



LUND UNIVERSITY
Department of Sociology

Punk Not Die!

– A Minor Field Study on the performance of punk in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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Developing the outlines to a theory of a scene presented in a prior paper, the author's intention is to further highlight punk's heterogeneous and dynamic character. Investigating how punk has been transferred to and has developed in Indonesia the author stresses the importance of considering the cultural framework which provides actions with meaning when investigating culture. Based on Clifford Geertz's concept of thick descriptions punk, it is argued, cannot be addressed as dependent on local structures. Instead the cultural framework of the scene: the themes the actors adhere to, their interpretations of these and the subsequent identification of a cultural Other, must be considered in order to understand the actors' performances. Besides the contextual transition of punk and the role of local culture in this transition this study also poses the question how punk is performed in relation to a cultural Other and how this affects the performances.

Starting off by considering culture as a means of legitimising a distinction this paper is a critique of the recent development in Cultural Studies regarding the concept of hybrid cultures and indigenization. Throughout this paper it is suggested that a punk's transition to Indonesia cannot be viewed as a cultural hybrid since the foundation for the performance of punk has neither been indigenized nor altered. Instead the author argues that the cultural framework of the scene decides what direction the performances take. Introducing the concept of the aspects of the scene the author argues that there is a convex and a concave aspect of punk. The convex, being outwardly directed, identifies the cultural other; the mainstream, as an external mainstream. Accordingly punk is publicly performed through the display of mohawks, tattoos, studs etc. so as to make this distinction from an external mainstream. The concave aspect on the other hand addresses the mainstream in internal terms, identifying it as already within the scene in the shape of the convex punks. Consequently the concave punks perform punk privately in order to make this distinction. This, it is argued is the foundation for the performance of punk but also for punk's contextual transition. Punk is transferred to one context to another through the convex aspect's use of the external mainstream to communicate their interpretation of the themes and the concave aspect's internal distinction. Together the two aspects enable a dynamic and heterogeneous scene which enables new actors to imagine punk and current actors to re-imagine punk. Developing Arjun Appadurai's idea of imagination, it is suggested that imagination involves a two-step process: an initial stage where what to imagine is developed and a second more important where how to imagine this becomes central. Focusing on the former as in claiming punk to be a cultural hybrid is, it is argued, neglecting the cultural framework which gives meaning to the actors' performances.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and the questions of issue

Punk not die! Here I am, standing on a busy shopping street in the middle of Kuta, Bali, dodging taxis and surfers swinging around their boards as they pass me by and the Indonesian punk standing in front of me has green mohawk and a shirt which says “punk not die!”. I’m puzzled. I ask him what it means; he answers “punk tidak mati”. I laugh politely: I get the joke. The punk looks at me and asks why I laugh. I explain that I understand that he is making fun of the fact that the Indonesian language has no word for the verb “to be” and that “mati” can thus be translated as either the adjective “dead” or the verb “die”. The famous slogan “Punk’s not dead” therefore becomes “punk not die”. Only he’s not laughing, there is no joke, just a misunderstanding in translating “punk tidak mati” back into English. He walks away, clearly offended by my clumsy attempt to make contact. As I start walking back home, I suddenly stop. Was it really a misunderstanding? To the punk in question the overall message has not been changed. Am I staring myself blind on cultural differences which prevent me from seeing that little has actually changed? It seems that I’m the one who is misunderstanding.

In *The Interpretation of Culture* (2000) the American cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz insists that we must take into consideration the cultural framework within which actions are carried out and given meaning¹. As researchers we should attempt to go beyond the superficial and obvious, and investigate on what basis meaning is created and interpreted. This is what Geertz calls making “thick descriptions” of culture. The story about the Balinese punk and his shirt captures this point as it poses classic sociological questions such as “how are social actions given their meaning”, and “how do we make sense of the world”. Furthermore it draws attention to the risk of taking things for what they appear to be and thus make thin descriptions instead of thick. Taking the shirt’s slogan as a misunderstanding is ignoring the cultural framework which gives meaning to it. Instead we are attempting to draw conclusions based on the obvious; the deviance from an established set of codes which is the English language. This way, instead of asking what meaning the slogan has for the punk and to those he seeks recognition from, and how this meaning is constructed and reproduced, we are imposing an interpretation based on our reality upon him, making thin descriptions. My point is that to understand the meaning of the shirt we have to understand how this Balinese punk constructs his own reality. Drawn from Peter Berger’s and Thomas Luckmann’s (1991) theoretical propositions of the construction of reality and Thomas’ (1928) famous theorem, this paper is based on the analytical assumption that reality is socially constructed, and that this construction becomes real for social actors as it is perceived as real in its consequences. Reality as we perceive it is constantly being created and reproduced as we interact.

In line with this analytical assumption I will refer to punk² as a *scene*. In the thesis preceding this paper (E. Hannerz 2004), I sketched out the outlines to a theory of scene, developed from the combination of Erwin Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model and Pierre Bourdieu's (1984,1986) concept of distinction. The reason behind this was the inability to capture punk's dynamic and heterogeneous character by the existing concepts and theories, which largely rely on a structural determinism. These included Bourdieu's notion of field and The Birmingham School's subcultural theory, which stress habitus and class respectively. Instead a scene, I argued, is based on the performances of the actors; it constitutes a negotiated social space in which actors pursue distinct positions based on how they interpret certain common shared themes. Whereas my previous paper addressed the creations of hierarchies within the scene based on how these themes are interpreted and performed, this study further develops the concept of scene by focusing on the fractionation of the scene by the actors' performed distinctions from a perceived cultural Other, rather than within the own group³.

I intend to show that this fractionation of the scene affects how punk is performed spatially and visually, and how this concerns the relation to and creation of a global elsewhere. This in turn shapes the contextual transition of punk throughout the world. I will introduce the idea of *aspects of the scene* to describe this fractionation. Previous attempts to cover different fractions of punk, I argue, tend to homogenize punk as a cultural formation and suggest an objective truth, often in relation to existing local structures. My intention is to show that this is making thin descriptions since it neglects the cultural framework of the scene, which gives meaning to the actors' performances. I have chosen Indonesia because of its geographic, socio-economic, and cultural character. As the world's largest Muslim nation, a third world country consisting of more than 200 million inhabitants spread out in the largest archipelago in the world, it constitutes a striking difference to my prior study which was carried out in Southern Sweden. I intend to show that local cultural traditions are of little interest in investigating and theorizing punk since these refer to limits in shape, not structure. Just as the story with the Balinese punk, the appearance of the shirt is of little interest since what we should investigate is how it is used to perform a meaning. This involves taking on theories of globalisation, and more importantly, the issue of hybrid cultures. Based on the cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's (1998) concept of imagination I intend to show that how punk is imagined is dependent on the communication within the scene and not on local cultures. This, I will show, is crucial in explaining punk's contextual transition.

The purpose of this study is therefore to break away from essentialist notions of punk and to highlight the interrelation between the global and local punk scenes. The stress on performance together with the view of punk as a scene, I argue, captures its dynamic characteristics without failing to describe it as a heterogeneous cultural formation, something which, to my knowledge, has so far not been done. The questions of issue in this paper are thus: *How can the contextual transition of punk be theoretically addressed and analysed? What role do local cultures and communication within the scene play in this transition? How is punk performed in relation to a cultural Other and how does this affect performances?* I will now present how the global phenomenon of punk and its different fractions have earlier been addressed theoretically.

1.2 Prior research

First and foremost, punk in the US and Western Europe is most often addressed theoretically as a local or national phenomenon (Hafeneger et al 1993, Fox 1987, Laing 1985, Leblanc 2002, Sabin et al. 1999, Savage 2001). If we move beyond the Western sphere, however, punk is addressed as a global phenomenon. Anna Szemere (1992) has studied how punk in Hungary was influenced by Anglo-American culture, Alan O'Connor (2004) has written about the impact of US and Spanish punk in Mexico and Emma Baulch (2003) and Joanna Pickles (2001) have both described punk in Indonesia as being connected to a global punk phenomenon. These authors, however, merely speak of punk as global in an initial state, what punk signifies is due to local factors. Thus Szemere (1992:49) notes that punk became a means to respond to problems encountered in Hungary's socio-economic decline, while for O'Connor, based on Bourdieu, the Mexican punks' style and taste in music is explained from a shared Mexican habitus (2004:180). Further, Baulch, in investigating the punk-, metal-, and reggae scenes in Bali attributes the existence of punk in Indonesia to governmental actions taken during the last years of president Suharto's presidency. Baulch argues that the development of punk in Indonesia is correlated with the Indonesian youth's ability to express themselves more freely and their increasing control over local territories. Pickles, in her thesis on radical punks in Bandung, focuses on how and why there has been a shift within Indonesian punk towards a more radical political stance. This, she argues, is in line with an existing situation in which culture is defined politically, thus making the appropriation of alternative politics inevitable.

Put together these studies present Western punk as the authentic punk: its global characteristics being unapparent in these studies. Punk in Eastern Europe, Mexico, and Indonesia, on the other hand, is defined by a global framework i.e. an Anglo-American punk culture, whose importance merely refers to an initial appropriation. Thus Western punk is legitimised: it becomes the centre and these other countries are at the periphery. The problem, I will argue, is that focusing on punk as a local phenomenon, whether or not initiated from outside, stresses local cultural traditions as essential in deciding what punk becomes in different parts of the world. This in turn obscures the cultural framework within the scene which provides meaning to the actors' performances. Further it homogenizes punk in concealing any different interpretations of what punk is, by claiming these are dependent on a local cultural structure. This way there is little room for deviation from punk's defined nature.

When differences within the scene are addressed, any deviance is attributed to a lack of authenticity. John Savage (2001) and Simon Frith (1981) have both studied punk in England and distinguish between the "social realists" and the "artistic vanguard". The former were associated with an emerging political radicalism while the latter were described as embodying the style's subversive nature during the late seventies and early eighties. Kathryn Fox (1987) goes one step further and distinguishes between sectors of punk not as opposing fractions but rather as united yet stratified in their commitment to punk. Fox differentiates between "hardcore", "softcore", "preppie punks" and "spectators". Commitment is also stressed by Lauraine Leblanc (2002), in her dissertation on punk and young girls in North America, and social psychologists Sue Widdicombe and Rob Wooffitt (1990). Ryan Moore (2004) connects these lines of arguments in saying that the punk subculture consists of a "culture of deconstruction" and a "culture of authenticity". Where the former expresses nihilism and cynicism, the latter seeks to pursue artistic sincerity through staying away from the mainstream, instead building an independent network of local institutions such as record labels, venues, fanzines⁴ etc.

Common to all these authors is that these differences are explained in terms of maintaining an authentic punk core established in relation to existing socio-economical structures. Deviation from this path is seen as less authentic, as for Moore (2004) in claiming that the culture of authenticity has replaced the culture of deconstruction due to postmodern socio-economic changes such as a more consumer-oriented and media centred society. The same is argued by Frith (1981) and Savage (2001) who explain that the differences between social realists and

artistic vanguard depends on class, the latter being middle- and the former working class. This way differences are explained as dependent on structures outside the scene, providing little room for deviation. Similarly Fox (1987) and Leblanc (2001) both stress authenticity, the actors' positions are seen to correspond to an authentic punk core. Pickles (2001) equates authentic punk to politics, as she distinguishes between radical punks and apolitical punks, thus dismissing the apolitical punks as less authentic. To counter these authors' claims, and instead present punk as a dynamic heterogeneous scene in which the issue of authenticity is rather a subjective feature disguised as something true, I will use and further develop the concepts of *scene*, *themes*, *properties*, and *aspects of the scene*, which I will outline below⁵.

1.3 Key concepts

The term *scene* will be used from now on as an analytic tool to capture punk as an ongoing performance. The actors construct the scene as a framework to provide meaning to their distinctive actions based on their interpretations of a few common shared themes. Based on Goffman's (1959) work on performances and Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) concept of distinction, I have developed the concept *scene*, as it is presented here⁶, to capture how punk is performed as an internal and external distinction and that the performances are temporary in the sense that the themes are constantly reinterpreted so as to claim distinct positions. Performances are thus in constant change. Goffman does not provide the structures to explain the process by which performances are given their meaning, but on the other hand Bourdieu has problems capturing how meaning is created and negotiated on a micro level. Distinction is not something static but is negotiated as the actors relate to each other and towards a shared cultural Other. Therefore I chose to rather theoretically develop the concept of scene instead of being limited by concepts not flexible enough. The term *distinction* will be used in this paper to signal a disassociation with something, the own group is created through the denigration of a *cultural Other*. Thus the cultural Other, based on Edward Said's (2004) classic account on orientalism, is invented as a backdrop in front of which the own group is defined. In the paper preceding this study (E. Hannerz 2004) I identified the themes within the punk scene, developed from the work of Gina Arnold (1998) and Petter Karlsson (2003). These are a musical theme; "*loud, fast rules*", an agency theme; "*do it yourself*" (*DIY*), and thirdly a directional theme; "*don't suck corporate cock*", identifying a cultural Other as a perceived mainstream. These themes are common in the sense that in order to become recognized as actors within the relational framework the scene constitutes they have to be adhered to. The themes of the scene are interpreted into rules of action upon which the actors

perform punk through the use of objects of distinction, which I call *the properties of the scene*. These include objects of dress and appearance, myths and political standpoints, in short everything which can be used to accentuate the actors' performances (E. Hannerz 2004:25).

