Commons people: managing music and culture in contemporary Yogyakarta

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INTRODUCTION

Music is always *for* something. This research is about musicians, visual artists, music collectors, fans, curators, and cultural activists, participating in the popular discourse of music through relevant music activities. It narrates the stories of these people, with some of their music-based plans and initiatives. It also tells of the elaboration of the spaces where their work takes place. The implementation of the plans and initiatives occurs in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in an urban media infrastructure setting.

A diverse range of conversations about everyday music practices with the different people that I had during my fieldwork revolves around what they had done or were thinking about doing with their music. The conversations touched on different areas of music and culture: music opens up possible directions in advancing the people's questions and thoughts. In some occasions, the plans and initiatives emerged as visions, ideas, hopes, and aspirations. On other occasions, they appeared as doubts and anxieties. These sentiments, attached to the topics around distribution, income, archiving, musicians-fans relation, politics of performance, enriched the conversations that I had with the people during fieldwork. They formed a pattern of themes, and appeared in different conversations, with different people. Their stories would be remembered, because in our subsequent meetings, they would be mentioned again. Each encounter led me to the production of stories; it is the stories, which they had always thought about for a long period. This gives a sense that it is part of an ongoing matter that needs to be dealt with.

Small asserts that "to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing) or dancing" (Small 1998: 9). I extend Small's idea and frame the scope of musicking as something that can go beyond the usual performances of music—beyond the songs and the music, the musicians, and the stages. I study the people who

are moving under, around, through, across, and towards music. They are doing music and constantly thinking about other things at the same time.

I consider Harney and Motten's reflection (2013) about 'politics surrounded.' The notion of 'surrounded' or 'being surrounded' provides insights into a sense of possession, changes, emergency, protection, and being settled (Harney & Motten 2013: 18). In this dissertation, I explore how the condition of 'surrounded' or 'being surrounded' engenders determination of performing a self-defense, or further reflection on what is left and what needs to be done.

I refer to the people in this research as musicians, visual artists, music collectors, fans, curators, and cultural activists. They developed their artistic practice in the local alternative milieu. I observe that there are two kinds of force, which attributed to, as Harney and Motten propose, 'being surrounded.' First, the condition of being surrounded is guided by aspirations for sustainability. Such aspirations come from within and drive the people to become musical-based activists and cultural enablers. Second, the condition of being surrounded is shaped by the localities where the people are situated. The dynamics of Jogja demand the presence of social ethics in the aesthetic practices of the artists.

Music is often perceived as the finished product of creative process. Many things seem to be determined and judged through what is visible—albums, musicians and performances. People in music, or music people, are often defined according to their designated function within the industry. The meaning of music is constantly reframed.

I choose points of musicking, which embody the dynamic relations of music. I study the development of an Internet-based record label union, event organizing, cassette collections, cassette repair, initiative to save a historical record company, and establishment of a record company. I pay attention to various dimensions of musicking that might otherwise be characterised for their non-musical dimensions. They sustain the efforts exerted to make *something* happen. I study about friendship, kindness, friction, and informal supports. I study old and new habits of doing music – which go beyond the act of 'making music'. I present them as innovative experiments in the field of music and popular culture. At the same time, I show why and how they fail and do not work.

In the following sections, I introduce my research focus further through outlining some contributions made to the study of music and culture. Second, I elaborate on key concepts to frame this research. I present 'commons' (a shared resource) as a framework to think about music. In the cases presented in this dissertation, music does not emerge as a determinant of a case study. Rather music is inserted as part of the questions, or plans, to be executed in a certain project. To define music as a commons might sound odd, and indeed, there is more than one way to define a commons. In thinking about music as a commons, the focus is not on music of a particular genre. Music, which also serves as a commons, emerges as a horizon of possibilities, or a means, to be managed and maintained for different purposes.

I introduce the people in this research, the figures of the scene, through an elaboration of indie and alternative concepts. I describe their family background, and try to think about the politics of class through problematizing the way they are narrated in this research. I use terms such as self-organizing, collectivism, alternative cultural infrastructure, and institutionalization of cultural production as useful concepts to define the alternative milieu. It is the milieu, which shapes the production of tools and ways of organizing a series of action on managing music, culture, and life.

I propose sustainability as a shared imagination of what doing music means. The articulation of such imagination informs the structure of the dissertation. The structure articulates the questions brought about by managing commons; they are the questions about a sense of security, sustainability, and documentation. It provides insights into what aspects that the people need to work on when they think about music.

The development of new technology and social media provides an environment where collaboration, networking, and sharing, constitute the elements to inform peer-to-peer relations. The city of Jogja (also known as Yogyakarta) serves as an ecosystem, surrounding the people and activities presented here with contexts. It fuels the people with the spirit to develop alternative infrastructure for art and culture.

Third, I define the meaning of Jogja as a research field and the knowledge produced in the field. The knowledge production is characterized by my position in the field. I situate myself in between Jogja—the city where I have lived for twenty years, Kunci Cultural Studies Center—the organization I

co-founded in 1999, and the people that I research. To connect it with the idea of commons, I consider the knowledge presented in this dissertation as a product of collaboration and shared resources. It complements my theoretical contribution to the study of music and culture.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF MUSIC AND CULTURE

Many scholars approach Indonesian music from the genres, or the 'fluid genres' (Wallach 2008). Baulch (2007) has produced an important body of work on reggae, punk, death metal, and alternative music. Weintraub's work (2010) is essential to the study of the genealogy of *dangdut* in Indonesia. Luvaas (2012) writes about indie music, lifestyle, and youth culture. Barendregt (2011, 2017) has produced a series of writings which focus on Islamic popular music and culture. Such research creates a specific body of work and representation of Indonesian music. Without these important studies, my work would not be possible.

Indonesian music is also region-based, diverse, and rich. It constitutes a mainstream representation of how the study of music is regarded, or expected. It engenders a wide range of authoritative studies to focus on ethnic music and traditional music instruments [see for example in Sutton's works (1982, 1997) on *gamelan*, Supanggah (2002) on *karawitan*, Barendregt (2002) on Minang popular music, Suryadi (2003, 2014) on recording industries and cassettes in Minangkabau]. Music is situated at the dynamic crossroads between traditional music, western music, and various cultural references.

A focus on a specific genre, combined with a historical exploration, opens up a new branch of research area on sound, genealogy of music formats, recording industries, and taste formation [see Barendregt and Bogaerts (2014) on Indonesian-Dutch musical heritage, Barendregt and Hudson (2016) on the crossover study of Islam, popular music and lifestyle in Southeast Asia, Barendregt, Keppy, and Nordholt (2017) on the muted histories of popular music in Southeast Asia]. The focus on a specific musical genre is often tied with a celebrity, or pop star, study in popular culture. Such approach provides valuable insights into the important role of public figure in contemporary media culture. In between the blurring lines of information and

hoax, the celebrities who carefully 'crafted their images' (Rojek 2001) and seek acclaim for audience (Ang 1991), people seek guidance daily.

Various case studies in my chapters make clear that a certain genre of music can bind different people to an activity. Indie music, for example, is a major thread used to characterize the music released by net labels in the Indonesian Net Label Union (see chapter two). Folk is the music to be performed during Walk the Folk (see chapter three). In chapter four, I examine a case of a cassette collector who collects any cassettes that he regards as 'intriguing', or 'interesting' for whatever reason. Only when he started to think about developing a family library based on the collection, he began to reorganize the collection according to what his family members liked—dangdut, pop, and children stories. Transition from music archiving to music recording, as presented in chapter five, however, is not limited to a specific genre.

In this dissertation, I propose that to move away from the study of a genre or pop star is a useful approach to capture the trajectory of the contemporary popular music environment. I argue that the study of Indonesian music is enriched by taking into account the condition of cultural production and the well-being of cultural producers. The performance of action with music and culture is always intertwined with the struggle for self-sustainability and personal survival. I suggest that consideration for these aspects direct music studies to observe the collective dimension of music. It shifts a perspective from seeing individuality as the ultimate form of artistic elaboration to the emergence of music as a source of collaboration. To view music as a collective project means to understand it as part of long-term cultural strategy. It provides links to media access, alternative distribution mechanism, social engagement practices, archiving, and cultural activism. It reveals the shared questions, vision, and plans that would remain unspoken otherwise. It leads to the production of vernacular keywords to define the character of doing music and culture in contemporary Yogyakarta.

MUSIC AS A COMMONS

There is no term for 'commons' (a 'shared resource') in Indonesian. 'Shared resource' is roughly translated as *kepemilikan bersama*, or *milik bersama*. On a formal level, the conceptualization of commons can be found in Article 33,

the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. In describing the regulation of national economy and social welfare, the article does not use the phrase kepemilikan bersama, or milik bersama. Rather, it defines shared resources through describing their characters and how they should be regulated—"important for the country", "affect the life of the people." The article refers to land, waters, and natural resources, as parts of shared resources. The importance of these resources lies in the decision that they all "shall be under the power of the state" and "shall be used to the greatest benefit of the people."[1] In the context of Indonesia, conventions around shared resources relate to the existing customary law. This research, however, provides little room to discuss the various ways of dealing with commons in the field of law. The discussion, instead focuses on how the commons always revolves around inclusion, exclusion, access, ownership, and regulation.

