

# Outcasts and Orchestrators

*Finding Indigeneity in Contemporary Aotearoa Punk  
Culture*

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# Abstract

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Though not acknowledged as a realm heavy with indigenous participation, punk culture has the potential to provide solidarity for the indigenous people it attracts. In this study, I explore how indigeneity is being expressed in Aotearoa punk culture by indigenous punks. Through interviews, participants articulated that punk culture has provided an alternative means of belonging in contemporary and diasporic settings that have necessitated a broadening of ways in which to find and reclaim indigeneity. Though punk culture cannot be seen as a realm that is imbedded with indigenous sentiment, participants suggest that its egalitarian philosophies and ethos of freedom and autonomy are conversant to indigenous experiences and desires that make it a potential port of solidarity for indigenous punks.

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# Glossary

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**Awhi:** To assist.

**Boot Boys and Skinheads:** Subcultural group known for wearing steel-capped boots and having shaved heads. Their main brand of punk is Oi. Though not necessarily racists (indeed there is a style of Skinhead called Anti-Fa that are anti-fascist/anti-racist) Boot Boys and Skinheads have a rough and violent presence that can be intimidating.

**Crusty punks:** Punks who stereotypically wear black denim or leather vests with patches and studs. The favoured form of music is also called Crust encompassing bands such as Doom, Amebix, and Discharge.

**Dero-core:** A term used in Wellington punk culture. Its participants engage in activities that result in getting things for free via dumpster diving and stealing. While subversive of consumerist emphases, dero-core has a hedonistic and individualistic tinge.

**Distros:** Short for distribution. These are independent entities set-up to dispense punk wares to punk communities. Distros manifest through online websites and local stalls at shows and festivals.

**DIY (Do-It-Yourself):** Attributes all aspects of production to the person, band, community, or organisation, making DIY a grassroots and autonomous mode of production.

**Dumpster diving:** The act of obtaining edible food from dumpsters or rubbish receptacles for free.

**Food Not Bombs:** An international phenomenon that offers vegetarian food for free or a donation. Food is acquired either through dumpster diving or is provided by ethical businesses. It is an action that attempts to address poverty and hunger while recognising the waste accumulated through consumerist practices.

**Info centres:** Space providing services, reading material, music and art spaces to be used by punk communities.

**Kapa Haka:** Traditional Maori performance.

**Kohanga Reo:** Early childhood education focussed on learning in Te Reo Maori.

**Kura Kaupapa:** Maori-focussed primary and secondary schools using Te Reo Maori.

**Singapura:** Indigenous name for Singapore.

**Talalog:** Indigenous language of the Philippines.

**Tautoko:** Support.

**Whakapapa:** Bloodlines; descent.

**Whanau:** Family.

**Whanaungatanga:** Family connection or family-like relationship.

**Zines:** A shortening of magazine. Self-produced booklets.

# Introduction

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*I'm an hour and a half away from Melbourne, Australia, in the dry, brittle Eucalyptus bush setting of the long-running punk festival Such is Life. Rogernomix, the band I play bass guitar for has been invited to play along with fellow Wellingtonian punk band Numbskull as the Aotearoa contingent for the three-day festival. We've been chauffeured (in a 4-wheel drive ute) out to this discreet location by one of the collective organisers. Out here, it's a DIY haven – generator-run musical equipment, kitchen, and bar, tents as far as the eye can see, and long-drops - all set up and run by an autonomous, egalitarian collective. At a time when I am fine-tuning the final drafts of this thesis, this festival brings to the fore what punk culture symbolises to me. It is grassroots community-driven. It is making do with what you have. And it is about having fun and feeling comfortable in the collective belonging that such spaces provide.*

*Yet, for me, it also highlights the lack of visibility of indigeneity in punk culture. While others may not be tuned-in to the indigenous-punk connection, my identity as a Maori punk involved in the Aotearoa punk scene for the last two decades marks this duality as a constant presence. The fact that we did not know whose traditional land we were having this festival on and that there was no acknowledgement of this sits uncomfortably with the otherwise politically-minded punk scene here. This is not just a mark of this festival, however, but an overriding theme of indigenous recognition (or lack thereof) within punk culture generally. Indeed, in comparison to the Aotearoa punk community, seeing people of colour at Such is Life was not an anomaly. I heard none of the racial slurs that I have heard in Aotearoa punk events. Yet, there is an indigenous presence in Aotearoa punk culture – indigenous peoples who have found punk communities most suited to their identities. Thinking about the comparison between my Australian and Aotearoa experience in punk communities, this thesis concerning indigeneity in contemporary Aotearoa punk culture seems all the more important.*

\*



Punk culture is not often seen as a place where indigeneity resides. Despite its Western origins and white domination, however, some indigenous peoples have found punk cultural spaces conducive to their identities and relate to the outcast positioning of punk. This thesis explores both indigenous identity and punk culture in order to investigate alternative and contemporary ways in which indigenous peoples are constructing identity and belonging. I do not infer an intimate correlation between punk culture and indigeneity, but utilise punk culture as one of many realms where indigeneity can be found, in recognition of the diverse ways in which indigeneity is expressed. As a result, I confront the notion that culture is homogenously constructed and that singular notions of culture fail to acknowledge all identities umbrellaed under a specific culture. Like other scholars (Andersen and Hokowhitu 2007; Harvey and Thompson 2005; Maaka and Fleras 2005) I argue that culture as a concept is flexible, changing, and malleable, and houses the ability to recognise diversity.

In this thesis, I pose the following questions:

- What is the experience of indigenous punks in Aotearoa?
- Is there room in Aotearoa punk communities for indigenous expression?
- How do indigenous punks create an indigenous presence in Aotearoa punk culture?

To answer these questions, I talked to indigenous personalities involved in Aotearoa punk culture through interviews and analysis (see appendix 1 for participant profiles). My own involvement in Aotearoa punk culture situates my interest in this subject. The lack of research conducted on indigeneity in Aotearoa punk culture indicated the need for this area to be explored. Spaces, locations, philosophies, and the music of punk culture will be examined to illustrate indigenous situations in the Aotearoa punk movement.

Being an outcast, misfit, underdog, or outsider was an overriding theme presented by participants in their interviews. Punk was a realm where they felt they could own their identity and belong to a collective that accepted their outcast identity. For me, like the participants contributing to this study, I align with this outcast position. As a Maori woman, who is vegan and plays in punk bands, I rarely feel comfortable in most collective situations in Aotearoa, particularly those constructed through dominant

mores. From my indigeneity being questioned because I do not eat seafood, through to having to learn my native language at a state tertiary institution because my grandfather was caned whenever he spoke Maori, making it difficult for him to speak our native language and therefore pass it down to me – these experiences have made me feel outcast. In this sense the outcast position is one in which an individual feels they lack control and power over how they are perceived and how they are accepted due to feeling disjointed from dominant paradigms. This is a position felt by some indigenous and punk individuals. What punk culture provides for such outcast identities is a place that not only accepts but encourages difference. For me, this has been empowering and has provided a space where I feel comfortable in orchestrating my identity. It is a space to strengthen and feel secure in an outcast identity, and it is a realm that provides tools and mindsets that encourage confidence in self-autonomy and freedom of expression. These were elements that participants also found important to their involvement in punk culture.

In this investigation of indigeneity in Aotearoa punk culture, I recognise that participants feel punk culture provides a better cultural fit than other realms they have experienced. Participants were realistic, however, about the shortcomings of punk culture for indigenous identities. I explore participant expressions and experiences of indigeneity in punk culture through three main areas – rebellion, community, and indigeneity. The first chapter investigates rebellion, covering the political philosophies of punk culture and the relationship of these philosophies with the rebellious style attributed to punk cultural activities. All participants reflected on the rebellious attributes of punk culture and this theme was significantly represented in participant accounts. Community was a concept that arose throughout all participant interviews indicating community as integral to cultural belonging. Whether discussed as a sense of belonging to punk culture, indigenous culture, or musical realms, or sentiments of distance with mainstream society, collectivity was highlighted as important to the identities of participants. I felt indigeneity necessitated its own chapter as the two other chapters largely focussed on aspects of punk culture. Though indigeneity is most certainly investigated in the other two chapters, I wanted a space within this thesis where indigeneity was the main focal point. This vantage is more conducive to understanding how punk culture interacts with indigeneity specifically. As a study of indigenous experiences, indigeneity came up frequently in all interviews, with

participants expressing the importance of their indigenous identity. These three themes were overwhelmingly represented in all interviews and thus, were selected as the basis of this research. Before deliberating on these themes and the questions this thesis will answer, some background on punk culture and important definitions will aid the ensuing discussion.

### *Punk beginnings*

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Punk began in the mid-1970s. There is contention over where it first started – either in the United Kingdom or the United States of America (Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; Taylor 2003). What can be said is both settings influenced how punk music developed in both countries, as well as its manifestation as a global phenomenon. UK bands The Sex Pistols, The Buzzcocks, The Damned, and The Clash; and US bands and artists The Ramones, Patti Smith, and Television were amongst those who defined initial punk music and culture. Groups from pre-dating punk such as The Velvet Underground, MC5, Death, Iggy Pop and the Stooges, and David Bowie have been termed proto-punk, acknowledging their seminal influence on the punk genre (Hebdige 1979:27). These bands and performers produced music within various rock genres, ranging from glam to psychedelia.

Punk has built on its simplistic three-chord mantra to create multiple subgenres that run the gamut of aggression, love, politics, personal reflection, extremely fast, droningly slow, complex and simplistic. These subgenres of punk range from thrash, hardcore, pop punk, crust, d-beat, emo punk, screamo, sludge, power violence, power pop, melodic punk, through to street punk.

Influenced by mainstream culture such as disco and singer-songwriter chart hits, as well as high unemployment, poverty, and government impositions, punk rose as a counter-culture that portrayed the frustration with hedonistic music coupled with socio-political disenfranchisement. Punk culture and music provided a forum to express this disdain in a visceral, cathartic way. Amy Scholder confirms:

When punk came along, it felt like the (im)perfect mix of my desire for pop music's hit of energy with the radically declarative form of expressing opposition (Pussy Riot 2013).

Like the music of punk, punk style and culture has diversified from safety pins, leather jackets and torn clothing, as well as reactionary aggression, to a diverse array of aesthetics and political leanings. Punk culture has been carried forth by successive generations that have developed the culture and emphasised some elements while minimising former punk cultural indicators that lack relevance and context for modern day punks.

Punk in Aotearoa began in the late 1970s, relatively soon after its beginnings overseas. Sam Buchanan, still a participant in the anarchist-punk scene in Wellington recalls how punk culture in Aotearoa was marked by sentiments of social disenfranchisement:

...punk was just part of this whole sort of bleakness that was infecting society with unemployment and so forth, and it was a reaction to it that for many people was wholly positive... fresh, exciting kind of grassroots music (Campbell 2009).

Early Aotearoa punk bands included The Suburban Reptiles, The Enemy, and Life in the Fridge Exists (Churton 1999). In the 1980's the "Dunedin Sound" created an Aotearoa-specific strain of music that was influenced by punk in its creative originality and lo-fi production (Churton 1999). Punk has continued throughout Aotearoa since its inception, exploring the gamut of musical genres that punk music encompasses.

## *Definitions*

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### *Defining punk*

The word "punk" encompasses a range of meanings, places, beliefs, philosophies, and people, united through music. In this study, I will use the word punk in a number of contexts in order to illustrate the pervasive nature of punk for punks. In order to distinguish what aspect of punk I refer to, I will add descriptors along with the word punk. These terms are punk *culture*, punk *community*, punk *scene*, and *punks*.

Punk culture is the main, all encompassing term I will use, covering punk philosophies, ethos, life-ways, music, places, fashion, style, groups, and politics. Additionally, I have chosen the term punk culture to enhance its conversance within Maori and Indigenous Studies. In this respect, I place punk within the distinct position of a cultural entity in and of itself.

To a lesser extent, I use the terms *punk community* and *punk scene*. These are terms that relate to punk culture that are place specific. Punk community references a localised grouping of punks who engage collectively in punk culture. It forms a unique conglomerate based on punk individuals and their interactions with one another. When I refer to punk scene within this thesis, it particularly references the style and clique of a punk community. *Scene* can denote negative exclusivity, or can be viewed as superficial in that a “scene” may merely encompass a look rather than the multiple facets employed in *community* and *culture*. Indeed one participant contributing to this study, Jess, differentiated punk philosophy and *punk scene*. For Jess these terms have different inferences of punk cultural theory and practice. While punk culture may extol egalitarian virtues for example, scenes and their practices may negate equality through exclusivity of membership. Some literature embraces the use of scene in referencing punk culture (Baulch 2002 & 2007; Culton and Holtzman 2010; Glass 2010; Martin-Iverson 2007; Matsue 2009). For the purpose of this thesis, however, culture encompasses the gamut of punk and particularly suits the way in which participants discuss punk, and is therefore referenced with greater frequency than *scene*. *Punks* or *punk* simply refers to the individuals involved in punk activities.

### ***Aotearoa***

I have chosen to limit this study of indigeneity in punk culture to Aotearoa for a number of reasons. Firstly, the study of a little-known phenomenon necessitates narrower parameters in order that specific contexts are given ample room for discussion. One way to narrow those parameters is by location – in this case, Aotearoa. Though international examples will be referenced to give context to this particular research, prioritising the location of indigeneity in punk culture in Aotearoa will allow for a focussed and deeper study. Secondly, my familiarity with Aotearoa punk culture

and my location within Aotearoa deemed this location as the most advantageous fit for this study. Thirdly, that little has been published concerning Aotearoa punk culture as an alternative site for indigenous community justifies the importance of this study in this location.

In addition, my preference for the use of the term *Aotearoa* as opposed to New Zealand in naming this location is based on both indigenous and punk cultural preferences. In my involvement in punk culture, I have noted the use of Aotearoa in referring to this location.<sup>1</sup> In terms of indigeneity, it is more fitting to utilise the name Aotearoa, rather than New Zealand, as the former prioritises indigeneity and is a means of lessening colonial dominance in this study. Though I maintain that colonisation is invariably important to how indigeneity has been defined (for better or worse), by utilising an indigenous specific term for location, I attempt to prioritise and empower the indigenous voice.

### ***Indigenous identity***

In the interviews conducted for this research, I decided to open my invitations to participate simply to those who self-identify as indigenous and are currently involved in punk communities in Aotearoa. In terms of indigeneity, I did not want to limit interviews to Maori, at the exclusion of others who identify with indigenous identities globally, yet also participate within Aotearoa punk culture. There were a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, as a study of indigeneity, I thought it paramount to stay within those parameters, rather than choosing one indigenous group. Secondly, this study is geographically located in Aotearoa to create a boundary for the time and size of work encompassed in a Master's thesis, more so than a boundary of Maori indigeneity specifically. Thirdly, I liked the idea of creating discussion *between* indigenous peoples. Rather than indigeneity being discussed purely in relation to dominant or settler culture - namely the colonial relationship within Aotearoa - I wanted the focus of this research to attend to indigenous-indigenous relations. I find the migrant-

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<sup>1</sup> See [alwaysneverfunrecords.wordpress.com](http://alwaysneverfunrecords.wordpress.com) and [pantaloontparty.wordpress.com](http://pantaloontparty.wordpress.com).

indigenous discussion in Aotearoa to still be in its infancy, and hope that this study can add to improved dialogue. In recent years, I have noticed an increase in multiculturalism within Aotearoa punk communities that is heartening and therefore desired to investigate and lift its significance and recognition in discussions concerning indigeneity in punk culture specifically and Aotearoa generally.

Lastly, in my research, it became apparent that race, rather than indigeneity, has been favoured as a point of discussion in punk culture. While I find the discussion of race important, indigeneity has specific nuances that are often missed through discussions on race. Race has connotations that denote often, but not always, discussions based on outward appearances. Indigeneity has attached to it, alongside visible markers of minority positioning, a host of cultural pasts and whakapapa including colonisation, tribal connections and specific cultural and social formats and organisational strategies that are difficult to pinpoint through the term of race. Additionally, the lack of discussion time given to indigenous identity in punk culture prioritises the need for this perspective, as an addition to the important literature already existent on race in punk culture (King 2008; Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; Nguyen 2011).

### *Thesis argument and structure*

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Punk philosophies suffer from misinterpretation by those external of the punk cultural forum (O'Hara 1999). Stereotypes of violence, racism, and aggression, while present in punk contexts, are overemphasised. Punk scholars direct much of their written work for mainstream readership realigning interpretations of punk culture to bring its meaning closer to how punks themselves have formed philosophies, and how these philosophies are put into action (Furness 2012; O'Hara 1999; Taylor 2003). Equality, freedom, and autonomy are aspects of punk culture that have emerged as significant philosophical bases as represented by opinions in interviews and literature used for this study (O'Hara 1999; Furness 2012; Taylor 2003). This thesis takes the philosophical elements of punk culture and places them in a context that speaks to indigeneity in punk culture. Importantly, I do not try to make punk cultural philosophies fit with indigenous experiences, but instead use punk culture as a lens into how indigenous punks experience punk culture as indigenous people.

Interviewees expressed a shared outcast positioning between punk and indigenous cultural experiences. Punk culture, however, cannot be deemed as a solid base for indigenous expression, despite anti-racist and egalitarian sentiments within punk philosophies (O'Hara 1999). While indigenous participants within Aotearoa punk culture find some solace within its communities, not all indigenous people will relate to punk. The participants contributing to this study display desires to express themselves alternatively to dominant societies, and this can include expressions alternative to dominant indigenous ways of belonging, as well as the Pakeha majority experience. Through this study, I discovered the contradictions within punk culture between its theories and practices that cause dissonance for indigenous participants. As indicated by my thesis title, pockets of indigenous punks need to be deliberately created by indigenous participants. This signals that, as a largely white domain, punk culture can inhibit indigenous expression. These identity conflicts mar the ability of punk culture to fully cater to indigenous punks. Through my analysis of interviews, three main themes were extracted as a basis for this thesis. I will now introduce these three themes.

### ***Rebellion***

Rebellion, danger, and aggression are at the forefront of perceptions of punk culture (Taylor 2003; Sabin 2012; Churton 1999). Participants argued that these aspects of punk culture were major influences for joining punk communities. As a culture that not only accepts but invites outcasts and those at the fringe of dominant society, rebellion and aggression are indicative manifestations of this exclusionary positioning that illustrates the disenfranchisement, and lack of power afforded those who feel outcast within sanctioned societal realms. Fashion, political inclinations, and musical style make evident this outcast status of punks.

I argue that these rebellious outward appearances and actions are manifestations of a political core. Though on the surface, punk cultural acts of rebellion may seem hedonistic and chaotic, these actions are driven by socio-political out-casting and dissension, even if it may be questionable as to whether some punks realise their actions as materialisations of this standpoint or not. From its beginnings and developed



throughout the decades since, political action and fervour has been a constant punk cultural attribute (Sabin 2011; Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; O'Hara 1999). Anarchism and activism feature throughout punk cultural discourse (O'Hara 1999; Nguyen 2011; Zavella 2012) and has helped form a theoretical basis for punk specific actions. While I argue that rebellion is a valid product of punk cultural participation, some aspects of punk's rebellious nature can render certain punk scenes as exclusive and even antagonistic to indigenous punk involvement.

