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PUNK SPACE IN BANDUNG, INDONESIA: EVASION AND CONFRONTATION

JIM DONAGHEY & FRANS ARI PRASETYO

Figure 1: Reclaims The Stairs Collective 'Reclaim the Studio' gig, 2007. Archive collection, Frans Ari Prasetyo.

PUNK SPACE IN BANDUNG, INDONESIA: EVASION AND CONFRONTATION

Punk activism and punk space in Bandung

Bandung is home to a vibrant punk scene and was historically a primary site of transmission of punk to Indonesia in the late 1980s. Bandung punk bands and collectives boast numerous connections with the global punk scene, and the scene has been a focus for numerous academic researchers (see for example Martin-Iverson 2017; Saefullah 2017; Pickles 2007; Hannerz 2013; Moog and Bandung Pyrate Punx 2019; and, indeed, Prasetyo 2017; Donaghey 2016). In common with scenes across Indonesia, punks in Bandung have been involved with various forms of activism, most often informed by anarchism. Punks in Bandung were actively involved in the opposition movement against the New Order regime in the 1990s, especially with *Front Anti Fasis* (FAF – Anti-Fascist Front). The impact of this resistance persists in the subcultural memory of Bandung and was a key moment in the punk community's development of 'a critical narrative' (Prasetyo 2017: 193). It has been argued that the politicization fomented around the anti-Suharto movement 'has not been sustained into the post-*Reformasi* period', and that 'a neoliberal, entrepreneurial approach to punk independence has come to the fore' (Martin-Iverson 2014a: 185). This was arguably evident in the spike in popularity of punk-run 'distro' shops in the late 2000s, but as Wilson notes 'with every move towards punk's co-optation, a counter-movement focused upon keeping punk "true" to its antiauthoritarian and anti-commercial roots continued' (2013: 3). And in terms of punk activism, opposition to neo-liberalism, has, in fact, been a key focus. Martin-Iverson himself notes that '[p]olitically-active punks have been influenced by the resurgence of the Indonesian labour movement', and that 'Indonesian punks also participate in class-oriented political action, from solidarity with striking workers to participating in May Day demonstrations' (2014b: 3). The May Day events are a visible focus of punk and anarchism across Indonesia, and have become a key site of conflict with the authorities – in Bandung in 2019, police 'arrested 619 protesters [out of an estimated 1000 participants] for vandalism and destruction of public property' (Needle 'n' Bitch 2019: 11).

Despite the hopes for a restructuring of society, neo-liberalism (and neo-colonialism) have been accelerated in post-*Reformasi* Indonesia, with 'privatization and greater penetration by global corporations' under the veil of 'democratization' (Katsiaficas 2013: 353). A pertinent example is the eviction of urban *kampongs* (villages), which Springer identifies as an outcome of '[t]he far-reaching promotion and adoption of free

market economics' that has 'produced conditions of globalized urban entrepreneurialism' (2016: 234). Smith notes that the 'dramatic shifts affecting gentrifying neighbourhoods are experienced as intensely local […] Yet the processes and forces shaping the new urbanism are global as much as local' and argues that the 'gentrification frontier is also an "imperial frontier"' (1996: 28, citing Koptiuch 1991: 87–89). The *Forum Solidaritas Melawan Penggusuran* (Solidarity Forum Resisting Eviction) in Tamansari, Bandung, highlight exactly this neo-liberal and neo-colonial motivation behind the ongoing 'land grab' by the city government, as well as identifying it as an extension of Suharto-era corruption:

> With a total of 659 land conflicts in 2017 […] development […] has now become a regime that works no differently from the New Order regime […] [It] is hatched from the same system launched by Cendana [Suharto's former presidential residence] and cronies, oligarchs and predators […] the current regime is also eager to carry out the mandate of global capitalism which requires primitive accumulation […] as well as the task of carrying out the mandate of the World Bank [through the KoTaKu 'City Without Slums' project]. (2018: 5)

Tamansari, in Bandung, is one such threatened *kelurahan* (urban administrative unit made up of several kampongs), and the involvement of punks, anarchists and squatters in the campaign to resist the eviction there will be discussed in detail below.