Hess and Ostrom's viewpoint about 'knowledge as a resource' (2007: 8) informs my argument in thinking about music as a resource. The meaning of music as knowledge represents the general perception about music that I seek to capture in this research. To perceive music as knowledge first, then as a resource second, to follow Hess and Ostrom, can be indicated through the projection of the music discovery and accumulation practices; they are projected at developing a public good for the well-being of the future generations. To study music as a commons offers a new framework to understand the proposal of another set of value systems outside the usual commodity value. Hess and Ostrom's study emphasizes the position of knowledge as a commons, a collective shared resources. In perceiving knowledge as 'knowledge common' (or 'information common'), organization and governance play the crucial roles.

Various technological tools and online music streaming platforms—YouTube, iTunes, Spotify, Last FM, SoundCloud, and other sources which are used to download music, legally or illegally—shape the daily habits of the people who serve as the informants for this research. "Our days are filled with ubiquitous listening," to follow Kassabian (2013). Digital formats, along with technology

1 The full description of Article 33 is the following: (1) The economy shall be organized as a common endeavor based upon the principles of the family system; (2) Sectors of production which are important for the country and affect the life of the people shall be under the powers of the state; (3) The land, the waters and the natural resources within shall be under the power of the state and shall be used to the greatest benefit of the people; (4) The organization of the national economy shall be conducted on the basis of economic democracy upholding the principles of togetherness, efficiency with justice, continuity, environmental perspective, self-sufficiency, and keeping a balance in the progress and unity of the national economy; (5) Further provisions relating to the implementation of this article shall be regulated by law.

development, inform personal sound experience, which later are used to construct the areas of the daily lives (Bull 2007). It enables one to amass the material (songs, files) on an unprecedented scale, and thus it can be perceived as a resource.

After a series of discoveries and exploration, music material and other findings are kept in personal laptops and other digital storage devices as collections, or simply supplies, for future needs. It propels the development of new vocabularies to depict the newness level of music and other cultural material gathered in the collection process (reviews, music videos, essays, news). The collected materials are referred to as archives, *musik lawasan*, (music of the olden days—deriving from the Javanese word—*lawas*, which means old), or *harta terpendam* (hidden treasure). The ownership of these materials is not based on their position as new music releases. But it is more of the result of the excavation of sound from the past. They are collected for preservation purposes.

There have been many scholarly works, which have attempted to answer questions regarding what music can be and do in a social context. This is complemented with the discussion about the new materiality of cultural material. The substance of the act of music, according to DeNora (2004), and its potential to structure the social life, lies in its 'dynamic material.' Sterne emphasizes that music is a thing, and at the same time points to its position as a 'bundle of affordances' to make possible something (Sterne 2012: 193).

As much as I have used the word 'music' here, the discourse of music that I observed is always about music in its relation to other matters. It is always about what action can be done to create a music commons that is, to go back to Hess and Ostrom, more equal, efficient, and sustainable. Small's argument (1988) about 'musicking' centers on the idea that the essence of music is at the 'doing'. This is an aspect of his argument that I consider in thinking about the meaning of music in my research.

According to Federici (2010), the concepts of 'empire', 'multitude', and 'commonwealth' proposed by Hardt and Negri (2000, 2004, 2009) are important in order to examine the development of commons as mediated by technology. Federici argues that Hardt and Negri's theory sees the production of commons as a process, which operates within the organization of work and production. Federici, however, criticizes the theory for it seems to "skirt the

question of the reproduction of everyday life" (Federici 2010: 4). To follow Federici (2010: 6), it is important to emphasize the reproduction of everyday life because commons always involves struggle for creating "collective interest and mutual bonds". Attempts to create a collective through commons reveal more pressing questions regarding what kinds of transformation works need to be done to make it happen. Chapter two provokes a discussion about whether a change in the distribution mechanism is accompanied with rectifying the hierarchical nature of a network. How would the questions about competition and individuality negotiated in the commons? Chapter three brings forward a reflection on how to connect with the people and the surroundings.

The chapters in this dissertation show that the desire for managing a commons is propelled by a sense of responsibility, sensibility, and a capacity to imagine what needs to be done to fill in what is lacking. It states an intention to contribute to a wider community. The commons-making process paves the way for the formation of new communities. This is the type of community which is different from the formation of a traditional community defined by geographical boundaries, culture, and religion. In this research, the imagined communities established on the basis of fandom, shared principles, and like-minded perspectives about ways for doing music.

TOKOH SKENA: ON INDIE, ALTERNATIVE, HUMAN RESOURCES

The people in my research are often referred to as *tokoh skena*, the 'figures of the (indie) scene', by their peers, because of their prominent position in that scene. Based on my observation, *skena* is also used in a loose manner, referring to a certain place where a music project takes place. To some extent, the scope of the works explored here is located within an indie music environment. However, my research does not focus on the textual and aesthetic realm of indie music. The people that I am researching here are moving within and across various music scenes at the same time.

The focus of my research is on the indie principle as a means to practice alternative ways of cultural production against mainstream-conventional procedures. My research privileges alternative principles. But the alternity narrated here cannot be easily pinpointed as "invitation to disorderliness" towards the "New Order's regime obsession with order."[2] What I mean by

indie is situated in the readiness for taking alternative approaches to control the cycle of cultural production and to consciously frame the musical activities within the wider social context.

The people in this thesis cut across different profiles of creative individuals. Some of them are musicians, in the conventional sense, while others cannot be categorized into artists. But, the various people in this research share similar concerns *to common the music*. The significance of the 'figures of Indonesian modernity' studied in Barker (2009) is in their production of the keywords, which would help illuminate 'the questions at stake in Indonesia today' (Barker et al 2009: 38). The people in this research bring forward important questions in contemporary music and culture, and convey what their takes on them in real contributions.

In his book, Mrazek (2002) proposes the notion of 'technology' to refer to methods, or certain ways to handle the intertwinement of culture, identity, and nation, in the late-colonial Dutch East Indies. Mrazek refers to the people in his research as 'engineers.' As engineers, they work to materialize their plans and dreams. According to Mrazek, what makes the engineers different is that "there is a calculated sameness between the planning and the dreaming" (Mrazek 2002: xvii). Mrazek's idea of the engineer is instructive to understand how the people in this research deal with certain questions and manage them through a series of doings. The doings are parts of the plans and the dreams; and this research shows that they are not always in accord with the expectations. To own these dreams, and to be able to realize them in plans, bring a sense of confidence. Their dreams and plans are useful for their surrounding.

In the title of this dissertation, I refer to the people here as the 'commons people.' The definition comes from an intention to connect them with their music commons projects. But it is also apt to refer them as the 'common people,'[3] as their dreams might be the kind of dreams that shared with many.

In everyday conversations, however, the word *tokoh* or figure connotes certain fame to a referred person. I do not use *tokoh skena* as a strict category to refer to an established musician or artist. But the people that I am talking about here are engaging closely with music, and showing care through what they are doing. It seems appropriate to refer to them as

2 It is pointed out by Hill and Sen (2000) in their study of alternative music as quoted in Baulch (2002: 222).

'practitioners' or 'musical-based activists.' They are also music fans, but their fandom activities are not limited to a certain band and musician. Their participation extends music consumption. They function as human resources. Their works concerned with how to make a musical-based project and to put forward certain questions, vision, and plans.

During fieldwork, I met with art managers, band managers, civil servants, and lecturers. Their roles seem to be interchangeable; they can be swapped with the others' roles. It is not unusual to meet a person with more than one role: a lecturer at a university who is also a bassist in a local band; a visual artist and an initiator of a new record company; a visual artist and a cassette collector; a visual artist and a librarian in an NGO; a musician and a band manager or a student and net label owner and musician. They signify the contemporary cultural enablers to make up a cultural landscape. They created different initiatives and played different roles in managing their relations with music.

SELF-ORGANIZING: ALTERNATIVE CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE, COLLECTIVISM, AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

I commence this research with thinking that the management of a music commons leads to the development of alternative cultural infrastructure. The chapters in this dissertation make clear that this is the kind of infrastructure emanates from certain vision and plans. In whatever forms they have emerged, it seems that they sprang from the inside. Various initiatives and facilities devised are the tangible forms of vision and plans. What is bubbling beneath them is an ongoing dynamic process where certain vision and plans are continuously tested and shaped.

Collectivism and the institutionalization of cultural production are strong elements which indicate the projects narrated in this research. This needs emphasis as it marks different points of view in seeing the expression of the creative works. The chapters in this research narrate the works, which take place in various independent institutions. I contextualize these institutions within the rise of alternative spaces in post-1998 Indonesia. Creating an alternative space, I argue, has been a habit developed by a new generation of

3 I indebted to The Secret Agents duo, Indra Ameng and Keke Tumbuan, for the use of the term 'common people.' The Common People is The Secret Agents' project. The project intends to capture the latest trend in selfie culture and traveling. In the project, the duo presents their self-portrait image, taken in various places. They imitate the common practice of many people. In doing so, they state that, "I want to live like common people."

cultural activists in Indonesia as a model platform for fulfilling their visionary ideas. The ownership of new visions is an important element in the existence of the spaces. This section highlights the organization of alternative spaces as a method for managing music commons.

