollution." And, indeed, the "global punk" framing has been the key impetus behind solidarity campaigns against repression of punk in these "other places," as detailed in the case of the "Aceh 64" discussed above (even if this is imperfectly enacted in practice), and as Moog writes, "punks in Indonesia are *transcending geopolitical and cultural borders* through their identification, participation, and central position within global anarcho-punk networks" (7; emphasis added).

Conclusion

The contexts of China and Indonesia and their punk scenes are distinct from one another in terms of their local particularities, the repression waged against punk, and the modes of resistance and cultural production expressed by these punk communities. Because of this distinctiveness, and with a relative lack of direct interconnections between these places, it is *only* with reference to a "global punk" framing that punk in China and Indonesia can be properly understood in relation to one another. In both cases, limitations, challenges, and interference force the punk communities to respond and adapt, and they do this by drawing on an anarchistic "shared language" of resistance, provided by global punk networks of cultural exchange, communication, and solidarity. This chimes with Frampton's conception of "critical regionalism," which "has the capacity to cultivate a resistant, identity-giving culture while at the same time having discreet recourse to universal technique" (20). The shared language of anarchist resistance and DIY cultural production means that the punk scenes of China and Indonesia *make sense* in comparison with one another, despite their distinct wider contexts. The few interconnections between the punk scenes of China and Indonesia that were discussed toward the start of this article occur within this anarchist-informed global punk framework of resistance. As noted, it is in fact those who would repress (or dismiss) punk in China and Indonesia that lean on the neocolonial interpretation of punk in these "other places" as merely an inauthentic imitation of a supposedly authentic Anglo-American (and historically specific) root. A "global punk" framing counters the repressive or dismissive analyses of punk in "other" places through a neocolonial

(or Anglo-American) "center," and the comparative approach of "inter-Asia referencing" makes a decolonizing intervention into that critical decentering.

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Notes

1 The 1990s/early 2000s saw another "commercial punk wave" when a rash of bands, in the U.S. especially, signed to major labels, and numerous formerly DIY and independent punk labels established distribution links with corporate labels (see O'Connor).

2 For example, listing the "local" bands first—in Indonesia: Krass Kepala/Die Wrecked (UK) 2013, KontraSosial/Warstruck (Sweden) 2012, Milisi Kecoa/HårdaTider (Sweden) 2012, Proletar/Greber (Canada) 2012, Total Anarchy/Fucktard (US) 2012, Krass Kepala/Projekbabi/Deathgrenade (Australia)/the Craw (Australia) 2010, Injakmati/Black Sister (Scotland) 2009, as well as the compilations *Riot Connection* (2008, featuring Indonesian and German Oi! bands) and *Total Fuckin' Pogo* (2005, including bands from Germany, England, Czech Republic, and the Netherlands). In China: Brain Failure/Big D and the Kids Table (US) 2007. The *Punk Aid: Aceh Calling* benefit compilation (2012) is discussed in detail in the text. While not strictly punk, another international connection with punk in China is that Demerit's 2008 album *Bastards of the Nation* was produced by Brian Hardgroove from prominent U.S. hip-hop group Public Enemy.

3 For example, David O'Dell, author of the book *Inseparable: The Memoirs of an American and the Story of Chinese Punk Rock*, describes the punk scene in China since the 1990s. As a contributor to the punk scene himself, the author had experienced hardship alongside the first generation of punk musicians in China. Additionally, one member of the Chinese punk band Criminal Minds was previously a member of a punk band in Sweden.

4 The main singer from the punk band Subs was once invited to Switzerland and squatted there with the musicians. The punks from "Our home," a space operating with similar ideals to squatting culture, exchanged emails with

people from the squat space in Switzerland.

5 For more on Soekarno's censorship of "Western" culture, see Farram. Barendregt notes that "after 1965, (exponents of) [Western influenced] *pop Indonesia* soon became very close with the Suharto administration" (29).

6 Berger notes that "Marxist ideology and symbols associated with the former Communist Party (PKI) continue to be banned" as a legacy of Suharto's seizure of power in 1965, in which the PKI were blamed for an attempted coup, after which his forces "massacred an estimated five hundred thousand 'leftists'" (Katsiaficas, 345), with Vltchek placing the upper bound of estimated murders at three million (2). For more detail see the *Final Report of the International People's Tribunal on Crimes Against Humanity in Indonesia 1965* (Van Klinken).

7 While they are not the focus of this article, the occasional overlap of punk and commercial interests, or even instances of right-wing, racist, or misogynistic punk forms, must be acknowledged. Examples of Indonesian punk bands signing to major labels include Superman Is Dead signing to Sony Records in 2003, Rocket Rockers also signing to Sony Records in 2004, and Pee Wee Gaskins signing to Universal Records in 2016. This is obviously a tiny fraction of the multitude of punk bands in Indonesia, and the more impactful corporate influence is via sponsorship of smaller-scale punk gigs by cigarette companies (as discussed in the text, see also Donaghey 2016).

8 The Marxism of the mass-movement PKI was the dominant ideology of the revolutionary left in Indonesia throughout the first half of the twentieth century, though anarchism was also a significant influence, even within the PKI. For instance, in the mid-1920s the PKI newspaper, *Api*, featured quotes from Bakunin on its front page, eventually prompting Darsono (a leading figure of the PKI at the time) to "urge the PKI to remember that the Communism of Marx and not the anarchism of Bakunin must govern the party" (Benda and McVey, 325; cited in Stromquist, 191). Prominent student activist Soe Hok-Gie also described himself as an anarchist in the mid-1960s (Anderson, 226).

9 The "Pirate Punk" international network began in the U.S. in the early 2000s, and there are now Pirate Punk "chapters" around the world, including several in Southeast Asia. The Bandung Pyrate Punx collective formed in 2006 from the precursor "PI" collective (associated with the PI hangout discussed in the text) as a direct result of a visit to Indonesia by a Pirate Punk from the U.S. The network expresses itself through material solidarity, such as fundraising by collectives in "richer" parts of the world; this was the process by which Bandung Pyrate Punx acquired equipment to host their own gigs. Pirate Punk also connects to China, as the tour of the western U.S. by the band Demerit was facilitated by this international network (Moog, 42).

10 While this article focuses on instances of religiously motivated repression of punk, there have been instances of overlap between punk and Islam in Indonesia (see Donaghey 2015; Saefullah 2017).

11 For a more detailed discussion of "punk space" in Bandung, Indonesia, see Donaghey and Prasetyo 2021.

12 For detailed accounts of government interference into punk performance in China, see Xiao and Qu 2019.

13 See Baranovitch for discussion of the singer Kelimu, a Uyghur composer who performed Xingjiang folk songs in an orthodox manner to propagate officially sanctioned ideologies (for example, state harmony among ethnic groups). In this case, the singer becomes an instrument.