

Women in Punk Creating Queer Identity Spaces: Strategies of Resistance Revisited

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Declaration

Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for award of any other degree or diploma in a university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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This paper is cited in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight. It contains data from the Honours project that formed the pilot study for this thesis

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Abstract

This research presents a contemporary snapshot of queer engagement with punk fields in an Australian and UK context. Conducted from an ‘insider’ position, the study finds that queer women and gender diverse people are configuring resistance to hegemonically masculine music scenes by building communities of praxis. Through a Do It Together (DIT) spirit, marginalised groups are dualistically initiating resistance and collectivism at gigs, making zines and forming bands, as well broadly positioning intersectionality as key to creating safe(r) punk spaces. Queer punx are using resistance as practical tool of foregrounding productivity and longevity in their scenes though generating ephemeral archives where remembering is both affective and transformative. Queer punx deconstruct what we know of the spatiality of resistance – how it is invoked, configured, unpacked and reconfigured. Incorporating affective atmospheres into an analysis of queer(ed) punk space as sites of resistance, this research analyses affective, spatial and temporal spaces of collective embodiments. Drawing on interviews, formal participant observation, as well as reflexively drawing on 15 years of lived experience and relationship building within punk scenes, this study revisits Halberstam’s concepts of *strategies of resistance* and *rewriting narratives* to add a new perspective to understanding punk practice. Considering Muñoz’s *queer futurity* as well as Hammers’ *collective authorisation*, queer women and gender diverse people’s experiential knowledges and identities are explored to contribute new knowledge to a queer archive. Importantly, this research problematises feminist constructions of women and gender diverse people as invisible subjects, instead remarking them as hypervisible but unknowable.

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Glossary of Terms

Call Out Culture

Call-out culture refers to the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organisers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language use by others. People can be called out for statements and actions that are sexist, racist, ableist, transphobic, homophobic, ageist, as well as any number of expressions that further marginalise an already marginalised group (Ahmad 2015).

Cisgender (ciswoman, cisman, cisfemale, cismale, cispeople)

A term originating on online spaces and discourse, rather than in academia, cisgender refers to an individual whose constructed gender aligns with physical and biological sex. That is, a person assigned female at birth identifies as a woman and a person assigned male at birth person identifies as a man. Largely a queer(ed) term, cisgender is used by those in the queer community to acknowledge the power of normative discourse by referring to the norm as 'cis'.

Creative Self-Making

This concept addresses the ways individuals and groups, specifically young, queer women, express queerness and in turn (re)produce identity through creative outlets such as music, zines, art, performance and adornment. Exploring the intersection of punk and queer exposes pockets of young women creatively navigating themes of identity and sexuality in the landscape of male-dominated spaces.

Distro

A distribution centre which collects and sells or trades zines or items through a physical or web store. These centres exhibit a DIY ethos and are usually run by an individual or small group.

Do It Together (DIT)

DIT is an extension of DIY (as below) used to acknowledge the collective effort which culminates in music, space and artefact production. The term is being used in film, music and art production to describe the contribution of many individuals to one or more projects. Divergent from the

individualism of DIY, DIT is taken up to never let the resources of one individual limit the potential of the community as a whole.

Do It Yourself (DIY)

DIY represents a resistance to commercialised music production. The punk scene has taken up a DIY ethic since the early 1970s, whether by necessity or preference. Records, events, gigs, zines and networking are supported through self-funded means, rather than being made financially viable through major record labels or publishing houses. Music is often shared rather than bought, and funds are allocated back to bands or publishers to make new material. DIY presents an ideal of punk; if it does not exist, do it yourself.

Gender diverse

The umbrella term for such genders as ‘genderqueer’ or ‘non-binary’. The term ‘gender diverse’ is used in the thesis to refer to collective groups of people who have a number of fluid identity labels but are comfortable with the overarching ‘gender diverse’ terminology.

Gig (also referred to as show)

Gig is slang for a live musical performance; however, it has also begun to be used to describe precarious employment. Originally coined in the 1920s by jazz musicians, the term, short for the word ‘engagement’, now refers to any aspect of performing, such as assisting with performance and attending musical performance.

Hardcore

A musical style and value system stemming from punk. Hardcore, as the name suggests, is seen by those within the scene to be the core of punk; anti-authority, anti-establishment, middle or working class, angry and distrustful of ‘act your age’ ideals. The ‘hard’ infers a masculine space, distrustful of outsiders, including women. Adherence to the punk ideal of Do It Yourself (DIY) encoded as a sharp, simple sound justifies the claim by those in hardcore to be the essence of punk (Fox 1987). Blush (2010: 9) notes, ‘hardcore generated a lifestyle stripped down to the bare bones. Its intensity exposed raw nerves. Everyone was edgy and aggressive’.

Malestream

First used by Mary O'Brien in her 1981 work, *The Politics of Reproduction*, malestream intends to describe the cultural connection of good engagement with mainstream engagement. I use malestream to represent the taken-for-granted assumption that cis male participation in punk scenes is the 'best' form of expression while queer and gender diverse participation is less worthy of acknowledgement.

Mosh pit (the pit, circle pit, wall of death)

Mainly inhabited by cis men, mosh pits (also known as 'the pit') exist in punk and hardcore spaces during a performance. The space, usually located at the front of a music arena and opposite a performer/band, is where collective, stylised and aggressive movement occurs. Sometimes loosely referred to as dancing, the mosh pit resembles a pinball machine. Depictions of movement include punching, grabbing and kicking while slamming into objects and others.

Non-binary folk

Describes a person or people who reject codified gender markers through their performance. Non-binary people may identify as both masculine and feminine at one time, as different genders at different times, as no gender at all, or dispute the very idea of only two genders. 'Such gender identities outside of the binary of female and male are increasingly being recognized in legal, medical and psychological systems and diagnostic classifications in line with the emerging presence and advocacy of these groups of people' (Richards et al. 2016: 1).

Punk

There are several meanings of the term punk described in this thesis. Firstly, punk is a subculture, scene and field, which includes music, space and style. In this way, punk is both a culture and a movement seeking to include marginalised youth through a range of issues including: the unequal distribution of wealth and class stratification, religion, conservative culture and alienation. Stylistically, punk music is fast and aggressive and participants are visibly non-conforming, often choosing to use fashion and body modification such as tattoos and piercings as an expression of punk selfhood. Secondly, punk is described as an identity; one feels punk as opposed to feeling like a punk.

Punx

Some scholars of punk spell the plural as punx to recognise common practice in the subculture (for example, Vensel 2008; Sharp and Nilan 2015). Punx is also used in colloquial terms to express the intersection of punk and other identity markers, as well as a descriptive term of changing lexicon. Punx generally appears on recordings, show posters, merchandise and zines that are made on anarchist or queer scenes.

Queer Punx

The intersection between queer and punk identities. This overlap marks experiences, identities, bodies and spaces and becomes a way to describe ethics, values, aesthetic and lifestyle in both an individual and collective sense. In Jack Halberstam's (2003: 314) work on queer subcultures, it is argued that queer can develop within a punk subculture through 'kinship based notions of community'. Halberstam uses punk as an example of how the rejected (those removed from societal norms) create their own community through exclusion. This is the intersection between punk and queer; the idea that you can simultaneously be included and excluded based on non-normative values and beliefs.

Riot Grrrl

A feminist movement and musical style within punk fields. In the early 1990s, after the punk scene diversified into stylised segments, Riot Grrrl bands such as Bikini Kill and Bratmobile sought to challenge how women in punk and hardcore were represented; as sexualised and passive participants (Jacques 2001: 47). The term Riot Grrrl was used in the production and distribution of music, self-publications and art through collectives of women across the globe, originally forming on the US east coast.

Trans (trans people, trans women, trans men, m2f and f2m)

Trans is a term that represents opposition to cisgender gender identities and includes anyone whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs significantly from what is expected of them in their culture based on their sex assigned at birth, including people who are transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, and more (Shlasko 2014). This term has been used throughout the thesis where informants have labelled themselves as such.

Zines

A small circulation, self-published magazine containing original or appropriated texts and photos. Usually produced using a photocopier and distributed through trade, gifting, or sold for a minimal fee at zine fairs, music venues and through distros.



Figure 1: Karina Utomo performing with High Tension at The Evelyn, Melbourne on 15 June 2016. Photo by Jessica Batty.

Chapter One: Introduction

We have difficulty recognising the affective dimension of events as 'resistance' to the extent that we expect resistance to be oppositional – to be defined by an act of saying no to an existing state of affairs. But the challenge is, to understand resistance as something other than what is left after power has staked its claims.
- Maria Hynes 2013: 570.

*I don't wanna join your club
I don't want your kind of love*
- Sleater-Kinney 1995.

This research project unpacks the relationships that queer women and gender diverse people have with alternative music (specifically the punk arena), with each other, and with broader discourses of feminism, gender and self-making. Concentrating the research to a specific age range (20 - 30) of queer women and gender diverse people in Australian and UK punk scenes, this thesis presents a nuanced snapshot of a field that has been studied extensively in the social sciences (Hebdige 1979; McRobbie 1980; Bennett 2002, 2006; Marcus 2010). I draw on the important earlier work of others to reflect the changing landscapes of punk, and to draw together some of the historical and cultural turns that have influenced contemporary punk practice, as well as research that concerns it. Without the work of scholars, punks, and scholarly punks before me, re-writing narratives of punk and updating its relevance to youth studies would have been an imposing task - one that I probably would not have undertaken. However, authors such as Jack Halberstam, Corie Hammers, Jodie Taylor and José Esteban Muñoz compel me to see the future of punk for queers as impacted by how we engage with it in the here and now.

Using queer theory, I undertake an analysis of the ways in which construction and navigation of the queer self in a cismale dominated space takes place. The thesis addresses what queer looks, sounds and feels like in contemporary punk scenes and how spaces become queer(ed) through the bodies that inhabit them. While I use the term 'women' in the title and for research aims stated below, many participants in this research, and the punk field more broadly, identify as gender diverse. As such, both women and gender diverse people are considered within this study. That speaks to the evolution of the project over time and my desire to represent queer punx as they themselves find flux. Employing four key research aims, the thesis intends to sketch out:

- (1) the construction and meanings of queer identities for young women engaged with punk subculture in Australia and the UK.
- (2) an expansion of previous research to encompass creative self-making of punx women; the use of art, community groups, self-publishing as well as music and music activity in navigating queer identities.
- (3) whether groups of young women from urban, regional and metropolitan locations have similar or different experiences in their queer punx narratives and whether these narratives broaden the histories of punk.
- (4) whether groups of young women from urban, regional and metropolitan locations have similar or different experiences in their queer punx narratives and whether these narratives broaden the histories of punk.

Identity curation is a key conceptual tool used in the research to map a punk journey of women and gender diverse people, and as such, it features heavily in each chapter. Taking into consideration active and passive participation within punk spaces, the project explores the tangible and ephemeral artefacts of punk, such as zines and tattoos, as well as the more subversive aspects, such as aesthetic and attitude. I have chosen to utilise a methodology that is both rigorous and flexible, one that investigates lived experiences from an insider position while acknowledging reflexivity as an important epistemological tool. The informants are often people that I know or that I have known, as well as people with whom I have built relationships in the course of the research project. I make this known in the interpretative analysis of the data, and in the theoretical and methodological chapters. Ultimately, this thesis provides a snapshot of a time and place where queerness is present and presented, which challenges the foregone conclusion that women and marginalised people are ‘invisible’ in punk places.

Much of this thesis unsettles how resistance is conceptualised in youth sociology, and contributes to a growing body of work exploring social groups acting as configurations dislocated from the remnants of disempowerment (Clough 2009; Collins and Munro 2010; Hynes 2013). I find that queer women and gender diverse people pre-configure dynamic social spaces where they are able to fracture and dismiss masculinised sites of power - or negate them all together. These resistances are displayed through the taking up of Do It Together (DIT), which invokes intersectional, community- based approaches to creating spaces of intimacy within punk settings. Following Pile (2013), I scaffold a theoretical and methodological framework that challenges the idea that ‘the relationship between geographies of domination and geographies of resistance is as simple as that between a hammer and nail’ (Pile 2013: 4). Using spatialities, Pile asks us to deconstruct what we know of resistance – how it is invoked, configured, unpacked and reconfigured. Incorporating affective atmospheres into an analysis of queer(ed) punk space as sites of resistance, I draw on Anderson’s (2009) work, which inclines us to

imagine a place where the materialist and non-materialist ether of affect pools and forms temporal spaces of collective embodiments.

Like those who have written of queer time and space in subcultural scenes before me, I do not assume that all queer people live radically different lifestyle to their straight counterparts. As Halberstam points out, 'queer subcultures produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience – namely, birth, death, marriage, reproduction, and death' (2005: 2). Though a constructivist epistemology, I find that queer women and gender diverse people play at the intersections of spatial and social enactments to curate identities which reframe 'youth' as an ephemeral but available anchor, a state of doing which can be picked up in certain places and set down in others. The physical and digital geography of the research project aims to show that a queer punx experience is not isolated to regional, urban or international scenes, rather that subcultural practices of punk are reproduced across scenes.

I note here that queer punx gives a broad but purposeful meaning to this study. Rather than the plural of punk/s, punx is a term used across scenes to acknowledge the intersections that exist within genres, sounds, venues, ethics and values. The 'x' represents a symbolic meaning; punx as codified resistance; as progression from traditional, stylised 'punks'. The term is not exclusive to queer scenes; it is used colloquially across grindcore, hardcore, folk and queercore genres, moreover it appears frequently in queer ephemera. There are a number of terms that have been appropriated from the queer punx lexicon in this thesis, all of which are commonly used in the scene and have been noted in the glossary.

What this thesis provides is a generous and wilful insight into how queer punx construct and experience meaning in a social space that claims inclusivity but enacts fragmentation. Being written from an insider perspective (Hodkinson 2005), the intricacies of self-making and performativity (Butler 1990) form the basis for understanding how technologies of collective embodiments mobilise to step away from domination, preferring instead to configure sites of resistance rather than existing conditions. The narratives that have been openly shared with me, as a researcher and a queer woman, give weight not only to the struggles of marginalised people to be considered legitimate in punk scenes, but how legitimacy is being re-visited in collective terms. In this way, queer women and gender diverse people are taking up some of punk's most imperative ethics and viewing themselves outside of capitalist ideologies of success.

Interlude

As I compile the thesis in preparation for submission, taking care with the narratives of informants and triple-checking my interpretation and order of their stories, it seems appropriate to begin with some reflection on my time as a researcher in my own home. I did not have a plan to study punk spaces, my original research proposal in 2013 was to consider queerness in everyday life, so this all started somewhat by accident. It was only after talking to my friends about post-graduate study that I started to realise that my 15 years in punk might be as valuable to my academic research as they had been my own identity. There are two important points I want to make here. One, that my biography has undoubtedly shaped the approach I have taken towards developing this project, and two, that my community of queer (and not-queer) punks have been with me from the start, from before the start.

As a white, working-class ciswoman¹ growing up and living in Newcastle, Australia I found punk early in my teenage years - queer came later in my twenties. I spent most weekends watching bands and hanging out at pubs, even when I was too young to be allowed in. Most of the friends I have now I met through punk in one way or another. I did not have the cash to go to upscale bars, drink cocktails, and wear fancy outfits like my high school friends wanted to. I'd like to think that it was because I wasn't interested in that kind of thing, but something about that claim seems dishonest. I found a home in black clothes, a table in a beer garden or someone's backyard, face-melting sonics, the fury of being written off as 'good, for a girl' and in the gratitude of Friday and Saturday nights spent with my friends.

The scenery of my life for the next 15 years didn't change all that much, I still go to shows with my friends in Newcastle, my wardrobe is the same, and I'm still furious. I have moved around a little, finished a degree, started a career, had relationships and relationship breakdowns. However, the show posters are all the same, the bands still start 45 minutes after they say they will, and my friends are still the people that I look for, look to and look up to. The space that punk has afforded us is not without struggle or compromise, as most of the queer people in this research suggest. We are subjected to violence - physical and symbolic - and we are not given access to legitimacy in the same way that others who fit the mould of punk are. By no means do I suggest that young men do not also struggle for legitimacy in punk, but I have watched them earn it on terms that are quickly erased for women, queers and gender diverse people. I also do not suggest that by naming one's self as queer, automatic inclusion to a community of queer people is awarded. Even within these social groups, exclusionary practices are reproduced. However, I have found both in my lived experience outside of academia, and in my

¹ 'Cis' (ciswoman, cisman, cisgender) is a queer community term for an individual whose constructed gender aligns with physical/biological sex assigned at birth.

research, that queer punx have remarkable potential for leveraging their social, cultural and symbolic capital.

I argue that it is because of queer people's acknowledgement of privilege as a hierarchy where some profit and others are disempowered, that they create new worlds of belonging, and certainly this has been my experience. Queer punx seem to carry this trait for endorsing the curation of singular and collective identities into worlds beyond punk. I understand my value system as repurposed from my punk education, therefore I cannot extract my desire to clear spaces for voices in research from that time I watched a female friend do a mic grab at a Propagandi show and the feeling of community I had afterwards. So, when informants of this study re-tell their narratives, I am usually alongside them, feeling the affective intensity of their histories, and linking them up with zines I've read in the past or records that I have listened to. Because of this, the research must be reflexive and I have documented how I have engaged with reflexivity throughout the process. But even more so, this work intends to show women and gender diverse people as they see themselves; not simply the oppressed or victimised subjects of cismale occupation of time and space, but as resilient, creative, smart and playful. This is the way I know them, and myself, and through the process of completing this project, their generosity in supporting the path I am taking resoundingly reflects a DIT ethic.



Figure 2: DIT records logo. A global network of artists releasing music collaboratively. Retrieved from <http://www.ditrerecords.com>

Chapter Outline

The following is a brief overview of each chapter, its direction and overarching theme. The chapters correspond with a traditional thesis outline and fulfil the logistical requirements for a doctoral dissertation. The rationale for compiling the data chapters is epistemological; informant stories are retold in the order in which they were presented to me, because I understand this to be the most authentic way to portray their knowledges. Beginning with scene setting, and moving onto acts of violence was the common flow of interviews for reasons of both the order of the interview questions and the lineage of experiences that informants chose to share. The narratives then consider the proximity of the informant to performance, technical assistant and audience; this is reflected in two chapters that consider the affective intensities of multiple positionalities in punk settings. Informants generally moved on to discuss why they continued to stay in punk scenes and how stylised artefacts, such as zines and tattoos, present opportunities for identity curation. Lastly, I have included a synthesis of the theory, literature, methods and data chapters to illuminate the connections between informants' stories and the wider field of youth subcultural studies to present the original contribution of this work.

Chapter Two of the thesis frames queerness through existing theories of identity, sexuality, gender and spatialities. The purpose of the theoretical framework is to position the research within the field of queer theory, youth culture and musicology; intersecting at the lived experiences of young women and gender diverse people who identify as queer within a specific music scene. By positing queerness as self-defined and fluid, the exploration of identity curation takes shape as a mode of collective engagement that transforms scenes and spaces. The becoming of queer, and representations of a multifaceted self as hypervisible, are key to understanding how one embodies an identity. These theoretical frameworks are used to analyse the self-making of queers in heteronormative and cismale-dominated music spaces. In **Chapter Three**, I review contemporary literature in the fields of youth, feminism, punk and queer, which aligns this research project with significant relevant scholarly publications. The disentangling of themes of authorisation, and the praxis of youth participation in music culture, presents a fresh perspective on current engagement with queer discourse for alternative youth. The thesis discusses the meanings of queerness for young women and gender diverse people, and the contribution of collective authorisation in sustaining continued scene participation.

Chapter Four justifies the research scope and design by outlining the qualitative and participatory methodology of the study. Narratives from a sample of 49 queer people - ciswomen, transwomen² and gender diverse people - were collected via semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed, coded and analysed thematically. Using ethnographic and participatory methods, data was also collected through immersion in punk subculture at a local, regional and global level. These layers of immersion are threaded together through online connectedness and networking, flowing between the researcher and the researched. As an 'insighter' (Hodkinson 2005), I posit myself as intrinsic to the field of study and therefore intimately knowing of the faces, spaces and places around me. Accordingly, this research disentangles various elements of queer identity curation, focusing on how communities of women and gender diverse people can impact on heteronormative and queer(ed) discourse, particularly how queers create the self in relation to the Other.

Beginning data analysis in **Chapter Five**, the navigation of a queer self in opposition to heteronormative paradigms is discussed using examples of relationships, aesthetics and spatialities. By examining the intricacies of these constructs alongside the women's shared experiences, a review of queer invisibility is conducted to precede the data analysis chapters. In this chapter, *Setting the Scene*, I map venues, genres, hierarchies and intersectional marginalisation in order to piece together some of the affective and transformative aspects of the punk scenes in Newcastle, Melbourne and Brighton. More than simply oppressed recipients of cismale domination, young queer women and gender diverse people actively negotiate their identities and the spaces they inhabit by utilising reflexive knowledge beyond 'being' queer punx. Informants invest labour in their scene, which acts as individual and collective doing work, helping to reconfigure spaces to be safe(r) for marginalised people. This chapter addresses specific groups of people who face intersectional marginalisation within the punk scenes.

In **Chapter Six**, I move to providing discursive and specific instances of violence within punk scenes. Using Bourdieu (2004) and Connell (2002), I apply theories of symbolic violence and hegemonic masculinity to punk to draw together some of the ways that queer women and gender diverse people are subordinated, but more importantly, employ strategies of resistance (Halberstam 2005) to combat this oppression. Some of these strategies are enacted in physical gig spaces, whilst others are generated online. Forming groups on social media sites, such as Facebook, exclusively for queer women and gender diverse people is not only a practical resource but also a site of intimacy where queers can engage identity curation in private arenas. This practice demonstrates resistance to the cismale nepotism that informants state commonly exists within the scene. The experiences of

² Trans (transwoman, transman, transgender) is a queer community term for an individual whose constructed gender does not align with their sex assigned at birth.

performers are described in this chapter as they face specific forms of empowerment and disempowerment as a result of their high visibility. Performers act as a voice for those in the scene who experience oppression and so, become increasingly revered as spokespeople. Overall, gender stereotyping is evident in gig spaces, continually reinforcing the idea that appearing masculine results in being taken more seriously.

Chapter Seven discusses audience members, who have been named as such to distinguish them from performers and event staff. These informants spoke frequently about their identities ‘as punk’. This is a critical reason for their continued participation in the scene. In this way, audience members are reflecting on the way they do punk, which is how they understand themselves to be punk. Using West and Zimmerman’s (1987) hypothesis of gender as ‘doing’, and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) conceptualisation of ‘becoming,’ the consistent naming of the self as punk through action appears as the catalyst for participation, even when not within the gig space. In this way, punks, and specifically queer punx, are doing their identities as part of their daily praxis. Like performers, audience members consider their participation in the punk scene to be transactional; one where the labour is unpaid, but social change is the capital, or *illusio* in Bourdieu’s terms. On this basis, audience members understand themselves to remain as part of the scene because they have invested so much emotional labour. Notably, audience members frequently thought of themselves as less able to affect change than performers or event staff.

After providing an account of some of the labour that queers undertake in punk scenes, the focus of **Chapter Eight** is to highlight why young queers continue to participate, despite the challenges of punk as defined cismale territory (Ciminelli and Knox 2005; Halberstam 2005; Shoemaker 2010; Wiedlack 2011; Taylor 2013). White, heterosexual cismen dominate at most punk gigs, on stage, in technical support, in front-of-house and in the audience. This is nothing new (see for example Haenfler 2015; Sharp and Nilan 2015; Avery-Natale 2016). Yet some queers remain faithful fans and members of the punk scene, sometimes for many years (Taylor 2010). In this chapter, I examine the doing of queer resistance, of claim and counter-claim in punk scenes, to foreground queer punk as a site of collective authorisation and contestation. At the intersection of space and subjectivity, queer punx access silos of resilience and solidarity as legitimate punk praxis, what informants call a Do It Together ethic. An analysis of DIT provides some explanation of how young queers are able to create communities and curate collective identities in a field which makes little affordance for their participation. Moreover, DIT is a catalyst for solidarity among young queer people, where spaces are often claimed as territories, either spatial or temporal, and act as a domain where queer punx can endorse the doing of identity for others, and have this endorsement reciprocated.

To make clear the conceptual interpretation of hypervisibility and collective authorisation, in **Chapter Nine** I focus on zines and tattoos as ephemeral artefacts, which facilitate queer collaboration and practices of knowing. Using futurity (Muñoz 2009) as an interpretive method, I give evidence through re-tellings that queers express and explore their self(s) through creative self-making, creating fleeting-yet-concrete utopias. I propose here that action, language, tattoos, artefacts and bodies in the present are affective fabrics for queer punk becoming in the future. In this way, the tangibility of the present facilitates technologies of embodiment where queer women and gender diverse people are able to communicate through modes of private communication. By finding ourselves in histories, and in each other, queer punks are resisting the taken-for-granted heteronormativity of both online and offline punk discourse.

Lastly, **Chapter Ten** synthesises the original theoretical contributions of this research to the field of queer youth music activity. Queer appears in this thesis as both a radical and political shift away from codified gender norms, and informants discuss their openness to new pathways of acceptance, such as intersectionality. This chapter contends that queer punks are hypervisible as a result of their gender and sexuality performance of self, and so curate individual and collective identities to armour themselves against cis-male dominance. By analysing the lived experiences of ‘doing gender’ queerly and creatively, this thesis interprets a nexus of youth culture, queer, punk and authorisation. The discursive limits of queer are explored beyond the concept of sexual desire, and the apparent limitlessness of a queer identity is discussed. By doing so, the chapter evaluates the relevance of a queer label in terms of sexuality; opening up discourse around the potential of queer to encompass all elements of doing gender in the self-making process.

Ultimately, the research project aimed to explore how queerness is produced and reproduced within punk subculture, as well as to report on the experiences of young, queer people in relation to how their identities and creative self-making may transform mainstream landscapes. The research findings contribute new understandings of the way queer women and gender diverse people navigate homosocial spaces, as well as the affective intensities that presuppose individual and collective identity curation. In the following chapter, I scaffold the theoretical framework of the thesis. The chapter re-visits historical and contemporary gender and queer theory to include intersectional and affective nuances of queer experiences in punk scenes.



Figure 3: Handstands and concrete picnic in between bands outside Black Goat DIY venue, West Footscray, VIC. Taken during fieldwork by Jessica Batty on 12 April 2016

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides a theoretical framework, which outlines contemporary and historical perspectives on youth, gender and sexuality, queer theory, punk subculture and space-making. It commences with a brief overview that locates this study in the field of youth sociology, gender studies and feminist thought. Beginning with a conceptualisation of youth as a specific site of sociological enquiry, this chapter theorises young, queer people - both women and gender diverse - as reflections of their political, economic, social and cultural environments, as well as agentic curators of these world. More than simply empty vessels awaiting knowledge input, young people face complex and dynamic expectations of the kind of world they wish to occupy. As this research is situated in the field of subcultural youth studies, the theories incorporated below concentrate on youth and subcultural affiliation, as well as the construction of subcultural theory more broadly. I argue here that while young people may be reluctant to consider themselves as part of a 'scene', they in fact operate within several scenes, which converge at points of identity politics, music activity and space-making praxis.

Alongside youth as a social and cultural position, I outline the progression of gender theory from its early critique of sex and gender as synonymous, to non-essentialist perspectives, which are currently being grappled with under the constraints of traditional feminist theory. I trace feminism as a social and political movement through the 1950s to now to give a brief, but holistic view of where my research project sits within a broader context of feminist thought. Moving beyond liberal, Marxist and radical feminist, this study lends itself to intersectional theory, which considers gender, race, ethnicity, class, status, ability and age to be inextricable from arguments of privilege and inequality. Making a connection between gender and feminist theory, I draw on the work of Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) to unpack the importance of queer theory as an embedded epistemology. If gender is what is *done*, rather than a state of being, queer must follow suit. While certainly not making queerness any less of a real world experience, queer provokes questions of what it means to *do identity* in social worlds constructed around compulsory heterosexuality.

It is in the everyday doing of gender, sex and sexuality that I consider affect and futurity as key concepts with which I theorise how and why queering space occurs. Using affective transference (Ahmed 2004) and concrete utopias (Muñoz 2009), young queer people's experiences of 'growing up punk' (Alice, 25, participant) are considered as technologies of collective identity formation.

Collective identities and their authorisation by others mobilise micro-social change within punk scenes and spaces. Using Hammers' (2008) work on queer bathhouses, the way that young queer people signify subcultural membership is noted as a process of queer punk practice and bodily speech. The construction and deconstruction of collective identities become concrete utopias where young people converge to form commitments to queer futures - no matter how fleeting (Muñoz 2009).

Lastly, the chapter explores symbolic violence using Bourdieu (2002) and Valentine (1989) to bring together theoretical perspectives grounded in geography and social interaction. By conceptualising violence beyond the physical, and reconfiguring subordination as a map of inequality, this chapter section outlines how social space is configured based on historical and learnt hierarchies of power. Women, and others, learn that some space is not for them through processes of fear and dismissal. Rather than being natural states of personhood, these relegations are a naturalised consciousness, which serve to sustain unequal distributions of power. Being that the punk space is one that has served cismale dominance well, symbolic violence is an important theoretical distinction to make in this research. While there are some examples of actual violence given within subsequent chapters, acts of dismissal, relegation and ignorance were reported as much more memorable for informants.

Youth and Subcultures

The complexities of youth and young people's lived experiences are so expansive that sociology as an academic discipline has been reshaped by them. Increasingly, sociologists are looking specifically to young people to understand local and global social trends such as citizenship, life transitions, class and identity. It is important here to look back to macro-theoretical considerations of youth as a social group in order to begin conceptualising young, queer women and gender diverse people's experiences specifically. Harris (2004) offers a concise explanation of the social and economic differences between youth in late modernity and their previous generation's counterparts. Rather than a concretised progression of hurdles towards adulthood, young people's experiences today are producing, and produced by, the flux of economic and social systems.

The social and economic logic of late modernity compels people to become self-inventing and responsive citizens who can manage their own development and adapt to change without relying on the state (Harris 2004: 2-3).

In a pre-modern era, transitions from youth to adulthood could be understood through rites of passage, perhaps no less fraught with risk, but potentially less reflexively self-negotiated. However, in late modernity, young people are increasingly engaging reflexively with their own biographies and carving out innovative pathways to individual achievement (Harris 2004: 3-4). Ultimately, young people in today's globalised, capitalist economies experience technology, employment, education and leisure time in much more complex ways than previous generations (see Furlong and Cartmel 1997; Wyn and White 1997; Harris 2004; Nilan, Julian and Germov 2007; Baker, Buttigieg and Robards 2015; Threadgold 2017).

Fittingly, there is ample research in the social sciences that theorises youth as creators and subjects of subcultural movements. Bennett's (2000, 2006, 2015) work on subculture as scenes, McRobbie's (2000) critique of gender-blindness in subcultural theory, Hodkinson's (2002, 2005) empirical research on goths, and Taylor's (2010, 2014) exploration of queer youth practices, all offer substantial impetus to theoretical considerations of young people's lived experiences. Bennett (2015) contests that subculture - as theorised by the Chicago School in the 1950s and later, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s - does not adequately describe or encompass the everyday experiences of young people. This lack of reality from the CCCS led Straw (1991) and later, Bennett (2002) to re-frame conventional understandings of subcultural membership as 'scenes', where young people are contributors to social movements; consequently, influencing discourse, rather than being paternalised by normative social structures. Bennett (2015: 12) asserts that 'the notion of a sub-dominant binary relationship between "youth" subcultures and a hegemonically superior "parent" culture is becoming increasingly obsolete'. Interestingly, informants of my research into queer punx used the term 'subculture' to describe their social and musical membership, whereas 'scenes' was a much less popular expression from informants. This is discussed at length in Chapter Three. Nevertheless, Bennett's theoretical contribution regarding the implicit classism, sexism and racism of the Chicago School, and of CCCS conceptualisations of subculture, is acknowledged as valuable and speaks to a more nuanced conceptualisation of local and global citizenship for young people.

At the same time as youth subcultural theory was being revisited in terms of young people's civic engagement, McRobbie (1991) shifted from the traditionally from male-centric focus on youth and subcultural activity to a more critical conversation about how girlhood can contribute to these theoretical articulations. Using young women's experiences of education, family, legislation and popular media, McRobbie critiqued the prescriptive maleness of subcultural theory to configure young

women a central subjects in sociology and cultural studies. Importantly, the commitment to lived experience as a methodological tool was a key theoretical and epistemological concern in generating knowledge about girl-focused youth studies. McRobbie's work suggests that young women's 'general invisibility was of course cemented by the social reaction to more extreme manifestations of youth subcultures' (1991: 4). The concerns of social scientists researching youth were compounded by sensationalist media claims of violence, drug-use, promiscuity and declining values, particularly in America, Britain and Australia in the late 1980s. As a result, much of the research produced at this time rendered young women as present but invisible. McRobbie asserts however, that the 'exclusive attention paid to male expressions and male styles none the less reinforces and amplifies this image of the subculture as a male formation' (1991: 5). By successfully conceptualising young women as fulfilling more than just innocuous roles in subcultures, McRobbie explains that *resistance* is vital in making different leisure and personal spaces possible. This means that gender, alongside globalisation and citizenship, plays a crucial part in the complex embodiment of subcultural affiliation, an embodiment that was underrepresented in classical subcultural theory.

Extending these gendered 'resistances' into the field of queer youth studies, Driver (2008: 1) explains that young queer people are 'not classifiable as either mainstream or marginal, they are neither insider or outside dominant cultural institutions; rather, they criss-cross commercial mass media, grassroots subcultural and activist roles'. Young queer people are present in most, if not all, previously theorised subcultures however, as McRobbie points out in reference to girls, queer people had been overlooked in classic subcultural theory. Moreover, queer youth are paradoxical in their representation both on and offline. Often discussed in theoretical terms as an oppressed and marginalised group (Rasmussen, Rofes and Talburt 2016), queer youth have emerged as innovative and imaginative curators of subcultures rather than simply passive bystanders (Driver 2008).

The complexity of queer youths' subjectivity, agency, sexuality and cultural practices is flattened by a dominant framing of them in terms of danger and victimisation... Queer youth agency, whether linked to sexual desire or activity, or to projects of crafting the self and relations to others, is relegated to the domain of the unthinkable (Rasmussen, Rofes and Talburt 2016: 7).

Studies which compel sociologists to consider youth and subcultural interaction as more complex than simply young people's innate desire to rebel have contributed greatly to this research project. For example, Taylor's (2014) Australian study of queer youth in music cultures shows how the sexual

engagement of youth is sanitised by the normative binaries that exist in discourses of class, gender and ethnicity. Taylor argues that queer representation among youth is a marker for radicalisation; a divergence from the existing codification of sexuality and from heteronormative paradigms. Researching queer youth in Brisbane, Taylor describes the ways in which young people find both a sense of community and performance of self in queer ascribing activities (Taylor 2014: 13). Taylor's studies of contemporary queer culture offer productive insights into the Australian context. She maintains that at a micro level, the agelessness of a queer identity is often marked by participation in activities such as music and arts contribution (Taylor 2010: 897). Her research offers key insights into the progression of a queer life in contrast to heteronormative constructions, such as marriage and reproduction, which will be discussed in more detail in later chapter sections.

By looking at the entanglements between gender, civic participation, agency and subcultural (or perhaps, scene) participation, any promise of a holistic theorisation of young people's lives is problematised. This study contributes an innovative theoretical perspective of futurity and collective identity curation which layers affective and embodied discourses onto classical theory, offering new ways to conceptualise youth praxis, not least of all, young queer and gender diverse people's everyday sociality. The chapter section below begins a discussion of how gender theory has been constructed and its foundational influence on the overall theoretical framework of the thesis.

Classical Gender Theory

Sex and gender have undergone dynamic reconceptualisation in the social sciences over recent decades, and have informed broader interdisciplinary studies of masculinities and femininities, feminism and patriarchal dominance. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) originally refined the experience of womanhood as a social problem, one that is embedded in a critical misunderstanding of difference between the biological, physiological and psychological traits of humans.

What peculiarly signalises the situation of woman is that she - a free and autonomous being like all human creatures - nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other (de Beauvoir 1949: 29).

Almost 70 years on, such a statement still resonates in the contemporary field of gender studies. Of course, changes to political and economic structures in Western countries have encouraged social progress, however the premise of women as Other still holds significance. This Othering begins as a result of the biological and medicalised differentiation of bodies at birth. Anne Oakley's (1972)

dismissal of gender as biologically inherited provided some mobility for the feminist movement to challenge inequality between genders. While Oakley's work has since been heavily critiqued (see Carby 1982; Wearing 1996), she nonetheless provided a platform to begin discussion of gender as a social construction, one which is prescriptive but ultimately naturalised. Oakley argues that gender is assigned to the body, much like sex, and that this process serves to sustain power imbalances in social, political and economic spheres. She states,

The consensus of opinion seems to be that its role (biology) is a minimal one, in that the biological pre-disposition to a male or female gender identity (if such a context exists) may be decisively and ineradicably overridden by cultural learning (Oakley 1972: 170).

Oakley's ultimate argument - one which has been developed in much more detail by non-essentialist theorists - is that the sex assigned at birth cannot be the determining factor in gender identity because the roles of gender are not fixed. Very few biological differences exist between men and women beyond the process of reproduction, which now have been made even more inconsequential with the advent of medical intervention. Therefore, one is assigned biological sex (usually by a medical professional), which shapes later experiences of Othering; from interaction to oppression and experience. Gatens (1983) asserts that it is the cultural value of bodily ability which distinguishes gender in patriarchal societies. The imagined body, one which is inscribed with hierarchical notions of value, becomes a metaphor for unequal power relationships. Using the penis as a semiotic counterpoint, Gatens explains that 'it is not the power of the penis that constructs males as more powerful, but the cultural value associated with the symbolic phallus' (1983 as cited in Wearing 1996: xi).

Later sociological theories of gender fracture at various points of argument regarding the impact of sex on the construction of gender. As explained extensively by academic and non-academic authors, the ideology of gender construction rejects essentialist biological assumptions of sex and their relationship to gender (West and Zimmerman 1987; Butler 1990; Ingraham 2002; Connell 2009). Rather, the creation of gender is understood to occur as a result of external factors, such as culture, environment, socialisation, actions and reactions (Connell 2009), as described in the proceeding chapter section.

Gender: Non-essentialist Perspectives

Some authors, such as Judith Butler, whose work is discussed at length below, take a non-essentialist approach to bodies and their phenomenological components, understanding gender as performative

rather than innate; and naturalised rather than natural (Butler 1990, 1993). Butler's theory of performativity highlights the importance of gender not as cause, but effect, both on understandings of the self as gendered, and in reading the other as gendered. In a related sense, West and Zimmerman (1987) proposed gender as a binary-organised doing, rather than a natural state of being. Gender is then a mode of transaction where the do-er expresses gender through action and reaction – being seen to do gender in a legitimate way, or not, and the reverse. They point out that social reality, as currently constituted, requires someone to have a gender,

While it is plausible to contend that gender displays - construed as conventionalised expressions - are optional, it does not seem plausible to say that we have the option of being seen by others as male and female (West and Zimmerman 1987: 130).

Connell (2009) reiterates this same point by discussing the connectedness and trajectories of gender, both personal and collective, informing social structures through performance and interaction read through bodies. For Connell (2009: 67), gender passes through and over the surfaces of bodies, creating both overt and subversive tactics of difference. This concept of 'social embodiment' points to bodies reflexively forming social structures through connectedness; and through trajectories, both personal and collective. Yet while gender is constructed at both an individual and structural level, the confines of heteronormativity create a bounded field of action within which genders are binary. Yet the gender binary is an artificial construction; the reality of sexed bodies, of gender and sexual identities, is fraught with incoherence and instability,

Binaries incompletely or imperfectly represent a broad range of complicated social processes surrounding the meaning of bodies and the social cues, practices and subjectivities associated with gender and sexuality (Velocchi 2005: 753).