### ***Community***

While manifested through stylistically rebellious and aggressive expressions on a community level, punk culture has provided a positive outlet that has collectivised outcast identities. In this sense, punk communities have provided punks with settings that are controlled by community members themselves and that reflect anarchist political standpoints and that share parallels with indigenous desires for tino rangatiratanga, self-determination, and sovereignty separate from the controlling institutions of dominant societies. For participants, punk spaces felt like one of the few places they fit and are domains where they have become active participants through music, organising shows, and involving themselves in other creative pursuits within punk culture.

### ***Indigeneity***

I will investigate the nature of indigenous expression within punk culture informed by the experiences of participants. I will explore generalised notions of indigeneity that are problematic for the inclusion of diverse indigenous individuals and how this has influenced participants to become members of punk communities. In search for a better fit for their unique identities, participants, and punks generally, have found a sense of belonging within punk communities. Though punk culture may provide a better fit for indigenous identities informing this thesis, participants insist that punk culture and communities could improve how punk spaces can reflect the equality, freedom, and inclusiveness professed through punk cultural philosophies. I challenge

the white privilege pervasive in punk cultural settings and explore how this inhibits indigenous expression and creates discomfort for indigenous punks.

In this thesis I will explore indigenous punk identity and I will contend that punk culture, as a cultural choice, is seen as a better fit for the indigenous punks informing this study than they have experienced elsewhere. It is an area not often seen as housing or encouraging indigeneity. However, the freedom, egalitarianism, and political mindedness of punk culture lends itself to creating spaces conducive to indigenous expression, particularly for those who may not fit traditional notions of indigeneity. Yet, I argue that punk culture, in some respects, has reflected dominant mores in certain punk scenes that have created a homogenous culture itself that limits the freedom and equality that are at its foundations. While all cultures suffer from some form of homogeneity in order to create collectivity, the aforementioned foundations of punk culture suggest improvements not only could but should be made for the benefit of all punk community members.

# Methodology

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I have written this thesis, written within Maori studies, recognises both indigenous and punk cultural contexts. In doing so, I have selected methods and theories most suited to the study of both cultural realms. Kaupapa Maori and the work of punkademics are the basis of my methodology for this thesis concerning indigeneity in Aotearoa punk culture. As a study primarily informed by interviews, I have selected interview techniques and analyses that are fitting to the subject matter and that reflect the cultural philosophies focussed upon within this thesis. In this case, I decided grounded theory – a style of qualitative analysis – was the best fit for directing my interview technique with participants and my analysis of their interviews.

## *Maori, punk, academic: insider-outsider dynamic*

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My impetus to carry out this research has stemmed from my own involvement in punk culture for the past seventeen years and my observations of indigeneity within it as a Maori woman. My close connection to the subject could be cause for concern. In this instance, the newness of the study of indigeneity in Aotearoa punk culture within the academic record is such that an insider perspective would be beneficial to tread this new terrain. I am also aware that as the researcher, I hold specific power over this research project, and therefore must not overstate my insider positioning. Linda Tuhiwai Smith expresses that as a researcher, the power in this role cannot be dismissed even if one is heavily involved with the community in which the research is taking place. Of her interview visits Linda Tuhiwai Smith states:

I could see immediately that homes were extra spotless and I knew from my own background that when visitors are expected considerable energy goes into cleaning and dusting the house. There was also food which I knew had been prepared for my visit. The children were in their pyjamas (the top matching the bottom) all bathed and ready for bed at 7.30pm. I knew and the mothers knew that as a group we were all quite casual about bedtime rituals but on the night of the interview everything was in the kind of order which is organized solely for the benefit of the outsider (1999:138).

Even though I may move in the same circles, and socialise with participants regularly, I cannot assume that the interview process will be the same as our usual interactions. Though we have talked about the issues focussed upon in this thesis on a number of occasions, my placement within an established institution adds a new element to our conversations that requires care.

To ease researcher-participant tension, interviews were kept informal and conversational. Participants were given the option of emailing answers to my questions, skyping, one-on-one interviews, or group interviews. One interview was conducted by email,<sup>2</sup> due to the participant being overseas at the time. The remaining were one-on-one interviews conducted in a place agreed upon by both myself and interviewees. Participants have been kept informed of the progress of this research and how their work is used within the thesis. I have encouraged participants to contact myself with any feedback or questions throughout the time given to complete this thesis. It will be suggested that a follow-up group discussion about the research will be advantageous, to share ideas and experiences regarding the research and as a chance to make contact with fellow indigenous punks. This will take place after the submission of this thesis.

### ***Kaupapa Maori and decolonising methodology***

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Maori Studies research has been informed in recent years by Kaupapa Maori methodology (Smith 1999; Irwin 1994; Harmsworth 1998). Having Indigenous-centric ways in which to investigate and grow our own indigenous knowledges has produced empowering work that not only informs indigenous realms, but also academic disciplines. Importantly, Kaupapa Maori has increased indigenous participation and control over our knowledge within and without academia (Smith 1999). Smith acknowledges the lack of control indigenous peoples have had historically over our own knowledge in academia:

Most of the 'traditional' disciplines are grounded in cultural world views which are either antagonistic to other belief systems or have no methodology for dealing with

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<sup>2</sup> Jess Hansell

other knowledge systems (1999:67).

Smith's assertion of decolonising methods introduced some well-needed criticism of colonial-centred research (1999). Historically, research on, and rarely for, indigenous peoples, has perpetuated colonial mindsets within academia. Decolonising methods deconstruct those colonial assertions that produce power imbalances found in academic research in a number of ways. Firstly, dominant academic analyses and methods are questioned. As a result, reciprocity between researcher and participant is asserted that breaks down assumed power hierarchies (Bishop 2003). Secondly and relatedly, it is a people-focussed methodology that hinges on relationship building (Irwin 1994). Thirdly, by prioritising Indigenous ways of knowing and processes toward the acquisition of knowledge, academic research that is conducted with a decolonising methodology can improve longevity of research relationships (Gibbs 2001). This can make inroads into creating a fairer balance of power in academic study addressing the inherent power hierarchies of the researcher-researched relationship, producing shared control of research, instilling vested interests between the two parties, and constructing a better informed and durable study.

Decolonising methods can be problematic, however, in that they are set in relation to colonisation. Though these methods are resistant to dominant, colonial research in academia, this reactionary stance lessens the potency of indigenous knowledge as its own entity. Kaupapa Maori is a decolonising strain of research that centres indigenous knowledge and culture to drive research (Smith 1999). By centring indigeneity, Kaupapa Maori moves decolonising reactionary efforts to an active indigenous positioning that prioritises indigenous ways of knowing.

It is important to note that indigenous-specific research cannot be generalised because indigenous peoples are not homogenous. Methodologies entrenched in idealised, traditional settings, ignore the diversity within indigenous experiences today. Therefore, flexibility is needed for this particular research concerning indigenous punks, whose identities may not reflect typical or orthodox indigeneity. Thorough and considered research should be second nature to knowledge seekers such as those found within academia. Indeed, unlike other methodologies, Kaupapa Maori has the ability to adapt to research and those participating within it. Its people-focus prioritises reciprocity and balanced control between researcher and participants, safeguarding

knowledge shared by participants.

Contemporary settings have further diversified indigenous identities. Yet this diversification does not suggest multiple indigenous experiences are any less indigenous. The use of Kaupapa Maori in this research will help challenge how indigenous peoples have been objectified and disempowered by research, while dually, giving basis to this exploration of one of many avenues in which indigeneity is expressed. Through this study, core elements will be distilled and made visible, irrespective of location - place, space and time. My research will take the strands of Kaupapa Maori and decolonising methodology that prioritise respect, and that create relationships with participants in order that the power rests with those whose knowledge is being shared and created (belonging both to participants and researcher), while adding methods that allow the reality of indigenous multiplicity to come to the fore.

### *Punk versus the academy*

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Punk culture and academia have methods of knowledge collation and dissemination that are constructed differently and some would say, oppositionally. As Penny Rimbaud of the anarcho-punk band *Crass* has said of punk and academia: "*It irritated me beyond belief...academics sitting round talking about something so anti-academic.*" (Furness 2012:15). Yet punk culture is a flurry of contradictions. Its anti-establishment stance does not mean that the patterns of thought designed through academic institutions are not expressible within punk settings. Punk culture has been intellectualised from within the movement itself, through zines, conversations at shows, and music since its inception in the mid 1970's (Furness 2012:16). Academia, as a ground for challenging thought (Victoria University of Wellington 2013), fits well with punk cultural philosophies that look to expose and confront dogmatism of widely held and unchallenged beliefs (O'Hara 1999).

Punk culture has its own style of media that disseminates information about bands, music, politics, and activism, in the form of zines or more recently, online blogs and distribution entities. Though punk has not been well-represented in academic formats,

there has been an increase in academic punks, following punk culture's penchant to encourage alternative thinking and analysis. While still in its infancy, academic punk writing has produced some thought provoking works on punk that contribute to wider understandings of punk culture (Furness 2012; Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; Nguyen 2011; King 2008; Baulch 2002; Wallach 2008; Matsue 2009; O'Connor 2003; Glass 2012; Attfield 2010). With this thesis I aim to add to this body of work.

Punk's writings in academia discuss the nuances and complexities of identity (Nguyen 2012; King 2008; Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; Furness 2012; Attfield 2010; Pickles 2007; Ngo 2012; Matsue 2009; Churton 1999). While many applaud the open and challenging air that attracted them to punk culture in the first place, punk academics are also willing to critique generalisations and assumptions perpetuated within punk culture (Furness 2012). These contradictions in punk culture become more apparent on closer inspection of punk communities. Predilections of punk cultural hypocrisy were raised in interviews and have shaped important critiques informing this thesis.

Alan O'Connor argues the insider-outsider duality of the punk-academic is beneficial to the academic study of punk culture. He suggests his academic book concerning underground record labels "*was intended to help people in the scene talk about...issues in a more informed way. That, I think is the role of an academic punk: one foot in the scene and one foot outside*" (Furness 2012:10). This position allows the punkademic, with their insider knowledge and experience of punk culture, to analytically and methodically critique punk communities with the tools acquired through academic learning institutions, adding another perspective to the punk cultural analytical tool kit while offering new material to the academic record.

### ***Interview methodology***

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I have utilised qualitative analysis for interviews conducted for this research through the method of grounded theory (Charmaz 2006). Grounded theory creates a systematic and thorough interview and analysis process that is helpful when a new area of research is investigated and new material analysed, as is the case in this research. There are many branches of grounded theory (Blumer 1969; Denzin 2007; Charmaz 2006), and

this gives the researcher flexibility in selecting a method within grounded theory that is best suited to the research. Grounded theory tends to prioritise the interview relationship (Charmaz 2006) – viewing both interviewer and interviewee as integral to knowledge production. This engages responsibility and accountability of the knowledge produced. As a theory that follows closely views extolled by interviewees as a means of informing research, grounded theory works well with Kaupapa Maori methodology (Foley 2003; Denzin 2007).

I used coding and note taking in the analysis of interviews (Saldana 2009). The coding style of grounded theory allows the voice of participants to come through that limits biases of researchers and institutions and requires researchers to be open to letting the data create the direction and findings of the research. Codes are structured by what participants say, how it is said, and the themes expressed in the interview data. These themes are usually derived throughout the analytical process, through systematic reading, note-taking and coding. Therefore the researcher actively interacts with the data collected during analysis processes (Charmaz 2006), encouraging accuracy and engagement with interviews. In this sense, grounded theory encourages critical thinking throughout the various stages of research. For this research in which new data on an all but unresearched subject matter is being created, this critical engagement is paramount.

Each interview was based from thirteen key questions which are detailed in Appendix 2. Interviews were kept informal in a way that acknowledged my close relationship with participants. Furthermore, through my interview experience, I have found that an informal setting allows those being interviewed to be more comfortable and candid than is afforded in a formal setting (Matsue 2009). In her work concerning hardcore music in Japan, Jennifer Milioto Matsue found an informal setting conducive to the punk cultural contexts in which her study was placed (Matsue 2009). If people feel uncomfortable or out of their element, they tend to act less themselves and may find it difficult to give candid answers, as has been my experience as an interviewee in formal settings. This informal interview technique allows greater control for the participants to shape their interview and is important for the creation of new data. This sits well with the premises of grounded theory (Charmaz 2006).

Rather than contacting people who I thought would be appropriate for this study, I



posted an invitation to participate on the POC (People Of Colour) Punk Facebook group page.<sup>3</sup> I wanted participants to feel interested in the project, but not feel obliged to participate, which may have been the case had I asked them personally. By putting a post on the POC Punk Facebook page, I was more removed from directing the research. Though the POC Punk Facebook group is not comprehensive of indigenous peoples involved in Aotearoa punk culture, it is the best avenue I knew of where race and indigeneity in punk culture in Aotearoa are discussed specifically.

Five people showed interest in participating in this research project and in the end four made themselves available to be interviewed – Jeremy, Jess, Shasha, and Trixie. My goal was to interview between four and eight indigenous punks, so I was happy with this number. I could have raised this number after the initial invitation by contacting those I thought would be good to interview, but felt that this would mean I was guiding the study too much and preferred my thesis was guided by the subject matter and participants rather than by my personal perspectives and preferences. Maybe this stance is problematic, as those who are not proactive in approaching an academic study, no matter how much it speaks to them, would not come forward to speak to me. Many punks and indigenous peoples are sceptical of academia, and despite my identity as an indigenous punk, some indigenous punks would feel uncomfortable being interviewed for a Masters thesis. Yet, I felt the four participants who participated in this research produced informative interviews that held more than ample information for the space given this Masters thesis, to initially tread this new research.

Though most participants have been active in the Wellington punk community at the time of writing, not all were from Wellington and a number who now participate in the Wellington punk community have also lived in Auckland and Hamilton and been involved in punk scenes in these locations. Though a Wellington focus may have been an advantageous focus, I was also interested in gathering viewpoints from outside Wellington to get a broader range of experiences in punk culture. Those perspectives from outside Wellington have been beneficial to this thesis. Therefore, I decided a focus on Aotearoa was best for this study.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pocpunks/>

My analysis of interviews utilised a coding system (Saldana 2009) and note taking indicative of grounded theory. After reading and listening to the interviews a number of times, key ideas and themes became clear. These were grouped into the three main sections of the thesis, derived from participant interviews – rebellion, community, and indigeneity. I created sixteen subheadings based on further ideas and themes expressed in interviews as they related to the three main headings. These groupings were also informed by my notes made from relevant literature. The literature coding was much more comprehensive, having a total of five main headings and a total of thirty-six subheadings. The main headings were given a number; the subheadings, a letter. Both interview and literature codes used have been listed in Appendix 3. This coding system made referring to notes much quicker and easier, and more identifiable by subject, while giving a good overview and insight into the thesis structure. Initially, I contemplated using NVivo to analyse interview data. As my final number of interviewees was four, I decided the use of NVivo was redundant, as it is an analysis system beneficial for larger amounts of data. I felt that the simple and interview-directed coding system and note taking methods I selected were sufficient. The coding of interviews was matched as much as possible with the same coding criteria used for literature that informed this study.

Kaupapa Maori and punkademic methodological style has guided the writing of this thesis. Grounded theory was helpful in directing this research, and prioritised the themes and subjects raised by participants. As a study heavily reliant on interviews, the coding system and systematic analysis indicative of grounded theory was useful in the development of this thesis. As people-based methodologies, Kaupapa Maori, punkademic methodological style and grounded theory compliment this study of indigeneity in Aotearoa punk culture.

# Rebellion

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*Everyone who gets involved in Punk is usually prompted by some form of rebellion, be it against parents, authorities, or the whole system itself* (Steve Beaumont, letter in *Maximum Rock N Roll* #53, Oct 1987 in O'Hara 1999:38).

Punk culture is stereotypically rebellious. Whether signified through fashion and style, or through political music and activity, it is a culture holding deference to the status quo. All participants within this study indicated they are attracted to punk culture because of this rebellious and challenging penchant. Punk culture attracts those who struggle with power and authority, and is peopled by those amongst the disenfranchised of society.

In this chapter I will investigate the rebellious actions and sentiments of punk culture. In punk settings, rebellion manifests through a number of avenues. Punk performances rebel against musical convention through grassroots venues and inclusive, egalitarian participation, with imperfect musical production and playing that creates the stylistic quality attributed to punk music. Rebellion against government and authority, as well as stylistic juxtapositions to fashion trends and norms, all deem punk culture as a counter-culture that encourages rebelliousness in its participants.

In this sense, rebellion in punk culture is illustrated as a counter reaction to societal norms. This type of rebellion creates a place of belonging for those who feel outcast by society. While participants found that this acceptance of rebellion in Aotearoa punk culture was heartening for disenfranchised people, and particularly for indigenous people, some expressions of rebellion that have been enacted in their punk scenes can alienate or even be antagonistic toward indigenous punks. Yet the overriding theme of rebellion recognised by participants has enabled them to explore and value their outcast positioning, and embrace the use of rebellion to convey empowerment and release through music and participation in punk culture. For participants this rebellion is, overall, an empowering and positive process that aids the exploration of their distinct identities.

### *“Smash the State”:<sup>4</sup> creating space*

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The places where punk culture amasses and are performed is indicative of punk philosophies. Punks create inclusive yet underground shows that can allow for maximum and intimate participation of punk audiences and performers alike. These spaces can be found at protests, squats, house parties, all ages shows, outdoor festivals, public spaces, and info centres amongst others. For example, Trixie mentioned her first experiences of punk performances that were set at house parties and outdoor, public spaces.

I went to this gig there called Unity Fest, and that was my first experience of punks...It was at Necropolis [a house and venue], and then there was a day show in this like park/reserve...The first band [I joined] was Donkey Fries which was just me and lots of other 14 year olds, and we just did one show which was at my friends dining room.

Trixie’s first experiences of punk performances are indicative of how punk cultural performance regularly manifests. Trixie’s initial forays into punk culture reflect the inclusiveness of all ages, particularly positioning punk as a youth based or at least youth inclusive, culture. Additionally, these settings reflect punk cultural tendencies to shirk established routes in the desire to find autonomy and self-determination within punk itself. These preferred venues and performance structures highlight the stance of politicised rebellion in punk culture that directly rebels against norms of practice, indicative of the inclusive and challenging make-up encouraged by punk cultural philosophies (O’Hara 1999).

### *Anarchism*

*When it comes to choosing a political ideology, punks are primarily anarchists...This is not to say that all punks are well read in the history and theory of anarchism, but most do share a belief formed around the anarchist principles of having no official government or rulers, and valuing individual freedom and responsibility. – O’Hara 1999:71*

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<sup>4</sup> Song title from Aotearoa punk band, Dead Vicious.