Punk, I have stated (2004), is less a question of what you do and more of how you do it. The actors' distinct positions are achieved and maintained through their performances of how they interpret the themes. At the same time the cultural framework which provides these performances with meaning are reproduced. The scene is structured as the actors position themselves in relation to each other; positions are negotiated by recognizing each other's performances as existing within the scene. This way the themes of the scene are perceived as something objectively true as they become real by their consequences. The cultural framework of the scene is created and maintained so as to legitimise the actors' positions as a reflection of something objectively true. Thus authenticity becomes a matter of performance: it only exists in the recognition of other actors' performances as corresponding to what is expected of their interpretation of the themes. Paul Willis (1984:57) defines *homology* as to what extent the music's structure and content correspond to the values of the specific social group. Homology thus refers to how an object corresponds to a lifestyle and consequently to what extent the members of this lifestyle can identify with the object. Cultural objects are never isolated, they have to be seen in connection to a framework which gives them their meaning. Consequently I will equate authenticity to homology, in the sense that through the use of properties the actor signals how the themes should be interpreted. If recognized as corresponding to this interpretation, their use is perceived as homologous to punk, again reproducing the idea of punk as something authentic. The term homology, as it will be used from now on, should not be seen as something objective: it involves the ingredients of interpretation, manifestation and negotiation as it is performed. It is a way of excluding other potential interpretations, of disguising the subjective as the objective and thus claiming authenticity.

Consequently adhering to the themes is performing an association with other actors sharing a similar interpretation of the themes, and a common cultural Other. The actors perform an image of authenticity, of belonging to something true in presenting the cultural Other as fake. Based on Sarah Thornton's (1997) work on English club culture, I will use the term *mainstream* as a socially constructed space which is created through the actors' performances. Thornton states the mainstream should not be seen as a fixed place, but instead as plural and

constantly changing. As such mainstream as plural “exhibit the burlesque exaggerations of an imagined ‘other’ (...) it is precisely because the social connotations of the mainstream are rarely examined that the term is so useful; clubbers can denigrate it without self-consciousness and guilt” (Thornton 1997:205)⁷. I propose that we see the mainstream as the perceived popularized grey zone that overlaps cultural formations: the mainstream does not exist other than in the distinctions of the actors. The term mainstream will be used as a perceived mainstream, which is created through the performances of the actors as these are directed against something⁸. How to address and define the mainstream constitutes the basis for how punk is performed, regarding appearance and the visual performance, and where; the spatial performance, consequently it also defines the distinct fractions of the scene.

As we have seen the different fractions of the scene have been addressed by theorists prior to my work, however I will not address these as radical punks opposed to non radical punks (Pickles 2001), or hardcore versus softcore punks (Fox 1987), since these terms inevitably point to something authentic either in terms of politics or that of commitment⁹. Further, since I intend to show that punk is less a matter of responding to local existing cultures and more about adhering to the cultural framework within the scene, I see little use of employing Moore’s (2004), Savage’s (2001) or Frith’s (1981) concepts outlined above, since these suggest a structural determinism I intend to counter. Instead I have chosen to develop a concept which combines the performative, creative and dynamic feature of the scene. It also captures, as opposed to the previous attempts outlined above, these fractions as interconnected and reflections of the same themes; one is not more punk than the other. Therefore I will call these *the aspects of the scene* and differentiate between a *convex* and a *concave* aspect. The connection between the two I argue is that of a convexo-concave figure: the convex aspect is outwardly directed while the concave is turned inwards. Only taken together as a scene does the *cultural framework* which gives meaning to the aspects’ performances become visible: the themes, the interpretations of these and the identification of a cultural Other.

Communication, as it will be used in this paper, refers to properties within the scene: lyrics, fanzines, stories, pictures etc, while the term *diffusion* describes the process through which properties becomes available beyond the scene. John Clarke (1993:188) of the Birmingham School argues that the dominant culture, in order to fully exploit the subculture, not only has to diffuse stylistic features but also defuse them: dislocate the objects them from their original context and transform them into a style of consumption. However I will not use the term

defusion since it portrays these objects as having an original meaning and that the subculture is entirely directed by structures outside it. Further I prefer the noun *actor* to individual since the latter somewhat suggests that we are unrestrained. The use of actor signals that something is being performed *within* a framework, and not *because of* that framework as proposed by Bourdieu. Similar to a simplified script there is room for surprises and arguments since the script is read differently by each actor not because s/he is free to do so, but because it is encouraged as a means of distinction from other actors and groups of actors.

The use of *local* and *global* in this paper is based on the work of Andy Bennett (2000). According to Bennett the local is constructed and negotiated as actors and collective formations interact. It involves a process of mapping out the implications of the culture, both in terms of space and values. Bennett's point is that there might be a shared belief by different cultures of what constitutes the local but these beliefs might have a different meaning to various actors and groups of actors. I suggest that the same applies to how we perceive the global: it is constructed through an interpretation and negotiation by and between actors and groups of actors situated in a specific context¹⁰. As such the global is locally created and maintained at the same time as the local only exists within the global. This interrelation between the local and the global I will refer to as a *gesturing elsewhere*. Baulch (2003) argues that death thrashers in Bali gestured toward a global elsewhere to avoid essentialising local stereotypes. This included a strive for authenticity by learning to play death trash through covering foreign songs. Through this gesturing, performances are legitimated as homologous to the scene, in this way the local is created at the same time as the global.

So, a scene is the ongoing social interaction and negotiation, internally and externally, of actors performing interpretations of certain common shared themes in search of recognition from other actors. How to interpret a cultural Other, as a shared target of distinction, decides in turn which aspect the actor adheres to in search for recognition. Punk becomes more a matter of how you do it than what you do, implying that the process we should investigate is how properties are performed to communicate the actors' desired position. This means that properties per se are of little use as they can differ on a regional, national, or international level. The importance lies in how they are used to signal the actors' distinct positions as opposed to a cultural Other, and how these performances are legitimised. This stresses the methodological choices, as to place these performances within a cultural framework.

2. METHOD

2.1 The gathering of data

As I stated in the introduction, in order to understand the meaning behind social actions we have to understand the cultural framework within which properties are performed and evaluated, which Geertz (2000) refers to as making thick descriptions. Our task is to explain what meaning social actions carry for the actors and what these actions and their meaning can tell us about and beyond the social context in which they occurred (Geertz 2000:27). What are the structures that direct the actions carried out by the actors? Largely this focus implies an ethnographic approach to conducting research as it goes beyond merely conducting interviews.

During the two months I spent in Bandung and Bali in 2004 and 2005 I was living with punks, sleeping on their floors, hanging out with them during the days, going to shows, accompanying them to work or to see their families. The sociologists Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler (1994) state that qualitative observation has the advantage of “drawing the observer into the phenomenological complexity of the world, where connections, correlations, and causes can be witnessed as and how they unfold” (1994:378). I wanted to live and experience punk as closely as possible in order to understand how meaning was created and maintained within the scene. Consequently I assumed a “complete membership role” (Adler & Adler 1994:380): I am a punk, denial is futile. Instead, I argue that it is advantageous since the way I conduct research is dependent on gaining free entry to the scene and the possibility to discuss topics inaccessible to an outsider. I interact with the punks while observing: participating in their discussions and also conducting more formal conversations one-to-one¹¹. Jaber F. Gubrium (1997:36) points out that the main advantages with a combination of participant observation, unstructured interviews and informal conversations, is that it allows us to study a large numbers of actors over time as we can return to certain questions and thus make a thicker description as we attempt to understand how meaning is created and legitimised.

In 2003, as I was preparing my master thesis in Cultural Studies, I visited Indonesia and befriended punks in Java and Bali. During this trip I conducted a dozen interviews and observations based on my previous work, of which I have made use of one interview in this paper since it addressed issues which are of relevance in this study. The observations I made

in 2003 also helped in preparing my field research for this paper, especially in deciding where to go. The reason I chose Bali was that I was already familiar with the Balinese scene from previous trips to the island, and had found its connection to the mainstream rather intriguing. Bandung was chosen for its significance to the Indonesian manifestation of punk during the 90's, when it served as a centre for bands and the distribution of fanzines (see Pickles 2001 and Baulch 2003) and I wanted to compare the performances of punk and possible differences between the two areas to better capture the dynamic character of the scene.

In addition to taking notes as I was observing and discussing with the actors, I also tried, as often as it was possible, to record parts of conversations which interested me whether or not I was actively participating. These recordings I then transcribed into field notes. During my stay both in Bali and Bandung these partial recordings of conversations were never objected to. With the intention of improving these observations and informal discussions I also conducted seven interviews, three in Bandung and four in Bali, in which I asked the specific actors to further develop issues that had been touched during informal interaction. Before arriving to Indonesia I had, based on Steinar Kvale's (1997) advice, constructed an interview guide with a couple of themes and examples of questions (see appendix 1). Based around these themes I then highlighted certain specific topics which had occurred during previous discussions or observations. The actors I interviewed were chosen as they were actively involved both in constructing and reproducing the framework of the scene through playing in bands and setting up shows. This was a strategic selection as I was interested in finding out how their performances of punk had developed over time which required actors who had passed an initial stage of performing within the scene. These interviews lasted for about 45 minutes each and were mostly unstructured in the sense that I tried not to follow a pattern but rather to improvise. Again Kvale (1997) was a major influence as I tried to keep these interviews as spontaneous as possible, encouraging spontaneous answers.

The biggest obstacle in this process was my insufficient skills in Indonesian. Prior to this study I had started taking classes in Indonesian at the University of Lund. Although I was able to conduct short conversations, it was impossible to understand everything that was said around me, especially since some of these conversations were carried out in the local languages Balinese and Sundanese. Nevertheless this sometimes improved my observations by leading to a more intense conversation conducted in English when my Indonesian was not enough. Most of the punks I met in Bali spoke good English, while in Bandung only a few

were fluent. Essential to this process were my informants, two in Bali and two in Bandung, all relatively fluent in English and long-time punks. They introduced me to new actors and constantly acted as translators¹². Berger and Luckmann (1991) state that language is essential in the social construction of everyday life. Consequently it might seem complex to rely on conversations carried out in a language that neither I nor my subjects fully master. Although this is correct I am concerned with how punk is performed, this includes any use of properties, not only through speech but also through dress and agency. This also stresses the importance of investigating what is being said or performed, within a cultural framework. Thus speaking English perfectly becomes subordinate as long as the meaning of the action can be indicated anyway, again “punk not die” might seem as a strange way to communicate “punk’s not dead” but the action is given its meaning within a cultural framework. Only there can it be understood. Consequently our problems in communicating were often solved by finding other ways of expressing what we wanted to say.

2.2 The process of analysis

Analysis, writes Geertz, means “sorting out the structures of signification ... and determining their social ground and import” (2000:9). In order to describe and explain how and why actions occur, analysis involves placing the action within a cultural framework providing meaning¹³. In analysing the data I have made use of what the Finnish sociologist Pertti Alasuutari (1995) calls “the study of cultural distinctions”. Focus within my study lies not on *what* is being said as so much as on *how* it is being said: how distinctions and categories are constructed and reproduced by the actors so as to make sense of their reality. In the case of this paper this is shown in the differentiation between ways of interpreting punk and how this in turn decides how punk is performed. As events occur we collect information about other actors which is transformed into statements regarding categories¹⁴. This is a way of constructing a cultural Other. Thornton (1997) argues that there is a tendency to describe the own group as something outside the mainstream. The own group is portrayed as heterogeneous and is thus difficult to categorize, while other groups are described as homogenous and are subject to generalizations. Thus I have focused on looking at how punks perform their interpretations of punk, tell stories, and categorize other actors in order to understand and to some extent explain the social structure which gives meaning to these distinctions. As Geertz (2000:17) states, studying behaviour becomes vital, as it is through behaviour that culture is manifested.

The categories and concepts used in this paper are also of importance since they force me to act as a sociologist in analysing the data and thus prevent me from thinking too much as a punk¹⁵. This is important because I am already an actor within the scene, I risk “going native” in the sense that I forget my role as an outsider in analysing the data (Silverman 1993:49). In order to understand how meaning is created and attributed to social action I have tried to come as close to these actors as possible, to understand the structures behind their actions. As such I have to constantly remind myself to take notes concerning where and from whom I learned information so as to separate between my own beliefs from those I am about to study. During my stay in Bandung I began reviewing some of my interviews to look for themes that could be investigated further, but I did not transcribe these interviews fully until my return to Sweden as I wanted to distance myself from the scene both mentally and physically.

2.3 Limitations

This paper is in itself an interpretation, more so it is an interpretation of interpretations. As such it is, as Geertz points out (2000:15), “fiction”: it is a construction. In order to make thick descriptions from the data gathered, my intention is to investigate how these punks construct their own reality and what expectations this puts on the actors. Consequently this study does not attempt to generalize the findings presented to a wider population of punks, rather my intention is to further illustrate the theoretical propositions I have developed.