Gendered actions of binary 'doing' take place within a nexus of social signifiers and routines that are heavy with imputed meanings (West and Zimmerman 1987: 126). Gender is not only interwoven with all everyday interaction and performance, but the reflexive nature of physicality and visibility account for the translation of meanings and situated effects. Considering gender as achieved, rather than imposed, allows us to reconfigure gendered identity construction as an outcome of social arrangement (West and Zimmerman 1987), which opens up space for challenge. Shifting focus from 'having' gender to 'doing' gender posits the self as capable of subversion. However, the idea of 'doing' does not mean that gender is chosen completely of the individual's free will. The achievement of gender is

regulated structurally and continuously monitored. The application of normative gender behaviour in individuals leads to processes of categorisation; the naturalisation of allocated gender based on presentation and behaviour. For instance, in the case of a transitioning person - one who is obscuring their physical sex signifiers to align with their gender presentation - the production of gender must still be configured in accordance with normative gender behaviour in order for categorisation to occur. This configuration places the individual in a constant state of 'being', reifying gender as action (West and Zimmerman 1987: 134) at the level of embodiment. Yet at the same time, the very idea of transition between genders renders a subversive moment.

This is because, as Velocchi notes in relation to his work on queering gender, 'sociologists are used to thinking of sex, gender and sexuality as separate variables with discrete attributes defined in binary terms' (2005: 752). In many studies, gender is still used as a simple binary. There is little recognition of gender as fluid; moving between biology, culture, social practice and performance. Velocchi's work points to the subversive potential of deconstructing not only gender, but sexed bodies and heteronormative understandings of sexuality. It will be argued later in this chapter that queer theory does this by recognising the subversive work of the fluid category - 'queer'. However, first I move to review feminism as a social and political concept in order to scaffold a solid framework to support the later empirical analysis.

Feminism in Review

In discussion of the intersection between biology, culture, social practice and performance, the evolution of feminism is documented below to theorise a contemporary perspective of feminist politics as understood academically today. It is important here to note that feminism for the participants in this research was spoken of, and enacted in, a multitude of disparate ways, which perhaps speaks to the embedded neo-liberal individualism of the current Australian and UK climate. Each person invoked feminist perspectives on their own terms and as a result of their own lived experiences. Notably, the term itself was used frequently throughout informant conversations and observation.

Wearing (1996: 4) explains that 'the traditional view enshrined in structural functionalist sociological theories prevalent in the 1950s defends gender difference in contemporary society as the natural outcome of biological difference'. The physical and emotional strengths of men and women were compared and contrasted in order to maintain a social hierarchy whereby women were tied to the

family because of their bodily ability to incubate children, which placed them in the role of ‘carer’. To be a carer means that one must have another to care for, and so women were assumed as collective agents, requiring other people to facilitate their natural position in the world. What was not considered in a structural functionalist theory of gender was access to power and the differential modes of power that exist in developed societies. So, structuralist feminist theories of gender difference, which became prominent during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s, took up ‘power’ as a key contributor of inequality (Wearing 1996: 9).

Where liberal feminism assumes a male-orientated reality as the typography of women’s success in the labour market, Marxist feminism sought to put on display the effect of capitalism in dividing classes, further exploiting men and women. Using an economic framework, Marxist feminists such as Evelyn Reed (1970: 124 - 125) theorised that the family acted as a signal for capitalist success whereby ‘the family was based not on a natural or inevitable division of labour among sex lines, but on its economic function for capitalism’. Introducing the patriarchy as an overarching discourse that served to oppress women - and subordinate men (Connell 2005) - radical feminism rejected economic ideology as the basis for unequal power distribution. Radical feminists such as Firestone (1970), Millett (1971), Bunch (1978) and Daly (1978) saw the institution of gender as the primary mode of inequality among men and women. This meant that sexual politics became central to identity construction, rather than economic divisions, which radical feminists saw as a symptom of patriarchy. Millett (1971: 25) explained that the sexual conquest of women by men was politicised, implying that the deeply entrenched traits and values associated with gender relations meant ‘half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male’.

Criticisms of radical feminism address the tendency of theorists to assume a biological reductionist perspective to sex and gender, rather than highlighting the nuance of cultural and social constructions of gendered inequality. Even though this politicised movement attempted to draw together sexuality and gender to concretise women as subjects of patriarchal oppression, those who are not considered in their writings are often living at the intersections of marginalisation. Further, radical feminists have been accused of exclusionary tactics; keeping transwomen silenced as a result of their biological assignment (Walters 1996: 835; Wearing 1996: 17). Post-modern gender theory brings about theories of intersectionality, where social markers of class, ethnicity, age, ability and sexuality cannot be removed from a conversation about feminist politics. Kimberle Crenshaw (1991), in her study of violence against African American women at the hands of men, maps out the problematic constraints of contemporary feminism to address social division and difference. Crenshaw states that by

assigning a defect model of identity politics to intersectional debates centred on women's lives, theorists risk erasing the very precursors for which violence is often perpetrated. Rather Crenshaw (1991: 1299) offers a rethinking of how we approach social difference in feminist agendas, stating,

Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics.

Such grounding offers an important critical focus for grasping how queer punx negotiate their ethical suppositions against their overwhelming white-presenting privilege and feminist ideals. Following Crenshaw, Yuval-Davis (2006: 195) in her work on the 'triple oppression' of Black, working class women notes,

Any attempt to essentialize 'Blackness' or 'womanhood' or 'working classness' as specific forms of concrete oppression in additive ways inevitably conflates narratives of identity politics with descriptions of positionality as well as constructing identities within the terms of specific political projects.

These studies of intersectionality are pertinent to research in queer punx spaces where diversity of gender presentation, ethnicity, and sexuality, as well as class and status, are taken up as important failings of the scene. If feminism is approached with a broad brushstroke, it risks whitewashing and recidivism of trans experiences. Rather, intersectional feminism seeks to put back together some of the disparate elements of how groups become subordinated; it looks to de-categorise marginalised groups and instead work at the intersections of inequality. In this way, intersectional inequality is thought of within this work as 'specific power and affective relationships between actual people, acting informally and/or in their roles as agents of specific social institutions and organisations' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 198). While feminism is discussed explicitly in this research project, it is often re-framed as a form of collective identity where those who participate in punk scenes find commonality (and difference). To further contextualise this standpoint, Whittier (2017: 382) notes that,

Because collective identity is an *interpretation* [original emphasis] of a group's commonality and grows from interaction among participants, it changes over time and is shaped by context. One tension emerges because many groups want to both deconstruct the barriers that separate them from the mainstream and simultaneously to organise around their distinctness as a group.

Emerging post-feminist theory outlines that collective identities are becoming more prevalent in liberal and localised societies where commitment to combat anti-racist, anti-trans or homophobic rhetoric assumes a feminist position but is centred on issues that connect feminism with broader social inequalities. The interweaving of post and intersectional feminist theory prompts an interpretive rationale that informs the broader structure of this study and speaks to the non-essentialist gender perspective employed throughout.

Heterosexuality and Gender: The Heterosexual Matrix

As participants in this research use the term queer to describe their sexuality (among other elements of how they experience the social world), for them heterosexuality is resisted and in some ways, rebuked. A common definition of heterosexuality is as follows: a sexual orientation in which a person is sexually attracted to people of a sex other than their own. According to that definition, people who identify as heterosexual have emotional, sexual, and romantic relationships with people of the 'opposite' sex. The term might appear to describe a state of affairs stretching back into pre-history. Yet the term heterosexual was only coined in the nineteenth century, when advances in the medical field demanded a taxonomy of sexuality for epidemiological purposes (Foucault 1998). Moreover, as Kinsey's (1990) research showed, there is really no such thing as heterosexuality, rather all people are located on a continuum of sexuality and the categories of preference/practice are far more blurred than common belief suggests. Nevertheless, heterosexuality is a highly significant dominant discourse in shaping the social order. Feminist Adrienne Rich (1980) described it as 'compulsory', a political institution that legitimises financial and political control of women within patriarchy. Connell (2005) described heterosexuality as the bedrock of hegemonic masculinity. In social theorising, in the past and in the present, the discourse of heterosexuality is generally understood to constrain the constitution of the gendered self.

While gender and sexuality are frequently considered as separate arenas, when it comes to challenging heterosexuality they can productively be considered together. For Judith Butler (1990) gender and sexuality are inexplicably entwined because, taken together, they pertain so strongly to the constitution of the human subject as either legitimate or not, in the eyes of others. Thus, if sexuality is culturally constructed within existing power relations of gender, then gender is simultaneously constructed within existing power relations of patriarchal heteronormativity. Such an understanding confirms the idea that, 'heterosexuality as it is currently understood and experienced, is a (historically and culturally specific) truth-effect of systems of power/knowledge' (Sullivan 2003: 39).

The truth effect of heterosexuality inheres in operations of power that bring about an institutional naturalisation of gender categories. So the heteronormative might appear to be a natural or static state of being, but it is rather in the *doing*; repeated and reproduced actions and rituals of gender and sexual preference/practice. These are encoded - historically and culturally - into heteronormativity, a 'highly organised, social institution rife with multiple forms of domination and ideological control' (Ingraham 2002: 74-5). If we acknowledge that sexuality is culturally constructed within existing power relations, then the postulation of a normative sexuality that is 'outside' or 'beyond' prevailing power relations is a cultural impossibility, not least because we all live within the embodied conditions of patriarchy (Connell 2009) which assume the gender binary. The encoding of heteronormativity depends on repeated practices that construct an idea of the 'normal'. However,

The replication of heterosexual constructs in non-heterosexual frames brings into relief the utterly constructed status of the so-called heterosexual original. Thus, gay is to straight not as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy (Butler 1990: 43).

Butler goes on to point out that 'heterosexist constructs circulate as the available sites from which to do gender' (1990: 43). She refers to this as the 'heterosexual matrix', the norm-regulating body of identity construction that supports the patriarchal order. The heterosexual matrix presumes the congruence of sex, gender and heterosexual desire. Hence, the naturalising norm of heterosexuality shapes the construction of gender, sexuality and identity (Jagose 1995) as legitimate or non-legitimate. A subject's position within the heterosexual matrix is read as coherent if it represents 'a stable sex expressed through a stable gender... that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality' (Butler 1990: 206). Individuals have agency only within the confines of a regulated and codified gender/sexuality macro-system (Butler 1990: 136-140). People act and walk and speak and talk in ways that consolidate the impression of being a man or being a woman, of being straight or gay/lesbian. They can be readily located within the parameters of the heterosexual matrix. Under the usually taken-for-granted institution of heteronormativity, some space exists for individualistic gender choice, but this must be struggled for, as the queer women in this study demonstrate in punk scenes.

Relevant to the theoretical framework of this thesis, queer is acknowledged to challenge that hegemony by deconstructing the masculine-feminine gender binary enshrined in the concept of heterosexuality (Butler 1990). Queer resists normative sex/gender and gender/desire discourses while invoking its own modes of performance. In this way, subjects can be considered queer by what they

are not. Butler (1990) amply demonstrates that a person's physical characteristics (usually read as sex) do not necessarily dictate that person's sense of their gender. Rather, in the praxis of queer, the flexibly-gendered body becomes the *subject* of discursive practice, able to resist dominant power structures and make self-knowing choices (Ruffolo 2009: 9). Bunch (2013: 40) maintains that Butler's theory of performativity provides a platform for the subjectivity of queer to be a tool that transcends the gender binary. In queer there is no *core* gender identity or sexuality. For Butler (1990: 25), gender and consequently queer, rather than a fixed state of being, are always representative of the choices made and the selves performed at any given time. In that sense, gender is negotiable. As shaping ideas such as gender performativity have gained increasing influence over the past twenty years, the deconstructed notion of 'genderqueer' has emerged. This has enabled minority groups, such as trans people, to sustain individual and collective power against heteronormative and naturalised institutions that seek to regularise sex/gender categories. Elsewhere there is evidence that young women are challenging the formative process of heterosexualisation in teenage years. They were found to be 'tracking the ripples and breakdowns that are central to its organisation' (Renold and Ringrose 2008: 331), for example, by manipulating boyfriend-girlfriend discourse to suit their own dynamic interests.

In short, if we consider gender and sexuality as 'done' or performed, we can see how gender and sexuality can be 'undone' as embodied deconstructive practice. Bodies are active participants in social process. They participate through their capacities, development and needs, through the friction of their recalcitrance, and through directions set by their pleasure and skills. Bodies must be seen as sharing social praxis, generating and shaping courses of social conduct (Connell 2009: 57). Insisting on the representation of the queer bodies of women in places where they might well be considered 'out of place' (such as in punk) directly challenges the gender binary of heteronormativity; those social institutions of knowledge that discursively shape our understanding of gender as an outward sign of biological sex (Taylor 2012a: 31) and conformity to the heterosexual matrix. Resistance to heteronormativity is discussed in the next chapter section through the introduction of queer theory.

The Contribution of Queer Theory

In terms of gender identification, the term queer operates as a catch-all alignment with non-normative gender descriptions. This alignment makes room for people who do not ascribe to traditional gender binary paradigms and furthermore, may offer the means to resist oppressive social institutions (Gamson 1995: 391). In the case of transgender, tri-gender, pan-gender and non-gender identities, an exclusionary dichotomy exists in relation to normative categorisation. Heteronormativity has no real

way of 'normalising' these individuals given that apparent physical sex was traditionally the only signifier of gender. Yet attempting to pin down a definition of queer that represents all manner of individuals and groups is problematic. This is not only because of the self-defined nature of queerness, but because a queer identity achieved in local action can often seem removed from theoretical conceptions of queerness. In terms of advocacy, it is necessary to acknowledge queer as the Q in the LGBTIQ movement. The acronym aligns with non-normative sexualities and is critical in disrupting the stigma attached to non-heteronormative people. Yet an effect of this is to limit the discourse of queerness to gender and sexuality (Sullivan 2003: 44; Taylor 2012c: 14). This raises the issue of how to talk about queer. In this doctoral project, queer is understood to exist around, through, beside, and upon, the usual sociological concepts of identity construction. That understanding comes from the fact that the informants understand themselves as queer. Yet queer must also be considered in theoretical terms.

It is important to distinguish between theoretical and practical applications of queer in order to contextualise the theoretical as a definable paradigm. Otherwise, it becomes an idea so fluid that it cannot be discussed pragmatically. For example, a cursory glance over literature concerning queer theory and its application to various social and individual circumstances will likely produce either a notion that exists completely outside heterosexuality (Halperin 1995: 62) - or that describes nothing at all (Taylor 2012a: 14). It has been argued that queer has 'neither a fundamental logic, nor a consistent set of characteristics' (Jagose 1995: 96). Queer is widely taken to be a fluid term (Halperin 1995; Kemp 2009; Ruffolo 2009; Levy and Johnson 2011) extending well beyond binary physiology and considerations of sexual preference. Taylor (2012a) discusses the complexities of queer(ed) language,

Queer - whatever that might be, or not be - can function in a number of ways: as a noun (naming something/someone), an adjective (describing something/someone), a verb (queering something/someone) or an adverb (doing something queerly) (Taylor 2012a: 14).

Queer can therefore operate in a multiplicity of arenas. Complex yet flexible, the term queer can fracture heteronormative paradigms - mostly through its refusal to align with any one identity marker (Halperin 1995: 62). Yet at the same time queer is both oppositional and relational to heterosexuality because it implies a 'straight' comparison (Halperin 1995; Jagose 1995). Thus, the discourse of queer includes same-sex attraction, and cisgender and transgender identities. In principle, an infinite number of bodies exist within queer(ed) constructions of gender and sexuality.

Any queer analysis of gender reveals the instability of the term. Queer interpretation of social phenomena point to dichotomous gender formation through divergent pathways and subversive trajectories. These pathways and trajectories can be reinterpreted through exploring the creative self-making practices of young, queer women and gender diverse people who engage with the subversive nonalignment of normative gender practices. The scope of a queer analysis extends to consider intersectionality and collective identity across various realms of social difference (Velocchi 2005: 753). Driver (2008) argues that 'queer youth have the potential of invigorating theory through their culturally expressive assertions of desire in a culture that scorns the pervasions of young love and lust' (Driver 2008: 8). The ability to destabilise sexual codification is one of the most fundamental characteristics of queer; moving away from the idea that *heterosex* is the only real sex and that gender is allied to physicality. Such an interpretation of gender is necessary in the field of queer punx research, since those involved in the scene are from diverse cultural and class backgrounds, as well as being undoubtedly aware of normative gender boundaries and discourse.

It can be argued that queer 'challenges' heteronormativity precisely because its boundaries are not defined; it is nomadic (Jagose 1995: 98) and risks domestication if it is reduced to a singular paradigm. It shakes the ground on which foundations of identities are constructed, reconceptualising what it means to be gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and so on. Queer is radical and progressive because of its 'ambiguity' (Velocchi 2005: 754). The discourse of queer invokes critical thought in those who experience it subjectively, questioning the heteronormativity of bodies and culture (Ruffolo 2009). Queer seeks to radicalise gender construction and the meanings of bodies and sexuality (Connell 2009). 'Queer studies is largely a deconstructive enterprise, taking apart the view of a self defined by something at its core, be it sexual desire, race, gender, nation or class' (Gamson 2000: 348). Thus, we might question whether being queer is an impossibly overarching concept of identity, gender and sexuality. Yet as indicated above, it may well be that the gender fluidity is what challenges heteronormative and conservative paradigms of corporeal praxis. Possibly the limitlessness of queer that is what constitutes the greatest challenge (Halperin 1995).

We must consider the power of self-definition. Not only does queer describe a diversity of bodies, spaces and times, but bodies are marked as queer through self-description. Self-allocation of a queer identity is an overwhelmingly political act, one which is not free of policing and surveillance. The queer self presents a paradox in this way. It is self-defined but collectively policed and can be judged as 'not queer enough' if it does not adhere exclusively to non-normative paradigms. In exploring queer space and time, current socio-political discourses that surround 'bourgeois rules of

respectability’ are highlighted by outlining the power of queer to rewrite postmodern narratives (Halberstam 2005: 5). Taking this further, queer can be an ‘ethical choice’, as well as an intention to disrupt gender or sexual orientation constructs (Taylor 2012b). Theorising queer(ed) identities as self-descriptive, rather than imposed (heteronormativity) or deviant (homosexuality), transcends ‘prescriptive’ meanings of sexual desire (Ahmed 2006: 71). Instead, the fluidity of bodies, gender, sexualities and sexual desire is central for understanding queer in self-ascriptions, functions, acts, embodiments and events that it describes. Rather than being an allocated identity, queer functions as an act of self; an individual alignment, which subscribes to a multitude of queer(ed) discourses. However, queer can also be inscribed and can become an identity marker which enables surveillance, particularly when acts - whether sexual or political - are able to be labelled as ‘unqueer’.

Gamson (1995) points this out by tracking the history and development of queer theory alongside gay and lesbian studies in America. He notes ‘queer becomes simply a shorthand for “gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender” much like “people of colour” becomes an inclusive and difference-erasing shorthand for a long list of ethnic, national and racial groups’ (Gamson 1995: 396). So, while queer operates to tie together a variety of identities using a distinct acceptance of the position of Other, in doing so it presents an opportunity for this Otherness to be regulated. In some of the lived experiences recounted in this text, particularly in Chapter Nine concerning zines, the policing of queerness by queers is named. For example, there are instances where informants feel not queer enough in relation to others who they understand to be ‘doing more’ for the queer punk community.

Embodying Queer: Non-Normative Positions

The disruption of gender and sexuality by queer is inherently problematic for heteronormativity, particularly since queer exists as an embodied state. In other words, the queer body itself is subversive and fluid. Being a slippery term and an often ambiguous tenet of identity, queer is able to change orientations to fit the landscape of that which it embodies (Taylor 2012a: 13). If we look back to the LGBTIQ movement, we can see the Q sitting squarely at the end of the acronym; alongside all other non-heterosexual labels. Choosing fluidity, some choose to identify as queer rather than as lesbian, gay or bisexual,

In this sense, following Foucault, queer is not a singular oppositional position, but rather evokes a broad range of radical critical responses, which are constantly questioning the dominant discourses that produce ever-shifting logics of social and cultural normativity and non-normativity (Taylor 2012a: 29).

Yet queer theory has certainly been informed by lesbian and gay studies. Jagose (1995: 57) notes that lesbian feminism has productively contributed to the formation of queer identities through critique of naturalised heterosexuality and the attention paid to the specificity of gender construction and performance. This choice appears to signify the unwillingness to be categorised beyond ‘non-normative’ in terms of identity and sexuality. It can be argued that the choice of queerness, rather than the more rigid terminology of lesbianism or gay, in self-determining identity frames the self as embodied. The queer label, in terms of performativity, highlights the subject’s ability to embrace the fluidity of gender and sexuality in terms of corporeal presentation of the self in social interaction. Queer mobilises the embodiment of gender and sexuality, creating a conceptual awareness of the self and the Other (Butler 1990: 25). Yet ‘the idealised queer’ (Warner 1993) infers a state of utopian enlightenment.

The risk is that the queer(ed) body and identity will be (mis)understood as emblematic of total gender inclusivity (Hammers 2008; Stone 2013: 1648). Rather, the embodiment of an identity, whether queer, straight, punk and/or feminist, can locate the self in multi-identity frames. My experience of being part of a community of queer women and gender diverse people in everyday life has concretised the idea that queerness is expressed and projected through all manner of activity and self-making, rather than simply being a position of sexuality. As opposed to being always signified through overt acts of visibility, orientation or desire, queer can also be the internal naming of resistance to hegemonic normalisation (Jagose 1995; Giffney 2009: 2-3; Taylor 2012b: 35-6). Yet our attention is drawn by queer as visible and tangible. Space and place, bodies, music activity, zines and art may be created and engaged with queerly. These ‘of the world’ things produce and reproduce queerness by sight and sound; embodied discourses that can be translated and transacted through physical and online mediums. Embodiment is a critical component of queer performativity.

Hammers (2008), in her research in Canadian queer bathhouses, points out that gender and sexuality as embodied discourses are expressed through what she terms ‘bodily speech’. She outlines how queerness can be multifaceted in its divergence from non-normative society, with an emphasis on the visible and intelligible (Hammers 2008: 152). The action and non-action of queer bodily speech constitutes an embodied ‘doing’ of gender and sexuality (West and Zimmerman 1987). The body is used to mobilise queerness, to produce and present a queer(ed) state of being. In theorising lines of orientation, Ahmed refers to the direction and placement of bodies. This is useful when theorising the act of the body to speak into existence the relationship between subject/object and desire (2006: 79).

For example, the directed performance of gender and sexuality was inherent to bodily speech in research on Canadian bathhouses; here participants referred to their practices as ‘gender work’. This ‘work’ was performative in that its function was to establish a space for queerness to be produced and displayed (Hammers 2008). Some sociological researchers are now beginning to look at the past, present and future of queer theory; as Kemp (2009) does in his analysis of queer as a movement. Kemp proposes that queer theory is threatened by institutionalisation. It risks becoming normalised against its critical underpinnings and therefore faces the prospect that it will lose the steam that has fuelled its propulsion over the last three decades (Kemp 2009: 22). However, that does not seem to have happened during the eight years since the warning appeared. In fact, some intriguing studies of the time and space of queer have been published over that period.

Muñoz (2009) offers a thesis on queer futures, which foregrounds material queer bodies in space. Yet queer futurity is proposed as an ever-receding horizon; so queerness is always a process of reaching forward, becoming, producing, and shifting. In the here and now, queerness is tangible; previously neutral or normative spaces are transformed by queer acts, producing concrete queer utopias, however fleeting. This understanding grafts a future aspect onto what Freeman (2010) defined as erotohistoriography, a way of understanding the past and present as a hybrid which is intimately experienced by the body when it comes into contact with historical materials. Muñoz’s (2009) futurity extends the place of the body onwards from a vessel, which treads the past/present line, to the meaning of a tool, which physically produces queer futures. Queer futures are imagined up from the debris of queerness’s history, the still-warm body of the near-immediate past, and the ever- shifting moment in which the body operates (Muñoz 2009). This is not a permanent effect, since ‘utopia is a stage’ (Muñoz 2009: 99), temporally but also physically. Creating queer utopias requires queer bodies, and a space for them to not only exist within, but also to transform (Muñoz 2009).

In this way, queerness as a transformative tool finds itself staged in myriad manifestations. One way in which this process occurs meaningfully is through the meeting of queerness and musicality (Taylor 2012a), and in particular through punk music (du Plessis and Chapman 1997; Wiedlack 2015). Although punk has had a long history of straight and cispeople co-opting queer aesthetics, often diluting genuine expressions of queerness (Daniel 2013), queers continue to participate in, and often significantly morph, punk spaces today (Muñoz 2009; Sharp and Nilan 2015). Importantly, queerness appears throughout this work as both an individual positionality and a collective embodiment through which queer punx negotiate their ethics, and envisage the not-yet-here world of queer futurity (Muñoz 2009).

Collective Authorisation of Queer

Collective authorisation is an important theoretical consideration concerning the intersection of punk music and queer identities for young women and gender diverse people. Where much of the research available regarding queer communities (both online and physical) and punk subculture explores collective identities as markers for self-making (Maskell 2009; Ensminger 2010; Griffin 2012: 67), collective authorisation conceptualises acceptance into both punk and queer spaces and identities at the same time. There is limited research available regarding how young, queer people authorise and are authorised to perform and participate as queer punx. However, connections will be made to this concept through discussion of the Riot Grrrl movement and recent work on queering space which identifies the concept as advantageous for others who may be working in, studying or exploring this field of enquiry.

A queer space and its participants authorise both self and other to act out certain gender displays and sexual performances (Hammers 2008: 161). By collectively authorising behaviours and acts that heteronormative culture would consider deviant, queer-identifying people are able to increase their representation. This authority is derived from a collective consciousness, one that recognises gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex persons (as well as an endless list of variances) have the capacity to politically counter dominant discourses of gender and sexuality. In this way, groups of people who have life experiences, which may not necessarily be similar but find commonality in disengagement from heteronormative culture, are able to find a collective that authorises them to be queer. Of course, this presentation of self may not be the participant's most 'authentic' representation of themselves but rather a version of self within a liminal space (Hammers 2008). It must be noted that Hammers' fieldwork takes place in highly sexualised spaces designed for the enactment of desire, which is not the focus of this research. However, her point about queer authorisation of space stands as useful. It was found to be so in the pilot study for this project, where twelve young, queer women shared narratives of collective authorisation of gender fluidity and challenges to heteronormativity in punk spaces. Their evident sense of authorisation came from the capacity to perform a queer(ed) self in punk spaces where other queer women were present (Sharp and Nilan 2015). That notion of authorisation came to form part of what I now call identity curation, where young queer people are effectively performing bricolage on parts of what they saw/felt/heard in queer spaces to put together their own performance of identity.

The term *identity curation* emphasises the way that queer punx synthesise the representations they put forward in social worlds, and simultaneously use them to (re)form their identities. ‘Curation’ may connote a considered particularity to the kinds of embodiments one chooses to perform, however the term also recognises the embedded autonomy of living a queer life. By piecing together various forms of symbolism, communication and information, queers construct identities and embodiments that are representative of their most desired self. Muñoz (2009) describes the queer aesthetic as a catalyst for envisaging future queer worlds, and it is used here to theorise the performative and discursive methods that queer punx utilise in queer world making.

Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing. Often we can glimpse the worlds proposed and promised by queerness in the realm of the aesthetic. The aesthetic, especially the queer aesthetic, frequently contains blueprints and schemata of a forward-dawning futurity (Muñoz 2009: 1).

In the quote above, the words ‘lets us feel’ describes the affect of the world, and the imagining of ‘new worlds’ (Muñoz 2009: 1). Muñoz implicitly theorises queerness as mobility, moving beyond the here and now to conceptualise the potential for queer futures. For Muñoz queerness is essentially about insistence on potentiality, or the concrete possibility for another world. Muñoz’s theory of futurity is used to grasp queer identity curation in punk scenes; imagining new places of possibility. Futurity offers an affective and embodied insistence on identity making, and shapes the theoretical framework of this study. If queerness can never be in the here and now as Muñoz suggests, we must find new ways of interrogating how queerness can be *felt*. In turn, such feeling might be investigated using spatial and emotional pre-configurations of ‘affective atmospheres’ (Anderson 2009), ‘sticky subjects’ (Ahmed 2004), and Do It Together (DIT) collective embodiments.

Affect and Queering Space

The potential for space to be considered queered is evident when using Ahmed’s theory of affect as a stickiness; collective affects that become ‘sticky’ (Ahmed 2004). The use of the term sticky in this way communicates an affective transference of emotions through doing. Ahmed (2004: 91) describes the stickiness of emotions and the expectations of them as, ‘what objects do to other objects... a relation of doing in which there is not a distinction between passive or active’. Rather, a ‘sticky’ attachment evolves in the doing. The intangible becomes ‘sticky’ in that ‘emotions are not only about movement, they are also about attachments or about what connects us to this or that’ (Ahmed 2004:

11). Using this concept means that queer(ed) space can be mapped by materialising abstract terms such as embodiment, space and even, queer. And even more so, these sticky experiences can be mapped as a collective intensity which mobilises emotions. The movement of affective transference in queer punk spaces and times illustrates how affective atmospheres (Anderson 2009) come *into* doing.

Punk is much more than a physical space for members of the scene. Punk is simultaneously a geography/ethos/identity/sound/field/scene. Collectively accomplishing queer identities in a music scene that encodes cismale dominance might at first appear to constitute straddling two mutually exclusive socio-cultural worlds. However, collective pleasure in making and (re)claiming space and time within punk represents a key factor in continued punk scene participation for queers (Sharp and Nilan 2015). Of course, there are always consequences of queering space, some of which are discussed explicitly by participants throughout this research. Defining statements in Warner's 1993 landmark book *Fear of a Queer Planet* sum up the landscape of claiming queer places,

Every person who comes to a queer self-understanding knows in one way or another that her [sic] stigmatization is connected with gender, the family, notions of individual freedom, the state, public speech, consumption and desire, nature and culture, maturation, reproductive politics, racial and national fantasy, class identity, truth and trust, censorship, intimate life and social display, terror and violence, health care and deep cultural norms about the bearing of the body. Being queer means fighting about these issues all the time, locally and piecemeal, but always with consequences (Warner 1993: xiii).

Queer punx take punk's collective and embodied experiences of identity and relationality (Hancock and Lorr 2013), and transform them through the nexus their existence produces, outside both the heteronormative guidelines of punk, and the musical tastes so closely related to mainstream gay identity (Fenster 1993). This convergence is evidenced by the coalescing of myriad queer punk bands under the 'Queercore' umbrella (Nault 2013), as well as other forms of visibly queer performance, drag in particular, in punk spaces (Siegel 2008; Muñoz 2009). Queer punx take the abject embodiment prescribed by punk (Griffin 2012) and combine it with the 'extended adolescence' that has become a hallmark of how queerness is understood as a social phenomenon (Halberstam 2005). In doing so, queer punx create an embodied experience that is visceral and confronting, regardless of whether this was their explicit intention, or simply how they are perceived by others within the field.

One of the practical ways that space can become queer(ed) is through the collective ethic of DIT, which builds on the original embedded resistance to commodified culture while also critiquing it. In doing so, DIT presents an eminently collective method of claiming space and time in tangible and temporal ways, for example, the use of safe(r) spaces policies at gigs. In this way, I theorise the epistemological meanings of DIT with a specific focus on the queer *doing of togetherness*; relationship maintenance, visibility work, (re)claiming credibility and dismantling gendered boundaries located in punk scenes. It is argued that this is a ‘sticky’ process in Ahmed’s (2004) terms.

Symbolic Violence as a Technology of Subordination

This chapter section addresses the concept of a queer geography within masculinised sites using Valentine’s (1989) concept of spatialising women’s fear, and Bourdieu’s (2002) theory of symbolic violence. Valentine’s work focuses specifically on women in public space, and has been developed extensively over the past three decades. For some women, the learning of what constitutes occupiable public space is enacted through violence (Hanmer and Maynard 1987). Valentine (1989: 389) argues that ‘women’s inhibited use and occupation of public space is a spatial expression of patriarchy’. Most women learn one way or another that many spaces are not for them. Valentine’s (1989) work offers a catalyst for entering into a discussion of the geography of queer fear.

The concept of symbolic violence was first introduced by Bourdieu to describe not just injurious talk or gesture but ‘violence which is exercised upon a social agent *with his or her complicity*’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 167, my emphasis). Bourdieu’s examples of symbolic violence in his book *Masculine domination* (2002) include gender relations in which cismen impose demeaning meanings on ciswomen who are already a dominated social group and may have already internalised doxa about their subordination. In the punk scene, an example might be routine micro-aggressions by cismen against women and/or queers that have become normalised to the extent that they rarely protest against them. The internalised idea here would be gender-‘business as usual’. The concept of symbolic violence used in this project expands this outward into macrosocial aspects of inequality in a global context and reflects inward into the gendered landscape of membership of a music scene. Notably, for Bourdieu (1994), symbolic violence is embedded in language. The authoritative framework of communication privileges the normative values of advanced, capitalist societies and so, systems of classification and categorisation themselves become systems of domination. Bourdieu theorises that ‘the names which construct social reality as much as they express it are the crucial stakes of political struggle’ (Bourdieu 1994: 134). Schubert (2008: 184) described Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic violence as referring to arbitrary methods of categorisation and classification that are

locatable in history, rather than nature. Violence can then be seen as a product of the naturalisation of these systems.

In Bourdieu's conceptual analysis of symbolic violence, the enactment of privilege is largely unconscious, 'members of dominant classes need only to go about their daily lives, adhering to the rules of the system that provides them their position of privilege' (Schubert 2008: 184). The dominant classes or groups reproduce subordinating classifications and categorisations under the guise of legitimate practice within the fields of their daily practice, playing out and reinforcing inequality via their everyday beings and doings. While Bourdieu's focus on symbolic violence originally centred specifically on political and class struggles, especially in education systems (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), the concept was later reconceptualised (Bourdieu 1998, 2002) and can be applied effectively to queer punx spaces. These spaces have a direct relation to the politics of histories and hierarchies of gender. This is especially when looking to Ahmed who followed up on Valentine's work on stigmatised bodies and fear in social and public space.

Fear works to align the body and social space: it works to enable some bodies to inhabit and move in public space through restricting the mobility of other bodies to spaces that are enclosed or contained. Spaces extend the mobility of some bodies; their freedom to move shapes the surface of spaces, whilst spaces surface as spaces through the uneven distribution of fear which allows spaces to become territories, claimed as rights by some bodies and not others (Ahmed 2004: 70).

Like Bourdieu, Ahmed uses the everydayness of social life to demonstrate how bodies internalise structural boundaries of power. Social space is public, it is of-the-world and therefore is implicitly anchored in everyday engagement.

It is important to note the critique of scholars such as Adkins and Skeggs (2004) and Butler (1997), of Bourdieu's accounts of gender and patriarchy in his development and analysis of symbolic violence. Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) argues that Bourdieu fails to acknowledge the subversive potential of performativity and misconceptualises patriarchy as faultlessly being the dominance of structural power. For Butler (1997), bodily speech can be knowing and unknowing which foregrounds the discursive acts of agentic performativity and further speaks to affective transference as a catalyst for resistance to patriarchal regulation. Utilising these critiques for addressing the semiotics of punk and queer communication, space and place, symbolic violence as a concept can be productively used to scaffold a theoretical analysis of gender and sexuality divisions within the scene. As seen in recent

research concerning subcultural scenes (Maskell 2009; Ensminger 2010; Griffin 2012; Miller 2016), the hierarchy of wider capitalist society is replicated even in anti- capitalist scenes. White, straight, able-bodied cismen dominate the landscape of music arenas, even in underground communities (Halberstam 2003).

Importantly, such a scaffold makes possible an argument that queer women and gender diverse people are *hypervisible* in punk scenes, rather than *invisible* as much of the research in this field suggests (Hebdige 1979; Maskell 2009; Griffin 2012). Several informants pointed out inconsistencies in the assumption that their bodies could be viewed as invisible in the punk scene and in wider society. Instead, they felt that it was their visibility as a woman or gender diverse person that made them a target of violence, both physical and symbolic. Without such a clear and visible Othering, the enactment of oppression falls short of acutely representing lived experiences. Such a finding reconfigures corporeal notions of what it means to be a feminist, a woman, non-binary or genderqueer in spaces that are cismale-dominated. As Žižek (2008: 31) points out, ‘social-symbolic violence at its purest appears as its opposite, as the spontaneity of the milieu in which we dwell, of the air we breathe’. Chapter Six of this study explores the concept of hypervisibility through ethnographic accounts.

Conclusion

Moving through the theoretical landscape of youth, gender, feminism, queer, space and violence ultimately brings forth the key concepts with which this thesis is concerned and attempts to reconstruct. By considering a specific group of people, youth, and reducing the scope of theory to gendered identity construction and queer performances, an emerging field of identity curation, queer space making and futurity appears. It has become evident that queer time and young punks’ transitions into adulthood do not always follow a linear path. Their seemingly endless ‘youthful’ identities reframe traditional rites of passage, such as marriage or family. The progression of gender studies and feminism have contributed hugely to the capacity for academia, popular culture, media and youth movements to mobilise towards social equality on their own terms. Ultimately, in this chapter I have foregrounded the theory of identity curation as a mode of collective identity and futurity by interweaving conceptual standpoints. In doing so, a static state of identity is disqualified and reconfigured as a dynamic and fleeting entanglement of praxis.

Violence, and how queer people resist it as a technology of collective identity, is a remarkable feature of everyday life for queer punx, which this thesis addresses in detail. By naming symbolic violence as

both embodied and spatial, this chapter frames up the experiential nuance of queer punx identities within masculinised subculture. Furthermore, the doing of gender is relatable to how social space is configured through affective and embodied praxis. Women and gender diverse people learn to be fearful or wary of certain places because of what is done in them, or what has been done before. In this way, affective transference is a useful theoretical tool with which to configure experiences and embodiments as 'sticky'. These affective intensities are picked up by others who may, consciously or unconsciously, be receptive. As a result, collective authorisation can occur. This process of authorisation affords the potential for identities to be explored, tried on or tried out, performed or hidden.

Using an intersectional and post feminist framework, this chapter has named privilege and inequality as important critiques for research in this field. By attempting to draw together social and cultural distinctions of class, race, gender, ethnicity, age and ability, I find a considerable gap in the theoretical literature in which I situate this research project. The next chapter moves on to consider some of the literature that exists in that field.



Figure 4: Handmade ceramic pin on jacket pocket. Worn to signal feminist ideals. Self-taken in Newcastle, 13 November 2016.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

In a review of contemporary literature about the synthesis of punk and queer, the intersection between the two appears underrepresented. Most publications to date address either queerness in punk (Maskell 2009; Griffin 2012; Taylor 2012a), youth participation in punk subculture (Bennett 2000; Taylor 2010), or women in male-dominated landscapes (McRobbie and Garber 1976; Leblanc 1999; Tsistos 1999; Krenske and McKay 2000; Jacques 2001; Ryan 2008; Marcus 2010; Purchla 2011; Dawes 2012). Building on that prior knowledge, this thesis project contributes to knowledge at the intersection of those fields by exploring the lived experiences of young queer women and gender diverse people in punk in the current climate of intersectional identity politics. The meanings of their lived experiences are discussed with current and historical literature in mind; however, this project goes further - to interrogate how young queers curate identities through creative self-making practices, such as on and offline space-making, zines, tattoos and DIT politics.

Notably, much of the research concerning identity-making in punk spaces refers to collective identities (Maskell 2009; Ensminger 2010; Griffin 2012), which represent a core concern in the field. Collective identity locates the self as coherent with the values and actions of, in this case, punk subculture. Yet overall, the concept of collective identities seems somewhat restrictive in terms of the intersection between punk and queer, for reasons of dynamic gender and sexuality politics. Accounts of collective identity in the punk scene have usually considered the sharing of likeminded ideals regarding class, anti-authority, anti-establishment and rebellious youth culture (McKay 1998; Sabin 1999: 3; Bennett 2006: 225; Strachan 2007; Dale 2008; Langman 2008; Baker and Huber 2013). When gender and queer are added to these configurations, it seems evident that a different collective authorisation is enacted, and a more complex understanding is required. It is argued that grasping the nexus of contemporary categories of 'punk', 'queer' and 'women' requires an analysis beyond the constraints of a collective punk identity.