As Debies-Carl highlights, 'punk subculture […] through [its] alternative interests and associated spatial tactics […] provide[s] a source of resistance to the social and spatial dominance of neoliberal capitalism' (2014: 12). Squatting holds the most prominent spatial association with punk and has played an important role in punk's history elsewhere in the world. Van der Steen et al. emphasize 'the link between radical politics and subculture', arguing that in both 'squatted houses' and 'rented social centres […] the focus on […] youth and alternative lifestyles remains a constant' – they identify punk as a key example (2014: 8). In many international contexts squats provide infrastructure for punk gigs while emphasizing the political aspects of punk, both as spaces in opposition to private property/ capitalism and as bases for activism – though legally rented 'social centres' also fulfil this latter role where squatting is less viable, and this is the case for Rumah Pirata. Historically, punk in Indonesia has not had a strong connection with squatting, though punk-associated activist groups such as FAF, and the subsequent *Jaringan Anti Fasis Nusantara* (JAFNUS – the Archipelago Anti-Fascist Network) did squat buildings as part of their activist campaigns (see Donaghey 2016), and the contemporary resistance movement in Tamansari has inherited this activist punk squat focus.

Hangouts have been a key aspect of punk space in Bandung, with the idea of 'claiming space' at its core. Some hangouts have become established over a period of

prolonged use, such as 'PI' which has been described as a variation on a 'Reclaim the Streets' action, emphasizing the political significance of this publicly visible occupation of space. Similarly, Martin-Iverson notes that the BalKot Collective's weekly gathering on the steps of Bandung's City Hall 'adopts the name "Reclaim the Stairs" as a reference to the Reclaim the Streets movement – there is a self-consciousness to their appropriation of government space' (2014a: 8). 'Distros' are another key example of punk space in Indonesia. These punk shops initially emerged as an outgrowth of particular hangouts, based on DIY production and distribution practices. However, with the rapid proliferation of distros across the archipelago in the 2000s, there was a sense of co-optation by neo-liberal entrepreneurialism in what Martin-Iverson describes as 'the gentrification of punk spaces' (2014a: 9). The distro bubble has popped in the last decade – Prasetyo notes that there are about twenty distros remaining in Bandung from a highpoint of 'about 500 in 2010' (2017: 203). It is notable that the distros that have survived are those more focused on DIY production (as opposed to the profit-focused entrepreneurs) and those that function as meeting places and activist information points (or 'infoshops').

Of all punk spaces, those 'where punk music is performed are the most important locations for the subculture' (Debies-Carl 2014: 12). Historically, increased cultural freedom in the declining years of the New Order dictatorship in the 1990s was manifested in Bandung in large-scale punk gigs held primarily in the government-owned sports hall, known as GOR Saparua. After 2003, when GOR Saparua became untenable as a venue, gigs were held in small café venues as more exclusive events, and the scene fragmented into particular subgenre scenes. In response to this lack of autonomous space and the prohibitive expense of hiring private venues, Frans Prasetyo established 'IF Venue' in May 2004 as an alternative space dedicated to 'Music, Art and Literacy'. This was very consciously a 'punk space', as exemplified by the benefit gig under the moniker 'SpaceAid' in 2006. However, this particular event led to IF Venue's eviction, with more than 1000 people attending a venue with a capacity of 150 – the crowds spilling into surrounding streets attracted unwelcome police attention, and after IF's closure, 'it was noted that the Bandung police became more aggressive towards the punkers' activities' (Prasetyo 2017: 198). Harassment and extortion of bribes by police was already a problem for gig organizers, and to evade this, some gigs were organized surreptitiously with dissemination of the location by word-of-mouth, further augmenting the sense of exclusivity that had already emerged with the fragmentation of the scene, 'resulting in an increased perception of elitism' (Prasetyo 2017: 198). The difficulties of organizing gigs were further compounded in the wake of the Asia Africa Cultural Centre tragedy (February 2008), in which eleven people died in a crush at a metal gig, leading to further

Figure 2: Rumah Pirata, featuring squat motif. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo (2016).

restrictions, especially for 'underground' events. Other responses to restrictions have included organizing gigs in surrounding cities nearby, or, more controversially, punk gigs have been held at military bases, but this remains particularly problematic for anarchist punks in Bandung, as discussed below.

Rumah Pirata – 'Come Under the Radar'

> *Alternatif hidup, milik kita* (Alternative life, belongs to us)
> *Perlawanan ini, selamanya* (This struggle, it is forever)
> *Punk ... Anarkia !!!* (Punk … Anarchy!!!)
> (Kontrasosial, 'Punk Anarkia', 2005)

Rumah Pirata (Pirate House) takes its name from the Bandung Pyrate Punx Collective who established and run the space. The international 'Pirate Punk' phenomenon has its roots in the United States, with the Bandung Collective forming from the earlier 'PI' Collective (associated with the PI hangout mentioned above) after a Pirate Punk visited Indonesia from the United States in 2006. Rumah Pirata is also strongly influenced by the European squat punk scene, evidenced by posters from prominent squats such as Köpi in Berlin on the walls, and the use of the squat motif in artwork (see Figure 2). This influence comes directly from two Bandung Pyrate Punx bands, Krass Kepala and

Kontrasosial, who toured in Europe in 2010, playing numerous squat gigs, and were then motivated to bring the collective house idea back to Bandung (Donaghey 2016).