Another of the limits of this study relates to gender issues. The punk scenes in Bandung and Bali are entirely male-dominated. When present, and this exclusively refers to shows, the few female actors stayed in the periphery. They never during my stay frequented the different gathering points of either aspect of the scene. Consequently it was hard for me to further investigate how these female actors performed punk as this would have called for an entirely different approach, focusing more on actions carried out outside the scene. Further the hierarchical structure within the scene which I emphasized in my previous paper (E. Hannerz 2004) is of little interest here, since it refers to the actors’ relations to each other within the scene. As such the relations of power within the scene are largely left untouched in this study, since my intention is to capture how punk is performed against a cultural Other, and on what grounds the cultural framework of the punk scene imputes the actors’ behaviour with meaning. Before we can touch on how punk is performed in Indonesia, I will now turn to the theoretical concepts which are of relevance in this paper. This is the foundation upon which my theoretical development relies.

3. APPLIED THEORY AND CONCEPTS

3.1 Culture

(C)ulture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be casually attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is, thickly – described (Geertz 2000:14).

Before we can examine how punk is performed in Indonesia and how this affects punk's transition, we have to start with the notion of culture. As I stated in the introduction making thick descriptions emphasizes the cultural framework within which actions are given their meaning. James Lull (2002:130) states that culture not only proclaims our way of doing things and what we are but also indicates what we are not doing and who we are not. This way culture becomes a matter of legitimizing our actions by comparing them with something else. According to Berger and Luckmann (1991:36) the tools and objectifications that are necessary to make sense of what we encounter in everyday life are given to us through language¹⁶. In this sense cultural differences are socially constructed through our use of language and maintained as a basis for making sense of our way of life. A cultural framework limits our alternatives, as it distinguishes between what we are by pointing out what we are not, providing us with a way to make sense of the world and actions carried out by those around us. Appadurai (1998) argues that *culture* should not be used as a noun but as the adjective *cultural*. As such:

The most valuable feature of the concept of culture is the concept of difference, a contrastive rather than a substantive property of certain things (...) I suggest that we regard as cultural only those differences that either express, or set the groundwork for, the mobilization of group identities (...) culture is a pervasive dimension of human discourse that exploits difference to generate diverse conceptions of group identity. (Appadurai 1998:12-13)

Seen this way, *culture* signals a distinction, a structure to which we adhere to and which provides our actions and our distinction from others with meaning through our use of language¹⁷. This way the cultural Other is essential in understanding cultural action since the own culture is created and maintained in opposition to it. How we perceive the Other tells us much about how we perceive ourselves, and how meaning is created to legitimise this distinction. The perceived *authentic* is created as the opposite of a defined *fake*. As such this relationship between a cultural formation and a cultural Other is not on equal terms. Instead it hides a dominance of one side over the other as argued by Said (2004:152) concerning the

West's dominance over the Orient. Thornton writes "Distinctions are never just assertions of equal difference; they usually entail some claim to authority and presume the inferiority of others" (1997:201). This involves seeing these oppositions as interrelated. In excluding the Other potential interpretations are reduced as the ranks of the group are closing. Excluding the Other thus means narrowing down alternative interpretations (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:51-2).

This way cultures cannot be seen as insular phenomena; they are subject to outside influence (Lull 1987:28). The distinction from a cultural Other is one example of this, another is the transition of cultural formations globally. Appadurai (1998) stresses the role of mass media and imagination in this transition. As more and more people around the world are exposed to images of other ways of life they are able to "consider a wider set of possible lives" (1998:53). We are able to *imagine* something different. According to Appadurai the consumption of mass media triggers actors to resist and select information. Against theories of cultural imperialism, in which globalisation is seen as "the creation and global extension of a near total corporate informational-cultural environment" (Schiller 1989:128), Appadurai, together with among others Michel Maffesoli (1996), and the Swedish anthropologist Ulf Hannerz (1990), argues that we are seeing more of an organized diversity than a uniform culture. Even though there are signs of an increasing uniformity as the mass media is penetrating more and more areas of our lives, there is also an increasing local action in form of communication, fashion and food. As Maffesoli claims "we are in the process of reappropriating our existence" (1996:41). Similarly Appadurai argues that when global forces enter a new environment they "tend to become indigenized" (1998:32).

In his study regarding globalisation and mass media John B. Thompson (1995) notes that appropriating media is always a matter of the local, since in interpreting information we rely on instruments provided to us by our socio-historical context. According to Lull (1987) indigenous cultures use information coming from the outside, such as music, and transform them into familiar objects. Information that is globally diffused is thus incorporated and converted to fit the beliefs of the indigenous culture. As the global is introduced to the local through shifting populations, mass media and the cultural industries, new forms of expression are created in this mix. A *hybrid* is created as the synthesis of this encounter¹⁸.

3.2 Cultural hybrids

John Tomlinson (2001) argues that the most basic component of the idea of hybridity “is that of simple *mixing* – intermingling, combining, fusion, *mélange*” (2001:142, italics in original). Tomlinson further notes, based on Rosaldo (1995), that hybridity should be seen as a feature of all cultures: there are no zones of purity. This echoes Homi Bhabha’s claim that all forms of culture are in a constant process of hybridization and that the process of hybridization preserves the traces of the feelings and practices that permeate into a culture (in Rutherford 2002:286). Culture should thus, as we have already discussed, not be seen as something essential. The question, however, is whether the idea of hybridity takes for granted an original culture. If there is a hybrid there must most likely be an original; if not what is the hybrid a hybrid of? Both Bhabha and Lull (2002) recognize this problem and Bhabha states that the “original culture” should not be seen as original in an essential sense but as having a priority due to its pre-existence (in Rutherford 2002:286). But as Tomlinson notes, “the question then arises of what use terms like hybridity are in designating something peculiar to the process of globalisation. If all historical cultures have always been hybrid – well what’s new?” (2001:144). Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1995:64) makes a similar point in arguing that hybridization is only meaningful as a critique to essentialist views on culture. What is the usefulness of a term design to describe the end product as it at the same time includes the original and the process behind it: it becomes somewhat of a tautology, as also Tomlinson (2001) recognizes.

Furthermore as the concept of hybridity presents the local as independent from the global; a contextual transition becomes more of a matter of local socio-economic structures than features within the cultural formation itself. This way Lull (2002:249), based on Tony Mitchell’s (1996) work, states that hip-hop in New Zealand has been indigenized so as to carry forward the Maori population’s political and cultural claims. However, at the same time Lull notes that many young Maoris legitimise their cultural adherence to hip-hop by comparing their socio-economic situation to that of American blacks. This adequately captures the problem of hybridisation theory as it points to a shared cultural framework transcending local cultures. My point is that cultural formations must not only be seen in relation to a cultural Other, but also to the cultural framework which provides these actions with a meaning, as they are recognized by other actors. As Geertz (2000) noted above, behaviours cannot be casually ascribed to culture, this is making thin descriptions. Instead

culture provides us with the means to understand the logic behind these. The concept of *homology* captures this problem as it stresses the cultural framework to be included in the investigation of an object. An object is homologous because of its perceived connection to something beyond it, thus in order to understand the use of the object we have to investigate the cultural framework which legitimises its use. As symbolic forms can carry many different meanings, the process of recognition is essential to create the image of the authentic. Lull notes that “Messages are polysemic (...) What they signify to different people depends on how they are interpreted. The interpretative process is the selectivity aspect of meaning construction” (2002:218). Since a cultural object derives its meaning from its value of distinction from a cultural Other, it is important that its polysemic quality is concealed so as to maintain this distinction. This is where the cultural framework becomes essential since through performing these as having a true meaning, of reflecting something authentic i.e. the cultural framework, any alternative interpretations are suppressed. As cultural objects, or rather properties, are performed as homologous to the cultural framework, their meaning is performed as something inherently true. Consequently this reinforces the distinction from a fake cultural Other. As such they are only homologous as long as their polysemic character can be disguised. As we shall see, this is important in investigating both punk’s transition and the performance of punk

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

One of my first questions to punks in Indonesia was how they got in touch with punk and which punk band they first listened to. The answers were similar wherever I went: either Ramones, Sex Pistols or Green Day were the first bands that attracted them to punk. Mass media's accounts of these bands enabled them to imagine something different, something foreign and something radical. Sofyan¹⁹, a punk in Bandung, delivered the following account:

When I got into punk maybe in junior high school, like 13, 14 years ... the first time I like punk, I liked the style, and I heard the music and I liked it maybe radical and it was new for me (...) The first bands were Sex Pistols, good. But the first time I heard Sex Pistols was from the police (...) my father has a job in the police (...) he told me hey man you have to hear this tape it's good, yeah so I heard the tape and said "man what kind of music is this?" and my father said "it's punk". (Interview, Bandung Jan 30th 2005)

Similar stories were told by other punks: how they were introduced to punk through a parent, a friend or directly through mass media as a style, another commodity. The introduction to punk was often, as in the quote above, described as a kind of revelation as in discovering something radically new²⁰. This is in line with the work of Baulch (2003) and Pickles (2001) who both recognize the mediation of punk as essential to the establishment of a punk scene in Indonesia. Baulch argues there was a change in media reports on rock fandom in the mid 90's. Whereas previously presented as a dissonant group reacting to social divisions, rock was portrayed as being in line with a globalising bourgeoisie and consumerist ideals²¹. As the television market as well as the recording industry was opened up to private investors including MTV and major labels, young Indonesians were able to experience alternative music: alternative music thus became a mediated ideal (Baulch 2003: 115). Baulch notes how Green Day cover-bands emerged everywhere in Bali in this initial state of the Balinese punk scene during the mid-late 90's²². Pickles (2001) also recognizes how a mass mediated image of punk was appropriated by Indonesians and served as their starting point. She notes that "(i)t appears punk rock arrived in Indonesia through the popular culture channels in the early 1990s, with major labels bands like the Sex Pistols" (2001:8).

This is interesting since Baulch's and Pickles' lines of argument contradict Dick Hebdige's (1988) and John Clarke's (1993) well established claims that the diffusion of subcultures

through mainstream media signals the death of the subculture. As such they become “frozen” according to Dick Hebdige who echoes John Clarke’s (1993:187) claim that mass mediated objects are neutralized to make them ready to be consumed²³. Instead mainstream media, in Baulch’s and Pickles’ accounts, is rather a source of imagination as Gary Clarke notes:

It is true that most youths do not enter into the subcultures in the elite form described in the literature, but large numbers do draw on particular elements of subcultural style and create their own meanings and uses of them (1990:92).²⁴

What becomes interesting is thus how this is carried out and on what grounds, and how it is legitimised. The latter is crucial as the actors I met in Indonesia differed in terms of dress and appearance, and also regarding how these initial bands were contemporarily addressed. In order to understand and analyse punk’s transition to Indonesia I will argue that in order to understand social actions we have to understand the cultural framework that gives meaning to these and exclude the use of others. Therefore I will start by investigating the aspects of the scene and how the interpretations of the themes decide how the mainstream is perceived and approached. Secondly I will turn to the spatial and visual performance of punk and draw attention to their interrelation, and how this is also mirrored in each aspect’s approach to the global and local. Punk, I will argue, is performed in relation to a cultural framework *within* the scene which gives meaning to these performances as they are legitimised as homologous to the scene. In this chapter I will also discuss how local cultures affect the performances of punk and how this relates to the issue of aspects. The intention is to show that local cultures merely affect the scene in questions of shape not in content as obstacles are negotiated so as to maintain the actors’ performances as homologous to the scene. It is the same themes that are discussed, interpreted and acted upon in relation to a framework beyond the local. What is negotiated is how this framework of the scene is performed in relation to a cultural Other, not the basis of this performance.

As such this process has little in common with hybridisation theory which stresses the local’s role in translating the global and suggests an alteration of what is appropriated. In this case the content is still intact. I will show that this is making thin descriptions as the local cannot be separated from the global: they are mutually created. In the last chapter of the analysis I will then address punk’s transition and show how it results from the aspects of the scene’s relation to the mainstream and the communication within the scene. Punk’s transition, I will argue, is a result of the convex aspect’s ongoing negotiation with an external mainstream which allows

properties to be used and diffused through a mass mediation of these. Their homologous character is revealed as polysemic as they are freed from the homologous restraints that govern their use within the scene. Developing Appadurai's (1998) concept of imagination I will argue that the communication within the scene not only directs *what* to imagine but also, and more importantly, *how* this can be imagined. In this chapter I will also stress the role of communication within the scene in the creation of the different aspects and how this once again excludes the concept of hybridity. But first let us turn to how punk is being performed in Bali and Bandung and how these performances differ.

4.2 The aspects of the scene

The performance of punk varies, both in Bandung and in Bali, depending on where it occurs. In Bandung the scene is centred on two different communities, both in the centre of the town. The first one, *the PI*, is situated amidst a couple of food stands, right in front of a semi-luxurious hotel on the way to one of Bandung's largest inner city malls. The second, *the Balkot*, gathers at the stairs of the City Hall²⁵. Even though the difference in space is only a couple of hundred metres, the difference in style is striking. The PI-punks are easy to spot, performing properties such as dyed hair, torn clothes, tattoos and piercings. They sit in the middle of the busy street drinking, shouting and making faces; laughing at people passing by on their way to the mall. In contrast to this the Balkot-punks gather in the secluded area which constitutes the surroundings of the City Hall. Marked off from the surrounding streets by a huge park and an iron fence, this place is almost empty during the late afternoon. Two days a week the Balkot-punks gather at five p.m. to organize shows and trade properties, and discuss how to improve the scene and society at large. At the City Hall the properties performed by the PI are absent: there are no tattoos, no torn clothes, no studded jackets nor dyed hair. Rather the properties performed are anarcho-syndicalist standpoints, knowledge about the global punk scene, and small patches and badges bearing band logos.