An involvement in alternative space, serves as an avenue for building a new network. It produces experiences, practices, and reputation, which taken together, function as a readily available modality and produces for the nearby future 'traces of past collaboration' (Simone 2004: 408) on which a new collaboration depends.

In the reform period that followed the fall of Soeharto in 1998, Reformasi gave rise to the emergence of what is categorized as 'alternative space'. Reformasi, ushered in a time when ideas spun quickly, and in which a number of new mass media (published in various genres--from female, male, unisex, urban, to religious-based topics), alternative media and local civil initiatives developed. An alternative space refers to new cultural spaces—artists-run space, gallery, performance space, or discussion place—for thoughts that would be homeless otherwise in the cultural spaces formed and designed by the established cultural authorities. This increased activity reflected the intensity of local cultural production in Indonesia and was partly encouraged by the urgency to express a long-suppressed counter-culture movement. It indicates areas, which had been experienced various tensions and conflicts during New Order era: freedom of expression and initiatives, production of ideas, and space.

In the Indonesian context, 'alternative space' was initially a category limited to its use within the visual art domain. Little is known about how the concept 'alternative space' had originally circulated, and how it evolved, and used in Indonesia. References about alternative spaces started to flourish in mid-2000s. Academics and researchers started to document this new trend (see for example in Crosby 2008, Darmawan 2006, Hafiz 2007, Juliastuti 2007, Jurriëns 2017, Rath 2003). Many informal publications also started to document the rise of alternative spaces: through exhibition notes at independent galleries, or in self-published artist monographs and post-event catalogue (Klinik Seni Taxu 2004, Widhi 2015). These references are important because they provide a deeper understanding of what the curators are doing with the spaces.

During the Soeharto-led New Order era, the term 'alternative' referred to ideas which signaled an opposition to the authorities or an attempt to provide

avenues for progressive thoughts. Throughout this period, the concept 'alternative' was largely used to underline various forms of journalism that were in opposition to the political news making of mainstream journalism, strictly confined within the tight yet vague rules and regulation of the regime.[4]

Along with an associated fast growing movement, however, the category of alternative space is hard to define. It is formed by a set of loose definitions. An alternative space is composed by a group of individuals, with different backgrounds and trajectories, who develop their own attitudes to test their thoughts on arts and culture. Their works range from art production and research—all conducted with clear interdisciplinary intention, provision of art and culture that supports wider infrastructure,[5] as to facilitate dialogues with policy makers to organizing activities that can be classified as community empowerment.

In the field of art and culture, alternative spaces have been playing key roles. The strategies used to manage their shared goals and aspirations are diverse—club, collective organisations, company, center, or even laboratory. But they embody self-organizing and working together as important principles to inform the cultural production environment. However diverse the character and work fields of people and organizations involved, it indicates that they are a part of a broad movement and share similar values.

Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta are arguably the most important cultural centers in Indonesia. In the first decade of the 2000s, these cities constitute the main locations of alternative spaces. Although as the word 'alternative' suggests, these three cities are no longer considered the main locations for alternative spaces. During research, I observed that such spaces find fertile ground in other cities and have influentially changed the landscapes of their cultural environment. The chapters in this thesis narrate the continuity of alternative spaces as a model of working together in art and cultural scene.

Post-1998 Indonesian society is marked by the emergence of alternative

4 Various student newspapers and magazines and activists-journalists magazine "Suara Independen" are cases in point. Along a similar line, Allen's exploration of the dynamics of artists' magazines in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States (2011) indicates the identification of artists' magazines as an alternative space. According to Allen, "Like other artist-run, independent, and nonprofit exhibition spaces and collectives, magazines challenged the institutions and economies of the mainstream art world by supporting new experimental forms of art outside the commercial gallery system, promoting artists' moral and legal rights, and redressing the inequities of gender, race, and class" (Allen 2011: 7).

5 See Merdikaningtyas's report (2005) on the growing intention to develop independent alternative cultural infrastructure through the development of a network of alternative libraries in early 2000s in Yogyakarta.

spaces and initiatives. The lifespan of an alternative space depends on its social and political context. The structure of the alternative spaces resembles that of the state-made cultural institutions. While providing spaces for critical and progressive thoughts, they function to perform cultural responses to the regular lack of cultural infrastructure in their environment.

Lefebvre (1991) proposes a theory of social space production, which anchors in the foundation of three principles—spatial practice, the representation of space, and spaces of representation. In the context of this research, Lefebvre's theory is useful to understand the implementation of vision and plans in providing the definition of what the space means. To follow Lefebvre, vision and plans can emerge in the forms of everyday activities. The everyday activities connect vision and plans to how a space is lived and activated in practice.

My research, however, also shows that there is the feeling of lacking something, which informs vision and plans owned by the initiators of the alternative spaces. This is translated into different useful practices. The usefulness becomes an aspect that is sought for and lends a pliable character to inhabit by an alternative space. An alternative space might start from an idea, which is developed into other ideas and something else. It runs from one dream to another and consequently transforms into different kinds of spaces. This is one of the shared characters of the people I met during fieldwork. An alternative space has the capacity for producing other spaces.

Alternative space, or other forms of collective spaces, might function and give the impression of an ordinary public institution. One alternative space might differ greatly from another due to various reasons in terms of everyday organization. The semblance to the operationalization of the spaces, which includes the network and collaboration practices, is that they are all coached in informal ways and practices.

In many cases, an alternative space grows out of something that initially may not clearly be defined as a 'space', but simply an individual, or a group of people, with the intention to employ it for different social purposes. In his study of alternative space in Indonesia and China, vanhoe (2016) refers to alternative spaces as 'also space.' The meaning of the space is flexible, depending on the needs of the context where it is situated. The concept of

'alternative space', as pointed out in Isabella (2015), might be over-used and reproduced too much. In practice, as Isabella argues, there might be not much done to "actually be alternative" (Isabella 2015: 259).

Instead of perceiving it as something romantic, I argue that the term 'alternative space' captures the spirit of cultural practices and the disobedient character that needs to be nurtured in post-Reformasi Indonesia. Alternative is a word that can be used to host the pliability which is entailed in the production of culture. Alternatives can serve as a horizon where rooms for exploring possibilities to work and think together are open.

While I value the tenacity of the alternative spaces, and I recognize their roles in democratizing public cultural landscape, I want to push the efforts at defining an alternative space by further asking to what extent they complement and complete the existing art infrastructure and practices. In his curatorial writing to the *Fixer: Exhibition of Alternative Spaces and Art Groups in Indonesia* organized by Ruang Rupa, Darmawan (2010) points to the function of alternative spaces as 'fixer.' The alternative spaces developed to, in Darmawan's words, "fix the severance in the chain of the production cycle of art ideas, but also to bring the ideas into the larger context of the public" (Darmawan 2010: 15).

Darmawan (in Juliastuti 2012: 121) elaborates more on the meaning of fixer performed by the alternative spaces as 'contextual responses.' Such responses serve as an applicable infrastructure to cater to the local needs. The emphasis on such responses is on the performances of experiments. Budianta (2003) depicts the climate of the post-1998 environment as an emergency situation and the cultural activities to take place in the period as part of 'an emergency activism'. Their activities are conducted to fill in holes in the environment. My chapters narrate collectives' responses to different social questions of the post-Reformasi period.

SUSTAINABILITY: WOMEN AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Contemporary music practices pose new questions about shared concerns for ongoing sustainability. They form part of the imagination of what doing music means. The focus on sustainability becomes a shared value throughout the various projects which I have examined.

Gibson-Graham (2013: 21-22) proposes the idea of well-being, which encapsulates the interaction between five elements: “material well-being, occupational well-being, social well-being, community well-being, and physical well-being.” My definition of sustainability relates to ideas, activities, and the imagination. My definition is concerned not only with the existence of music, but also with those who make music, and the spaces where music activities are situated. The idea of sustainability articulates various key moments where resources, infrastructure, and access, are reutilized, revalued, recreated, and rethought.

Music is not only something to buy, keep, and listen to: music is also something that moves along with the reflection about access, distribution platforms, the ethics of distribution and earning income through creative expression, and a sense of shared history. This is the thinking that becomes an ethic of working for sustainability.

In the previous section, I discussed about the development of alternative cultural infrastructure as a contextual response and a site to nurture self-organizing capacities. It connects to the discussion about sustainability. The chapters in this dissertation show that various forms of alternative cultural infrastructure function to sustain certain ideas behind a cultural project. Technological things are often seen as a form of infrastructure. They function to preserve important musical archives. In this section, I connect the notion of sustainability with people, who function as a kind of infrastructure. In the conclusion of chapter one, I refer to Larkin’s proposal (2013) to see the relational aspect that lies between technological things, in order to see the infrastructural aspect which emerge from it. People provide help and support for cultural access.

