



Muslim Hardcore: Defining Resistance Identity Politics and the Reimagining of Punk

Ervan Kus Indarto ¹; Rima Firdaus ¹; Muhammad Fahmi Nurcahyo ²; Agus Wahyudi ³

¹ Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia

² Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia

³ Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v12i8.6886>

Abstract

The existence of a fairly large punk subculture and the position of Islam as the majority religion in Indonesia often give rise to a binary view that opposes the two. However, in the midst of this dichotomy, a group has emerged that identifies itself as Muslim Punk. This study does not focus on the Muslim Punk community in general, but rather examines the practice of identity politics carried out by The Fortys Accident, a hardcore punk band from Surabaya, through the media of music, lyrics, and pamphlets that they produce. Using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach and qualitative descriptive methods, this study examines how these texts reflect efforts to re-articulate Islamic identity in the punk space that has been dominated by secular and anti-religious discourses. The results of the analysis show that The Fortys Accident practices counter-hegemony through the resemantization of punk as a space for spiritual and social expression, as well as building alternative discourses that are more down-to-earth, reflective, and humane. They not only reject the dominant view that separates religion and punk, but also show how Muslim identity can be constructed culturally without losing its spiritual dimension or social criticism.

Keywords: *Muslim; Punk; Identity Politics; Music*

Introduction

In the contemporary cultural landscape, punk music has long been identified as an arena of resistance to social norms, institutions of power and cultural homogenisation. Since its inception in the late 1970s, punk has been recognised as a form of cultural dissent, a sonic and visual protest against hegemonic norms (Hebdige, 1979). However, over its long history, the master narrative of punk has often been homogenised and focused on white, secular and masculine identities (Fiscella, 2012; Rokib & Sodik, 2017). The emergence of 'hardcore Muslim' communities - both in the East and in the Western diaspora - offers a reimagination of punk as a space that is inclusive of minority identity-based religious practices and political expressions (McDowell, 2019). In this context, punk is no longer just a symbol of secular anarchy, but a medium for shaping subjectivities rooted in both faith and resistance. As Hamid Dabashi

(2012) puts it, 'being a Muslim today is to be at the intersection of global suspicion and local resistance,' and in the hardcore Muslim community, this tension is expressed in an aesthetic that is both violent and spiritual.

The existence of groups like The Kominas, Secret Trial Five, and others, shows that Muslim identity is not something that should be contrasted with radical subcultures like punk. Instead, they show that 'religion can be punk, and punk can be religious,' as Mark LeVine (2008) asserts in *Heavy Metal Islam*. This practice creates a new space in identity politics, where individuals can 'reclaim and remix identities' (Butler, 1997) as a form of resistance to stereotypes and marginalisation, including Islamophobia, racism, and internalised patriarchy within their own communities.

Cluster Bomb Unit, a German punk band in a documentary film entitled *Punk Im Dschungel*, which tells the story of their tour in Indonesia in 2006, said that apart from Indonesia holding the title of the largest Islamic country, punk in Indonesia is also a very large youth movement. They were amazed to witness the gigs in Indonesia. Local, self-organised punk gigs can be attended by hundreds of punkers. Whereas in Europe and America, the so-called birthplace of punk, local punk gigs are only attended by no more than a hundred people. The fame of Indonesian punkers and punk scene is no doubt, Cluster Bomb Unit, a punk band from Germany, in a documentary film entitled *Punk Im Dschungel*, which tells the story of their tour in Indonesia in 2006, said that besides Indonesia holding the title of the largest Islamic country, punk in Indonesia is also a very large youth movement. They were amazed to see that local punk gigs that were organised independently could be attended by hundreds of punkers. Whereas in Europe and America, the birthplace of punk, local punk gigs are only attended by no more than a hundred people.

From its inception until the late 1990s, the punk subculture, along with its ideology of anarchism, became an important alternative political tool for Indonesian youth to resist the repressive regime of the New Order. The punkers' desire to participate in the change towards a better society was a major factor. In 1999, this desire was manifested in a semi-formal organisation called the Front Anti Fascist (FAF), which later became a wing organisation for the PRD (Democratic People's Party). FAF then attracted anarchist individuals from various regions in Indonesia and formed the Jaringan Anti Fascist Nusantara (JAFNUS) (Nurcahya, 2014: 11).

By groups of young people, punk is now used as an alternative movement to fight injustice, not infrequently there are also several punk collective groups that join in solidarity and merge with the resistance of local communities. As happened in solidarity with farmers in the Kendheng Mountains, the struggle of Kulonprogo coastal farmers, Lapindo mud victims, the Bali Tolak Reklamasi group, the Pakel community, and so on. The fluidity of the punk movement in the struggles of society proves that punk does not only exist physically but also ideologically. This is what makes punk able to survive for a long time and become a large alternative grassroots movement and has a significant role in the political constellation in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of "hardcore Muslims" can be read as an attempt to reject the subaltern position silenced by the dominance of Western discourse. As Gayatri Spivak (2023) puts it, 'the subaltern cannot speak'-but through music and cultural performativity, this community finds its own voice and political articulation. They not only reject the dominant narrative, but also produce an alternative epistemology that incorporates progressive Islamic values, social criticism, and an ethic of solidarity (Sahin, 2018).

Thus, this study is important as an attempt to understand how global subcultures such as punk are not monolithic, but always in the process of negotiation and transformation. Through the lens of "hardcore Muslims", this research will explore the dynamics between resistance, identity politics, and faith expression in contemporary popular culture.

Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a critical-cultural paradigm, as the main focus lies on exploring the meanings, representations and practices of identity in hardcore Muslim subculture, particularly as manifested by the band The Fourtys Accident. This approach allows researchers to understand how religious and subcultural expressions are intertwined in daily life practices, as well as how they form a narrative of resistance to the dominant discourse that separates religion and popular culture.