The two communities in Bandung are somewhat equal; the PI attracts more punks, but the Balkot sets up more shows. This contrasts the scene in Bali where there is one community which totally dominates the scene in terms of attracting actors and setting up shows. Centred on a bar in downtown Kuta, right in the middle of the tourist frenzy which characterizes the area close to the beach, punks from this community gather from early noon to late night. This bar serves as a venue for shows, as well as a rehearsal place. It is owned by the family of the drummer in Superman is Dead (SID). SID is Indonesia's best selling punk band and appears

in magazines and on MTV. The bar is run by the drummer and a few local punks. These punks create an astonishing contrast to the tourist image of Bali as a paradise as they hang out and drink on the small patio that borders the street sporting mohawks, tattoos, bright hair colours, leather boots and jackets, an abundance of studs and piercings. However this image obscures that these actors are far from removed from society. Most of these actors play in bands, have their own manager and are sponsored by surf brands or local distros²⁶. Further Balinese punk bands play large festivals, surf competitions, benefit shows and large commercial venues such as the Hard Rock Café.

Thirty kilometres from Kuta, in the regional capital Denpasar, another Bali-community exists based around a collective space rented by three punks. Similar to the Balkot punks in Bandung these punks reject properties such as mohawks, studs and dyed hair. Instead they focus on setting up shows without sponsors, stressing topics such as anti-capitalism and a cooperative spirit. However as opposed to the Balkot punks this community has a indiscriminate status within the scene due to its deficiency in numbers and its inefficiency of setting up shows. Therefore their performance of punk rarely moves beyond their own community. Most of the Kuta-punks actually had no idea there was even a community which had a different approach to how punk is performed.

These different communities consist of a plethora of actors gathered because their interpretations of how punk should be interpreted coincide. Their performances have a common feature: they are directed within the own community to obtain recognition and signal a distinction from the perceived mainstream, their common cultural Other. As such these communities provide the actor with a certain security, as they create a framework of the scene in which performances are legitimised as homologous to something bigger, something beyond the local: the global punk scene. Their differences boil down to a process of defining and reproducing what is punk. As Lawrence Grossberg writes:

The relevant social network for fans is determined, not merely by shared tastes in music, but more important, by shared ways of drawing the line between what is and what is not rock (1987:184).

Grossberg, however, notes that these groups are nominal in the sense that they do not imply any sociological reality or stylistic feature, something which I disagree with. Instead I argue that the way punk is interpreted, and more so what is performed as homologous to punk and

what is not, carry important sociological connotations. These become the base upon which the actors construct their performances and legitimise them. The shared beliefs of where to draw the line between the real and the fake I call the *aspects of the scene*, since they merely reflect different sides of the same thing²⁷. Contrary to previous theories regarding the fractionation of punk, the concept of aspects I argue, captures the performance of punk as dependent on where to direct this performance and towards whom. It does not claim one aspect to be more authentic than the other: it is a reflection of a performance of punk. What is interesting is how the actors of each aspect perform punk in such a manner so as to present the own aspect as the legitimate one. What is conceived as the authentic is socially constructed through the actors' performances.

I suggest that we look at the relationship between the two aspects as a convexo-concave figure such as a spoon, since this captures their orientation as well as their interrelation. The convex aspect of the scene curves outwards towards what is beyond the scene, while the concave aspect is curved inwardly. Motivated by their interpretations of the themes and connection to the mainstream, I argue that the PI- and the Kuta-punks constitute a convex aspect of the scene while the Balkot-punks and the small Denpasar community represent a concave aspect.

4.2.1 The convex aspect of scene

For the PI- and Kuta-punks the cultural Other, the mainstream, is direct and graspable yet external to the scene. This mainstream is encountered everyday: their families tell them to get a job, security guards and police harass them, and outsiders stare with disbelief at a bunch of punks getting drunk and screaming in the middle of the day. These punks' interpretations of the themes of the scene also capture this relation to a direct outside: The theme "loud fast rules" becomes louder and faster than what is perceived as mainstream music, and "DIY" is interpreted as limiting the mainstream's influence of the scene in putting up small shows, recording music within the scene. The third theme, "don't suck corporate cock" captures the two former in keeping the mainstream as external to the scene. This, I argue, is a convex interpretation of the themes as it is outwardly directed. It is only in relation to what is outside the scene as its distinctive character is visible. This relation to the mainstream is, however, somewhat ambivalent as becomes apparent from this Balinese punk's account:

MTV is trendy but what can we do we need money to buy stuff and food (...) I don't want to be mainstream, I don't want to follow and consume what the TV tells me to, I

don't want to be like that. I just want be free and not bother anyone (...) a lot of people will buy punk stuff and look like punks (...) it's becoming trendy, but it's not supposed to be like that. I don't want punk to be trendy²⁸ (Interview, Bali Dec 17th 2004)

The relation to the mainstream is expressed in external terms. When it is questioned it is legitimised by being addressed as a necessary evil, as in something that has to be done, which in itself contains a distinction from the mainstream. As the quotation implies, the relation to the mainstream has to be supervised and the boundaries maintained in order for the actors to keep their distinct positions that are created in the distinction from the mainstream. The different interpretations of the themes are legitimised by the actors performing their interpretations as the one and only, the real thing, hiding any alternatives. Edward Said (2004:64) writes that the Orient has helped defined the West by acting as its counterpart: the Orient is an integrated part of the West. Similarly we cannot separate the mainstream from the scene. We cannot understand these actions' meaning if we does not understand how the mainstream is created. Accordingly if punk properties become "trendy" their homologous relation is exposed as just one out of many meanings, thus threatening the actors' distinct positions²⁹. Consequently such a performance would have to be altered to withhold its distinctive character³⁰. Accordingly the convex aspect of the scene is resisting and reacting, aiming to maintain an image of authenticity and exclusivity in the encounter with the mainstream. Therefore bands conceived by the convex punks to be mainstream were dismissed as external to the scene. However the use of the mainstream can also be legitimised as homologous to punk, as explained to me by the PI-punks:

Once again I asked them about what they think about DIY and the claims made by the Balkot that they are not. This sparked an inflammatory speech which attracted most of them and went on for almost half an hour. I was told that they are DIY too, that they only set up shows with small local distros as sponsors. When I asked them if it mattered that these distros carried Nike- and Adidas-shoes, and sold surf- and skate-wear, they told me "so what", the people who own these stores are still punk and saying that they are not is too political. Commenting on (...) [recent shows by bands from the community at a high school and a shopping mall] they said that the sponsors that were used there had nothing to do with them, they were chosen by the organizer, not by the community, and thus they cannot be blamed for this. Plus it was sometimes good because it attracted new members. (Field notes Bandung, Jan 20th 2005)

What is important here is the ongoing dialogue with the mainstream, a give-and-take relationship which is carefully orchestrated and supervised with the purpose of maintaining the actors' distinct positions. Their actions are portrayed as homologous to punk, as in this case DIY is interpreted as setting up shows with local independent sponsors. This is defended and presented as the "true" interpretation as the Balkot-punks' remarks are cast off as too

political and too serious: it is less punk. The use of corporate sponsors is legitimised by saying that it is not their fault, but the promoters of the show, an external outside. The Balkot and Denpasar-punks, however, as implied in the excerpt above, do not share this interpretation. For them the mainstream is neither directly encountered nor external to the scene, rather it is much more complex and abstract.

4.2.2 The concave aspect of the scene

The Balkot- and Denpasar- punks interpret the themes of the scene as opposed to an abstract cultural Other. The mainstream is perceived as the capitalist system which exploits and contaminates the scene. Consequently it is never encountered in its pure form, only as signs or symptoms of this greater evil. Where the convex aspect identifies a cultural Other external to the scene the concave directs its performance internally; the mainstream is perceived as being within the scene itself. The stress is put on DIY, of taking it as far as possible: identifying it as an alternative to a consumerist capitalist society. Similarly “don’t suck corporate cock” becomes a way to eradicate the mainstream’s attempts to exploit the scene: through a refusal to deal with any commercial companies, be it record labels, distros or sponsors. Musically it is often a simple production with a poor sound, yet fast and furious, which in turn enhances the image of DIY: it is recorded by the punks themselves.

The two aspects are just different sides of the same thing, it is the same themes that are interpreted and acted upon. They both identify themselves as being punk, same goes for the other aspect albeit less. This is important since the aspects, both in Bandung and Bali, are separated units in the sense that they seldom visit each other’s home ground. Nevertheless the two are interconnected. In Bandung the PI punks go to the Balkot shows and bands from the two aspects at times share the line-up. Further, since the concave aspect’s performances are directed internally, the convex aspect is the target of distinction. As Camunk, a Balkot punk, states regarding why his band was formed:

(O)ne of the reason was that it was more of like a call from us who really cared about the scene which at the time was really, we were really disillusioned of what punk and hardcore had become. The bands from the mid 90s were breaking up and those who stayed big became really big by joining the mainstream corporate music industry by, they would sign to Sony, they had videos coming out on MTV and they didn’t want to play shows anymore, although before this we were already dissatisfied with the scene because we thought this is not a actual DIY-scene. As you might know shows at that time were sponsored by multinational corporations, even McDonalds sponsored... we (...) felt like this man this is wrong this is not how punk is supposed to be (...) I felt maybe we should gather people who actually believe in the DIY-ethics and you know

and form a community-centred scene instead of a fashion-centred scene which also at that time, the so called distros were already bulging so massive and you know they only focused on selling more and more clothes. (Interview, Bandung Jan 19th 2005)

This excerpt captures my point as nearly everything that is said is used to legitimise the own interpretation of the themes as homologous to punk while dismissing any alternative as fake, or less punk. Said (2004:200) argues that the Orient for the West is always passive while the latter is active: the West acts as the observer at the same time as the juror and the judge. In this case consider for example the repeated use of terms such as “actually believe in the DIY-ethics”, “how punk is supposed to be” and “those of us who actually cared about the scene.” Camunk’s interpretation of the themes is not performed as one out of many possible interpretations, it is presented as the “actual DIY”, the real thing: the essence of what punk is about. This image is in turn painted against a background where the PI, the convex aspect of the scene, is presented as the unreal, the fake: sponsorship by multinational corporations, being on MTV, focus on consumption and fashion. For the concave aspect, the mainstream exists within the boundaries of the scene in the shape of the convex aspect of punk. As such it aims to present the convex punks as yielding to the mainstream. The concave aspect, therefore, is in need of the convex since it is the foundation for its distinction. Only in relation to the convex aspect does the concave take shape. Consequently, within the convex scene punk bands conceived of as mainstream were treated internally as a symptom of a capitalist contamination and not as in the convex aspect cast off as external³¹.

Thus the cultural Other is constructed in the performances of the actors, the border between the aspects of the scene and the perceived mainstream being imaginative yet nevertheless performed as real. How the mainstream is perceived in turn, determines how punk is performed in order to legitimise this distinction as somewhat real.

4.3 Performing punk in Indonesia

4.3.1 The spatial performance of punk

The meeting places of the convex punks in Bandung and Bali are both centred in busy streets where outsiders are constantly passing by. These are public spaces, not only in the sense that they are available to everyone, but more importantly they are shared with outsiders.

Consequently the spatial boarder between these spaces and the outside is blurred as the actors sit in the middle of the street, in Kuta on the small patio outside the bar and in Bandung on wooden benches next to the mall (see appendix 2:4-5). In Bandung this spatial performance of

punk is further enhanced by the number of street punks who frequent the PI. Literally living in the street, sleeping in the midst of the city in plain sight of the people and cars passing by, these punks further highlight the convex aspect's public performance of space. The choice of space, I argue, is important. This dialogue, this performance in the open, is meant to reproduce this feeling of being different, and to prove the distinction between the punks and the non-punks. The interpretations of the themes are sorted into an attitude of difference based on style and style based on difference. Consequently convex shows in Bali and Bandung are held in bars, at school dances, the mall etc. Most of these are sponsored by small distros some by large corporations such as tobacco companies, MTV or Hard Rock Radio (see appendix 2:1-2). This means that audience members are drawn to the show on behalf of the sponsors as well as the bands, which further blurs the border towards the outside³². These shows are thus public in the sense that action and participation is not limited to actors of the scene.

On the other hand the Balkot shows are held within the scene. The choice of space includes auditoriums, basements, and closed indoor skate parks, which are not frequented by outsiders during the show. This and a refusal of sponsorship, keeps these shows exclusively within the scene. Shows are advertised with flyers handed directly out to punks or by posting them on lampposts and walls, as opposed to convex shows which sometimes are advertised in music and fashion magazines (see appendix 2:3). Further, this spatial border between the own aspect and the outside is enhanced as performances are kept away from the public light, as they are internally directed. The City Hall, where the Balkot punks gather, is a public space yet nevertheless closed to the outside both physically, by the fences and gates surrounding the park beneath the City Hall, and temporally, the time of gathering keeping outsiders to a minimum. In Bali the small concave aspect takes this one step further and gathers in a private house rented by some of the actors. The dialogue with the outside is absent as it is not needed in the concave performance of punk, since the cultural Other is addressed internally³³. Where the convex aspect performs punk publicly in relation to a direct mainstream external to the scene, the concave punks perform privately within the scene, as the mainstream is perceived as internal. These spatial performances of punk, private or public, in turn decide how punk is performed visually.