I have discussed about how the people in this research perceived themselves as ‘human resources’; their relations with music is defined by certain questions, vision, and plans that they have. Simoné (2004) proposes the idea of ‘people as infrastructure’ to extend the idea of infrastructure and people’s activities. Simoné’s ‘people as infrastructure’ defines adeptness at generating ‘maximal outcomes’ from the tentative and precarious proceses of remaking the city and urban environment, which in turn shapes how one lives, makes things, and collaborates with other people (Simoné 2004: 407-411). As the chapters in this dissertation make clear, various cultural projects examined depend on different models of ‘people as infrastructure.’ They emerged as a group of individuals, couple, union, or mechanism to work together—*koneksi*

(connection), *gotong royong* (mutual aid) and jaringan (network). During fieldwork, I also observed that the people often referred to another group of individuals, or an artist collective, as 'support system'. My findings also show that the adeptness at generating maximal outcomes is also a useful repertoire to recognize the usefulness of informal infrastructure bordering on piracy.

Women are visible in this research in ways that engender further questions about the meaning of support and providing support. How would caring works of women be understood in a cultural production? In this regard, I consider Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen's view (2000) about 'housework' in the context of cultural production. Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen assert that in order to promote a just perspective of the contemporary social movement, one needs to renew a perspective of women in the cultural production. They propose a subsistence, or 'life production' perspective, as opposed to 'commodity production.' In the context of this research, I return to the general perception of music as the finished product of creative process. To talk about support in the context of contemporary art often means to talk about a certain kind of organizing and caring works that are often gendered, or discoursed in certain ways. The kind of care that is performed is related to their multiple positionalities as women, wives, and mothers.

In chapter two, I write about Tinta, who despite her unfailing support and work for the Indonesian Net Label Union, still felt that she was not being appreciated. She was sure that everyone involved in the union organization would do as much as her for the union. But, the last part of the chapter reveals her feelings about her colleagues at the union, who seemed to let her do a bit too much by herself without any support for the organization of the Indonesian Net Audio Festival in Bandung. Perhaps in a moment that is defined by Ukules (1969) in the *Manifesto for Maintenance Art as an epiphany*, Tinta realized that not everyone is equally willing to share free labour. This led to a discussion about how to deal with work division in the union, particularly in a context when everyone in the union is regarded as equal. How could the new arrangements regarding work co-ordination be reached without resorting to more control?

At the same time, Tinta often referred to herself as the 'mother of the union.' Such tag might derive from a simple fact that she is the only woman among the core members of the union. It is also an appropriate tag given how much she has done for the union. It is also appropriate as while Tinta works, she brings her caring qualities to the union. Her care transforms into many forms

of support and serves as part of the foundation on which the organization of the union stands. The union relies on the support of a woman.

In chapter four, I describe Yoyok's activities as a cassette collector. While explaining what he did with the collection, he told the stories of other collectors, who discontinued their collecting practices due to the disapproval of their wives. Collecting is perceived to be an activity with little economic value and it takes up much space in a house. A collection needs to be protected, which means further allocation of more money. There is a narrative about a concern of how collecting troubles the household budget, and 'women who is constantly thinking about the organization of a household'. Collecting is imagined as a domain, which continuously needs to be justified against the interrogations of a woman.

My reflection on being a woman in this case shows how the shaping process of the internal part of a plan occurs. But this is the process that is often not made visible. When revealed, it sheds light on other points that can be used to understand about how to keep it going. It questions the purpose of doing something and it provides insights into the ethics of working towards a set of goals. In what follows, I want to deepen the discussion about sustainability through making a connection with time and economy of survival.

ON TIME, BEING PERSISTENCE, AND ECONOMY OF SURVIVAL

The question of time makes its way into the organization of cultural activities through different paths. It provides insights into the condition, which enables cultural production. Such questions often relate to questions about the resource of the initiators. But, the discussion about money, useful materials, and other assets, is often confined to the organization of cultural activities. It is regarded as separate from the precarious living of the activists.

A number of scholars who have written on the informality of alternative spaces have connected it with the discussion of time. For example, in Luvaas (2012), Crosby (2013), Dahl (2016) equally emphasize the productivity of hanging-out, or *nongkrong* as a common mode of working together. I observe, however, that their research does not connect the discussion of time with the time management of the cultural activists to earn a living on a daily basis. The seemingly idle *nongkrong* engenders the impression that the

practitioners of nongkrong have the privilege of 'having time' to *nongkrong*. The chapters in this dissertation show that the discussion about the condition of cultural production always entails discussions about the well-being of cultural producers.

The cultural spaces described in this research are characterized by the relative autonomous nature of their financial capacities. They are established on the personal financial resources which support the running of the organizations. Private funds are complimented by foreign aid organizations. During the early 2000s, the availability of funding from foreign aid organizations was vital to inform the 'knowledge performativity of the alternative spaces' (Juliastuti 2010). At the same time it provides insights into the lack of funding in the field of art and culture from the state.

The discourse of funding provides an occasion for discussions about the sustainability of the cultural activities, independent financing for these activities, and the life improvement of the cultural activists. Funding needs to be discussed not only in relation to its significant position to enable certain cultural activities, but also to provide sustenance for the cultural enabler status.

The performance of action on music and culture is always intertwined with the struggle for self-sustainability and personal survival. Another set of questions, in other forms, comes from the closest circles of people with whom the people that I researched live with—the parents, family members, partners, and friends. Questions that I often heard from their conversations revolved around the usefulness of their work: will being a net label owner and producing music earn you a lot of money? Why is it important for you to collect all these old cassettes? Don't you want to be just a regular worker or *pegawai* in an office and receive a monthly salary?

The organization of the independent cultural projects needs to be balanced against the everyday needs of the family, ongoing friendship, and personal limitation. In a condition where many things seem to be determined and judged through what is visible—the number of albums produced by a musician, the productivity of a record company, the comprehensiveness of a record collection—the efforts exerted to make *something* happen does not always show.

The discussion about it is often regarded as mundane. Most of the time such

discussions are hidden away by the necessity of compromising the everyday. The everyday struggles for maintaining these cultural projects and dealing with pragmatic matters at once is a part of cultural production. During fieldwork, the people that I talked with mentioned about the idea of setting up merchandise business and creating a café to support the running of a gallery, how to fit the budget of purchasing cassettes for collection within the daily household budget, how to create an independent record company, and run a small grocery shop to make an additional income. There is a sense of shared understanding that in order for one to engage in a cultural project, it is important to fulfill the basic needs.

SURROUNDEDNESS: JOGJA ISTIMEWA

I imagine the city of Jogja (also known as Yogyakarta) as an ecosystem which provides networks, spaces to thrive in (as well as in which to fail), and spaces to learn together about methods, skills, and practices. Taken together, it is an environment which functions as an apparatus which molds the people who are a part of this research. To imagine the city of Jogja as an ecosystem is to see different living organisms which live together in a network, and each of them functions to provide resources for the others, and those who have wished to access them. Jogja is a city that serves as a mechanism which forms the people who have chosen to live and work in it. Likewise, it is a city which is being constantly reworked by its inhabitants.

The streets of Yogyakarta are dominated by an abundance of motorcycles. They appear in various designs and colors, alongside *dokar* (horse and carts), *becak* (trishaws), private cars, taxis and rusty buses that emit thick exhaust. Motorcycles intensify the crowdedness of the streetscape as well as increase the noise and pollution of the city. The streets are busy: not only with many kinds of vehicles, but also many kinds of advertisements, banners, signs, slogans, informal kiosks, and roaming traders. Motorcyclists use the footpath when the traffic is jammed; with a lack of car parks, car users park on the side of already-narrow roads and thus take up vital space for traffic. The city's walls are also always busy: intensely decorated and vandalized with many kinds of street art and graffiti. When I started the fieldwork period, many new malls and hotels were being built throughout the city.

In the chapters throughout, I use both 'Yogyakarta' and 'Jogja' to refer to the

same city. The name 'Yogyakarta' represents how the city is addressed in the news and formal conversation, the latter represents how the city is addressed in informal conversation. I prefer referring the city as 'Jogja', as that is the familiar name of the city to me and many of the artists studied here.

During my fieldwork, I had to use different modes of transportation. The change in how I traveled the city, from a motorcycle to a *becak* or a taxi, has re-oriented my views towards the urban landscape. As the speed of my travel depended on how fast I could go with my motorcycle, or on the ways the *becak* driver or the taxi driver drove, I began to look at the cityscape with a different look. While sitting on either the *becak* seat or the car one, I saw how the graffiti on the city walls was replaced by a new layer of graffiti and changed the daily appearance of the walls. The dynamics of the city, as appears on its walls, emerged to be a readily available source of conversation for the locals, domestic tourists, and wanderers. On several occasions, such dynamics found their way into communications with the becak or taxi drivers who brought me to various parts of Jogja.

On one day, I could easily travel from my office at Kunci, to KKF—for an interview or lunch, and then go to an exhibition at Ace House Collective later in the afternoon. Jalan D.I. Panjaitan, Jalan Tirtodipuran, Jalan Suryodiningratan, Jalan Ngadinegaran, Jalan Mangkuyudan, Jalan Parangtritis, Plengkung Gading, and Alun-alun Kidul—were the names of the streets that made up an important part of the daily lives of the people that I talked to during fieldwork. They were the streets in which Kunci's office, the organization where I work, as well as the rented house where I stayed during fieldwork, were located. The aforementioned spaces are all within a kilometer from each other.