As O'Hara argues, punk culture and its philosophies have been informed and shaped by anarchism. As such anarchism has solidified rebellious modes within punk culture in that autonomy and anti-authoritarianism are major premises in punk spaces. Rather than settling for governmental hierarchies, anarchism is firmly grassroots based. While anarchy is often portrayed as chaotic and nihilistic, the theory and practice of anarchist politics has its basis in equality and mutual aid, and necessitates greater community participation, responsibility, and organisation than found in many government-based political philosophies (Goldman 1910). Anarchism has been present within New Zealand for some one hundred years, seen through protest movements, co-operatives, communal projects, labour movements (Davidson 2013:17), and was recently highlighted in nationwide raids targeting Maori and anarchist activists in 2007, known as Operation 8 or the Terror Raids (Morse 2010).<sup>5</sup>

Community hubs such as 128 in Wellington, Black Star Books in Dunedin, and Black Heart in Auckland all combine elements of punk and anarchist politics within their collectives. 128, while on the periphery of punk culture nowadays, formerly enjoyed a vibrant punk cultural community in its beginnings at the start of the 2000's decade, housing punk shows and fundraisers. Today, it provides an anarchist library, meeting rooms, safe spaces for marginalised genders, and a bike workshop. Both Black Star Books and Black Heart<sup>6</sup> in Dunedin and Auckland respectively, are anarchist book and zine distros and libraries that have close connections to punk communities in their cities. They create an intellectual and philosophical space for both politics and fun to inhabit the same place, utilising both punk culture and political activism for mutual advantage.

It is interesting to note that while some literature aligns punk culture with anarchist politics (O'Hara 1999; Lagalisse 2011; Furness 2012; King 2008), only Shasha mentioned anarchism in her interview out of all the participants, while other participants hinted at political and personal activism generally. Additionally, Shasha now steers away from claiming an anarchist positioning explaining that the more involved in anarchist organising she became, the less it resonated with her.

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to Morse's work for more details on Operation 8.

<sup>6</sup> Black Heart has since closed.

I should say, strangely enough, after I got into punk, I started to believe less in anarchism... So as I got more engaged in punk I started to be less engaged in anarchism and that stuff, but still stay politically active in terms of radical stuff. But... I would never claim myself as an anarchist anymore. Just feminist will do [laughs]

Anarchism like any other political philosophy can suffer when translated into practice. Many political communities suffer from intellectual rigidity that is untenable in real life circumstances. Shasha suggests that punk culture houses political elements that are more applicable to her political leanings than anarchism. Furthermore, Jess shared sentiments in her interview where well-meaning activism and politicisation within punk communities themselves can suffer from an “holier than thou” rhetoric.

Although you should push yourself to be a better human, you shouldn't preach something in your heart you know you can't back up yet... It's a process and a damn humbling one if you're doing it right. This isn't an oppression competition – this is real life.

Jess infers that, like other philosophical standpoints, those found in punk culture like anarchism, can be pontificated by punks who, in practice, cannot back up their political espousals. In this way, Jess realises the need to be flexible and humble in political rhetoric – that philosophical standpoints in punk culture are admirable, but can suffer from individuals within punk who, rather than speaking from experience and with a voice that helps elevate others within the community, find being philosophically correct to be a competition.

The lack of anarchist rhetoric in interviews may be due to the fact that participants came into punk culture through music. On the other hand, the lack of anarchist rhetoric in interviews may indicate the dominance of white people in anarchist communities in Aotearoa (Davidson 2013; Morse 2010). Additionally, punk and anarchism have drifted apart in my observations of Aotearoa punk communities over the last decade. There is a heavy focus on music rather than overt political action in punk communities. Yet punk communities continue to flourish, enriched by punk cultural standpoints that have been inspired by anarchist politics. It just so happens that anarchism is not a name placed on contemporary punk cultural philosophies in Aotearoa. The similarities between punk cultural philosophies and anarchism are close and the aspects of self-

determination, freedom, mutual aid, and egalitarianism (Goldman 1910) that resonate with both punk and anarchist politics were mentioned by all participants and are elements that provide a rebellious basis to punk in juxtaposition to normative societal values.

### *Language*

*Los Crudos* vocalist, Martin Sorrondeguy used Spanish in the majority of their songs as a blatant move to elevate the Latino presence in their band, their community, and the United States generally. Sorrondeguy observes that “*when you sing in Spanish, you're prickin up some ears that wouldn't have been turned on before*” (Sorrondeguy 1999). Likewise, Trixie suggests punk culture shows the potential to be supportive of non-English languages in punk music.

If I was to start a band, and have all my lyrics only be in Tagalog<sup>7</sup>, punk would be the only genre where people would be ready to listen. If it was like in a Rock n Roll band, or a Country band, people would be just like ‘What the fuck?’ [not getting it]...it’s about that raw expression.

Trixie argues that punk culture is more open to the use of indigenous languages than other musical cultures and as such, relays the potential of punk culture to support indigeneity generally, and to rebel against normative conventions. However, the lack of indigenous languages used in Aotearoa punk culture shows that this potential to challenge norms is not intentionally sought by punks. A number of bands within the Aotearoa punk community have used languages besides English. Bands such as *Malparido* and *Shock Futuro* had vocals in Spanish reflecting their vocalist’s Columbian origins. Very few, however, have used Maori. While Jess has used Maori in her raps, a number of the participants made mention of *Fantails*, who have Maori lyrics. The use of Maori is an important recognition of indigeneity within Aotearoa punk scenes and Aotearoa at large (Fantails 2011). As Trixie identifies, “*Fantails...having lyrics in te reo is like a huge huge thing.*”

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<sup>7</sup> Indigenous language of the Philippines.

Shasha argues that the use of te reo Maori in Aotearoa punk music should not, in an ideal world, be seen as an anomaly or even impressive. As the language of the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa and recognised as an official national language, te reo Maori should not be unusual in Aotearoa music including that made in Aotearoa punk music – yet it is. This suggests that, though punk culture is seen as a rebellious realm, many within the genre are happy to remain in the comfort of the English language. While te reo Maori is not the sole indicator of indigenous presence, the lack of its use in punk music shows apathy to transpose rebelliousness toward mainstream societies, in this case, supporting indigenous culture via using indigenous languages in lyrics, to subvert dominant New Zealand society. As one of the few musical genres that are explicitly rebellious in nature, the near absence of the indigenous language of Aotearoa heightens the lack of awareness of, and connection to, indigenous subjugation in Aotearoa.

*“Scumbags of society”:<sup>8</sup> misfits and outcasts*

When asked why they became involved in punk culture, participants rallied around the idea of it creating a forum of solidarity for those who do not fit in with mainstream society and its values. Jeremy sees punk culture as “...real embracing of misfits...” He continues:

It’s this whole thing of being an outsider, kind of looked down upon by parts of society - large parts of society...And like I can relate to that directly...

The misfit sentiment that permeates punk culture often manifests in rebellious behaviour and ideology. Rebellion becomes a natural outlet to outcast identities that helps explore and confront the perceived oppression outcasts feel when placed within normative settings. As Jess states:

I enjoy the rebellious and confrontational aspect of the punk kaupapa and it helps me articulate my frustration as a Maori person more outside of music.

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<sup>8</sup> Lyrics from Aotearoa punk band Johnny and the Felchers.



Here, Jess makes an important connection between her lack of control over how she is perceived as an indigenous person, and how the acceptance of rebellious and confrontational behaviour in punk culture provides an outlet to display the frustration of stereotypes placed on her by external parties. As seen in other counter-cultures such as rock n roll or hip hop, punk culture provides a visceral yet positive outlet that is difficult to find outside these realms. For indigenous peoples, depending on your definition of rebellion, finding positivity through rebellious activity can be extra difficult. Given racial profiling, crime and prison statistics, venting frustrations of colonisation and oppression can be negatively life changing. For some indigenous peoples who are disconnected from whanau and traditional indigenous organisation, gangs can be the only avenue available to channel anger and rebellion as reactions to oppression, while dually finding some sense of belonging. In his autobiography, former Mongrel Mob chapter president Tuhoe Isaac relays the symbolism of hatred displayed in gang life:

The bulldog was a symbol of the British colonial oppression that consumed Maori people. The guys figured if you put that image on a Maori's back, with the dog wearing a German helmet with a swastika attached to it, then you had a dual symbol of contradiction and hatred. That is what we stood for (Isaac 2007).

Rather than having a basis in hatred, punk culture channels rebellion through creative outlets. What does become clear from this comparison of gangs and punk culture is the high level of marginalisation felt throughout indigenous populations inter-generationally as a result of the oppressive colonial experience, and that the need to vent this anger has found expression in multiple contexts. The participants in this study have found punk culture an empowering space to channel and express their discordance with mainstream society.

### ***Musical style: diversity and freedom***

Pilar Tompkins discusses punk music's ability to speak to rebelliousness for punk artists in a visceral way:

...to be able to get on stage and scream your lungs out performing something that has more of an edge to it was definitely stepping out of some pre-determined ideas about what...should be (Reyes and Waldman 1998:xv).

Likewise, Jeremy highlights how this rebellious aesthetic drew him to punk music:

I've always liked how it was angry and aggressive, fast and short...

Anger, aggression and the fast, short aesthetic of punk music transposes rebellious tendencies of punk culture that can speak to those who feel marginalised. Similarly, when asked about what she enjoys about being part of punk culture, Trixie stated:

Mostly I'm just really excited about new music. That's like my number one, is hearing a new band. Also I like the aggression about things. Because I'm naturally an aggressive personality by choice, so there's lots more people who are angry about something. It's kind of normal. It's so validating. It feels, I guess, sane...I like how it's not safe, but safe at the same time as well.

Punk culture provides a space that validates aggressive expression. By providing an outlet to express disillusionment and anger, punk music attends to the need for release in participants. As others in punk communities feel this need for aggression, it becomes a safe space for aggression to be expressed, rather than being something abnormal or dangerous to others. In this sense, aggression is validated on a communal scale. Trixie continues:

It was such an eye opener...I had no idea that there were people like that. Like people into just being real raw... No one gave a fuck.

Witnessing the rawness expressed by punk performers was empowering for Trixie who was struggling as a teenager to find a community that reflected her identity. That punk culture encourages originality, realness, emotional expression, and being able to be yourself resonated with Trixie. It's acceptance of difference can be empowering for punk participants.

Shasha acknowledges that one of her favourite aspects of punk is to perform (Shasha 2013). As the vocalist for Melting Pot Massacre, she is able to show aggression and passion with her lyrics and vocal performance. Therefore, rather than a style of music, punk reveals an attitude of and toward music. In this sense, participants realise that

punk music cannot be pinned down to one specific style. Trixie has found inspiration from the vast array of stylistic motifs available to punk musicians. Talking of The Pussies and Coco Solid, referencing their use of rap and electronica musical styles, Trixie acknowledges the diverse musical exploration that can be found in punk music:

This is exactly what I want, like, so bad. They [the Pussies] were so cool. And like, even Coco Solid. She'd be playing with all these punk bands. It was like, fuck, oh you can be into rap and be into punk?! Whoa, I didn't know you were allowed that! It's more of an avenue where music can be tried. You're given way more leeway.

Here, Trixie infers that parameters of expression are more rigid in other musical genres where as punk music allows and encourages diverse musical expression. This standpoint recognises punk cultural spaces as empowering to its membership by encouraging expressions of difference. For those who do not fit the parameters of other cultural contexts punk music can be a space that acknowledges this diversity, mirrored by musical themes.

### ***Imperfection***

The diversity and participatory nature of punk music allows for imperfection that would not find traction in some other musical genres. Punk embraces amateurism, in that professionalism is rejected (O'Hara 1999; Churton 1999:38). It is not uncommon for a band to begin with members "learning on the job", having little or no musical experience (Martin-Iverson 2007:116). As Luvaas identifies, "*What mattered in punk was style and attitude, not well-honed musical chops*" (Luvaas 2012:13). This can be empowering and has seen many punk bands begin, improve, and create distinct, unique, and passionate music. The acceptance of amateurism as a punk cultural aesthetic cements its ability to encourage participation and autonomy. Laing sees the use of feedback – the creation of harmonic squeals phased between amp and guitar – as 'rhetorical incompetence' that reflects punk musical amateurism (Pickles 2007:227). Additionally, the use of feedback is indicative of the aggressive style of punk music. While feedback is seen as a mistake in other musical genres, its purposeful deployment in punk music reflects the greater theme of rebellion that permeates punk culture. For those who do not conform to the dominant norms of most musical genres, punk

culture's universal encouragement is refreshing. Where diverse identities are viewed as abnormal or imperfect, in punk culture it is celebrated.

Similarly, the goals sought in other musical genres such as signing with a major record label and playing stadiums are shirked by punk performers. When the odd punk band is scooped up by a major label, these bands are often disowned by punk communities who equate mainstream success with selling-out (O'Rourke 2011). Again, the stance of amateurism is directly connected to punk cultural philosophies that reject mainstream mores. For the most part, punk music is an underground phenomenon and it is preferred that way by punks (O'Hara 1999). While those looking for mainstream success would find this lack of commercial appeal disheartening, it is embraced in punk music. This indicates that people who play punk music do so out of personal expression and self-determination. It is not a career move but a lifestyle. Dunn signals this position shown by the comments of one punk performer informing his study:

I couldn't think of anyone willing to release my crappy bands (and I still don't) so the only option was to do it myself (2012:223).

The rise of digital and online media has given punks greater access to self-determined music production (Luvaas 2012). Forums such as *myspace* and *bandcamp* specifically cater to self-publication of music, affording greater creative freedom and control for musicians over musical productions and images. For those involved in punk music, these online tools are used as an extension of the do-it-yourself ethic that has been a part of punk culture since its inception. In her interview, Jess argues that punk culture prioritises creativity and freedom over perfection:

Most of all I think punk is about permission. Permission to be and express things that aren't idealised, conditioned and perfect and still be loved. It's a permission I've given at crucial points and a permission I am always determined to share with people who doubt themselves.

Living in this self-determined mode of imperfection can bring comfort within one's own skin and solidarity with those holding similar ethics. For the participants informing this study, having creative freedom and equality within punk communities is a welcome change from the demands and outcast position they are afforded in

mainstream contexts, and is a standpoint that punks like Jess are willing to share with others that reject mainstream parameters in order to acquire creative freedom.

*“Punk Cult”<sup>9</sup>: fashion and aesthetics*

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*After years of trying to wear the right clothes, the right hairstyle, the right makeup, and always falling short, I said “fuck it” and became a punk rocker.*

*Nia King 2008:197*

O’Hara recognises the significance of the “shock factor” fashion that punk culture allures and signals that this initial visual indicator of punk culture was and is symptomatic of its ideals.

...Punk has evolved past the ‘shock tactics’ of colored hair and dog collars to have a fairly cohesive philosophy with little or nothing to do with one particular style of dress. While useful at the time, and still fun today, shocking people with appearances has taken a back seat to shocking people with ideas (O’Hara 1999:34).

Punk fashion is a visual manifestation of the rebellious ideas personally held by punk members. Though the traditional punk look of leather jackets, studs and Mohawks are still existent within Aotearoa punk culture, not all punks follow stereotypical punk fashions. For some, it has become cliché and almost conformist in itself. Fashion in punk culture can be as diverse as the participants within punk communities. When speaking to one participant in her study, Pickles discovered that punk participation cannot be based on looks alone. The participant states:

Many [people] laugh when they find out I am a punk...Perhaps because my hair isn’t multi-coloured, it is straight, black and long. Or maybe my clothing style is neat and girlish, not funky masculine. My piercings are only two, my left and right ears. I don’t have a tattoo, I have never smoked, never drunk and never taken pills. Crazy, so what is it that makes me punk? My soul. My lifestyle. My thinking. All of these are very punk (*Pancake Muak* 2001:1 in Pickles 2007:234-5)

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<sup>9</sup> From the Rogernomix song, Punk Culture.

In her first foray attending a punk show, Trixie recalls her nervousness with having the right image:

I wore this like, pretty gross t-shirt that said “Royal Rock” in different fonts...because I was like “I don’t know how I’m supposed to fit in!” like “Everyone’s so much more punk than me!” but it totally didn’t matter. I made tonnes of friends and saw so many awesome bands.

Trixie’s self-perceived “not-so-punk” look had little bearing on her inclusion at this punk event. That her look “totally didn’t matter” indicates that punk cultural philosophies of freedom of expression and inclusion override wearing the “correct” punk fashion. This shows that fashion, while symbolic of the culture, is not essential to punk cultural belonging. Trixie’s fears of not fitting in may have also been symptomatic of her experiences within mainstream and other cultural contexts. The need to conform to the right fashion trends and have a certain look is well documented, particularly as it impacts on female self-image (Mitrofan 2012; Bishop 2010). Punks have been determined to reject accepted notions of beauty and attractiveness. Make-up is used as a pastiche to glamour while ripped and self-modified clothing is a not so subtle rebellion against conforming to mainstream standards. Experimenting with style to develop nuanced aesthetics that reflect the personalities and beliefs of punks is evidence of punk cultural philosophies that empowers and supports the creativity and individuality of punks.

### ***The non-political can be political – Indonesian and Singapura punk culture***

The punk culture of Indonesian punk communities is an anomaly in the global punk phenomena. The first inklings of punk in Indonesia began in the late 1990’s, coinciding with the end of the long-reigning dictatorship of Soeharto (Wallach 2008:111). For many Indonesian punks their traditional culture comes first and hence punk is a pastime rather than a dominant lifeway. The band Superman is Dead makes this stance clear:

Our anti-establishmentarianism is not a lifestyle. We want to have a good life...only to be anti-establishment in our music (Baulch, 2002:162).

Shasha recognised the apolitical stance in the Singapura punk communities she was involved in also, relaying that ‘they don’t really get involved in activism.’ However, the demographic of Singapura punk communities is heavily indigenous. Shasha estimates 90% indigenous participation and 10% “white people, like Chinese and all that...”, namely the power holders of the nation. It is interesting to note that these demographics are reversed in Aotearoa punk culture.

It’s really strange, because in Aotearoa, it’s the other way around right? So in Singapura, that’s our escape, that’s our solidarity space, that’s our rage space, you know. Yea, so because of that, I’ve always thought punk was meant for the oppressed – people who are oppressed. And even though most of the bands we listen to are really white, we kind of try to contextualise it to make meaning to us. And like a lot of bands in Singapura, a lot of bands are people of colour, like people who are indigenous. So yea, I kinda got really overwhelmed, and it’s like “oh yeah that’s right, I’m in a Westernised place now” ...what the fuck, right? In Aotearoa, right?

Though not actively political, Singapura punks display inherent politicisation through indigenous outcast solidarity. The situation in both Singapura and Indonesian punk communities signals the diversity and different emphases that can be attributable to punk culture. The fact that punk culture arose after the end of a lengthy dictatorship in Indonesia shows punk culture began in a time of new beginnings and hope, and was initiated as a result of revolutionary political change. This offers an insightful comparison for the Aotearoa punk cultural experience. Though political rebellion is present in Aotearoa, the lack of indigenous presence in punk scenes may signal a lack of understanding of indigenous strains of political rebellion.

### ***Cultural appropriation and reactionary rebellion***

Though piercings and tattoos have become engrained in punk style, these visual indicators have ethnic and Indigenous origins that many forget. In the documentary *Afro-Punks* Tamar-Kali Brown conveys comfort within the punk aesthetic by making those cultural connections. She sees it as bridging her ethnic origins with African aesthetics such as body modifications, and wearing a Mohawk as acknowledging her Mohawk heritage. Tamar-Kali Brown explains:

When I'm wearing a mohawk, I really feel it. There's cultural validity in it for me, it's not just a trend or a style. I have Mohawk blood as well as Cherokee blood, and West African blood, being a descendent of enslaved people from West Africa. I remember one time I had a Bantu knotted Mohawk and I was like, 'Ooh, how interesting, I just manifested the fusion that exists in me genetically in my hairstyle.' So, it's on that level; it's not a trivial thing (Spooner 2011:252).