Data was collected through literature and netnography. Literature includes studies on punk, identity politics, and contemporary Islam. Meanwhile, netnography was used to observe how The Fourtys Accident presented their Islamic identity and values in digital spaces such as social media, YouTube channels, and independent music forums. This method refers to Kozinets' et al, (2010) netnography approach, which is considered relevant for studying cultural practices in the context of online communities. The objects analysed include song lyrics, pamphlets, album covers, performance documentation, and other visual narratives produced by the band, which are understood as forms of 'cultural texts' (Hall, 1989).

The data analysis technique in this research uses Fairclough's (2013) Critical Discourse Analysis model, which focuses on how linguistic practices-both in lyrics, online narratives, and visuals-reflect and shape relations of power, resistance, and ideology. The analysis is conducted in three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. In addition, this reading is enriched by emphasising that identity is not fixed, but constructed through actions, representations and social repetition. By combining these frameworks, the research aims to reveal how The Fourtys Accident not only negotiate their identities as Muslims and punks, but also build alternative discourse spaces that challenge dominant narratives in both the religious and subcultural realms.

Breaking Down the Dichotomy: Islam and Punk in Alternative Discourse Construction

The binary view that positions Islam and punk as two conflicting entities is a legacy of hegemonic narratives that separate religious values from contemporary cultural expressions. Islam is often associated with piety, order and conservatism, while punk is identified with rebellion, nihilism and secularism. The Fourtys Accident, as part of the Muslim Hardcore scene, actively challenges this dichotomy by constructing a hybrid and intersectional identity space. In this context, Islam is no longer seen as the antithesis of punk, but as a value framework that can encourage the practice of resistance to social, political and cultural inequality. The integration of these two domains forms an alternative discourse that allows the articulation of a progressive Muslim identity, without having to lose the roots of spirituality or the spirit of social criticism inherent in the punk tradition.

Indonesia is well known as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Reporting from katadata.co.id (3 November 2021) based on a report from The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (RISSC), there are 231.06 million Indonesians who are Muslims. This number is equivalent to 86.7% of Indonesia's total population. The proportion of the Muslim population in Indonesia also reaches 11.92% of the total population in the world. Islamic values have also taken root in almost all aspects of social life, from daily practices, cultural customs, to political practices.

The development of punk and Islam, which are both big, cannot be separated from the emergence of a binary view between the two. A year before the Casualties' South East Asia Rebels was released, an event occurred that brought the Indonesian punk scene to international attention, when the Aceh Sharia Police arrested around 60 punks and then shaved their heads because they were deemed incompatible with the Aceh Special Region's Sharia bylaw. As reported by The Guardian (14 December 2011):

Police in Indonesia's most conservative province have stripped away body piercings and shaved off mohicans from 65 youths detained at a punk-rock concert because of their perceived threat to Islamic values. The teens and young men were also stripped of dog-collar necklaces and chains and then thrown in pools of water for "spiritual" cleansing, the local police chief, Iskandar Hasan, said on Wednesday. It was the latest effort by authorities to promote strict moral values in Aceh, the only province in this secular but predominantly Muslim nation of 240 million people to have imposed Islamic laws.

In addition, the BBC (14 December 2011) also wrote:

Dozens of young men and women have been detained for being "punk" and disturbing the peace in Aceh, Indonesia's most devoutly Muslim province. They are being held in a remedial school, where they are undergoing "re-education".

They were arrested on Saturday, 10 December 2011 while holding a charity concert for orphanages titled 'Aceh for the Punx' at Taman Budaya, Banda Aceh. After being arrested they were taken to the National Police School in Seulawah Aceh for counselling. They were stripped of all their punk attributes and dried in the hot sun while being shaven. They were then "rehabilitated" with military training (physical and disciplinary exercises such as being immersed in water while naked) and religious moral guidance in accordance with Acehnese culture for 10 days.

What the punkers in Aceh experienced triggered solidarity in many areas, one of which was in Bandung. The action, held in Dago during Car Free Day, was attended by around 100 punkers who participated, in the action they also distributed leaflets containing information about violence against the authorities, human rights equality, and freedom of speech, to the people around the location. In addition, they also held a free clothing stall and shared free food.



Gambar: Solidaritas Punk Bandung (Sumber: Lemarikota zine)

In addition to national solidarity, there were also solidarity actions organised by international networks such as solidarity actions in Moscow, Germany and London. At an action in front of the Indonesian Embassy in London in Grosvenor Square, musicians from London's underground punk scene spoke using a sound system while blocking the entrance to the Embassy. The protesters demanded a statement from the Indonesian Ambassador to condemn the forced removal of identity attributes and people's freedom of expression and called for an end to human rights violations in Indonesia.



Gambar: Solidaritas Punk di London (Sumber: guy-smallman-photos.photoshelter.com)

After the Aceh punk case, a wild narrative developed that punk seemed to be at odds with Islam. This narrative is not without reason, in various mass media it was reported that the Aceh

Regional Government seemed to clash Punk with the applicable Sharia. As reported by *beritasatu.com* (16 December 2011), then Deputy Mayor of Aceh Illiza Sa'aduddin insisted that she would continue to gather punkers and re-educate them. "Aceh is a Sharia region. Everyone must comply and it is very clear that the punk community violates Sharia," she said. Then *antaranews.com* (20 December 2011) also wrote that dozens of community organisations in Aceh rejected the existence of punks, and urged the government to issue a "Qanun" (local regulation) containing a ban on the punk community. 'There is no place for the development of the punk community and we urge the government to immediately make a qanun prohibiting this community in Aceh,' said Secretary General of the Aceh Dayah Ulama Association (HUDA) Faisal Ali. This was conveyed in a meeting between the leaders of mass organisations and the Aceh Police Chief, which was also attended by FPI Aceh, the Association of Mosque Imams, the Aceh Da'wah Council, KAMMI, HMI, and PII.