To obfuscate police attention, Bandung Pyrate Punx historically publicized the venue for their gigs as *'Klub Racun'* (Poison Club), with the actual location disseminated by word-of-mouth. Police harassment during this period was a serious problem, with numerous gigs being shut down. Gigs and other public events in Indonesia require a permit from the local police, who ask for details including which bands are playing and the lyrics that will be sung. The consequences of this are obviously repressive and censoring. Even if a license is acquired, the gig will be plagued by police seeking bribes, on the threat of shutting down the gig. As mentioned above some promoters evade police harassment by holding gigs on the numerous military bases in Bandung, because the police cannot enter those spaces. Punk gigs at army bases are very problematic from an anarchist perspective since the army is an especially oppressive arm of the state, and in the militarist/oligarchical context of Indonesia the military is also heavily involved in government. Yet, the other option is to use a commercial venue and ask permission from the police, then face police extortion anyway – neither offers much in terms of autonomy. The obfuscation of 'Klub Racun' successfully limited the interference of the police to some extent, but gig organizers were still beholden to private venue hire costs, and there was always a chance that the police might show up anyway. Also in this evasive vein, Bandung Pyrate Punx have hosted twelve 'Libertad Fests' in remote mountain areas on or on far-flung islands in the Java Sea, but even the Libertad Fests have not completely succeeded in escaping the police – for example, during the 2015 Fest, despite its remote island location, police arrived *by boat* to extort bribes.

Rumah Pirata, then, represents an extension of this evasive strategy, limiting police harassment by being at a distance from the city, avoiding private venue hire costs (though paying rent to a landlord), and providing a sustainable focal point for punk and activist organizing. The first manifestation of Rumah Pirata (2011–15) was a collective living space, but did not function as a venue, being too small and in a densely populated area of the city. The 'new' Rumah Pirata was established in 2015 and is located outside of Bandung city centre in the surrounding mountains. This location has the benefit of a relatively cool climate, but also means the area is sparsely populated and the rent is cheap, and they are (usually) beyond the reach of the Bandung police, who are, as highlighted above, very repressive towards punks. Rumah Pirata has a workspace, sleeping room and other multi-purpose spaces and the collective engage in 'forms of activism through film screenings, Food Not Bombs events […] a free open-market (*Lapak Gratis*) and a library' (Moog and Bandung Pyrate Punx 2019: n.pag.).

Figure 3: Rumah Pirata. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo (2016).

The gig venue at Rumah Pirata is called Klub Racun, in homage to the precursor police obfuscation tactic, and is housed in the same ex-military medical tent that was used to host Libertad Fests. There is also a distro called 'Perompak' (Pirates) which sells cassettes, CDs, records, patches, t-shirts and hats.

The building that has become Rumah Pirata is a residential house (see Figure 3). Pepper Glass, discussing a Pirate House occupied by a Pirate Punx chapter in the United States, points to a remarkably similar process of transforming a 'normal' house into a 'Pirate House': 'members established a space in a marginal area [...] they transformed the space by adding punk symbols, as well as holding punk events [...] [and] they managed the boundaries of the space' (2012: 699). Examples of 'punk symbols' and slogans that adorn Rumah Pirata include the (anarchist) circled-A, the ACAB slogan (All Cops Are Bastards), Antifa (anti-fascist) Action (see Figure 4), and Steve Moog's photo-zine of Rumah Pirata features an anti-police mural titled 'Evolution of Pigs' by the Pena Hitam Collective (2019: n.pag.).

Figure 4: Klub Racun (roof of the tent). Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2015.

Figure 5: Banner inside Klub Racun. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2015.
Figure 6: Screenprinted poster depicting Rumah Pirata. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2016.

The 'politics' of the Bandung Pyrate Punx are inscribed in these adornments, and this extends to explicitly stating the expected norms of behaviour within the space. A banner in Klub Racun reads, 'here there are: no sexists, no racists, no fascists, no homophobes, no xenophobes' (see Figure 5) – the phrasing is problematic in that it suggests an *already achieved* overcoming of the oppressive norms inherited from

Figure 7: Runtah at Klub Racun, 27 August 2018. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2018.