Brown highlights the multiplicity within punk membership and how that can manifest in punk fashion. It is unlikely that many punks have delved into such consciousness of punk style and its ethnic origins. Though little is mentioned in the literature concerning relationships between indigenous or people of colour punks and "crusty" punks, a number of the participants in this study reflected on experiences and attitudes of crusty punks. For both Shasha and Trixie, the crusty punk contingent fall into the category of punk posturing that feeds this unconscious espousal of punk style and nihilistic rhetoric. Shasha states, 'I don't wanna be one of those fucken crusty punks that is just fucken "anarcho!"', and Trixie adds 'I think that just is really posturing and people being immature, and like "oh, look at my crusty patch" like I'm doing this, so I must be punk.'"

Shasha and Trixie's comments highlight that this crust punk rhetoric relays superficial connections to punk culture of this crust punk rhetoric. Within Aotearoa punk culture, crusty punks fit the aggressive, stereotypical punk attitude, lifestyle, and fashion. Studded leather jackets, ripped and well-worn band t-shirts, dreaded or greasy hair and home-made tattoos are all classic visual indicators of a crust punk aesthetic. However, many crusty punks are heavily politicised, involving themselves in activism, squatting, dumpster diving<sup>10</sup>, Food Not Bombs<sup>11</sup> and creating and maintaining community networks. Yet, recent years have seen this politicised crusty punk movement diminish in Aotearoa punk culture. What participants refer to as crusty punks within their interviews are the non-politicised "dero-core"<sup>12</sup> crusties who drink a lot of alcohol, scrounge money, alcohol and cigarettes, are verbally abusive, and try to get into shows for free. This behaviour does little to support the punk community and antagonises those punks trying to make something positive from their involvement in punk

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<sup>10</sup> See glossary for definition of term.

<sup>11</sup> See glossary for definition of term.

<sup>12</sup> See glossary for definition of term.



communities. Aotearoa punk scenes have a penchant to ebb and flow, and even as I write, there are a number of crusty punks coming through the Aotearoa punk scenes who desire to make inroads that contribute to punk cultural sustainability.<sup>13</sup> That participants mentioned stereotypical crust punks in a derogatory manner hints at what participants value in punk culture. Rather than looking like a punk, community, mutual aid, freedom of expression, and equality are shown to be important to participants and their involvement in punk culture.

### ***Racist fashion***

Some of the symbolism used in some punk fashions has histories and meanings that can alienate and offend disenfranchised groups. The swastika was widely used in punk fashions, particularly when punk culture first began (Churton 1999; Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; O'Hara 1999). Though its appearance in punk fashion was nihilistic in intent and as a means to shock and insult the parent generation who grew up through World War II (Churton 1999), much like the shock value it gave gangs like the Mongrel Mob, the swastika also heightened racism in punk scenes. A number of New Zealand punk bands in the 1970s and 1980s wore the swastika until unwanted attraction from boot-boys<sup>14</sup> and other groups with racist tendencies began attending punk shows because of the presence of this racist fashion (Churton 1999). For the most part punks in Aotearoa were tied to the Pakeha culture of New Zealand, and had little interaction with Jews, Roma and other groups targeted by the Nazi regime. The detachment of sporting Nazi symbolism illustrated desires to shock more so than racial prejudice and most punks have dropped the Nazi-chic pastiche quickly after challenges from other punks in their scenes (Ngo 2012; Churton 1999).

In her interview, however, Trixie acknowledges that there is still a racist presence or at the very least, a desire to shock through derogatory comments, in Aotearoa punk culture:

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<sup>13</sup> A Waitangi weekend festival was one recent show that was organised by a number of crusty punks in Wellington.

<sup>14</sup> Similar to skinheads, boot boys wear steel-cap boots, and often have shaved heads. Their main brand of punk is Oi – which also attracts skinheads. Though not necessarily racists, boot boys and skinheads have a rough and violent presence that can be intimidating to some punks and most certainly “normal” society.

I've been to shows where people have said "niggers!" and stuff like that and I'm just like, "Do you think this is actually American History X or something?" Seriously, like get with it...there's a huge message behind it.

For Trixie racial slurs have an effect that impacts on minority peoples in the punk community. This highlights the contradictory nature of punk culture, particularly the discord that can occur between the principles of punk culture versus how rebellion manifests in some punk communities. This is disheartening for Trixie, as punk "is one of the few places that you might actually fit somewhere." Her comment indicates that punks need to try harder for the benefit of their fellow punks, particularly those who feel they have no other place to turn. Flippant remarks that project racism within punk culture makes its spaces antagonistic for people of colour. While "niggers" may be a term with little impact on white punks who use it for shock value, for people of colour, the derogatory remark can personally affect them, conjuring past and present cultural and racial subjugation. Yet Trixie concedes:

But of course people out there are learning too. And that's what's really important too, in punk circles. You're actually free to call that shit out, because that's the whole point of the movement. It's supposed to be evolving. It's not just staid.

While speaking of the racism and immaturity present in punk culture, Trixie displays the maturity and community value existent in punk culture. While not excusing racist posturing, Trixie understands the part immaturity plays in punk culture. As a culture that houses a largely youthful demographic, immaturity can manifest as ignorance that manifests in racist pontification. While not excusing or tolerating the racist attitudes of some punks, interviewees hint that there is room for racial prejudice in punks to gain less traction in their communities through education. With the aid of open communication encouraged in punk culture, racism and discrimination can be called out, and those espousing discriminatory rhetoric, educated. This is reflective of punk cultural philosophies professing inclusion, mutual aid, and a DIY ethic.

### *“Questioning Motives”<sup>15</sup>: Presenting a challenge*

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In her interview, Trixie describes a challenging interaction she observed when Badd Energy played with Melting Pot Massacre that illustrates the rebellion present in punk culture.

Bands like Melting Pot Massacre bringing shit to the public eye...like “I’m going to bring it up and I’m also going to not let you forget it.” To be able to be like, “ok, this sucks so let’s actually do things to try and change it...When we played with them at Cassette [bar in Auckland] which is like, they’re sooo white and like uni students...their out was like Kings of Leon and all that kind of thing. There were soo many people that were *incredibly* uncomfortable. Like when Shasha’s talking about white macho bullshit it was like, all these dudes were like “oh what! Why is she getting angry at us?” It was amazing. Like half of them were like “oh my god, I feel like I’m at the first Bikini Kill show,” and the other half were just like “who are these bitches! Fuck, why are they so angry?” Amazing!

In this example offered by Trixie, rebellion manifests in challenging the status quo by creating discomfort in established mainstream realms. Moreover, while rebellion satisfies a sense of unity and orchestration in outcast identities in punk culture, it can cause discomfort for those reassured by status quo predicaments. The confrontational style of punk performance can be intimidating and challenging for people, particularly for those used to dominant cultural contexts of performance, radio-friendly pop and love songs, and a quiet beer at the pub. They do not expect to be confronted by people of colour or feminists calling them out on their privilege on stage. For some members of punk communities, this challenging style of music and politicisation is an attraction. The confrontation that ensues can be exciting, confusing, and life-changing, simultaneously. Like Trixie, Jess has drawn inspiration from the challenging nature of punk culture. Jess recalls how punk philosophies and culture have helped address her disjuncture with mainstream mores.

When the patriarchy starts crumbling from under your feet it is mind-blowing. You see the bullshit we are fed from the day we are born and how everything is related to the same oppressive idea – superior humans/inferior humans. My constant inspiration is

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<sup>15</sup> Song title from Aotearoa punk band Shortlived.

“who wrote that rule-book and why.” That is my guide and I couldn’t have found that burning question to drive me without the punk philosophy.

Here, Jess describes the questioning and critical tone of punk philosophy. For Jess, punk culture follows a critique of power structures of superiority and inferiority that she sees as pervasive throughout society. Being able to identify these hierarchies and power structures has been important for Jess and has helped form a critique that has inspired her worldview. The realisation that one can question these widely disseminated hierarchical structures is empowering for punks, and was an aspect that participants found important in validating their identity.

Rebellion permeates the cultural ethos of punk participation and is an element enjoyed by the indigenous punks informing this study. Punks acknowledge the collective rebellion that exists in punk realms that speaks to the outcast positioning of punks within mainstream society. For the participants in this study, this rebellious stance validates their anger at their subjugation as outcasts and as indigenous peoples, while punk communities create safe spaces for this anger to manifest through music, fashion, and politics.

Indigenous punks have used specific forms of rebellion in punk realms that bring to the fore aspects of their indigenous identity. Participants acknowledge the use of indigenous language in punk and the ability to articulate their marginalisation within dominant society in punk performances. While participants acknowledge their attraction to rebellion in punk culture, they argue that some punks can take rebellion to oppressive lengths that disassociate from the freedom which rebellion in punk culture can give. Instead, rebellion takes on destructive qualities including racist language and symbolism that can further marginalise indigenous people and people of colour punks. As such, participants argue that punk culture can provide a better fit for their lifestyles and identities, but aspects of punk culture as reflected in destructive rebellious actions can benefit from improvement that better acknowledges the egalitarian values of punk culture.

# Community (orchestrating self-determination)

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*There is this thing when freaks meet other freaks or when punks meet other punks – they don't care if you're queer or black or whatever, they just want to unite around this freak identity or punk identity that they have in common (Stinton 2012:271).*

*Osa Atoe, African American, queer, feminist punk.*

Punk communities are seen as potential ports of solidarity through the conglomeration of outcast identities. In this sense, the discussion and conclusions made in the previous chapter on rebellion helps inform this chapter that concerns finding community in punk settings. Punk culture provides a much needed space and ethos for those who feel marginalised in other cultural realms. Solidarity as outcasts creates familial bonds within punk settings (Stinton 2012; Zavella 2012; UpThePunks) that transmutes into confidence in identity, and that manifests through joining bands, writing zines, and critiquing society through self-publishing, lyrics, music and protest (Culton and Holtzman 2010; Glass 2012). The use of do-it-yourself or DIY tools is widely practiced in punk culture. In this chapter I explore DIY, the formation of community through difference and participation, and finding indigenous solidarity within punk to show the importance of punk community in fostering self-determination in indigenous punk participants. In this sense, community is forged on a basis of rebellion in the sense that rebelling against dominant life-ways, methodologies, and concepts is a unifying ethos in punk culture.

Though punk communities are seen as a better fit than other communities experienced, participants in this study are realistic about its hypocrisies and drawbacks, particularly where indigeneity is concerned. Like many cultures, a main thread or orthodoxy is created in punk as a means to provide collective ideologies that dictate belonging (O'Hara 1999; Sabin 2012). The largely white beginnings of punk culture are a basis for its current existence (Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; Stinton 2012; King 2012). This makes finding indigenous community sentiment within punk settings difficult and requires an intentional search for indigenous presence. Yet when indigenous connections are established and developed in punk culture, participants of this study

suggest the open-mindedness imbedded in punk cultural philosophy as it relates to outcasts and difference aids the exploration of indigenous identity by indigenous punks.

### *DIY: participation and connection*

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Punk cultural methods of practice are largely dictated by DIY or do-it-yourself culture. It is a mechanism that participants argue allows greater freedom, autonomy, and creative control. DIY methods attribute all steps of production to the punk scene and its members (Spencer 2005; O'Hara 1999). It covers multiple arenas under the punk cultural umbrella including but not exclusive to, zine making, distribution entities or distros,<sup>16</sup> playing music, independent record labels, and band-organised shows, all adhering to grassroots methods that encourage local production (Matsue 2009; Martin-Iverson 2007). Always Never Fun, Zero Style, Stink Magnetic, Riki's, and Pantaloon Party are examples of DIY punk cultural entities in the Wellington region alone. While such entities are locally derived, they also enjoy international networks and recognition within their style of punk music and culture. All participants contributing to this study relayed instances where they had utilised DIY methods in their participation in punk culture. All participants have been involved in organising shows and have been in bands; Trixie and Shasha have been involved in managing distros; and Shasha and Jess have created self-published zines and comics that reflect punk sentiments. While not all punks are as active as participants contributing to this study – for example others may just attend shows or play in a band (Matsue 2009) – punk culture and its DIY methods encourage active participation that better cements punk belonging and control over punk scenes by and for punks. In this way DIY methods solidify the anarchist-socialist influences of punk culture (Savage 2011; Glass 2012; O'Hara 1999).

### *DIY recording – imperfection and autonomy*

Current punk bands in the Aotearoa punk community have established prolific DIY, independent records through local labels and distros including Always Never Fun, Zero

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<sup>16</sup> See glossary for definition of term.

Style, and Scumbag College recordings.<sup>17</sup> The lo-fi<sup>18</sup> production of punk music reflects broader themes of rejecting conventions and encouraging autonomy that are important in punk culture. Punk's rejection of music industry standards by choosing to record at home and putting music out independently reflects a defiant flouting of societal conventions generally, that also manifests in dress, political views, and abrasive music (Churton 1999; Taylor 2003; Glass 2012; Wallach 2005).

Punk cultural aesthetics are intentionally stylistically flawed. The lack of written rules for DIY production makes it easier for wider participation and greater creativity, and gives a sense that anyone can do it (Dunn 2012). Jess argues how DIY aesthetics, while embraced in punk forums, sit strangely amongst other cultural context and norms, like that of her first musical love, hip hop:

When I went solo I made a tape on my parents' stereo with a karaoke mic and beats I made on downloaded Fruity Loops. Cos none of the cool male beatmakers I asked would make me beats, please believe it...I had to sell my own CD's at my first show – which I'd burnt on a friends PC the night before, 20 CDRs with gluestick artwork on them and a pink paper cover. When people laughed at me that night walking around I just remember thinking 'have you dicks never been to a punk show'. So the seed was sown, I was on my own buzz. I was a Maori German-Samoan rapping electro double-agent punk and nothing much has changed.

Jess recognises the freedom and creative abilities of DIY that are accepted in punk communities. Such open-mindedness is unlikely to be found in other musical genres such as hip hop.<sup>19</sup> The "proper" way of doing things in the hip hop scene did not connect with the realities of Jess's creative situation. Jess's anecdote indicates that hip hop has a certain way of doing things - perhaps more professionally than DIY allows. This was shown by the rejection by a number of those in the hip hop scene of the use of DIY by Jess. Jess's DIY ethic to release her music was out of necessity as well as desires for creative freedom. Without the support or help from others within the hip

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<sup>17</sup> See [alwaysneverfunrecords.wordpress.com](http://alwaysneverfunrecords.wordpress.com); [zerostyle.wordpress.com](http://zerostyle.wordpress.com); [scumbagcollege.wordpress.com](http://scumbagcollege.wordpress.com)

<sup>18</sup> Minimalistic means of music recording, usually due to lack of resources and funds.

<sup>19</sup> While hip hop has recently embraced fusions of musical styles, particularly through rock n rap collaborations (see Public Enemy and White Mandingos) the punk music genre has enjoyed musical experimentation since its inception (Furness 2012).

hop scene, she had to find other avenues to realise her creative projects. DIY constructed such an avenue.

### *Misfit solidarity*

In its beginnings, punk culture gathered together those who were disenfranchised and disheartened by the consumerist, capitalist direction of society, and this has continued as a point of connection for punk communities (O'Hara 1999; Furness 2012; Duncombe and Tremblay 2011)). Joey Ramone, of one of the first and most seminal punk bands, *The Ramones*, once said that punk was “a reaction to all the pretentiousness, mediocrity and superficialness that was going on at the time (O'Rourke 2011:3). Sarah Attfield argues how punk offered a dynamic that fit with her disillusionment with greater society. Viewing punk as expressing the “inequality and the positioning of young people in an uncaring society”, Attfield connects with how punk culture turns disenfranchisement to empowerment through the solidarity of punk outcasts (Attfield 2010:1).

Jeremy argues that he finds “solidarity of other people non-conforming to mainstream ideas” within punk culture. This sentiment resonated with the other indigenous punks contributing to this study. In punk culture, not fitting in creates solidarity. This collective empathy can generate freedom of expression in punk communities because of the collective understanding of the ostracising experience felt within mainstream realms. Therefore, being your “outcast” self is encouraged and supported within punk culture, like other cultures that attempt to create space for those who do not fit dominant stereotypes.

Trixie personally identifies with how punk culture accepts a variety of people and personalities that find it difficult to find belonging elsewhere.

As soon as I tapped into this community there's like at least two or three shows every weekend, there was like marches to go to, meetings too, and just all this stuff...I was a little hoodlum from South Auckland, hard out into *Bone Thugs*...and then all of a sudden there was this whole new world...It's so refreshing.



Here, Trixie illustrates how there are a multitude of activities attached to punk culture that can create a sense of excitement and empowerment that manifests as a collective presence for punk participants. Additionally, she recognises how punk culture accepts different people. Her background from South Auckland does not fit stereotypically punk origins, but nevertheless, she found belonging in her punk community. This signifies that one of the main connections in punk cultural belonging is difference. When measured against other collective contexts that require conformity, this standpoint is inviting for those who feel they do not fit elsewhere. Though an unconventional space for indigenous peoples to find belonging given the largely white demographic, punk culture can meet the needs of some indigenous peoples to vent anger and frustration at their marginalised position in society.

### ***Living together differently; constructing community***

Trixie sums up her attraction to punk culture as “just like the underdog thing. People that don’t fit in.” Trixie uses the term “underdog” to describe her dual relationship with punk culture and indigeneity. While being indigenous invokes power struggles between indigenous and colonial counterparts that continue to have repercussions; for punks it is discord with mainstream society that creates an underdog status.

Maaka and Fleras acknowledge diasporic indigenous origins created through such social upheavals as colonisation and urbanisation. They term the collective experience of such social upheavals as the act of “living together differently” (Maaka and Fleras 2005:16). This recognises group and membership diversity as contributing to belonging – connecting through difference. Punk culture also attempts to find solidarity through diverse individuals “living together differently.” Participants argue that the oppositional strategies of punk culture against mainstream society push together those attracted to punk culture irrespective of their differences, because of this collective oppositional sentiment. Therefore they deem punk settings as a better fit for their identities (Force 2009:289).

Shasha found when she first moved to Aotearoa, she no longer had the punk networks she enjoyed in Singapura. She utilised zines and her distro as a way to reconnect with the punk community in her new residence of Christchurch, Aotearoa.

I thought zines would be a good way to just reconnect and slowly get into it...so once people knew I did zines, and once I spoke to people who understood what a zine was in Christchurch, then I got hooked into the Anarchist and Anarcho-feminist stuff. And they were like, 'Oh, you do a zine?! You should come to do this stuff now.'

Shasha's introduction to punk culture in Aotearoa came about through her own knowledge and experience of punk culture in Singapura, and her use of zines and politics to find like minds. In this sense, DIY was the connector that directed Shasha to people who shared her specific interests. Her anecdote shows a genuine desire of DIY designers to connect with people who hold similar values, skills, and methods that indicate a kindred ethos that can build community.