The following week after the arrest of the Aceh punkers, on 16 December 2011, what happened in Jakarta provided a contrasting picture to the growing assumption that punks were at odds with Islam as in Aceh. The community who identified themselves as "Punk Muslim" also held an action at the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout in Jakarta to commemorate the day of Intifada and the moral struggle to support the liberation of the Palestinian people.



Gambar: Aksi Hari Intifadhah Punk Muslim di Bundaran HI (Sumber: Facebook Punk Muslim Indonesia)

If previously in the Land of the Porch of Mecca, punk was considered incompatible with Islamic sharia and deserved to be purged, the Punk Muslim group actually presented something different, namely

as a defender of Islam and a fighter for the rights of Muslims in Palestine. Punk Muslim tries to carry out a restoration project of faith and piety in the punk subculture environment which has been synonymous with anti-religious life, Punk Muslim uses punk music as a medium to strengthen Islamic identity. This is the kind of thing that is missing from the mainstream media coverage.

Nevermind the Jahiliyyah, Here's the Hijrahs: Symbolic Appropriation and the Identity Politics of Muslim Punk

The phrase 'Nevermind the Jahiliyyah, Here's the Hijrahs' implies more than a play on words; it reflects the courage to reclaim a space of identity that has been divided into sharp dichotomies between religious and secular, East and West (Saefullah, 2017). In the spirit of Muslim punk communities, including groups like The Fourtys Accident, the term jahiliyyah no longer simply refers to the dark pre-Islamic era, but is reread as a metaphor for the social inequality, alienation and cultural oppression they feel today. In contrast, hijrah is not only a spiritual journey, but also a symbol of transition to a new consciousness-both personal and collective. By borrowing the punk idiom that is synonymous with resistance and submission, they build a space where religion and social criticism do not negate each other, but instead strengthen each other. In Fairclough's critical discourse approach, this action is a form of intervention against established meanings - a way to refill popular symbols with more contextualised, humane and meaningful life experiences.

To understand Muslim Punk as a phenomenon, it is not enough to take a simple view that tends to emphasise the boundaries between punk and religion. Everyone certainly has meaning, and always tries to live in this meaningful world. For this reason, it is necessary to see how the process of meaning and what experiences shape them.

One of the well-known figures in the Muslim Punk group is Aditya Rahman aka Aik, he is a well-known figure in the Surabaya hc/punk scene. Aik is known as a member of The Fourty's Accident, a hardcore band that he founded with his late brother, Arief Budiman aka Jack in 1997, besides that Aik is also known as the author of the zine Sub Chaos. Aik went on a long hiatus, as did The Fourty's Accident and the Sub Chaos zine, after feeling that the punk scene in which he lived tended to stagnate without any scientific development and was considered to lack social awareness. It turns out that many of them shout about justice and blame the government, but today they can't even wake up in the morning, are lazy to work, study lazily, spend more time hanging out, discussing unimportant things, and spend money on cigarettes and alcohol.

Not to mention, some who feel that they are activists in resistance collectives, but when they make appointments, they are often not on time, when they are given a mandate, they just ignore it, and escape from responsibility. Today, they shout for freedom, but tomorrow they take away other people's freedoms while arguing 'I'll do what I want!' Although all of these things do not always happen to Aik himself and all his punk friends, but most of them are the fact (Yani, 2017: 40-42). The hc/punk scene is becoming less and less of a threat to oppression and domination, the collectives with which to share and discuss are receding. Instead, hc/punk bands proliferated, gigs and new releases appeared everywhere. All bands are represented. But everything feels dry, because there is no longer the spirit of the past, the spirit of defending justice.

Aik discovered the defects in his thinking. From there he became interested in learning Islam from the lectures of Aa Gym (Abdullah Gymnastiar). He felt that the solutions offered by Aa Gym in overcoming the problems of society at that time were very "against the stream". Because usually Aik is more focused on "correcting" others when there are social problems, but Aa Gym actually opens the mind to focus on "correcting" yourself. Aa Gym's words stuck with me when he quoted one of the verses in the Qur'an: 'Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change themselves.' (Surah Ar-Ra'd: 11) (Yani, 2017: 25-26). In 2004, Jack (Aik's older brother) was the first punker in the Surabaya

punk scene to decide to leave the scene and study Islam, followed by several other friends. Then in 2006, Aik wrote the 8th edition of Sub Chaos zine as a farewell edition. The edition contained his personal outpouring regarding the conflict of thoughts in his heart until he decided to end his activity in the punk scene. This became known as the hijrah phenomenon.

In 2011, Aik returned from his contemplation of studying religious knowledge, and became known as one of the community leaders in Punk Muslim, he also founded a similar community in Surabaya. Currently, his main activity is as a coach at Better Youth Surabaya, a social foundation engaged in youth mentoring and empowerment. It was actually hard for Aik to decide to return to the scene that he had left for almost 6 years and come back with a “new face”. Aik's return to the hc/punk scene was most clearly marked by the revived Sub Chaos zine in the same year. Sub Chaos was first published in May 1999, and was the first zine in Surabaya. This zine was made by Aik and his brother after previously receiving a shipment of Tigabelas Zine made by Arian, the vocalist of the band Seringai from Bandung, which was first published in 1998. Gradually Sub Chaos began to be recognised in various cities in Indonesia, the content of the zine which initially reviewed music turned into political content. Sub Chaos was thick with social criticism and became more militant when other contributors began to appear to fill the essay content, they were activists of the punk subculture such as Pamudji alias Pam who was a member of the band Runtah and Kontamin Kapitalis, he was also the editor of the zines Mempersenjaji Imajinasi, Gandhi Telah Mati, and Submissive Riot, and Herry Sutresna alias Ucok who was a member of the hiphop group Homicide, and editor of the zine Membakar Batas.

Sub Chaos was revived with a completely new face. Aware of the risk of being hated or abandoned by old friends, in the introduction to the 9th edition of Sub Chaos zine in 2011 Aik asserted that the new Sub Chaos is a medium that contains ideological arguments and personal reasons why Aik decided to change.