4.3.2 The visual performance of punk

As we have seen, both the Bali and Bandung convex aspect of the punk scene are public in their spatial performance of punk. As I stated above, this is mainly done through the blurring

of the border that separates the scene from the outside. Since this spatial performance is based around a distinction from this outside, or rather the mainstream, this difference has to be emphasized visually. Properties such as piercings, tattoos, dyed hair, radical hairstyles, studs, and punk t-shirts and patches, and acts such as making noise and drinking in public are performed so as to mark this difference (see appendix 2:7-8). This performance is what separates the actors from the outside. *The border between the scene and the mainstream is performed visually as it is not performed spatially.* This way the convex punks can legitimise being punk while at the same time interact with the mainstream; a necessary negotiation to claim authenticity. As long as the other actors recognize an actor's performance as homologous to punk and to the actor's perceived position, the interaction with the mainstream is legitimised. As we saw above, this goes for distros selling shoes and clothes, shows with corporate sponsors and being on MTV.

As for the concave aspect, the stress on visual performance is less distinct when compared to the convex aspect³⁴. The convex punks' external performances are meaningless within the concave aspect, since for the latter the mainstream exists within the scene not outside it. Therefore there is little use making a public distinction from parents, teachers or people passing by, which serves as a backdrop for the convex punks, since such a distinction is irrelevant to the concave aspect. Consequently punk is performed visually through the display of small pins or a patch on an otherwise clean denim jacket, or through political standpoints (see appendix 2:6). It is a private performance as it is kept within the scene yet it still signals a distinction from the mainstream as it is directed towards the convex aspect. As was explained to me by a Balkot punk when I asked why they did not sport mohawks or tattoos³⁵:

The main reason is that we don't wanna be labelled as punks by everybody and thus become connected to those mainstream punks, we're tired of getting mixed up with people who have transformed symbolism into fashion. (Field notes Bandung, 17th Jan 2005)

The refusal to perform these properties is explained in a much elaborated way. This is something which has been well discussed, hence the well articulated reference to symbolism and fashion, as the authentic versus the fake. However the choice not to perform these properties does not preclude the existence of them. For example, some of the concave punks had tattoos on their shoulders or backs: as such they were not performed. Rather they were concealed as to further mark a distinction from the convex aspect's performances of tattoos³⁶.

Thus the same properties can have a different meaning depending on by which aspect they are performed. This is important because it stresses that in order to understand the performance of punk we have to take into consideration the relations between the aspects of the scene since they are given their meaning through not being something else. As we shall see, this relational performance is further enhanced by the Balkot punks' refusal to consume alcohol.

4.3.3 Straight Edge

As opposed to the PI punks' active use of drinking as a way to signal a distinction from a mainstream external to the scene, the Balkot punks have appropriated the idea of Straight Edge; staying away from drugs, including alcohol and tobacco³⁷. The idea of Straight Edge which originated within the punk scene in Washington D.C. in the mid 80's, is not exclusively concave, neither is drinking solely convex³⁸. The point here is that both drinking and not drinking are used as objects of distinction by the aspects of the Bandung scene to signal a distinction from the perceived mainstream. As such, the choice of being Straight Edge is explained in terms of an internal distinction: "as a way to reduce dependency on capitalism", as a Balkot punk pointed out to me. Thus the refusal to drink becomes a property homologous to punk, performed as the letter X, the symbol of Straight Edge, drawn on one or both hands³⁹ (see appendix 2:9). This way it portrays them as different from the convex punks and in their own opinion more punk, dismissing the PI-punks' alternative interpretation as being contaminated by capitalist ideals. At the shows the Balkot punks organized which the PI-punks attended, the struggle to legitimise each aspect's interpretations became obvious:

It's such an obvious separation, I'm standing just outside the provisional entrance to the venue, we are on the fourth floor (...) where the stair ends and the hallway begins (...) below me in the stairs, the PI punks are passing a bottle of arak around, drinking and shouting. In front of me in the hallway, the Balkot punks are quietly passing a black marker around, drawing large Xs on their hands (Field notes Bandung, Jan 25th 2005).

Once again we cannot attempt to investigate what meaning an action has if we do not place it within a cultural framework. To argue as Appadurai that cultural objects "tend to become indigenized" (1998:32) is missing the point as the performances of properties, in this case the relation to alcohol, follows a pattern of a conscious distinction from a cultural Other. As such they have to be thickly described in order to be understood. The excerpt above captures how the concave punks constantly direct their performances internally. The convex aspect is dismissed as fake, or at least less authentic. This interconnection between the two aspects is thus essential for the concave punks, since it functions to legitimise their performances.

Similarly the convex aspect uses an external mainstream to legitimise theirs. This way the cultural Other is invited to participate only to be dismissed as fake, legitimizing the actors' distinct positions as within the punk scene and not outside it. But at such it creates problems for the convex punks.

4.3.4 Negotiating the public

As the performance of punk is public and visual, the convex punks constantly have to adapt their performances to avoid negative sanctions from their families and from society at large. Religion, for example, was hardly ever negatively treated and sensitive issues often involved a negotiation so as to avoid negative sanctions. The issue of tattoos, for example, is a sensitive matter in Indonesia. Within certain parts of Islam tattoos are seen as *haram*, forbidden⁴⁰. On several occasions the government has proclaimed tattoos to be characteristic of delinquency (Baulch 2003) and during Soeharto's regime, tattooed street gang members were sought out and killed by the military (Kroef 1985:758)⁴¹. As such it carries an enormous potential as an object of distinction for the convex punks, but this performance has still to be negotiated within the family realm and with the neighbourhood. Almost all convex punks I met in Bandung and Bali were tattooed, often in highly visible places such as the neck, face and hands: tattoos were thus performed as properties. To avoid any negative reactions from parents and the extended family, many punks in Bandung simply left home and stayed with a friend, or slept in the street, returning home from time to time to eat or to get some money. However, most often having tattoos was negotiated in relation to the local cultures in a way which was deemed as respectful. Yono, a convex punk I lived with, for example, went to the mosque every Friday since this was expected of him by his family and neighbourhood. In order to hide the spider web he had tattooed on his chin he did not shave between Wednesday morning and Friday afternoon, and he always put on a long sleeved shirt to cover the rest of his tattoos before going to the mosque. Nevertheless, he told me, everyone in the mosque knew about his tattoos but as long as he showed respect by covering them up, it was bearable⁴².

In Bali, which is predominantly Hindu, the issue of tattoos was less provocative. Nevertheless the convex aspect's visibility created problems at times. Every housing area in Bali, with about 200 to 300 houses, has a communal space called a *banjar*. The banjar functions as a meeting place where issues regarding the area are discussed and dealt with, and has its own security, the *pecalan*, which patrols and surveys the area. This way the banjar has control over

the local neighbourhood and this affects how punk is performed. One Balinese punk told me how the banjar used to harass him because of all the punks who frequented his house. When he refused to answer their claims, they picked him for an “interrogation”, which, he told me, was just an excuse to give him a beating. He was told to stop having strange looking people hanging around his house and that he should reconsider the way he dressed. After he had answered all their questions about who his strange friends were and why they were there, they let him go with a warning. Today he said it’s not a problem anymore since he has proved to the banjar that punk is a way to make a living.

Focusing on punk as a career choice was thus one way to negotiate the performance of punk with the banjar. Another was, similar to the situation in Bandung, the concealment of properties at banjar gatherings or visits to temples. The convex punks I lived with in Bali went to several ceremonies every week, often together with their family. At these gatherings, a more traditional way of dress and appearance was chosen so as to signal respect: their hair was hidden under a hat and their clothes changed into a sarong and a shirt⁴³. When asked why this was so important it was once again expressed in external terms: it was something they had to do and they wanted to avoid offending their families.

In both Bandung and Bali, local tradition was thus respected within the convex aspect as properties were concealed at times to avoid negative sanctions. As such this is still a performance within the scene as it refers to the ongoing negotiation between the outside and the convex aspect of the scene. This constituted a striking difference to the concave punks who often dismissed religion as oppressive in line with an extreme left standpoint. Concave performances, however, are private and as such they do not have to be legitimised outside the scene as do the convex punks. The negotiation with an external mainstream is useless for the concave punks as they only conceive the mainstream in internal terms. The concave punks in Denpasar thus told me that they had never had any problems with the banjar for their political standpoints or dismissal of religion. But the impact of local cultures also stresses the issue of hybridity. If the performance of punk is affected by local cultures, does this not signal a hybrid culture? To argue as Lull that “the exotic, unfamiliar, and foreign is domesticated” (2002:244) is, I propose, making a thin description as it conceals that the foundation for this performance has not been affected at all. The themes of the scene, the interpretations of these, the positioning of the cultural Other and the fractionation of the scene is barely touched by these limitations, instead these provide the means by which this negotiation is made possible.

Thus these limits merely refer to a difference in shape not in content, as such this cannot be equated to an indigenization of punk, translating the foreign to fit the local. Rather these limits point, again, to the importance of seeing the convex aspect of the scene as in an ongoing negotiation in relation to the mainstream since it is only in this encounter that authenticity can be claimed. Only in relating their performances to something beyond the local manifestation of the scene can these be legitimised as authentic, as homologous to a global authentic elsewhere. But as we shall see this differs as well regarding how the themes are interpreted.

4.3.5 Gesturing elsewhere

“Finding one’s space has often meant going elsewhere into a supposedly free space, a space perceived as more authentic” (Hetherington 1998:329)

Social actions are given their meaning as they are attributed to something beyond the actor. Consequently performance inevitably boils down to a gesturing; it is always directed towards something. Only when recognized as valuable or authentic by other actors does it carry a meaning within the scene. This gesturing or direction of the performance is global, it is legitimated by its connection to something bigger: a perceived authentic. Nevertheless it is always local in the sense that only in the local is this justification valid. The global scene is constructed and reproduced in the actors’ performances to legitimise the local which thus is created and maintained in this performance as well. The convex punks’ interpretations of themes, and the identification of an external mainstream, inevitably localize performance. The global is locally constructed as what matters first and foremost is the distinction from a direct and external mainstream. Consequently the global elsewhere becomes an intangible elsewhere since it is only in the own local sphere that the global may be reached; it is rarely encountered directly, but more often mediated through magazines and music television. There is little opportunity to participate in these as they are beyond the actors’ reach. Therefore they are placing themselves in the periphery of the scene which makes an active global gesture of little use. Thus instead as we have seen, the local is emphasised since this is perceived as the way to claim authenticity as the mainstream is encountered directly and publicly. As such *the convex aspect is performing punk locally to legitimise their adherence to the global punk scene which is thus reproduced as it is locally legitimised.*

For the concave aspect, however, the relation to a global elsewhere is of extreme importance since it is used to proclaim their interpretations of the themes as the only legitimate ones. As

we have seen this is mirrored in the appropriation of Straight Edge, but it also takes other forms. Every concave show I went to in Bandung or was told about, included non-Indonesian bands. There were American, European and Asian bands, together with a variety of local bands (see appendix 2:3). This way punk is cemented as global, even the own local bands becomes global in their participation with bands from outside the own local manifestation. In contrast to the convex aspect, the concave punks create the local globally: the local is performed as a reflection of the global. Pickles (2001:50) notes how, what she calls, “the political punks” in Bandung used stories from other communities in the world to legitimise their actions. This way punk is performed globally to legitimise a local distinction, not the other way around. Thus the authenticity the global elsewhere is seen to carry is transferred to the local aspect, eradicating the boundaries between the centre and the periphery by acting as if there were no such line⁴⁴. Consequently where the concave aspect is predominantly global, the convex is focused on the local. Both, however, are in need of this play between the local and the global to make sense of their and others’ performances, what differs is how this is carried out.

Again this contradicts the concept of cultural hybrids, which addresses contextual transition as a mix between the imported culture and indigenous culture. The foreign culture is domesticated and adjusted to fit local cultural customs: the global yields to the local. Instead, I have argued, the global cannot be separated from the local as they are both created by the actors’ performances. The global does not exist outside the actors’ performances, neither does the local: it is performed and negotiated. As we have seen the different aspects’ approaches to the global follow each aspect’s interpretation of the themes. The convex punks’ identification of an external mainstream stresses the local, while the concave punks’ internal distinction is dependent on the global. As we shall see the use of communication differs within each aspect which affects punk’s contextual transition. The diffusion of punk becomes an interaction between each aspect’s use of communication within the scene.

4.4 The diffusion of punk

4.4.1 The use of the mainstream in communicating punk

How to communicate through properties within the scene differs between the convex and the concave aspect based on their interpretations of the themes and performance of punk. The convex aspect, as it stresses the local in the performance of the global, communicates through

local channels which are often perceived as external to the scene: shows set up by organisers, records distributed by labels owned by non-punks, and in some cases through magazines and TV. This makes sense, as there are few channels within the scene which are of relevance to the convex aspect since authenticity is locally achieved. This close encounter with the mainstream is possible as the border between the scene and the mainstream is performed visually. This performance enables the convex aspect to invite the mainstream to participate, only to openly dismiss it and thus strengthen the distinction from it. For example during my stay in Bandung, some of the PI punks participated in a commercial radio show about punk:

Sofyan, Bambang and Akbar appeared on Hard Rock Radio yesterday. There was a show about punk featuring RR [Rocket Rockers]. Sofyan and the others were drunk and kept on interrupting and making fun of the hostess and RR. When they came to the PI afterwards, they were greeted with cheers. I asked them why they did it and they told me they wanted to show that punk was more than just mainstream shit. A couple of days before Bambang had told me that radio was mainstream, so I asked him if he was mainstream now as well. He answered “no, because we fucked them”. (Field notes Bandung, Jan 27th 2005)

In this case the appearance in the mainstream is legitimized as homologous to punk since the distinction remains: the mainstream is used to make a distinction from it. This constitutes a part of a communication within the scene. The target for recognition is not the mainstream but the other actors within the scene. Just as for children standing on a railway, dodging trains at the last second, the train itself is of little relevance other than the danger it poses.