DIY challenges hierarchy by giving mandate to anyone within the punk scene to produce, contribute, and influence their community (Spencer 2005; Force 2009; Wallach 2005; Martin-Iverson 2007). In a musical context, the divide between fan, audience, and band are expelled (Wallach 2005; Baulch 2002). Sentiments of equality and humility are expressed through being involved in multiple processes of music and scene-making. As Jess argues:

It [punk] resists that celebrity culture...Punk is about humanizing and hard work, borrowing and lugging gear, doing the door, gold-coin donations, leaving the comfortable couch because your friend is playing and trying to make something outta this life.

There is little pretext of celebrity in punk culture. Audience members often know the band members performing at the shows they attend, and have little problem in getting interviews with band members for their self-produced zines because of this level of equality in scene-making forged through punk communities (Spencer 2005; Matsue 2009; Thurston and Bird 2010). This physically manifests at shows where bands often perform at ground level and band members, particularly vocalists merge with the audience, making both band and audience participants *and* makers of the event (Maximum Rock n Roll 2014). By extension, all punks have the potential to have a hand in creating their punk community.

### *DIY orthodoxy*

For all its egalitarian rhetoric, DIY culture forms part of the orthodox ideologies that surrounds punk culture. In this sense, DIY creates hierarchies of legitimacy not unlike those found in other cultures, including the mainstream norms that punk looks to challenge (Stinton 2012). If individuals within the punk scene diverge from DIY methods in their creative pursuits, there can be challenges from other punks to their punk integrity and even inclusion within their own community (Brown 2011). Additionally this DIY legitimacy can create insularities from mainstream realities due to the solidarity and self-sufficiency that punk culture can create from within. As the accepted method of production in punk settings, DIY is the dominant way to create in, and belong to, punk communities.

A number of participants contributing to this study have desires to voice their opinions, particularly as indigenous individuals, to challenge their dominated position in mainstream society, through whatever avenues are available to them. This challenge cannot always be realised through DIY methods and is only likely to achieve reaffirmation in a supportive punk community that already empathises with being different to the norm. Both Jess and Shasha realise the potential ostracism that can be incurred by diverging from underground DIY methods in punk settings. Jess argues:

I have a commitment to infiltration and subverting bigger contexts and that's why Badd Energy signed with a predominately white male label like Flying Nun. People need to look at why we made that choice. We're criticized a lot in that world because we are different. We deliver something quite murky; non-conformist to what that audience thinks is cool and anti-airbrushed. For me that's what it's about. We don't want to share our ideas with the converted. Punk is a non-judgmental refuge for us as a band I think but you gotta be tough and take it outside of that if you want your kaupapa to gain new ground.

Similarly Shasha feels the need to create new opportunities for her ideas to gain traction. She also realises the judgement of punks on the decision of her band, Melting Pot Massacre, to look to broader communication avenues outside punk underground and DIY culture – avenues that could be deemed as “selling out” by some punk communities (Churton 1999). Though both Jess and Shasha have heavily utilised DIY avenues through zine-making and organising shows, their decisions to explore further

afield attracts criticism. For Shasha, there is an urgency that relays her desire to challenge the status quo and its subversion of indigeneity:

I also don't like how people talk about selling out in punk. So much more than in other music and subcultures...like getting our stuff on Undertheradar<sup>20</sup> and that kind of thing. Even before that I was feeling like they were "oh you [sold out]" from the crusty punk [types] you know, and that sort of judgementality already. And it's like you know, I never get the chance to play these things. I have to create this chance...

It is such hierarchies of legitimacy within punk culture - a culture housing individuals with varying degrees of privilege - that can be problematic for indigenous punks. Though there is a level of acceptance and solidarity within Aotearoa punk culture for indigenous desires to gain respect for their indigenous position,<sup>21</sup> participants in this study realise that their struggle for indigenous recognition cannot end at punk culture. Indigenous punks like Shasha have an urgency to educate through wider societal parameters whenever those chances arise, to give voice to her unique identity. Within punk culture, the white male, middle-class demographic enjoys the bulk representation. This demographic dominance is also found in contexts outside of punk culture. This affords this white male, middle-class demographic the privilege to adhere to the constraints of DIY if they so choose. For marginalised demographics such as indigenous peoples, sometimes grassroots methods such as DIY are the only methods available to them. As Jess and Shasha argue, there are desires to be able to disseminate indigenous sentiment outside the restraints of DIY and underground realms. They see that for more marginalised groups, the opportunity to participate in avenues other than grassroots and DIY are rare, and therefore feel these opportunities should be taken, as a means to disseminate their ideas in new realms.

Though participants illustrate an appreciation and even kindredness with the DIY aesthetic, they look to the wider ramifications of their work as punk artists and the socio-political messages they can circulate to wider audiences concerning indigenous

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<sup>20</sup> See Melting Pot Massacre's interview on [undertheradar.co.nz](http://www.undertheradar.co.nz) at <http://www.undertheradar.co.nz/interview/602/Melting-Pot-Massacre.utr> (accessed 23 November 2013).

<sup>21</sup> Fundraisers for those arrested and affected by the Terror Raids, targeting a Maori community as well as activists have been held within Aotearoa punk communities and independent activist groups such as Concerned Citizens. Anti-racism marches and opposition protests to National Front marches (that usually fell on the weekend of the major annual punk event in Wellington, Punkfest) have also been well attended by punks.

issues that can only be initiated through more mainstream forums. Punk communities can provide a good sounding board and safe space to grow ideas and support for indigenous solidarity. This forum is appreciated by participants but they feel this should not negate utilising the skills and ideas developed in punk settings to offer their perspectives on a larger scale.

The orthodoxy that punks create through punk cultural aspects such as DIY imparts critiques of members within their own scenes. This is indicative of the questioning tone of punk culture generally (O'Hara 1999; Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; Furness 2011). Afro-Punk is a movement that prioritises the African American punk cultural experience that was spurned by a documentary made by James Spooner entitled *Afro-Punk* (2003). Spooner has since stated to Atoe that "...at this point I don't know how punk you could call Afro-Punk." (Stinton 2012:269) Atoe explains:

I believe he said that because of the corporate-sponsored festivals or more specifically because Afro-Punk festivals and the Afro-Punk website are not D.I.Y. phenomena. The shows happen in clubs with security, the websites advertise Afro-Punk products like Vans sneakers with Afro-Punk logos on them...I just want to say that Afro-Punk is a worthwhile thing and something I myself have benefited from...Before the creation of such a forum, there would have been no way for me to reach 60 black alterna-culture folks at one time. However, Afro-Punk is not anti-capitalist or D.I.Y. in its foundation and that is sad to me. Black folks don't need another product to buy; we need personal, economic, and artistic liberation (Stinton 2012:269).

This gives insight into what many punks feel fits within the punk cultural ethos and what does not. The aspects of Afro-Punk that project fashion and consumerism do not sit well with the DIY culture and political critique that punk demands (Hawthorne 2011). For Atoe's dual black and punk identity, Afro-Punk, though helpful in creating an Afro-centric community, does not meet her political, grassroots desires. This critique diverges from Jess and Shasha's use of mainstream vehicles in that while Jess and Shasha have used mainstream tools, their basis is still heavily imbedded in DIY and politically-driven methods. Afro-punk has developed into a capital enterprise with fashion and marketing at its fore, much like the corporatisation of grunge in the 1990's (Moore 2010).

It is a fine line treaded by indigenous and people-of-colour punks. While DIY methods exemplify the punk spirit of autonomy and imperfection, like any other defined set of principles and methods, they can create barriers for exploring new avenues. While bands like *Badd Energy* and *Melting Pot Massacre* have deliberately sought recognition of indigenous and diverse identities within more mainstream forums of musical dissemination, it is a challenging path to take. It risks criticism from both external social entities<sup>22</sup> and within their own punk communities. The way in which *Badd Energy* and *Melting Pot Massacre* have chosen to use these avenues still carries a sense of autonomy, rebelliousness, and challenging notions that can be interpreted as “punk”.

***“Punk is a way of life”: the pervasiveness of punk cultural identity***

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The application of punk cultural philosophy permeates various aspects of the lives of punks. When asked what punk means to her, Shasha answered:

Without sounding too cheesy, punk is a way of life. It’s a form of existence that aims to subvert and constantly challenge and constantly problematise norms...I know historically it’s viewed in a music subculture context but when someone were to say "that's so punk" or if I say "that's so punk" I mean it beyond that...beyond the music, beyond the mohawks and the leather jackets and shit like that. And for instance I would call Annette Sykes from Mana Party punk you know, stuff like that -her way of challenging things in society and life in general...which includes a lot of people in hip hop; which includes people in different parts of society.

Shasha highlights the challenging nature of punk culture that “problematise norms” - a sentiment that she aligns with. Though punk music was initially the main focus of punk culture, the political ethos of punk has continued to develop and for some, has become ever present in how punks interact with their world. In her description of punk, she realises the fluidity with which it can be applied, both inside and outside punk culture, and by punks and those who do not participate in punk music. In this sense, Shasha illustrates that punk is pervasive in multiple contexts.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.offthetracks.co.nz/badd-energy-underwater-pyramids/> (accessed 13 November 2013).

For Jess, the participation that is expected in punk culture aligns with Shasha's sentiments of the all-encompassing nature of punk. By participating in the various aspects of a punk community, belonging is formed.

The Aotearoa punk scene demanded I participate in it and it essentially gave me a gratification and inclusion that I would never get from the mainstream world or even hip-hop, the genre I was fuckin working in. For that I'll always be grateful and want to contribute, strengthen and diversify it.

Here, Jess touches on a number of key aspects of punk culture that other interviewees also highlighted. Firstly, there is a real need to participate within punk (Spencer 2005; King 2012) and therefore punk cultural values can become engrained in other aspects of life for punks. Secondly, Jess sees this need to participate as part of earning trust and building loyalties that heightens a sense of belonging to a community. Thirdly, she sees punk cultural participation as reciprocally beneficial and creatively validating. This impetus to participate is not shown to be a burden to Jess because of the benefits she sees it giving her and her community. She is happy to offer her time and skills to the wider punk community in order to see it flourish and survive, as well as placing her unique mark on the development of her punk scene.

Perhaps my goal is also to set up a warm, more multi-cultural and multi-genre context for the next lost me that bumbles through and finds it by accident.

Perhaps reflective of her Maori upbringing, this reciprocally beneficial relationship that Jess has with punk culture connects to Maori concepts of whanaungatanga, awhi, and tautoko. In this sense, punk cultural philosophy is applicable to multiple aspects of life much like tikanga Maori can be for Maori. Jess indicates her desire to help others who struggle with belonging and identity through the context of punk culture that expresses her connection to the reciprocal relationship of belonging. Much like Shasha finding belonging through other zine-makers in Christchurch, or Trixie, who found collective activities through protests, marches, and shows, Jess has found solidarity and belonging through the initiatives of punk communities.

For punks who have experienced outcasting, invisibility, subjugation and powerlessness in other realms, punk is one culture that can provide belonging, reciprocal relationships and participation, as well as responsibility that initiates

empowerment and collective trust. As Jeremy concurs, he enjoys “the solidarity of other people non-conforming to mainstream ideas.” This solidarity produces a space for participants to belong and create. Jess continues:

Punk as a philosophy, not so much a micro scene, is where my Maori kaupapa, my feminism and my emotional maturity as an artist can grow...To me it is about doing our thing, being yourself, even if that is flawed – the pretence is barren (in theory lol).

Jess argues that punk culture is a grassroots experience that allows development and self-challenges. Importantly, participants differentiated between the philosophy and practice of punk culture, suggesting that for all its theoretical “goodness”, it does not always measure up to its positive and self-determined outlook in practice.

Participants signalled the need for personal growth in order to add to collective belonging and strength. In this sense, punk communities have the potential to provide space for reciprocal relationships between the personal and the collective. In finding punk music, participants have discovered empowerment over their identity, creative control, as well as collective ways to express disdain for greater society (Culton and Holtzman 2010). All participants found solidarity within punk communities that aided personal growth found through supportive punk members, expression through music, and developing skills and knowledge through DIY activities – all produced through belonging to a punk collective, scene, or community. Jess recognises the collective basis in punk culture that has aided her comfort in her identity:

Up until then [her formation with her first band, The Pussies] I was branded a chronic outsider and fuck up, I was a pretty broken individual when I was a young woman because of the media crap I was being fed about my culture, my size, my elusive ‘brand’ of intelligence, my addictions, my tomboyishness, my lack of obvious binary-heavy labels.

Having an identity that does not conform to societal norms can be destructive to such personalities. But like Jeremy, Jess also found punk communities to be supportive of non-conformist or non-mainstream personalities. Punk culture allows hard to define identities to be accepted and to flourish. Jess continues:

But crossing my flygirl roots with the unapologetic, self-governed ethos of punk, I knew it was special and I fell in love with the punk sound too.



Participants argued that they find comfort in punk contexts that give them confidence in their identities. Punk communities foster this confidence through placing value on members who embrace their individuality and apply their unique skills to benefit their community. For instance, Trixie’s introduction to punk culture gave her a sense of belonging she had not formerly experienced, giving her confidence to participate and start bands that contributed to the vibrancy of her punk community. All participants shared similar stories that illustrated that punks value this reciprocal relationship. For indigenous peoples who find themselves in contexts where traditional indigenous collectivity is unattainable, communities such as those found in punk, that value diverse identities, can help foster belonging due to modern settings and influences.

***“Loitering at the End of the World”:<sup>23</sup> Indigenous solidarity in punk culture***

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For indigenous peoples affected by cultural dissonance and colonisation, means to access traditional modes of collectivity are not always available (Delugan 2010:84). Through the punk cultural context, participants have connected with other indigenous peoples who share similar ideologies and experiences. Participants expressed a desire to connect with indigenous punks in their interviews that both illustrates desires to find like people, but also suggests punk communities in Aotearoa do not fully cater to indigeneity, so indigenous contexts have to be deliberately sought. In Jess’s case, her first band The Pussies intentionally formed membership through multi-cultural means:

We...had a mock 'biracial' law which proved to be intensely empowering as we were all very isolated and on our various odysseys for identity and a context that let us in...We were Balinese, Maori, Fijian, Indian, Samoan. We made our own context...Hybridity was the key philosophy and is still with me in very powerful and obvious ways...We were hanging out with punks and art circles and this started to infiltrate our sound and identity...

It is difficult to say whether punk communities aided this “bi-racial law” that The Pussies created or whether the white, male domination of punk communities (Rooks

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<sup>23</sup> Song title from Aotearoa punk band Cult of the Cobra.

2011:199) could have necessitated this “bi-racial law” to be initiated by the band in the first place – so that their non-white identity was elevated through the band’s existence. What Jess argues is that their bi-racial position found a place and community within punk culture.

### ***Hip hop and indigenous belonging***

In Aotearoa, hip hop is seen as a genre that attracts more indigenous participation (Kopytko 1986), in contrast to punk culture’s white domination (Duncombe and Tremblay 2011). Hip hop took root in New Zealand in the early 1980s, breakdancing being the initial draw card for a largely Maori and Polynesian youth who found kinship between themselves and the African-American originators of hip hop (Kopytko 1986). While there are parallels between punk culture and hip hop outcast predicaments, particularly referring to mainstream ideals, musical tastes and practices are vastly different across the two genres. Some, like Jess see a correlation between hip hop and punk culture and can find creative outlets in both. Jess, however, recognises the sexism present within some realms of hip hop that tend to objectify women, and that sees few women rappers progress in its largely male domain (Kopytko 1984). Feminism and equality have been standpoints touted by punks (Spencer 2005), with people like Blondie, Patti Smith, Alice Bags, and Poly Styrene helping forge punk music in its first few years which create a legacy for the female punks who followed. Such points of difference between punk culture and hip hop have seen Jess choose punk forums for performance and production despite her musical placement within rap and hip hop. That they were utilising hip hop beats and rapping was little deterrent for The Pussies to experiment with their music in punk musical realms. They found the punk cultural philosophy and its musical flexibility as a better fit for their musical creations and identities than they had experienced elsewhere. Overall, Jess sees punk culture as a better fit than other avenues available to her.

I love the friendship and the acceptance. My implicit loyalty to it comes from my distaste in other communities. Local hip hop is proudly sexist...I think even while I ascend in it, I’ll subvert and infiltrate it with my punk philosophies.

Jess has drawn inspiration from her band members. She feels she has gleaned some useful life lessons from her multi-cultural band mates that create solidarity and community within her bands as well as inspiration for the punk communities they inhabit:

I have to say Badd Energy has taught me so much. Trixie our singer transmutes so much of her pain into an extroverted focus when we are performing and she is fearless when challenged. Being around...Jerry too – his commitment and love for the hardcore punk scene definitely influences the band...I'm still neutral by nature I think but when something is not fair I now speak up and I perform and write with the same ethos.

Trixie relays her own experience of indigenous solidarity within punk culture and the important indigenous connections she has made through punk involvement:

Pretty much whenever I went to shows, and saw brown people, I would automatically go to them. If I saw Asians, I would go to them. If I found out there was a Filipino punk...When I met Drake<sup>24</sup> [a Filipino punk based in Wellington] it was like, we've got to be friends! When I met Tara<sup>25</sup> [a Filipino punk based in Auckland] I was like "We have to be best friends!" ...So to meet Filipino punks is just like Holy Shit! I thought I was the only one!

Solidarity with other Filipino punks has been important to Trixie's connection to punk culture, her indigeneity, and embracing her underdog positioning. It is unusual to find Filipino punks in the Aotearoa punk scene, so when Trixie makes connections with Filipino punks, they form a sense of belonging on multiple levels. As punks; as Filipinos; as punk Filipinos in a white dominated culture; as punk Filipino underdogs; Trixie has found that strong alliances can be formed. While this connection is empowering for Trixie, the fact that finding this solidarity with other Filipino punks is an anomaly brings into question the ability of punk culture to secure indigenous membership and create a welcoming space for indigenous punks. Yet, given that participants felt dissonance in other social realms including dominant indigenous settings, punk culture's ability to attract different identities heightens its potential to create an area from which indigenous punks can generate belonging.

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<sup>24</sup> Pseudonym.

<sup>25</sup> Pseudonym.

### *A better fit*

Atoe argues that punk culture is a comparably better fit for her because of its acceptance of those who feel outcast by mainstream society.

All in all, I see punks as being more open-minded than our mainstream counterparts. I don't like to spend too much time nitpicking about what's fucked up inside punk because as soon as I set my gaze on mainstream society, I am far more horrified. Punk's not perfect, but nothing is. I think we're all doing a pretty good job (Stinton 2012:268).

Here, Atoe indicates the comparable fit of punk culture in opposition to other cultural avenues experienced by punks – a sentiment that the participants contributing to this study also noted. Importantly, Atoe acknowledges that punk is not a perfect fit for her identity, but sees it as better than what is offered by “mainstream counterparts.” Jess shares a similar response:

It wasn't perfect and we weathered a lot of bullshit/sexism/racism/assumptions but a part of me felt weirdly accepted and like I was finally good at something.

This indicates a dichotomy of acceptance in punk culture of indigenous punks, tempered with elements of discordance. What participants indicate, however, is that punk communities are trying to do things better for the outcasts it attracts. Shasha sums up well the viewpoint raised by the participants that argue that punk is the only musical genre available to them to express their concerns about society stating that “...it just kind of voiced a lot of the stuff that I couldn't voice in any other music genres.”