The artists and the other people that I met for much of this research would often go to the same places for coffee, lunch, dinner, and shopping. It is through doing this research I felt that I got to know the city better. Sometimes, I met my informants in a discussion event organized by Kunci or another organization. Just as the bustling streets we regularly passed, participations in all events listed on the art and cultural agenda of the city, as well as the conversations, brought in excitement and exhaustion at once.

Holt's book (1968) depicted Jogja as a vibrant city through the dynamic activities of arts related and cultural organizations. Jogja maintains its reputation as the measuring stick for Indonesian contemporary art. The city is

home to many important artists, galleries, and studios. It is also home to prestigious education institutions namely Gadjah Mada University and Yogyakarta Indonesian Institute of the Arts. Hence the city is labeled as *kota pelajar*, or, student city.

Many students and artists, having completed their education, choose to live and work in this city. The city is also home to many who have ambitions of being writers, poets, curators or art managers.

The dynamics of public art activities that has been initiated by local artists since the early 2000s is mixed with different forms of public creativity and political expression. Different forms of traditional art and other art activities related to Javanese cultural production still hold a strong currency in increasing the inflow of domestic and foreign tourists to Jogja. It is among the intense, rapidly changing and highly contested urban life, intersected with tourism, that art is created, consumed, performed, and participated in.

The Yogyakarta Keraton (Sultan's Palace) which is located in the city's centre at the end of Jalan Malioboro—the city's main street and tourist market—welcomes flocks of tourists and new students to the city. The city is open to tourists and visitors who explore the different histories and trajectory of the city. These factors make up Yogyakarta's Javanese *keistimewaan*-ness (its difference, its uniqueness).

The streets' walls indicate a contestation between the wills of politicians and business and subcultures to claim and reclaim elements of public space. Sometimes their interests overlap, but more often, they're in conflict. There is always something new to see on the city's walls: the proliferation of street and graffiti makes it difficult to consume in a single journey. Moreover, they give a vital indicator of changing attitudes: they are small fragments that suggest changes in ideologies and values.

For example, on the corner of Jalan Brigjend Katamso and Jalan Kolonal Sugiono: graffiti sprayed in support of the Kopassus or the Army's Special Forces' attack on Cebongan Penitentiary, Sleman, Yogyakarta which left four detainees dead on 25 March, 2013. The detainees were suspected of killing former commando First Sgt. Heru Santoso who was stabbed to death in Hugo's Café on Jalan Solo in eastern Yogyakarta. The graffiti was soon replaced with some more graffiti that was promoting the annual Yogyakarta Arts Festival (Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta). This graffiti was in turn replaced

with a poster celebrating the coming of Ramadhan. Violence was a part of the streets and the walls and embodied in graffiti and other creative signatures.

The word *istimewa* has been used in both formal and informal conversations as a metaphor for referring to the special quality of the city. It derives from the official name of the province where the city is located, *Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*, Special Region of Yogyakarta. The special status of the region was given by the state due to the existence of Keraton Yogyakarta as the ruling monarchy and the important role of the palace supporting the country's independence during the national revolution.

Such *keistimewaan*-ness has become a weapon against the orang *Jogja asli*, the Jogja people born and bred, as opposed to orang *pendatang*, the migrants. The last phase of my fieldwork as well as the writing phase, however, saw how it has developed into a controversial situation. Jogja is increasingly portrayed as a city that is growing to be intolerant and losing its aura of openness – a quality which attracted so many artists and students in the past. As I write this chapter, there have been many cases where intolerance has become a problematic. These include a Catholic district head in Bantul who was protested against by a group of people, the banning of books with communist and socialist themes by the Islamic Defenders Front, a series of threats and intimidation directed towards the Papuan students who lived in student dormitory. The city is no longer simply *Jogja Istimewa*, but has also become *Jogja Istimewa (Intoleransinya)*, the special intolerant Jogja.

The ratification of the Indonesian Constitution of the Special Status of Yogyakarta in 2012 was a controversial political move.[6] Leading up to the ratification of the constitution, the draft was circulated widely and broadly polarized Yogyakartans into two camps—*pro-penetapan* and *anti-penetapan*, pro-ratification and anti-ratification of the constitution (see Lay 2008, Laksono et.al. 2011, Huda 2013). Although this research doesn't discuss the constitution, the controversy surrounding it, provides insights into the ways of re-imagining the city performed by the people who live in it, including those with whom I talk to for this research.

As a result of the constitution ratification, the Sultan of Yogyakarta is regarded as having too much power. The implementation of the policy of the 'Sultan Grounds' (Tanah Sultan) is an instance of how the constitution opens up business opportunities that would only benefit the already privileged Sultan family. The discussion takes place within the context of the city that gradually

grows as an uncomfortable city; it contradicts the slogan of the city—Jogja Berhati Nyaman. *Nyaman* literally means comfortable. However, I prefer to translate Jogja Berhati *Nyaman* as 'Jogja with a contented heart'. The slogan was replaced with 'Jogja Never Ending Asia' in 2001. And it was replaced again with 'Jogja Istimewa' in 2015. At the same time as the city is developing into an uncontrollable city, 'Jogja Berhati Nyaman' has resurfaced.

The reappearance of Jogja Berhati Nyaman comes with a critique—that the city has stopped being relaxed and comfortable. Traffic jams are everywhere (it is just like in Jakarta or Bandung on weekends and holiday seasons) and the city is unable to cope with its tourists. The proliferation of hotels causes traffic jams and environmental damage. The streets become so crowded (there are too many advertisements on the streets and the new buildings obscure the view of Mt Merapi). New initiatives and city activist groups have emerged to focus on the changes in the agrarian condition. They call for 'Jogja Darurat Agraria', the Agrarian Emergency Jogja, and 'Jogja Ora Didol', a Javanese statement that means 'Jogja is not for sale'.

Cities are in constant change. In the case of Jogja, 'change' means that the city is increasingly for sale. The politics of the city are increasingly heated and polarized. To live in the city means, as the collective 'Jogja Darurat Agraria' aptly puts, "to defend and struggle over threats and confiscation of the living space in the Yogyakarta Special Region, which seems to make the living condition in Yogyakarta uncomfortable." More many residents, the city is becoming unbearable. One only needs to glance at the city walls to see this: stickers and silk-screen posters to protest against the changes of the city are pasted on the walls adjacent to different signs produced by right-wing religious groups. Such proximity depicts the growing friction and tension. To inhabit it, and this is what the Jogja Darurat Agraria has been trying to function, is to express solidarity with certain marginalized views.

The people in the chapters, as it would be clear later, need to think, and are asked to rethink about the ethical dimensions of their work—the impact, relevance, and significance amidst the changing city landscape of Jogja. The needs of city becomes more urgent and demands the measurement of the importance of the works. "The times call for ethical action" (Gibson-Graham,

6 The Constitutional Court ratified the constitution on August 31, 2012. Its implementation underlines the political meaning of the special status of the city. To follow the constitution, the status is established through granting the formal consent to the Sultan Hamengku Buwono and Adipati Paku Alam as the ex-officio governor and vice-governor of Yogyakarta. It is regarded as a point that jeopardizes the democratization process, and has impacted on the organization of the city. The chapters make clear that this informs the way artists organize and reorient their works.

Cameron, Healy 2013: xviii). The times call for reflective practices. It demands for creating works and projects, which address current social issues. To be an artist, or to decide on engaging with art and cultural practices, requires a development of regular tendency to question and reposition the creative works among an ecosystem.

POLITICS OF REPRESENTING THE PEOPLE AND CLASS

Family background and the rise of creative class

In order to provide insight into how class relates to the people in this research, I look at their family background. I use it as a departure point to see how imagination about welfare is circulated as a family value. The family backgrounds of the people in this research are diverse. The occupations of their parents, however, can be categorized into two broad groups—civil servants and private sector jobs. Based on our conversations, during college years, their parents performed in an advisory role to transform the ideas about stability in everyday life into a set of recommendation for courses to take and careers to choose.

To be a *pegawai negeri*, or civil servant, conforms with popular narratives about access to a sense of security and individual well-being. It does not only reinforce the state domination in exercising political control of economic resources and access. It also instills attitudes of how to manoeuvre in securing personal stability amid the dynamic political and ideological condition. Parts of the popular narrative about being a civil servant is that being one means to have a long-term fixed income, be included in state support system, and access a pension (see Reeve 1985, Jones and Manning 1992: 363-410). Parents of the people in this research who worked as civil servants mainly occupied low administrative positions in different government offices.