Figure 8: Krass Kepala at Klub Racun 30 June 2018. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2018

Figure 9: Poster for fundraiser gig in solidarity with Rumah Api, Kuala Lumpur, September 2015.

Figure 10: Poster for fundraiser gig in solidarity with victims of the Palu tsunami disaster, October 2018.

mainstream society, but this may be a translation issue rather than a false sense of perfectly enacted equality. Gigs held in Klub Racun are organized on an entirely DIY basis – '[n]ot to be bought, not to be sold […]. There are no corporate sponsors, no advertisements, just true independence' (Moog and Bandung Pyrate Punx 2019: n.pag.) – and complementing their anti-capitalist production politics, gigs are often fundraising activities in solidarity with similar initiatives (for example, following the violent eviction of Rumah Api in Kuala Lumpur in 2015 [see Figure 9]) or to help people affected by natural disasters (such as in the wake of the tsunami that affected Palu in Sulawesi in 2019 [see Figure 10]). The spatial aspect of these gigs is also key – in addition to the practical advantages of evading police and 'predatory capitalists' (Moog and Bandung Pyrate Punx 2019: n.pag.), Glass notes the importance of *ownership*, '[p]articipants preferred the […] Pirate House (*their* space) to hearing this music in a more "legitimate" venue (*someone else's* space)' (2012: 703, original emphasis).

Evasion of police repression (and attendant bribe extortion) remains a prime concern for Bandung Pyrate Punx. Gig posters often feature '1312' (a numerically rendered version of ACAB [All Cops Are Bastards]), and, despite being essentially public events, no venue address is given – some posters stipulate that prospective attendees will need to 'ask a punk'. This protective process of gate keeping their space ensures that people who come to gigs will have some connection with the collective or the wider scene. However, the safety that comes with managing the boundaries of the space in this way also makes gigs exclusive (i.e. exclusionary) – as Glass puts it, they are

'flirting between control and openness' (2012: 708). As discussed above, this carries the risk of 'ghettoization', as will be discussed in more detail below.

Tamansari – Tolak Rumah Deret (Reject the Housing Development)

> *Kami terusir dari tanah* (We were driven from the land)
> *Tanah yang kami rawat sendiri* (Land that we took care of ourselves)
> *Terusir dari tanah sendiri* (Expelled from our own land)
> (Eviction, 'Terusir di Tanah Sendiri', 2016)

Reerink describes Tamansari, located in the north of Bandung city centre, as 'a settlement of precarious substandard buildings, suffering from a lack of adequate infrastructure and proper access to public services, and tends to be rather informal in terms of land tenure and land use' (2015: 193). Echoing patterns of urban gentrification across the world, kampong areas of Bandung city centre are being violently evicted, and subsequently demolished to make way for commercial 'development' under the auspices of the *'Kota Tanpa Kumuh'* programme (KoTaKu – City Without Slums, 2016–21, funded by loans from the World Bank, Islamic Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank), and in the Bandung context 121 kampongs are at threat under the 'Rumah Deret' (RuDet) residential settlement scheme. This is portrayed by the Bandung government as providing new housing for the current residents of Tamansari, but the Bandung Urban Land Use Plan (Kota Bandung 2011) reveals that luxury apartments are to be built. As Hartman points out, 'forced displacement is most often a severely damaging experience' (1984 in Lees et al. 2010: 531), and specifically in the Indonesian context, Eddyono et al. point to impacts such as 'insecurity, losing homes, working places and sources of livelihood, and the vanish[ing] of relations and social cohesion […] in the community' (2017: 16).

Tamansari originated as '*garapan*' land (Reerink 2015: 187), with ownership rights deriving from customary law as a result of opening and cultivating the land. Kampongs historically enjoyed significant autonomy during the colonial period, and despite efforts by successive colonizer and Indonesian regimes, governments have never 'succeeded in exercising effective control over kampongs' (Reerink 2015: 194). This lack of control is officially recognized in the regional government's designation of these kampongs as 'informal slums' (Departemen Pekerjaan Umum 1999 in Reerink 2015: 211), and the residents are stigmatized as 'illegal citizens'. As discussed above, kampong evictions are a manifestation of 'neo-liberal urbanism' (Smith 2002 in Lees et al. 2010: 495). This 'gentrification portends a displacement of working-class residents from urban centres' (Smith 2002 in Lees et al. 2010: 502), and in contexts such as Indonesia the 'lack [of] "proper" documentation that

Figure 11: Public discussion at Kampong Tamansari, 18 November 2018. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2018.