This chapter firstly outlines a brief history of punk in the broadest sense, and moves on to describe queer experiences in diverse punk scenes, concentrating on imbalances of power and representation, as well as strategies of resistance within these cismale-dominated scenes. Ultimately, the chapter evaluates how women and queers have been gestured to within the archives of punk history. For example, 'in the punk canon, many of the first British groups listed in critical histories of punk were

exclusively male, or at best had one or two female members which reflects to a certain extent, the way in which punk, at least in England was a less open space for expression as it could have been' (Cogan 2012: 122). Such accounts make women and queers invisible even though they were present. By contributing a new narrative of queer(ed) bodies actively engaging in 'the punk project' (Thomson 2004), this thesis project positions those who are often relegated to the sidelines of the mosh pit to the centre stage. If histories of mainstream punk tell us anything, it is that heteronormative gender and sexuality are at the forefront of identity construction within masculinised punk spaces. Maleness appears in punk histories as the critical element required to resist the normative oppression of capitalism and commodification. As a strategic relocation, recognising the construction of selfhood for women and gender diverse people in punk is crucial to challenging their subordination in punk histories. Young queer women and gender diverse people resist subordination by re-making and re-claiming punk territory in new and innovative ways. While these territories of online and temporal space appear as ephemeral, they are archived in the embodiments of those who engage with them, becoming technologies of memory and affect.

While punk as a movement has been endlessly described as a rebellion, alternative histories of punk are important, because without them, 'punk becomes a rebellion without a cause, a boys' club of heroic art-school drop outs, and another master narrative within which white guys play all the parts - the masters and the slaves, the businessmen and the slackers, the insiders and the outsiders' (Halberstam 2013: 129). It is argued that while it continues to replicate a normative patriarchal dominance, punk cannot claim to achieve any kind of anti-establishment resistance.

Punk History

Writing briefly about the history of punk is difficult because punk music, style and subculture has been described, analysed, reported and retold for as long as the community itself has existed (O'Connor 2016). However, just as sonics,³ spaces and styles of punk evolve and change, so too do the narratives of those who participate (Becker 2012: 117). As Halberstam (2013) claims, the need for alternative re-tellings of experiences within punk communities is vital to explore marginalisation and exclusion within the punk community. Without such contributions, the history of punk reflects only white cismale performers, gatekeepers, audiences, producers, consumers and contributors. Yet despite the fact that dominating sexuality, class and ethnicity identities of punk favour white, straight

¹ The music, in the broadest sense, and across all genres of punk.

cismen, women and queers existed - and continue to exist - in the punk arena. Furthermore, their stories and experiences illuminate the dynamic of collective belonging and the survival of women, and queer women and gender diverse people, as 'authentic' bodies and subjects within the punk community. This is important for the contribution of punk and queer studies to wider fields of sociology and cultural studies because, 'to understand both the musics of queer subjects and how queers have coalesced around particular musics can tell us much about sexual agency, advocacy and the stylistic modes of queer resistance and survival' (Taylor 2012a: 42).

The punk movement may be described as a music-driven counterculture of marginalised youth seeking to have their voices heard on a range of issues, including the unequal distribution of wealth and class stratification, religion, conservative culture and alienated youth (Sabin 1999: 3). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, English, Australian and American governments were looking to instil a conservative value system into young people who were becoming increasingly disenchanted and disconnected with mainstream society. The resulting alienation from this process led some young people to find spaces that promised emancipatory qualities such as separation from parental values and ownership over the trajectory into selfhood (Langman 2008: 660). Such a space in the music field presented itself as punk, where radical positioning and rebellious influences were celebrated and encouraged. Visual and bodily representations provided a strategy for self-determination; one could be read as a punk through style, language and music activity.

A defining feature of punk is that it 'gives itself to be read' (Hebdige 1979: 101) as an embodiment of chaos. Punk stylistics include 'dissonance, distortions, decomposition, clashes of disparate elements, destruction and vulgarity' (Hebdige 1979: 101). Such an embodiment of young punk attitude is explained in a 2006 interview with Keith Morris (original singer of influential hardcore band Black Flag and founding member of OFF!) for the documentary *American Hardcore*. He is referring to his experiences as a young person in the California punk scene,

Here comes Friday and I'm just gonna go off. I hate my boss, I hate the people that I work with, I hate my parents, I hate all these authoritative figures, I hate politicians, I hate people in government, I hate the police. [...] Everyone is kinda pointing the finger at me, everyone's poking at me, and now I have a chance to be with my own type of people and I have chance to go off. And that's basically what it was (Morris in *American Hardcore*, Blush and Rachman [film makers] 2006).

For young people looking for a way out of what they see to be a conventional lifestyle, punk embodies an unknown but exciting future, a liminal space where the possibilities of constructing selfhood are self-governed rather than externally imposed. However, the narratives of punk diversified from the very moment of its initiation. In a movement born from emancipation, a hierarchy of punk becomes evident in its historical re-tellings; and not all punks are created equal.

After a period of carving out a particular sound, often described through infamous bands such as the Sex Pistols, The Ramones and The Clash, and embedding the ethos of punk into those who participated in the subculture, punk diverged into subsets of musical style during the 1980s. These subsets included Riot Grrrl and queercore, which were critical of hegemonic gender relations in punk scenes. Elsewhere, resistance to the trend of commercialisation in the punk scene produced the ‘angry’ music of hardcore, which stripped away the commercial conventions to which punk had begun to subscribe (Fox 1987). 1980s hardcore bands played a distinctive amplified fast and dense sound with aggressively-delivered lyrics and guitar distortion (Blush 2010). Adherence to the punk ideal of Do It Yourself (DIY) encoded as a sharp, simple sound justifies the claim by those in hardcore to be the essence of punk (Fox 1987). The point was (and still is) to create an ‘authentic’ sound,

By the mid-1980s the ferocity and tempo of certain branches of hardcore punk became even less melodic and began to liberally employ a sonic aesthetic known as ‘breakdowns’ (...) This sonic shift was integral to facilitate the hypermasculinity of crew scene performance (...) The sound of many bands became harder (Purchla 2011: 201).

Early US hardcore was ‘stark and uncompromising. Hardcore generated a lifestyle stripped down to the bare bones. Its intensity exposed raw nerves. Everyone was edgy and aggressive’ (Blush 2010: 9). Lyrics were anti-authority, but also often sexist (Purchla 2011; Griffin 2012). Moreover, the hardcore mosh pit was (and still is) an emphatically male space in which physical injury is expected (Driver 2011). Women - and others - have tended to avoid it (Tsistos 1999) – and still do. Yet some queer women in the punk scene show a fondness for hardcore (see Sharp and Nilan 2015) because of its uncompromising sound and style. To acknowledge how the sonics of punk, exemplified in hardcore – ‘an infectious blend of ultra-fast music, thought provoking lyrics, and “fuck-you” attitude’ (Blush 2010: 9), might possibly appeal to young queer women and gender diverse people,

the relationship between music, imagination and modes of corporeal conduct must be explored. De Nora (2000: 124) points out that within social spaces, ‘music may allude to modes of aesthetic agency – feeling, being, moving, acting – and so may place near-to-hand certain aesthetic styles that can be used as referents for configuring agency’. So, entrained by the physical patterns of the music, bodies gain the empowering capacity of self-invention. In this case, it is queer becoming that emerges as an empowering capacity for young women.

Encarnacao (2016: 15) claims that punk exemplifies ‘the power of the flawed product’; where ‘ugly’ is ‘beautiful’ (Leblanc 1999: 193). Yet, punk is diverse in its sonics, ethos and style. For example, we cannot assume that queer people participate in folk punk like they do hardcore because the two genres have different encoded meanings and patronage. While they may cross over in their membership, venue and lyrical content, the two scenes and sounds produce varying fields (O’Connor 2016). In a similar vein, Wald and Gottlieb (1993: 11) warn that the homogenising of the 90s American Riot Grrrl movement by journalists served ‘an ambivalent function in both defining a new trend and limiting it, and in diminishing the diversity of women’s performance and musical styles under a single label’. Therefore, the analysis of punk in this research considers the depth and breadth of ‘punk participation’ broadly defined, while simultaneously untangling some of the specificities that cross-pollinate (Straw 1984) genres, sonics and venues. In this way, rather than being a homogenous ‘scene’, punk can be seen as a template for cultural resistance right across its different demographics and biases.

An important linkage across punk settings is the principle of DIY (Avery-Natale 2016). DIY signifies collective resistance to commodified culture. It favours alternative spaces outside the commercial music industry where artistic creativity, community building, politics and identity work can take place (Culton and Holtzman 2010). In that sense, punk involves ‘self-empowerment’ (Dunn 2016:15) which transcends simply aesthetic and stylistic preference. Like Straw, Thompson (2004) theorises a diverse punk scene which is bonded through futurity, DIY ethics, and resistance to capitalist values. Thompson (2004: 4) notes punks ‘cannot fully imagine what the better world would look like, but they refuse to accept the one that they know as final’. In this way, punks mobilise DIY production under an unimaginable progression towards anti-establishment revolution, which transgresses genre, sonic, style, and geography, and speaks to Muñoz’s (2009) theory of queer futurity more broadly. The following chapter section follows the conception of queer futurity and reviews literature which explored the intersection between queer and punk.

Queer Punk History

To consider how punk can be queer at all, we can look at the development of queercore (sometimes referred to as homocore) in the 1980s. The appeal of punk to women is represented in the later emergence of Riot Grrrl in the 1990s and the influence of women like Kathleen Hanna (Bikini Kill, Le Tigre) and Donna Dresch (Team Dresch, Chainsaw Fanzine). These iconic movements and performers were primary influences on the feminist, queer punk movement (Halberstam 2003: 323). Queercore became a distinctive sub-genre of punk (Cooper 1996; DeChaine 1997; Du Plessis and Chapman 1997; Schwandt 2009). It first emerged in the 1980s, where 'queercore as a musical form takes as its primary inspiration a path blazed by a second wave of punks (...) queercore music favours an ethic of raw, "do it yourself" performance and production hearkening to the original punk rock' (DeChaine 1997: 19). It is here that the radical politics of punk DIY and queer come together. In queercore, a musico-sexual coalition is directly signalled: the prefix 'queer' meaning 'not straight' and the suffix 'core', indicative of the genre's punk rock extraction (Taylor 2012b: 606).

In the early 1990s, after the punk scene had been diversified into stylised segments, women began to shift focus back to issues of gender and sexism. In August 1991, Riot Grrrl had its coming out party (Jacques 2001: 47). Riot Grrrl, originating in Olympia and Washington D.C, placed docile femininity and the marginalisation of women at the forefront of critical expression in alternative music scenes (Marcus 2010). For example, bands such as Bikini Kill and Bratmobile challenged how women in punk were typically represented as heterosexualised and passive participants (Jacques 2001: 47, Leonard 1998: 102-3). Kathleen Hanna comments on the beginnings of Riot Grrrl by saying, 'our friend Jen Smith said, "You know what we need, we need a girl riot". We just tried to take feminist stuff and then filter it through a punk rock lens' (*The Punk Singer* 2013, Anderson [film maker]). Introducing an explicitly feminist discourse into malestream spaces, Riot Grrrl signalled 'a collective confidence which could transcend the need for boys', moreover, it represented 'an important progression in the politics of youth culture' (McRobbie 1990: 80). More than simply a musical style or taste, Riot Grrrl extended to creating zines, event organisation and holding meetings to discuss issues of gender, sexuality, assertiveness and self-protection. Shying away from media attention after clashes with local media outlets and misrepresentations among mainstream music and arts journalists, Riot Grrrls produced self-published underground zines, which were distributed largely through networks of local and regional communities (Leonard 1998: 103). Harris (2003: 45) explains that zine culture - particularly grrrlzines - are representative of 'a time when young people, and

young women in particular, are afforded little privacy, when surveillance regimes take the form of incitement to speak', and so 'it makes sense that young women may well resist this by attempting instead to find marginal places to express themselves'.

However, some punk scenes attempted to remain separate from such gendered trends. Writing about the US hardcore scene, Blush (2010: 36) finds he is 'hard pressed to remember many women present (...) most hardcore boys saw girls as distractions, even interlopers'. Although the scene in Australia was not exactly the same as in the UK and the USA, anecdotal evidence suggests that typical gender relations were not dissimilar. A relevant example is provided by Breen (1991) where he compares Australian, British and American heavy metal scenes to find a personification of patriarchal and misogynistic traits running through those working class communities from which heavy metal bands and audiences emerge.

In both principle and practice, hard-edged punk constitutes an exclusionary space segregated into those who are 'serious' and those who are not (Fox 1987; Bennett 2006). Likewise, the mosh pit physically encodes only hard male bodies as competent to perform. The constant (re)production of cismen's power in keeping the hardcore scene 'hard' – thus authentic (Driver 2011) – is what relegates women and others to the fringes. For example, Blush notes that on the periphery of the US hardcore scene 'lurked plenty of stereotypical Punk chicks that guys mistreated and/or sponged off' (2010: 36). Resonating with McRobbie and Garber's (2006) original critique of youth subcultures, Blush's observation encodes the way women are seen; as objects of scorn, as resources to be exploited, but in the end relegated to the margins. Yet even so, women have continued to construct viable identities for themselves at the hard edge of punk.

Thus, given the emphatically masculine nature of the punk music scene even today, it might seem curious that contemporary queer-identified young women find a place within it; yet they do (Taylor 2009). For example, Halberstam's study (2003) found that queer women were not put off by the strong male overtones of punk and hardcore. In fact, the traditionally iconoclastic ethos of punk/hardcore was found to provide a space and time where young queer women developed 'strategies of resistance to gender norms' (Halberstam 2003: 324). However, being a DIY queer punk in a scene such as hardcore is hardly an easy path to follow. It is one paved with marginalisation and the threat of irrelevance. Such a finding raises the question of why queer women and gender diverse people would choose to participate on the hard edges of the punk scene. On the other hand, it suggests that

there is something attractive about the iconoclastic nature of the music and the scene that invites gendered challenge and subversion. This research project explores the pleasure of participation against the rigidity of implicit heterosexism in relation to queer women and gender diverse people in punk spaces.

Using Hammers' (2008) research into queer bathhouses as evocative sites of collective authorisation, an important connection to queer punx praxis of identity curation can be drawn. Hammers (2008: 154) recognises the sexed bathhouse space through the metaphor of '*authorisation*'. Here a queer individual is able to perform queer overtly without necessarily concealing parts of their sexual identity. Moreover, they are authorised to choose to present a multifaceted self, which then bonds and binds affectively to others within the space. As explained in the previous chapter, Hammers' article is in keeping with the epistemological framework of my project in that constructivist perspectives of knowledge generation are key to queering space and place.

By analysing how punk can be queer(ed), the interplay between performance and subjectivity can be deconstructed. Queer exists both within punk as a lived experience and as an overarching discourse of rebellion. The clearest link between punk and queer exists in their anti-norm alignment. Both discourses attempt to establish themselves in opposition to the dominant culture. Punk wants to rebel against the commodification of music. Queer wants to break down the barriers of oppression and the naturalisation of gender/sexuality. Brought together each enhances the iconoclasm of the other. For example, Jamaican singer, songwriter, model, record producer, and actress active in the New Wave scene of the 70s, Grace Jones, 'reminds us of a maverick strand of punk that twists in and out of the avant-garde, that flirts with high fashion, low theory, hetero- and homo-sexualities, androgyny, sexual and sonic dissidence' (Halberstam 2013: 132). Even in the late 1970s, women had begun to form traditional punk bands such as The Slits, Siouxsie and the Banshees and X-Ray Spex, which advocated for women's rights and sought to integrate active engagement of women into the punk scene. These bands influenced their male audiences to consider women as participants rather than as by-standers. As a result, the punk movement in the 1980s began to intermingle with concepts of gender difference and feminism (Cogan 2012: 122; Dunn and Farnsworth 2012: 138), as well as queer.

In Halberstam's (2003: 314) work, it is argued that queer can develop within a punk subculture through 'kinship based notions of community'. Halberstam uses punk as an example of how the rejected (those removed from societal norms) create their own community through exclusion. It

can be contended that such a congealing represents facets of both individual and collective queer identity curation. Halberstam suggests that it is kinship which binds and bricolages punk together, ultimately mobilising the scene, however not necessarily moving forward or backward. Punks are routinely at odds with each other, with their scene or subculture, and with broader, more normative social expectations. Resistance manifests in punk as a form of inclusion and exclusion; what brings us together may ultimately tear us apart.

Therefore, grasping the setting up and continuity of punk requires some interrogation in order to tease out how young queer people's engagements may contribute or generate deficit within the site where they participate. The following chapter section reviews literature which synthesises the formations of punk, as well as the configurations which affect practices; to ultimately argue that scene/subculture/field as theoretical concepts are all useful for articulating queer punx experiences.

Scenes and Subcultures

Engaging with the lexicon of punk as both a movement and an identity is complex, and widely debated within academic spheres. Punk itself was a key object for the very genesis of subcultural studies. Terms such as 'subculture' (Weinstein 2000), 'neo-tribe' (Bennett, 1999), 'post- subculture' (Muggleton 2000) and 'scene' (Straw 1991; Bennett 2008) have been used to describe and analyse the structure and mobility of punk music, spaces, identities and cultures. The following discussion hinges around the use of subcultural, scene and field theory, as theorised in Chapter Two, with attention to studies that explore the possibilities for their use.

Writing extensively on music cultures and space, Bennett (1999, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2015) argues that the first use of subcultural theory to explain popular music was by the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the mid to late 1970s. Heavily anchored in working class youth praxis, subculture was a term easily applied to an ideology of youth consumption. The visual symbolism of punk style became emblematic of subcultural engagement, particularly English street and skinhead punk style which incorporated all-black adornment with Doc Martins combat boots, patched denim, safety pins and studs - as well as 'unconventional' hair, make-up and body modification (Bennett 2006: 222-5). Yet the problem with a term like subculture, according to Bennett, is the socio-historical connections it has to youth culture and class rather than music consumption and identity. In writing of subcultural styles, Hebdige (1979: 3) asserts,

On the one hand, they warn the ‘straight’ world in advance of a sinister presence – the presence of difference – and draw down upon themselves vague suspicions, uneasy laughter, ‘white and dumb rages’. On the other hand, for those who erect them into icons, who use them as words or as curses, these objects become signs of forbidden identity, sources of value.

Whereas Hebdige (1979) explores subculture extensively in terms of youth and their practices of resistance against a failing UK political system, others such as Bennett (2000), McRobbie and Garber (1976) and Straw (1991) argue that subculture itself is not a sound theoretical paradigm with which to analyse punk communities if we consider the complexities of class, age, gender and ethnicity (Bennett 2006: 222-5). Furthermore, Leonard argues that ‘the term sub-culture tends to suggest a group displaying integrated behaviour, beliefs and attitudes’ (Leonard 1998: 102), which is avoided in her work on Riot Grrrl. Preferring to conceptualise Riot Grrrl as a ‘network’ of information and connectedness, Leonard makes the point of communication occurring informally through zines and letters (1998: 102). Favouring the term scenes rather than subcultures, Straw (1991) used dance music to discuss regional connectedness and temporality. The dance scenes he investigated existed in multiple geographical spaces much in the same way as punk does. The regional sites then acted as performative spaces (scenes) where young people could actively connect with networks previously unknown to them but with whom they had a commonality. In defending his use of ‘scene’ rather than subculture, Straw (1991) maintains that those who move between styles of the one genre - his example is alternative rock - are mobilising their individual career rather than making a shift into or out of a (sub)culture. As Straw (1991: 376) suggests, ‘moves within this culture - from punk to country, psychedelia to boogie blues, and so on - represent idiosyncratic passages across the space of alternative rock rather than attempts at collective redirection’. Yet framing scenes in this way appears to rely on music as commodity, which is at odds with the DIY and DIT resistance to commodification often expressed by those within the punk community.

The findings of an honours pilot study for this doctoral thesis project suggested young queer women in the Newcastle scene understand punk as a subculture. That term was foundational in their identity construction (Sharp and Nilan 2015). Yet use of the term subculture by the pilot study informants does not mean that the term can be unproblematically applied. Music scenes do not necessarily fit with the classic definition of subculture, as O’Connor (2016: 70) notes of the term scene, ‘few punk kids use it (except as a kind of joke). Kids talk all the time about the scene: the local scene, the hardcore scene, the straightedge scene. By this they mean something similar to what Bourdieu calls a field’. Therefore

the concept of field might be more useful as a theoretical and epistemological tool, even if informants did not use that terminology to discuss their musical or stylistic affiliations.

O'Connor's recent work explains disparate functions of punk by re-thinking scenes as fields (in Bourdieu's sense),

The major advantage of the concept of field is that it allows, it actually assumes, a diversity of positions within the field. The Mekons and Subhumans are both British punk bands. The Mekons belong with the radical art-punk sector of the field, whereas the Subhumans do leftist and anarchist youth anthems. There is a retrospective of the Mekons organised by an art gallery in the United States of America (1996). You sing along with the Subhumans, preferably drunk. It is possible that they shared some fans in the 1980s. Yet it makes no sense to try to assimilate them to one substantive definition of punk. Instead they should be understood in relation to each other, and to all other bands in the field (O'Connor 2016: 70).

Engaging critically with the concept of local and regional spatialities while acknowledging O'Connor's reframing of punk as field, it can be argued that geography plays a part in keeping communities separate but relatable. For example, the 1982 hardcore compilation: 'This is Boston, not L.A', released by Modern Method, exhibited tensions between regional spatialities. The purpose of that compilation - and many more thereafter - was to send a message of separation to the established L.A punk and hardcore scene. Records such as that one act as artefacts of localised scenes seeking to maintain authenticity for a particular sound or style locatable at a particular site. Featuring local Boston bands Gang Green, The Freeze and Jerry's Kids, that compilation embodied spatial segregation, implicitly rejecting community and connectedness within any subculture of punk. However, because the record is part of punk practice, it can still be considered relationally to other punk sounds and styles, as O'Connor suggests.

I suggest that, while all of these theories have merit when applied to queer punx in an Australian and UK context, field is the most pertinent for this project as it follows a Bourdieusian application, one which I have also considered in sections on symbolic violence and social space. Furthermore, the idea of punk fields seem to offer a more nuanced and flexible understanding of punk culture, one which places identity and embodiment at the forefront of its construction. One of the ways that queer punk can be exemplified as a field is in its taking up of DIT as an intersectional and post feminist response

to symbolic violence perpetrated by masculine domination and as a challenge to the older, individualised principle of DIY. However, this is not the only facet of queer punx that will be addressed throughout the thesis, and so a composite of these theories has been utilised across the discussion to best reflect the complexity of the punk, and queer, space.

Do It Together as Space Making

DIT politics claim space within the primarily male homosocial punk scene. In recent times, women and queers in the punk scene have actively promoted DIT against the individualised ethos of DIY. Yet DIT is really an extension of DIY rather than oppositional to it, because DIT retains the anti-commodification, iconoclastic ethos of DIY. Therefore, while DIY represents lateral organisation and ironic stylisation at an individual level, DIT promotes the often informal coming together of marginalised people within the punk scene to form communities of action. Indeed, the organisation of DIY production and performance relies on social networks of cooperation, trust and friendship (Moore 2007; Portwood-Stacer 2013; Martin-Iverson 2014; Sutopo, Nilan and Threadgold 2016, Threadgold 2017). DIT represents an alternative to individualised notions of productivity. Yet it is also located within specifically queer and feminist discourse. The term DIT in informant accounts points to the collaborative efforts of women and queers to create inclusionary politics within punk scenes (see Portwood-Stacer 2013). The concept of safe(r) spaces is a DIT method of claiming queer territory; a queer intervention; and a form of ‘queering’ in itself. Queering a space reveals how power operates in normative codes and normalising practices that at the same time constitute ‘deviancy’ and ‘otherings’ as sites of social violence (Spike Peterson 2016). Yet the use of the specific term *safe(r)* spaces in the punk scene at least recognises that there is no absolute state of feeling ‘safe’ (Avery-Natale 2016: 226). The purposeful addition of (r) recognises the collaborative work and emotional labour for those organising gigs as an ongoing process, while simultaneously highlighting the limitations of *safe*.

Safe(r) spaces at gigs and events reduce the risk of harm that a gender diverse person or group may endure because of their attendance (see Harris 2005). Strategies include gender-neutral bathrooms, accessible floor planning, trigger-warnings, a list of guidelines for participation given on entry and displayed, and volunteers wearing a pin or badge indicating availability to talk. In short, the declaration of a safe(r) space punk gig offers support and inclusive practice for marginalised people. Yet that same declaration simultaneously foregrounds the privilege that cisgender men already hold when they walk in the door. In that sense, a safe(r) space declaration at a punk event operates as a

form of disruption to the male-gendered status quo of punk, exemplifying the DIT ethic. Portwood-Stacer (2013: 116) makes the same point in her research of American anarcho-punks. She states,

By articulating authentic anarchist identity with non-hegemonic sexualities, the subcultural discourses of sexuality circulated by anarchists work to discipline self-identified anarchists into adopting particular practices as a means of demonstrating the authenticity of their commitment to anarchist politics.

Here, Portwood-Stacer alludes to affective co-presence in queer punx communities. This can be read as bodily speech, where subcultural members make visible their socio-political alignment, while simultaneously reproducing subcultural affiliation. Bodily speech is one of a myriad of ways in which queer punx represent themselves. Queer punk ephemera such as records and zines are utilized as repositories for memory and collective embodiments that offer a tangible discourse which one can reuse, revisit, redress or refuse at will. However, these artefacts; their collection and distribution, is not without scrutiny.

Archiving and Queer(ed) Cultural Production

Seminal American punk band Poison Idea's (1984) album title *Record Collectors are Pretentious Assholes* is emblematic of punk's contradictory relationship with its own cultural products. Punk cannot exist without vinyl records and other merchandise (otherwise we would have never encountered Poison Idea's sentiment), but any reverence for, or preoccupation with, these artefacts is in strict opposition to its zero-care/anti-capitalist characteristics. Despite this sentiment's mainstay status in a punk ethos, material artefacts such as vinyl records continue to be crucial in documenting and proliferating punk music. Thompson (2004) proposes that the production of punk artefacts in the face of punks' strictly anti-commodity ethos is fuelled by the fact that those works are the product of a tug-of-war between individual and collective desire for, and repression of, urges to move beyond commodity. Thompson identifies punk's 'at least partially failed practices' as an example of both the moral bankruptcy of the capitalist commodity project, and punk's own inability to achieve independence from material production. Rather, these acts, 'in utopian fashion' (2004: 120), gesture towards a futurity beyond both commodification and normativity.

This intersectional insight provides a significant link between punk in general and Muñoz's (2009) concrete queer utopias; punx and queers are both oriented towards materialising that which is

visceral, ephemeral, and often distinctly (homo)sexual. It also gestures towards Halberstam's (2004) notion of failure as queerness; by failing to achieve a particular standard, we open an opportunity to operate in the world in ways that have not previously been conceived. Punk fail to completely eject themselves out of capitalist materialism, and queers fail to completely eject themselves out of heteronormativity; queer punk negotiate the coalescence of these two points of failure. They straddle a line between resistance to, and reliance on, commodity-based economies, upholding radical ideals whilst simultaneously having their ability to assemble, organise, and protest facilitated by the free labour economy of many Western countries (Cover 2004). This contradiction, truly a queer punk failure, manifests in alternative forms of artefact production and documentation/archiving (Kumbier 2014). As Muñoz (2009: 96) submits, queer punks are 'innately heretical yet still desirous for the world'.

It is also important to recognise here the salience of punk music for the production of queer in the scene. In this way, 'musical materials provide terms and templates for elaborating self-identity - for identity's identification' (De Nora 2000: 68). We can understand music as a partly written narrative which, when interlocked with the narrative of selfhood, becomes part of the embodiment of any music culture. Music is being and doing; an active ingredient in the reflexive construction of self- and space-making. Style, aesthetic and culture mobilise around music, creating new connections between self and other, highlighting the transformative characteristics of music. For example, in history, a Riot Grrrl gig attracted a different audience to a hardcore show. Intercut spaces and times act as self-inventive arenas where queer punk *do* identity, sexuality and gender, actively playing out and (re)producing embodiment and discursively shaping spaces as they enter and exit. The importance of transformations in music culture ties in to the (re)mapping and (re)conceptualisation of how cismale-dominated spaces can become queer, changing terrain with and through the bodies of women that exist in these arenas.

Moving to other punk textualities, the becoming of queer is also attributable to the way that queer people archive their experiences, both individually and collectively. Kumbier (2014) explores the multitude of alternative mediums that queer people utilise as archives of queer history, such as oral accounts of now-destroyed artefacts and collaborative archival curation. Through archiving, we *become* 'archival/archiving subjects' (Kumbier 2014: 1), both narrators and actors in a set of stories which would otherwise never be recorded. One approach to these actions is 'archiving from the ground up' (Kumbier 2014: 124); where the people within the group determine the choice of materials, language and narratives archived. Queer punk tattoos are one such type of ephemeral archive that are built from the ground up. They represent creative individual expressions of affiliation

with particular cultures, narratives and groups (Wohlrab, Stahl and Kappeler 2007). They form a repository of shared memories, which then further galvanises the collective (Leader 2015); and, due to being *inside/on* bodies, unless they are documented elsewhere, tattoos often take the memories they represent to the grave as discussed in the proceeding chapter section.

Zines and Tattoos as Ephemeral Artefacts

Acknowledgment of different areas of participation in the scene broadens our understanding of how punk should be considered,

There are several major genres of punk textuality: music (recorded and performed), style (especially clothing), the printed word (including fanzines or ‘zines’), cinema and events (punk happenings aside from shows), together these texts make up, ‘the punk project’ (Thomson 2004: 3).

Thomson’s four genres of textuality suggest fleeting or ephemeral artefacts of punk histories. While some may be tangible, they signify impermanent moments of time. However, at the same time they are all punk practices, which leave residual affects in, or on, the body, for example tattoos. By identifying as ‘queer punx’, the young women in the Newcastle pilot study indicated they belonged to a subculture that had introduced them to new ways of considering and production their feminisms, sexualities and genders. Using the kinds of punk textualities identified above as temporal artefacts, they created and mobilised scenes, either through face-to-face interaction or online discourse (Sharp and Nilan 2015).

As another example of textuality, the virtual or digital music scene appears under-researched in the academic literature on punk communities, perhaps as a result of the strong overtones of authenticity requiring physical presence among those who participate in punk spaces. We have long been aware that,

Music is more than a static object or product, music is a collection of interconnected activities and texts employed as strategic resources in the production and transmission of self-narrative and collective belonging (Taylor 2012a: 41).

Taylor's point above opens the discourse around how young, queer women and gender diverse people might use online spaces, such as social media, to create and maintain connectedness in a virtual scene. I recognise here concepts of authenticity and visibility in these spaces; in the ways young, queer women use Facebook, blogs and Instagram as modes of identity curation and repositories of ephemeral artefacts.

An example of physical immediacy is Riot Grrrl zine culture. In the mid to late 1990s only the most privileged of Riot Grrrl followers had access to the internet. Most relied on paper zines purchased face-to-face. It was claimed in the 1990s that where e-zines could reach a larger audience, they did so 'at the loss of individuality, lacking the personal qualities of paper zines' (Leonard 1998: 103). However, a contemporary understanding of virtual punk scenes, particularly in regard to the exchange artefacts of punk (records, merchandise, zines and books) in online spaces, is yet to be documented. Harris' (2003) work on digital grrrlzines demonstrates how online discourse can function as an act of resistance against the constant surveillance of young women, particularly in the public sphere.

The latter condition situates queer punk tattoos in a rare superposition, being both a legitimate form of archive, and requiring the expansion of archival methodologies in order to accommodate for their ephemerality, forcing the fields of ethnography and sociology to contemplate the archiving of archives (Wright 2009). When understood in this way, they also fit perfectly into Muñoz's (2009) concept of *queer concrete utopias*. Queer punk tattoos, and the bodies where they exist, are physical objects that manifest particular spaces by their presence. Within these, the affects associated with queer punkness can be stored and experienced; desire, fear, bravery, and most importantly the fleeting sense between knowing and unknowing - a shadowy understanding of where the wearers of these tattoos are situated in relation to queer others and the broader world.

Online praxis however, can be seen to counteract the ephemerality of queer tattoos to some degree. The Instagram hashtag #QTTR (shorthand for 'queer tattooers') for example, denotes a specific group of people who are both queer themselves, and also produce queer(ed) tattoos. Another hashtag, #queerpunx, also includes photographs of tattoos, although they are dispersed amongst documentation of other common queer punk interests. While not all photographs that appear in these hashtags are explicitly queer, nor do they exclusively appear on queer punks, there is nonetheless a developing body of documentation relating to queer punk tattoos and the visual artefacts that queer punks produce. These hashtags are one way of archiving the archives; despite the ever-present possibility of social media platforms or servers collapsing and losing stored data, there is potential for

these digitally collated photographs to be conserved and publicly accessed long after the documented bodies have perished. However, tattoos are a unique, incomplete-yet-significant trace of events and perspectives, which more Westernised forms of archiving and documentation are incapable of fully capturing (Calano 2012).

When contemplating the futurity of punk, the structured documentation provided by Instagram is useful for observational analysis. Although the critiques of tattoos persist: as cliché (Sanders 2012); as a luxury commodity of equal political valuelessness to a sweater (Gamson 1995); or even as a capitulation into the homonormative mainstream (Isaacson 2011), tattooing continues to grow in both its content and representation. The current queer/punk tattoo landscape, as seen through the lens of social media (Instagram's #QTTR hashtag in particular), ranges between highly stylised, well-executed, studio-based creations, and homemade, blunt, stylistically simple designs. The images and themes are as diverse as the mainstream tattoo world; the exception lies in the intentional tagging of these images as queer. By queer-punking what might otherwise not be read as such, queer punk tattoos and the people who give and receive them are imbuing additional meanings and depth in these images, queering their literal understanding; a bird, two hands, an innocuous triangle, are all transformed. Exploring the relationship between queer punks and their tattoos allows for a new lens on an ancient art, heightening the role of the tattoo as an agentically-assumed marker of Otherness, rather than its previous role as the societally-forced sign of a heretic, criminal or pariah. Just as the word queer was reclaimed (Gerdes 2016), we are now reclaiming those marks of ink, and distributing this reclamation as far and wide as we can. In summary, punk ephemera is a valuable barometer for queer punx who seek to create networks and communities within the spaces that they inhabit. These artefacts perform functions that speak to both generating and reproducing sites of intimacy and embodiment. The queer(ed) social spaces are outlined in detail in the following chapter section.

Queer Space: Bodies and Embodiment

Space is an important consideration for exploring the construction and meanings of queer identities engaged with punk fields in Australia and the UK; those who collectively 'make' punk spaces queer. An understanding of queer space-making lends itself to the notion of space no longer being 'regarded as merely being a backdrop for social relations, a pre-existing terrain which exists outside of, or frames, everyday life' (Valentine 2002: 145-6). Instead, the constitution of a queer punk self by young women engages with the physical elements of spaces (music venues, bars and clubs) and the social (identities, bodies, temporalities and community).

Space-making for queers in punk presents a specific challenge (Fox 1987; Yuval-Davis 2006; Culton and Holtzman 2010; Avery-Natale 2016). While queer-allocated spaces, such as gay bars, directly authorise performance of queer, queer can also be authorised through a 'slantwise process' that accesses the iconoclastic discourse of punk (Sharp and Nilan 2015: 451). For De Nora (2000) music is a kind of sensory narrative that interlocks with narratives of selfhood to constitute member embodiment in music cultures. Much of the research that has been undertaken in the field of queer space-making concerns sexualised spaces such as queer events (Hammers 2008) and clubs specifically designed for sexual encounters (Stone 2013). While such spaces are not the focus of this research, they are invaluable for yielding concepts such as 'bodily speech' (Hammers 2008) and 'flexibilities' (Stone 2013), which can be applied to punk spaces.

Massey (1999) refers to space as the product of the intricacies and the complexities; interlockings and the non-interlockings of relations from the unimaginably cosmic to the intimately tiny. As the product of relations as active practices, space is always in a process of becoming; it is always being made (Massey 1999a: 283). Considering space that way frames the nuances of queer identity production by women in the male dominated scene of punk. Considering space as both intricate and complex, overt and subversive acts of selfhood and othering can be analysed as potentially equal contributions to self-making. Furthermore, contextually specific understandings of queer(ed) space at a local, regional, global and virtual level assist in documenting a theoretically sound snapshot of queer space-making.

The idea of queer space-making relies on a grasp of how spaces become heteronormative. Conceptualising the production of space in this way, we must imagine that 'the straight street or office environment do not pre-exist their performance, rather, specific performances bring these places into being and these spaces are themselves performative of particular power relations' (Valentine 2002: 154). This connects with punk subculture, where spaces are constructed by bodily exchange and (re)produced through inherent performances of identity. Nominating spaces as punk or for punx deliberately establishes a boundary of performance and subject/object relations. Furthermore, punx have developed their own lexicon to distinguish between normative and non-normative culture, but also between particular punk fields. Words such as 'punx', 'normies' (non-punks), 'folx' (an umbrella term for queer people) and 'new jacks' (new to the punk scene) delineate people and place, communities and scenes. Yet punk language has been underrepresented in literature

beyond the spectacular, such as in Hebdige's (1979) and Fox's (1987) studies, although more recently O'Connor's (2016) work on punk as field acknowledges the salience of punk language.

Extensive bodies of work theorise non-heteronormative space and spatialities (see collections by Bell and Valentine 1995; Ingram and Bouthillette 1997; Browne, Lim and Brown 2009 for an overview). For example, Nash and Bain (2007) highlight the complex relationality of queer space-making and homonormative discourse in Toronto's queer bathhouses. They explain 'while the label and concept of queer is arguably here to stay, it occupies a precarious and perhaps ironic position outside of, yet within, homonormative gay and lesbian communities' (2007: 168). This insight is valuable for research in queer punx spaces where radical politics of the body, and expressions of sexuality through music, can often be written off as 'too out there' for even a self-identified, politically- progressive audience. Browne, Lim and Brown (2009) argue that rather than advocating for traditionally normalised marriage equality, radical queer activism supports the destabilisation of heteronormativity, and ultimately homonormativity, through rejecting social and political institutions of straightness.

Music is an integral part of queer space-making. For example, Halberstam describes awakening to punk after hearing the sonic disturbance of Rhoda Dakar's - The Bodysnatchers - scream in a darkened London club in 1979 (2013: 124). This narrative of self-awakening is situated in a specific place and describes the pull to subculture through the performance of the Other. In this way, the self becomes part of a space, awakened by the music of punk to the world of 'creative mayhem' (Halberstam 2013) and open to subcultural narratives. In another sense, the possibility of bodies queering spaces and time occurs through directly challenging masculinist style and discourse (Halberstam 2005) at gigs. Such a challenge can be observed if we look back to the Riot Grrrl movement where Kathleen Hanna famously demanded space for women at front of stage. The Riot Grrrl slogans; 'girls to the front' and 'boys, be cool for once in your lives' became emblematic of women's space-making and temporalities in the 1990s punk scene.