"Now I'm back with a direct woro-woro to continue the zine I made in the past, which was interrupted, and even if you remember, I even decided to “say goodbye” to no longer continue SUB CHAOS. Well..forget how I used to be. Not too important to remember. Because SUB CHAOS is different now. Remember, I just wrote above about “change”? And don't ask too much...just read the contents of this zine, then you will feel a different “flavour” from the previous editions of SUB CHAOS-SUB CHAOS. And it can even be said that the role of this edition of SUB CHAOS is to erase the “role” of the previous edition."

Aik's opinion that the scene was scientifically impoverished and no longer a threat to injustice led him to fight through other avenues. This does not imply coercion to anyone who is different. So according to him, it shouldn't be too much of a problem. Sub Chaos just wants to return everything to its portion. As an alternative and balancing thought in seeing thoughts that were once believed from a different perspective.

The phenomenon of religion being moderated and negotiated using popular cultural practices is not only specific to Indonesia, but in other parts of the world. In Europe, for example, young urban Muslims use hip-hop music as a counter-hegemonic discourse as well as a vehicle to emphasise contemporary Islamic identity in response to current socio-political conditions. As Swedenburg (2001:76) writes, the growth of Muslim hip-hop music groups in Europe reflects a resistance movement against racism and Islamophobia in Europe. Hidayatullah (2014:155) says that the twentieth century has presented reports on the growth of spiritual movements and religious revolutions that tend to increase in almost all parts of the world. In this century, science, capitalism and politics have tended to strengthen in all layers of the world's population, however, religion has also experienced a similar fate. In addition, globalisation and advances in media technology have allowed this situation to sweep across the globe. This phenomenon has prompted social scientists to question the validity of secularisation theory and forced some sociologists to ratify their views on the relationship between religion and modernisation.

These developments increasingly allow religion to transform into practices that are public. Peter Beyer, through the concepts of function and performance, suggests an interesting model to see how religion conceptualises reality. Like science, economics or the health system, religion is able to provide services not only in supporting and enhancing the religious beliefs of its adherents, but also in expanding the implications of religion beyond the territory of religion itself (Beyer, 1990: 377). Religion not only asserts functions that refer to the sacred aspects of religious communication in the form of religious practices such as: worship, soul healing and salvation, but also more profane performances that include providing applicable solutions to problems in areas of life outside religion (Beyer, 1990: 379).

Redefining Punk, and the Representation of Identity Politics

In addition to Sub Chaos, The Fourty's Accident was also revived by inviting some old friends, but not like before, Aik said The Fourty's Accident comes with a new Islamic face and voices positive advice through song lyrics. Aik said,

"At that time I had just returned from my uzlah to study religion. After several years I left the scene, then I intend to return to the scene with a new face that is more Islamic. My goal in forming TFA (The Fourty's Accident) again is to convey positive advice through my song lyrics (Interview 12 December 2021)."

The Fourty's Accident was formed in 1997. At that time there were 5 people who became the former of this band including Jack (vocals), Abas (drums), Savic (bass), Tono (guitar) and Aik (guitar). At that time they were very inspired by bands like Operation Ivy and Rancid, then began writing songs and recorded in the first album entitled 'There Are Hundred of Ways of Getting Round The Law'. The first album received a positive response from the Surabaya punk scene considering there were not many punk bands that had sprung up in that era. Then in 1999 released an EP entitled 'Pembodohan', at that time the musical direction began to change into hardcore punk in the style of Minor Threat and THE END 32 (Bandung), then in 2000 released a full album 'Self Title', and participated in several compilations. After being revived, The Fourty's Accident had released albums entitled 'Against The Stream' in 2012 and 'Between Regret and Hope' in 2014 with the last formation being Aik (vocal), Doni (Bass), Yudha (Guitar), and Endy (Drum).



Gambar: Formasi terakhir The Fourty's Accident pada salah satu gigs di Indies Café Surabaya tahun 2012. (Sumber: Facebook page The Fourty's Accident)

The Fourty's Accident being revived after Sub Chaos sparked many questions in the hc/punk scene itself. Many are looking forward to the arrival of this legendary band to enliven the hc/punk scene again.

"At first, it seemed that our friends in the scene were a bit surprised by the colour of our band. Some reacted negatively, but others positively. For me, that's normal. The important thing is to be confident, and always maintain good communication with them (Aik, Interview 12 December 2021)."

The new colour in The Fourty's Accident is strongly influenced by the personnel's activism in Muslim Punk. Like Sub Chaos, The Fourty's Accident is used as a medium of struggle to preach, convey ideological arguments so that they can contest other discourses in the scene..

"Indirectly, the thoughts I brought to TFA had a lot to do with my involvement in Muslim Punk at the time. You could also call it a "medium". The reason is because the target of my da'wah is the punk community too. Of course the media used must also be in accordance with their interests and interests, namely bands, music, lyrics, and things related to that (Aik, Interview 12 December 2021)."

The discourse contestation carried out through The Fourty's Accident media is a form of identity politics struggle from the Muslim Punk group to return to the representation space. Discussions about identity politics are generally interpreted as the political interests of a group with the same racial, religious, ethnic, social or cultural identity. A.M. Mudhoffir, Luqman N.H., & Diatyka Widya (2017) said, in Indonesia itself, identity politics is often associated with the problems of multicultural society, for example, as in the 2017 DKI Pilgub, and Action 212 is considered a real form of identity politics practice. But is this really the case?

Seyla Benhabib (1997: 28) says that identity involves distinguishing oneself from what one is not, therefore identity politics is always the politics of difference. Identity politics is more about individuals with their own cultural baggage. In this case Benhabib gives an example, such as a Bosnian Serb but is considered different by other Bosnian Serbs because he is a Muslim; then a member of the European anthropological community is considered different because he comes from the Middle East, or Asia. This means that identity politics here is not just about difference, but how differences tend to be positioned as "others". Nathaniel Mackey (1992: 51) asserts that the process of othering is related to the practice of power, exclusion, and privilege, in addition to the concentration of norms that result in differences being regulated, dropped, and even marginalised.