Figure 12: Eviction performing at Kampong Tamansari, 22 October 2018. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2018.

Figure 13: Festival Kampong Kota, held at Kampong Dago Elos (2017). Kolektiva are on stage giving a political speech. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2017.

confers legitimacy on property' leads to a 'trampling of marginalized people […] through a negation of their ownership claims to long-held possessions' (Springer 2016: 236).

'Kampong improvement' is not new in Indonesia, and earlier colonial efforts to this end in the 1930s also 'led to gentrification: the lower income residents were forced out by incoming more well-to-do residents' (Reerink 2015: 199 citing Wertheim 1956: 179). Hudalah et al., discussing the 'peri-urban' context of Punclut to the north of Bandung, note that local residents are 'treated […] like pawns' because in 'state-sponsored gentrification, support from the local community is often required as a "political tool" to justify the realization of a project' (2016: 603). Such support has emphatically *not*

been achieved by the private developers or the state in Tamansari, where the community has mounted effective resistance. A section of the kampong was evicted and demolished under the mayorship of Ridwan Kamil in 2017, after which the kampong renamed itself Tamansari Melawan (Tamansari Resistance).

As Lees et al. highlight, 'in nearly every community experiencing gentrification, there is an enormous but latent reservoir of hidden resistance […] [an] enormous creativity and resilience of the people and groups trying to resist displacement' (2010: 526), with 'many potential allies in unexpected places' (2010: 528). Among the diverse set of allies in this case are the 'Street Library' collective, the Bandung Supporter Alliance (BSA – fans of Persib Bandung Football Club), and antifa groups, as well as the local anarchist and punk activists who have been actively involved with this struggle, setting up protest squats in evicted buildings, and hosting gigs and cultural! events in the ruins of demolished houses. As Barrett points out, 'Punks may be atypical community organizers, but they are activists nonetheless' (2013: 38), and a cultural and musical aspect has been highly prominent in the Tamansari campaign. Examples include the Harlah (Anniversary) Tamansari Festival in 2018, the Festival Kampong Kota (City) (2019 – the 2017 FKK was held at Kampong Dago Elos, see Figure 13), and the Tamansari Melawan (Resistance) Festival in 2018, that included 'screen printing, photo exhibits, merchandise stands, book stalls, live murals, music stages and free speech platforms' (Militansi 2018: 27). Around 60 bands and groups have performed at Tamansari since 2017. The music featured at these events has been diverse, including hip-hop, jazz and neo-classical groups (Main 2018), but punk has been closely associated with this culturally focused resistance, with long-established Bandung Punk bands such as Jeruji and Turtles Jr. playing at the 2017 Festival Kampong Kota, along with more recent bands such as Masturbasi Distorsi (folk punk), Eviction (experimental doomy neo-crust) and Senartogok (folk pop-punk), who have adopted Tamansari as a 'homebase'. Musicians associated with the Tamansari struggle, and other local campaigns to protect kampongs from eviction, have also released several fundraising compilation albums (*Pustakan Nada Masa Kini* 2014, *Organize: Benefit Compilation for Community Empowerment* 2017, *Durma Kota* 2018). These CD compilations are accompanied by booklets containing articles on the anti-gentrification struggle, as well as interviews with communities building participatory initiatives for city residents.

As discussed above, occupations of 'punk space' are usually understood in explicitly anarchist terms, and in the case of Tamansari Melawan, with its direct confrontation against the capitalist and state 'developers', this is in sharp focus – circled-a motifs are
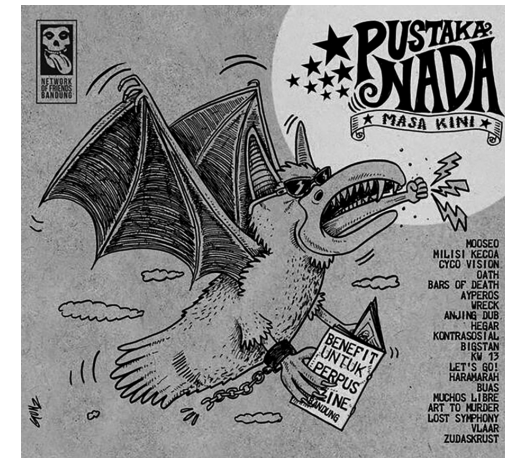

Figure 14: Benefit compilation (2014), Pustaka Nada Masa Kini, Network of Friends-Perpustakaan Jalanan Bandung.