Situating female-identified bodies in arenas where they were forbidden and requesting male-identified bodies be removed from central spaces 'for once' highlights how integral spaces and times are to the construction of selfhood and belonging in a music scene. 'For once' women were able to literally see the band and engage with the performance without fear of being physically injured as a result of the masculine bodily performance in a mosh pit (Griffin 2012: 72). These seemingly isolated instances of women being included in the punk landscape became later reference points for those who

continue to be excluded in current subcultural communities, further justifying the claim that archives are of importance to the permanence of queer punk. Such a challenge to the master narrative of punk sees young women now, who may not have been born when Riot Grrrl was initiated, emblazon their vests with Spitboy or L7 patches, collect zines about the Riot Grrrl her-story, and loudly assert ‘girls to the front’ when their favourite band is playing. Such a line of argument is followed in the next chapter section which discusses the queer(ed) subject position as subversive and preconfigurative of social space. I find in my own research, and the literature reviewed, that a collective authorisation foregrounds the effectiveness of queer identities to disrupt heterogeneous space and remake it as possible for queer(ed) bodies

The Queer(ed) Subject Position

In writing about what was then called ‘homosexuality’ three decades ago, Foucault (1997: 138) described it as a ‘slantwise’ subject position that lays out ‘diagonal lines’ in the social fabric. In other words, it works against the grain of the heteronormative, but not in a right angle configuration. In principle, the contemporary queer subject position fractures the norm at oblique angles, producing anomalies. It can be argued that queer disrupts the lines of heteronormative gender, sex and sexuality simply through that which is either skewed or unreadable, so bodies become the core of creating affective atmospheres. In the same way performativity is used to describe the effect of performances, the concept of lines of orientation is intended to describe how sexuality itself can be considered a spatial formation. Here we could say that ‘orientations towards sexual objects affect other things we do, such that different orientations, different ways of directing one’s desires, means of inhabiting different worlds’ (Ahmed 2006: 68). The concept of inhabiting different worlds is important to the scope of this thesis project in that the navigation of selfhood through different realms or ‘worlds’ of queer and punk is explored. Respondents to the pilot study for this project often referred to their uncertainty in defining where their queer(ed) selves started and punk selves stopped (Sharp and Nilan 2015). This slippage between queer and punk creates the intersection of queer punx as an identity produced in particular spaces, in the broadest sense.

In Taylor’s (2012) article *Queerious youth*, young people are observed and interviewed during their participation in a queer youth music festival. Respondents discussed their attitudes and experiences of queerness and self-presentation. Interestingly, Taylor finds that the participants have varied knowledge of the term ‘queer’ and most are not comfortable with the term, preferring the labels of gay, lesbian, bisexual and so on. Taylor concludes that most young people do not have access to theoretical and political knowledge of the term queer unless they take part in university, community

or activist groups (Taylor 2012: 11). This finding is valuable, because for the project I interviewed young women and gender diverse people who identify as queer, but with differing educational backgrounds. Elsewhere, in Kemp's (2009) review of queer history, he explores how queer is a parallel ideology, running alongside gay and lesbian culture rather than opposing it (Kemp 2009: 11). Grasping how the process of deconstructing and reconstructing terminology is crucial to understanding theoretical and practical experiences of queerness among young people, particularly in punk scenes.

Queering punk spaces can be described as an embodied practice of subversion. Stone (2013), in a qualitative study of transgender inclusion within queer spaces, analyses Warner's (1993) theoretical model of 'the idealised queer' to better understand the meaning of queer space in relation to queer(ed) bodies. The idealised queer refers to the utopian notion that 'queers are resolutely non- binary, aware of multiple intersections of social injustice, and have a nuanced understanding of their own stigmatisation' (Stone 2013: 1648). That study hinged on the lack of inclusivity of trans and gender non-conforming people in purportedly queer but still 'sexed' spaces where physical sex markers were used to regulate bodily activity. One example was a binary bathroom system where bodies were policed on the basis of their outward presentation. From this work, the embedded heteronormative gendering of everyday social engagement is recognised as presenting a challenge for queer spaces, which seek to disrupt and breakdown binary expressions of gender, to create open or free space where gender signifiers are flexible (Stone 2013: 1654). Re-conceptualising gender as non-binary is intended to reduce enforced binary gender display in identity construction. Recognition of iconoclastic non-binary and non-conforming flexibilities of gender resignifies bodies as sites of resistance to dominant norms, much like the concept of women as subversive signifiers in traditionally masculine punk spaces. In this regard 'bodies are queer(ed) in these spaces through radical (re)thinkings, (re)drawings, (re)conceptualisations, (re)mappings' (Browne 2006: 88). It seems possible that the playfulness with gender observed among young queer women in punk signifies not only their understanding of social norms but their desire to disrupt homogenous gender performance, thus problematising how identity is constructed. In such transformations we glimpse the futurity of queer punk along the lines suggested by Stone (2013: 1652): 'identities could be flexible and bodies could have shifting signification. Bodies did not cease to matter, but they became resignified'. Turning briefly to the experiences of gender diverse people who identify as queer, it is evident that bodies matter a great deal in punk spaces. We know that transgender people face high levels of victimisation in everyday life (Namaste 2000; Lombardi et al. 2002; Hill and Willoughby 2005; Doan 2007). Therefore, there is a particular nuance to space-making for transpeople in that

embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986; Skeggs et al. 2004; Stryker 2006) is acquired through affective interactions which make transpeople hypervisible, particularly in heteronormative contexts. From trans hypervisibility comes the risk of being outed, victimised or oppressed in punk scenes. This was noted in the comments and lived experiences of gender diverse people in the project such as transwomen. They reported feeling fearful in the heteronormative gendered space punk as well as in everyday life.

In summary, it is argued that queer identities are locatable within, through, and around, the *authorised* map of punk spaces in the scene. I rely here on Halberstam's (2003) assertion that some spaces either explicitly or implicitly *authorise* the expression of queer, and also Portwood-Stacer's (2013) study of anarcho-punks who *mobilise* political power through solidarity. Certainly queer- designated spaces explicitly authorise the 'doing' of queer, yet queer can also be implicitly authorised in other spaces through a compatibly iconoclastic, yet ethical, discourse such as punk. Thus, queer punk authorisation is an endorsement of the *doing* of alternative identity, in line perhaps with the original principle of DIY. In the next chapter section, I briefly touch on literature which addresses age and the young people's perceived trajectories from 'youth' to 'adult'. The rationale for such inclusion is that the participants in this project indicated that their age is often used by others in the scene as a supposition of knowledge and commitment to punk; those who are most 'authentic' have been in the field of punk for the longest time or have been the most active. Furthermore, age is an important consideration to queer identities, as Taylor (2010) found.

Age and Queer Punx Trajectories

It can be argued that youth practice in punk still denotes a mandatory level of physical interaction where participants are tested by others in order to be authorised as authentic. These tests are often undertaken as questioning of knowledge about the history of punk, record collection size, musical ability and aesthetics. Therefore, age may play a positive role in the perception of authenticity, reducing the need for face-to-face interaction as assumptions prescribe a middle-aged punk to be 'true to the scene' simply through longevity. On the other hand, age may play a negative role in shaping assumptions of authenticity in punk. For example, in Goltz's (2008) investigation of the queer ageing process, young gay and lesbian men and women expressed the stigma attached to an old age lived outside familial heteronormativity. This sense of stigma signalled that young, queer people acknowledge their detachment from the usual rites of passage associated with getting older. Taylor's (2010) research on middle-aged queers participating in music activity confirms that a standard linear

progression of socially constructed life ideals does not mesh with queer time. Queer culture therefore can be understood as creating a fluidity of both time and space. This raises the question of what the future looks like for young queer people if it does not fit into normative social contribution (Goltz 2008: 565). However, at the same time it points to a different kind of future, where the rejection of heteronormative rites of passage signal fluidity of age and gender in authorised spaces.

The intertwined nature of space and time is exemplified in several recent studies concerning music activity and queerness (see Blush 2010; Ensminger 2010; Taylor 2012a; Griffin 2012; Halberstam 2013). For example, Taylor (2010) uses the theme of music activity to discuss the ways middle-aged queers view temporalities. She describes how participating in certain sectors of the Australian music scene contributes to the participants' feelings of a constant becoming as queer. An evolution of learning and redefining occurs, without the constraints of heteronormative practice and standard chronological linearity. By engaging with others who identify as queer within a time and space (such as at a gig or queer event), participants expressed their queerness as a kind of fountain of youth; a stage on which to play out an alternate lifestyle (Taylor 2010: 897). Skewing gender, sexuality and in turn identity, spaces which establish a queer landscape punctuate the ideology of queer as an identity without an essence. The very doing of queer reflects the idea that queer is without the intrinsically determined nature of heterosexuality with its fixed rites of passage. In the same way that queer can be authorised by and through queer-allocated space and time, space and time in general can be queer(ed). Breaking down existing gender confines and creating gaps within historical sexual constructs renders queer space not a thing, but a process of becoming and re-evaluation (Jagose 1995: 2).

When it comes to conducting research within the field of queer and post-queer studies, Levy and Johnson (2011) note that representations of identity can shift and change seamlessly. Therefore, someone who is in a heterosexual relationship may identify as queer for a number of reasons, including past experiences, present engagement with queer communities, or future perceptions of relationships (Levy and Johnson 2011: 135). This type of reframing of identity as fluid is critical to research into experiences of young, queer women and gender diverse people because it highlights how time/space can influence one's perception of the self. For instance, in work on post-queer identity politics, it is proposed that rather than move into a post-queer paradigm, new and yet unexplored paths of thought lie in considering contemporary trends in queerness and sexuality (Ruffolo 2009: 2). Again, Goltz's (2008) work on the queer ageing process can be considered here, since he argues queer theory itself has not aged sufficiently to describe how queerness is played out in

a lifetime. In summary, heteronormative temporalities of ageing and a sequential life course are challenged within the discourse of queer punx by the very genesis of its intersection. Both queer and punk present ‘youthful’ characteristics of a lived experience and so temporal trajectories become cyclical, while corporeal transitions become blurred.

Conclusion

With such a breadth of research spanning more than 50 years, punk has been a core topic in youth studies, cultural studies and sociological investigation. The masculinised histories of punk as written down in academic work, spun into records, printed in zines and hung on walls of venues are valuable contributions to archiving. However, as this chapter shows, re-tellings of historical ‘truths’ do more than simply make visible women, queers and the gender non-conforming. They frame new ways of thinking and new interpretations of the past, which impact punk’s progression into the future. As Muñoz (2009) points out in reference to queer, and Thomson (2004) points out in reference to punk, imagining the future is what drives the present and ultimately creates commitments of queer punx to not-yet-here worlds. Queer punx have developed technologies of the collective in fields which make continued membership a nexus of pleasure and emotional work; to stay in punk requires strategies of resistance not only against capitalist commodification but against patriarchal dominance. DIT, as an extension of DIY, manifests through collective authorisation whereby young queers are granted permission to explore and enact their own performative identities. The constitution of these non-heteronormative discourses is acknowledged as the way queer space is brought into being and doing.

Through the signifying practices of DIT, tattoos and the production of zines, for example, queer punks explore and concretise experiences of sexual and gender diversity, alongside political resistance to hetero/cis/homonormativity. When these methods intersect with digital modes of archiving, they produce another chapter in ‘the history of visual technology’s participation in the making of genealogies and intimacies’ (Freeman 2010: 21). Ultimately, these interactions between intimate, social, political, and digital realms of queer punk yield a diverse range of material and social outcomes, which my research project explores in detail in subsequent analytical chapters.

In summary, this literature review has identified gaps in research, which I address in this thesis. It is evident that queer and gender diverse people appear as spectacular, perhaps even fetishised, where they are mentioned in broad punk histories at all. They are sometimes pitied for being ‘invisible’, but they are actually hypervisible and must devise strategies to manage that. As ever, collective identity is

how marginalised groups ultimately band together to generate subcultural change. The queer women and gender diverse people who participated in this thesis project were found to enlist encoded practices of collective authorisation to claim territory in punk scenes.



Figure 5: Melbourne 4 post punk four piece playing at Girls Rock Philly, a not-for-profit community based program which aims to mentor young people wanting to enjoy making music in a safe space. Photo reproduced with permission 27 July 2017.

Chapter Four: Methodology

In this chapter I outline the perimeters of the research design and its rationale relevant to the aim of exploring the construction and meanings of queer identities for young women engaged with punk scenes in Australia and the UK. The methodology has been rigorously considered at beginning, middle and end stages of the research project. I understand research methodology to be an ongoing reflexive dialogue, even after the ‘writing up’ phase of the research. In this chapter I explain the selection of a semi-structured interview format, participant observation and ethnographic framework for data collection. Furthermore, I rationalise the choice of informant age range, and the geographical sites of the study. The scope of the study is outlined to trace an appropriate picture of the cohort and field. I found that an insider position to the research group, which I have reconceptualised through the term ‘insighter’ (Hodkinson 2005), afforded me rich possibilities which might have been unachievable for an outsider researcher. Yet the insider/‘insighter’ position requires ongoing reflexive boundary work to negotiate the complex meaning of being inside. These techniques have been documented widely by scholars across disciplines as beneficial for uncovering deeply embedded social formations, while also generating productive tensions between the researcher/ researched and the knowledges delivered or withheld.

Research Aims

This project has four research aims:

1. To explore the construction and meanings of queer identities for young women engaged with punk subculture in Australia and the UK.
2. To expand on previous research to encompass creative self-making of punx women; the use of art, community groups, self-publishing as well as music and music activity in navigating queer identities.

3. To analyse whether groups of young women from urban, regional and metropolitan locations have similar or different experiences in their queer punx narratives and whether these narratives broaden the histories of punk.
4. To discuss the relationship that young, queer women have with queer sexuality and creating selfhood in terms of what it means to be queer punx and how representations are produced authentically and visibly.

In total, 49 young queer women and gender diverse people were interviewed, and over 150 hours of participant observation was recorded in field notes made before, during and after gigs and parties. Several informants are named as key informants throughout the thesis because they contributed to the data collection process on multiple occasions. A virtual ethnography of relevant online sites, blogs and discussions was included to supplement the face-to-face data.

Research Methodology and Design

With the aims stated above, the research design required extensive consideration of my proximity to queer punks, as a queer punk myself. I decided to employ a reflexive approach to methodological design from the outset. This meant that at each point in the decision-making processes, my insider/insighter knowledge was considered in tandem with my skills as a researcher. Ultimately, these seemingly dichotomous capacities implicitly inform each other in that, if the research cannot be disentangled between subject/object, it must then be fore-fronted as a methodological and epistemological tool (Heckert 2010). That reflexive standpoint was employed throughout the research design.

The accounts used in the subsequent chapters were obtained throughout an 18-month period of intensive data collection in Australia and the UK. Please see Appendix 1 for a list of informants. The scene itself was not limited to any one form of punk, rather a bricolage of sonics and genres were acknowledged to make up punk as a scene. This is discussed at length in Chapter Five. In total, 49 semi-structured interviews were conducted with informants aged between 20 and 30, between January 2015 and July 2016. The elongated data collection process was due to the fact that participant observation was an extension of my social life. Informants were recruited using a 'snowballing' approach via online social media, word of mouth and interaction within local art and

music scenes in Newcastle and Melbourne in Australia, and Brighton in the UK. Collecting data in these three settings broadened the scope of my research by allowing comparison of music scenes at regional, national and international levels. The similarities and differences of larger and more urban cities designated live music and art spaces are explored in later chapters, which look at queer(ed) space-making at gigs.

A virtual ethnography was included within the thesis to better represent the technological connectedness of queer punk communities. The virtual ethnography makes use of social media outlets such as blogs, Facebook, and Instagram to better understand how young, queer punk women and gender diverse people creatively produce and engage with a global punk community. These online resources were observed anonymously unless specifically retold to me by an informant and any data collected in that manner that is attributed to someone has been assigned a pseudonym.

As indicated previously, online social media, word of mouth and interaction within local art and music scenes was used to find young queer women who might be interested in the study. They were invited to email, text message or phone the researcher to arrange an interview. All informants were provided with consent forms and participant information statements prior to the interview.

Interview Participants

The main criterion for selecting and recruiting interview participants was that they were young queer women in punk. However, the term ‘women’ was not intended to exclude woman-identified persons who wanted to participate, or others. In the end, while most informants were young, queer, cisgender women, some did not match that category of person. Those participants who identified as non-binary or gender diverse were advised that the pronouns used to discuss their data matched the way they wanted to be represented. Self-nomination as trans, non-binary or gender diverse was confirmed with me prior to their consent being obtained. All informants are protected by pseudonyms. A set age range of 20 to 30 was established to align with a youth cross-section and to address the gaps in literature highlighted in Chapter Two and Three. Participants were recruited online or through networks (Leonard 1998; Harris 2003) such as Riot Grrrl communities, bands, queer and punk spaces.

Open-ended questions were developed to guide the interview process and approved for use by the Human Research Ethics Committee (as above). However, in practice interviews were mostly informal, held in pubs, cafes, homes and parks, so they often waned and wandered depending on what the informant wanted to talk about at that time. In some instances, I had met or seen an informant the night before at a gig, or at dinner, in the street or talked to them via social media and so, conversation frequently pre-dated the actual recording of the interview. Such an approach required extensive reflexivity and biographical considerations from myself, but allowed for a rich and complex dataset to develop. As a note, the interview questions listed were changed if the informant did not identify as a woman, in which case I replaced ‘woman’ with ‘gender diverse person’.

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your experiences as a queer woman in a punk subculture? For example, at gigs, events or in non-music activity like workshops or discussions with others. How about online?
2. What are your main activities in the punk scene?
3. Do you feel that ‘queerness’ is an important part of who you are and how you have constructed your identity? Why?
4. What does creative identity-making mean to you in terms of your experience as a queer identified woman within the punk subculture? How important is punk music itself in this process?
5. How important are your friends and contacts in the punk scene?

Interview Structure

As explained above, interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format using the interview questions as points of reference for discussion. That interview format provides a space where reflection can take place. Anecdotal evidence of the self being constructed can be expanded on and analysed in depth. To achieve that kind of interview data, it is necessary to talk with the informant in

a manner that represents how a queer identity is constructed in punk, such as introspective retellings and personal lived experiences (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 73). Semi-structured interviews offer elasticity; they can bend and move as the informant and the researcher engage in discussion (Kothari 2004: 98). Importantly, informants are able to provide examples of various situational experiences to create a depth of data that would not have been possible through other methodological approaches.

Observational techniques were also employed. These were field notes recorded at music and arts events, as well as in everyday engagement with queer punx. Names were not included unless a person had already given consent as an interviewee for a pseudonym to be used. Observing interactions within punk spaces provided valuable insight into the ways young women and gender diverse people symbolise queerness, how they are received by others and the *affect* of their participation. All observational data collected was recorded non-intrusively in written notes afterwards. These field notes were used to highlight the subversive enactment of queer(ed) identities. I made allowances for participant observation to happen at any punk gig I attended; up to 150 hours over the course of the research period. Interpretive themes were established from the transcripts of interviews. Comparisons were drawn based on the incidence and prevalence of a particular feeling or experience. Narratives were analysed through thematic prevalence. That analysis concentrated on personal re-tellings and linkages between experiences of informants in order to highlight the self-defined nature of a queer(ed) lived experience as a punk.

Memory Aids and Reflexive Journals

Alongside the interviews and participant observation field notes, I kept my own reflexive journal, which served a twofold purpose. Firstly, journal-writing illuminated my entanglement in the processes of data collection, and allowed me to see how my auto-ethnographic insights could contribute to the research topic (Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti 2016), particularly given my proximity as an insider/insighter researcher (Breen 2007; Tang 2007). Secondly, by understanding the interviews as text, self-reflection allowed me to analyse the data hermeneutically, openly considering the role that lived experience plays in how the text is interpreted and documented (Rennie 2012). In that sense, I took the epistemological approach of *hermeneutic realism*; which Yanchar (2015: 107) describes as a way of seeing truth as ‘unfolding, multifaceted, and inexhaustible’, rather than monolithic and requiring supposedly objective documentation. Hall (2009) defines this process as the *queer hermeneutic cycle*, where readers/researchers shift between being significantly transformed by

the text, and transforming the text with their particular perspectives. As such, reflexive observations are included in this thesis alongside interview excerpts.

Dealing with over 150 hours of participant observation entangled with 15 years of my own memories in queer punk required the use of memory aids. This meant that I collected flyers, posters, records, zines and other ephemera which I date-stamped and collated alongside entries in my reflexive journals. Furthermore, I used Facebook to record shows that I attended. By nominating 'attending' via an event post, these were saved as a digital memory aid, which allowed me to re-visit a particular time or venue. The digitisation of what 20 years ago would have been a temporary poster on a telegraph pole, provided a kind of reflective consistency. I could rely on these event notifications for details of the shows themselves, and also for the public conversations that happened within them.



Figure 6: Poster for 2016 Such Is Life festival, a DIY punk fest held annually over three days in regional Victoria (no longer running as at 2017).

Insider/Insighter

In this chapter section, I explore some of the affordances of an insider position in terms of my relationality to the group of research informants. Such a position affords much potential to expand on the nuances of conversations and interactions, apply historical knowledge to temporal circumstances, and utilise the possibilities of a dynamic research population. However, these affordances and possibilities are not without limitations, even compromises. Here I establish the boundaries of my research project. By boundaries, I mean the externally- and self-imposed rules of informant relationships that have constrained some of my data collection practices.

It must be emphasised that I had immediate access to queer women in punk because I am a member of that same scene. I have pre-existing relationships with queers in punk, some of which have been intimate, and even, at times, uneasy. Such considerations are implicitly epistemological when the construction of knowledge is one of lived experience; my own knowledge and my informants' knowledges, and their interlockings or non-interlockings (Massey 1999a). Using the work of Bennett (2002), Hodkinson (2005) and Taylor (2011), I discuss the meaning of insidership within a queer punk context. Being an insider is not a static position. It is one of relationality and mobility, ever-shifting across place, space and time. Because I am an insider and known to some participants, there was sometimes friction in relationships with informants in the context of collecting and analysing narratives. This points to the need to look at the limitations that inhere in an 'insighter' position, how this (re)constructs and distorts knowledge (Sullivan 2003), and how boundary work can challenge knowledge distortion.

Considering my role as researcher/friend/fan/audience of punk within the data collection context, from a methodological perspective there are a number of epistemological challenges. These include the immediate practical negotiation of initial subjective proximity, and appropriately managing continuing subjectivities as they were maintained and emerged throughout the project. That includes the effects of lived experience; personal bias and histories, relationships and understandings of bodies encountered in space; and the relationships I developed with participants. These were particularly important considerations for the data interpretation and write-up stages of the project.

Close proximity to the research context from the outset provided me with a privileged understanding of the spaces and communities that are the objects of my study, and ready access to observe and recruit willing informants. The queer punk women were people who, aware of my 'insider'

positionality, were perhaps more inclined to participate, share significant personal responses, and thus provide richer qualitative detail. Yet Hodkinson (2002, 2005), when considering the role of the researcher in studies on youth culture, warns that the advantages afforded by insider positionality should be balanced through a cautious and reflexive approach. Certainly, this 'insighter' position brings with it complex ethical challenges, and requires diligent management of subjectivity/objectivity. For example, the informants' lived experiences and their meanings unquestionably shape their partiality towards certain bands, venues and people, and therefore needed reflexive questioning, especially if I did not share their views or in some cases, knew them very well indeed.

For example, I often asked: How do these people make me feel? Do I know these people and if so, do I have mutual friends? Would I not want to include them in the research because of a shared history? Those reflexive questions underscore (re)negotiation of my epistemological orientation towards the informants. Likewise, the transformative effect of engagement with these punk spaces, including the creation of new understandings of my own body and identity, undoubtedly influenced understandings of meanings drawn from discourse analysis of data. It was only through a careful and continuous process of reflexivity that I could reflect on these subjectivities, minimise knowledge distortion, and respond to these challenges ethically. In retrospect, my experiences of insider research on queer punk emphasised the need for rigorous and ongoing reflexive consideration of relational orientation and choice of research methodology; since data collection was in a constant state of unfolding rather than a fixed and finite task. The concept of relationality is useful for acknowledging that when it comes to women and gender diverse people, queer punx are not a homogenous group, nor are punks more broadly. The nuances of queer punk identities are precisely what makes them queer(ed), and so the interpretive approach should reflect those dissimilarities.

The position of insider researcher is a contested domain in the social sciences and is usually debated through a consideration of reflexivity and potential bias (Bennett 2002; Sullivan 2003; Hodkinson 2005; Taylor 2011; Robards 2013). In relation to researcher position, I was not always an insider (for example in Brighton), but I can never be totally outside because I know the punk scene so well as a member. I am sometimes stuck between worlds of knowing because I have not organised a show in years, or ever been in a band, but I have snuck a peek over the guardrail or been backstage after the band played, who might be my friends, housemates or partners. In this way, I am sometimes-insider/absolute insider, but always 'insighter' (Hodkinson 2005). I have relationships with informants, both

harmonious and contentious, but for the most part these relationships are based in historical understandings of context. As an insider, I have known and do know some of the informants. I knew them for perhaps decades before I started my PhD study, and I will continue to know them well into the future. They are my friends now, and hopefully tomorrow, and so I am an intimate insider (Taylor 2011). Knowledge production has been written about extensively in feminist ethnographies, particularly concerning emotional connections of researchers to their fields (see Edwards and Ribbens, 1998; Sullivan 2003; Miller et al. 2012; Jaggar 2015). Taylor (2011: 5) notes, 'knowing someone, especially in a very close or intimate manner, has a significant effect on one's perception of a person and the ways in which you relate to this person'. Like Hodkinson (2005), Taylor argues that insider research can afford rich and complex interpretive analysis but that interpretation should always be approached with caution (2011: 5). It seems best then, that I outline the ways that caution was exercised in this research.

When I began thinking about researching and writing about the punk scene and the queer women who operate within it, I was worried. The scene was complex and dynamic and I did not want to find prejudice or discriminatory practices in my friendship groups (even though I had seen them enacted in the past), and most of all, I absolutely did not want to write them down. What if my friends got hurt, or what if I did? So, I began examining the boundaries of my relationships with people and places. Certain punk spaces were not comfortable to me, mainly because of embodied histories that were tangled up within them. But, for my snapshot of queer punx to be as knowledgeable as possible, I needed to become a researcher in these spaces, to cross borders and make 'queer methodological choices' (Heckert 2010: 7). My discomfort needed to be documented, and in turn, assessed within my interpretation of what occurs in these places. In this way, I enact a kind of embodied epistemology which extends beyond just insidership, it leans into the body as 'an instrument of research' (Longhurst, Ho and Johnston 2008), and specifically of method. Crang (2003: 499) questions why the researcher is thought of as a 'ghostly absence' in their documentation and postulates that this muteness must have an impact on how one 'thinks through qualitative research practice'. I also understand that muteness of the body in research is inherently gendered. The marginalisation of emotion and bodily speech as method have been:

Part of a gender politics of research in which detachment, objectivity and rationality have been valued and implicitly masculinised, while engagement, subjectivity, passion and desire have been devalued, and frequently feminised (Anderson and Smith 2001: 7).

Nash and Bain (2007) make note of their bodily engagement in researching female, queer bathhouses in Toronto, Canada, explaining how they made conscious choices regarding their aesthetic, their proximity to participation (i.e. were they going to watch from the back of the room, or be up front and centre?) and how their bodies reacted to certain events. I draw on Nash and Bain, among others such as Heckert (2010) and Taylor (2011), to talk back to entrenched meaning-making and subjectivity, to untangle discomfort and insecurity and to contextualise boundary work as part of my research practice.

Having knowledge of informants that pre-dates the research study has resulted in some perhaps unconventional affordances for my research practice. Interviews were often spontaneous and elongated, observation could (and often did) turn into social engagement, and reflections from those who participated were subject to their contemplation and sometimes change. For example, several times after talking with a friend in interview, that informant contacted me via text message to re-establish their interpretation of my question, or to add an anecdote that they had only just thought of. Informants often used phrases like ‘you know what I mean’ as statements, rather than questions, because they knew that I did know what they meant. Shared experiences of queerness in punk scenes, and witnessing each other operate in these spaces foretold the need for detailed explanation. On the other hand, the lack of detail they gave sometimes presented an issue in that I was inclined to fill in the gaps with my own experiences. In that case, I would either check with them that I was reading their knowledge as their own truth (not mine), or make an assessment about whether that topic made them relive certain, possibly uncomfortable, events. This has something to say about the ambiguity of the insider:

Regular and intimate contact not only results in more opportunities to gather data, but it also increases one’s level of perception in relation to body language and non-verbal communication; sensitive or covert topics; detecting false-truths; emotive behaviour; the degrees of affect that something may have won someone; logics of taste and rationality; an informant’s self image and their performative attempts at displaying this; and their intended meaning which may sometimes be obscured by incongruous or abstruse language, but is able to be referentially decoded through the researchers’ intimate understanding of past events and/ or their knowledge of the informant’s personal history (Taylor 2011: 11).

What is perhaps under-researched in social sciences is the willingness of informants to participate in projects in which they themselves feel personally invested. The queer punx who took part in this doctoral project expressed their desire for the project to ‘be a thing’, as one of them put it. They seemed to want it to happen. Unanimously, they validated my project and offered their stories generously because they saw some benefit in its documentation. Some had studied gender in formal institutions, others had critiqued punk for its unrelenting patriarchy and wanted to take part in making that known. But also, they invested their time in the project because they knew me and felt personally attached to my success as a researcher and academic. While the validation of those informants was welcomed, it poses a specific ethical and methodological challenge: were they omitting some stories and re-telling others because they assumed my personal success relied on certain *valuable* narratives?

I engaged some boundary work in interview scenarios where I felt informants were making conscious efforts to stylise their social performances or one-on-one interactions to suit the account they perceived would be ‘helpful’ to my research. It was my insider/insighter positionality that allowed me to; Firstly, notice shifting accounts of performances; and secondly, to negotiate these with the informants if they wanted to modify those accounts. I found it useful to establish that their ‘help’ was subjective and collection of their narratives was about generating various knowledges, not absolute truth. I reflected on ‘methodological anarchism’, and the idea that ‘I do not claim the authority to tell the truths of the lives of these individuals. Rather than representing lives, I am representing the stories that have been presented to me’ (Heckert 2010: 19). By thinking of narratives and observations as presentations, I drew on pragmatic tools of reflexivity to avoid assumptions. For example, I shared transcriptions and audio files with informants. I engaged with them about the research progress via digital and physical platforms, such as Facebook groups and music events. I offered my interpretations of their stories as notes, and I continued relationships with them beyond the research moment. As Taylor (2011: 17) points out, there are times when transparency and diplomacy are key to analytic processes, and ‘we must equally value and rely upon our strength of character, goodwill, our gut instincts and emotional intelligence as we do on our formal training’ in research. This chapter now moves on to discuss insider reflexivity in greater detail.

Reflexivity

As discussed previously, I use insider methods as a framework for reflexive and biographical considerations, not only of narratives but of the longevity of research and the possibilities of its dynamic future meanings. Aspects of reflexivity and knowledge production have been discussed in depth in feminist standpoint theories (Harding, 1993; Hartsock, 1983), social psychology (Mruck and Breuer, 2003; Kuehner, et al. 2016; Langer, 2009; Muckel, 1996), and sociology (May, 2002). Looking back to Taylor's (2011: 17) suggestion to use 'gut instincts', and Hodkinson's (2005) assertion of 'insighter' knowledge, I make reference to the 'biographical reflection schema' of Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti (2016) as well as Yanchar's (2015) concept of hermeneutic realism.

Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti (2016) note the capability of a biographical reflection schema to act as a methodological tool through which a researcher can critically reflect on their personal entanglements with the field, and the possible influence of those relations on data interpretation. I found that conducting such a reflective exercise was crucial; it served as a methodological compass through which to locate dynamic researcher/audience/fan/friend roles in terms of the insider/outsider standpoint. Reflective consideration of my research positionality bolstered the rigour of both data collection and analysis. That reflexive process continued through to the final authoring of the study and presentation of findings. It was experienced as a constant and shifting knowing and unknowing.

Extending from the notion of reflexivity is what Jones (2010) refers to as 'intersectional reflexivity', which I argue is particularly critical to apply when researching queer contexts and undertaking research studies involving queer participants. Jones notes that,

Engaging in intersectional reflexivity requires one to acknowledge one's intersecting identities, both marginalised and privileged, and then employ self-reflexivity, which moves one beyond self-reflection to the often uncomfortable level of self-implication (2010: 122).

Intersectional reflexivity requires consideration more deeply of personal experiences, perspectives, entanglements and privilege, and how these may influence the study and scholarly outputs. For example, this project makes extensive use of the scholarship of queer, trans and non-binary authors. The use of work by researchers and theorists who identify as queer, trans and non-binary is personal and political. As part of the broader LBGTIQ political agenda, the voices of queers should be

prioritised in queer writing because it is their stories that become the axis to sharing narratives. To research queer visibility and representation without privileging the work of queer authors and writers would be at odds with that broader political agenda for change. Yet at the same time, in a practical sense, reflexivity must be undertaken as a routine exercise, with the researcher addressing the accounts made available through a biographical reflection scheme using a first-person approach, and through constructing written responses such as field notes or a reflective journal. In that regard, I propose the importance of collectively discussing reflexive responses with peers and colleagues, so that diverse perspectives and feedback become available. I outline below the ‘before’ stages of reflexivity for this project using a framework of feminist objectivity, a perspective that matches my own position as a feminist.

Objectivity: The Researcher as an Instrument

As highlighted above, the process of reflexivity is one in constant flux. It did not simply come into being at the formal start of the active phase of the project. Rather, reflexivity was acknowledged to require a fore-fronted negotiation of subject/object in the proposal stage. Knowledge production processes and knowledge claims should be seen as contextualised and situated,

Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subjects and objects. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see (Haraway 1988: 583).

Feminist objectivity thus is an attempt to reformulate a new concept of research objectivity that does not, like a traditional notion of objectivity, exclude the role of the researcher’s experiences, biases, emotions, values, and so forth, in a research process but sees them as an integral part of knowledge claims. If we look now at the phenomenological tradition of biographical research, it can be argued that questions of subjectivity, reflexivity, and the explication of personal involvement with the research topic (Langer 2009) have seldom been made explicitly visible.

To start from my own position, feminism, visibility, sociocultural expectations of appearance, queerness and self-making have been intricate themes throughout my teenage and adult life. As a queer, ciswoman committed to intersectional feminism, it has been necessary for me to negotiate the problematic terrain between my feminist principles, and my long and arduous struggle with

marginalisation and privilege. Like many queer women, in the course of deepening my own understandings of self, and through my own self-making, I have sought reflections of myself and commonality with others within subcultural spaces and digital media where we acknowledge our routine marginalisation in punk. However, I also understand myself to hold privilege, particularly as a white ciswoman and it was necessary for me to address this privilege before I began the formal design of this study. Hendrix offers an important consideration to be made about researching from a position of privilege,

White scholars are not often in surroundings that place them in the role of minority or in circumstances that require exploring their Whiteness when conducting research with white participants (Hendrix 2005: 330).

Through this quote and others like it, I have expanded on my own understanding of privilege to include people with disabilities, people of colour (PoC), trans, and gender diverse people. Exploring my own implicit status and standing within social groups was paramount to reflexive acknowledgement of the ability I hold to move through these spaces. Ultimately, I considered whether it was appropriate for me to conduct this research and whether my contribution risked misrepresenting or erasing the experiences of those groups where I am not, and can never be, an insider. Yet such considerations create a productive tension. Conquergood (1991) reminds us that emotional risks may come with engaged research, and Behar (1996) says research that does not break your heart, is not worth doing (see also Jones 2010). After careful thought, and requesting critical feedback from queer punx in particularly marginalised settings, I was able to implement a series of reflexive processes to better frame the project in ways that did not implicitly elevate my own privilege. The major tools to achieve this were consulting with key informants throughout the project and maintaining the personal research journal.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

This study became a qualitative exploration of the meanings of queer among young, queer women and gender diverse people in Newcastle, Melbourne, Brighton (explained in more detail in the next chapter). As indicated previously, this doctoral project has benefited from a pilot study completed in 2013 during an honours program. That earlier study provided thematic substance for further research

of much wider scope. The findings (see Sharp and Nilan 2015) also suggested the framing of interview questions for this doctoral study.

As indicated above, data collection for the doctoral project was conducted through interviews, participant observation and a virtual ethnography. The resulting data was analysed through identifying thematic prevalence of collective experiences. Such an approach to data analysis meant both the objective and subjective nature of the content was reported (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 344). As the production and reproduction of knowledge through dialogue and social interaction is at the heart of this study of the construction of queer identity, analysis of data concentrated on personal narratives and linkages between experiences of informants to support the overall perspective of the research and highlight the self-defined nature of a queer(ed) lived experience (Carter and Little 2007: 1326) in punk scenes.



Figure 7: Coffee date with friends turns into jam session. Photo by Alicia Slay. Reproduced with permission 27 July 2017.

Limitations and Homogenisation

With the research design hinging on lived experiences of young queer women and gender diverse people, some social groups in punk have inevitably been omitted from this account. For example, the analysis does not consider the social, economic or political class stratification that exists in punk scenes. Informants did not describe their economic position as impacting on their experience of doing queer punk, and they were not invited to do so. Yet economic class position does affect the consumption and inclusion practices of queer punks. For example, some shows were named as too expensive to attend, while other shows were made available to ticketing agencies, which meant that the crowd constituted only those who had access to the resources required to attend. However, as described in a later chapter, queer punx actively renegotiate class boundaries in their gigs by offering 'pay what you can' door charges. Yet such examples, while definitely having connections to class, were discussed in terms of marginalising tactics which directly impact in a negative way on queer punx identities, rather than emphasising class differences. The emphasis was on the gendered experiences and practices of informants, so class did not play a primary role in their accounts.

Another important limitation in this project is that I make reference to cismen as if they were a homogenous group. As a researcher, and an insider, I acknowledge that cismen are not a homogenous group. The identity curation of cismen in punk appears to be as complex as ciswomen in that marginalisation of sexuality, bodily presentation and authenticity are not inherently attributable to all cisgender people. Cismen are also queer, they are people of colour, they are people with disabilities. They can be subordinated and marginalised in specifically gendered ways in the punk scene. As a ciswoman who participates in punk spaces, I have been able to gain first-hand knowledge of the work that some cismen do to create(r) spaces for queer women and gender diverse people. However, from an insider and researcher perspective, those cismen are in the minority. When I began designing this research, I worried that my pre-conceived relationships with cismen in punk would colour the narratives of informants. Because of this, I made active attempts to remove the term 'men' from interview questions to allow choice in the stories research participants shared with me. In participant observation, I used biographical reflection schemes to reflexively deconstruct the way my experiences impacted on how I saw cismen and their bodily speech in punk spaces. After finalising the interview process, it became clear that queer punk women and gender diverse people themselves described cismen in homogenous terms. Only in very few instances were cismen spoken of as a diverse group, and this is reflected both in the analysis and the way I interpret the data. To

diversify a group who are not spoken of in these terms would move outside the scope of this thesis. However, it has been named as a potential site of research for future projects, specifically how cismen respond to queer and gendered diversification in punk settings.

Lastly, the representation of transmen in this research is limited because, while I know that transmen participate in queer punk scenes - I have friends and acquaintances who identify as transmen in punk, as well as performers and organisers – this group did not match the aims of the project, so no transmen participated. Research into the lived experiences of transmen in punk would be a valuable contribution to the field of youth subcultural participation in future and is mentioned further in Chapter Ten.

Conclusion

This chapter has explained in detail the aims and design of the project, as well as foregrounding the epistemological, theoretical and methodological tools used to frame the analysis undertaken. The positive and negative aspects of my insider research position have been extensively explained. The chapters from this point of the thesis move into data analysis. They outline how young women and gender diverse people, as queer punx, piece together identities, either as individual or collective formations. As this chapter has suggested, I am one of these queer women and my own framing of identity has been influenced and impacted by the experiences that I have lived.

Chapter Five: Setting the Scene

The data analysis chapters of this thesis begin by providing a snapshot of how punk appeared at the time the data was collected. This snapshot includes arrangements of venues, sonics, ‘doing’ queer punx, and intersectional marginalisation. Layered within are historical and sociocultural negotiations for why and when queer resistance to homosocial norms appears within punk. Drawing on existing literature and theoretical nuances documenting queer retaliation to normalisation, I forefront how this resistance plays out; its overt and covert praxis, and its usefulness in creating space and self. More cogently, the utility of queer resistance is thought of as generalisable beyond just a queer audience. Resisting the male gaze fractures overarching and taken-for-granted power structures in punk scenes and in wider social activity, and in these metaphorical fractures wider communities of marginalised groups claim territory. These claims then become more commonplace as resistance is normalised. For example, heterosexual women who participate in punk scenes often ally with queer punx initiatives to broaden the scope of resistance, and vice versa. I position groups who are viewed as marginalised in punk discourses as much more complex than simply the put-upon victims of punk histories. In this chapter, I pay homage to music’s gendered codes of time and space in order to build a platform for queerness and later, intersectionality, in punk arenas. In parts, the stories told by informants sketch out how cismen engage with femaleness in the broadest sense. However, these narratives are being told from the position of those who identify as queer and/or gender non- conforming.