As it will be made clear below, the parents who worked in private sector managed small-scale businesses, or worked in a small-scale business venture. Robison's class categorization (1996) within the rise of the new rich in Indonesia is useful to define their character. Based on the scale of business and earnings, it can be estimated that they fall into the category of middle class. Such estimation emerges from particular situations where their businesses are prone to social and political changes. During New Order era,

they were not part of collusion and nepotism chain, which enabled them to obtain credit access for their businesses (Robison 1996: 84-93). Some people told me about the closure of their fathers' business, affected by the *krismon*, an abbreviation of *krisis moneter*, or monetary crisis in 1997 (see Turner 2003 for more insights into Indonesia's small entrepreneurs during monetary crisis). This can be regarded as narrative where middle class-ness status slipped into lower class, with greater financial precarity. Precariousness is a familiar thing. However, precarity might not be something to discuss among family members. But it becomes part of personal experiences and living strategies to relate—scarce monthly allowance, regular empty fridge, or parents who always change jobs (from a herbal drink seller to a grab driver, a peasant farmer to a masseur, a human right activist to a UN consultant on casual employment).

Wok the Rock's father owned a news agency in Madiun and his mother ran a food stall at their home. Anitha Silvia (Tinta)'s father worked as a teacher in Jakarta and he also had a side job as a security officer at a mall in South Jakarta. Like Wok's mother, Tinta's mother used to run a small food stall at her home. Mira Asriningtyas' parents were both teachers in Yogyakarta. The parents of Taufiq Aribowo (also known as Arie Mindblasting) worked at a municipality hospital in Lamongan (the father the head of administration, the mother a nurse). The father of Hayyi Al Qayumi (Acong) worked as a peasant farmer in Jember and his mother had passed away when he was young. Hahan's father still works as a small-scale entrepreneur. The areas of his business are wide, depending on what seems to be more lucrative at a certain time (from making gold pendants, selling tires for cars, to providing charcoals made from coconut shells). Hahan's mother works as a notary in a local law firm in Magelang. The parents of Adi Kusuma, or Uma, worked as staffs at the army hospital in Magelang.

Many of my informants' parents are retired from work. The people that I researched have become used to earning a living in independent and creative ways. In this dissertation, they are narrated and known as visual artists, musicians, curators, producers, music shop owners, writers, researchers, librarians, and cultural activists. They might have the occupations that the parents would not have hoped for them to have. This is the case when the courses in universities do not relate with the actual jobs possessed. To follow his parents' recommendation, however, Arie Mindblasting pursued a master degree in public health in Jogja. Rather than simply being a place to study, Jogja has turned into a site where he nurtured knowledge and networks in

noise music and free distribution platforms. Wok, on the other hand, is a graduate of a visual communication design department. But rather than working in an advertising agency, a common path to follow after graduation from the department, he works as a music producer and cultural activist. Mira is a graduate of a communication department who has become a curator. Tinta is a graduate of a public administration department who has become an artist.

The people in this research are sometimes referred to as *anak metal* (metal kids), *anak punk* (punk kids), *anak noise* (noise kids), *anak folk* (folk kids), depending on the music they are involved with. Some of them are *anak lapak*; their involvement in music is through organizing music events and merchandise pop-up shop, or a lapak, during a gig or festival. More generally, they are also known as *anak indie* (indie kids). They have carved their own ideas of how they should be defined. Their appearance also serves as an avenue, and a site to work on, to suggest a different outlook compared to other existing categories. They recognize various categories to embody certain ideas of youth, lifestyle, and class. At the same time, they develop their own perspectives about themselves.

To illustrate this, I use '*alay*' and 'hipster' as cases in point. '*Alay*' is possibly an abbreviation from *anak layangan*, or someone who likes flying kites. Thajib (2011) notes that *alay* is a popular phenomenon and stereotype formed in the media and everyday discourse. According to Thajib, the connotation of *alay* attached to being tacky, too trendy, cheap, and ridiculous. Based on my observation, *alay* is often used as a derogatory remark among the people in this research. It forms a style that these people do not belong. As a popular term, hipster refers to the category of consumption that is considered more superior than alay. However, this does not mean that the people in this research would accept to be defined as such. My assumption is that the people in this research tend to define themselves in vahue terms, but maintain the idea that in whatever style they perform, it has to be convincing, original, and conceptual.

To work in art and culture is an option, which leads to the possibility to express a different artistic life than the parents' generations. This includes an adoption of a new lifestyle. McRobbie's research (2016) on the formation of creative economies provides a useful approach to frame their activism. A wide range of creative works that McRobbie researched covers visual art, website marketing, performance, fashion, writing, film-making, and music. According to McRobbie, the rise of the creative economies is accompanied with the 'workplace politics'

and 'creativity *dispositif*' (McRobbie 2016: 27). To follow McRobbie, to be part of the creative class is to be willing to get involved in a precarious economy. This indicates that these people are not afraid of failing. In the case of this research, these creative practices are situated in between doing art and trying to make a living. The areas of their creative practices are not part of the big economy machines.

I observe different performances of personal expenditure in everyday life. Buying a house, car, other properties, and having a significant amount of savings, are important. However, these are things that have become increasingly difficult to obtain. On the other hand, there are aspects of the everyday, which require costly payments. Parts of the income are allocated to buy music related goods and merchandise (CDs, vinyl, cassettes, t-shirt), tickets for music gigs by favorite musicians, travel to neighbouring countries to attend important music festivals, and buy enough food for pet dogs or cats. This might give the impression that they are part of the middle class. The ability to travel abroad, buy vinyl records, and own a dog might give the impression of *tampang kaya*, or to appear rich. This is even when other aspects of their life indicate their precarity. The chapters in this dissertation show the modest settings and practices of my informants.

University life and participation culture

The people that I talked to during research are not *orang Jogja asli* (the original Yogyakartans). They have come to Jogja for study, or work; Jogja is their new home after being brought up somewhere else. Their educational background is varied.

I can divide my informants into two groups based on when they were born. The first group is the people who were born in early 1970s. Wok the Rock, Arie Mindblasting, and Yoyok, belong to this group. I am one of a few members of Kunci who was born during the 1970s. We are part of Generation 98 who has the privilege of experiencing Reformasi 1998, at first hand. Our involvement in arts and culture is formed by many cultural channels which opened to follow Reformasi 1998.

In the previous section, I have written a section about the rise of alternative space, which paved the way for a new generation of cultural activists. It also served as an important medium to train the capacity for organizing independent cultural spaces. As a political moment, Reformasi provided the

source of new vision for many young artists, writers and intellectuals. But instead of transforming into collective vision, it is constantly being refracted. Some 20 years into the process of 'reformasi', we are still dealing with the remnants and legacy of the Soeharto era.

The second group in this research is the people who were born in between mid-1980s to early 1990s. Tinta, Hilman, Mira, Acong, Hahan and Uma belong to the second group. The moment of Reformasi is already become a myth, if not entirely forgotten. When Reformasi took place, they were still in primary or high school. For us older members of Kunci and our associates, Reformasi is a kind of privilege because of the momentous political and social change which happened during this era. Reformasi 1998 is a matter to learn and relearn, mediated by mass media documentation and other archives available. In certain cases, it was part of their memory of how they listened to the conversation about Reformasi 1998 between their parents and much older siblings or relatives at home.

The people in the second group are known as the emerging artists and cultural activists. Their involvement in field of art and culture started with taking part in extra- curricular activities within the university environment. It is often combined with an active involvement in various alternative spaces and other independent cultural spaces paved and formed by the others from previous political generations.

Going to exhibition openings and music gigs, making zines, making music and artworks, creating personal blogs, are parts of developing politics of aesthetics, networks, and camaraderie. Residency, volunteerism, internship, assistantship, become common methods for learning about how to organize an art event. Such is the common paths that the people in this research took before initiating their own projects, or setting up independent art spaces. During the New Order era (1968-98), to set up an independent space was part of reclaiming a more open and democratized cultural space against authoritative cultural sphere. My research findings show that in post-Reformasi era, to engage in various cultural projects is part of being an educated youth. It also means to navigate around the many opportunities for doing art enabled by the multiplied art infrastructure.

The activities and involvement in different alternative spaces provides an additional tool to identify one's capacity. In everyday conversation, it is not uncommon to hear a person referred to not just by their name, but also the

name of the organization that he or she is associated with. For example: Wok [of] Mes 56 , Arie [of] Mindblasting, Lani [aka] Frau and Laras, Menus [of] Jogja Noise, Tinta [of] C2O, Yoyok [of] Taring Padi, Hilman [of] Earblogspot, Mira [of] Lir Space, Dito [of] Lir Space. Chapter three narrates a story based around Walk the Folk, a music gig, organized by Lir Space. The description of the people who participated in the event reveals their involvement in various cultural spaces—Unieph [of] KKF (Kedai Kebun Forum), Titah [of] Warning Magz (an independent magazines), Anom [of] We Need More Stage (a photography collective which focuses on music performance). They might know each other, but this does not necessarily lead to collaboration. The chapters in this dissertation show that the projects examined take the form of collaboration. They reveal the process that each project has to go through in order to manifest questions, visions, and plans, into a particular activity.