Recognition is sought from the own group. Consequently the intended meaning of the action, the distinction from the mainstream, only makes sense to other punks. To the listeners of the radio show, the people passing by the communities in Kuta or Bandung, or the viewers seeing a punk band on MTV, this intended meaning is not the same. What is important here is that this relation to the mainstream enables punk to spread through channels which otherwise could not be used since the scene itself does not have the means. The convex aspect's use of an external mainstream allows the properties employed; dress, appearance, music etc., to be diffused beyond the scene. As a consequence these properties are revealed as polysemic objects: their meaning is not restricted by the cultural framework within the scene anymore. Their use is open to interpretation and can thus be given a meaning outside the scene. This, I argue, is the first step in punk's transition.

How these Indonesian actors got in touch with punk, regardless of what aspect they now adhere to, results from a convex relation to the mainstream. Sex Pistols, Ramones and Green

Day were mentioned by almost every punk I talked to as their way into punk⁴⁵. These are all convex punk bands, in fact I cannot think of better example of a convex punk band than Sex Pistols which constantly negotiated their performance with an external mainstream⁴⁶. As such it attracts new actors to the scene beyond the own local context as it enables people to imagine something different through this mass mediated diffusion. As Ketut, a long time Balinese punk points out:

The information about punk in Indonesia was so limited, so my source for music was my dad he used to bring me billboard magazine, so I kept reading that. And I bought my first Ramones tape in Australia 1987, but I didn't understand what it was until I went to college and bought a lot of magazines in Australia and suddenly opened my eyes (Interview, Bali Aug 15th 2003)

The object used, the Ramones tape, had no specific meaning to Ketut initially. It was just music, a polysemic object open to interpretation. However as he learned more from reading magazines he was able to situate this object within a cultural framework: the Ramones became a property of punk. Thus at the same time as the convex aspect's use of the mainstream allows properties to be diffused beyond the scene, it also contains the means to complete the transition of punk. Once again these objects' polysemic character is concealed and they are performed as homologous to the scene. What is interesting is thus how this appropriation is made.

4.4.2 The role of the communication within the scene

Punk's transition is completed when diffused objects are interpreted as punk. They have a meaning which legitimises their use, as described above by Ketut regarding how he situated the Ramones within a larger cultural framework. Properties are polysemic objects which have a different meaning and use beyond the scene. Punks did not invent tattoos, piercings, dyed hair, safety pins or anarcho-syndicalism; instead these objects have been appropriated and performed as homologous to the themes of the scene. Lull argues that "the term mass communication implies – that messages become detached from their senders and from the times and contexts of original production" (2002:35). Similar to John Clarke (1993) he thus claims these objects having an original meaning prior to their detachment. This, I argue, is neglecting cultural objects' polysemic character and more importantly the process by which they are legitimised. Once again punk is not a matter of what you do it is how you do it that counts. While listening to Sex Pistols is not punk per se, performing Sex Pistols as homologous to the themes is. This is something the actor learns through expanding the

achieved imagination. Thus whereas Appadurai (1998) speaks merely of imagination as a one-step process, I would rather consider it to involve two stages. First an initial stage which directs *what to imagine*, for example the Ramones, or punk for that matter. And secondly the process of expanding this initial imagination as the actor learns *how to imagine it*, situating it in relation to the themes. As such, these objects are once again restrained since they are performed as properties. Their polysemic nature is concealed as they are performed as somewhat real: in portraying the own interpretation of the themes and use of properties as being exclusively legitimate. As the way to imagine punk changes, however, previously endorsed properties are repositioned and abandoned as they are no longer perceived as homologous to the actor's interpretations of the themes. Camunk captures this:

For me it's more like, like when you go to college for example you have this basic one on one units or courses and listening to bands like Sex Pistols and Ramones is like the introduction for a punk and then later on you have these specific courses that you have to take, it's like a cone and then you get into this whole thing like Kontrovers and the whole community. (Interview, Bandung Jan 19th 2005)

Camunk is describing punk's transition and his own development in relation to it. What started out as punk, Sex Pistols and Ramones, is considered less punk today. According to Camunk this is due to his socialization within the scene and imagining punk to be a global community⁴⁷. The analogy with going to college is strikingly appropriate. You start off by learning the basics, mainly from "open objects" diffused through mass media, in this case Ramones and Sex Pistols. If you then decide to take the course, to use these "open objects" as properties, these are imputed with a specific meaning and turned into objects of distinction as the actor is introduced to the themes of the scene. In stating these properties to be punk, they are placed within a structure which provides them with a deeper meaning as these properties are put in a relation to other potential properties: they are performed as homologous to punk and other alternative meanings are concealed. By continuing to take these classes, how to imagine punk changes as the actor is exposed to more potential properties. As these are appropriated, the actor soon abandons the first ones since they have lost their value of distinction due to the restrictions the themes of the scene put on the actor. If you have graduated level three why go around showing off your diploma from level one?⁴⁸

This is not something exclusive to the concave aspect of the scene: it occurs within the convex aspect as well. However, as we have seen, how to use this communication differs. While the convex aspect has little interest in other local punk scenes since its focus is

predominantly local, the opposite applies to the concave aspect. As we have seen, the global is constantly stressed within the concave aspect, so that communication is carried accordingly through fanzines, web pages and e-mail. Not only do these channels reflect the concave punks' interpretation of the themes, which stresses an internal performance, but they are essential since the global provides the means to make a distinction from the convex aspect. As such, the situations in other local punk scenes are of relevance since this information has a value of distinction. This does not preclude the existence of a global communication within the convex aspect. On the contrary it does exist in the shape of records from other countries, for example Sex Pistols or Green Day. Nor does it exclude concave punks' use of local communication. What I want to say is that wherever this communication is obtained from, its focus differs. For the convex punks, global communication only has relevance locally as it is only locally their distinction against the mainstream is valid. The concave punks, however, perceive the local as global. As such everything is a part of the global as we saw above regarding the staging of shows. Again, the global and the local are not an objective reality: they are created in the actors' performances⁴⁹.

The relation between the convex and the concave aspect must not be seen as something fixed, rather it is constantly changing as actors move in and out of the aspects. The concave punks I met in Indonesia told me how they used to be convex punks, that is they identified the mainstream as external to the scene and performed punk accordingly. Thus they showed me pictures of them with studded leather jackets, mohawks and dyed hair. As such the communication within the scene ensures a dynamic, heterogeneous and creative scene since there is room for re-imagination and there are more properties available. Consequently the transition of punk is a process where the scene changes as the actors find new ways to imagine punk and interpret the themes. As we shall see, this is the basis for the creation of the aspects of the scene.

4.4.3 The creation of the aspects of the scene

Whereas the convex aspect relies on communication within the scene in relation to an external mainstream, the concave is once again internally directed. Fanzines from Europe, the US and South East Asian countries are imported via post or internet, and distributed within the scene. These fanzines are most often concave in their nature: they identify the mainstream as internal and are only distributed within the scene as they are sold at shows or at collectives.

Nevertheless, these fanzines were sometimes read by the PI-punks but they were never during

my stay performed as properties. That is, they were not used as a manifestation of the actors' interpretations of the themes. This makes sense as there is little meaning for the convex punks to perform punk globally through the use of fanzines since their distinction lies in the local encounter with an external mainstream. As Camunk notes:

EH: But did you use to hang out at the PI?

C: I think at that time when the whole unified thing still existed we were all, (...) whenever I went to a show I always looked up to these people as rolemodels oh man these people are so cool, but then as I discovered more and more about punk I got so disappointed with them and then started to fuck it, I'm just gonna do it my own way (Interview, Bandung Jan 19th 2005)

What Camunk is describing is a development in imagining punk: you start out by being a convex punk and then when you learn more you become a concave punk. However it is not that simple. Instead there is a more complex relation between the two aspects. All convex punks do not become concave punks since there is a horizontal shift as well as a vertical. The former refers to claiming higher positions through making a distinction from actors within the own aspect. This is how the actors are hierarchically structured as they perform punk within an aspect which gives their performances meaning but still differentiates them as more punk than the other actors within the same aspect (see E. Hannerz 2004). The vertical shift from convex to concave refers to a bigger change as it points to a re-imagination of how to perform punk. But it is exactly because the opportunity exists which gives the scene its dynamic character⁵⁰. Through the communication within the scene, actors are able to imagine and re-imagine how to perform punk and what properties to use in this performance. These properties both define how punk can be performed; a fanzine or a magazine, and legitimise the own interpretation; a political standpoint or a mohawk. Punk is imagined and performed as something real, something essential which is out there for the actor to approach and discover, and as the "real" is defined, so is the fake. This applies even if there is no local equivalent to the interpretation which is performed. As Camunk and André point out:

C: When punk was transferred from the West, things that were transferred mostly, things that were mostly embraced by the people here were the tangible aspects of it, the music, the style of clothing, the packaging and those sorts of things. However the intangible aspects of it, or the core or the fundamental aspects of it like DIY-ethics or the political aspects of punk, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic

A: Anti-capitalistic

C: Anti-capitalistic, were not touched until late 99 when people started to write their own zines and tell their own opinions

A: Yeah when the technology came

C: With internet (Interview Bandung Jan 20th 2005)

Again this contradicts notions of hybridity since in this case, how to imagine punk is appropriated from the global elsewhere without any local equivalent to adjust it to. The political issues were based on fanzines and information from overseas. This excerpt is once again a distinction against the convex aspect of the scene as the concave aspect's stress on DIY is portrayed as the authentic, the intangible as opposed to the visual and fake. Once again, this points to how the concave aspect of the scene performs punk globally to make a distinction from the convex scene. This cannot be addressed as merely an adjustment to existing local culture and structural predispositions since how to imagine punk is rather directed through the communication within the scene.

As internet in the late 90's became available to Indonesians at internet cafés, fanzines could be downloaded and printed and properties ordered and obtained. Camunk and André also describe how this change enabled them to imagine punk differently as communication within the scene increased. Before the arrival of the internet, I was told by actors from both aspects, these fanzines were imported to Jakarta and Bandung from actors whose parents worked overseas, often as diplomats. The scarcity of these sources provided these actors with a distinct position within the scene⁵¹. Pickles (2001) notices this change in Bandung in the late 90's, that there was an increased attention within certain circles to punk as a political issue as the fanzine *Submissive Riot*, the first Bandung group to talk in these terms, called for a boycott in 1998 of an event deemed to be a capitalistic enterprise and that “[r]eal punks wouldn't spend a cent to support this enterprise” (quoted in Pickles 2001:58). Largely this shift can be attributed to the increased availability of global punk fanzines such as *Profane Existence* (PE), an anarcho-syndicalist punk fanzine from Minneapolis. Pickles notes that a punk manifesto from PE was translated and published in the Indonesian fanzine *Kontaminasi Propaganda* in 1999 and how this coincided with a growing tension between different groups regarding how to interpret punk. Bands who failed to meet these demands were recognized as less punk.

Nevertheless Pickles fails to see this as having any real impact on how the scene was fractionated. Instead she associates it with a disbelief in the political system and the increasing opportunity of radical action and thinking in the post-Soeharto era. Similarly Baulch (2003) explains the change within the Bandung scene as being due to the punks' failed expectations

of striking a major label deal and profiting from the alternative hype which occurred in Indonesia during the mid-late 90's. Consequently the impact of communication within the scene from overseas is thus neglected. But this change cannot be explained merely in terms of reacting to already existing social structures, this is making thin descriptions as it neglects the cultural framework which provides these properties with meaning⁵². The existence of global punk fanzines, I argue, involves a subsequent increase in properties⁵³. My point is that this led to the opportunity to imagine punk differently as these properties were either endorsed or refuted by the actors and the themes reinterpreted to legitimise these decisions. As how to imagine punk changed, properties were abandoned, and others which were conceived as homologous to the themes were performed. This is how the scene develops: the convex aspect's performances towards an external mainstream attract new actors, while the concave aspect's internal performances attract actors from the convex. This dynamic process also explains why this fractionation never occurred in Bali as the means to imagine punk differed significantly between the two local manifestations of the scene.