### *“Guilty of Being White”<sup>26</sup>*

While many individuals have come to punk culture through reactionary discord with mainstream society, its white, male, middle-class domination becomes a problematic majority for a context attempting to grapple with varying outcast identities and their cohesion as a community. For the benefit of unity, punk culture is susceptible to

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<sup>26</sup> Song title from Minor Threat.

creating an invisibility of difference that, while treating people equally, can work to deny important identity markers of some punks that can cause individual isolation. In turn, if such diversities are heightened by punk members, the white male middle-class majority of punk culture may feel symptoms of guilt and even create conflict between white and non-white members (King 2012; Sorrondeguy 1999).

Nia King, who deliberately claims an “ex-punk” identity, sees the white, heterosexual, male domination of punk as inhibitive of marginalised identities, suggesting that people are “asked to leave part of themselves at the door...” Her critique of the cliquy tendencies of some punk scenes describes feelings of ostracism, particularly felt from the nihilistic actions of some punks, as well as the middle-class, conservative ways of some in her community. She states:

I also started to notice how competition and vying for status pervaded every anarcho-punk show and event. Everyone seemed out to prove how many important scenemakers they knew...When I got tired of trying to out-bro everyone and wanted to be real with people, I realized there was no room in punk for my queer, brown, androgynous ass (King 2012:199-200).

Shasha recognises these elements, also present in Aotearoa punk culture, can override the potential value of all its members:

I really don't like how it doesn't open up spaces for diversity...I think about how when I first got to Aotearoa and I heard about Mika.<sup>27</sup> Like Mika, she's so cool, you know, she does all this art stuff, and like zine stuff, and like I have so much respect for her in the scene. But then I thought, that's only Mika. And like how many of us can do “Mika” right? So there's that struggle. Only if you know the right people and connect to the right things *then* you can actually get somewhere. And *then* you are accepted. And I don't like that.

Shasha describes the cliquy-ness that can be perpetuated in punk scenes. Though she explains that she respects Mika (a person of colour zine-maker, show organiser, and artist who has been in the punk scene for a number of years), she also argues that her elevation in punk can lessen the worth and contribution of other up and coming punks. This is through no fault of Mika, but a symptom of the narrow vision that can occur

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<sup>27</sup> Pseudonym.

through punk scenes. For all its talk of equality and anarchist values of non-leadership and individual autonomy, punk culture in practice perpetuates inequalities and favouritism that may not reflect the many contributions that others make in punk communities.

Trixie shares similar opinions as Shasha in that punk communities can be inhibitive to some punks. She argues that there are some areas of punk where she does not fit, and does not feel comfortable.

There is punk – punk culture – where I *definitely* don't fit in... Like I remember going to punk shows and there would be *no one* – not one person of colour. And it was like “oh yeah, ok, so this is that kind of punk.”

Trixie cites hardcore punk scenes that tend to attract white male participation, as being particularly out-casting for her.

I realised how I just stuck out like a sore thumb and was actually just pushed aside because I was a girl, or because I was brown and I was just like, “oh, I don't get this. I'm gonna just stand over there.”

While punk culture may provide a better fit for societal misfits, the potential for inclusiveness to be met with apathy and for cliquy attributes to seep into punk communities does not go unnoticed by indigenous punks. Pair that with the tendency of punk communities to be over-stocked by a white populous, and it becomes clear that indigenous peoples potentially have an uphill battle to find belonging in some punk communities. Trixie continues:

I also do feel like I've still got heaps to prove and lots to fight about... in punk. I think again that's just because there's just so many entitlements ... even when people hide their racism and with homophobia as well. Like if I can't go to a punk show and be fucken gay as hell, like then what's the point?

Trixie desires to be able to be herself at punk shows, but homophobic and racist attitudes perpetuated by some in the scene can make it an uncomfortable environment to participate in. Shock tactics exploited by nihilistic punks who, whether racist and homophobic or not, delve into this realm of hatred merely for the shock value it incurs (Hebdige 1979; Bangs 2011). While this racist and homophobic rhetoric is less

surprising in mainstream New Zealand, it is disappointing for participants when it manifests in punk communities whose basis is in egalitarianism and inclusion of difference. As mentioned earlier, many punks like Trixie see exclusive rhetoric and immaturity in punk culture for what it is for the most part – bravado and posturing. She still recognises, however, the damage this can cause to punk scenes and its participants. For Trixie this bravado can be annoying and inhibitive. Yet she displays a need to challenge the punk scene and society generally, in order for recognition of her own set of beliefs and identity markers. Trixie concedes that she feels safe and confident in expressing her indigeneity in punk due to the overriding ethos of punk that looks to challenge such discrimination. Though discrimination is present in punk cultural practices, its philosophies house the ability to challenge this discrimination.

This chapter has explored the elements of community in punk culture. Participants argue that their diverse and unique identities have found some semblance of belonging within punk culture in Aotearoa. It is a space where participants can find a haven for outcasts and misfits that enables a collective unity through difference. Through such contexts, participants indicate that they have gained confidence in expressing their various identity values that has not been afforded in other realms. Participants are realistic, however, about how an amalgamation of such diverse personalities under the umbrella of punk culture can create discord. Though professing an egalitarian and open-mindedness in theory, punk culture in practice has seen members espouse racist, sexist, and homophobic attitudes that act to alienate fellow punks, creating an antagonistic space that mirrors similar experiences of out-casting in dominant society. Though participants argue that punk is a better fit for their diverse identities and finding belonging, such discord between egalitarian theory and discriminatory practice is problematic in creating community for indigenous peoples in punk realms.

# Indigeneity (diversifying location, finding meaning)

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Many factors contribute to how indigenous peoples connect to their indigeneity within multiplicitous and increasingly globalised societies. When traditional ties become severed and are often unable to be repaired, other avenues and contexts to express and explore indigeneity must be sought. In this chapter, I investigate the ways in which indigenous peoples are finding indigenous belonging in punk culture. Ultimately, punk culture cannot be seen as a forum specifically catering to the exploration of indigenous identity. For the participants contributing to this study, however, their punk identity has created new contexts to form relationships with other indigenous peoples with similar experiences that have enlivened their diverse indigenous identities. Despite the dominance of a white demographic, the egalitarian and autonomous desires put forward by punk cultural philosophies has provided a basis for indigenous punks to investigate their unique identities.

This chapter is constructed in four main parts. The first discusses orthodox indigeneity and its unrealistic application. The second part imparts what indigeneity means to the indigenous punks contributing to this study. Thirdly, I examine the problems of indigenous invisibility in punk culture in Aotearoa, heightened by a white demographic dominance and the well-intentioned desire for equality in punk culture. In the fourth part of this chapter I will illustrate how indigenous punks have found and created indigenous belonging to counter indigenous invisibility within punk cultural contexts.

## *Indigenous orthodoxy*

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### *Colonial constructs*

It is interesting to note, though Maori means normal or ordinary, this has been changed over the course of the last 200 years to refer to Maori as "other" or "abnormal", while White identity has become the default group known as "New Zealander" (Harvey and



Thompson 2005:3). Colonisation has impacted contemporary indigenous identities, causing out-casting and confusion for indigenous peoples (Paradies 2006).

So called indicators of indigeneity, perpetuated by colonisation, such as full-blood quantum (Franklin 2003; Kukutai 2013), relegates indigeneity to an unattainable traditional past. Governmental institutions have added to indigenous oppression in Aotearoa which has maintained power imbalances between those descended from colonisers and colonised.

The native school system created in Aotearoa in 1867 (Barrington 2008) highlights the impact of government legislation and colonial powers on indigenous culture in Aotearoa that has subverted Maori culture and language in preference of British-based norms. James Elkington, who attended a native school in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, recalls the confusion created by the native school system:

I'd go to school in the morning and I would be taught by Mrs Raynor...I would go home, and Grandma would say 'What did you learn?' So I'd tell her. And so I got the normal cane that everybody else got. 'That's not how you say it.' That night I'd have to learn it in Maori. I'd go back to the school the next day, and Mrs Raynor would say, 'Tell me what you learnt?' And it would come out in Maori so it was strap time, because 'that wasn't what I taught you.' So it was a hell of a confusing time (Barrington 2008:271).

Education reflected colonial hierarchies that deemed Maori as inferior. Rates of success were largely dictated by the ability of students to speak English and assimilate to English ways (Simon and Smith 2001:160).

Colonial processes including government legislation and the domination of economic and cultural hierarchies imbedded in colonial constructs have necessitated creative and lateral thinking by indigenous peoples in order to recreate and reconnect with their indigeneity. Colonial and governmental tactics and stereotypes attached to indigenous peoples do a number of things. Firstly, the idea of indigeneity is relegated to the past through ideals of traditional and rural settings (Peters and Andersen 2013; Harvey and Thompson 2005). Secondly, indigeneity is presented in dichotomies that reflect colonial hierarchies of power. Indigeneity is juxtaposed with settler, colonial and postcolonial identities, and tradition juxtaposed with modernity (Hokowhiti 2009).

Yet in such a diverse and cultured global setting, these dichotomies lack the substance and depth required to explore and express nuanced identities and values of contemporary peoples. Thirdly, the requirement and abilities of contemporary indigenous identities to modernise indigenous belonging have been interpreted as, rather than adaptable, a move away from traditional and orthodox indigenous realms (Hibbard and Atkins 2013).

Some scholars have explored the meaning and repercussions of orthodox indigeneity (Peters and Andersen 2013; Hokowhitu 2013; McIntosh 2005; Delugan 2010; Gagne and Salaun 2012; Trigger 2010). They identify dangers of idealised, traditional, and static images of indigeneity that very few indigenous peoples can adhere to; an ideal that can lead to exclusion of some indigenous people (O'Regan 2009, Meredith in Gonzalez, 2010:30; Peters and Andersen 2013). These scholars acknowledge the element of change within culture that grows with each generation and that is manifested by collective experiences.

In the past few decades Maori-led initiatives including political activism have led to the revitalisation of Maori culture and the reinvigoration of te reo Maori through Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa (Harris 2004). Such Maori-led initiatives intentionally work to undo the inter-generational damage done by the ruling elite of New Zealand on Maori cultural self-determination. These creative ways of continuing indigenous expression have found homes within modern musical realms (Kopytko 1984; Zemke-White 2004). Importantly this has not meant the denial or loss of traditional aspects of indigeneity, but has spurred further growth of indigenous perspectives within and aided by, new and multiple contexts. From te reo ensconced within fast, distorted guitars (Fantails 2011), through to anarchist and Maori activist solidarity (Morse 2010), indigenous-punk cross-cultural interactions acknowledge the potential for widening the scope of indigenous contexts.

### *Stop Backing Winners<sup>28</sup>: indigenous misfits*

Indigenous peoples can feel outcast and less legitimised, even by their own people, due to disconnections with traditional lands, whanau, culture and language (Maaka and Fleras 2005). Connections with traditional aspects of indigeneity can be difficult to maintain without governmental initiatives and community outreach that can help generations of assimilated indigenous people towards cultural revitalisation. Even then, not all indigenous peoples will be the target of such governmental and community initiatives. Those drawn to cultures like punk, though proud of their indigeneity, may not fit the stereotypical mould of indigenous identity, and may not share the cultural interests of the dominant indigenous set. This essentialises who can fit indigenous paradigms even in contemporary settings – those who do not fit are missed by this generalised sweep of stereotyped, homogenous indigeneity. These stereotypes inhibit some indigenous peoples from expressing their indigeneity. Jess questions the slim parameters of ‘validated’ Maori culture and the implications of this on her artistic outlets:

Does it mean that if I don't employ a particular motif or idea or kaupapa, it depreciates my value as a Māori entity, as a Māori artist?...I use my art as a total therapeutic autobiographical extension of my identity... and an opportunity to have fun and have control over my representation because I have no control of it anywhere else in society (Gwynne 2009:6).

Jess challenges not only mainstream society through her musical message, but also conventions of indigeneity. In this respect, she exerts autonomy through controlling and orchestrating her artistic direction and motifs. For Jess, music and her creativity are essential to her autonomy and empowerment because she feels she has “no control of it anywhere else in society.”

Hierarchies sit uncomfortably within the setting of punk culture. Theoretically, punk culture challenges hierarchies of race, ethnicity, and class. In this sense, indigenous peoples can find alliances within punk culture. Autonomous indigenous groups like the Zapatistas in Mexico have been open to working with activist branches such as strains within punk communities that align with anarchist principles (Lagalis 2011).

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<sup>28</sup> Song title from Aotearoa punk band Punchbowl.

Additionally, a number of punk bands have initiated fundraising gigs to contribute to the Zapatista movement and their continued self-determination (Zavella 2012). In Aotearoa, a number of fundraisers and a CD were produced to aid the court costs for those affected by Operation 8 – a nationwide police initiated raid that targeted activists and the Maori community of Ruatoki (Morse 2010). Punk festivals can also be accompanied by politicised workshops that encourage knowledge sharing inclusive of indigenous rights and activism.<sup>29</sup> As Jeremy acknowledges “I find the forum of punk more supportive than the mainstream media is of indigenous affairs for sure.”

### *What is indigeneity?*

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The colonial-indigenous relationship has become intertwined with what indigeneity means, placing indigeneity in a politically-loaded framework (Weaver 2001:240; Trigger 2010:56). In a talk delivered by Shasha at Clitfest 2013, land and whakapapa were seen as the major indicators of what being indigenous means and entails. While Shasha wholeheartedly agrees that these aspects are integral to indigenous identity, she spoke to the history of colonisation and violence that permeates all indigenous cultures globally. In her interview for this study, she argues that the negative impacts of violent experience and adversity is part of what makes us indigenous. Shasha explains:

Like who is occupying that land, and who is resisting that? There's a similar context with Maori in Aotearoa and Melayu in Singapura. It has to be in a post-colonial context. Being indigenous and having a connection to the land, water, mother earth. Also being indigenous means who/where are the power lines and you are always at the bottom of the power lines. Is it always about being white or brown? You [indigenous people] make the majority of the incarceration rates eh, you make the majority of poverty, you make the majority of homelessness, and the fact that that's making us indigenous globally. Yea, so that's what being indigenous means. Being marginalised on a global scale."

In this sense it is power structures and the lack of self-determined forces afforded indigenous peoples under colonial-initiated rule that indigenous people share and

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<sup>29</sup> Such as CLITfest 2013 – a feminist festival held in Wellington that included workshops and discussion panels that were centred on indigeneity and other marginalised communities, as well as musical performances.

hence, factors directly into what it means to be indigenous (Maaka and Fleras 2000). The experience of colonial violence finds an outlet of release in punk culture for indigenous punks. Indigenous punks in Aotearoa subvert colonial domination in order to create meanings of indigeneity that reflect their diversity and desires for self-determination. This autonomy is sought via the support of punk cultural standpoints of egalitarianism and freedom.

### *Indigenous self-identification*

Participants connected themselves to ancestral territories in their interviews, irrespective of the contemporary locations in which they currently find themselves. In the process of finding participants, self-identification as indigenous was a key foundation for their participation in this study, along with their involvement in Aotearoa punk culture, and a desire to be a part of a study that discusses the interaction of these elements. Self-identification is important to indigeneity because it gives power to the indigenous person, rather than impinging on proof of indigeneity to external authorities, such as colonial governments. Indeed, indigenous self-identification is included in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions” [article 33] (Gagne and Salaun 2012:383). This also acknowledges that community acceptance is one of the cornerstones of indigenous belonging. All participants are validated through their indigenous affinity in punk via pan-indigenous affiliations within their punk communities. Additionally, through my own identity as an indigenous person within this group I acknowledge all participants within this study as part of my indigenous affiliation within the Aotearoa punk community. In this sense, there is a definitive pride within the indigenous-punk conglomerate that recognises this indigenous-punk dual identity in a way that reflects whanaungatanga.

### *Living away from tribal lands*

When asked what being indigenous means to him, Jeremy acknowledges a responsibility to land. Similarly, Trixie sees indigeneity as where you're from rather than where you are. Jess, however, highlights the nuances of the modern-traditional relationship in acknowledgement of her multi-faceted whakapapa:

My mother is Maori (Ngapuhi), she's originally from Kaikohe but was raised in South Auckland. My Dad is German-Samoan but he was raised in old school Grey Lynn.

Here Jess acknowledges both the traditional and modern settings of her parents and by doing so, acknowledges the importance of both locations in her identity as an indigenous person. Dissonance in indigenous identity has a presence throughout participant interviews. The diversity in which indigeneity is contextualised and recognised solidifies the notion of an indigenous diaspora and the degrees with which indigeneity has expressly branched out from a traditional, orthodox base (Peters and Andersen 2013). Instead of displaying a harsh duality between tradition and modernity, Jess expresses a fluidity that validates all aspects of her whakapapa – traditional, urban, modern, or otherwise – as indigenous.

Like the participants contributing to this study, many indigenous peoples live outside their traditional homelands. Trixie is an indigenous person from the Philippines, and Shasha is an indigenous person from Singapura. Both Jeremy and Jess, though of Maori descent also identify as indigenous to Samoa. Their connections to indigeneity are nonetheless strong and real despite their current location in Aotearoa. Though Jeremy has never been to Samoa he is still intrigued by it. As his grandparents moved to New Zealand for a better life, this desire has been passed onto Jeremy, who relayed similar desires to move overseas. This intergenerational disconnect from tribal lands requires the use of other methods to connect to indigeneity. For the indigenous punks informing this study, punk culture has provided a forum to create pan-indigenous links.

Jess has had artistic residencies in Europe and Asia in order to further her creative pursuits. These are experiences that have enlivened her unique identity including her passion for her indigenous whakapapa. Her collaboration with Brazilian rap duo A.M.O.R (2012) indicates her exploration of indigenous activism:

*Liberate from stereotypes / Government give a shit and treat them right  
Free them from treaties you never heard / Stop remixing ancient words  
Honour and respect tangata whenua / Tino rangatiratanga's not the enemy  
Diversity is not a box to tick / This is a reality  
This is not a joke and this is not radical  
Poverty and prison is not a sabbatical  
They cut the money then they pump the tax  
Then they cut the power then they send a fax  
Then they sell the ocean then they buy it back  
Then they say "we're on track" (yea, don't buy that)*

Indigenous activism can provide a link that is universal to global and collective indigenous struggle. Here, Jess expresses impacts and burdens that Maori deal with in Aotearoa, and speaks to the colonial-indigenous experience generally. Although Jess explores her identity in global contexts, her work recognises her Maori whakapapa and puts on the world stage her identity as a Maori connected to Aotearoa. Here, she particularly focuses on politically significant aspects within Aotearoa that impact on Maori, recognising the political machinations behind contemporary indigenous identity.

When asked what indigenous punk bands he enjoys, Jeremy named Bad Brains – a seminal African-American punk band from the Washington DC hardcore scene that began in the late 1970s/early 1980s. Prior to our conversation, I had not thought of African-American peoples as being indigenous, because of the forced location of African peoples within the United States, Brazil, Canada, and other areas in the Americas for some centuries. Yet this forced deployment through the slave trade should not negate their indigenous identity to areas within the African continent. Though many African-Americans may be unaware of their tribal whakapapa due to the aggressive erasure of their identity, not only as members of African tribes, but as equal human beings, their indigeneity should not be denied should they choose to define themselves as such. Much like the participants within this study who identify as indigenous to overseas lands, and whose indigeneity has been threatened by colonisation, slavery, and oppression, their indigenous identity should remain validated despite locations in non-tribal lands. This is similar to the movements of Maori within Aotearoa, particularly through the urbanisation process that relocated Maori away from their tribal lands. This physical removal from location can remove cultural connections

to indigeneity but importantly, does not erase indigenous self-identification from indigenous individuals. As discussed in the previous chapter, punk culture can create spaces that can support indigenous punks. In the absence of connection to tribal lands, this supportive space can aid indigenous exploration.