Figure 15: Benefit compilation (2016), Organize! – Benefit Compilation For Community Empowerment, Grimlock Records.

prominent among the graffiti on the ruins of the demolished houses (see Figures 16 and 17). However, while the anarchist principle of direct action is clearly manifested in the squatting actions and physical resistance (including the immobilization of a developer's digger), the campaign to resist gentrification in Tamansari has been multi-pronged. This has involved cultivating connections with the local mosque, including the commissioning of a study into the ethics of 'Land Grabbing' from an Islamic perspective (Militansi 2018: 28) – indeed mosques hold 'valuable cultural significance as places where, traditionally, the authority of the state could be challenged' (Culton and Holtzman 2010: 271, citing Tétreault 1993). There has also been a legal challenge to the eviction, with a lawsuit brought against Bandung city's government (Militansi 2018: 28), and at the supra-state level the campaign has also appealed to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to argue for a 'Human-Friendly City' approach to urban development in Bandung (Militansi 2018: 28). This diverse range of tactics (and the diverse alliances discussed above) has formed the groundwork for widespread public support for the Tamansari Resistance campaign. As Hartman (1984) suggests, this supportive response is significant because it indicates that 'common sense and common decency about meeting people's housing needs may transcend formal, legal precepts regarding ownership of property' (in Lees et al. 2010: 540).

Urban kampongs under threat of eviction have become landscapes of battle between the communities that live there and the exploitative forces of private capital and their state backers. These spaces are intensely political and have become alternative spaces for punk performance and activism.
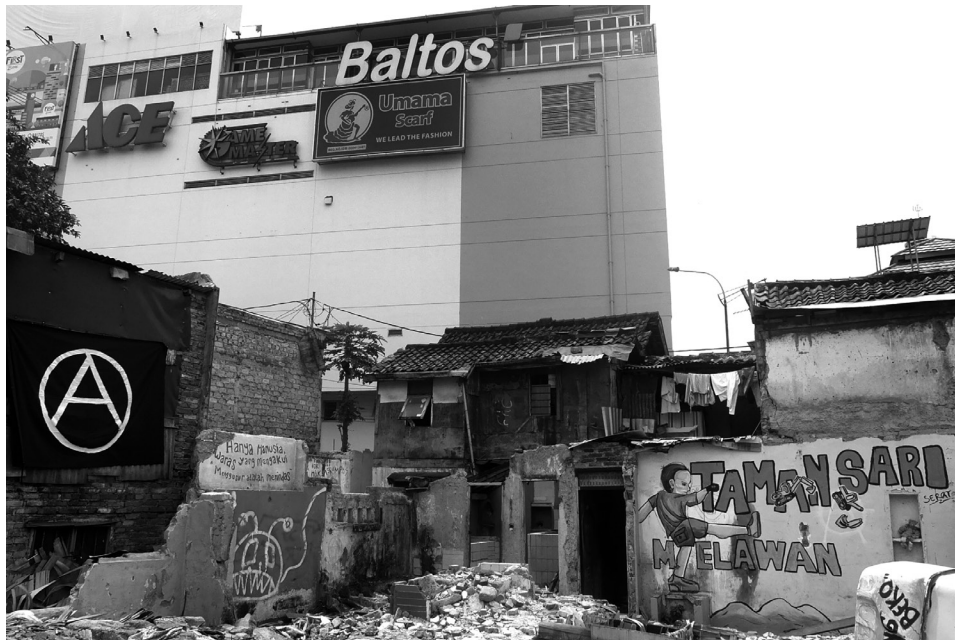
Figure 16: Demolished building in Tamansari Kampong, with the neighbouring Baltos shopping mall visible. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2018.

Discussion – Comparing punk strategies of evasion and confrontation

There are some clear overlaps between the activities of Rumah Pirata and Tamansari Melawan squatters in terms of their punk and anarchist grounding, and indeed, they are both part of the larger solidarity network in Bandung, with some overlap in membership between the Pyrate Punx and the Tamansari Resistance movement. However, there are also significant differences in their strategies: Rumah Pirata is a legally rented space, situated away from Bandung city centre in an effort to evade police repression; the punks of Tamansari Melawan are 'illegal' protest squatters, hosting music events as outreach activities in a pointedly confrontational context. The Pyrate Punx take great care over gate keeping access to 'public' events at Rumah Pirata; while the Tamansari campaign actively networks with a diverse range of local community groups and tries to engage the wider public as much as possible. These differences speak to some key tensions around the autonomy of legally rented spaces versus 'illegally' squatted spaces, and tensions between exclusivity and openness in punk spaces.