To adequately sketch out the contemporary formations of punk, and to begin the process of unpacking how queers fit - or do not fit - into the picture, I have included details of venues, audiences, sonics and genres. If such detail tells us anything, it is that the complexity of punk and queer participation in the scene is dynamic and dependent on historical and cultural affects. Punk has a particular atmosphere of *affect* (Ahmed 2006). The analysis in this chapter considers the depth and breadth of ‘punk participation’, while simultaneously untangling some of the specificities that cross- pollinate (Straw 1984) genres, sonics and venues. Addressing the aims of the thesis, the focus is on the positionality of queers as audience members, performers and technical assistants.

Queer(ed) bodies exist in a punk space that is both liminal and constant. These bodies and embodiments contribute to identity curation as previously defined, and in turn, to punk space-

making. That which is curated in punk space and time leaks into ‘everydayness’ (Muñoz 1999). This is highlighted below in accounts by informants Katy, Nat and Maggie who understand themselves to ‘do’ a punk ethos, even when engaging in social spheres outside of punk. If the personal is political, queer punx are central to reconfiguring patriarchal norms embedded in (sub)cultural discourse and in turn, sociocultural discourse. As Nestle (2011: 11) explains in her account of the butch-femme experience over time, ‘time has shifted not just the contours of my body, but the streets I walk, the skies I see’. Keeping Nestle’s ‘queer’ insight in mind, and using De Nora’s (2000) conceptualisation of transformations in and through music, this chapter reveals modes of queer punk identity while addressing the everydayness of queer punx. In this way, the subversive construction of selfhood for women and gender diverse people in punk can help explain why they are easily erased from dominant punk histories.

I have set this chapter out to firstly address venues, including their aesthetic and geographical location. Addressing venues as containers for affective atmospheres, as well as technologies of memory, anchors the accounts from informants. Good things, bad things, some things and no things happen in these places, which are then made symbolic for membership, resistance or avoidance. I then move on to explain how embodiments - queer and otherwise - fill (or do not fill) these places; where transformative moments can facilitate identity curation, but also generate internal social hierarchies. Moreover, I address some of the rationale that research informants gave for why they may simply avoid a particular venue or place. Lastly, I consider the affects of bodies coming together in punk space, as (un)known collectives or as oppositional standpoints.

Venues

Across the three main field sites of this research project, gig venues show consistency in their type, locality and accessibility. They are mostly inner urban pubs or bars. Shows are held in either the main bar or in a band room away from regular patrons to muffle the sound of the band. Segregation of patronage is typically seen where a venue was a bar or pub, perhaps without the reputation of being ‘alternative’, yet can provide the space required for a punk gig. These types of venues tend to provide space for any genre of music and are not specifically designed as alternative music spaces. For example, a music venue or bar which is known as alternative may display tour posters and other ephemera specific to punk or alternative bands.

Newcastle

In Newcastle, as the smaller, regional site, only all-ages gigs (those made accessible to youth under 18 where no alcohol is accessible on the premises) are held in venues other than pubs and clubs. These sites are community halls, shops and art spaces. With Newcastle facing recent changes to infrastructure, such as the closing down of the main rail line into the city and privatisation of community art spaces, many venues previously identified in history as queer or alternative bars have been re-invented to cater to a burgeoning middle-class patronage, with no live music. Recently implemented lockout legislation in the CBD and inner suburbs of Newcastle has meant that after 1 am, patrons who are not inside a venue are unable to gain entry.⁴ As a result, punk gigs, which notoriously run on 'punk time' (generally 45 minutes later than billed), become sites of desperation just to be able to end a night out. Given that most venues in Newcastle are not specifically 'for' punks, the general public will siphon into pubs holding gigs after midnight to avoid going home early, or having to wait for the next bus. Misunderstandings and disengagement between different social groups can, and occasionally do, turn into late night brawls between young people, which further label Newcastle youth as deviant and untrustworthy in media reports and political speeches.⁵

As a result, Newcastle youth, queers and punks have improvised in their organisation of events. A few of the city's working class pubs have been transformed into 'LGBTIQA' (the acronym that venue managers have appropriated to highlight inclusivity of queer people) and punk friendly spaces, offering an attempt at 'safe(r) spaces' policies and progressive ethics when organising and facilitating gigs. For example, some gig organisers are now known to take into consideration the representation of women on a show bill and to provide security staff with queer-appropriate procedural knowledge. Structurally, some venues have installed unisex bathrooms to combat current logistical and cultural issues of gender presentation and bathroom codification. However, these establishments are rare in Newcastle.

⁴ Harris, M. 2015. Hamilton lockouts to stay. Newcastle Herald. Viewed 24 June 2017 <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/114758/hamilton-lockouts-to-stay/>

⁵ ABC. 2012. Newcastle venues remain most violent. ABC News. Viewed 24 June 2017 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-11-28/newcastle-venues-remain-most-violent/4397344>



Figure 8: A backyard punk show in Newcastle, April 2016.

Melbourne

In Melbourne, where underground music has been a flourishing scene over many decades, venues and events are more progressive towards queer patrons.⁶ Punk or alternative bars are found mostly in the inner-suburbs of Melbourne. Given some crossover between traditional rock and metal venues, punk events are held exclusively just outside the Melbourne CBD, with a heavy distribution in the inner northern and western suburbs. Such pubs (and to a much lesser extent, all ages venues) offer a diverse range of musicological terrains, all with a focus towards indie, punk, folk, electronic, hardcore and post-punk sounds. While the venues are smaller, darker and open later, the politics of queer identities still exist. During fieldwork, several informants mentioned the problematic nature of white feminism⁷ and queer politics within ally communities. In Melbourne, women playing at shows and attending events is not an uncommon experience. In fact, many women performers express their disdain at being tokenised, preferring their gender label to be removed from promotion of their performance all

⁶ The Music. 2017. Melbourne Stamps Itself As Australia's Music Capital By Hosting Major Global Event. Viewed 24 June 2017. <http://themusic.com.au/news/all/2017/05/03/melbourne-stamps-itself-as-australias-music-capital-by-hosting-major-global-event/>

⁷ A form of feminism in which white women (generally heterosexual, middle-class and able-bodied) are give the greatest majority of power. In turn, white feminism fails to take into account intersections of class, race, ethnicity and ability.

together. While this is not a consistent thread of argument, it was mentioned often enough to merit further discussion below.

A notable difference between Melbourne and Newcastle venues is the lack of poker machines in Melbourne in contrast to Newcastle venues. Melbourne music venues in inner city suburbs cater specifically for live performances and social gatherings and therefore rely on revenue raised from attendance and alcohol sales. The organisation of space in these venues hinges on the assumption of an audience for live music. The beer gardens are smaller and furniture is permanent, unlike space arrangements in Newcastle venues. There are a few venues that serve food, and some larger pubs feature vegan menus. Everything in these venues points towards the stage with double doors to the beer garden and a segregation between the bar and the band room, which also affords good acoustics and sound distribution. The architecture of space in these Melbourne venues communicates a certain principle to patrons: ‘there will be a band here later, they will be loud, and you can stay and watch or leave’. In fact, without a band playing, most of these spaces would be largely inhospitable for general socialising. This is often used to explain why the Melbourne punk scene works in the way it does. As Ren points out ‘you either get it, or there are a thousand other places you can go’. Lastly, the inner suburbs of Melbourne house a number of record labels and distributors, record stores and vintage music shops. In this way, there is an accessibility to music and music activity that does not appear in the same concentration within other sites, when compared to Melbourne.



Figure 9: Pink Tiles play a show in The Tote (Melbourne) band room, August 2015.

Brighton

After spending some time exploring the punk scene and landscape in Brighton in the United Kingdom, several similarities were identified between this site, and Newcastle and Melbourne. Brighton is coastal, regional but metropolitan, touristy but leisurely, quiet but busy. These comparisons of the general social terrain are beyond the scope of this research, yet they are important to note here because they contextualise the subsequent sections of discussion. Venues in Brighton are larger in scale and perhaps more middle-class in comparison to Melbourne venues. This was deduced from the minimalist aesthetics of venues, their drink pricing, and usually the dining area being set apart from live music spaces, so that both could operate simultaneously. However, Brighton venues appear to have a varied mix of clientele, which is similar to Newcastle. The segregation of patrons was evident; those who are there for the show generally looked for arrows on the walls or doors that read ‘bands, this way’ to navigate past diners eating seafood dinners by candlelight. The atmosphere of the shows I attended in Brighton was eclectic, and to an extent, so were the people I spent time with. A mixed bill of performers appear to be the preferred approach to gig organisation and this meant that crowds changed several times in one night. There are the fiercely queer, the lads, the indie kids, the ‘serious’ musicians. This is similar to the aesthetics of a crowd typically found at any mixed bill show. However, the segregation between types of audience attending sets is marked. In part, it is made easy simply due to the large size of the venues. Groups are able to mingle with a select few all night without ever having to set foot into the territory of another. This fragmentation appears to reduce the amount of friction between event attendees. It gives ‘breathing space’, as I overheard one gig participant explain to their friend.



Figure 10: Shopping play a show at The Joker, Brighton, April 2015.

Gigs and Events

It is necessary to contextualise the aesthetic and affective atmosphere of punk gigs, specifically the broad make-up of an audience. The description here is intended to give a sense of the spaces in which not only pleasure, but certain kinds of violence, symbolic or otherwise, might take place (see Chapter Six). While audiences will always be nuanced, the participant observation component of data collection, as well as my personal experience in these spaces, affords me the potential to provide a snapshot of crowd organisation, activity, fragmentation and community in my notes. The following is a description of the venues and interactions I had between January 2015 and July 2016.

As a general (and perhaps expected) statement, cismen comprised the majority of people in attendance at venues, in contrast to ciswomen in all three locations: Newcastle, Melbourne and Brighton. In addition to their attendance as general audience members, cismen dominated the sound booth, the stage, the bar and the security. In terms of age distribution, cismen between 18 and 65 seem to be regular gig attendees even though young people were in the majority. In contrast, there appeared to be very few women over the age of 40 present at the gigs, particularly in Newcastle and Brighton. In the instances where women over 40 were present, they were introduced relationally as someone's mother, aunt or co-worker. This was made known to me explicitly by band members or people within my social circle. While this finding was interesting, I was unable to explore it any further due to Human Ethics Committee restrictions and the overarching scope of the research. I noted that the stereotypical uniform of punk has not lost its appeal; it manifests in an almost manicured dishevelment. Black jeans, black shirts, black hoodies, neutral colours, nothing too outlandish on the colour spectrum. Tattoos and body modification, such as facial piercings and gauges in ears, are unremarkable in these spaces as they have become the norm. As an overarching assessment, most women, myself included, opt to wear jeans and t-shirts rather than dresses and skirts. Very few women wear heels; most opt for trainers instead. These aesthetic traits are not specific to any one locality. There are perhaps seasonal changes, but as a generalised statement, punk has a signature dress code: the historical safety pin and studded leather jacket have been exchanged for a flanno⁸ and denim jacket (Skylar 2013).

The billing of shows, and their location, tends to create changes in crowd size, visibility, fashion and age. For example, at an all-ages gig where there is no alcohol and young people under 18 are

⁸ Flannelette checked shirt

permitted, crowds are more likely to show unity with other audience members. A recent experience of this was at an all-ages metal show in Melbourne where young gig attendees changed the structure of a wall of death⁹ to a wall of hugs. Shows with queer bands will attract a flux of gender diverse folk, whereas straight, all-cis male line ups will attract mostly straight cismen depending on the popularity of the band and their politics as a group. Politics vary greatly between such bands. For example, Luca Brasi, an all-male punk band from Tasmania, recently went public in denouncing the assumption of male entitlement to women's bodies in the music scene. As documented by Sam Murphy,

They [Luca Brasi] further issued a strong warning to anybody who is coming to any of their shows to, 'keep your hands to your fucking self'. It's the sort of warning you would think goes without saying but apparently that's not clear for everybody. 'If you believe it is your right as a male to do as you please, you are NOT WELCOME HERE', they signed off with.¹⁰

In this case, Luca Brasi leveraged their privilege as well-known male musicians who sell out the majority of their tours to advocate for women's safety at punk shows. They used their Facebook profile, which at the time of writing had 26,674 followers, to make known their politics against violence at their shows and in the scenes where they participate.

Although accounts from such informants are included in this research project, numerically there were very few trans and non-binary participants in punk subcultures in the sites researched. There might be perhaps one or two transfolk at a show in Newcastle at the most, although more in Melbourne and Brighton. Several informants commented on the lack of trans and non-binary identities in most punk spaces, arguing safety and representation as the primary logics for their exclusion. Sara (informant) noted, 'I wish transpeople felt safer at gigs, especially, you know, just your average Friday night show, but I understand why they wouldn't want to go'. Here Sara connects the lack of community at 'average' gigs to trans exclusionary punk practice. She indicates that unless a show is specifically organised and advertised to be queer and gender affirming, trans and gender diverse people are unlikely to attend. For the most part, these safer spaces are few, particularly in Newcastle.

⁹ A wall of death is the space in the venue where moshing develops, usually at the request of the band, as individuals come together to form a mass; the participants in this self-defined circle of space slam into and bounce off one another—punctuating the surging sound of the music (Hancock or Lorr 2013: 10).

¹⁰ Murphy, S. 2016. Luca Brasi Call Out "Piece Of Shit Male" Who Felt Up Punters At Their Sydney Show. Music Feeds. Viewed 24 June 2017 <http://musicfeeds.com.au/news/luca-brasi-call-piece-shit-male-felt-punters-sydney-show/>

Rachel Maria Cox (known as RMC), a non-binary performer from Sydney, pointed out in a recent interview with Oliver Moore, 'I came out around the same time as Sad Grrrls Club launched, and so people always just assume I'm female – I identify as non-binary'.¹¹ Moore writes 'RMC is passionate about safer spaces in music venues and stresses that they need to go beyond direct violence and also combat micro-aggressions like not making assumptions about people's pronouns, and not touching people without their consent'.¹²

On the topic of inclusive spaces, Elizabeth Tranter, a Melbourne songwriter and sound-engineer, explains that 'it's immediately obvious if a venue is trying to be a [women] welcoming space, and I really appreciate it'.¹³ In terms of booking and attending shows, Katy expands on Elizabeth Tranter's view of welcoming spaces to say,

There are a few places where you can't book a show, or like, where you wouldn't. Even some punk venues don't have accessible entry or exits for wheelchair users. Or like, have super sexist stuff up on the walls and stuff (Katy, 23, Newcastle).

Gin echoes Katy's statement by saying,

Punx are less likely to go to shows in places where they've never been. Unless it's a house show, they don't know that they are not going to cop shit for being in the venue 'cause of their appearance or that they can leave the place easily (Gin, 23, Melbourne).

Gin and Katy's responses on the topic of venues and attendance both highlight safety as a key component in where and when gigs take place. Knowledge of a venue generates an overall conception of how appropriate a venue is for queer punx and the meanings attributed to certain architectural or aesthetic choices. Katy describes a venue that is inaccessible to wheelchair users as somewhere 'you wouldn't book a show'. For context, Katy is a young, able-bodied, queer, cisfemale who occasionally books gigs in Newcastle. For Gin, an unfamiliar space affects the overall

¹¹ Moore, O. 2016. Dancing to their own tune. *Honi Soit*. Viewed 24 June 2017 <http://honisoit.com/2016/09/dancing-to-their-own-tune/>

¹² Moore, O. 2016. Dancing to their own tune. *Honi Soit*. Viewed 24 June 2017 <http://honisoit.com/2016/09/dancing-to-their-own-tune/>

¹³ Moore, O. 2016. Dancing to their own tune. *Honi Soit*. Viewed 24 June 2017 <http://honisoit.com/2016/09/dancing-to-their-own-tune/>

attendance of a gig. With the exception of house shows, which generally occur in the suburban living room or backyard of a friend or acquaintance of the attendee, queer punx (at least in Melbourne, where Gin resides) are less likely to organise or attend a show outside of spaces they know are either safe(r), or at least intelligible. In this way, some venues operate as a kind of punk 'home' for those who are already exhausted by the conventions of the other social worlds in which they participate. However, these homes are temporary, perhaps even fleeting. They hinge on permanence, such as design and geography, yet also on the ephemeral - certain days of the week, certain bodies in the space and the corollary of collective practice. Alice draws this conclusion by saying, 'you can be in a place that yesterday was full of after work scotch-drinking bankers and today is full of punks watching a crust gig, as long as you know when to go' (Alison, 25, Melbourne).

This sentiment was expressed at all three sites of study. It is evident that some venues would transform at certain times to host seemingly oppositional clientele. I propose that when Alice was talking about 'scotch-drinking bankers', her assumptions were based on class, appearance, dialogue and the time of day, rather than any foundational knowledge of the subjects. Significantly, Katy, Gin and Alice are all commenting above on how queer punx understand their positionality within social space. Comments such as these speak to the congealing effect of identity curation - who am I in queer and punk, and how do I want to be represented? By focusing on knowing and unknowing, Katy, Gin and Alice are explaining how they understand themselves as subject and object and in turn, reflexively curate their identities accordingly. In the following chapter section I explore some of the sounds and genres of punk in order to detail the different embodiments of music participation that emerge.

Genres and Sounds

With this thesis seeking to deconstruct punk participation along gendered lines, I now establish punk outside binary terms - that which is alternative, and that which is not. The snapshot must now diverge into stylised subsets of what I broadly define as punk practice. While these subsets are put back together in later chapters of this thesis, it is important here to pull them apart to attribute certain modes of activity as specific to some facets of the subculture and not to others. The discussion below of punk categories is by no means exhaustive, rather I have included it to illustrate the complexities of punk and the straight and queer people who operate within it; the nexus of culture, politics and style where divergence and cross-pollination occur. Also, while the examples below describe some

musical differentiation, their examination mostly concentrates on embedded sociocultural politics. Straw (1984) explains the need to unpack music scenes by genre, since each has its own political and cultural trajectory encompassed within a broader ethos. While Straw is referring to rock music and participation, the same rationale can be applied to punk,

The obvious problem here, however, is one of conceptual consistency: notions of audience practice, modes of subjective involvement and the very ‘meaning’ of rock music are sufficiently fundamental to an epistemology of the sociology of rock music that they themselves should not change substantively with each generic current or period analysed (Straw 1984: 105).

Wikipedia¹⁴ lists over 40 genres and sub-genres of contemporary punk, however, there are a couple of important genres of particular relevance to this doctoral project. While hardcore and queercore punk has been previously mentioned, there are some other genres to which informants referred.

Crust punk

Acknowledging the variety of punk genres, Molly gives an explicit description of why each genre of punk needs to be considered in its specific subjectivity as well as its most overarching dialogue,

You can’t really assume that crusties or folk punks or pop punks have the same politics, you know? Like, we’re not all the same and that’s for a very good reason (Molly, 24, Melbourne).

Molly is alluding here to the diversity in the embedded discourse and genealogy of each of these sub-scenes (see for example Nilan and Threadgold 2015). As Straw (1984: 105) mentions, while cross-pollination occurs in music cultures which can bind membership, aesthetics, sounds and venues, each sub-scene has distinct stylised variations. This has been noted in the literature on ‘crust’ punk,

Many of the descriptions of crust punk and ‘crusties’ encapsulate the arrogant misperception of the mainstream dominant culture, similarly labelling them ‘gutter punks’, ‘drunk punks’, or ‘dirty hippies’. The perceptions of crust punk culture as involving drinking, drug abuse, homelessness, transiency, squatting, and generally dropping-out of mainstream society have resulted in studies that

¹⁴ Wikipedia. Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punk_subculture Accessed 24 July 2017.

only focus on the 'classic' self-destructive punk attitude and style (Roby 2013: 1).

That classic self-destructive punk attitude is countered by Christian hardcore, for instance,

Hardcore Christians 'carry Church into the next generation' as they create a common space where Christian men can come together as men and come in contact with secular men. To build this space, hardcore Christian men present themselves as both aggressive and loving (McDowell 2017: 24-25).

Straightedge

That same classic self-destructive punk attitude is countered even further in straightedge scenes, 'a subsection of youth culture where members (intentionally) do not: drink alcohol or take recreational drugs, indulge in promiscuous sexual activity, or smoke tobacco' (Nilan 2006: 1). These 'clean-living' politics are the key component in straight-edge counter-culture, originally informed by Ian MacKaye of Minor Threat, a hardcore band formed in Washington D.C in the mid-80s. It is understood in straightedge that drugs, alcohol and sex are expected stimulants and behaviours of subcultural youth, and so active resistance to these things is undertaken.

Anarcho-punks

In contrast, anarcho-punks consider 'clean living' to be an expression of activism and traditionally 'political' resistance,

This is a self-consciously political culture which valorises the direct self-creation of anarcho-punk culture, and demonstrates the attempt to foster particular values through the propagation of a particular mode of cultural perception (Nicholas 2007: 2).

For anarcho-punks, clean living is congruent with advocating sustainability and anti-institutional values, rather than maintaining the 'pure' body, as in the case of straightedge.

Folk-punk

It is also appropriate to mention folk-punk in terms of its resistance to anti-establishment politics as well as its focus towards inequalities faced in contemporary Western societies. Informed by crust punk and more traditional acoustic folk arrangements, folk-punk accesses some of the political counter-points listed above while positioning itself as context-specific. This means that folk-punk singers and bands are likely to adjust their lyrical and sonic expression based on geographical location. For example, Australian folk-punk bands such as Fear Like Us, Jen Buxton, Camp Cope, The Smith Street Band and Luca Brasi all feature vocal accentuation and references to suit an Australian context, and often are location-specific to a city like Newcastle or Melbourne.

Acknowledgement of the varied genres of punk is important because the particularities of punk are mentioned by informants in terms of specific queer identity curation. Most often in retelling stories, queer women reference their own biographies of sound when recalling how they have come to be in the scene at present. For example, Ren does this by saying,

I grew up in a small town and I remember the first time I saw this one particular crust punk band and it was basically the best day of my life. I loved crust and hardcore for ages, mainly because they were the most obvious ‘punk’ where I grew up. But then I got older and my tastes changed, I would be heaps less likely to go to a hardcore show these days (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

Ren’s reflection on her changing tastes and how that has impacted her identity curation as a queer, ciswoman in punk points to modes of performativity utilised to telegraph stylised punk participation, which is the topic of the next section of discussion. While in this thesis punk refers to the broadest sense of music and subcultural affiliation, it has been important to highlight the distinctions between sub-scenes in order to acknowledge their similarities. All are founded on an anti-establishment value-system and, with the possible exception of Christian hardcore, have a kind of moral code which positions the subject as resistant to organisational domination.

Being and Doing Punx

More than half of the 49 people I interviewed engage reflexively with the praxis of their identity - doing both queer and punk as an active process of identity curation. They see themselves as part of

the scene because they have invested so much emotional labour into entering and becoming part of it in the first place. Respondents discuss the nexus of queer and punk ethics in their understanding of embodied practice. Queer punx are doing queer punk, and as such, are constantly becoming. Deleuze (1994: 91) explains the corporeal nature of becoming ‘as a body enriching its affective capacities by increased engagement; a kind of non-linear progression’. Yet a broad political meaning is also implied, since becoming always tends towards the periphery, the marginal, the minority (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The notion here is ‘becoming-minoritarian’; an ethical action (and constitution of self) is prompted affectively by confinement to restricted social space (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 106). The male-dominated punk scene, by its very nature, restricts the social space of women and queer people, producing the conditions in which a subversive ‘becoming-minoritarian’ emerges in the form of queer punx.

As a result of ‘doing’ queer punx, respondents such as Maggie, Nat, Rebecca and Mary describe *making an investment* in punk and so, even if they do not feel particularly connected to the scene at certain times, are unable to disconnect from their valued queer punx identity. Many respondents saw this inability to disconnect as linked to uniformly having to ‘work harder’ than cismen in order to feel any level of acceptance or credibility. Engaging reflexively with queer punx as an identity appears most frequently among those in the Melbourne punk scene, probably because the scene is larger and more diverse. However, there were comments of that kind in Newcastle too,

I don’t know how to be anything other than a punk, or punk, right? Like, even if I don’t go to a show or put a record on for a year, I’m still punk. When I wear a suit to work in a corporate office, it doesn’t change how I grew up or what I think. It’s just part of who I am (Maggie, 29, Newcastle).

When asked why she still considers punk as part of her identity, Maggie’s words are descriptive of a fundamental or core element of punk identities: ‘I don’t know how to be anything other than punk’. This orientation was not only evident during discussions with key informants; it is also true for myself, as a queer, punk ciswoman. It is an important statement that is representative of both internal and external views of what ‘being’ punk is. Maggie sees herself as a punk through the being, rather than the doing of punk. She does not need to be engaging with physical aspects of the subculture, such as going to shows or listening to records, to qualify herself as punk. Rather, Maggie

understands herself as ‘punk’ because of her ethics, values, morals and embodiment. This internalised curation of identity is not negotiated by bodily involvement within the punk scene, instead it is of the body; simultaneously a becoming and a doing. Similarly, Bennett (2006) and Hodkinson (2013) conceptualise the ongoing scene participation for punks as internalising the locus of non-normative values. From that same premise, the two authors map separately how age affects self-perception of scene involvement beyond youth practice. In the same way, Maggie considers punk to be part of her; a life project, rather than her just being part of punk. She implies she is unable to disentangle the parts of herself that have been influenced by growing up punk. Over half of the respondents broached the subject of punk embodiment as ‘what they do’ (or are) in our discussions. Nat explored this nexus of identity by saying,

How can I attempt to define what it is about me that is punk, when punk has defined who I am and what I do? I order vegan food and soy coffee at the cafe because I advocate for animal rights. Something that I was introduced to through animal liberation demonstrations at punk shows and events. I protect young people at gigs because I remember being young and new. I am aware when I walk down the street of the safety of other women. I wear black and my keys from the belt hole of my jeans. I read the news and consider my privilege when I am in cultures that are not my own (Nat, 28, Newcastle).

The thread of sentiment here is one that hinges on how identities both become and maintain embodied practice. From an auto-ethnographic perspective, Maggie and Nat speak to my own identity as a queer, punk ciswoman. I am just like Maggie and Nat. What they describe are all extensions of the politics that punk has instilled in me, and so, cannot be unpacked from other parts of my becoming-minoritarian (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) constitution of self within punk. And yet, unlike Maggie, I recognise punk (and as an extension, queer) to be what I also do. According to West and Zimmerman (1987), the subject may experience their identity as being, however the process of doing is embedded in being. This resonates with Deleuze’s (1994: 91) claim that ‘becoming’ is constituted in a body enriching its affective capacities by increased engagement; in short, by doing things. Rebecca describes this kind of subject/object positionality. She highlights the identity entanglement of punk in a similar way to Maggie, explaining that ‘punk is more of an ethos to me, rather than a sound’ (Rebecca, 28, Melbourne). Whereas the emphasis was previously on ways of being/doing punk, here Rebecca is describing a code of ethics that she uses when approaching her everyday life. Yet this also implies that punk is a practice of doing.



Figure 11: Birthday celebrations in Brunswick West, February 2017.

Social Hierarchy

Being an audience member within the punk scene can sometimes be isolating. A social hierarchy exists whereby performers and producers are often valued by the punk community to be ‘doing more’ than those who simply attend gigs and consider themselves to be punk. Most of the rhetoric that exists about women and marginalised groups proposes that, in order to have power in the punk scene, they should start more bands, put on shows, and engage more in running their community and events. That type of advice points to the labour that marginalised groups are expected to do to become valued and garner equivalent power and space in the scene. Those who are disempowered are expected to do more, while those with the most power continue to leverage their privilege rather than making space for disempowered people – in the case of this project, women, trans and non- binary people. This rhetoric is not specific to punk and can be seen in almost all facets of public life, for example, the gendered wage gap, Indigenous disempowerment and citizenship discourse. As Mary muses,

I go to shows, get involved in online stuff, and I’ve always bought records and supported local bands. But I’ve never wanted to be in a band, or organise gigs, really. I think there is like, an expectation that everyone wants to be involved musically or whatever, but that stuff doesn’t interest me. So, I guess I don’t know what more I can do to support women and queers in this scene other than be visible and protect others, speak out, you know? (Mary, Brighton, 24).

Mary, like other informants who are not musicians or organisers, is unsure of how to empower a greater number of young, queer people and women to take part in punk as a place of community. Mary further explains how important it is to have a community as a queer person, and that punk is a great place to meet like-minded people. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that it was easy to feel disenchanted by the hierarchy which exists, even among those who are marginalised within punk. By ‘getting involved online’, Mary is referring to sharing events on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as networking with members of local and translocal punk communities in virtual spaces. Online discourse and navigation of punk communities through digital mediums will be discussed in greater detail later, however it is important to note here that digital cultures are of tremendous influence in the scene, particularly for marginalised communities. Online arenas are spaces of intimacy, where the lines between private and public are blurred. Members of

punk can come together in 'affective publics' (Papacharissi 2015) to discuss or debate certain aspects of community building. Here participation in the scene does not grant the same affective space as a pub or music venue. The virtual 'stage' is deconstructed and so the hierarchy is destabilised. In this way, power can be redistributed and a voice can be given to those who may not ever have a microphone or a platform to speak from.

Muñoz (1999) identifies these practices as strategies of creating concrete-yet-fleeting utopias where queer people can enact futurity; the notion that queerness exists beyond the here and now. By considering affective publics as utopias, we can conceptualise the interchanges that Mary refers to as belonging to the future, where public and private spaces away from the virtual can be formed. Katy, an informant from Melbourne, explains how she put together a zine which operates as a collaboration of women, trans and non-binary people within a translocal music space. Online communication allows her to stay connected to her project continuously, while also negotiating a space of importance for audience members of punk. 'We have a constant text thread and when I get on my break at work, there's 24 messages there for me to look at' (Kim, 23, Melbourne). What Kim is describing here is a space of intimacy that transcends geographical boundaries while forging boundaries of its own. It is possible then that marginal communities in punk can readily access a digital platform of music sharing and blogging provided they know how and where to engage with this information, and that they can see themselves represented in it. Constant access anywhere means Kim's zine project retains traction and is consistently evolving. The zine project brings together the voices of contributors who may never have been a performer or organiser within the punk scene. A zine such as this destabilises the dominant hierarchy that negatively positions queers - women or otherwise - within the scene: 'We have a platform now where people listen to us so we want to give back to other people who do not have a stage to speak on' (Kim, 23, Melbourne).

Kim describes how 'girls' in the audience, whether at a gig, online or in the street, are potentially subversive. They might be disempowered within certain settings, such as physical gig spaces, but are able to strategically use other platforms for their messages to be received. A social network between queers at shows, between musician or performer and between audience members, also generates social and cultural capital. These capitals create beneficial affordances. For example, being mates with the singer of a certain high-profile band can enable disempowered voices to be heard. Kim's zine project and her understanding of how to renegotiate power for marginalised groups moves us

onto the next chapter section which explores ‘broadening the joining’ (Lorde 1984: 10) of such groups through intersectional politics.

Intersectional Marginalisation

The bringing together of marginalised groups as a strategy to increase access to positions of power is not new, nor is it specific to queer or punk discourses. Enveloping numerous broad identities under one umbrella term of ‘women’ or ‘grrrls’ provides affordances of at least intermittent visibility, and joins together the inherently disempowered. Of course, this joining is not without its own complications, and the following chapter section will address some of the issues that arise for those who do not fit neatly into a single marginalised category. For example, informants refer to fracturing inside these communities, such as resentment of overarching white, middle-class, feminist politics.

To begin with, Gin, a performer in an all-female band in Melbourne, discussed with me her perspectives on why providing space for identities outside a white, cisfemale experience is important to her scene,

I just think it’s really regressive to not address the obvious.... imbalance of white to non- white people in music scenes. Like, punk is obviously a boy’s club but it’s also a white, middle-class, able-bodied club (Gin, 23, Melbourne).

Immediately, Gin forefronts race and ethnicity as downfalls in the formation of current attempts at intersectionality in queer punk scenes. She notes that whiteness, class and ability are potentially being cast aside in an effort to promote gender equality. She is one of several white and able bodied informants who made statements along these lines. Gin admits that she often promotes gender equity at gigs in ways that may seem to prioritise white, able-bodied feminism, however she is clear too that, as a white woman, she does not want to ‘give’ a voice to others. She prefers instead to support spaces where intersecting identities are represented, to step aside where white voices have the potential of overriding dialogue. Gin and I spoke at length about how she navigates her position as a performer to support such spaces. She says, ‘I just try to be supportive but not in a “oh, you need help” kind of way. Like, buy a t-shirt, donate some money, give up a door spot or a place on a bill’ (Gin, 23, Melbourne). The pragmatics of leveraging her privilege rely on the same ethics as

those which create gender equality, however Gin recognises that in practice, destabilising hierarchies of power are often much more complex than simply being kind, and educating people.

Gin is also concerned about the protection of what she calls ‘the boys club’ by its own members, and how the emotional labour of generating space for marginalised groups is left largely to members of marginalised groups themselves. By applying the theory of affective atmospheres to the example Gin provides, it becomes clear that dominant power structures in wider society are reproduced in punk scenes. The erasure of non-dominant voices is something queer punx make an attempt to reconfigure, as Gin points out. One of the ways this happens is the organisation of minority-led events and zines, which Maude describes in detail below. These events and zines are beginning to be prioritised in the scene through a process of equity, rather than simply popularity.

It is important to note that one of the reasons queers continue to make investments in the punk scene is the challenge of resistance to male homosocial egocentrism. Gin is particular in her application of this reasoning, indicating that ‘of course, there are people who participate just because... I don’t know, it’s fun. Not everything has to be a battle, I guess’. But, in understanding her voice as a political tool, Gin indicates her desire to affect change. However, she is also viscerally aware of the imbalance of power in punk, through historical erasure.

Below Debbie describes what a feminist-leaning, safe(r), queer punx event looks like. This description contextualises Gin’s assessment in the description of the way ‘men were sitting on the outsides’. This serves as a visceral example of the shifting dynamics of power in these spaces, both physical and cultural.

So different. And the way the women, queers and transpeople held themselves being allowed in the space. You know, it wasn’t somebody with their jacket on sitting in the corner, it was women wearing bra tops with huge hair and heaps of make-up and platform shoes. Talking loudly and sitting loudly and hugging their friends. And you could see it was almost like the opposite, the men were sitting on the outsides, apologising for bumping into someone on their way to go get a beer. And also it’s like - wow all these things you can just see it shifting people, kids getting around this sort of stuff, you know? And like, understanding (Debbie, 26, Melbourne).

Here, Debbie provides an example of how oppressed minority groups within the scene are 'broadening the joining', or in Massey's understanding, operating non-interlocking praxis. Whilst Lorde's (1984) concept of 'broadening the joining' may relate to intersectional race politics in America, the joining through labels is also an important consideration for queers in punk scenes. In Debbie's example, the intention of joined-up strategy is to redistribute power for equity - against heteronormativity and cisnormativity, and by extension, ablest and ethnocentric majorities. However, such an approach is not without its pitfalls. Fleur, a woman of colour in the Brighton punk scene, points out,

I'm all for, you know, getting change to happen. By any means possible. But I don't need white women to stand up for me. I might be part of a larger minority, but their voices stack up higher than mine so I want them to step aside for a minute, give women of colour a chance to voice their issues separately (Fleur, 26, Brighton).

Through her example of privilege within joined-up marginalised groups, Fleur is demonstrating how certain underrepresented individuals do not feel respected or considered in expressions of intersectionality. For example, grouping certain underprivileged groups together as 'part of a larger minority' can reduce all women's issues to a singular site of disempowerment. Fleur understands this as problematic for her intersectional politics as a woman of colour because that which is a solution for white people may be a barrier for her. She explains this further by indicating that women of colour and those with disabilities do not become any less marginal when white or able bodied women gain greater representation. In this way, the joining of identity labels under one coherent banner has the potential to create privileged hierarchies within the music scene. On the other hand, feminist women in the punk scene who have privilege feel responsible for organising events so that less-privileged others can enjoy the event without experiencing symbolic violence or overt marginalisation.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped venues, genres, hierarchies and the concept of intersectional marginalisation in order to piece together some of the affective and transformative aspects of the punk scene in Newcastle, Melbourne and Brighton. More than simply oppressed recipients of cismale domination, young queer women and gender diverse people actively negotiate their identities

and the spaces they inhabit by utilising reflexive knowledge beyond 'being' queer punx. This chapter has described some of the ways that doing queer punx, such as zine making, creating safe(r) spaces and redistributing power, facilitate identity curation. Moreover, by investing emotional labour into reconfiguring our scene, queers are able to justify continued participation, which is discussed in depth in Chapters Eight and Nine. In this way, queer identity curation itself becomes 'doing work', where young people internalise resistance to dominant social norms and invest labour into their own performativity in the hope that fracturing these norms will make room for future queer punx.

The specific groups of people beyond ciswomen who face intersectional marginalisation within the punk scene have been named as people of colour, people with disabilities, trans and non-gender binary folk. While not exclusively queer and in no way an exhaustive list, the individuals who comprise these groups often align with, or become aligned with queer advocates and collectives in trying to create space for members of marginalised groups. There was seemingly very little work being done in regional sites, such as Newcastle, to affect the representation of disenfranchised minority groups. In Melbourne and Brighton, there appeared to be greater inclusion of minority groups other than queers within local punk communities. However, the vast majority of critical engagement with intersectional marginalisation is happening in virtual communities and online spaces.

This chapter has provided an overview of the challenges that young women and other marginalised groups are coming up against in punk scenes. The issues that have been highlighted are historically and culturally duplicated in all places - they are not isolated to certain local scenes. There may be nothing new about marginalised groups struggling to have their place in a music scene justified by those who hold power, but the informant accounts document the voices of those creating and maintaining the momentum of affecting change. In the next chapter, I will further unpack strategies of resistance, with particular concentration on the enactment of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1994), and its utility as a form of erasure for women and gender diverse people in punk.



Figure 12: Street art by Astro Twitch in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Photo taken 30 March 2016.

Chapter Six: Symbolic Violence

This chapter explores key informant accounts of gendered violence by cismen in the scene as both symbolic and physical. Violence then is theorised, not only as a tool for oppression, but as a catalyst promoting subjective resistance among punk women performers and technical assistants. Not only do cismen in punk enact violent modes of engagement towards women and queers, those who experience gendered aggression respond in a variety of forms to renegotiate the boundaries of power that frame gig spaces and the wider punk community. The narratives included here explain the experiences of queer women who face aggression or dismissal in those spaces. Although there were certainly some instances of physical violence, which are described below, these were not often to the point of injury. Rather, symbolic violence through micro-aggressions, dismissal and erasure were frequently recounted as insidious practices, which prompted collective development of weapons of resistance.

The experiences of queer women and gender diverse people in punk settings cannot be refined to any one constraining sentiment. However, an overarching power dynamic between cismen and queer people was displayed consistently throughout punk spaces and times and their re-tellings. The diversity of experience is explored below based on nuanced engagement with scene activity. What emerges from this exploration are similarities and differences based on modes of participation. Analysing these modes using Massey's (1999) concept of spatial interlockings and non-interlockings, I draw together and pull apart threads of experiential variance between women as performers, organisers and producers. Through these accounts, we come to understand cismale opposition to women in punk (queer or otherwise) as a kind of layered (non-)praxis. This opposition is often represented in a lack of recognised legitimacy from cismale organisers, sound engineers, venue staff and members of supporting or headlining bands, which can manifest in both passive and overt hegemonic display. Any interaction between participants within a gig space, no matter how big or small, 'transmits and produces power' (Foucault 1998: 100). In this way, happenings within the political economy of a show affect the gendered experience of the performers and the audience.