At this point, it is useful to compare the difference climate of the university inhabited by Generation 98 and post-Generation 98. Based on my experience, it was not being a student that was the most crucial to our development. But being in a university, or living on campus, provided many moments of, following Harney and Moten (2013), 'fugitive enlightenment.' We nurtured our capacities for talking back. The post-Generation 98 moved back and forth between campuses to various independent cultural spaces. To talk back is to acquire a skill for managing a commons. My findings show that the available spaces to nurture the capacities for talking back have been multiplied. These are the spaces to practice collaboration and to learn how to live together.

METHODOLOGY

Position in the field: Jogja, Kunci, and commons

Jogja is not only the site of research, it is also my second home. As a city in which I have previously lived for twenty years, and whose prominence as a nurturing ground for the development of my future ideas somewhat surpasses my hometown of Surabaya, Jogja was indeed a familiar city. I moved to Jogja to continue my education at Gadjah Mada University in 1994. My anthropological fieldwork spanned two different periods—from October 2012 to April 2013, and July 2014 to January 2015. During my fieldwork, I did a series of conversations, walks, visits and trips. I did a lot of hanging out, and taking notes. Every day was a repeat of each of these activities, while following new directions at the same time.

Though the site of this research is Jogja, I found myself constantly travelling to other cities in Java - Bandung, Jakarta, Surabaya, Malang, and Solo - in order to follow and capture the dynamics of the works and activities of people being researched here. The chapters in this thesis narrate different projects in which a range of people work together, or plan for new activities.

The definition of the field in an anthropological research is subject to changes and constant reflection. The globalizing deterritorialized, and mobile social environment challenge the definition of the field (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997). As such, the spaces of my research are multiplied. Throughout my research, I moved from various online spaces—artists' personal websites, record labels' websites, art and cultural organizations' websites, to offline spaces—houses, studios, offices, bedroom-cum-studio, markets, cafes, and galleries. The people in this research use traveling as a mode of working and aspirations; they travelled locally—inter-city, inter-province, and internationally.

The meaning of Jogja as a field goes beyond the multiplicity of research spaces generated during fieldwork. In my case, Jogja became a field not by chance, or as something that stumbled on me. In assuming the role of a PhD researcher, I was never regarded as an outsider in the city: Jogja is my home after all. I was playing the guest while in the field, or I swapped the role of being the host with being the guest all the time.

Many of the people that appear in the coming chapters have been friends and colleagues for years (long before I started doing this PhD project). This research has also allowed me to consolidate friendships and collaborations, meet new people and create a different network. The wealth of network and knowledge generated from an active involvement with Kunci Cultural Studies Center enabled me to develop a solid ground for doing a research about music commons.

My interest in commons is shaped from the inside as well as the outside of Kunci. Two of many Kunci's projects particularly, *Media and Technology Convergence in Indonesia: Cultural Perspective on Handphone Culture and Creative Digital Production* and *Made in Commons*, have shaped my concept about 'music as a commons', collective action, vernacular knowledge, and self-organizing. The fieldwork process produced moments to amplify the questions that I already have through the organization of Kunci's projects. It provides valuable insights, which I could use to enhance my work at Kunci.

Outside Kunci, I have also been benefited from the discussions about commons in particular, which take place in various art organizations in Indonesia and beyond.[7]

Knowledge production in the field

To follow Geertz (1973: 7), doing ethnography means constructing a reading of "a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures", combined with an ongoing personal effort to gain confidence in doing so. It informs the meaning of ethnography as "a thick description" (Geertz 1973: 9-10). Fieldwork is a site for knowledge production. Jogja has often been a research field for many local and foreign researchers from different disciplines. My project has focused on a site that has been constantly dissected for various research purposes. But different elements of the local cultural ecosystem have been played an important role in various stages of my personal formative years. I always feel that I am in Jogja's debt. Impulses for exploring a range of interests occurred inside and outside the designated duration of fieldwork. I try to convey this symbiosis relation in an honest and straightforward manner. These are the aspects that I attempt to describe "thickly" in this research.

Doing fieldwork points to many stages where social observation and critical reflection can be transformed into shared-understanding and shared-knowledge. Observation, writing, and organizing public gatherings, have been part of my usual interaction. They have formed the practices from which I earned my stripes among the artists and cultural activist tribe in the city. I pay attention to what I have learned, and unlearned, during research. It engenders "a microscopic character" to the description (Geertz 1973: 21). This thickens the description and the knowledge produced in this research.

What does it mean to do a fieldwork in a place called home? Doing fieldwork in Jogja alerted me to elements of my own subjective position within the city and community of artist-practitioners. The more time I spent doing fieldwork,

7 Kunci Cultural Studies Center is part of Arts Collaboratory—a network comprised of twenty-five independent art and cultural organizations in Asia, Europe, Latin America, and Middle East. Within Arts Collaboratory (http://www.artscollaboratory.org/), the relation among network members, former funders and their grantees, are reimagined and reconstructed. Through collective meetings and savings, the organization of Arts Collaboratory revolves around the sustainable translocal ecosystem. During my stay in the Netherlands, I participated in some discussions, and visited site-specific exhibitions related to the issue of commons, organized by Utrecht-based Casco Art Institute: Working for the Commons.

the more questions I had about both my privileged educated position and long-term ignorance. I kept thinking about how to build a more reciprocal relationship with the people I talked with during my research. How could the relationship between researcher and researched be more equitable? I came to the field with an intention to gain a lot of knowledge. But instead it also made me wary of the possibility for influencing something, or taking too much for myself.

There were also moments when I felt that I was positioned as an individual with a kind of authoritative position—a resource person from Kunci and a PhD student at a university in The Netherlands. But, these were also the moments where I had to deal with the questions of the others and my own questions (and confusion) at the same time. This is how the process of the interpretation of facts and truths has taken place.

In what follows, I describe various opportunities where I showed my appreciation for access to physical and non-physical resources that were made available to me during research in return. It explains what it means to do a research on a subject, which intersects at many points with what I have already been doing as a cultural activist in Jogja.

Throughout fieldwork, I collected research materials ranging from interviews, notes, videos, photographs, and electronic files of music, films, books, artist monographs, zines, magazines, cassettes, CDs, records, and maps. Most of the photos and videos were taken with my mobile phone. Sometimes I uploaded glimpses of spaces and research materials on social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter or Facebook. They were useful to advance communication. I gathered hints from comments or images posted by the people in this research. And sometimes I silently observed the conversations which were taking place in their social media accounts. But not everyone in this research has social media accounts. There are different ways of navigating around contemporary media culture. For research purposes, I bought some of the cultural products which would become my research materials. To purchase something from an artist was often to be an action to open up and renew conversation. On other occasions, I was fortunate to have been given some materials for free. This happened, despite my insistence on paying. Other people let me borrow certain materials to scan or copy.

In my case, to define the experience of doing fieldwork is to partly explain the experience of collaboration with the people I met for this research. Two of Kunci's publications became the main source of the discussions to be held in both festivals organized by the Indonesian Netlabel Union, which I describe in chapter two. These two books are Lawrence Lessig's *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity* and Marcus Boon's *In Praise of Copying*. They are published as part of the Media and Technology Convergence Project. Their Indonesian titles are *Budaya Bebas: Bagaimana Media Besar Memakai Teknologi dan Hukum untuk Membatasi dan Mengontrol Kreativitas* and *Memuliakan Penyalinan* respectively. A net label owner used the publication of *Budaya Bebas* book as a case study about copyright and the phenomenon of Creative Commons to complete his undergraduate study in law.

Throughout my research, I received numerous invitations to write in a zine or contribute a chapter to an edited book. The invitations indicate that I am regarded as part of the people being researched. A PhD researcher is a role which served as a medium for social exchange. I wrote about "The Trajectory of MP3 in the Context of Indonesian Net Labels" in the zine published by the Indonesian Netlabel Union in conjunction with the international MP3 Day in 2015. In the same year, I took part in Kunci's exhibition, *Made in Commons: Indonesian Iteration*, in Jogja National Museum, in 2015. In collaboration with Gatari Surya Kusuma, a Kunci member, we created Klub USB, an offline platform where people can meet, bring their electronic files of everything, and build a public collection from them. I also wrote about cassette collecting in an essay titled 'On Dust and Caring" in the zine published by Jogja Record Store Club in conjunction with the international Record Store Day in 2016. These were mostly co-operation with people and institutions I already was familiar with through my works for Kunci.

Narayan (2012: ix) describes writing as a process "when words gather together with energy, other places, other people, and other voices stir in a parallel life." To apply this in an ethnographic research, writing appears as a process where our thoughts encountered the thoughts of the others. These thoughts walk in parallel, creating a feedback loop to shape the writing. During fieldwork, I met many local scholars and writers who shared similar interest in music, digital culture, sharing culture, and popular culture. Sometimes it leads to an intellectual collaboration. In other times, it leads to an informal conversation around music and other matters. In both occasions, I

had to respond to the question about what I was doing in Jogja. I asked the same questions about their researches. To follow Narayan (2012), writing is a transformative process: it has the power to evoke, connect, narrate, and reframe (Narayan 2012: 93-107). The topic of my research becomes the source of connection. It allows me to develop new networks with local scholars. In addition, it also allows me to be part of the rise of emerging music scholars.