4.4.4 The Balinese scene

The Balinese scene differs from the Bandung scene as the convex aspect dominates. A fractionation similar to that in Bandung never occurred, as Baulch (2003:164) also notes⁵⁴. The few concave punks in Bali re-imagined punk before arriving to Bali. As Iqbal puts it:

- I: First it was music and fashion then I started reading fanzines and media and the lyrics and I understood it was more than that, that was in 96 (...)
EH: Where did you live then?
I: In Jakarta (...)
EH: You started learning about DIY in Jakarta?
I: Yes with my friends and through fanzines and the internet. I don't remember the name but I was downloading a fanzine and copying it and spread it to my friends
(Interview Bali Feb 9th 2005)

Whereas in Bandung there is a wide diversity of fanzines, there are no globally distributed fanzines sold or traded in Bali, something which Baulch (2003:212) also notes. This is a problem since this communication within the scene enables the actors to imagine punk differently and creates room for distinction and a wide range of properties. It is through this process that the concave aspect attracts new actors as this communication in the shape of globally distributed fanzines, bands from other local manifestations of punk etc., provides the means for convex punks to imagine punk differently and join the concave aspect. This way

the scene is given a dynamic, heterogeneous character. The aspects of the scene in Bandung have developed over time. Consequently there is a connection between the two as the concave punks were once convex. In Bali the concave aspect has not grown from the Bali scene, rather it has been imported. As such there is no clear connection between the two aspects in Bali: most convex punks did not even know there was an alternative when I asked them. This creates a gap between the aspects which becomes hard to transcend. The concave punks in Bali are isolated in the sense that they cannot reach the convex punks. They cannot grow since there are little means to attract convex punks to re-imagine punk. The more means to imagine punk differently, the more properties are available and thus the more room there is for distinction. Consequently it is nearly impossible to re-imagine punk in Bali as there is a lack of potential properties enabling alternative ways to imagine punk: the convex aspect's total dominance is reproduced. As such, the Denpasar community in Bali illustrates how the concave aspect is internally directed against a convex aspect perceived as yielding to the mainstream and how this is performed globally. But as such it is introvert: it constitutes preaching to the converted and if this global performance is not available to the convex aspect there is little possibility to grow. In Bandung this works as the fanzines and bands from overseas at times attract PI-punks to the Balkot. Again, the concave punks have most often been convex punks: there is a connection. In Bali this is nearly impossible since the concave aspect has problems reaching out beyond the own aspect, attracting few new actors.

This difference between the Bali and the Bandung scene cannot be attributed to local cultural differences alone. To argue that this is due to the unwillingness to take on the local culture as a target is not enough. As I pointed out above, these local restrictions mainly refer to the convex aspect as it is public. Thus there is no reason for this to prevent a similar fractionation as in Bandung. To address this as merely due to cultural differences is neglecting how punk is performed, its distinction from the mainstream and how properties are obtained, thus making thin descriptions. Instead, to explain this situation we have to investigate how the scene is made up of aspects, how these are interconnected so as to provide the scene with a dynamic character, and how they interact in attracting actors from both within the scene as well as outside it. The question is not what is authentic or not: the important thing is how the illusion of it is created and how it is legitimised by the actors' performances and how these create a cultural framework which at the same time transcends the local as it creates it.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In a newly published book, the cultural anthropologist Mikael Kurkiala (2005) illustrates the importance of understanding culture by citing the detective stories by Tony Hillerman. In Hillerman's books the main character is a Navajo police officer who manages to solve murder cases within the Navajo reserve when the FBI fails. Whereas the federal agents lack the cultural competence to obtain relevant information, the main character himself a Navajo, solves the case because he understands the culture within which these actions take place⁵⁵. Throughout this paper I have further developed the theoretical claims I made in my previous paper. Similar to Kurkiala I have, based on Geertz (2000) argued that in order to understand how punk is performed and how it is transferred from one context to another we have to understand the cultural framework within which these performances are given their meaning.

Let us therefore return to the actor with the "punk not die"-shirt. First now can we understand the logic and meaning behind it. As a convex punk, which is suggested by his performed properties including the mohawk, his performance constitutes a distinction from an external and local mainstream. The spatial border between the convex aspect and the mainstream, I have argued, is blurred since punk is performed in the streets, in bars, in radio and on TV. Instead the convex punks rely on a visual performance to make a distinction from the mainstream, in this case through performed properties such as his mohawk, although the shirt is of importance as well. This legitimises his performance as it signals his adherence to something beyond the local. The convex punks, I have argued, create the global locally as it is only in the direct encounter with mainstream that this distinction is valid. As such, the slogan "punk not die" is only of local relevance to this punk. Its global connotations as a famous punk slogan are played down in favour for a local distinction: everybody in the local scene understands its meaning. The concave aspect on the other hand, as it identifies the mainstream as internal, would have little use for this shirt. For the concave punks, punk is performed privately: spatially through gathering and staging shows at closed off places, and visually through not focusing on dress and appearance. The external mainstream the convex aspect identifies has no relevance for the concave aspect. In its place the convex aspect becomes the target for distinction. This distinction is in turn legitimised through the use of communication within the scene in the shape of fanzines and shows with global bands. Let us compare the statement "punk not die" with the concave punks quoted above, for example the claim regarding turning symbolism into fashion. Whereas the shirt's meaning is derived from the

global scene but is manifested locally, the concave punk does the opposite. The local is created globally, hence the well articulated answer probably taken from a fanzine. In this paper I have argued that if we cannot understand the motive behind the actions, we cannot understand their implications. I have stressed the importance of seeing punk as a heterogeneous, dynamic and creative scene, constantly changing as the actors re-imagine how to interpret the themes and adjust their performances. Consequently this paper has its basis in the aspects of the scene since their relationship to each other and to a perceived mainstream affect how punk is performed and transferred to new contexts. The convex punks' use of the mainstream as a way to communicate within the scene enables the diffusion of the properties employed. As opposed to theorists such as John Clarke (1993), I have argued that this is not something negative to the scene. Instead it enables the scene's transition beyond the own local performances as the properties are freed from the restrictions of the scene and are revealed as polysemic objects available for interpretation. I have argued that the Indonesian punks in this paper follow this path as they cite large convex bands such as Sex Pistols as their way into punk. However when these bands, just as any object, are performed as homologous to the scene, the range of possible interpretations and performances is limited through a relation to a global scene.

I have sought to show how the actors performances are a result of the themes, how these are interpreted and the identification of a cultural Other. Therefore I have argued that punk in Indonesia cannot be described as a cultural hybrid, since this stresses the local culture's impact on the global in translating the latter to fit existing patterns. Any possible difference merely lies in the performance's form, not the cultural framework which constitutes the basis for this performance. To highlight this further I have shown how the punk scene in Bandung was fractionated due to an increase in the communication within the scene which enabled the actors to re-imagine punk. Developed from Appadurai (1998) I have argued that imagination has to be seen as a two step process where how to imagine something is just as, if not more important, than what to imagine. This "how" refers to situating performances within a cultural framework which provides the performance with a meaning. This way "punk not die" is just as valid as a performance as is claiming a visual performance to be "symbolism turned into fashion". What differs is how meanings behind the actions are created and maintained.

See you in the pit!

Endnotes

Introduction

¹ Similar to this Arjun Appadurai (1998) writes: “The subject matter of cultural studies could roughly be taken as the relationship between the word and the world. I understand these two terms in their widest sense, so that word can encompass all forms of textualized expression and world can mean anything from the means of production and the organization of life-worlds to (...) globalized relations of cultural reproduction” (1998:51).

² The word punk will be used in this paper both to refer to an actor who identifies him- or herself as a punk and to the scene which constitutes the social space in which actors are recognized. It is not my intention to define what punk is. Such an answer would limit me in my analysis. Thus a punk for me is someone who claims to be punk, that is enough for me. However in order to be recognized as punk by the other actors this actor would have to relate to the themes.

³ Nevertheless these two are interconnected in the sense that in performing punk in relation to a cultural Other, the differences regarding where to draw that line directs the internal hierarchical structure, as it positions other actors as above or below the actor. For more on how this is done see E. Hannerz (2004)

⁴ A fanzine is a xeroxed magazine produced within the scene with interviews, record reviews, ads for records, tour dates, news and rumours.

⁵ This paper is a development of a theory of scene which I outlined in my previous paper. However as such it does sometimes challenge certain topics which were presented in *Hierarchy through Anarchy*. This mainly refers to the use of mainstream and the development of how to treat the local and the global. This is due to the process of research, I am still developing as a sociologist thus whereas these concepts were of less importance in my previous paper they are essential in this one. Consequently I have had to rethink my use of them.

⁶ The term scene is frequently used within music, as such it is also used by theoreticians to describe music, thus Baulch (2003) uses the scene in studying punk, metal, and reggae in Bali without further theorizing the concept, O'Connor uses scene as “it is used within the punk scene” (2002:226) identifying it as including the infrastructure of punk, places to play and sleep, etc. The only attempt I have found so far on theorizing the concept of scene is Will Straw's (1991) definition of scene as a ‘cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation’ (1991:372). As I understand Straw this comes closer to a description of culture, in the sense of art. A scene is the combined musical practices in a certain area. My own theoretical development of the concept of scene focus less on musical features and more about performing interpretations in such a way as to conceal the possibility of alternative interpretation thus creating a structure within which actions are provided a social meaning. For a further discussion on scene see E. Hannerz (2004)

⁷ Thornton (1997) however overlooks that in denigrating the mainstream, the actor is at the same time providing his or hers definition of what constitute the mainstream, thus proclaiming other actors of being mainstream as well. This is how the scene is structured internally as in making a distinction from a cultural Other.

⁸ As Erik Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation* and *Reefer Madness*, writes: “the underground is inextricably linked to the mainstream. The lines separating them are fluid, not permanently fixed ... Like yin and yang, the mainstream and the underground are ultimately two sides of the same thing” (Schlosser 2003:8-9).

⁹ For the same reason I will not use the term ideological versus non-ideological punks which I have sometimes been advised too, since I argue, similar to Foucault (1972), that the term ideology indicates something “truer”, beyond what we can perceive, which is not in line with my analytical assumptions.

¹⁰ Appadurai makes a similar point: “(T)he work of the imagination ... is a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern.” (1998:4).

Method

¹¹ As opposed to traditional observation, which is marked by non-interventionism, participant observation involves interacting with those we attempt to study (Adler & Adler 1994:378).

¹² My brother Gustav Hannerz, who at time was living in Bali, also functioned as an interpreter at times, facilitating my work in explaining what was said during informal conversations but also as he took time to come to Bandung during my last week to help me conduct one of the interviews

¹³ Similar to this, Harvey Sacks states that we should not only attempt to investigate how representations of the world are being made by actors but also to describe the apparatus behind these descriptions or representations (in Silverman 1993:80).

¹⁴ Sacks for example writes that “*if we’re going to describe Member’s activities, and the way they produce activities and see activities and organize their knowledge about them, then we’re going to have to find out how they go about choosing among the available sets of categories for grasping some event*” (Sacks 1995:41).

¹⁵ This is what Anselm Strauss calls “sociological constructs” (1987:34), a combination of theoretical and empirical knowledge which signal something beyond the field and situates it within a broader context.

Applied theory and concepts

¹⁶ Lull goes even further in stating that “language is about differences in the way people live” (2002:139)

¹⁷ As Michael Agar puts it, culture is “something you make up to fill in the spaces between them and you” (1994:128)

¹⁸ The concept of hybridity, introduced by García Canclini (1995), is seen as the end to modern dichotomies such as left/right and popular/mass culture etc.

Results and analysis

¹⁹ All names regarding the punks quoted in this paper have been changed to ensure their anonymity

²⁰ As Brenner (1996:677) notes, appropriating foreign fashion distinguishes oneself as different.

²¹ In 1993 a Metallica show in the Jakarta resulted in riots as cars and houses of the rich were destroyed and injured more than a hundred people (Pickles 2001:25). The press reported the riots as reflecting gaps between rich and poor and social problems (Thompson 1993:6) or as associated with the Democratic Party (Baulch 2003:28). Contrary to the media’s reports the government’s official statement was that these were the actions of well-organized criminals, easily identifiable with their tattooed bodies and long hair. As a consequence no rock shows were allowed for a year and any subsequent shows were to be held at daytime far from the housing estates (Pickles 2001: 26, Baulch 2003:228).

²² Thus following Kirchner’s (1994:78) claim that MTV is essential in defining the popular.

²³ As Bennett points out “in the work of Hebdige ... subcultures are objects of ‘authentic’ expression as long as they remain undiscovered by the market” (2000:23). Something which Bennett argues pretty much disables any form of local variations of the culture since it is spread through the processes which render the subculture meaningless.

²⁴ Similar to this Baulch notes that “It was possible for local youth to expropriate recuperated global styles, and use them to generate revisions of New Order official and elite Balinese discourses of identity” (2003:43) and Ryan Moore notes that: “In fact, the media scandals actually preceded the development of a full-fledged punk subculture” (Moore 2004:312).

²⁵ *Balkot* is derived from the Indonesian word for City Hall; *Balai Kota*. As for *PI*, I honestly do not know what it means, nobody was able to give a satisfying explanation. Nevertheless these terms will be used at times throughout this paper since they are used in the actors’ daily actions.

²⁶ The word *distro* is used in this paper as it is used by the Indonesian punks, that is a small independently owned shop selling clothes, records and different accessories such as patches, stickers, badges, belts, and bracelets, some associated with punk bands other are not. It should thus not be confused with the European and American punks’ use of the word *distro* to describe a distribution company or the kind of temporary distribution space which are set up only at shows, and deals exclusively with punk properties.

²⁷ It is important to note that these aspects are not clear cut and the borders well defined, rather they overlap and actors can move in and out of them during their involvement and development as actors.