### *Pan- indigenous solidarity*

With distance created from traditional ties, new links have been formed between pan-indigenous groupings of indigenous individuals. Shasha's involvement in activist groups includes an Asian immigrant group who support Maori endeavours for self-determination. As a conglomerate of indigenous and immigrant peoples, such groups share similar experiences of colonisation and oppression as Maori in Aotearoa, but importantly, they acknowledge that Aotearoa is the homeland of Maori. Shasha confirms:

I'm just trying to navigate space and own it. And also, I can't own all of that space either. Like I'm not indigenous in Aotearoa you know?

The personal experiences of indigenous peoples whose homelands are overseas produces empathy and support, rather than taking over space, of the indigenous peoples in their new residence. This positioning recognises the right of Maori to seek self-determination and restitution for the impacts of colonisation in their homelands and is something that other indigenous groups worldwide can relate to.

Similarly, Trixie acknowledges pan-indigenous solidarity through her involvement in Maori cultural groups at school.

Even at school...I'd join every Maori cultural group...I was in every single Maori cultural group because they got me, and they got each other and it was like we were all on the same buzz...like we were fighting the same bullshit.

Maori cultural groups were a means to connect with kin people for Trixie. Through her Filipino heritage, she found solidarity with Maori students because they "got" her, having shared similar experiences of not belonging to the dominant set and struggles with institutionalised oppression. It was a way of constructing belonging through



ethnic difference to the majority. Similarly, punk culture provides a setting for Trixie and others to find solace among other societal outcasts. Strength and belonging is found within the underdog paradigm through collective support and empathy. This pan-collectivity can manifest through being in a band, showing support for other indigenous and ethnic minorities, or competing in kapa haka. This indicates that though connection to land is important for indigeneity, when this connection is obscured, relationships on pan-tribal levels can generate a sense of belonging for indigenous people.

### *Whanau*

The question of what whanau thought of interviewees' participation in punk culture seemed the most difficult question for participants to answer. Many times, the question was followed by a deliberate pause and I found myself giving participants the option to pass on this question. This may indicate that participants were comfortable to talk about punk and indigeneity, but not such personal relationships such as whanau relationships. Furthermore, the distance of family from the punk experience can be large, punk culture being a youth and musically dominated realm. In this sense, it is understandable for participants to be taken aback by the inclusion of the question of whanau within these interviews. Yet, I felt it an important question to ask, as whanau is one of the primary connectors to indigeneity as the source of indigenous whakapapa. I am still unsure how this lack of correlation between punk and whanau impacts on the study of indigeneity and punk, and this deliberation may be outside the scope of this thesis. I am reticent to make the judgement that such distance between whanau and punk culture necessarily means that punk culture is an unsupportive environment for indigenous expression. That would be too large an assumption to glean from this sole question on whanau opinions on punk identity, and would certainly not be a conclusion derived from the interviews in their entirety.

Perhaps the deliberation over this question by participants merely indicates separate relationships between their punk identity, their indigenous identity, and their familial ties respectively. These three settings seem distinct to participants. Whanau holds personal connotations that differ to those found in punk or even indigenous identity.

Punk culture, its chosen nature and element of fun does not necessitate the depth found in familial relationships, and as Shasha has stated, indigeneity can be very political. From growing up with a father who is a Vietnam veteran, to a Mormon upbringing, through to experiences with domestic abuse, whanau connections can be highly charged. These are just some of the personal challenges faced by participants in whanau settings. I have omitted linking the names of participants to these experiences precisely because of the discomfort that such experiences and relationships seem to cause.

Most participants express sentiments of non-comprehension of their punk identity amongst whanau members. When asked what whanau members thought about their participation in punk, interviewees responded with comments such as "My family doesn't know" or "I'm the black sheep [of the family]." Another participant senses that their whanau would be "pretty shocked." They quantify:

I haven't told them I'm in a band called The Dilfs and that we've got a song called All Cops Are Bastards. No way! Yeah, they definitely wouldn't be impressed.

This shows a certain distance or at the very least a dissonance of identities between some of the interviewees' punk cultural and whanau identities. Though generational difference between parents and children is nothing new whether in indigenous families or otherwise, this generational dissonance can interfere with traditional dissemination of indigenous culture from elders, parents, down to children. The participation of indigenous peoples in punk culture could reflect this distance from traditional knowledge and illustrates attempts to find new ways of expressing identity.

As discussed previously, punk cultural philosophies have similarities to indigenous belonging. Jess expresses this collusion well when she discussed her definition of indigeneity:

Second-nature to me is the outlook of equality...Not putting money or colonial laws before the livelihood and spiritual health of human beings. Sharing your resources happily. Passing down your experiences...Empathise and look out for your community. Accept your brothers and sisters for who they are and trust that they will do the same...Indigeneity is about your community and uplifting them through your own actions.

As Jess describes her view of indigeneity, similarities between the punk cultural ethos and indigenous ways become clear. Desires of equality, and putting people and community first are highlighted in both indigenous and punk cultural realms. In this sense, Jess relays a whanau quality that is attributable to punk communities. Reciprocity, skill and knowledge-sharing are embraced in punk culture through DIY motives and are also supported in indigenous cultural organisation and whanau settings. This correlation is particularly telling when Jess sums up her attraction to punk culture and how it coincides with her indigeneity as “tino rangatiratanga.”

### *Seeing punk within whanau*

Some of the participants read traits of family members through a punk filter in a way that combines both elements of their familial and punk identity. This insinuates a bond of kinship that participants have found in punk culture. Additionally, this connection reflects the pervasiveness of punk culture in the everyday lives of participants. Shasha identifies her grandmother as her first punk icon. Though her grandmother was no punk, her manner, realness, and challenging voice solidified her "punkness" in Shasha's eyes.

I think my first punk icon...would be my grandmother. She always did everything just subversively...She was just never settled and living in any house. She just got too much bullshit I think. And I remember her getting angry and criticising everyone. It was great! She was my first punk figure...before I figured out who the Ramones were.

Similarly, Trixie and Jess acknowledge what they view as positive punk traits within their sisters. Though by no means involved in punk their sisters, like Shasha's grandmother, were categorised as holding a "punk ethos." Jess states:

My sisters are divas who don't really listen to punk music or read zines, but they are punks to the core. We all challenge the status quo and we all have tino rangatiratanga in our hearts, activating it and interpreting it in our own ways.

Similarly, Trixie relates punk culture to her sister:

My sister is quite punk but she doesn't actually participate in punk...even though her ethos and everything, is totally rooted in that [punk philosophy]...She also went to

Afghanistan, and did some amazing fucken shit. She went to an underground girls school...They'd invite her into their house...seeing this woman in the military...and almost looks the same as us...It was really kind of a big thing for heaps of the women there...All the girls [at the underground school] were like "you might get into trouble" [being in military gear]. And she was like "No, I'm allowed...and I'm going to teach you English. We're such rebels! We're like punks!"

Participants transfer their love of punk culture to show love and inclusion of their family members within the context of their punk identities. This is a testament to the pervasiveness of punk culture in the lives of punks. Vaughan Bidois acknowledges the contemporary usage of whanau in New Zealand is inclusive of wider societal groups and contexts such as sports clubs, schools, and cultural groups that mimics familial belonging (Bidois 2012). This is indicative of the close relationships that the word whanau denotes. By applying the positivity that punk culture denotes for Shasha in her grandmother, and Trixie and Jess in their siblings, participants indicate their close relationship to their family members. While hesitant to make explicit links between punk and indigeneity it is difficult to deny the existence of similar features within punk and indigenous experiences and standpoints that have seen indigenous peoples, such as those contributing to this thesis, gravitate toward punk culture. Jess acknowledges that, while her whanau may not like punk music, they unconditionally support her creativity because she is a loved whanau member.

Musically I don't think it would be for anyone in my whanau but anything that empowers me and enriches my experience as an artist, they support. Basically they all think it's noisy but cool.

***"New Deal but it's Always the Same":<sup>30</sup> white privilege / white invisibility***

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White privilege concerns the notion that being white affords a white person certain privileges that are not earned, but gained solely based on race or ethnicity (McIntosh 1988). As a result, non-white people are disadvantaged by this privilege being enacted (Gray 2012). Additionally, as the dominant set in New Zealand and many other

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<sup>30</sup> Lyrics from Aotearoa punk band Big Blue Blanket.

Western and colonised nations, the culture of "whiteness" becomes invisible because whiteness is the default demographic. One participant in Borell's study demonstrates:

There is a distortion about being normative and being unmarked so that how we do it is how everybody does it...like the thing about why do they have a Maori land court why can't we have a Pakeha land court. Now that's because all court transactions are unmarked Pakeha ones." (Borell 2005:42).

Trixie recognises this white dominance in Aotearoa stating "I read as Filipino, born in a white dominated society", suggesting that white dominated society is so permeating that it is subversive in her identity, despite being Filipino. Her comment also infers a lack of control over how a Filipino or indigenous person is perceived in a white-based social order. She cannot help but be Filipino, and thus is viewed as an anomaly because "white" is the dominant demographic. All participants recognised the white male domination of punk communities. Participants acknowledged that this demographic mimicked the power structures of Aotearoa generally and that this demographic impacts on how indigeneity can be expressed in punk cultural realms.

Trixie states, partially tongue-in-cheek, that being indigenous means "being...not white." However, this is a telling reaction to what indigeneity is perceived to be - as a face value, race-based identity, and little else. Colour is often the first distinguishing feature of indigeneity that some people will draw on, even in punk culture. Certainly, features have much to do with physical indigenous distinctions, but there are many indigenous people who do not read as indigenous, based on their skin colour. When Trixie states that being indigenous is being "not white," there are many other connotations to that - like not being of white culture; not having white mannerisms; not having white privilege (McIntosh 1988). While all participants saw the disadvantage of being the minority in punk culture, irrespective of the punk cultural ethos of equality, Jess positively stated how this privilege can be turned around. She is aware of the social biases of whiteness, race, and indigeneity but sees privilege in having an indigenous perspective.

It's like an inverted white male privilege because I feel like the privileged one seeing through all that shit.

Importantly, rather than viewing privilege in terms of holding power over another section of society – a position in which white domination is placed - Jess's realisation of her privilege as an indigenous person to be able to identify white domination, comes from a subversive source and perspective indicative of a minority identity. This perspective uplifts her ability to interact with spaces of white privilege, to be able to recognise inherent privilege, but is not a privilege that subjugates others. Instead, it is a privilege of perspective and being able to see when and how inherent privilege is enacted.

The invisibility of Pakeha culture in Aotearoa makes the recognition of white privilege problematic, and thus easy to ignore (Gray 2012). While the indigenous participants contributing to this study are well aware of white privilege, many within the white demographic of Aotearoa and its punk culture find this privilege difficult to see. Rupe from New Zealand band The Rabble illustrates the superficial treatment of race in punk culture, and the instilled fear of indigenous rights that permeates both New Zealand society and Aotearoa punk culture:

The right of Maori is a touchy subject...I don't think it's fair to give different rights to a certain race...They just need to be treated as equals (Scanner Zine 2007).

This statement is indicative of seeing the desire for colonial redress by Maori and indigenous peoples as racial privilege. Fed by governmental legislation, misinformation of Treaty settlements, and racial taunting of the mainstream media of New Zealand, the sense of Maori privilege (Brash 2004) has elevated fear throughout sections of the New Zealand population (Hagar 2006). Treaty settlements can be met with feelings of white guilt and hurt that illustrates the lack of responsibility taken in redressing colonial wrongs in Aotearoa. Brash fuelled this white guilt and fear of Maori through dismissing the rights of Maori to contemporary redress:

None of us was [sic] around at the time of the New Zealand wars. None of us had anything to do with the confiscations. There is a limit to how much any generation can apologise for the sins of its great grandparents (Brash 2004).

Distancing personal involvement with colonial acts has denied the right for indigenous generations to readdress acts that have led to Maori disadvantage and lessened abilities for indigenous communities to gain self-determination contemporarily.

The question of white privilege was recently brought into focus through the formation of a Facebook group called The Pakeha Party. It is reflective of views of some New Zealanders that desire "one law for all", and an end to what the party sees as legislative favouritism for Maori through the Waitangi Tribunal and special Maori political representation. This is indicated by the Pakeha Party slogan "We stand for equal rights for pakeha. If the Maori get it, we want it too! No matter what it is!" (The Pakeha Party 2013). The perceived monetary benefits of oppression seem the main focus of this Pakeha Party slogan, which may not have been stated so adamantly had inter-generational oppression, high-crime rates, lower wages and life expectancy of Maori been included in these "equal rights." Gray elaborates on the white privilege displayed by entities such as the Pakeha Party:

As the majority, white people have the privilege of being able to live in a society that reinforces the centrality of a white subject position and rewards white cultural knowledge...that can be exploited to gain access to further resources, power and privilege...On the very rare occasions when we [white people] find ourselves in situations where it cannot be utilised, we often interpret this, not as putting us on an even footing with those who are not white, but instead as placing us at a significant disadvantage (Gray 2012:68-9).

Punk culture is identified as a largely white, middle-class boys club (Duncombe and Tremblay 2011; Nguyen 2011; King 2012). To an Indigenous woman like myself, who has been an active participant in punk scenes in Aotearoa for some seventeen years, I have mixed feelings about this punk cultural demographic. On the one hand, I have to acknowledge that this white male, middle-class demographic seems to be the case. The majority of punk shows in Aotearoa are peopled by a sea of white faces in black t-shirts where I have been one of a handful - if not the lone - brown person. On the other hand, the overemphasis of the "white, heterosexual, middle-class male" pastime of punk does not give credit to the people of colour, women, queer, and those who grew up in poverty, who contribute to and identify just as much with punk culture and its ethics, as those fitting the middle-class, heterosexual, white male punk stereotype.

### *Punk culture: a better alternative?*

Though participants argue that punk is a better fit for them compared to other cultural avenues found in dominant society, and that punk provides theoretical equality that can aid the exploration of indigeneity, a number of participants found it difficult to express blatantly or boldly their indigeneity and their frustrations of indigenous oppression within white/pakeha/colonial domination, through the medium of punk culture. When asked if they felt confident and comfortable with expressing their indigeneity participants' answers were largely positive, but were often followed by a disclaimer that indicated punk culture had room for growth and acknowledgement of indigenous identity. Jeremy illustrates that punk culture is better than most forums available to him, but argues that it does not escape causing disruption and resistance at times for indigenous punks.

I think there definitely is [support for expressing indigeneity], more so than in other forums in society. Like sometimes it's hard and a struggle...

Shasha sees Aotearoa punk culture as having a lot more work to do to support indigenous punks and indigeneity generally. When asked if she thought Aotearoa punk culture was supportive of indigeneity she replied:

In Aotearoa? No, in Aotearoa, no...the fact that it took so long for me to find out about the Coolies, and on TV...and like finding out about Fantails, and only through people who know Fantails...It's just that no one really wants to talk about it, no one really wants to make it visible, no one helps to promote it... And even when its recognised it's kind of like oh you know, sometimes Sarsha does her vocals in Maori. Like what the fuck?!

Shasha expresses disbelief with the lack of depth of exploration and acceptance of indigeneity in Aotearoa punk culture. This is shown by the amazement expressed by punks when a punk band uses Maori – one of the official languages of Aotearoa, and through the difficulty she had finding other indigenous punks and indigenous punk bands in Aotearoa. The acknowledgement of diverse identities can be difficult, as Jess argues:

I'm allowed to listen to rap and Rn'B, I'm allowed to wear what I like, meat-eating is not right but for some cultures it is a luxury and honour to have meat in your home.



That is hard to extract yourself from if you are proud of your culture and don't want to make your grandmother upset lol.

Here Jess comments on the rigid orthodoxy that is sometimes present in punk culture. Cultural standpoints and punk cultural orthodoxy can neglect the importance of cultural safety and nuances, such as being a respectful guest with whanau members and not disrespecting hospitality simply because of stances that may have bearing in urban punk cultural settings – such as veganism and vegetarianism – that have little context when returning back to whanau lands. This stance does little to allow diversity within punk cultural realms.

Jess discusses the hypocrisy that can be present in punk culture. She notes how she has at times, been made to feel uncomfortable and an outsider by those who profess egalitarian views. She argues that punk cultural theory does not always match the practices of some punks:

I only really played with punk bands when Coco Solid was starting and these supposedly enlightened men wouldn't even talk to me in the green room. These guys are wearing political t-shirts, exchanging vegan tips, husky screaming these songs about justice and they are consciously making the one brown girl in the room feel like shit.

Punks can espouse egalitarian political rhetoric, while their actions can act to alienate those within their scene, particularly those who do not conform to their own identity and ideals. Talking in abstracts is much easier in punk settings than addressing biases and exclusion within punk culture itself and the hypocrisies this entails on a personal level. Ignoring “the one brown girl in the room” is unfortunately all too common in punk, while wearing an anti-racist or anti-sexist sloganed t-shirt (King 2012; Stinton 2012; Nguyen 2011).

In researching indigeneity in Aotearoa punk culture, I have investigated web pages, zines and academic publications concerning how punk scenes interact with indigeneity. Most are from overseas, with few examples from within Aotearoa itself. As predicted, forums like punkas - a New Zealand based punk cultural website - deliver predictable apathy and one-liners that look to shut down or at least belittle any considered, intelligent discussion regarding race and indigeneity. Though I would not advocate

punkas as the definitive arena for intelligent punk rhetoric, it is one of the main forums for punk culture in Aotearoa. For those who have read punkas forums before, this will come as no surprise, but in a quick perusal of its pages, flippant racism was easy to find.<sup>31</sup>

on ANZAC day:

"but that thread is pretty terrible really, it's less of a discussion and more of an abuse the guy who thinks differently while patting everyone on the back who agrees with you type deal. plus it's ok to be racist if a family member was once in a war with dirty japs."

on the Boston Bombings:

"I think we have little enough evidence already to blame Muslims, dam rag heads what's their problem. Burn the Qur'an"

on Iran-Pakistan border earthquake:

poster #1: "at least forty people dead"

poster #2: "Forty? That's like, half a white person."

Poster #3: "More like 25% -they were Muslim." (punkas.com)

Talking with these punks face-to-face usually gets past the online pontificating and button pushing – a symptom of aggravation and rebellion within punk culture. Though many of these comments are people mimicking the rantings of racist, middle New Zealand, these are still acts that alienate punks of minority and ethnic backgrounds from punk cultural participation. For a culture that prides itself on DIY aesthetics, self-sufficient media production through zines and blogs, and political awareness, Aotearoa punk culture has not taken seriously issues of race and indigeneity. This online pontification highlights the safety that white domination provides for white punks in Aotearoa punk culture. This study indicates, however, the presence of punks of colour in the Aotearoa punk scene and justifies serious self-reflection in punk communities, rather than regurgitating mainstream bigotry.

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<sup>31</sup> These examples were found in a casual five minute search on punkas.com.