My contribution to Laras—Studies of Music and Society is an example. Laras is a collective of musicians and writers to focus on popular music. Their first publication was an edited volume called *Ensemble: The Mosaic of Music in Society* (Hermiasih ed., 2016). Part of chapter one of this thesis was published in Laras' edited volume titled "*Biografi Akses: Burn Your Idol dan Narasi tentang Keterbatasan serta Jalan untuk Memecahkannya*" (Biography of Access: *Burn Your Idol* and Narration around limitation and ways to overcome it). The topic of my article was considered new, or perceived as part of the emerging area to work on music. It was placed in a section called "*Ansambel Komunitas*" (Community Ensemble), along with other three articles to talk about merchandise shop (see Bagoes Anggoro Moekti), net label (see Taufiq Aribowo), and friendship, friction, and hospitality in indie music tour (see Gisela Swaragita). Taufiq Aribowo, or Arie Mindblasting, and Gisela Swaragita, are musicians, and parts of the key informants for my research about net label in chapter two. Their involvement in Laras indicates that Laras is a new music researchers' collective, which depend on the support from local musicians. It also indicates that making good music is as important as learning to write an academic text about music.

Throughout my research, I felt that I was doing fieldwork together with the people that appear in the pages of my thesis. As Tsing puts it, "the point of ethnography is to learn how to think about a situation together with one's informant" (Tsing 2015: ix). Doing ethnography entails the performances of learning and unlearning process. It has opened up possibilities to meet and collaborate with the people from multiple planes of positioning and discursive strategies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: ACCESS, SHARING, PARTICIPATION, AND ARCHIVING

The research questions revolve around access, sharing and support, participation culture, and archiving. They are the areas which reflection, imagining, doing things together, thinking about precariousness and stability, inform the ways one feels connected with music. The music commons is about performing connectedness with music, and doing something which grows from these relations. The formulation of research questions shapes the design of the dissertation.

Access is an area where questions about availability and limitations posed and characterize media consumption. How the needs for music information and knowledge are fulfilled and characterized by the changing everyday urban infrastructure? Media memory is an important factor which shapes the sensitivity and appreciation towards the provision of music and art knowledge. How does such memory translate into a range of media tactics for accessing music? To draw on copying and piracy consumption as an important method for accessing music, I discuss about illegality as a useful method for knowledge sharing. How would copying be emphasized as a collective experience in music collection? Further, how would it be explained as an important contributing factor to the development of shared resources?

To obtain music for free has become a part of the norm of daily music consumption. To provide music without charge is a familiar act among musicians. Sharing can be part of the strategy for widening the scope of audience. Sharing is also an area where questions about the sustainability in art can be asked. How artists become sustainable through sharing their works for free? How sharing is imagined, reframed, and used to materialize support? To share music indicates a growing sense of taking a more active role in how information and knowledge should be governed. How would sharing and illicit-sharing advantages be explained in accumulating cultural materials? What kinds of support system to precondition the construction of alternative infrastructure in sharing? What aspects that can be shared, and what other aspects that cannot be shared? Can sharing be transformed into a reliable support and caring network?

The emergence of commons is always accompanied with the discussion about the meaning of taking part. The interest in discussing the matter of

participation, establishing a political position, morality stance, and conveying thoughts on the issue seemed to grow during research. What does the interest in the participatory art signify? What does it mean to be interested in participatory art when the meaning of participation in local context has been continuously redefined? Would participation also imply a capability to walk, and to take action? How would the changes in defining the production of work in art equip an artist with sensibilities towards one's context?

Archiving informs the sentiments regarding the fear of losing the grasp of something. An archiving or documentation initiative is not only justified in a condition where we have already lost a lot. Archiving can be a form of initiative, which opens up an opportunity for conveying certain musical vision to other people. It embodies intuition and urges concerns what needs to be done to develop an ongoing act to save certain cultural materials. It activates the capacities for organizing, which materialized into the development of new cultural infrastructure. How can the sense of lost in the practice of collecting be captured? How would the idea of precariousness provide insights into the nature of collecting and the significance of emptiness? What kind of criteria is set to decide on whether something is considered important or unimportant? How does the valuation work in collecting practices? How can a narrative about the intertwinement between recording, lost sound, and archiving music be drawn?

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one discusses the materialistic orientation of cultural access. It is a precondition for the emerging ideal of commons. To engage in contemporary music and popular culture is to practice different modes of consumption—buying, pirating, borrowing, renting, copying, and downloading. It is coupled with an exploration of everyday urban media infrastructure from which music and other cultural material accessed. It is part of a process of how cultural material is a regarded as a resource. To regard cultural material as a resource is to pose questions against its availability and limitation. As the Internet provides a useful site of knowledge exploration, it requires knowledge of how to navigate the

territories (shared or unshared) and the authorities which guard them. To regard cultural material as shared resources is to question their meaning as intellectual properties.

Chapter one also allocates a discussion about Burn Your Idol. Burn Your Idol is a music fans-based art project where ownership and access are reoriented and reimagined. The project produced a special disc collection based on participants' favorite music. The project evokes illegal copying as an important method for accessing music. But in this project, the idea of copying is tweaked as a useful method for sharing. Burn Your Idol developed a series of public presentation where the audience was invited to enjoy a selection of music from the discs. The participants' music favorite became something that shared with the others. Art becomes a field through which the making of sharing platform for music is imagined. Chapter one narrates the translation of media memory into media tactics, which can be transformed as a tool to generate new shared music resources.

Chapter two is about Indonesian Net Label Union. Net label is an Internet-based distribution platform for musicians to share their music for free. The development of the Indonesian Net Label Union represents a self-organizing act to indicate an attempt to work together and reclaim distribution space. The decision to share music for free generates public resources. Distribution is also a space to consolidate ideas around sustainability for future works and precariousness of an artist. The union constitutes an avenue for making commons and doing commons. In this case, to commons is to employ sharing as a uniting concept and envisioned to be a collective project to achieve a collective sustainability.

The union activists thought about the best mechanism for a wider access of their music, without taking cues from the mainstream of music industry. At the same time, they were also the music practitioners who were willing to experiment with new ways of seeking financial compensation for their works. In chapter two, I interrogate the embodiment (and the disembodiment) of sharing as well as the meaning of its sustainability. In doing so, I examine the interlinking of sharing with piracy, materialization of support from the fans' loyalties, and friendship, which forms the alternative infrastructure of the net label organization.

Chapter three focuses on Walk the Folk—a participatory music gig. Lir

Space, an alternative space for visual art and culture organized the gig. The running of Lir Space indicates a space-making act, a crucial element of the cultural movement post-1998, which is extended to the organization of Walk the Folk. Walk the Folk took place in improvised open stages amidst the beautiful scenery Kaliurang area, the popular tourist destination in Jogja. The environmental dimension of the gig extends to an intention to develop a more meaningful relation with social environment. Using stage, audience, participant, and mode of interaction between musician and audience axes, Walk the Folk engenders the opportunities to reimagine the meaning of participation and contribution. Walk the Folk contributes to the nurture of moments to produce the participation climate within art production. The development of commons requires participation habit.

In an attempt to understand the meaning of participation in Walk the Folk, I trace historical references, which point to social engagement practices, coupled with the desires for capturing the environment better. I use the case of the leftist Institute of People's Culture (or Lekra, an abbreviation of Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat) and the urgency to produce seni kerakyatan, or art for the people, as the aesthetics and political standard for evaluating art in the 1950s and the 1960s. I also situate Walk the Folk in the context of *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* (KKN), which roughly translates as 'practical university studies'. KKN is a student community service, and an established mechanism designed to deliver a concrete contribution. In the context of contemporary Jogja where artists are asked to rethink the ethical dimensions of their works, it is worth revisiting practices of Lekra and KKN.

The last two chapters—chapter 4 and 5—focus on archiving. But archiving, or a sense of documenting music material, is also touched on the other chapters. Chapter one discusses file collection as part of obtaining knowledge. Chapter two discusses some net labels which makes sense of their practice as a strategy for documenting the works of particular musicians. Archiving, and remembering, emerged as a thread to tie these chapters.

Chapter four explores collecting practices among music fans. It uses an exploration of archiving conditions as a starting point to examine what counts as valuable in developing a collection. Archiving becomes a means to generate social values from collecting. Using a story of personal cassette collections as a case study, I examine various moments in the collecting

process where senses and skills for valuation are exercised. I use it to draw a narrative of the meaning on what is important and the usefulness of collecting.

Chapter five explores a communal sense of loss and decline, which transforms into an awareness to collect music archives. Memory creates the ground on which the criteria of archives set and a sense of shared history built. The first part of chapter five talks about Nirmana Records, which uses re-issues as a strategy for preserving music material. The second part of the chapter captures efforts to save the historical music archives contained in Lokananta Records. They narrate initiatives to develop music as a form of public archives. Using the vinyl production of Nirmana Records and the current state of Lokananta Records as study cases, I interrogate the challenge to maintain commitment to care.

In the concluding chapter, I go back to sustainability as a lens to interrogate the implementation of vision and plans in managing the music commons. I make sense of the ongoing development of the commons-making process. I reflect on a shared value throughout the various projects which I have examined, and try to define what managing a music commons means.