If we refer to this definition, Muslim punk is identity politics. Viewed broadly, even though Muslims are the majority in Indonesia, what if the Muslims are punks? Referring to Hebdige (1991:19), Muslim punks are still seen as a subculture of punks who deviate from the "normality" of the dominant culture of society so that they are considered as "others". Punk tends to be a problem because it is considered deviant, not in accordance with the normality prevailing in the dominant society. In addition, within the hc/punk scene itself, Muslim punks also experience "othering". Muslim punks are considered different, strange and incompatible with punk in general because they bring punk in line with Islamic teachings.

"We in Punk Muslim are considered a strange sect that carries the name punk in it. For us, that's normal. Because they don't know. But as far as I have heard, Punk Muslim is considered by them as a community that does not represent "real punk" according to them (Aik, Interview 12 December 2021).

"Not infrequently, contradictory comments appear and tend to exclude Muslim punks, such as in one of the following Instagram social media content:



Gambar: Salah satu konten media sosial yang kontra terhadap Punk Muslim. (Sumber: www.instagram.com/p/CO7Atzqt58D/).

The framing of punk in positioning itself against religion has been done for a long time. Call it one of them Dead Kennedys, the band fronted by Jello Biafra in their song “Religious Vomit” released in 1981 said religion was disgusting.

“All religions make me wanna throw up. All religions suck. They all claim that they have the truth. That'll set you free. Just give 'em all your money and they'll set you free. Free for a fee”¹

Then later the American band Disrupt in 1994 said religion was a fraud in their song “Religion is a Fraud” below,

“Something to keep you content until you die. Pray every day to Jesus and all will be fine.

Why don't you grow up and observe all the lies. God's only in your head, when will you realize.

Religion, religion, religion is a fraud. And so is the myth you refer to as god.”²

The secularism that has invaded the life of Indonesia's imaginary state, as Ismail Al-Alam wrote in *tirto.id* (24 February 2021), has also influenced the development of a way of thinking in society that tends to reject the presence of religion in the public sphere. This influence can be read when people tend to question the presence of religion in public life, for example in the arrest of 60 punkers in Aceh, if examined closely, it also affirms this secular tendency. Frivolous interpretations that are then reproduced continuously can make religion or the symbols that represent it invariably a mockery. As happened during Seringai's concert at Java Rockin Land 2010, Arian13, Seringai's vocalist, called one of the political party figures who tried to block access to pornography sites in Indonesia ‘sucks!’, and he also said that Indonesia would be made like “backward” Arabia and then accompanied by the applause of his fans. Such statements are often made in criticism of the arrogance of the dominant group's interpretation. A tendency of absolute interpretation that seeks to close the space for other interpretations. If such a tone of criticism is accepted carelessly, we may fall into the logic of absolute interpretation, no different from the arrogant character of the dominant group. Isn't this arrogant character very clear when the symbol of “Arab” identity is used as a basis for labour? Or, perhaps, the term “Arabisation” already contains certain

¹ Dead Kennedys, Religious Vomit dalam album *In God We Trust* tahun 1981.

² Disrupt, Religion is a Fraud dalam album *Unrest* tahun 1994

stigmas to exclude. Then the most logical result of this is as if being a punk must be against religion. Then are Islam and Punk not allowed to be in line?

Talking about “what is punk?” is a very difficult thing, even since the beginning of the emergence of punk subculture until now it has never been finalised. Punk has gone through many transformation processes. Often the meaning between one person and another can be different and even contradictory. Borrowing Sedgwick's (2005: 68) view, as a cultural practice, punk is not easy to define because it has different meanings in various contexts. Anyone can interpret, but cannot claim to be the most correct. In fact, if punk then has an “established” definition, it will give limitations. Doesn't that contradict what punk stands for, which is freedom? Punk seems to only be owned by those who are considered to be able to define it. So anyone who tries to redefine it is not considered punk. Pam in *Beyond the Barbed Wire* zine issue 1 in 2005 wrote about her debate on the definition of punk, which she thought was increasingly absurd.

‘When being a punk restricts me from affiliating with anyone outside of the punk subculture, when being a punk means being a self-righteous nationalist and denying dialogue, when being a punk means being a businessman who can sell anything for the sake of his own wallet, when being a punk means compromising with the system that punk was desperately opposed to in the first place, when being a punk means establishing a confining feudal culture, for me it is punk to no longer be a punk.’

Aik in *Sub Chaos* edition 11 in 2011 also wrote that the debate about the definition of punk was too annoying because it was never finished, so he redefined punk for himself as follows:

"I really don't care how punk was born, I don't care who the father and mother were that led to the term “punk”. All I know is that me being a religious/Muslim, applying it in all aspects of my life, including being in the middle of the punk/hardcore scene in this country that is full of restrictions, is VERY PUNK!"

According to Barker (2004: 178), resistance is the defence of the “other” or subordinate against the power practices imposed by the dominant culture. In line with this, Muslim punks who are considered not to represent the “dominant punk group” also show a series of resistance. The *Fourty's Accident* voiced their resistance through a song released in 2012 entitled “Muslim Hardcore is What We Stand For”. In the lyrics they asserted to refuse to submit to anyone who felt the most entitled to define punk and non-punk, and questioned since when did punk become an established moral? What right does one group's definition have to be central to another group's? The *Fourty's Accident* have their own definition of “Muslim Hardcore” and hardcore as a medium.

This is not the time to argue, what kind of hardcore are you fighting for?

No need to answer, the question of what is hardcore?

Hardcore Muslims, that's what we fight for!