For example, if the audience can see a female band member asking a male sound engineer to adjust the volume or effects, they can then observe the sound engineer's overt or covert dismissal of her request. Audience members of different genders and from different experiential backgrounds may

read this kind of interaction in varying ways; anger, agreement, distaste, humour, unsurprising and so on. In this way, discourses of gender difference become produced and reproduced at the intersection of power and knowledge (Foucault 1998). Thus, cismen's complicit opposition to non-cismale participation within the punk scene reinforces historically and culturally located meanings that were entrenched in the scene early on. Cismen are understood, at least mostly amongst themselves, to be the forefathers of punk narratives, and as a result cismen are seen to own the most authentic codes and representations of punk discourse. Embedded power structures are (re)produced using these codes, by cismen in positions of power as venue owners, sound engineers, organisers and performers. The following sections of discussion highlight how a gendered discourse of superior male knowledge/competence is both produced at gigs, and countered by queer women and gender diverse members of the punk community.

Within the constitution of punk discourse, space is part of a nexus of power structures and identity curation. Thus, the fulfilment of hegemonic narrative in social interaction represents 'interlocking' praxis, and strategies of resistance to that dominating narrative represent 'non-interlocking' praxis (see Massey 1999: 283). The praxes are relational. Much like Foucault's (1998: 100-1) conceptualisation of discourse as a site of both power and resistance, the interlockings and non-interlockings located in active bodily practices dictate the boundaries of space-making. Power structures are reinforced through the embedded praxis of interlocking space, and challenged through the praxis of non-interlocking embodied space. Using Massey's (1999: 283) theory of space as becoming, the lived experiences provided below contextualise the (re)creation of space as active and what happens there as malleable practice. As cismen either wittingly or unwittingly make the space misogynistic, so women and queers unmake it.

By exploring the *doing* of punk as an identity among audience members, I explain some of the reasons why women and gender diverse people continue to participate in punk scenes and create spaces of intimacy in them (Kaplan 2005: 19). Interwoven in this analysis is the consideration that no amount of *doing* by queer women and gender diverse people is equivalent to the *doing* that cismen engage in. Authority and privilege are still withheld because female/queer/non-conforming participation is routinely undermined. Therefore, those who are marginalised always need to *do* more. This is further illustrated by the related experiences of women and queer performers/sound engineers later in the chapter.

Weaponising socio-political modes of interaction has been considered extensively in the field of sociology, particularly around youth cultures and globalisation. Therefore, I draw on some of Harris' (2004) considerations of grrrlpower as female youth politics to broaden not only my conceptualisation of symbolic power, but also to posit violence as a mechanism of counter-argument. Looking back to the history of Riot Grrrl, I firstly outline how violence - symbolic and physical - regulates queer behaviour and more broadly, femaleness (Harris 2004). Riot Grrrl, as described earlier, repositioned women as active contributors with the ability to generate dynamism in punk landscapes. Yet the critique of Riot Grrrl as exclusionary to other minority groups, such as trans people and people of colour, is warranted and has become a key debate in contemporary queer punk scenes. As a result, I have utilised the critical standpoint of Riot Grrrl to talk about embedded symbolic power structures, highlighting that othering happens even within spaces where violence against hegemonic oppression is being countered.

The chapter locates symbolic and physical violence within the three sites; Newcastle, Melbourne and Brighton. Whilst their nuances as places must be acknowledged, the lived experiences of queer women and gender diverse people did not vary extensively from place-to-place in terms of contextualised viewpoints, such as queer and safe(r) space labelling, historical underpinnings and embedded discourse. I start this chapter with accounts from performers and technical assistants, such as sound engineers and producers, to diagnose what they consider as 'problems' within their scene. Importantly, performers and technical assistants are also part of the punk community as audience members and consumers.

It must be noted here that most of the queer experiences included below come from white, able-bodied ciswomen, who made up the majority of project informants. This mirrors their relative dominance in the scene. The experiences of outsider others, such as trans and non-binary people, people of colour and people with disabilities, are noted separately to highlight their specificity. Diagnosis of violence is refined to the relationships between audience and performer, describing how power is both negotiated and leveraged. I conclude with an exploration of how technical assistants, such as sound engineers and event organisers who identify as queer and gender diverse, experience marginalisation in their specific arenas of knowledge.

Symbolic Power and Style

In five decades of punk styling, cismen have continued to claim ownership of space through exercising symbolic violence (see Bourdieu 2004) and through their advantaged position within the heterosexual matrix (see Butler 1990). This chapter section outlines anecdotal evidence of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2009) and, as recounted by informants, finds it central to an apparently authentic punk embodiment. While the terrain of white male domination has been considered extensively in sociological research on punk scenes, the histories of young women, queer women, transwomen and those who resist gender binaries deserves to be written, and written again. By contributing new narratives of queer(ed) bodies, both female and gender diverse participants actively enrich punk scenes. Those who are often relegated to the sidelines of the mosh pit, the venue and the community must be included within punk discourse because they exist there.

Symbolic violence is considered apart from physical violence because it is the most frequent kind experienced by women and queers, and is usually the most difficult to challenge directly. The act of being pushed at a gig brings forth a different point of resistance to being smirked at across a room, and in turn, responses to these forms of violence produce varying affective states. It is in these affective states that queer women and others utilise reference points to counter-arguments; approaching an act of violence requires some negotiation on the target's behalf. For example, the relational threat of physical violence or historical context of knowing the person or people enacting violence changes how someone might attempt to challenge an unwanted comment or similar.

The Boys' Club: Symbolic Violence as Style

Masculine domination (see Bourdieu 2002) is evident on the walls of venues, in the informal choreography of bodies on stage, in the stances and behaviour of the security guards working the door, and in the sonics and lyrics of bands, as well as in their names. For instance, a Brighton punk venue booked a band whose name included the pejorative and sexist term 'sluts'. They were booked to play a weeknight music set in an inner-city pub venue, which had been formally designated a gender safe space. When contacted by several women who were concerned and upset that posters for the show were appearing on their social media pages, the cismale booking agent apologised and assured the concerned parties that it had been an 'oversight'.

This example of gendered language working as symbolic violence provides some insight into the sometimes unintended, sometimes intended practices of oppression, and the haze of privilege that is equated with white, male dominance in the punk scene. The semiotics and potential affect of the word ‘sluts’ on a poster, on social media pages, and on the internet more broadly, were unremarkable to the booking agent. To him it was just another band booked for a weeknight show. However, for women who challenged this, the band’s permitted presence in a designated punk safe(r) space was even more important than the violence enacted by the word slut. Symbolic violence is embedded in language (Bourdieu 1994, 1998). In this example, the booking agent went about business as usual, and in doing so facilitated symbolic violence, even though he was simply ‘doing his job’ in another sense. We can see that the labelling of a venue as a ‘safe(r) space’, particularly when the clientele, managers, venue staff and organisers are primarily cismen, may do little to support the practical realities of gender safety. As highlighted later in this thesis, ‘safe(r)’ spaces are not safe simply because someone says they are. The semiotic device of a sign on a wall or advertisement on a website cannot protect those who are vulnerable in certain spaces at certain times. Rather, safe(r) spaces require active enactment by bodies within these spaces. They require validation through full recognition of, and collaboration with, marginalised groups within the punk community.

By acknowledging the show space as a political landscape, Gin - a key informant and punk performer - can clearly see divisions of sexuality and genders among participants within her scene. There, Gin observes the existence of a ‘boys club’, which operates to support itself by virtue of symbolic violence, where traditional gender and sexuality imbalances are embedded through repeated and expected behaviour. As a performer, Gin began her project interview by relaying to me a statement that she made in a recent street press publication as part of an interview with her band. In the publication and the quote below, she talks about the way she perceives a show, and later, how she understands a stage to be more than something only available in a show space. For Gin, the stage is a context where voices can be heard either sonically, in print or in bodily action,

I see shows as a political statement. If you give a microphone to an all-male band you’re giving them a platform to be heard. If you give it to a woman of colour, trans or non-binary person, you’re giving them a voice and bringing them into the picture. Men who are in bigger bands need to step up and do something and stop supporting the boys club, because the boys club can fucking take care of itself (Gin, 23, Melbourne).

Gin attempts to discursively change the show spaces that she inhabits by actively taking space away from hegemonic masculinity, calling it out when she can, or renegotiating dominant discourses. She recognises her own privilege as a queer ciswoman on stage and relinquishes some of her power as a performer by providing an avenue for dialogue in which the voices of marginalised punk people can be heard. Gin emphasises women of colour, trans and non-binary people as the main identities she aims to include within conversations about punk participation. The focus on these identities means conversations become queer(ed), especially those which occur in show spaces. 'Bringing them into the picture' is Gin's strategy of resistance against masculine symbolic violence, and is indicative of the centre/periphery relationship between cispeople and marginalised groups at events - even where feminist-leaning bands, such as Gin's, are playing. One example where Gin has actively renegotiated the power dynamics of punk spaces is by ensuring that intersectionality is represented on stage. Gin states that she makes conscious choices to seek out queer, trans and gender diverse performers who are looking to play shows more frequently or in larger venues. Participant observation of Gin at these shows confirms her success in doing so.

Gin's experiences highlight the emotional investment that must be made in order for marginalised individuals and groups to be given a platform to speak or be heard. By stating 'men...need to step up and do something', Gin is making reference to the pervasive and systematic nature of cismale symbolic violence and the emotional work involved in creating and queering spaces to counter this embedded violence. Labouring to make spaces safe(r) for queer people and marginalised others involves a constant campaign of vigilance. It means urging the ethos of rebellion against patriarchy, not only in the punk scene, but in the wider community. Gin's previously mentioned interview with a street press publication, for example, could have potentially been consumed by members of various music scenes; indie, metal, dance, noise and alternative music. As a result, she is open to criticism from an entire music industry while standing up as an advocate for inclusivity in the punk scene. Being an advocate is time-consuming and rigorous, and those who occupy these positions, either voluntarily or otherwise, often suffer compassion fatigue (Stamm 2016). Extending from the concept of emotional labour, queer women, trans and non-binary people who continue to be active members of punk scenes do not simply participate, rather they make an investment in changing the dynamic of the male homosocial punk landscape. Gin realises this in commitment to destabilising power networks within her local Melbourne scene. As a queer ciswoman, she implies the gendered anxiety of dominant cismale participants within the scene,

They are scared of us, scared of our power. That's why we get pushed down and pushed aside. We would run this place, this scene, if we got 'too much power' and that's another reason why dudes don't make space for us, fragile egos (Gin, 23, Melbourne).

Fear of queer resistance (see Warner 2003) points to the anxiety of cishnormative and hegemonically masculine collectives that marginalised groups (women, non-binary people, queers) will overthrow the existing power structures in place. The following section expands on this concept with reference to the punk scene.

The Subject Position of Performer

Of the 49 queer women and gender diverse people who took part in this research, 30 had been or were current performers, either as a solo act or in a band. For definition purposes, I have used the term 'performer'; yet informants do not refer to themselves in this way. The categorisation of performer is intended to delineate not only the obvious visibility of those who perform, but also the spatial and temporal experiences of a performance – that which comes before, during and after. The vivid retelling of stories by informant performers seems to bring an embodied affect to life as they sigh, raise their voices and straighten their backs, as if to stow themselves in their experiences. They recount details so small that the experience of a few seconds can be discussed for an hour. These performers' stories overlap and intersect (both figuratively and physically as they appear in each other's stories), beginning a discussion that maps some of the tensions they experience as visible and audible members of contemporary punk subculture. In the chapter section below, queer women as performers share anecdotes which trace gendered tensions, sexual(ity) division and the relationship between hegemonic knowledge and assumed femaleness in punk scenes.

The most consistent issue for queer performers is the ever-pressing illegitimacy they face as a result of cismale occupation of time and space in the punk community, especially in regard to technical ability. Illegitimacy takes the shape of a gendered assumption that female and non-gender conforming performers lack knowledge about playing, equipment and gig organisation. Specific examples of presumptive cismale behaviour towards these performers throw light on the larger issue of minoritisation within the global punk scene. The quotes below come from the Melbourne punk music scene, where queer, trans and non-binary musicians are greater in number when compared to

scenes within Newcastle and Brighton. However, despite ever increasing numbers of queer performers, gendered violence and the minimisation of non-cismale knowledge remains prevalent.

Ren, a drummer, describes this kind of interaction in her narrative about a recent show at a national music festival with over 15000 tickets sold. Speaking as a queer ciswoman, she explains the way these types of marginalising exchanges occur,

The sound guy was a fuckwit. I asked him to turn everything up in my foldbacks during soundcheck, like, right up because I can't hear shit. He gives me this face like 'do you even know what you're doing?' and then, once I have everything loud enough, I walk away from my kit and he's over there banging on my drums re-adjusting the volume. It was ridiculous. I couldn't hear anything the rest of the band was doing during the set and I'm going [makes hand gesture to turn up the guitar in the foldback] and he's shrugging his shoulders at me like I'm an idiot (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

Here Ren is describing the way that cismen downplay or silence women within a music performance space. By disregarding Ren's technical expertise and ability to judge the sound she desires, the sound engineer is privileging his own knowledge over hers. Ultimately, he is taking ownership of the sound that the crowd will hear without the express input of one of the band members. His treatment of Ren was in significant contrast with the way he treated male band members at the same gig.

Using Massey's (1999) theory of contested socio-spatial terrains, Ren's experience illustrates the active practices of cismen to produce and reproduce punk space as belonging to them. In dismissing Ren's requests, the sound engineer is demanding authority over the physical gig space (sound and organisation) and the social space (discourse and relations). In this way, the sound engineer contributes to an atmospheric production of space in which he reinforces his male dominance as an 'expert'. With his body, he telegraphs his embedded, authoritative power. In the moment, Ren faces an impasse. She can resist the sound engineer's dominance by making visible her own authority as an intelligible, female performer, or submit to the constructed space of privileged male knowledge.

If Ren cannot hear foldback in the way she wants, she is less likely to perform well and this may negatively affect the experience of the band's audience. In addition, the sound engineer is being possessive of the sound 'mix', rather than negotiating with the performers who create and own the

music. He has taken authority over Ren's belongings (her drums), and feels no hesitation in using her equipment without her permission. Ren notes that the sound engineer did not act this way with any other drummer during the show, all of whom were male. She is also angry that his demeaning behaviour towards her, as a woman performer, had been telegraphed to the crowd. This telegraphing of power creates friction between Ren, the sound engineer, the band and the audience, all of whom are engaged in active practices of space-making. The praxis of the sound engineer leaves Ren in a reactive state; she can combat male dominance immediately and risk being seen as a 'difficult woman' (Ahmed 2006), or alternatively, be silenced and perhaps retroactively deal with the sound engineer's subordination of her expertise. In either of these states, a particular gendered discourse is facilitated. If Ren chooses to defy the sound engineer, she is taking an active stance against the privileging of male knowledge, which will affect the atmosphere created between the performer and the (mostly-male) audience. If she does not resist this privileging, nothing changes in how the space is constructed as an arena of gendered symbolic violence. The mostly male audience understands the male sound engineer to hold power in the space.

Ren implies these kinds of exchanges as a form of gendered violence,

If, potentially, 15000 people can see the sound guy basically telling you that you have no idea how to EQ your instrument, why would any dude think that you can? Like, I could see women looking at him like, 'do what she says!' But dudes were just standing there like, 'yeah, this is normal.' It makes me furious. Not because I care what dudes think but that there is nothing odd about seeing a man publicly dismiss a woman in a way he would never do to another man (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

Ren critically points out that such behaviour polarises audiences along gendered lines, meaning that gender stereotypes of cismen as knowledgeable and women as naive are reinforced within the scene every time this happens and is publicly witnessed at an event.

Here, Ren is signalling the affective atmosphere created within a gig space. The bodies at a gig that experience an event, such as that which Ren described, rub together in active praxis (Massey 1999) and in doing so, create an affective atmosphere (Anderson 2009). The experience of the band members, the audience and the sound engineer intermingle to form an intense atmosphere of collective, bodily engagement or disengagement. This atmosphere becomes highly affective in varied

responses to gendered stereotypes. Some of those present may feel anger at a man dismissing a woman, whereas others may think he is 'just doing his job'. Some may fail to notice. While Ren does not describe if or how she challenged the hegemonic display of the sound engineer, she does provide a thoughtful analysis of the dismissive discourse. Ren is reflexive in these narratives. As an instance of non-interlocking contestation, she emphasises the affect and effect of telegraphing a gendered insult: 'he would never do that to another man'.

Jack recounts similar experiences over 10 years of playing in bands and being an active member of the Melbourne music scene,

You can't deny the attitude, like, I would have hundreds of stories of sound guys being pricks, like arguably I would have been more financially successful or respected if I was a man and in the band that I was in just purely because people like what's familiar and if something is unfamiliar it's a bit hard for them to digest or whatever (Jack, 30, Melbourne).

Ren and Jack's accounts both point to the repeated marginalisation experienced by women as musicians. Certain male sound engineers within the Melbourne punk scene are recognised as regularly undermining the levels of knowledge these women have as performers, including knowledge about their own sound, instrument, spaces and bodies. Those experiences speak to the patriarchal assumption of women's technical incompetence compared to that of cismen, and to how women should yield to cismen's authority. A sound engineer or organiser of an event has a level of control over the atmosphere created through the line-up, time allocations, logistics and sound arrangements. Since women, queers, trans and non-binary people are underrepresented in the technical fields of sound production and engineering, there are few opportunities to destabilise this patriarchal dominance.

The informants who share their gendered experiences of being made to feel marginal or less intelligent when compared to male performers express not only anger, but a kind of dismissive exhaustion at such situations. It seems as if being made to feel foolish was common and even expected, pointing to the constitution of symbolic violence. Ashley describes a problem she had with one male organiser of a show,

With this show that we're playing, the organiser is such a dick. Like, one of the bands had to pull out so I emailed him suggestions of replacements and he's like, 'How do you know that? They weren't supposed to announce that!' Like, I am trying to be helpful and he's snapping at me about something I am directly involved in. 10 minutes later, there's a post on Facebook with the band I suggested listed as support. I can't even be bothered, he's a dude, he's an arsehole, and it's like, 'oh yeah, of course you are.' It's just the expectation; setting the bar low (Ashley, 30, Melbourne).

In this instance, the organiser of the show was defensive about advice from a queer woman on how to manage the event, even though as a performer she was a direct participant. Ashley met with resistance from the male event organiser, firstly for knowing that a band (with which she has a personal connection) had to pull out of the show, and secondly for attempting to contribute to the success of the event with her suggestion. She noted that she did not receive a reply email or thank you from the event organiser after suggesting replacement acts, even after those same acts were contacted and put on the show bill.

Ashley uses this narrative to illuminate not simply the divide between men and women within the music scene – but also the experience of being a queer woman. Later in our discussion she makes reference to presenting visibly as a 'lesbian woman', and how she must negotiate the space between being 'undesirable to men' and being able to 'more easily inhabit a male arena because lesbianism is often an exception to the rule of women's perceived ineptitude' (Ashley, 30, Melbourne). This, it seems, is a non-interlocking element that disrupts the assumption of male authority in gig space. Other queer women reiterate this same point, indicating that their queerness, particularly if they appear more traditionally masculine, often translates to cismen accepting their knowledge more readily, perhaps because they have no sexual desire towards them. The informants assume that the cismen were less threatened or had less to prove. Conversely, femme or less traditionally masculine-appearing queer women consider that their assumed straightness was key to not being taken seriously as performers by cismen. For example, Elle is a rather femme-presenting queer woman. She describes the pervasive naturalisation of gendered interactions at punk shows and in wider society,

It's about thresholds, you know? When every day, not just at shows or as a band member or even in any music space, you have to deal with men treating you like you're incompetent your threshold for bullshit gets higher and higher. And then these micro-aggressions get less

and less noticeable because even you are used to them. And it becomes even more pervasive and insidious because you start giving out cookies to dudes just for making room for you at the bar (Elle, 28, Melbourne).

Here, Elle is making reference to the normalisation of women's marginality and passivity. She refers to the frequency of marginalising interactions and the under-the-radar tactics used to (re)produce gendered stereotypes. She makes the significant point that micro-aggressions are routinely ignored, reflecting the kind of normalising acceptance that Bourdieu recognises in symbolic violence. Elle is describing what Smith, Shin and Officer (2012: 388) outline, 'micro-aggressions are vehicles through which oppressive discourses are expressed through every day insults and indignities, as well as unintended and unconscious demeaning messages toward non-dominant groups'. Micro-aggressions manifest as micro-insults, micro-assaults and micro-invalidations. Their multiplicity demonstrates the damaging impact of underlying power structures. For example, micro-invalidations are low-key communications that subtly exclude or nullify the feelings, thoughts, or experiential reality of a person (Sue and Sue 2012). In fact, micro-aggressions are often committed by well-intended, egalitarian members of dominant groups towards members of non-dominant groups (Sinclair 2006; Brondolo et al. 2008; Hwang and Goto 2008; Purdie-Vaughns et al. 2008; Sue et al. 2009; Sue 2010).

In this case, micro-aggressions, such as ignoring a woman's request for a louder sound on stage or using their equipment without permission, reinforces and validates the dominant stereotype of cismen as experts. Such micro-aggressions enshrine cismen as superior gatekeepers of knowledge in punk, and women as naïve participants with inferior knowledge. Elle highlights how small such a dismissive interaction can be in the above quote. They are so frequent that Elle and several other research informants talked about praising men whom they thought treated them equally, or at least amicably, at shows. They reflected on how completely unbelievable such an interaction is if they stand back from it; to thank men for the smallest kindnesses or even for simply doing their paid job properly.

One of the most common responses about how cismen make women feel small through micro-aggressions in music spaces was via gendered commentary. Ren surmises this sentiment by saying,

Oh, dudes are always like ‘you’re my favourite female drummer’ or ‘damn, you hit really hard for a girl’, just to let me know that I’m not as good as men but that I’ve done enough to warrant their approval. And they don’t even realise or care about what they’ve just said or what it means. Apparently I should just be thankful? They get really confused when I tell them I’m not (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

Here, Ren highlights the reinforcement of cultural assumptions that women should be polite, submissive and thankful to men for their feedback. When Ren challenges the need for them to include her gender in their intended compliments, she is met with confusion and anger; ‘I was just trying to give you a compliment’, ‘do you have to be so difficult?’, ‘lighten up, I was being nice’ were all generic retorts to her criticism of apparent compliments. In this way, Ren is viewed as a difficult woman because she refuses the interlocking praxis of paying a woman a compliment because she is a woman doing something usually done by a man. In invalidating Ren’s feelings and experiences as a musician, and as a member of non-dominant group within the punk community, a micro-aggression is being enacted and the gender stereotyping of women as inferior becomes (re)produced.

I asked all informants to comment on whether, broadly, they felt that there was a division between men and women within the local punk music scene. Unanimously, informants stated that there was, and that women were under-represented. Elle and MJ, both 29, who live in Australia but participate in the queer punk scene globally, each pointed out that the only way queer punk - and the larger scene of punk - was going to change was if women continued to make noise about gendered divisions. They explained that the work being done to make women feel safe(r) and welcome at shows within the Melbourne music scene is being undertaken by women. Elle and MJ expressed disappointment at having to carry the burden of educating cismen about gender problems within their scene. Yet they felt it was necessary to make the scene better for younger generations and to ensure that the space of queer punk could continue to exist. MJ for example, jokes that she isn’t sure what women would write songs about if cismen were no longer ‘dickheads at shows’ (MJ, 29, Sydney). There is complexity in the relational understandings of ‘powerless’ and ‘powerful’ for these queer women. They conduct operations of power by informally educating young women about demanding space and teaching young cismen to be aware of their privilege. Yet this empowering role intertwines with the larger forces of gendered stereotyping at play. The intense commitment of emotional labour

in educating people to respect and acknowledge gender inequality within the punk scene can be compromised so simply, as Elle's comment above shows.

It is significant to note that, for the project informants, being active participants in the queer punx community extends further than buying records and attending gigs. In the expanded world of online engagement, for example, they risk entering a landscape of violence, dismissal and stereotyping. Threats exist for women and queers within the community of punk. As women who actively participate as punx, they are not only investing in their own creative process but also spending time creating and conserving space for other women to participate freely. Perhaps, given the challenges that many queer women, trans and non-binary people face, these marginalised groups must undertake significantly more emotional labour just to stand ground. Whereas cismen only really have to invest in their own creative process, queer women must make a much deeper investment in creating and conserving safe(r) space for themselves and others.

The following chapter section explores how the queer women who operate technical roles within punk scenes invent strategies of resistance (Halberstam 2013). This is the non-interlocking praxis of challenging male hegemony, as part of the female embodiment of queer punx. There are only a few female and gender non-conforming sound engineers and event organisers who participated in this project, and this ratio critically points to how few there are in the scene.

Organisers and Engineers: Experiences of Violence

This chapter section reflexively engages with women who work within authoritative roles¹⁵ within the punk scene. Of the 49 interview informants, 15 were sound engineers, organisers or venue staff who participated in the scene as paid employees. These women discussed their experiences of the punk scene in Newcastle, Melbourne and Brighton. They were able to speak as audience members, band members and staff members, moving in and out of their role narratives as the interview process happened. Participant observation of gig spaces reinforced the stories they told.

The discussion below first touches on the experiences of these women being either dismissed, or being celebrated. It looks at their understandings of gendered relationships within local and translocal punk arenas. Secondly, the concept of presentation of the gendered self is examined in terms of

¹⁵ Organisational and technical roles such as sound engineer, production and event management.

credentials and authenticity. Informants speak of being visible in traditionally masculine or feminine ways, and the assumed power position in both of these identities. Overall, it seems that appearing masculine results in being taken more seriously. Importantly, all 15 women indicate that at one time or another, people within the punk community had seemed surprised that, as women, they were in bands, managed sound or organised events. Furthermore, they explain the strategies of resistance they employ to combat routine male domination within the local punk scene.

Many of the women who participate in punk scenes as musicians and event staff or organisers have been part of the subcultural landscape as audience members for years, even decades. The lyrical and sonic content of punk attracts young people who are outliers of mainstream social groups, or who desire to be. Therefore, spaces for young punks are quite locatable, particularly in metropolitan or urbanised places. These spaces can be community art and cultural centres, after-school activities, all ages venues for gigs and record stores. More recently, the internet has provided many resources for young people to engage with punk subculture. Community building now happens across global networks and punk identity construction becomes a process of sourcing and sharing virtual information at translocal sites. The following chapter section explores how young women and queers negotiate their identities as participants of punk, both virtually and away from keyboard (AFK).¹⁶

Ashley

Ashley is a female sound engineer, a rare figure in the live music scene. She lives in Melbourne after moving from a small town in New South Wales in the early 2000s. Ashley regularly attends gigs as an audience member, but is also a member of several well-known bands. She has been working as a sound engineer for the last five years. She mixes bands several nights a week,

I get the sweetest feedback from bands really regularly, and I have a constant stream of work coming in because people have either heard a good mix at a show or heard of me from someone else. I work across three venues in Melbourne and then for community radio during the day. But those nice things are often offset by bands and performers who have never met

¹⁶ Away From Keyboard (AFK), born from the practice of online gaming, depicts a person being removed from the virtual world of internet. Usually, this acronym is spoken to a third party to advise they will be unavailable. However, more recently the term has been used to explain the difference between physical and virtual world without removing the 'realness' of either.

me and I can see the shock on their faces when they realise a woman is mixing [for] them.
Shock and then concern (Ashley, 30, Melbourne).

Reputation plays a significant part in Ashley's career opportunities. Her credentials have paved the way for her to continue working in the job that she loves. Ashley acknowledges her capabilities by saying that 'people have heard a good mix'. Overwhelmingly this statement reflects that her nexus of social capital is the most powerful tool she has to obtain employment. By stating that newcomers express shock when she appears as their sound engineer, Ashley highlights an understanding of ongoing gender stereotypes within the punk community, even in Melbourne where many informants have relocated in order to escape small town career and music barriers. The fact that newcomers are 'surprised' to see her as the sound engineer of a show indicates the underrepresentation of women working in this scene.

Furthermore, Ashley points out that when she is mixing an all-male band, they can seem concerned about her aptitude to mix sound successfully. This indicates the overarching discourse of masculine gender-stereotyped technical expertise as the primary symbol for evaluations of skill in the scene. Participant observation in gig spaces, where Ashley was employed as a sound engineer, allowed me to view these interactions first hand. Some all-male bands vocalised their surprise to Ashley. One man, while she was standing at the mixing desk checking the levels, said 'oh, I didn't realise you were going to be mixing us tonight, have you done this before?' Ashley and I conducted a small social experiment within this setting. We asked one of our cismale friends to stand behind the mixing desk and look like they were working. We watched the interactions of other cismale band and audience members, and observed where they placed their bodies in relation to him, their tone and language, and whether they directed the apparent sound engineer on how to operate the mixing desk. We noted that band members stood back from the desk, shook hands with our cismale friend and asked questions about the best formation to stand in for sound quality. We noticed that no shock or surprise registered on the band members faces; everything seemed to be as it should.

In contrast, when Ashley took over, the men approached the mixing desk more closely. They leaned in and asked Ashley questions about how long she had been a sound engineer and if she was filling in for someone else. They did not shake hands. This embodied contrast illuminated the division of authority in the highly gendered punk scene. A cisman as sound engineer is assumed to have authority simply by virtue of outward presentation, whereas a female sound engineer is seen to have

questionable authority. It is notable that, as everyday practice, Ashley presents herself in a traditionally masculine fashion. She half-heartedly jokes that, if it was hard for her to be taken seriously, ‘imagine how hard it would be for femme-presenting women’.

Casey

Casey told me about an online sound engineers group that excludes cismen. This type of resistance to cismale domination in gig spaces is not isolated to the Melbourne live music scene. It also occurs in Brighton. Within the punk scene, private communities of women and queers are set up, either online or socially, to exclude male contribution. With this tactic, those who are marginalised actively refute the engagement of cismen in their networks. That non-interlocking strategy represents a revolt against cismales being privileged in the scene on the basis of their gender. Nevertheless, it was quickly pointed out to me that this should remain private knowledge away from the general community, indicating fear that male sound engineers might find out and object. The practice of creating private and secret forums in order to share opportunities reveals the need for women to act in a way that remains covert for fear of their motives being questioned. The result for them might be further exclusion. This practice demonstrates resistance to the usual male-gendered nepotism in the scene. Casey sees the strategy of women as technical assistants and performers bonding together as ‘nipping it in the bud’ (negative female gender stereotyping), by completely excluding cismen from their dialogue around obtaining work or playing a show. It seems that a sense of community is being built within both the virtual and physical communities, and that ‘the girl gang’ (Casey, 28, Melbourne) of female sound engineers flourishes.

However, such covert communities of women are usually found only where the size of the punk scene makes it possible. In the much smaller city of Newcastle, Lola points out that there is an absolute lack of female sound engineers. Lola is a Newcastle performer in both bands and solo acts. She has been an active member of the punk scene for over ten years. She bluntly addresses the local gender gap by stating that, ‘I’ve been playing shows in Newcastle for 10 years. I’ve never had a female sound engineer’ (Lola, 25, Newcastle). With no representation of female sound engineers in Newcastle, there is little discourse around the subject. It seems that a woman had never been employed as a sound engineer at a gig. Moreover, all venues and bars in Newcastle where punk bands perform are owned and operated exclusively by cismen. However, at the time of this thesis being written, several women were in the process of acquiring a local, all-ages gig space in the city.

The women involved in this endeavour have experience with organising punk events, such as gigs and workshops, so it is possible that some female sound engineers might emerge from this initiative.

Conclusion

Narratives around cismen taking up space and enacting symbolic and physical violence against marginalised groups in the punk scene were frequently produced by informants. Performers (defined as those who produce and disseminate queer punx music, art and literature), face specific forms of empowerment and disempowerment as a result of their high visibility. On the one hand, these women act as a voice for those in the scene who experience oppression and so, become increasingly revered as spokespeople. These performers gain cultural and social capital through networking with local and international communities. Physically, their voices are amplified and so have the potential to disseminate countercultural resistance to heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions. On the other hand, performers become bodily representations of revolution, sites of resistance and so they are more likely to become targets of negative labelling. A clear example can be found in Ren's case, where a cisman notes her drumming ability but views her as a *difficult woman* because she refuses the interlocking praxis of being complimented for fulfilling a culturally produced, masculinised role. In this way, a micro-aggression is being enacted, and gender stereotyping becomes (re)produced. Another example appears in Elle's experiences where she expresses disappointment at having to carry the burden of educating cismen about gender problems within their scene. Elle acknowledges the intense commitment of emotional labour to educate people about respect, privilege and acknowledgement of gender within the punk scene. The interviews and participant observation component of this research imply that Melbourne has the greatest number of female-identified or queer performers, or at least the most active scene, and so the voices of these informants are represented at a greater level than for Newcastle and Brighton. However, the limits of these geographical sites are circumvented by digital communities, and so the problems facing specific sites are not isolated to any one place.

The 15 informants who were venue staff, sound engineers or organisers of punk events - either paid or unpaid - described examples of redistributing equity among queer women and non-gender conforming individuals and groups. Naming these as strategies of resistance (Halberstam 2005) provides a lens with which to view seemingly disjointed tactics as a single holistic function to exclude cismen. Some of those strategies include forming groups on social media sites, such as

Facebook, exclusively for queer women and gender diverse people. These sites afford private spaces where, for example, employment can be offered and shared amongst those who may be overlooked in other situations. This practice demonstrates resistance to the male-gendered nepotism that commonly exists within the scene. These groups are not only practical resources, but also sites of intimacy - this will be further examined later in terms of how private online spaces support queer(ed) communities. Overall, gender stereotyping is evident in gig spaces, continually reinforcing the idea that appearing masculine results in being taken more seriously.

The next chapter expands on symbolic violence and transformations of power by looking at audience experiences, both being physically part of an audience in the gig space, and being part of punk engagement in a broader sense; doing and viewing punk performativity in public space. It is evident that research informants consider queering punk to extend further than just being present at shows.

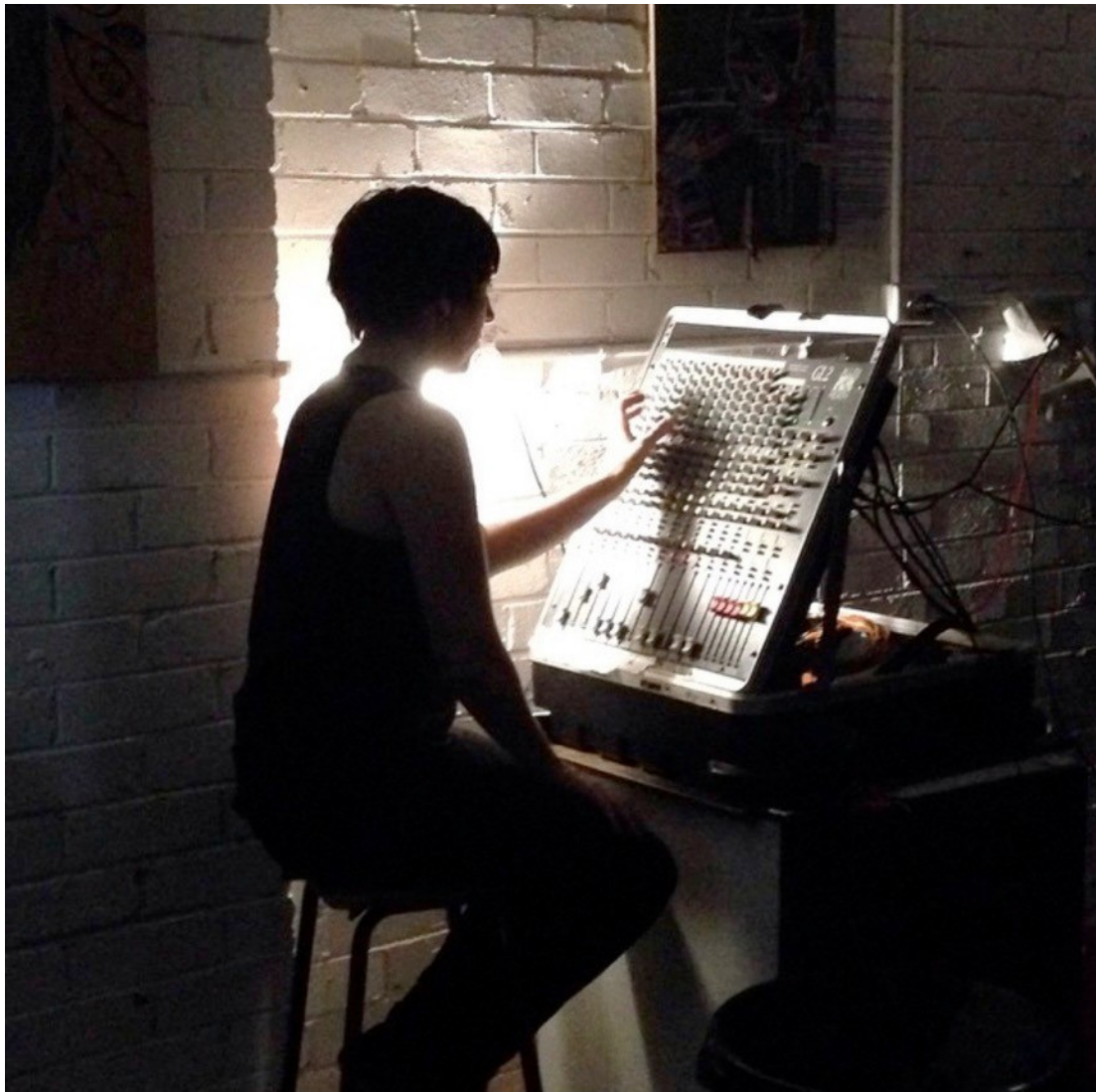


Figure 13: A queer, woman-identified person mixes a band a Melbourne recording studio. Photo taken July 2015.

Chapter Seven: The Audience as an Affective Arrangement

While queer women and gender diverse people may be underrepresented in punk in terms of performers and in technical roles, they certainly exist within scene spaces as members of audience. Yet often women and queers in the audience are forgotten contributors to the scene in the work of music journalists and academics, since their participation does not fall into the most visceral part of the social hierarchy in the way that cismale musicians or producers do. Trans and non-binary people are either misrepresented or completely erased from punk histories. Women as audience members, supporters, distributors and fans can be reduced to the category of groupies or girlfriends, denoting their connection to punk only through male-female relationships. The topic of female ‘invisibility’ in punk scenes has been much researched (McRobbie and Garber 1976; Leblanc 1999; Tsistos 1999; Krenske and McKay 2000; Jacques 2001; Ryan 2008; Marcus 2010; Purchla 2011; Dawes 2012). Yet this chapter reframes queer, female and gender diverse presence in punk as *hypervisibility*. As one key informant points out to me, ‘I’m not concerned with being invisible, I’m more concerned with being a target’ (Shelly, 28, Melbourne). Being so visible presents a range of issues for young, queer punx. They stand out not only in physical audience spaces, but on digital platforms and in everyday life. I begin this chapter with a necessary exploration of the violence that young queer women and gender diverse people experience as audiences in punk scenes. The informants named violence against audience members more frequently than any other topic in interviews.

I have named those who participate in punk gigs and events outside of performers and technical assistants as an *audience*. However, the term refers beyond those who attend shows. Firstly, those who engage in punk communities are in constant negotiation of their identities and as such are actively engaged in punk discourses both in and out of the gig space. Secondly, audience as a term distinguishes between the roles of producers and consumers. All informants shared at least one narrative of gender divisions within the audience, and I have witnessed these divisions from my very first punk gig. Narratives of violent audience spaces and mosh pit politics can be found in accounts from the Newcastle, Melbourne and Brighton scene, and therefore cannot be pinned down to any one locality. However, there are reports of greater violence being perpetrated in smaller scenes. Accordingly, the following chapter sections are organised by geographical place. The scenes and

spaces are certainly similar. However, each is comprised of various lived experiences, historical underpinnings, political climates and cultural understandings.

This chapter explores the audience and the mosh pit as sites of violence, affect and collective intensities using the conceptual framework of transformations within music activity (De Nora 2000), and technologies of the collective (Hancock and Lorr 2013) to theorise queer(ed) experience. Researchers in the study of identity construction are increasingly turning to analysis of *feeling practices* to better understand people's allegiances and investments, and the activities of categorising, narrating, othering, differentiating and positioning (Wetherell 2012: 10). Feeling practices, such as emotion, affect and embodiment, speak to the heart of feminist and queer punk scenes whereby inequity congeals as a sort of belonging across non-dominant participants. In this way, embodiment manifests in displays of involvement and exclusions from group membership, becoming the conduit between music, identity, conventionalised expressions, and how people configure their social worlds (Hancock and Lorr 2013: 3).