### *Punk difference and indigenous invisibility*

One of the major connectors in punk culture is difference. Yet rather than celebrating this difference, punk scenes render difference invisible under the homogeneity of its white, male, heterosexual dominant demographic. For all its desires for equality and freedom – perhaps as a means to rectify the inequality that punks face in normative society – celebration of difference as an abstract, rather than dealing with the actual cultures and identities represented within the punk cultural conglomerate, becomes the main focus. This means that with difference as the connector of punk, ironically, difference is subjugated for collective belonging and equality. Mimi Thi Nguyen argues:

...this insistence that ‘we’re all the same’ leads to all kinds of equivalences that just make no sense at all. That is, ‘blue hair’ discrimination does not even come close to rivalling racism. And if one more punk asks me to explain the difference between calling someone a ‘whiteboy’ and calling someone a ‘nigger’ or ‘chink,’ blood is seriously gonna flow. It’s called history people (Nguyen 2011).

It is the history of slavery, colonisation, genocide, and subordination that differentiates between the coloured and oppressed experience, and those belonging to cultural identities that govern powers of the world. Whether punks realise it or not, a large proportion of punk members benefit from white, heterosexual, male domination that is mirrored in governing structures within our societies. Extending Nguyen’s argument further, the equalisation of having blue hair and being called a ‘nigger’ cannot be seen as a similar experience, due to the factors of choice and the depth of histories connected to the latter. There are varying levels of how social difference affects people and this comes down to options or privilege. Though the will and desire may be there to express identity through having blue hair, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities do not have that element of choice in their outward appearance nor the history that is attached to their ethnicity. Race and indigeneity cannot be erased by simply redyeing hair, removing piercings, or covering up tattoos. Yet, the recognition of difference, no matter the level and element of choice involved, has a semblance of enforced connection that homogenises through the conglomerate of difference within punk culture. Understandably for racial minorities and indigenous peoples involved in punk

culture, this homogenisation of the “oppressed” experience can be insulting. Trixie argues:

People come into it like this alternative culture that they can apply themselves to...And they just kind of ruin it for everyone else...you know, aren't really willing to learn as much as people of colour in punk. They're way more narrow-minded and have a set idea of what punk is...[they are oppressive] just like colonisers.

In these contexts, Trixie sees similar sentiments and actions perpetuated by white punks that reflect their societal domination and privilege. They do this in punk culture by taking over space. What seems to make this takeover all the more obtrusive is the punk cultural ethos that professes inclusivity and acceptance of difference. For Trixie this disrupts her involvement in these punk cultural spaces because of the dominant position that is held by the white, male, heterosexual, middle-class demographic. In punk scenes like hardcore or the attitudes of some crusty punks, aspects of punk culture reveal a shallowness of thought, and domination by demographics that also enjoy elevated power in mainstream society. Trixie expresses that such domination should have little place in an egalitarian cultural realm like punk.

Similarly, Shasha acknowledges the anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian stance taken by Aotearoa punks, however, takes issue with the lack of internal development and betterment that could be produced in punk communities:

It's just bizarre, and I think that that's partly to do with that sort of white based value system that is not really challenged by people, that sort of filters through regardless of what they challenge in terms of capitalism and all that crap you know. It doesn't filter through in the way of doing things in the scene. And that's an issue.

In punk cultural settings, racism and discrimination against indigenous peoples is usually viewed as external failings of societies outside of punk culture (Nguyen 2011). Yet when punk communities arise that prioritise identities other than the white, male, heterosexual domain of punk, such as Riotgrrl, Queercore, or Afro-Punk, the punk orthodoxy feels challenged (Nguyen 2011; King 2012). The rise of these subgroups within punk culture illustrate the level of dominance the white, male, heterosexual group enjoys as the punk cultural orthodoxy, and the impetus felt by those in minority demographics to make their mark.

*“Sick of Excuses”:<sup>32</sup> creating indigeneity*

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*I have the same philosophy with my own Maori identity. You gotta challenge and interrogate not only others' beliefs but your own beliefs if there is going to be growth. You ain't gonna achieve that in a back-patting vacuum. Jess*

Shasha expresses her surprise at the lack of indigenous representation in Aotearoa punk communities – a lack of representation that highlights the Westernisation of Aotearoa compared to her punk cultural experiences in Singapura. Like other indigenous punks in Aotearoa, Shasha rallies around glimmers of indigeneity within Aotearoa punk culture. Shasha recalls discovering the all Maori female punk band The Coolies for the first time:

And, I remember when I was in Christchurch and I watched one of those like, you know Sunday youth programmes in the morning...What Now? Or Sticky TV...they had an interview with that South Auckland group ...The Coolies. And I was like what the fuck! How do I get to see them?...They were like South Auckland, and I was like, I need to get to South Auckland. Like what the fuck am I doing down in Christchurch? It's so fucking white! Yea, and that was kind of my inspiration, feeling connected again, like its more than just white people out there. I think being indigenous and being punk has so much in common. And I think even though it's rare to see that happen in music [indigenous solidarity], it must happen in music.

Participants convey a need to reach out and find other indigenous people who "get punk" and who are involved in punk culture. Jess discusses similar connections to other indigenous punk bands that have aided the feeling of belonging to a punk community that was more closely suited to their collective indigenous identities.

When I first started The Pussies we had our brother-band The Mint Chicks who are Hawaiian brothers and our sister-band The Coolies, all Maori females from South Auckland. We were brown bands in a white scene and I never felt like a racial outlaw because our agendas and performances were on a completely different vibe to other bands. We weren't interested in blending in because we didn't have a choice, so we decided to stand the fuck out..."

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<sup>32</sup> Song title from Shortlived.

Jess expresses how the punk ethos of being different works in favour of indigenous solidarity in punk culture. Jess saw this conglomerate of brown punk bands as solidifying their position as brown and indigenous outcasts that punks could respect. By creating solidarity through difference, these bands cemented their belonging within punk settings. Though punk culture has a tendency to homogenise difference in attempts to create equality and belonging, Jess's experience with this conglomerate of brown bands emphasised their difference to those in their largely white punk cultural surroundings as a means to create solidarity between indigenous punks.

Of her current exploration of indigeneity and people of colour in her punk community, Jess states:

There aren't many POC (People of Colour) bands in the punk scene but we are one of them. Melting Pot Massacre I think are the future because Shasha is such a compelling orator and their political grounding is airtight. I have known Meng Zhu [of Melting Pot Massacre] since she was a teenager and she is a natural society interrogator. Fantails to me are intimidating musicians, they clip all sexist perceptions of women and the technical abilities we lack in the genre and so watching them inspires and reminds me of that. Those are my two favourites at the moment because they understand my experience as a woman of colour trying to navigate the same things in the same country.

While Jess concedes there are few POC punk bands, individual people of colour punks make up for this dearth through passion and presence as staunch, challenging people of colour punks. This indigenous solidarity in punk settings is memorable and special to those indigenous punks who find it and suggests that punk is a cultural forum housing abilities to include politicised emphases that can encourage indigenous expression and identity. Similarly, as discussed in the previous chapter, Trixie recognised the staunch position of Melting Pot Massacre, and their ability to challenge the status quo through their music.

This chapter has explored indigeneity and the multiplicitous ways with which indigenous identities manifest. That the indigenous punk participants contributing to this study do not neatly fit essentialised indigeneity through whakapapa, living on traditional lands, and being imbued with indigenous cultural proficiency has not negated their self-identification as indigenous people. Modern multiplicity and

contexts have seen their indigenous identity manifest through their indigenous punk networks. Their passion for both punk and indigenous culture is indicated by the fluidity and crossover they express between these two identities.

Hypocrisies of punk culture and the continuance of white dominance within it can inhibit indigenous exploration within punk contexts. Solidarity between indigenous punks, however, is made stronger because of similar experiences between these two cultural realms, both inside and outside punk culture. Navigating indigenous recognition can be difficult in punk cultural realms. Yet, participants see punk culture as a better fit than other contexts experienced due to the egalitarianism and desires to improve as a movement. By utilising punk culture as a means to express indigeneity participants broaden the contexts in which indigeneity can be found and expressed that dismisses notions of indigenous orthodoxy and colonial domination over indigenous identity.

# Conclusion

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Indigeneity is being expressed in multiple arenas, acknowledging the past and present experiences of indigenous peoples and communities, from colonisation to urbanisation; traditional tribalism to global communities and movements, that have led to the diverse ways and places in which indigeneity is expressed (Hokowhitu 2013; Gonzalez 2010; Maaka & Fleras 2009) . In this thesis I have explored how indigeneity is expressed within the musical and cultural grouping of punk in Aotearoa aided by interviews with indigenous punks.

In this study I have asked if punk culture is supportive of indigenous participants, what the indigenous experience is in punk culture in Aotearoa, and how indigeneity is expressed in punk spaces. Interview participants contributing to this study suggest that punk culture provides a better fit than mainstream avenues for their outcast identities. They realise that punk culture has potential to support indigenous expression. Similar outcast experiences create solidarity and self-determination through community and belonging within punk cultural frameworks. Through punk culture, participants have found tools and solidarity with other outcasts that have enabled them to become orchestrators of their own identities. Participants found that punk cultural philosophies of egalitarianism and freedom resonated with their desires for recognition of their indigeneity and is a positive means of support for the exploration of their indigenous identities.

Additionally, punk culture attracts those on the fringes (O'Hara 1999), and this spoke to participants in that difference to mainstream ways was accepted and indeed, propagated within punk cultural realms. Punk culture is known as a rebellious musical movement and this was a key instigator for the indigenous punks in this study to join the punk cultural fold. Not fitting the mainstream mould, whether that be through dominant society, or through traditional and orthodox indigenous settings, were instrumental in participants connecting with punk culture. Politicisation of outcast positioning has found its way into punk communities, and this fits well with desires of participants to have their indigenous rights recognised.



However, participants were realistic about the contradictions of punk culture and communities that are problematic in aiding their ability to express indigeneity in punk cultural realms. Though they found punk culture in Aotearoa to be a better fit for their diverse identities, there are a number of anomalies that make indigenous expression in punk difficult. As a culture created in Westernised domains – namely the United Kingdom and the United States – it is dominated by a white demographic (Duncombe & Tremblay 2011; Furness 2012). Although punk culture prides itself on its egalitarian stance and support of those who feel outcast by mainstream society, this sentiment clashes with its dominant demographic. It is ironic that punk is viewed as a culture embracing difference and rebellion when its demographic is largely shaped by those who hold power in mainstream avenues. These mainstream powers are largely what punk culture rallies against so the ironic dominance of mainstream demographics can alienate those who do not fit dominant identities. Additionally, the egalitarian stance of punk culture can streamline punk cultural belonging. While well-intentioned, this egalitarian stance that situates the motto “we are one people” within the punk cultural mantra, this “one people” often becomes the “dominant” people and in the case of punk communities, this is white, male, and middle-class (O’Hara 1999; Brown 2011). While a well-meaning pursuit, the form of egalitarianism that punk culture tends to prioritise smooths out difference that illustrates monoculturalism, negating difference (Nguyen 2011; Sorrondeguy 1999).

For indigenous punks, this can mean punk communities do not recognise their indigeneity because this style of egalitarianism negates difference. The hardships faced by peoples other than the dominant demographic in punk arenas are overshadowed in the name of egalitarianism. Yet indigenous peoples and other minority groups within punk culture have taken their own initiative and built on other important premises of punk culture and philosophy such as freedom of expression and autonomy, to build their own communities that recognise the diversity that punk culture attracts. Movements within punk culture, such as Riot Grrrl, Queercore, and Afro-Punk cement the presence of difference in punk culture and practices its philosophy of questioning authority (even if that authority is within punk scenes themselves). It is such movements that empower indigenous punks within punk culture, and this was acknowledged by participants in this study.

The relationship between indigenous punks and punk culture is a complex one. Though participants acknowledge the overriding freedom given in punk cultural spaces, particularly compared with the hierarchical constructs in mainstream society that house a history of indigenous subjugation, punk culture, ironically, has within it demographics and aspects of mainstream society that still have the potential to inhibit freedom of indigenous expression within punk cultural settings. This highlights the tendency of many cultures to create an orthodoxy in order to present unity and solidarity. While this may be well-intended, those who do not exactly fit the dominant mould can suffer from ostracism despite desires and identity markers that would see them participate within punk culture (Spooner 2003; Sorrondeguy 1999). Participants contributing to this study show how indigeneity can be present in multiple realms and expressed in multiple ways. In turn, their participation in punk culture challenges its' largely white demographic and the contradiction between this demographic and its' desired view as an outcast domain.

There are a number of observations I made in this thesis that necessitated more room than the scope of this thesis allowed and could benefit from future investigations. The partnership of anarchism and punk culture is an interesting companionship globally (O'Hara 1999; Glass 2012) but was particularly absent in the interviews I conducted. I suggested the musical focus of punk for participants and the largely white participation within anarchist politics in Aotearoa may be reasons for this lack of connection and may be a study worth exploring in the future. Additionally, this study could aid further investigations concerning indigeneity in punk culture through international comparisons. Again, I touched on some international examples on this topic, but I feel a deeper comparative study would glean some interesting results. With more punks becoming involved in academia, deeper critiques of punk culture and its hypocrisies, such as the observation of crusty punks by participants, could produce interesting work concerning modern cultural contexts (Furness 2012).

This study highlights the various realms available to indigenous peoples today where indigeneity can be expressed. It is both an insight into and a critique of Aotearoa punk culture. As a realm that has had little investigation outside punk cultural settings, particularly as it reflects on indigenous participation, this study forms an introduction to the workings of punk culture and how that impacts on indigenous punk participants in

Aotearoa. This work invites other investigations into the multiple places in which indigeneity is being expressed. I intend to disseminate my findings in the Aotearoa punk community after the completion of this thesis through its DIY forums, infiltrating my work in Aotearoa punk scenes as a writer and musician. This study has given space to unique indigenous identities rarely given the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions in both academic and punk cultural realms. In this sense, this study encourages more dialogue concerning the gamut of modern indigeneity by highlighting one of many unique arenas – that of punk culture – in which indigenous peoples are finding ways to express their indigeneity.

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# Appendix 1: Participant Profiles

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## *Jeremy*

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My interview with Jeremy took place on a blustery cold evening. I met with Jerry in his cosy room in a house a block away from my own cosy lair. I've known Jerry for a good few years now through the punk scene here in Wellington.

Jeremy is of Samoan, Maori and Pakeha descent. He has been attending punk shows for a number of years, but first started playing in bands in 2009, playing guitar in *Guilt Society*. Recently he played guitar in *Badd Energy*, and is vocalist for *The Dilfs*. Jeremy is currently based in Wellington and has organised many shows within the region.

## *Jess*

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Jess's interview was conducted via email due to her artistic placement in Seoul, Korea. At the time of the interview she was working on an exhibition while also producing an animated show entitled *Hook Ups* which she collaboratively wrote and designed, concerning a pair of Maori twins and their musical endeavours.

Jess is of Maori (Ngapuhi) and German-Samoan descent and grew up in Auckland. She is a writer, illustrator, comic artist, rapper and musician. Jess joined her first band when she was 21 years old. It was an all female, bicultural group called the Pussies and has become well-known under her rap moniker *Coco Solid*. She currently performs and writes in a band called *Badd Energy*.

## *Shasha*

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My interview with Shasha Ali prologued the CLITFEST Queens Birthday weekend, featuring talks on feminist, tran-gender issues which delved into political and personal arenas, and touched on race and people in colour in activist-feminist contexts. Both Shasha and myself performed the CLITFEST afterparty comprising bands with female members. This weekend and its events, therefore were still at the fore of our mind when we came to have our conversation (Tuesday, 4 June 2013).

Shasha is Melayu descent from Singapura. Her people are from across Java, Indonesia through to the tip of Malaysia. She moved to New Zealand with her family in 2002 to Christchurch and now resides in Auckland. Her involvement in punk stemmed from her political activism and her zine writing, of which continued when she moved to Aotearoa. She joined her first band in the last couple of years – *Melting Pot Massacre* – for which she is the vocalist. Shasha currently works for the NGO SHAKTI, an organisation that supports immigrant families that have endured domestic violence.

## *Trixie*

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My discussion with Trixie took place in her bedroom in Wellington. We shared vegan sweet treats, cigarettes, cups of tea, and pats with her cat, Burgz.

Trixie is of Filipino and Scottish descent. She joined her first punk band when she was 14 years old and has since performed in *Curfew Girls* and *Badd Energy*. Trixie has been involved in organising shows and helping to run a distro. Trixie is currently an organising member of the BOX collective – a female, queer, pacifika group who organise entertainment events.

# Appendix 2: Interview Questions

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1. What is your indigenous whakapapa and your punk whakapapa?
2. In what capacity do you engage in punk scenes and culture in Aotearoa? Bands? Zines? Distros? Communities?...
3. What drew you to punk/why did you become involved in your punk scene?
5. What does punk mean to you?
5. What does being indigenous mean to you?
6. Do you feel that the aspects that attracted you to punk coincide with your indigenous identity? How so?
7. Do you find punk a supportive forum for being Indigenous and expressing your indigeneity? How so?
8. Do you feel confident and safe in expressing your indigeneity in punk scenes here in Aotearoa? How so?
9. What do you enjoy about being part of punk culture in Aotearoa?
10. What do you dislike about punk culture in Aotearoa?
11. Punk is touted as being a genre that encourages political awareness. Do you find this in punk culture in Aotearoa, particularly regarding indigeneity?
12. What do your family members think about your involvement in punk?
13. A number of non-white/middle-class/heterosexual/male punk scenes have sprung up around the globe - from the Taqwacores, Riot Grrls, Indonesian punk, to Queercore. Do you think a Maori-pacific specific brand of punk is possible? Or is already in existence?

# Appendix 3: Analysis Codes

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## *Note Codes*

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### **1. INDIGENEITY**

- a - land
- b - whakapapa
- c - culture
- d - tradition/legitimacy
- e - history
- f - contemporary
- g - community
- h - stereotypes
- i - racism
- j - music/arts
- k - politics

### **2. AOTEAROA**

- i - racism
- b - identity/culture
- e - history
- a - land/space
- f - contemporary
- g - community
- h - stereotypes

### **3. PUNK**

- a - ethnomusicology
- b - NZ
- c - indigeneity
- d - race
- e - DIY



f - zine  
g - venues  
h - community  
i - stereotypes/appropriation  
j - music  
k - scenes/culture. attitude  
l - politics  
m - diversity/authenticity  
n - history  
o - gender & class  
p - Anarchy

#### **4. IDENTITY**

a - belonging  
b - place/space  
c - diversity  
d - majority/minority/hierarchies  
e - subculture

#### **5. METHOD**

a - interview/method  
b - Kaupapa Maori  
c - researcher positioning  
d - inside/outside  
e - reciprocity  
f - style/punkademics, etc.

**1. Politics of Rebellion**

- a. Outcasts
- b. Location
- c. Music
- d. Fashion
- e. Activism
- f. Racism and culture

**2. Community**

- a. DIY
- b. Self-determination/orchestrators
- c. Personal growth
- d. Diversity
- e. Racism and culture

**3. Indigeneity**

- a. Stereotypes
- b. White privilege
- c. Whanau and growing up
- d. Music
- e. Indigenous solidarity