We do not avoid your judgment, that we bring Islam in everything we say

because for us, hardcore is just a tool to convey our thoughts. Hardcore Muslims, that's what we fight for! (*The Fourty's Accident - Muslim Hardcore That We Stand For*).

Although the nature of Muslim punks' struggle is much different from the anti-fascist punk-politics that dominated the scene two decades ago, their structure and operations are comparable. In a sense, their provocative and opinionated message and attitude is what makes them seem so punk, without necessarily implying that they are “counter culture”. Begundal Bertauhid's bold slogan *Hijrah* and Aik's

subversive anti-Zionist zine series Sub Chaos remind us that members of this movement are far from apolitical and passive. They embrace an altruistic attitude, on the one hand having a responsibility to spread the message of Islam, and on the other hand, they also help minority groups marginalised by the state (Papineau, 2021: 47). The Muslim Punk group also still carries out activities that pay attention to minority groups. In Surabaya itself, several activities were organised together with the Better Youth Foundation, including: Ruang Mendengar (youth problem consultation service), Mak Gerr (Free Meals for Dupak Rail Village residents) and distribution of basic necessities to those in need. Stamped as “hijrah punks” on The Fourty's Accident did not change their political stance. They still loudly voice resistance to oppression and domination such as the song entitled “Small Protest Against Mass Media Lies”. In the explanation of the lyrics included in the Against The Stream album release, it is written that this song is a form of resistance to the mainstream mass media that often stigmatises Islam. The mainstream media constructs and legitimises public discourse by giving negative terms to Muslims such as “terrorist” and “fundamentalist” and “intolerant”.

Today's news, you call us terrorists.

Tomorrow's news, you say we're fundamentalists.

Mass media, lie!

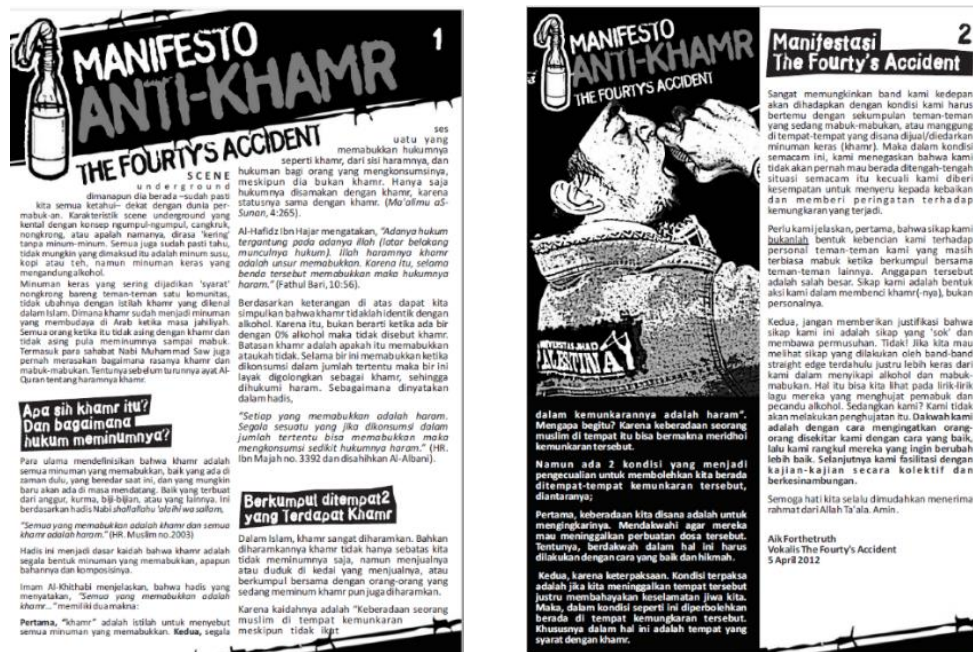
The negative stigma you have attached to us.

It won't change until we fight back.

(The Fourty's Accident - A Small Protest Against Mass Media Lies).

Other forms of punk resistance such as the DIY (Do it Yourself) ethos, which is often adopted by punk circles, are also still practised by The Fourty's Accident such as self-produced albums from the recording process, release, to distribution; not only that, they also produce and distribute their own band merchandise. The Fourty's Accident are firm in upholding the teachings of Islam, they politically often convey this on stage and through the band's manifesto which they published in 2012, namely the anti-khamr manifesto. The manifesto states that the characteristics of the underground scene, which is thick with the concept of gathering, “cangkruk”, nongkrong, or whatever you want to call it, is considered “dry” without drinking. Liquor, which is often used as a “condition” for hanging out with friends in the community, is not unlike the term khamr, which is known and forbidden in Islam. The manifesto goes on to explain that the manifesto itself is neither hateful nor hostile in the way that the Straight Edge group, a counter-culture form of punk subculture that developed in America and often committed violence against non-Straight Edge, did.

But rather not wanting to be in the middle of such a situation unless given the opportunity to call to goodness (dakwah) by reminding those around in a good way and then embraced if they want to change for the better. Borrowing Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the “carnavalesque”, which is the reversal of the domination of official values by the creation of other relatively open forms (Lachmann, 1988: 118), this manifesto can be seen as another form of resistance shown by The Fourty's Accident against the dominant punk habits.



Gambar: Manifesto Anti Khamr, The Fourtys Accident. (Sumber: Konterkultur)

In the face of the contradictions circulating within the hc/punk scene itself, attempts at dialogue and openness have been made since the beginning of The Fourty's Accident's reemergence in the hc/punk scene. However, most of them are just reactionary negative comments on social media.

"On average, those who tend to be against it only dare to make negative comments on social media. It's still hit and run. Every time I invite them to meet and have a good dialogue, no one has ever welcomed my invitation, they don't have enough reasons to refute my arguments about the concepts I bring. In fact, I am waiting for writings on social media and other online media that have the nuances to refute my opinion, until today there has never been one (Aik, Interview 12 December 2021)."