Considering that performers and technical assistants also, at times, form part of the audience, I acknowledge their interchangeable roles in the embedded power dynamics of the wider social space that frames the audience and mosh pit sites. In doing so, I take the notion of affective atmospheres further than I have previously, to describe the ways that embodied senses of self and their prescribed performativity rub together in social spaces (see Massumi 2002; Anderson 2009; Pile 2010; Ash 2015) or become 'sticky' (Ahmed 2004). Punk + queer achieves a hybrid metaphorical space that transcends the physical space of the venue through extensions of *affect* that are collaboratively accomplished. The kinds of social and cultural capital brought to this space by embodied queer women and gender diverse people are combined in the collective practice of DIT to achieve unexpected new distinctions of bodily habitus and cultural taste in the field of punk, which has always been a fertile site for political contestation in any case.

The Audience

The Melbourne punk scene appeared to have the highest representation of women and gender diverse people and so, resilient responses to overt and covert gendered violence were more wide reaching. In Newcastle and Brighton, punk scenes appear more localised and the frequency of gigs was irregular.

Specifically, queers seem to be hypervisible in Newcastle, whilst punks appear more likely to cross-pollinate a variety of music genres in Brighton.

Newcastle

As described in previous chapters, the Newcastle punk scene has a dominant historical narrative of being both cismale-dominated and not particularly queer-affirming. The narratives from young queer punx below highlight the overrepresentation of cismale musicians, organisers, venue staff and audience members, which negatively affects the context so that symbolic violence is often enacted. Of course, cismen cannot be conceptualised as a homogenous group, and there are several cismen who actively promote gender-affirming and sexually diverse culture in Newcastle punk spaces. However, overwhelmingly, informants found cismen to be domineering in their ownership of punk histories and futurity. Male overrepresentation was often attributed to historical understandings as indicated by one participant, ‘why would a girl start a band when she never sees a girl in a band in this town?’ (Ellen, 25, Newcastle).

We can understand this by returning to the concept of the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1990, 1993). As the regulating body of identity construction, the heterosexual matrix privileges straight over queer(ed) identities and in doing so, regulates what is considered natural and therefore normal behaviour. If performative spaces are constructed by the bodies within them, then Newcastle punk venues are intensely straight, and male. The primary discourse of the scene is the dissension of punks from everyday social and political norms. Referring back to the history of punk, white cismen claim implicit and often explicit ownership over the landscape of punk ethos and ideal. They embody the ‘other white man’; a disbeliever in the establishment, the corporate, and forms of authority. The ethic of rebelliousness, to wake up to the government pulling the wool over your eyes; is what white cismen have traditionally understood punk to be. And so, they are the self-proclaimed Other, both a symbol of the rejected and the rejection, the outcast in the willing periphery. Newcastle informants framed cismen as afforded the possibility of this kind of Othered positionality specifically because of their privilege in the heterosexual matrix. Here, assuming an Othered position can be understood as a performative move, rather than being structurally imposed. The doxic understanding of male dominated punk space is that it challenges economic and mainstream authorial power.

Punk creates new iconoclastic narratives about music and life. However, these are imagined primarily in terms of a heroic masculinity (Haenfler 2015; Sharp and Nilan 2015; Avery-Natale 2016). To disrupt the space and temporality of the scene through female voice and queerness refocuses the lens of this cismale self-proclaimed Otherness. In one moment, the straight white man understands himself as Other, is oppressed in relation to the norm and makes a community through his Otherness (Du Plessis and

Chapman 1997). Yet, in the next moment, he is the (oppressive) norm. His iconoclastic community is questioned when held up against his white male privilege. Thus, his collective identity as heroic misfit (Maskell 2009; Ensminger 2010; Griffin 2012) is challenged. Accordingly, straight white cismen (the majority at gigs) can feel threatened by those who are not straight white cismen.

Rose, an informant from Newcastle who attends local gigs frequently, describes her fear of retaliation against her female queerness by threatened cismen,

I make myself pretty small at gigs these days, it's just not worth the emotional labour.

Explaining myself, arguing, yelling and dealing with my feelings afterwards. These are men I've been going to shows with for years and they still arc up when I get mad about their language or the space they are taking up. I threaten their good time and I get punished for it (Rose, 25, Newcastle).

Rose uses the idea of emotional labour to explain how she tries to deal with an unsafe space by making herself less visible. She also touches on the affects of these encounters beyond the punk space by indicating she experiences 'feelings afterwards'. Physical abuse and bodies taking up space in punk takes its toll on women (see Maskell 2009; Ensminger 2010; Griffin 2012). Rose deals with symbolic violence in punk gigs by making herself 'small' to deal with unsafe spaces. By shrinking herself at gigs, Rose avoids coming up against physical or verbal altercations. She is not alone in this position. Most queer punx who do not participate in any 'backstage' operation, express their unwillingness to speak out at gigs about issues of queer or sexist inequalities. They imply that is unsafe or uncomfortable to do so. Negotiating safety within these male homosocial spaces is emotional labour. Women and queers are ascribed the position of educating or 'calling out' politically incorrect language, abuse and threatening behaviour by the straight male majority.

There are two analytical considerations to be made about Rose's comments above. Firstly, to make herself small points to her visibility. Rather than being invisible, Rose understands that without actively minimising her representation in an audience space, she occupies a highly visible position and in doing so becomes a target for gendered violence. Rose did not say whether she is visible as queer or as a woman and so, an analysis of her narrative does not specifically address which identity marker makes her visible. However, such a consideration arises later in this chapter. Secondly, by making herself small, she becomes less provocative to those cismen who regard the space as their own. The space becomes less about physical expression of enjoyment for those who do not occupy the hegemonic position in the scene. They can better enjoy the music and the company of their friends by shrinking back. Yet this 'making small' has the effect of silencing women and queers,

which in turn perpetuates the unsafe environment of the gigs. Gigs in Newcastle can be breeding grounds for physical forms of violence against marginalised or under-represented groups. Rose goes on to say,

There are no safe(r) spaces policies at gigs in Newcastle. As female-identifying and/or queer, we are not safe at shows. Our bodies and feelings and experiences become public domain, and who do we tell if someone pushes us or touches us? The bar staff, the security, the organiser? We need our own community [of punk] not to be perpetrators, and we can't seem to make that happen (Rose, 25, Newcastle).

Like Rose, every informant in the Newcastle site identifies at least one instance of being involved in, or witnessing, a threat of physical violence enacted toward a female or gender diverse person within their local scene. There were also overt instances of physical violence. Threats of violence were perpetrated by male gig attendees, band members, and security staff. Informants are quick to offer other examples of symbolic violence too, such as feeling unwelcome in certain space. They cite male band members referring to other men as 'pussies' or 'bitches'. They observe women not being represented in bands or as sound engineers, and they note the lack of recognition women are given for their participation and contribution to the scene. Instances of symbolic violence in Newcastle were *always* attributed to gender. Examples include a lack of venue security and bar staff refusing to eject patrons who make women feel unsafe. There were also instances of women being physically assaulted by cismen in the mosh pit, a place which is often difficult for women and queers to negotiate. Historical and cultural representations of the mosh pit name it as a site of anti-establishment resistance (see Nilan and Threadgold 2015). This makes pit violence and aggression difficult to define and report. They can easily be framed as normalised events. Later discussion addresses the mosh pit and the kinds of embodiments and affects that are experienced there.

While the above references to violence are not isolated to a Newcastle setting, the site was named as particularly violent by informants and without any meaningful hope of future change. It seems there is an entrenched local culture of gendered violence in the venues where punk gigs are held. Notably, several Newcastle respondents signal Melbourne as an example of a progressive, and in some ways successful, punk scene where women do not experience the same kind of routine aggression, perhaps because there are far more of them and the scene is much broader and more varied.

However, ethnographic observation at punk and hardcore shows in Newcastle, both for this project, and in the 15 years of prior attendance, indicates young women employ 'strategies of resistance' (Halberstam 2003: 134) against gendered violence within the local scene. For example, a recent depiction of violence against women on a flyer for an upcoming punk show was named as

inappropriate by a small group of young women. These women contacted the band and venue where the band was booked only to be met with derision and hostility from both parties. As a result, the women organised a meet-up and campaign where each show poster they came across in the city would be torn down. They explained they felt it was necessary to do this to keep women in their scene, and women in general, safe from depictions of violence. Some admitted to being afraid of the backlash their action would cause. However, they justified their actions as working for a greater good – to make gigs safer for women. The gig went ahead as planned, and neither the band nor venue responded to commentary on it. However, those same young women have since organised shows in alternative venues to raise funds for the prevention of violence against women. Not deterred by the earlier experience, the young women reframed this event as demonstrating the futurity and potential of their scene. This example gives insight into the collective understanding of a strong gender division in the Newcastle punk scene, as well as the tactics and time that young women invest in combatting male homosocial doxa.

There are certainly accounts of physical violence in Newcastle,

I've been spat on, cursed at, punched, kicked, thrown to the floor, all in the name of a good time at a show. Most of the time I can't even get a spot up front, and being short, I don't think I've ever been able to see a whole band play a set. Dudes just don't care if you can't see, or if they are running into you. Like, we move out of their way on the street, why would we get any space at a show, you know? (Millie, 20, Newcastle).

Millie presents an almost defeated experience of attending punk gigs in Newcastle. She asserts that she still regularly attends gigs but when she encounters violence as described above, she wonders about the point of it all. Millie illuminates the difficulties of queer space-making in Newcastle. It also shows how punk gig spaces are performatively constituted as male homosocial sites. Yet Millie continues to attend punk gigs in Newcastle, despite encountering frequent violence from cismen.

Melbourne

Many punk bands that originally formed in regional cities like Newcastle make the move to Melbourne permanently. In Melbourne, they gain greater access to show spaces and to communities that are more inclusive and tailored to punk scenes. The Melbourne punk scene is eclectic in ways that regional cities are not. There are many more venues, and styles of music cater for hardcore to post-punk to folk punk tastes. In a metropolitan city, the availability of punk activity outside of the gig space is also increased. For example, allied events such as Queer Skate are held in public skate parks and feature workshops for young women to learn to skate while engaging with the DIY punk landscape in the form of zines and live music. The Melbourne punk scene affords an ability to

compare the efficacy of collective authorisation (Hammers 2010) between regional towns and large cities. In large cities, there is increased visibility as a result of numbers, more extensive queer discourse and safe(r) spaces policies. These resources become more prevalent with time and activism.

However, the Melbourne punk scene is still fraught with inequality. In a similar way to the narratives of Rose and Millie in Newcastle, Jamie expresses her concern about the insidious nature of gendered imbalances in the Melbourne music scene. While she is ‘sure other places have it much worse,’ Jamie highlights that cismale-dominated Melbourne spaces are not universally safe either for women and queers,

I find that, in Melbourne, in underground or dive bars, men’s politics is much better. Obviously there are exceptions, but most of the owners and bar staff will kick men out if they are behaving badly so there is less chance of that happening. But that doesn’t stop the little things, like not being able to stand up front or not feeling safe to walk home after the gig if someone has been eyeballing you all night (Jamie, 25, Melbourne).

While Rose from Newcastle indicates the bar staff, venue operators and organisers are unreliable in their approach to combating gendered violence at shows, Jamie asserts that a more pro-active stance is taken in the Melbourne music scene. Even so, fieldwork observations in Melbourne indicate that Jamie is correct when she says she is unable to occupy a legitimate place at a show as a result of being visibly female. This is a common example of the way cismen assert heteronormative privilege in gig spaces no matter where they are.

The majority of women interviewed complained about the expression of male privilege. They reported that cismen at gigs were unaware of, or unapologetic about, the effect of their bodies on people around them. Like the example of shrinking oneself, this physical marginalising of women as active participants within the punk gig space creates unsafe spaces. The online punk space echoes this same marginalisation. Ahmed (2006) describes this as ‘diversity work’ in spaces that routinely exclude certain groups. The logic is, ‘to invite people in but make them uncomfortable, so if they leave, it appears they have done so of their own free will’ (Ahmed 2006: 104).

Jamie’s reported experiences at Melbourne gigs are supported by participant observation. I recorded multiple instances of cismen being removed, either wilfully or forcibly, from venues after having complaints made against them. In one instance, a young, white man stood front and centre at the gig of an all-girl, folk punk band and attempted to keep women out of the space by dancing erratically.

He was seen ‘grabbing’ at the bass player’s clothing and yelling sexually charged commentary between songs. The bar staff physically removed the man from the venue, citing sexual harassment. Visibly confused, the man initially told the band and bar staff that he had not done anything but try to have a good time. At that moment, the band and most of the audience, largely female, eye-rolled knowingly. They knew that having a good time in hegemonically male terms is often one where cismen take up the most space and conduct micro-aggressions against women.

Griffin (2012) has explained at length the dissonance and complexities of hegemonic masculinity in UK punk spaces. This is not dissimilar to the Melbourne punk scene in that spaces become created contextually by the expressive dominance of male bodies. Gemma highlights the ability of cismen to occupy space within the scene. As one of the youngest informants in this study, she expresses frustration at the naturalised male/masculine hegemony,

Cismen are just always in the way. They’re at the bar, they’re out the back, they’re front of stage, talking and telling us all about themselves. It’s boring and I wish they would all fuck off (Gemma, 22, Melbourne).

Again the dismissive exhaustion that resonates from Gemma’s quote indicates ongoing animosity between young women and cismen within gig spaces. Gemma sees cismen as being ‘in the way’, which underscores her frustration at not being free within a space she meaningfully inhabits. Gemma is simultaneously both welcomed into these punk spaces and made to feel unwelcome (see Ahmed 2006) because of her gender.

Gemma rarely discusses herself as an individual at shows. She prefers, whether consciously or not, to describe the collective of women who were present. In this way, Gemma understands herself as part of an oppressed community, where experiences are shared rather than being targeted at her in particular. Her account points specifically to the way women support each other in gig spaces where cismen dominate. Much of the research that has been undertaken in the field of queer space-making concerns sexualised spaces, such as queer events (Hammers 2008) or clubs specifically designed for sexual encounters (Stone 2013). By using Hammers’ theoretical framework of collective authorisation and extending it to include *affect* (Ahmed 2006) in queer and punk spaces, it is possible to identify the nuances of queer identity and space-making in a male-dominated scene like punk music. Ahmed (2006: 106) explains that bodies are oriented to feel at home in certain spaces and times and that ‘this line of desire is in line with one’s sex’. The project data indicate that queer women both feel at home and do not feel at home in punk scenes and gigs. Attending male-dominated punk gigs is a line of desire that does not follow the continuum of normative sexual

subjectivity (Ahmed 2006: 71).

In the context of Hammers' (2010) work on collective authorisation in queer spaces, Gemma's quote above speaks to how female and queer bodies in the punk scene become authorised to subversively take part, take notice, and take action against heteronormative regulation. Gemma's view of herself as part of a larger group of women and queers sharing experiences indicates her understanding that she is not alone in her frustration. She used terms like 'we' and 'us' with confidence. This indicates she understands herself through collective experience and in turn, collective authorisation (Hammers 2010). While there is greater gender freedom in the Melbourne punk scene and a greater sense of community, women still experience forms of male violence, and must gather resources to challenge heteronormativity. In so doing, they will make themselves more visible as a collective, and less vulnerable, in visibility terms, as isolated individuals.

Brighton

As an international hub of punk and DIY culture with stylised local and regional contexts, large cities in the UK afford a glimpse of queer punx identities at a more global level. During fieldwork, I was lucky enough to secure accommodation in UK homes specifically identified as 'queer punx' or 'DIY queer'. Through those contacts I gained access to communities of women engaged with punk and queer scenes. The city of Brighton allowed me to explore events such as festivals, international bands, historical venues and their underpinnings in the punk landscape. There I found gendered divisions just as elsewhere,

Brighton is weird. A lot of cismen run so-called feminist shows and labels here, but I know that their politics don't always match up with their actions. I've heard 'feminist dudes' call women bitches and make objectifying comments on their bodies at shows, which is totally gross. They parade themselves around to queers and girls as some kind of god amongst men, but really, they're just like any other non-punk dude trying to get their ego stroked (Jez, 26, Brighton).

Jez's comments pick up on the theme of feminism and a queer-friendly stance as fashionable trends. It seems some cismen in the scene consider the label of feminist/queer-friendly to be attractive and self-validating. They are a 'good dude' if they just call themselves a feminist and say they support queer people. There is a marketing angle here and a commodification of hypervisibility. Jez's statement indicates that women and queers are visible consumers of punk, and that those organising shows are attempting to leverage their high visibility to curate their own performative expression.

Michelle expands on Jez's statement by indicating that women are more likely to attend a show if it is

billed as queer, regardless of who is organising it,

In Brighton, a lot of gigs are billed as 'queer', I think because we are known as a queer town or something? But like, you turn up and the bands are all cisdues. It's almost like 'queer' has become a draw card (Michelle, 29, Brighton).

Mixed bills generate distinct atmospheres in Brighton. When each band is a different genre or has a different politics, the relevant crowd usually follows in an enter-exit sequence. Thus, gig spaces in Brighton can be queered and unqueered quickly. In terms of Hammers' (2010) work on authorisation, a space can be designated queer but is only queered by the bodies that fill it. As explored in Chapter Six, Brighton is often considered to be a 'queer town', or at least queer-friendly. Such a labelling seems to present an unstable foundation of acceptance and inclusivity. In the same way that safe(r) spaces cannot be safe unless every individual feels safe, a queer(ed) space does not become queer by being locatable in queer-named geography. The sequence of 'safe' labelling can become yet another way in which symbolic violence is enacted.

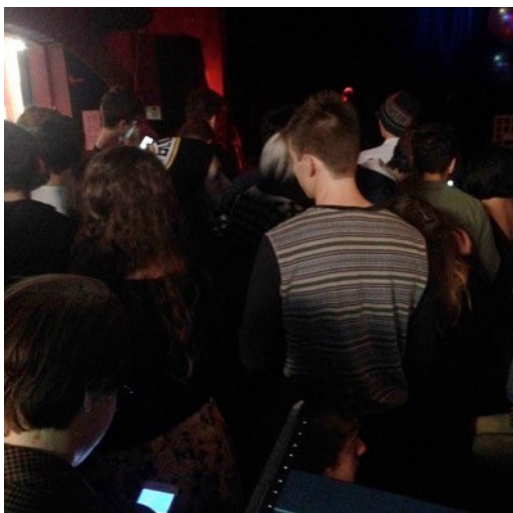
Using Brighton as an example, the behaviour of some people within the scene did not change when moving between sites labelled as 'safe(r)' and those that were not labelled. This points to a range of possibilities, all of which demonstrate that those who hold dominant status 'need only to go about their daily lives, adhering to the rules of the system that provides them their position of privilege' (Schubert 2008: 184). First, potentially safe(r) spaces policies did not resonate with certain groups of people, primarily cismen, and so they took no meaning from the posters on the walls naming the space as safe(r), the Facebook event comments enforcing inclusive language, or the greater representation of women and queers. The symbolic labelling or branding of a space cannot directly regulate practice. Second, the presence of posters and the labour being undertaken to produce a safe(r) space might have been noticed. However, cismen, as more privileged individuals, did not feel the need to engage with the message. These cismen may have been actively resisting the safe(r) spaces ethos through a narrative of traditionalist punk understandings - cismen being the owners of punk and dictators of naming what is punk, or what is not.

This chapter section has explored audiences in translocal sites to better highlight how geographical place can impact identity and space curation practices by young queers. From these re-tellings, I have conceptualised violence as physical and symbolic but also, as performative. Valentine's (2002) theoretical considerations about performativity of space connects with punk subculture here: 'the straight street or office environment do not pre-exist their performance, rather, specific performances bring

these places into being and these spaces are themselves performative of particular power relations' (Valentine 2002: 154). As Allison Gallagher of the band Skin Prison points out,

We need to continue being unapologetic in our participation and inclusion. Marginalised folks don't owe people anything when we perform or attend shows. We certainly don't owe putting up with verbal harassment and violence

This comment is not only about resistance but about owning punk space. Spaces are constructed by bodily exchange and (re)produced through inherent performances of identity. Nominating gig spaces as punk or for punx deliberately establishes a boundary of performance and subject/object relations. The punk audience self becomes part of a space, awakened to the world of 'creative mayhem' (Halberstam 2013) and open to subcultural narratives. Collective resistance by queer women to the domination and symbolic violence of cismen in punk space represents that kind of experience.



Figures 14 and 15: Crowds for shows at The Old Bar and National Gallery Victoria, 2017.

¹⁷ Fry, C. 2016. The grrrls are back in town: A look at the movement dismantling music's boys club. Junkee. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://fasterlouder.junkee.com/the-grrrls-are-back-in-town-a-look-at-the-acts-dismantling-musics-boys-club/865741>

The Mosh Pit

The mosh pit was frequently named as a key place where male violence was experienced by women at gigs. This is not surprising because punk cismen, if asked, would probably acknowledge their own experiences of violence there too. However, they would be likely to view those experiences differently, perhaps even as pleasure. Expanding on De Nora's (1999, 2000, 2003, 2011) music-in-action approach, Hancock and Lorr (2013) explore the mosh pit as a *technology of the collective*. Focusing on the musical practices of hardcore punk, they explain how music moves from a 'technology of the self' for individual identity construction to a 'technology of the collective' for group identity. Mosh pits do this by bonding groups together through collective corporeal and symbolic interactions expressed in musical practices. As they explain, 'for punks in the hardcore scene, music is more than just a soundtrack; it is a style of life and part and parcel of one's social activity' (Hancock and Lorr 2013: 4).

However, what Hancock and Lorr (2013) fail to include in their analysis is the social fragmentation locatable in mosh pit. In fact, there is no mention of gender within their ethnographic account of a mosh pit other than to use him and her pronouns to describe participants. I would go further than their identification of technology of the collective to suggest that the usual punk mosh pit is what I call a 'technology of collective relegation'. Emma, a young queer woman who participates in the Newcastle punk and hardcore scene, highlights gendered disillusionment within these spaces. Emma's focus is towards the site of the mosh pit, where bodies come together, either by will or by force, in relation to music,

Mosh pits are ridiculous. Just the name of them sounds violent. They're gross and pointless
(Emma, 23, Newcastle).

Emma's concise dismissal of the mosh pit as pointless was not the common sentiment among informants. Most used metaphors of the mosh pit to describe hegemonic masculinity. So, while Hancock and Lorr (2013) describe the anti-capitalist and anti-establishment values of the pit, I could not help but imagine all the women, queers, trans, non-binary and people of colour standing on their tiptoes with their backs to the wall, arms folded, possibly feeling hurt, angry and anxious about possibly getting hurt. For these people, the idealised 'collective' of the mosh pit seems an unimaginable feat. Sim and Baker (2015: 146) in their study of straight-edge culture explain the way

that the mosh pit acts as a vehicle for hypermasculinity and consequently exclusion of women: ‘by way of their bodies, male participants reduce possibilities for full female participation’ (Sim and Baker 2015: 146). Interestingly, the informants very rarely named singular or even collective male bodies to be the issue with a mosh pit. Rather, informants and observation of gigs pointed to the problems of ‘collective’ hypermasculinity,

There is no reason that a mosh pit needs to be so aggressive. The reason it is, is because it’s full of toxic masculinity. Look, I like being up front and listening and dancing, but I always know if I’m hurting someone in the process (Ashley, 30, Melbourne).

Interview respondents frequently imply the mosh pit to be an extension of male privilege, both within punk and the wider social frame. Chrissy, a queer ciswoman from Newcastle, describes cismen’s bodies as a catalyst for domination at gigs. She comments on cismen’s bodily participation in the pit,

What about how dudes can just take their shirts off and then you’re like, standing there with this sweaty dude’s body up against you, bumping his chest into you and jumping around erratically? Oh man, that’s the worst. And what do you do, you know? Leave and just allow it to keep happening, stay and suffer silently or speak up and get screamed at, or worse? (Chrissy, 30, Newcastle).

Like Ashley, Chrissy refers to the male body in a way that depicts how the mosh pit operates as a site of exclusion for those who resist male homosocial praxis. Both Ashley and Chrissy are aware of the cismale bodies that surround them, those that rub against them and those which minimise them, either through physical or symbolic violence. Their knowing is constructed through years of punk participation and lived experience. Chrissy points out that simply leaving the pit space, while perhaps an act of self-care, is a subordinating strategy. Ashley and Chrissy understand bodies to be a location of symbolic violence, where those who hold the most power are able to reproduce subordinating classifications and categorisations under the guise of legitimate practice. The apparently legitimate practice of moshing and using the body as a vehicle for participation, can lead to discounting all other bodies.

The performativity of bodies makes the mosh pit space. Hancock and Lorr (2013) reiterate the 'roughness' of the pit in their research, framing it as an embodied act of the collective in response to sonics, tempo and pace,

The faster and the more aggressive the music becomes, the rougher the mosh pit gets. As bands play harsher, they use more distortion in the guitars, which will then send the moshers into an ever more rowdy and frenetic pace as they feed off the energy of the band. The audience tries to match their moshing to the band's intensity. The rougher the pit becomes, the more intense the music (Hancock and Lorr 2013: 13).

By scaffolding the mosh pit as an effect of atmospheric engagement, Hancock and Lorr (2013) seem to be assuming that all informants are enjoying the experience of being front of stage amongst the bodies of others. Also, a hierarchy is being established where the moshing body is implied as more important, more connected and more engaged than the standing, watching and listening body. In this way, 'roughness' is coded as authentic enthusiasm and is therefore a valuable commodity in the mosh pit. The rougher the pit, the better the gig. Such a narrative is entwined with hypermasculinity in that a 'good show' will result in typically masculinised biographies; roughness equates to intensity. A recent online article published by Newcastle Live offers some critical engagement with the encoded roughness of gig spaces. The 2016 article by a woman, titled 'G'day mates, fellow Novocastrians, gig goers and everyone in between' demonstrates the way violence operates as authenticity, particularly in the Newcastle punk scene,

I saw the Smith Street Band last year and came home with a ripped t-shirt and a black eye. Not an accidental black eye. I was punched in the face in the pit. (And this is not the first time). And yes, I can hear it already, 'If you don't like the pit stay out of it'. No way. This is not at all about that. Because I have been front row at many a gig, and in the middle of many a mosh pit of much, MUCH heavier gigs than the ones I'm talking about. Because the pit is where I choose to stand and it's where I belong, I love being there and that's how I choose to enjoy a show. Standing toe to toe with Karina Utomo from High Tension whilst she literally screamed lyrics in my face whilst the pit raged around me is my absolute favourite gig-going memory. That genre of music makes me feel 10 foot tall and I will never ever ever stop going to those shows.¹⁸

In contrast to the project informant statements, the article author, Laura, is unapologetic about her involvement within the mosh pit and refuses to be relegated, even in the face of physical violence. Laura offers a vibrant account of the gig space as a woman-identified participant, and highlights that her choice to be involved is an active negotiation of embodiment, 'music makes me feel 10 feet tall'. In this way, feeling spaces, regardless of their overt marginalisation practices, can become key catalysts for continued scene participation and identity curation. Laura rebuts the assumption that mosh pits require violence to be authentic, preferring to reframe the gig space as a naturalised state of male homosocial activity, rather than inherently violent as a result of sonics or genre. Laura implies that it is the prescribed attitude of Newcastle punks, in this case, that generate unsafe spaces, rather than the style or sound itself, or even the pit. Laura continues,

The definition of what exactly it means to be a Newy punk kid, or even a gig goer in Newcastle, or what it actually means to love and follow these bands seems to be lost on so many people. Punk doesn't mean getting in people's faces who are clearly trying to just have a good time. Being a fan of hardcore music doesn't mean you have to prove to each and every punter that you're the most hardcore person at the show. That you'll get so into the set that you'll climb up on stage and attempt to grab the microphone from the lead singer, who again, is just trying to do their job. You're not a hero mate. Going to gigs and jumping in 'the pit' does not mean you own the entire space. It also doesn't mean that you can grab hold of anyone around you and toss them around without their consent.¹⁹

Laura's statements echo those of many project informants and other queer punks who have been recorded in subcultural activity, zines, online media and informal narratives. Transformative moments occur for both Laura and those who participate in punk alongside her. Laura feels an embodied sense of pleasure which manifests in her 'feeling 10 feet tall'. I consider Laura's article as a strategy of resistance, where she is utilising online discourse to reach potentially hundreds of punks in Newcastle. She recognises that, as a woman, she is hypervisible in punk settings and has chosen to reconfigure this hypervisibility in a way that shifts power from the observed, to the observer. By writing this article Laura is retaliating. She is reclaiming power through making it known that she will hold people accountable for their actions in gig spaces.

Project informant Ren supported this type of retaliation as identity curation and safe(r) space production by saying,

I'm not going to stop going to shows, and I'm always going to take up room up front. And if anyone fucks with me or my friends, don't expect me to be quiet about it like I might have been in the past. I think people forget that what happens at shows transfers to other parts of people's lives (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

Here Ren points to two important findings from this research project. The first is that queer women find community in each other's experiences - both positive and negative - by repositioning vulnerability as resilience. As a general statement, queer women and gender diverse people invest in the futurity of their scenes by making known the marginalisation that occurs with it. Secondly, for queer women and gender diverse people, the punk space is only one facet of their queer(ed) lived experience, and so they actively name 'getting fucked with' as a representation of an individual's ethics and values in their everyday life, rather than simply how they act in the mosh pit or audience space.

Sensing Community through Curated Aesthetic

Continuing to employ De Nora's (2000) concept of transformation, Hammers' (2008) notion of authorisation and Ahmed's idea (2004, 2006) of stickiness as affect, discussion that follows demonstrates how safe(r) spaces policies at gigs and events represent practical and successful applications of a DIT ethos. It is proposed that this inclusive recognition of bodies in space and their transference of affect operate as a symbolic telegraphy that is key to curating collective queer identities for women and gender diverse people. In this way, DIT (re)frames their identity-making practices as methods of sensing community and belonging. Tegan explains the affect that she experienced as a teenager seeing a queer punk gig for the first time,

I think the thing for me, being young and seeing these badass, feminist women who called themselves queer and really stood up for themselves and what they believed in, I really admired them. You know, they were educated about themselves. I mean, I had all the feelings towards being attracted to women as well, but really, identifying as queer made me proud of myself and proud to be a part of that mode of thinking (Tegan, 27, Newcastle).

For Tegan, the affect of the punk gig filled in the gaps in her queer narrative, much like De Nora (2000) conceptualised music to do. She experienced that ‘stickiness’ that Ahmed (2006) refers to in the form of admiration towards women standing up for themselves, and an internalisation of the values that were being put on display. Punk routinely signal stylistic and subversive modes of modifying their appearance. Thus, they ‘embody a conscious rejection of the norm and signal active dissent through clothing and performance’ (Cherry and Mellins 2012: 13). Women and gender diverse people in the punk scene also engage in these practices which diversify their visibility. As pointed out previously, in a cismale-dominated music scene, women and gender diverse people are far from invisible. Their presence inheres not only in their hypervisibility in a crowd of cismales, but in their capacity to signal specific identity to other women and queers through modification of visibility. My field notes from an exclusively female-organised Melbourne event called Y Listen demonstrate the symbolic visual telegraphing of diversity,

The fashion of the day was diverse - there were plenty of the usual black jean, black shirt, denim jacket wearers (myself included), but there were also electro/neon/kitsch/hard and soft femme aesthetics being presented and telegraphed. It was probably the most culturally diverse show I had been to (besides the Coburg house show perhaps) as there were several women of colour both in the audience and performing, transpeople and people in drag. After the show, most of the crowd went to Circuit (a local men-meet-men gay bar) to continue the party as the Tote began to fill up with regulars (Field notes 18 March 2015).

The Y Listen gig represented the dynamic potential of a locus of women, trans and non-binary people acting out identity as diverse visibility, where a likeminded politic equalises the fracturing of inequality. The gig had a strong focus towards people of colour and transpeople being appropriately represented as performers and audience members and so, the privilege of being white and cisgender was leveraged in response to calls for intersectional feminist politics to be acknowledged. Such an approach to space-making is clear in the politics of Y LISTEN more broadly. Y LISTEN is a collective of marginalised voices in music fields that seeks to deconstruct hegemonic power in underground music scenes. It was formed in response to a publication by Jimi Kritzler (2014), which took a cismale-centric approach to recording Australian punk history.

Within body modification practices; sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and homophobia can all appear in full force, as social norms translate into women's everyday routines, expectations, and interactions with their bodies (Lovejoy 2001; Sasson-Levy and Rapoport 2003). Women internalise ideas about their bodies as central to 'proper' femininity. Their sense of visibility can become other-directed, concerned about the male gaze, and oriented toward the (heterosexual) dating market. Women learn to dislike or deny their bodies (van den Berg et al. 2010); they hide their menstruation (Stubbs and Costos 2004). Women of colour often adopt hair-straightening and skin-lightening procedures (Byrd and Solomon 2005). Sexual minority women are often encouraged to pass as heterosexual to escape workplace discrimination, violence, and negative judgments (Anderson and Holliday 2004; Button 2004; Rosenfeld 2009). Women disguise and conceal their 'natural' bodies and undergo a vast array of bodily modifications, procedures, grooming habits, and maintenance behaviours to conform to social norms. Appearance has long been the means by which recognition of sexually marginalised others is enabled and capitalism feeds upon this desire. As Gluckman and Reed (1997: xv) note: 'The hunger for visibility and acknowledgement –not to mention for a long list of specific products and services – is a strong one for gay men and lesbians, and it's a hunger that market forces are finally poised to satisfy'. However, unlike gay men, Clarke (1993) notes that queer women are rarely addressed as consumers. They have not been targeted as a specific group because, she argues, they are not identifiable, accessible, measurable or profitable.

Embedded within such style and appearance behaviours is an insistence on the social maintenance of heterosexuality—particularly appearing heterosexual—and its accompanying body practices (Nielsen, Walden, and Kunkel 2000; Pitman 1999; Schilt and Westbrook 2009), which can be seen as resisted in the field notes above recorded at Y LISTEN. At the gig, the variation of bodies became celebrated but more importantly, became a way to telegraph community through chosen visibility. One informant noted 'so many great bodies here, all made up just the way we want them' (Alice, 28, Melbourne). The use of 'we' signalled the collective interface between the resistance of social control (women's bodies under the male gaze) and knowledge (the way we want them). The practices of body alteration, whether through adornment such as fashion, tattoos, corporeal modification and resisting hair removal represent a tangible manifestation of how women and queers can internalise and resist social control mechanisms. They play with visibility and are neither in nor out of place.



Figure 16: Two Conation fans looking forward to their upcoming reunion tour, photo take March 2015.

Conclusion

This chapter has described some of the ways that queer women and gender diverse people experience symbolic violence and employ strategies of resistance when they are audience members; given that they do not have the same levels of power as women who are performers, organisers and technical assistants. An important conclusion is that we need to move beyond the claim that women and queers are ‘invisible’ in punk. Their lived experience is quite the opposite, pointing to the experience of hypervisibility in the punk scene. To clarify, they are not unseen at all. Rather, as subjects they are (un)known in that they do not present visually as the ‘ideal’ or ‘authentic’ punk participant who is a cismale.

The mosh pit was identified as a site of collective intensity, both for queer women and cismen. But those differently-gendered intensities play out in very different ways. The mosh pit is a visceral representation of the differing perspectives that women and queer women have of participatory action. Respondents to this project named themselves as queer. However, participant observation at the three sites established that women could not be labelled as queer simply through watching them. Their presence at queer punx gigs does not define their sexuality or gender. In saying this, the mosh pit provided insight to the ways various groups of women negotiate belonging within their scene. In participant observation, and over the course of my experiences in punk scenes, a number of queer women and gender diverse people relish the pit as a site of expressive dance and bodily engagement and the inclusion of this analysis does not intend to name one practice or activity as better or more progressive than another. Rather, it is a reference point to consider when imagining the mosh pit site and the bodies that fill it. Grrrl gangs, named by informants to show a certain resistance to dominant cultural narratives, exist within pockets of gig spaces, and the wider nexus of punk discourse. There is not just one kind of women and queers that are part of the punk scene.

The findings presented in this chapter point to both resilience and determination on the part of non-cismale punks. It is their scene too. The following chapter goes further to address the successes of queer punx in claiming space, in spite of marginalisation. Looking to the possibilities and potentialities of punk as not-yet-here worlds of becoming, the way queer punks imagine the future of the scene is often just as concrete as the scene is experienced in the here and now.

Chapter Eight: The Grrrl Gang: Staying in the Scene

In this chapter, I address some of the reasons young queers continue to participate in punk scenes, despite the challenges and struggles outlined in previous chapters. Given the deficit of distributed space, time, credibility and acknowledgment of queer women and gender diverse people within local and translocal sites of punk, it may seem curious that they continue to invest themselves in it, and experience their involvement as successful, rather than a reinforcement of marginal status. No specific or pragmatic motive for continued engagement with punk scenes was ever relayed to me in interviews. Rather, reasons for continued involvement were assembled subjectively from a series of *doings* reported within informant narratives and anecdotes. Accordingly, this chapter explores some of these doings as successes against the status quo of cismale-dominated punk scenes. It proceeds by thematic analysis of informant experiences, field notes and other empirical research under the lenses of spatiality and strategies of resistance. To start explaining the phenomenon of continued queer participation, it is important to recall that punk is much more than a physical space for members of the scene. Punk is simultaneously a geography/ethos/identity/sound/field/scene. Collectively accomplishing queer identities in a music scene that encodes cismale dominance might at first appear to constitute straddling two mutually exclusive socio-cultural worlds. However, collective pleasure of making and (re)claiming space and time within punk represents a key factor in continued punk scene participation for queers (Sharp and Nilan, 2015).

In this chapter there is acknowledgement that all punk space is normalised as heterosexual. Queer women and gender diverse people are, and have always been, claiming space in homosocial settings. They do this not only in punk scenes, but in relevant streets, buildings, rural and urban places. According to my observations as a researcher, and as a queer ciswoman in the punk scene, even in this active ‘doing’, there is a nuance of participatory action that points to the affect of fear, of *feeling fearful*, as an embedded distinction of gender. As a product of fear, the experience of any particular environment varies across individuals and genders (Mazey and Lee 1983). While gendered and queer(ed) spaces have been documented extensively in ‘leisurescapes’ and critical geographies (see Hubbard, Gorman-Murray and Nash 2017; Browne and Bakshi, 2011; Hammers 2008; Anderson and Holliday, 2004; Koskela and Pain, 2000; Pain, 1991) very little empirical research has been recorded that specifically describes queer(ed) youth spatialities (see Taylor 2014). Developing a conceptual framework of queer space and its meanings for those who claim territory in cismale homosocial

arenas is perilously achieved, as Warner (1993) in *Fear of Queer Planet* suggests. Yet here I analyse the positive lived experiences of young, queer women and gender diverse people, their subjective realities and collective understanding within punk.

Following a discussion of queer(ing) space, the chapter proceeds to position the DIT ethos within the larger traditional discourse of DIY punk ethics. DIY has been defined as ‘a collective resistance to commodified culture’ (Gartside 1998: 59) and its efficacy as a cultural prototype of capitalist resistance is well documented (Threadgold 2017). However, DIY has also been critically interrogated for its bolstering of individualised white, male, heterosexual and cisgender punk schemas. While DIY in this capacity may be ‘a salient source of political socialisation’ (Paris and Ault 2004: 405), its individualised meaning is constraining when approached critically. The encoded anti-consumerist ethic of DIY can be seen to minimise the collaborative efforts of others under the guise of resisting a neoliberal, political and consumerist framework. In response, the collective ethic of DIT builds on the original embedded resistance to commodified culture while also critiquing it. In doing so, DIT presents an eminently collective method of claiming space and time in tangible and temporal ways, for example, the use of safe(r) spaces policies at gigs. This chapter explores the meanings of DIT with a specific focus on the queer *doing of togetherness*; relationship maintenance, visibility work, (re)claiming credibility and dismantling gendered boundaries located in punk scenes.