The explicitly political spatiality of Tamansari Melawan has been described above. Squats' illegality imbues them with an intrinsic confrontational value – Colin Ward describes squatting as a key model of 'anarchy in action' (in Honeywell 2011: 141). In the case of Tamansari Melawan, this anarchist grounding is sharpened in the

Figure 17: Graffiti on the ruins of buildings in Tamansari Kampong. Left reads 'The country is a slave to capitalism'. Photograph by Frans Ari Prasetyo 2018.

context of an urban kampong in confrontation with the state and capitalist 'developers' – as Zukin puts it, when residents mobilize to resist development 'they really confront the whole set of economic and social processes that underlie "development"' (1987, in Lees et al. 2010: 222). The class dimension of this struggle is also crucial, as Smith argues, 'the struggle over the use and production of space is heavily inscribed by social class' (1996: 89), or more succinctly, referencing a protest banner in 1980s New York: 'GENTRIFICATION IS CLASS WAR!' (1996: 3).

The Squatters and Homeless Autonomy (SHA) Collective in London argue that squatting engenders an '[o]ppositional self-identity [...] [which] continues to make squatting a threat to cultural power' by adding to 'larger cultures of resistance' (SHA Collective Communiqué 2015: n.pag.), and the cultural aspect of the Tamansari mobilization is paramount, as highlighted above, with punk at the core of this cultural activism. In 'traditional' understandings of urban gentrification, artists and musicians are the harbingers of shifting class demographics (Smith 1996), but this has not been the case in Tamansari, with punks and other cultural activists joining the struggles of the local community as unambiguous allies.

With punk's anarchist-informed politics and history of squatting, it is perhaps no surprise that Bandung punks are embroiled in the Tamansari Resistance campaign.

Barrett characterizes punk itself as 'a form of direct action', especially in its building of an 'elaborate network of counter-institutions, including music venues', which he argues are 'sites of resistance to the privatizing agenda of neo-liberalism […] [in] an intense […] struggle to maintain autonomous cultural spaces' (2013: 23–24). Rumah Pirata is also part of this struggle for spatial autonomy, but as a legally rented space, it does not share Tamansari Melawan squatters' intrinsic confrontation with property and capital. Rumah Pirata may pay rent to a private landlord, but, a crucial aspect for *both* squats and legally rented spaces is how they are used. Many of the functions of legally rented spaces are indistinguishable from those of squatted spaces in terms of the types of events held and the behavioural norms that are expected within their walls. So it can be queried whether 'legality' marks 'a retreat from the anti-capitalist struggle' *or* is in fact is 'a tactical advance' (Needle Collective and Bash Street Kids 2014: 167). The 'retreat from the anti-capitalist struggle' is clear enough in reproducing capitalist norms of private property by paying rent, while the 'tactical advance' here can be recognized in the benefits of a permanent and stable organizing base and an autonomous space for DIY punk performance.

A criticism levelled against legally occupied spaces is that they are hypocritically cooperating with state institutions that they profess to oppose, but squats' 'illegal' status does not free them from state interference. Squatters are often busily preoccupied with court cases and legal appeals to protect their spaces, and indeed Tamansari Melawan's multi-pronged campaign includes a court case, engagement with the local mosque and appeals to supra-national institutions. So the legal status of a punk space is not actually *that* significant, so long as a strong sense of opposition is maintained – and both Rumah Pirata and Tamansari Melawan act as bases for activist organizing and networking, and as sites of politicization.

The tension between openness and exclusivity in punk spaces speaks to wider critiques (usually from within the anarchist movement) of punk as an elitist subculture that distracts from 'serious' activism, and punk squats are bound up with this. Piotrowski, discussing squats in Poland, sums up the tensions between, 'the "subcultural ghetto" model (where the squat mainly serves a counter-cultural function for a specific group) and the "social centre" model (which is more focussed on politics and on mobilizing broad coalitions of people)' (2014: 242–43). The 'subculture' and 'specific group' in question is, usually, punk. Typifying this frame of critique, Ian Bone bemoans the 'anarcho-*ghetto* of endless squat gigs' in the United Kingdom in the 1980s (2006: 166, emphasis added), and Duncombe argues that while punk 'lambast[s] the powers that be […] [it] never ha[s] to confront power' (1997: 193). In the case of Bandung, this plays out somewhat differently, since the squatted context of Tamansari Melawan is in

direct confrontation with power in an intrinsic and conscious manner and seeks broad coalitions with the community, while also foregrounding the cultural (and punk) aspects of its activism. Despite their 'legal' status, the critique does resonate somewhat with Rumah Pirata, who do intentionally evade confrontation with the state, and part of that evasion involves exclusive gate keeping.