²⁸ *Superman is Dead’s* (SID), a Balinese popular punk band that signed to Sony and is frequently played on MTV, role in Bali is intriguing since as I mentioned above the community in Kuta is centred at the drummer in SID’s bar. Further the singer owns the shop next door and also a rehearsal studio. The convex aspect in Bali is thus dependent on SID in order to participate within the scene, thus their position is handled with care. To most convex punks I talked to in Bali SID’s music was detached from them as actors, thus placing them external to the scene as a band but within the scene as actors. They were never used as properties but never openly dismissed. As Karimun, a regular at the club told me “I don’t really like their new stuff, like it is a bit trendy, but they are great people”(Field notes Bali, Dec 27th 2004). Another example which captures how the convex punks are constantly negotiating their “punk-ness” in relation to the mainstream.

²⁹ I was told by a convex punk in Bandung; “the mainstream makes punk trendy and we hate the trend” (Field notes Bandung Jan 13th 2005). As Sarah Thornton notes; “[a]pproving reports in mass media like tabloids or television, however, are the subcultural kiss of death (...) coverage tend to lead to a quick abandonment of the key insignia of the culture” (1996:6). I agree to the point that this refers to the performance of these objects, not what they are perceived of as to signify. A band is endorsed because they are perceived as homologous to punk, if this band become trendy the band is abandoned, not the cultural framework which legitimated the use of the

band as a property. This is where John Clarke (1993) and Dick Hebdige (1988) goes wrong in claiming this defusion to be the end of the subculture as a whole.

³⁰ As Moore notes “All subcultures make distinctions between the genuine article and the Johnny-come-lately (...) The scene had to be “defended” from the moment it was built, even during the times when corporations and most young people had absolutely no interest in hardcore. Enemies and alien forces were needed from the start, and they could always be found in the form of sellouts and “poseurs,” bands which supposedly craved commercial success and spectators who only imitated “true” punks in their dress and demeanor” (2004:321)

³¹ As Lutfi, a Javanese concave punk points out “The real enemies are the major labels and the clothing companies, the mainstream that exploits the scene (...) 15 years ago it wasn’t a problem it became with SID and ska, before still enemy though because they were still a part of the system, with the major labels people can, we were opposed the capitalist system and major labels were a part of that system (...) diy is very important in Indonesia (...) now punk includes distros, politics and all the different aspect, punk is a whole, not just music (...) it would be better if no punk was mainstream” (Interview, Bali Jan 7th 2005)

Similar to Camunk, Lutfi thus addresses the mainstream in terms of internal issues as exploited by the mainstream. The mainstream is convex punk bands such as SID. This interpretation is further legitimised in terms of something bigger, punk is described as a whole.

³² In Bali sponsors frequently littered the crowd with give-aways in the shape of stickers, and shirts which attracted a lot of Balinese non-punks to these shows.

³³ This is further mirrored in the Balkot punks’ setting up of a small punk market on the stairs of the city hall, every Saturday where cassette tapes, photocopied fanzines, and books from everywhere in the world are traded. Further as this is a merely a feature of the bi-weekly gatherings this exchange is closed off to non-participants, which enhances its private character. To consume you must participate. Hence the consumption of properties is kept privately as it is entirely within the own aspect of the scene. The PI-punks’ sites for consumption, on the other hand and similar to the Kuta punks, are almost as public as their meeting space. Small distros that sell punk shirts, records, boots, fanzines etc. but also surf- and skate brands, and other objects produced outside the scene. This way even if the distro, just as their gathering place, is occupied by the punks, the boarder to the outside is not spatially accentuated as not only punks visit these distros as their clothes are directed beyond the scene.

³⁴ I am merely speaking in relational terms here since the visual performance is of course important when it comes to positioning the actor within the hierarchical structure of the own aspect of the scene, however even though this is the case this distinction within the own aspect is less radical in comparison to that within the convex aspect. For further reading how this internal distinction within the own aspect of the scene is carried out see E. Hannerz (2004).

³⁵ Similarly the small concave aspect in Bali also expressed their devotion to the scene in the same manner as opposed to the numerous mohawks and tattoos within the convex aspect in Kuta.

³⁶ As I have previously argued (E. Hannerz 2004), properties, as opposed to Bourdieu’s (1986) notion of capital, are temporary in their nature, they are flexible in the sense that they can be abandoned if not deemed homologous to the actor’s interpretation of the themes of if these interpretations change as the actor re-imagines how to perform punk. It might seem strange to argue that tattoos are temporary, but the point is how they are performed. In this case tattoos exist as consumed properties but they are not performed as an object of distinction rather this refusal to perform them is a performance in itself as it marks a distinction from the convex aspect of the scene. Similar to this is the example above regarding Lull’s (2002) example of Maoris and hip-hop, where the socio-economic situation is performed as properties homologous to hip-hop, while it is easy to imagine a socio-economic situation not being performed as homologous to hip-hop if this would questioned the actor’s authenticity. For example being a white, middle-class, university student.

³⁷ For an excellent study on Straight Edge and its development in the US see Woods (1999), see also Andersen & Jenkins (2003)

³⁸ The Denpasar-punks for example consumed alcohol, and in Lund, Sweden there is a convex aspect which is Straight Edge as opposed to Swedish youths’ excessive alcohol use. It can also be used as properties to claim a distinct position within the hierarchical structure of the own aspect.

³⁹ The drawing of an ‘X’ on one or both hands is derived from the bouncers’ marking of minors at all-ages shows in the US, to prevent them from drinking, as they then were easily noticed. This was later appropriated by Straight Edge punks, in legal age or not, to signal that they did not desire to drink at all (Andersen & Jenkins (2003).

⁴⁰ As the following Hadith – a story about the life and practices of the prophet Muhammed used as a normative example of how a Muslim should conduct his or her everyday life – states: “Allah’s Apostle (...) cursed her who tattoos and her who gets tattooed” (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 34, Number 440).

⁴¹ Pickles (2001:49) notes how the Indonesian reality show *Patroli*, in documenting the shooting of a drug dealer by the police, focused on his tattooed chest as it was revealed by the police.

⁴² Misno, a streetpunk I hung out with a lot who had tattoos on his arms, chest, legs and neck told me that one reason that he did not live at home was that he feared his mother would have a heart attack if she noticed his tattoos, since she was a dedicated Muslim and did not approve of tattoos. Therefore he had chosen to live in the streets or sometimes at some friend's place. However whenever he went to see his mother, to get some money or just to visit her, he always covered his tattoos with a long sleeved turtleneck shirt and kept it on during the whole visit. I asked him if this was not extremely warm, but he told me it was worth it, he loved his mother very much. I then asked him how long he had been doing this and he answered, that maybe for ten, fifteen years! This was later confirmed by his friends who told me the same story. Another punk told me how he had slept in abandoned car for three months because he could not stand his parents complaining about his mohawk, when he got tired of living in the car, he shaved off his mohawk and returned home.

⁴³ The connection to Goffman's (1959) concept of backstage and frontstage is too obvious to neglect, however I rather not use them. Front, according to Goffman (1959:135), are the parts of the performance that appear in a general and fixed way, involving the setting and the stage props. The front region is the place where a specific performance takes place or is about to. According to Goffman the setting is usually fixed so that the performance that need the setting for their performance usually have to arrive at the specific place in order to initiate the performance and then terminate the performance when they exit the place. While backstage constitutes the area concealed parts of actor's performance make their appearance, and the actor can relax and improve the personal front (1959:114-5, 132). This is the problem with Goffman since this, similar to Bourdieu (1984), signals that performances are determined by the setting, instead I argue that the scene is not limited in space, and as such there cannot be a front or a backstage, as long as there is at least two actors who adhere to the themes this a performance within the scene, thus two punks in a mosque dressed in a more accepted way is still part of a performance of punk.

⁴⁴ And indeed there is none, since it is performed.

⁴⁵ The Clash was also sometimes mentioned as well as Rancid, however both these bands are similar to Sex Pistols, Ramones, and Green Day as they were appropriated through mass media. As such these are also convex bands.

⁴⁶ For more on these bands relation to an external mainstream see Savage (2001), Arnold (1999) and Bessman (1993)

⁴⁷ Kontrovers, the band mentioned by Camunk, is a concave punk band from Malmö, Sweden.

⁴⁸ Thus we cannot, as Thornton (1997) does, speak of a "subcultural capital" in analysing and theorizing punk, the use of objects of distinction within the scene are performed as to signal the actor's position and how he or she perceives the themes of the scene. Since punk means an ongoing negotiation, a process, this performance is not fixed, it is ever changing as the actors seek to gain higher positions or defend achieved ones, thus these objects that are used to signal this position differs as well.

⁴⁹ Again this is problem with Bourdieu since his notion (1986) of field merely recognizes a connection to a specific local context.

⁵⁰ Indeed, this is where Bourdieu (1986) goes wrong in arguing that the field consists of pretenders and the orthodoxy. The pretenders are seen as pretenders to the throne which signals an objective development. What I am questioning is whether all pretenders can be said to aim for the orthodoxy; I suggest that this can be a goal in itself.

⁵¹ As Camunk told me about fanzines before the arrival of internet "those sort of thing were only acquired by people who could afford it, those rich kids, their parents were diplomats and went abroad and brought things. However the distribution of those kinds of mediums was only revolved around those elites." (Interview, Bandung Jan 19th 2005)

⁵² Similarly O'Connor writes that: "In a society where much emphasis is placed on dressing neatly, punks stand out by their use of brightly coloured patches on their pants and jackets (...) How should the exuberance of Mexican patches be explained? A little reflection suggests that it is an inexpensive way of altering clothing (...) But more careful observation in Mexico City shows that silkscreen equipment is easily available and quite widely used outside the punk scene for printing t-shirts, posters, business cards etc." (2004:231) This remark, I argue, captures the problem with focusing on the local in explaining punk. According to me O'Connor has already answered his question by stating that the "punks stand out by their use of brightly coloured patches". However since he claims this to be dependent on a Mexican habitus (sic!) he seeks the answer in the Mexican tradition of using silk screen prints. This, I argue, is an example of making thin description, of missing the forest in focusing on the trees. Similarly Pickles' argues that a "symbiosis of alternative culture and alternative politics was inevitable in a system which defines culture in political terms" (2001:33) would explain the rise of anarcho-syndicalism among punks in Bandung. Both O'Connor and Pickles thus neglect the impact of a global elsewhere and the cultural framework which provides actions with meaning. If local culture defines what punk is meant to express, then how to explain that patches are used by punks in South East Asia and Scandinavia as well, and that the concave actors I have encountered in these areas are anarcho-syndicalists. Is

this merely a coincidence? No, I would argue since these previous attempts to capture punk are not investigating how meaning is created. Consequently they cannot explain the development of punk. I agree with Pickles that in a society where alternative culture is seen as a threat it might be deemed subversive, but this in no way explains the rise of anarchist politics, something which, I was repeatedly told by both punks and anarchists, did not exist in Indonesia prior to the emergence of punk. The appearance of radical politics within the Indonesian scene was something inevitable since these have existed within aspects of the global punk scene since the late 70s – with the emergence of Crass and anarcho-punk in the UK – and since the means to communicate these ideas internally existed within the Indonesian manifestation of the scene with the existence of PE since at least 1997.

⁵³ In these fanzines t-shirts, pins and stickers can either be ordered through the advertisements of punk labels, or be copied and manufactured locally as there was an access to band logos and other prints. Another major feature is properties in the shape of information and rumours about bands and actors, myths, and politics.

⁵⁴ Baulch (2003) does however note how the impact of the Javanese scene provided the Balinese punks in the mid 90's with a "more developed modes of cultural production" (2003:154) as the punk aesthetics of mohawks, chains and studded leather jackets were introduced on the island by Javanese punk bands. Thus the means how to imagine punk increased as a wider set of properties was introduced. But this increase mostly referred to a convex interpretation as it focused on a visual performance of punk, it had little effect on how to imagine the themes differently.

Concluding remarks

⁵⁵ However, this must not be taken as a cultural determinism. My point is that we must understand culture to analyse it. In this case the FBI-agents would have to free themselves from their own cultural framework and open up the culture in which the crime is committed. You do not have to be a Navajo to solve crime within the reserve, but you would have to understand how actions are given their meaning.

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Appendix

1. Interview guide

Background

Tell me about yourself

Age, education, occupation,

Where were you born, where do you live now

Contact with parents, teachers

Punk

What does punk mean to you?

When and how did you get in contact with punk, what attracted you

Has the meaning of punk changed for you over the years

How did your family react, how did you react to their reaction

What is not punk, has that changed

What is mainstream?

Has this changed over the years for you

Who defines what is mainstream,

How do you learn more about punk?

Has this changed

How do you get access to these channels

Describe the scene for me

Differences

Has this changed

Describe your style

Is it important what you wear

From where do you get clothes

Tattoos, Piercings

Has this changed

Is your style a problem for your family and neighbourhood

If so, how do you solve this

Religious limits

Do you go to ceremonies, if so how are you dressed

Has this changed

2. Photos



1. Poster for convex show in Bali, note sponsors



2. Poster for a convex show in Bandung, note sponsors



3. Poster for a concave show in Bandung, with two Malaysian bands and no sponsors



4. Bali convex punks, hanging out just outside the club in Kuta.



5. Convex punk at the PI, hotel entrance in background



6. Balkot-punks gathering outside the City Hall



7. Balinese convex punk



8. PI-punk decked out in the middle of the street



9. The use of the X as is in Straight Edge by the concave aspect in Bandung.



10. The Balkot sets up a trading space for fanzines, books, music etc at a show in Bandung