For the future, Aik said there are no plans for new steps from The Fourty's Accident, but he will continue to focus on dialogical efforts with a more systemic approach through Better Youth.

"There are no plans to start a new project yet. As the frontman, I'm still focusing on more systemic approaches through Better Youth. However, we still distribute TFA songs several times through social media and groups in the punk scene (Aik, Interview 12 December 2021)."

Social Practice: Resistance to Hegemony and Rearticulation of Muslim Identity

Within the framework of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, The Fourtys Accident as part of the hardcore Muslim scene can be read as a discursive practice that reflects resistance to the dominance of mainstream culture as well as the hegemony of homogeneous Islamic identity narratives. Through their lyrics, performance, and musical aesthetics, the group reconstructs representations of Muslims that are often associated with normative piety into alternative forms of expression that remain rooted in the values of religious identity, but with loud, angry, and confrontational articulations. This creates a new discursive space where 'Muslim' is no longer synonymous with silence or conservatism, but with the courage to challenge injustice and domination, both from within the community and from outside.

Fairclough emphasises the importance of seeing discourse as a form of social practice, and in this context, The Fourtys Accident not only conveys a musical message, but also actively reshapes power relations-both towards state authority, religious institutions, and global cultural structures. Their choice to adopt the punk idiom, historically derived from a Western and secular context, but infused with a spirit of resistance rooted in the experiences of Muslim minorities, is a form of intertextuality and discourse hybridity. Through this, they do not simply create music, but construct a counter-discourse that challenges stereotypical expectations and opens up space for a plural, dynamic and political Muslim identity.

Through Fairclough's lens, The Fourtys Accident form a collective identity that is resistive by intervening in the dominant discourse of what it means to be a Muslim and a youth in contemporary society. The identity they construct is not something fixed or passive, but the result of constant negotiation through the language, symbols and performativity they use in their music. In this framework, Muslim identity is no longer presented as a normative religious identity, but as an active political identity that speaks out against social injustice and marginalisation. By mixing Islamic symbols, DIY punk spirit, and social criticism in one discourse space, The Fourtys Accident represents how identity can become an arena of discourse contestation-a place where subjectivity is formed, questioned, and redefined collectively.

Conclusion

It is ironic that punk, which has been known as a subculture that upholds freedom of expression, is narrowly framed by some of its own members. When religious identity is present in the punk space, as seen in the Muslim punk phenomenon, the response is not always inclusive. Instead of being considered part of the diversity within the community, Muslim punks are often positioned as the “other”-that is, not conforming to the dominant norm that punk and religion, especially Islam, are polar opposites. In fact, for Muslim punks, punk has become a medium that strengthens their Islamic values, not negates them. Understanding the existence of Muslim punks cannot be done through a binary lens that separates the religious world from the subculture world. Instead, they exist in an in-between space-an alternative discursive realm that allows for a more fluid and grounded form of piety to emerge.

The politics of piety that they practice is not driven by big ideologies or elitist jargon, but by daily experiences - by simple values, such as forming good morals, maintaining relationships with others, and making religion part of life practice, not just a symbol. In this sense, the Punk Muslim approach feels more familiar with the concept of Islam in everyday life, which touches social reality directly and without pretension.

As part of an Islamic subculture that uses a cultural approach, Muslim punks adapt popular culture not only to build an identity, but also to convey messages, convey interpretations, and even challenge the dominant discourse that excludes them. As done by The Fourty's Accident, punk music and aesthetics are used as a medium for identity struggle that reflects the consistency of being a Muslim as well as a punk. This approach is reminiscent of the cultural da'wah method of the songo wali, who combined spiritual values with artistic expressions so that religion could touch people's lives more inclusively and thoroughly. This phenomenon is also not exclusive to Indonesia. In various parts of the world, similar movements have emerged, such as Muslim hip-hop groups in Europe that voice resistance to racism and Islamophobia. This shows that religion, as argued by Peter Beyer, now not only functions in the sacred space, but also appears in the public sphere as a response to social problems. However, it is important to always keep identity politics from turning into a new exclusivism. When identities that were once “lionised” begin to exclude others, a cycle of epistemic violence is formed that distances us from human values. In a pluralistic society, dialogue and openness are the main ways to maintain differences and make them a shared wealth, not a source of division.

References

- Aik. 2011. *Introduksi*. Sub Chaos Zine edisi 9.
- Aik. 2012. *Tulisan Membosankan Tentang Punk*. Sub Chaos zine edisi 11.
- Al Alam, Ismail. 2021. *Mengapa Indonesia Tak Pernah Terus Terang Mengaku Negara Sekuler?* Diunggah pada 24 Februari 2021, diakses pada 10 Desember 2021, dari <https://tirto.id/gaw7>.
- Barker, Chris. 2004. *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Benhabib, Seyla. 1997. *Strange Multiplicities: The Politics of Identity and Difference in a Global Context*, Macalester International: Vol. 4, hlm. 27-56.
- Beritasatu. 2011. *Pemda: Penangkapan Punk Aceh Dilanjutkan*. Diunggah pada 16 Desember 2011, diakses pada 10 Desember 2021, dari <https://beritasatu.com/nasional/21745/pemda-penangkapan-punk-aceh-dilanjutkan>.
- Beyer, Peter F. 1990. *Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society*. Dalam Featherstone, Mike. *Global culture: nationalism, globalization, and modernity : a Theory, culture & society special issue*. London: Sage Publications, hlm. 373-395.
- Budi Kusnandar, Viva. 2021. *RISSC: Populasi Muslim Indonesia Terbesar di Dunia*. Diunggah pada 3 November 2021, diakses pada 21 Januari 2022, dari <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2021/11/03/rissc-populasi-muslim-indonesia-terbesar-di-dunia>.
- Burhani, Ruslan. 2011. *Ormas Tolak Keberadaan Komunitas Punk di Aceh*. Diunggah pada 20 Desember 2011, diakses pada 10 Desember 2021, dari <https://antaranews.com/berita/289685/ormas-tolak-keberadaan-komunitas-punk-di-aceh>.
- Dabashi, H. 2012. *The Arab spring: The end of postcolonialism*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Dead Kennedys, 1981. *Religious Vomit*. Album In God We Trust.
- Disrupt. 1994. *Religion is s Fraud*. Album Unrest.
- Edgar, A., & Sedgwick, P. 2005. *Key concepts in cultural theory*. London: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. 2013. *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge.
- Fiscella, A. T. 2012. From Muslim punks to taqwacore: an incomplete history of punk Islam. *Contemporary Islam*, 6, 255-281.
- Geiger, Andreas. 2008. *Punk Im Dschungel*. Documentary.
- Hall, S. 1989. Cultural identity and cinematic representation. *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, (36), 68-81.
- Hidayatullah, Rahmat. 2015. *Punk Muslim: Ekspresi Identitas Keagamaan Subkultur Muslim Urban*. Kawalu: Journal of Local Culture, vol. 2, no. 2, hlm. 145-164.