The critique of punk anarchism as exclusive and elitist is most acutely evident in attacks against the US-based anarchist group CrimethInc. (see Donaghey 2020). Critics focus-in on their 'dropping out' strategies, of which squatting is a prime example, denigrating their ideas as an 'individualist, selfish, and inchoate rebel ideology that eschews work, political organising, and class struggle' (Ryan n.d.: n.pag.). The evasive strategy of Bandung Pyrate Punx chimes with CrimethInc.'s ideas – indeed, CrimethInc.'s second book was titled *Evasion* (2002) – but speaking in defence of punk and punk spaces, CrimethInc. argue that the counter-culture serves as a 'sustainable space that nurtures long-term communities of resistance', and that it is often more effective for 'anarchists to invest themselves in ongoing outreach in a milieu of a manageable scale' (2009: 74). Rumah Pirata succeeds in being a long-term base for networking, activism and politicization by evading repression, and it is worth reminding of harsh the repression faced by punk scenes in Indonesia. Rumah Pirata may employ strategies that are open to accusations of elitism, but in this repressive context, safety and autonomy outweigh these issues. It is no small irony that the punks of Tamansari Melawan actually also succeed in evading police attention, because in the midst of this kampong eviction conflict the police do not dare enter the area, and the punks are able to exploit this situation to periodically turn the space into a punk venue. The long-term future of this space is, however, far from certain.

Postscript

On 12 December 2019, the uncertainty over Tamansari's future was given brutal clarity, with the violent eviction of the residents by state forces. As many as 1,260 officers, 'from the Public Order Agency (Satpol PP), military and the police' (Dipa 2019a: n.pag.) evicted residents with 'excessive use of force' (Mariska 2020: n.pag.). There were 25 arrests and the police's Mobile Brigade (Brimob) forcibly cleared residents and protestors with 'tear gas […] shields and batons' (Dipa 2019a: n.pag.) – 90 officers have already been charged with offences related to the eviction (Lazuardi 2019). People dressed in black, identified as 'anarkos' were particularly targeted with violence. This forced eviction took place just days before the expected ruling on the Tamansari land-dispute case by the Bandung Administrative Court on 19 December (perhaps unsurprisingly, they decided in favour of the Bandung administration [Dipa 2019b]). And, more goadingly still, the

eviction occurred just two days after 'an event commemorating International Human Rights Day' (The Star 2019: n.pag.) honouring Bandung as a 'Human Rights Friendly City' – calls have been made for the award to be revoked in the wake of the Tamansari eviction (*CNN Indonesia* 2019).

Some residents have been moved to temporary accommodation, at the government's expense, while the construction is underway (Dipa 2019a), but around 60 residents, including 20 children, have been 'forced to take shelter in a nearby mosque' (Mariska 2020). In addition to providing temporary shelter for residents, the mosque also hosted a public kitchen and functioned as a solidarity centre – punks and anarchists from Tamansari Melawan were actively engaged in this initiative. The People's Alliance Against Eviction (Aliansi Rakyat Anti Penggusuran – ARAP) mounted a protest at the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional) office in Jakarta. The violent eviction has prompted gestures of solidarity, with donations of money, food and clothing from various groups across Indonesia and beyond, and the social media tag #tamasarimelawan has been effective in widely sharing footage of the police brutality. The immediate impact on the Tamansari Resistance campaign is clearly disastrous, but the campaign's international media profile and ongoing court appeals may yet exert pressure on the state authorities to genuinely provide improved housing for the residents (as opposed to the feared gentrification engendered by building luxury flats in the area) – however, this would be a remarkable departure from the normal process of kampong clearance in Bandung to date.

Reflecting back on the comparison between Tamansari Melawan and Rumah Pirata above, this forced eviction in some senses vindicates Rumah Pirata's strategy of evasion as means to security and longevity. Tamansari Melawan has been a stirring example of opposition to private property and a direct confrontation with land-grabbing developers and the neo-liberal state, but the autonomy wrested through this resistance is revealed as temporary – not least in the shift from the police's previous trepidation about entering the area to an extreme show of violent force. Of course, it would be short-sighted to view the Tamansari eviction as a final defeat, and no doubt the politicizing effect on participants and observers has been substantial and will manifest in myriad forms in the future. Neither should the strategies of evasion and confrontation be seen as mutually exclusive, and in the wider context of ongoing struggles in Bandung, 'stable' or 'safe' spaces such as Rumah Pirata continue to nourish the counter-cultural networks of the city, and these networks underpin instances of confrontational resistance such as Tamansari Melawan.

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