- Hebdige, Dick. 1991. *Subculture : the Meaning of Style*. London. New York: Routledge.
- Kozinets, R. V., & Gambetti, R. (2021). Netnography unlimited. *Netnography Unlimited*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003001430>.
- Lachmann, R., Eshelman, R., & Davis, M. 1988. *Bakhtin and Carnival: Culture as Counter-Culture*. Cultural Critique, no. 11, hlm. 115–152.
- LeVine, M. 2008. Heavy metal Muslims: the rise of a post-Islamist public sphere. *Contemporary Islam*, 2, 229-249.
- Mackey, Nathaniel. 1992. *Other: From Noun to Verb*. Representations, no. 39, hlm. 51-70.
- McDowell, A. D. 2019. Enemies, Allies, and the Struggle for Self-definition in “Muslim Punk” Rock. *Social Currents*, 6(3), 270-283.
- Mudhoffir A.M, Luqman N.H, & Diatyka W. 2017. *Identity Politics: Mobilizing Religious Sentiment in Democratic Indonesia*. Diunggah pada 14 Juni 2017, diakses pada 10 Desember 2021, dari <https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/identity-politics-mobilising-religious-sentiment-in-democratic-indonesia/>.
- Nurchaya, Bobby S. 2011. *Konstruksi Sosial Tentang Straight Edge*. Skripsi. Surabaya: Universitas Airlangga.
- Nurchaya, M. Fahmi. 2014. *Fenomenologi Anarkisme*. Skripsi. Surabaya: Universitas Airlangga.
- Pam. 2005. “*Punk is Here, Life is Elsewhere*”. Beyond the Barbed Wire zine edisi 1.
- Papineau, Élise. 2019. ‘Hey! Ho! Let’s go [back to Islam]!': *Exploring the interplay of punk and piety in Java, Indonesia*. Master’s thesis, Montreal: Université de Montréal.
- Papineau, Élise. 2021. *Re-Thinking Punk Discourse and Purpose: A Case Study Of Muslim Punk in Java*. Trans-Global Punk Scenes: The Punk Reader Vol. 2, hlm. 39-55.
- Rukmi, I.P. 2009. *Punk Muslim : Ketika Idealisme Punk Melebur dengan Islam*. Diunggah pada 9 November 2009, diakses pada 10 Desember 2021, dari <https://www.eramuslim.com/berita/silaturrahim/punk-muslim-ketika-idealisme-punk-melebur-dengan-islam.htm>.
- Rokib, M., & Sodik, S. 2017. Muslims with tattoos: The punk Muslim community in Indonesia. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 55(1), 47-70.
- Sahin, A. 2018. Critical issues in Islamic education studies: Rethinking Islamic and Western liberal secular values of education. *Religions*, 9(11), 335.
- Saefullah, H. 2017. ‘Nevermind the jahiliyyah, here’s the hijrahs’: Punk and the religious turn in the contemporary Indonesian underground scene. *Punk & post punk*, 6(2), 263-289.
- Spivak, G. C. 2023. Can the subaltern speak?. In *Imperialism* (pp. 171-219). Routledge.
- Swedenburg, Ted. 2001. *Islamic Hip-Hop versus Islamophobia*. Dalam *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*, Wesleyan University Press, hlm. 57-85.

- The Casualties. 2021. *South East Asia Rebels*. Album Resistance.
- The Fourty's Accident. 2012. *Manifesto Anti Khamr*.
- The Fourty's Accident. 2012. *Muslim Hardcore That We Stand For*. Album Against The Stream.
- The Fourty's Accident. 2012. *Protes Kecil-kecilan Melawan Kebohongan Media Massa*. Album Against The Stream.
- The Guardian. 2011. *Indonesian Punks Detained and Shaved by Police*. Diunggah pada 14 Desember 2011, diakses pada 10 Desember 2021, dari <https://theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/14/indonesian-punks-detained-shaved-police>.
- Vaswani, Karishma. 2011. *Indonesia's Aceh Punks Shaved for 'Re-education'*. Diunggah pada 14 Desember 2011, diakses pada 10 Desember 2021, dari <https://bbc.com/news/world-asia-16176410>.
- Wijaya, Tatam. 2020. *Uzlah dan Khalwat, Tradisi Para Nabi dan Sufi Mengisolasi Diri*. Diunggah pada 10 April 2020, diakses pada 10 Desember 2021, dari <https://islam.nu.or.id/tasawuf-akhlak/uzlah-dan-khalwat-tradisi-para-nabi-dan-sufi-mengisolasi-diri-GQ2zp>.
- Yani, Aditya Rahman. 2016. *Melawan Arus, Membedah Pemikiran Subkultur Punk Islam di Indonesia*. Sidoarjo: Kanzun Books.
- Yani, Aditya Rahman. 2017. *Aku Pernah Punk*. Sidoarjo: Kanzun Books.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).