Lastly, the chapter moves to a discussion of sensing community as queers experience it. Authorisation of queer inheres in the mutual recognition and acknowledgment of queer(ed) identities and togetherness. There is a logic to signalling queerness within punk scenes. Reading and being read as queer congeals collective identities and space-making which in turn produces a tangible standpoint and political rather than vulnerable visibility in the scene. As Zukin (1996) notes, the production of space depends on decisions made about what should be visible and what should not. Only some forms of visual presence have legitimated value; others are considered illegitimate. For example, being a queer performer makes a visible claim for legitimate value. Whereas being a queer audience member, while also powerful, may require additional *doing work* to be legitimated. In this way, visual practices of queer identity and acknowledgement from others as queer also fix the subject into an authorised map of meaning and power (see Pile and Thrift 1995). This chapter outlines the ‘authorised map’ of punk sites in order to locate the successes of queer women and gender diverse people within them, ultimately acknowledging the complexities of participation and protest that often remain hidden.

Queer Identities and Authorisation in the Punk Scene

This chapter section analyses queer identities as locatable within, though, and around an authorised map of punk spaces. The use of the term ‘authorised’ is two-fold. Firstly, ‘social spaces’ (gigs, events, venues and discourse) are constructed around the male body and patriarchal dominance as outlined in the preceding chapter, and, on this basis, are authorised as sites for the enactment of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2002). Secondly, maps of alternative authorisation can be drawn of queer space, where women and queers collectively engage in resisting patriarchal understandings of what it means to do punk correctly. This resistance can either be an active engagement (overt or covert) or a subconscious placement of the body in space. For example, a queer woman pushing through a room of people may not signify a politicised claim to space as she understands it; however, her *hypervisibility* is in itself affective, and can produce a series of effects which others may read as political.

In theorising social spaces, I acknowledge Bourdieu’s (1986) conception of a metaphorical space which, although always having a material and physical manifestation, is not necessarily determined by it. The importance of social spaces to this chapter section rests on the understanding that with entry into physical spaces, such as bars and venues, a nexus of embodied cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1979, 1987, 1989) is carried. Furthermore, embodied capitals become part of the geography of a physical place; creating, increasing or decreasing the validity and visibility of different capitals relative to each other. In this way capitals are legitimated in certain places and times, whereas the same capitals may be seen as illegitimate elsewhere because ‘matters of distinction are always context-based’ (Skeggs 1999: 216). The mobility of capital can be exemplified by considering how capital is perceived and relational.

In my own research experience, walking into a bar as an academic studying punk perhaps generates the perception of some exclusive and institutionalised cultural capital, which is not generally the kind that is desired atmospherically in a gig space. However, it may be desired by some, depending on their own relationship to academia; particularly their position in that field. In contrast, walking into a bar as a member of the playing band potentially mobilises valued locally-legitimate social, cultural and symbolic capital. Of course, this is only if most people in the bar understand the band to be ‘worthwhile’. Some narratives included in this chapter explain this concept of being ‘worthwhile’ as an alternative to being ‘good’ or ‘terrible’, and the term points to a collective nod of appreciation for the politics of a group or individual, which may be stronger than personal taste or stylistic

preference. The logic is that you might not really like a band, but you might feel that their message or contribution to the punk scene is important.

There are gendered distinctions within the punk scene that are reflected by the range of identities among those who engage it. Certainly the informants in this project had varying gender identities - cisgender, transgender (m2f and f2m), non-binary - which means that no single experience speaks for all of them, even though the majority of informants were ciswomen who identified as queer. It seems appropriate to frame their experience of fear affect in the scene by referring back to Valentine's (1989) theory of gendered public space,

Women identify specific isolated places as frightening during the day and express a fear of all public space alone at night. This is not only because night reduces visibility and therefore increases the opportunity for attackers to strike unobserved, but because t h e n a t u r e o f public space changes, being dominated in the evening by the group women have most to fear, men (Valentine 1989: 388).

Valentine's insight enables us to construct a picture of moving spaces, much like social spaces. Thus, physical spaces are acknowledged to change affectively according to time and human presence. This is certainly the case for punk spaces, where the atmosphere can change markedly per how 'queered' the gig space becomes when there are particular bands or theme nights that favour diversity, for example. Valentine's quote is particularly salient for interpreting the complex narratives of informants around fear. Yet it seems the experience of fear does not in itself dissuade them from participation. In fact, several research informants spoke of feeling fearful as a first stage of getting more involved in the punk scene,

I used to be real scared. When I was young, and just friends with boys, I'd act like I wasn't bothered by their bullshit, but looking back, yeah I was scared. Mostly because I was the odd one out. I tried to be, just 'be like the boys', but you know. Then I started Uni and met heaps of girls going to shows, and then met their friends and started going to different kinds of female focused shows and all of a sudden, I wasn't scared anymore. Not because I was the odd one out, anyway (Millie, 20, Newcastle).

Here Millie expresses the change in her own understanding of the relationship between fear and belonging. On the one hand, Millie posits her strategy of resistance to feeling fearful as being 'like the boys' in an effort to reduce her susceptibility to violence (whether symbolic or physical). On the other hand, she acknowledges the transference of affect (I wasn't scared anymore) that occurred when she began to make solid friendships with other women in punk. Millie did not expressly comment on whether these friendships were with queer women, however she did point out that she began to gather knowledge of identity politics as a result of entering into a collective belonging with those women.

Pip also names fear as a kind of catalyst for what she considers to be personal successes of women at gigs and in the broader punk scene,

Fuck, being scared of getting hit at shows and on the street is so messed up, hey. Like, at any moment, someone could plough into me and go 'oh, you were in the way of my moshing' and that's like, a valid excuse. But with a girl gang, either there *is* no mosh pit, or there will be severe repercussions (Pip, 24, Newcastle).

It seems that fear is directly challenged by the collective authorisation of being with other women. Like Millie, Pip notes that her fear was circumvented even in physically and symbolically violent spaces at shows. The 'girl gang', which Pip often refers to as the 'grrrl gang', supports her in the Newcastle scene and offers an opportunity to physically change a space. The mosh-pit, as discussed at length in the previous chapter, is identified as a tradition of punk that occurs at the expense of personal safety and enjoyment of the larger scene and its members. Here, Pip indicates that the grrrl gang is able to either stop a mosh pit from forming, or make known the gendered effects of participating in one. This points to the collective potential of queer(ed) space; it is about what happens when the girl gang creates its own territory in the wider punk space.

Asha points this out by critiquing the overwhelming whiteness/ablest/cisnormativity of her Melbourne queer female scene,

I feel for the people at shows who are completely a minority. One transperson, one person of colour. Our scene is supposed to be diverse, and here we are, a bunch of white women telling other, more minority women, what to do and what to be scared of. At least I can look around a show and know that there's a bunch of people like me there (Asha, 29, Melbourne).

Asha expressed her dismay at the implicit exclusivity of grrrl gangs and their inherent connections to white, middle-class, cisnormative and ablest politics. She understands her scene to be inclusive of some; usually the ones with the most privilege, even in their queer and gendered marginalisation. Yet she feels her scene excludes others; those with the least or the most vulnerable level of representation. As one informant pointed out, 'Everywhere is scary when you're a transwoman. Everywhere' (Sara, 25, Brighton). Under the praxis of the different collective identity formations represented in the quotes above a common fear is inferred. Despite the complexities of each gendered identity, they all point to how different collective identity formation occurs against the dominance of cismale hegemony. Overall, feeling fearful resonates across overlapping experiences. So while a queer, cisgender woman and a queer, transgender woman may have distinct differences in their strategies of resistance to gender norms, both configure fear as politicised embodiments, and they may make a bond to collectively challenge it.

In order to establish an authorising collective identity among queer women in the scene, it seems two things need to happen: 1) feeling fearful is recognised and acknowledged as a legitimate embodiment among a group; and 2) individuals mobilise using queer(ed) and feminist understandings of collective (re)action. Of course, not all queer women who engage with punk are well-versed in feminist, queer politics. However, a knowing of one's own lived experience in the context of others is no less legitimate (Leblanc 1999). Millie, Pip, Asha and Sara were adamant that they had come to know feminist, queer or post-queer politics through a process of doing, rather than from academic sources. Reading and making zines, consuming punk herstories and sounds, starting bands and solo projects; these are what one respondent called 'the de-institutionalised discourse' of learning queer punx. Pip explained that being part of a 'girl gang' was part of circumventing fear. They bonded to hold others accountable for their actions, such as being physically touched or attacked in a scene space. As a collective this meant that through challenging fear, the authorised map of punk social space could be altered. Disallowing a mosh pit to form or making visible the politics of the collective identity ('the girl gang') transformed passive individual fear ('I was the odd one out') into collective politicised resistance. This is an example of DIT: doing-it-together.

Diversity at Gigs

Unlike gay bars or queer events, most punk events feature a range of diverse individuals. Each subgroup vies for space and recognition as a means to actively engage with the music and to claim territory. This entanglement of identities is not always disharmonious. People of all kinds engaged with punk share many of the norms and rituals of commitment to the scene. However, they may not share the same level, or type of, ideological commitment (Fox 1987; Culton and Holtzman 2010), particularly when it comes to gender and sexuality. In fact, the ideological ‘glue’ of free space may not actually be a value constituted in practice, especially when disputes arise (Culton and Holtzman 2010: 281). On the other hand, while queer-allocated spaces directly authorise the performance of queer, it can also be authorised in other spaces through a slantwise process that accesses an iconoclastic discourse like punk (Sharp and Nilan 2015: 451).

The concept of making a queer punk space can be seen in Millie’s account of her shared experiences above. Millie indicates that the transformative capacity of the collective was applicable to both surrounding herself with women (whether they were queer-identified or not) and by a focus on feminist-focused punk music. Millie’s strategy supports the contention that ‘musical materials provide terms and templates for elaborating self-identity - for identity’s identification’ (De Nora 2000: 68). De Nora understands music as a partly written narrative which, when interlocked with the narrative of selfhood, becomes part of the embodiment of any music culture. Millie highlights feminist punk music as a catalyst for embodied authorisation. In that sense, music is both being and doing; an active ingredient in the reflexive construction of self- and space-making. Style, aesthetic and culture mobilise around music, as do constitutions of self and other, highlighting the transformative characteristics of the make up and take up of music (De Nora 2000).

However, for Sara, a self-identified transwoman from Brighton in the UK, the transformation of self and space in punk was not quite so revolutionary. Sara points out that, for her, fear is omnipresent. As a transwoman, acknowledgement of her identity is contentious. She is often isolated in punk scenes as a result of her shifting gender expression. Nevertheless, she keeps participating because she locates punk as a kind of ingredient in her self-made and self-making method: ‘I like punk, I always have. And it’s hard sometimes for sure, shitty things happen but you kinda expect them (...) but so is the rest of my world, and I’m not going to stop doing that’ (Sara, 25, Brighton). Sara senses punk in the same way she senses her world; a nexus of difficulty and happiness, belonging and

dislocation. She points out the hardships, but also her resilience to them and her expectation of ‘shitty things happening’. It is possible this expectation becomes like amour.

The same point was raised in a number of ways throughout the informant data. In each instance the acknowledgement was followed by a discussion of collective resilience as a fortress around what was described by one informant as ‘the catch 22’ of continued participation in punk. Resilience is seen to be ‘rhizomatic’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 12) in the way that it thrives in some spaces and times, yet not in others, and does not stem from any central point. Moreover, resilience is not consistent. For example, Ashley describes how she feels resilient towards dealing with sexism and transphobia in gig spaces where she is a worker (either a sound engineer or an organiser), but less so when she is a performer or audience member.

In general, public space is dangerous for transwomen like Sara. For example, research shows that transphobic hate crimes were up 170 per cent in the UK over the last 10 years as at July 2016 (Ellis, Bailey and McNeil 2016: 2). Sara’s naming of fear indicates that she does not necessarily find a safe sanctuary within the punk scene that she has contributed to, and within which she has located herself. In Sara’s case, her visibility as a transwoman places her on the periphery of the authorised space of even queer women. The same point was raised by Ren, a gender diverse, queer performer. Ren noted that a collective identity was not something that ‘you could hold on to’. Ren expressed that while she feels ‘at home’ at times in the punk scene, she has also felt out of place. The sense of an insider/outsider dichotomy could potentially arise from the diversity of gendered identities, both marginalised and dominant, that participate in punk scenes. This is where collective authorisation (Hammers 2008) of queer is important.

It seems that non-mainstream individual embodiments can be enacted through the authorisation of queer others, even if they do not share the same identity. Authorisation is not meant here in the sense of approval or permission, even though obvious hierarchies of privilege exist across all scenes. Rather, authorisation is an endorsement of the *doing* of identity, of any kind, perhaps following the original DIY logic. Endorsement is transmitted for the performance of trans, non-binary, genderqueer, queer, femme, butch and so on. Endorsement is generated two-fold through recognitions and knowledges that attach to a range of identities. For instance, Millie maintains that ‘being part of a marginalised group means people are more likely to recognise their oppression and so read and learn about the marginalisation of others because of it’. Yet the implicit authorisation of

queer identities and embodiments may be only temporal. Endorsement can become unstuck with the move to the next band, a triggering post on a Facebook page, or the departure of a group that made you feel comfortable. Punk is not a fixed placement of music styles and ways of being and doing. Rather, punk is constituted in 'regimes of placement' (Skeggs 1999: 20) and displacement that often changes. Both Sara and Ren feel this dichotomy within their translocal punk scenes. Yet it seems that they continue to participate in punk because of its potential for authorisation of a queer self through music, identity and DIT doing. They seemed to find punk affirming. Sara points out that while she 'does not believe that punk is going to change the world', it changes her world, even if only momentarily.

In the conduct of participant observation for this project, I recorded such moments as Sara mentions. The notes below were made at a 2015 feminist 'synthpunk' gig in Melbourne,

The band playing... [is] made up of queer/trans/ciswomen and plays electro synth punk in and around Copenhagen, Denmark... A friend who was with me remarked during the middle of the set that she 'just felt so happy' as she smiled and danced to the music. There was something in this moment that made me feel happy in a collective way. I'd been enjoying the music and having a good time but when she said this to me, I felt another layer of happiness - like I was sharing the experience of being grateful and privileged (Field notes Melbourne 2015).

The venue is an inner-city bar which sits between several designated punk - or at least alternative - music-focused pubs in Fitzroy/Collingwood, Melbourne. It draws a variety of clientele. Some are downstairs drinking cheap shots in the bar after dinner, or pre-drinking to move on elsewhere. Some are in the small, outdoor courtyard smoking between bands (or drinks). Some go upstairs to see shows. The bar is open longer and later than many venues, so it often ends up being the last stop on a night out. It is not genre-specific to punk; however, people from punk, metal, grunge and electro scenes organise shows there regularly.

The field notes above were made on a night like many others. However, the bar on this occasion was a site where positive 'affective atmospheres' (Anderson 2009) began to crystallise. Kelly, the woman who made the comment about feeling 'so happy', and I were both excited - we had only ever listened to recordings of that band, never live. In the sharing of feeling, or my reception of affect, when Kelly

said to me that she felt so happy, this stuck to me. It was a direct experience of the ‘stickiness’ of affect theorised by Ahmed (2004). In the diversity of the room, which was dominated by cismen, an affective atmosphere had been generated among those of us who found the band’s combination of feminist politics, queer and trans visibility and global connectedness to be self-affirming. The music became the catalyst for transformation in De Nora’s (2000) terms, and set the tone for queer and fluid gender embodiments to become authorised (Hammers 2008) or endorsed. While there is the potential to read this as just the researcher having a nice time and being happy that Kelly was too, I explicitly noted the layering of happiness. Reflecting on this layering, I theorise that in Kelly’s comment I found both permanent and temporal collective identity and solidarity, which was highly pleasurable. It was a moment of affective attachment that I can hold onto and remember, and simultaneously leave behind, somewhere on the border of Fitzroy and Collingwood. As I will argue later, this reflexive remembering pertains to the curation of a queer identity in punk.

The following chapter section moves to discuss the practicality of DIT politics and how this collaborative ethic has become a way of claiming spaces as territories (Ahmed 2004: 70) within masculine homosocial punk scenes. As an extension of DIY, which is traditionally known to be a punk ethos (or at least appropriated by punks), DIT relocates the ownership of punk from individual bodies to a community effort. The shift from ‘I’ to ‘We’ is central to queer punx identity.

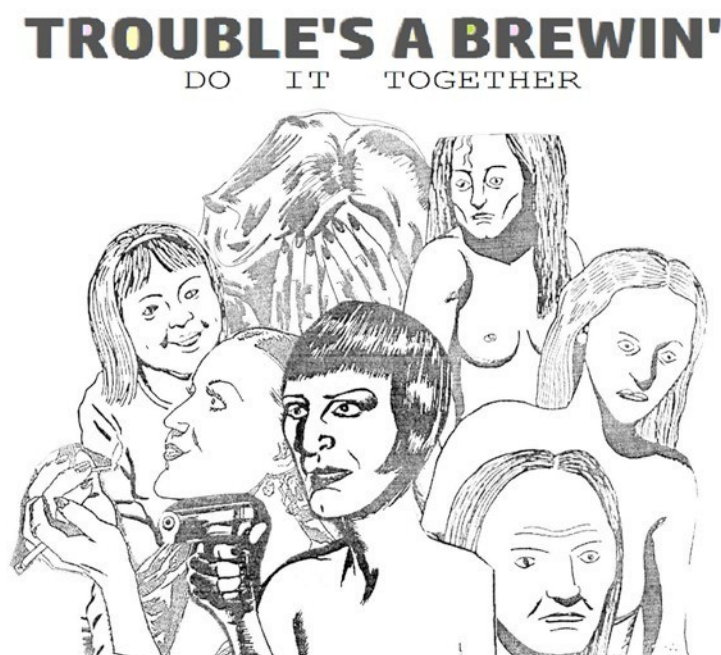


Figure 17: Poster and logo for Australian distro, *Trouble's A Brewin' Do It Together*. <http://troubletogethersedistro.blogspot.com.au>

Do It Together (DIT)

In recent times, women and gender diverse people in the punk scene have promoted the idea of DIT against the individualised ethos of DIY. Yet arguably, DIT can be mapped as an extension of DIY culture, rather than as oppositional to it, because DIT retains the iconoclastic ethos of DIY. While DIY represented lateral organisation and ironic stylisation at an individual level, DIT promotes the unpredictable coming together of marginalised people within the punk scene to form communities of action. There are very few studies currently of DIT, with the exception of Baker's (2015) edited collection, *Do It Yourself, Do It Together*, which is a consideration of how to *preserve* pop music heritage as a community. Baker's study, however, does not look at how DIT forms as a resistance to cismale-dominated punk and it seems that DIT has not been studied as a feminist/queer movement that positions itself within punk spaces. This chapter section aims to address this gap by offering an interpretation of some of the events and actions mobilised under the label of DIT.

DIY was discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis. In brief, DIY in punk signals independence from mainstream music and recording labels. It is often identified with an individualistic form of 'lifestyle anarchism' (Bookchin 1995). In recent years, the individualisation inherent in DIY has been challenged in the ongoing renewal of punk. There has long been some resistance to individualised DIY ethos that points to taking up reciprocal relationships within communal scenes. For example, in the field of Indonesian hardcore, 'the *anak* DIY reject the more individualistic interpretations of 'Do It Yourself', emphasising instead a collective struggle for autonomy from the capitalist market' (Martin-Iverson 2014: 186). Indeed, the organisation of DIY production and performance relies on the establishment of social networks based on cooperation, trust and friendship (Moore 2007; O'Connor 2016; Sutopo, Nilan and Threadgold 2017). Martin-Iverson's (2014) interpretation of collective DIY in an Indonesian hardcore punk scene speaks to the community-building ethos of DIT. Notably, the Bandung DIY hardcore community described by Martin-Iverson used the term Do-It-With-Your-Friends. Yet their DIT was still focused towards disrupting capitalist ideals.

Certainly DIT represents an alternative to individualised notions of music productivity. Yet it is also located within specifically queer and feminist discourse relative to the punk scene. DIT describes the collaborative efforts of women and queers within punk scenes, and recognises the dynamism of skill-sharing. According to the inclusive DIT principle, queer women and heterosexual women harness the

skills of a number of people in undertaking a project. Asha raises the point about DIT diversity when she states,

I think about how white our scene is a lot. And how to fix it without being a fucking saviour. How I can leverage some of my privilege as a white person to give over some power for people of colour to have room to talk, or organise, or have fun, or whatever. I figure the answer is to consider more material of people of colour, and not to be tokenistic about it (Asha, 29, Melbourne).

Asha's ideal DIT punk community would be one that appropriately represents marginalised groups. For this ideal to become realised, Asha sees herself as needing to relinquish white privilege. She acknowledges that she does not wish to embody a 'saviour complex', but rather she sees an exchange of power as a politicised act of togetherness, which echoes the aim of solidarity among the Bandung hardcore punks studied by Martin-Iverson (2014).

It seems that while DIT can be theorised as the process of (re)creating social spaces based on the capital one brings in, it is fundamentally an act; a *doing*. An excerpt from my field notes (below) contextualises an example of doing and reflects the transformative capacity of music as discourse (De Nora 2000) and the overarching ethos of queer community building.

The Magic Shop show was sold out - about 40 people in a small space off Sydney Road in Brunswick. It was an actual, operating Magic Shop which normally hosts evening magic shows. (After the music, the owner Dane, put on a magic show for the people who had stuck around.) Everyone sat on the floor to watch the bands play - equal amounts of boys and girls attended, trans and non-binary people too. And the cover charge was 'pay what you can, no- one gets turned away.' The music is female or queer driven in lyrical content; most songs are about love (platonic or otherwise), female friendships, standing up for yourself and self- esteem which both bands/performers introduced as their main themes before each song. Erica and Molly (*Hot Tears*) were excited to be playing a show in a space that was 'full of magic', they felt a connection to the room and loved the magic show afterwards which Dane made them part of (Field notes 18 February 2015).

These field notes draw attention to the embedded collective ethos of DIT. The performers, organisers and audience transformed a venue normally used for magic shows into a music space while incorporating some of the original atmosphere into the event. The venue owner was able to advertise his business to a crowd to which he would not normally have access. The organiser put measures in place to ensure economic capital was not the only means by which one could attend, and the performers took the opportunity to convey their appreciation and ‘pay some of their good fortune forward’ (Emily, 28, performer). In this way, DIT underscores a series of doings, which are enacted either overtly (the mixed lateral organisation of the show) or subversively (resisting money as the means of access). The following field notes reflect on the above, yet go further in unpacking the nexus of *doing* theoretically. Using De Nora’s (2000) concept of transformations and Hammers’ (2008) notion of authorisation, or what I call endorsement, the reflections below emphasise the importance of accessibility to performers and organisers in building queer(ed) networks. In these spaces, territories are claimed and legitimised as queer, and in doing so, social space is reconceptualised. The boundaries of existing capital, whether economic, cultural, social or symbolic, become blurred,

Luckily, my friend’s band were supporting this show and I got a chance to meet everyone who played (...) It got me thinking about how cool it is that I have access to women that I think are so wonderful. The DIY and DIT scene offers the opportunity for anyone who plays, organises or participates in shows or events to meet each other and become friends. I can’t remember the last time that I felt like the person that I was watching play was ‘out of reach’ of me; like I couldn’t just go up to them at the bar later that night and say ‘that was a really good show, can we be friends?’ or something (Field notes 18 February 2015).

These notes were written right after the show on 18 February, 2015. Re-reading them was a powerful reminder of the tangibility of DIT community. In that example, DIT was the bringing together of local, translocal and global scenes under the facilitation of a few committed individuals working together. As Spike Peterson (2016: 2) points out, ‘queering the globally intimate draws attention to emotion, embodiment, and embodied locations from which the (sexed, desiring, racialized, etc.) subject produces knowledge’. Such a standpoint highlights the often taken for granted subjectivities of emotional and knowledge experience as legitimate practice. Enhanced emotional affects are produced by the doing of DIT. In terms of affect, emotion drives not only the production and reception of the music, but the showcasing and management of delivering it. And so emotion itself becomes a primary mode of doing. In the original spirit of punk, accessibility to bands, organisers,

distros, venues and performers results in events and collaborations made possible by diminished use of capitalist systems, such as band managers, record labels, publishers and public relations. Similarly, a contemporary punk event organised under the label of DIT resists the economically hierarchical nature of music consumerism. The principle is ‘pay what you can, no-one gets turned away’; this says that access to music should not be determined by economic capital. Hierarchy based on possession of economic capital is one of the criteria which can define and commodify social space. The DIY/DIT ethos avoids that excluding commodification.

Avoiding Commodification: DIY/DIT

Some recent discussion about the commodification of female punk bands has been happening online. This discussion continues to address the issue of punk being compromised as a result of bands gaining mainstream popularity. Below is an excerpt from the 2016 online announcement that the queer band *G.L.O.S.S* were disbanding.²⁰ *G.L.O.S.S* is the acronym for *Girls Living Outside Society’s Shit*. The post sheds light on the emotional deficit that the members of this band experienced as a result of their mainstream visibility when the band was commodified as a product,

We want to measure success in terms of how we’ve been able to move people and be moved by people, how we’ve been able to grow as individuals. This band has become too large and unwieldy to feel sustainable or good anymore—the only thing growing at this point is the cult of personality surrounding us, which feels unhealthy. There is constant stress, and traveling all the time is damaging our home lives, keeping us from personal growth and active involvement in our communities. Being in the mainstream media, where total strangers have a say in something we’ve created for other queer people, is exhausting.²¹

After a Bandcamp demo in 2015 and a 2016 EP, *Trans Day Of Revenge*, *G.L.O.S.S* rejected a \$50,000 contract with Epitaph Records for a full-length release. They cited ethical and personal reasons.²² Front-woman, Sadie Switchblade, said in a statement that deciding to reject the record deal was not difficult,

²⁰ Ambrose, G. 2016. Goodbye from *G.L.O.S.S*. Maximum Rock N Roll. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://www.maximum-rocknroll.com/goodbye-from-g-l-o-s-s/>

²¹ Ambrose, G. 2016. Goodbye from *G.L.O.S.S*. Maximum Rock N Roll. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://www.maximum-rocknroll.com/goodbye-from-g-l-o-s-s/>

While signing to a label like Epitaph would be in many ways relieving, it would probably mean the death of the feeling that so many of you have told us means so much to you. We could never do that to all of you who have been so supportive and whose kind words have meant the world to us.²³

Their statement reflects the risk of the ‘cult of personality’. This risk is often cited when punk or indie bands garner a following larger than their local or translocal scene. The cult of personality can often attract unwanted²⁴ or even frightening²⁵ participation (see the footnoted websites for Australian examples). Moreover, the band’s concern about ‘mainstream media having a say in something we’ve created’ reflects their punk ethos of anti-commercialisation. That stance is often rebuked by mainstream music media and its participants. In terms of DIT, the members of G.L.O.S.S emphasise their desire as queer people to make music *for* queer people, to connect with their communities, and to be afforded an opportunity to self-care by disbanding. The break-up of G.L.O.S.S generated a positive buzz in punk music circles. Here, commentary focused on the band’s admired commitment to anti-consumerist ethics. The following excerpt was taken from an online statement they made about disbanding,

The punk we care about isn’t supposed to be about getting big or becoming famous, it’s supposed to be about challenging ourselves and each other to be better people. It feels hard to be honest and inward when we are constantly either put on a pedestal or torn down, worshipped or demonized. We want to be whole people, not one-dimensional cartoons (Girls Living Outside Society’s Shit).²⁶

²² Helman, P. 2016. G.L.O.S.S. Break Up. Stereogum. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://www.stereogum.com/1901137/g-l-o-s-s-break-up/news/>

²³ Breihan, T. 2016. G.L.O.S.S. Explain Why They Turned Down A \$50K Epitaph Deal. Stereogum. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://www.stereogum.com/1898497/g-l-o-s-s-explain-why-they-turned-down-a-50k-epitaph-deal/news/>

²⁴ Styles, A. 2016. Australian bands Luca Brasi and high Tension condemn sexual assault at concerts. The Sydney Morning Herald. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/australian-bands-luca-brasi-and-high-tension-condemn-sexual-assaults-at-concerts-20160822-gqyjcw.html>

²⁵ Findlay, C. 2013. The Bashing That Inspired The Smith Street Band. The Music. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://themu-sic.com.au/news/all/2013/08/17/the-bashing-that-inspired-the-smith-street-band/>

As the post above implies, much of the action of queer female DIT still represents core punk DIY values of self-publishing, crowdfunding and so on. It still involves rejecting music as an economically productive endeavour in favour of working collaboratively in recognition of who is 'good' at what, or who wants to learn. And, while the political connotations of (re)claiming space are made visible through how queer women (and heterosexual women) do DIT, it is also, simply, fun. And so the inclusion of G.L.O.S.S' statement in this chapter is two-fold in purpose. Firstly, it highlights rejection of the embedded capitalist characteristics of mainstream music production and dissemination. Secondly, the position expressed by all-female G.L.O.S.S personifies the intersection of queer and punk. The band's statements not only highlight rejection of commodification, but evoke emotion and self-knowing as reasons for their decision to disband. In summary, their honest information-sharing through online forums represents some of the most fundamental aspects of continued participation in punk scenes; access to community, resistance to business-model practice and commitment to having a good time.

Finally, the pleasures of skill-sharing stand as one of the reasons that marginalised groups remain in punk. The ability to transfer and reciprocate skills and knowledge was noted as a prevalent DIY/DIT theme,

I will be interested to see what the space is like at Grrrl Fest - I think this will crystallise some of my ideas about women and queers engaging in feminist skill sharing (I've already been offered to join a band and learn drums since I've been here). Women and queers seem very keen to teach each other how to do things (Field notes 30 January 2015).

Grrrlfest²⁷ is an annual event held in Melbourne. It is organised by and for women, and includes people of colour, queer, trans, genderqueer and non-binary people. It is a collaboration of art, music, comedy, zines, markets and workshops which takes place in an accessible space. The idea behind Grrrlfest draws upon the Riot Grrrl inspired movement of the 1990s that started as *Ladyfest* – a

²⁶ Helman, P. 2016. G.L.O.S.S. Break Up. Stereogum. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://www.stereogum.com/1901137/g-l-o-s-s-break-up/news/>

²⁷ Website homepage: <https://grrrlfest.com/> Accessed 30 June 2017

community-based, not-for-profit global music and arts festival for feminist artists. The Grrrlfest of today, ‘humbly acknowledges the great women of the past who have done the ground work for events such as this. But we also wish to acknowledge how “female only” and feminist spaces have historically excluded transwomen, women of colour and women not from the middle classes’ (Grrrlfest organisers 2016). The Grrrlfest event represents the fun and success of queer female DIT, where all kinds of non-malestream voices and bodies are authorised. Yet this is only one aspect, to advance our understanding of why queer women and gender diverse people stay involved in punk, it is necessary to carefully consider safe(r) space policies and what they mean for changing punk space into queer punx territory.

Safe(r) Spaces

Safe(r) spaces policies at gigs and events follow the concept of ‘safe’ borrowed from educational institutions. Safe-space (or safe space), safer-space, and positive space were originally all terms used to indicate that a teacher, educational institution or student body does not tolerate anti-LGBT violence, harassment or hate speech, thereby creating a safe place for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students (Hodkinson 2015). There, individuals who feel marginalised can come together to safely communicate about their experiences of perceived marginalisation, typically on a university campus.²⁸ Harris (2005) also describes some zines and online spheres as safe places where young women are able to enact their sexuality in overt ways with decreased levels of fear.

Safe(r) spaces are used at gigs and events for a variety of reasons, the most prominent being to reduce the risk of harm that a person or group may endure as a result of their attendance. Some methods of creating safe(r) spaces at punk events include gender-neutral bathrooms, accessible floor planning, trigger-warnings, a list of guidelines for participation which is given on entry to a show space and several times again on the walls or floors of a show, and volunteers wearing a pin or badge indicating that they are available to talk if needed. The mechanisms of safe(r) spaces offer support and inclusive practice for marginalised people at events, but also make known the privilege that some participants already hold simply by walking through the door. As a strategy of resistance (see Halberstam 2005), safe(r) spaces become a vehicle for the recognition of capital and begin a collaborative conversation of how privilege can be disrupted.

²⁸ Waldman, K. 2016. The Trapdoor of Trigger Words. Slate. Accessed 30 June 2017 http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/cover_story/2016/09/what_science_can_tell_us_about_trigger_warnings.html

A recent example of how a safe(r) space has been generated is documented by Melbourne band, Camp Cope, who in recent Facebook and Instagram posts notified gig-goers that,

We'll be handing out tiny pieces of paper with the hotline number on them at our upcoming dates supporting Against Me! If you feel unsafe at all at these shows, please call the number and we will assist you because we believe everyone has the right to feel safe at shows.²⁹

The band initiated a hotline for those who felt uncomfortable or unsafe at their shows where people were able to request assistance by a person in attendance. The hotline number was available via the merch (DIY merchandise) desk, where accessibility was high and anonymity was possible. Camp Cope has since reported that the initiative seemed successful. The hotline number was not used by gig-goers, which infers it was not needed. The band concluded that making known a kind of code of ethics fostered a greater sense of belonging among the crowd. Using Bourdieu's theories, it might be argued that entry into physical spaces, such as bars, venues, houses and even schools, constitutes possession of a nexus of embodied cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1979, 1987, 1989). In safe(r) spaces policies, the usual invisibility of social, economic and symbolic capital is made visible and detectible. Since embodied capitals are part of the geography of a physical place and move within them, then creating, increasing or decreasing the validity and visibility of different capitals is a form of disruption, and can be considered as territory-making at certain places and times through a DIT ethic.

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested why the punk scene continues to attract young queer women and gender diverse others; why they might find it a successful arena for the collective expression of non-cismale identities. Using Ahmed's (2004) concept of stickiness as the congealing effect of togetherness, I highlighted the fun of punk scenes and spaces for young people who desire resistance to masculine homosocial norms. By queering these spaces, young women and gender diverse people explore the possibilities of queerness, its potentiality and futurity. Collective endorsement not only satisfies the endorsed, but also the endorser, in that signalling community affects collective resistance. While additional 'doing' work may be required in order for marginalised and even violent space to be

²⁹ Williams, T. 2017. Camp Cope Launch New Safe-Space Hotline For Upcoming Shows. Music Feeds. Accessed 30 June 2017 <http://musicfeeds.com.au/news/camp-cope-launch-new-safe-space-hotline-upcoming-shows/#O3D3eh04Bw-Plty4t.99>

overcome, the possibilities of queer inclusion for future young queers outweigh the investment in the present.

An analysis of DIT ethics provides some explanation of how young queers are able to create communities and curate collective identities in a field which makes little allowance of their participation. Moreover, DIT is a catalyst for solidarity among young queer people. I identified some of the affective spaces that are generated in the punk and queer punx scene as a result of DIT events, such as Grrrlfest. These spaces are often claimed as territories, either spatial or temporal, and act as a domain where queer punx can endorse the doing of identity for others, and have this endorsement reciprocated. Some of the examples explored include safe(r) spaces policies and sensing community. These examples shed light on the praxis of queer punks within masculinised-specific sites, such as hardcore or grindcore shows. Safe(r) spaces are outlined as an achievement of feminist and radical politics in punk territories as they focus primarily on leveraging the privilege of those who hold it. Symbolic telegraphing is discussed as an extension of both DIT and safe(r) spaces in this context where young, queer punx find both pleasure and solidarity, a kind of enjoyable *doing of togetherness*.

In summary, DIT is an active and ongoing acknowledgement of the community of endorsement which underpins queer punk politics. Rather than an individual claiming ownership or accountability of events, sounds, spaces and places, DIT operationalises community - sharing and shared community. Looking more closely to how belonging is signified in punk, I have explored the concepts of collective endorsement and symbolic telegraphing as strategies that young queer women and gender diverse people enact. This 'doing' work then manifests in physical places, as shown in the example of safe(r) spaces policies which actively promote anti-violence initiatives at gigs and in the wider punk scene.

Queer futurity is addressed at length in the next chapter, where I explore technologies of memory and affect using Muñoz's (1999) concepts of queer futurity and concrete-yet-fleeting utopias. More than simply achieving success in punk scenes, young queer people envisage social change as both social and political - beyond the scope of what punk can provide. Their strategies of resistance are employed in punk settings, but have wider implications for challenging patriarchal norms in broader society.



Figure 18: Show poster for Punch tour, 2014.

Chapter Nine: Affective Archives and Digital Places

This chapter concentrates on the future of queer punk as perceived by those who currently participate in the scene. It proposes that action, language, sonics, artefacts and bodies in the present are catalysts for queer punk becoming in the future. It was common for fieldwork conversations with young women about queerness and punk to conclude with an imagining of the future. This is worthy of attention because productive discourse in the here and now may effect change for new generations. Therefore, it seems fitting that the final data analysis chapter of this thesis considers these forward-looking conversations. They are used to unpack some of the transformative elements of how queer punx as a group understand themselves as ‘becoming’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). I propose there are key processes that constitute archives of queer punx time and space, and that these process form part of identity curation for informants.

As indicated previously, queer(ed) bodies in punk subculture problematise a deeply embedded heterosexual, cismale occupation of space and time. Traditional modes of documenting the subculture aid in establishing these normative perspectives (see Kritzler 2014). Queer(ed) people inside and outside punk struggle to have legitimacy and be viewed as ‘authentic’ (King 2012). Therefore, they express and explore their self(s) through alternative means; creating fleeting-yet- concrete utopias that often leave only ephemeral evidence (see Muñoz 2009). One way these short- lived utopias are preserved is through a queer(ed) process of archiving, where broadly-distributed, mainstream means of recording and publication are eschewed for more transient and personal methods of remembering (Kumbier 2014) that are often constituted collectively. The examination of such processes in the chapter is twofold. Firstly, the discussion explores how queer women and gender diverse people in punk reconfigure social spaces by online archiving, and the digital creation and republication of zines. Secondly, the discussion explores the ways that identities become known and unknown in social spaces. I use the concept of identity curation to interpret the methods employed by queer punx in shaping an individual and collective body that transmits and makes readable subcultural and queer affiliations.

The concept of identity curation in relation to queer came originally from the academic disciplines of art history and museum studies (for example Steorn 2012). Queer curatorial activism is an attempt to change the system from the inside. For example, two queer female artists founded the *Feminist Art*

Gallery (FAG) in Toronto in 2011. They repurposed their back garage as an exhibition space for queer and feminist artists and activists to produce works, talks and performances. The FAG ethos constitutes a loose, unstructured form of curating anchored in activist and DIY culture. Similarly, the 2012 London-based *CUNTemporary* operates as a collaborative platform to curate the non-mainstream queer and feminist practices of subversive writers and artists. In short,

Queer curating is seen as a way of reclaiming present and future queer legacies by understanding queerness not as a supporting role, but a defining and central practice within modern and contemporary art.³⁰

If we take this concept beyond the mainstream creative arts arena and into a major music subcultural scene like punk, we arrive at the idea of queer identity curation as a struggle for authenticity and legitimacy in a scene that claims itself as iconoclastic, but remains cismale-dominated. Memories of radical practices and events significant for queers in punk are archived through texts and bodily traces, constituting and reconstituting their queer identities. This kind of ‘archive is not simply a repository; it is also a theory of cultural relevance, a construction of collective memory and complex record of queer activity’ (Halberstam 2003: 326). It can also operate as a resource for ongoing challenges to cismale heteronormativity in the punk scene.

Beginning with zines, the chapter contends that a digitised approach to documentation carries a dichotomy. Digital/ised zines fulfil their subcultural designation of being cheap, easy to make and reproducible, but in the process, neglect the ephemeral ‘throw-away’ aspect that was seen as essential to paper zines in earlier decades (Brouwer and Licona 2016). Moreover, while online archiving is broadly seen as endowing permanency, some stories may get lost in translation or argued away in keyboard warriorship.³¹ The analysis of praxis goes further than considering queer social networking as community building to suggest it forms part of creative self-making. As with Valentine’s (1989) theory of patriarchal physical spaces, I argue that online spaces are implicitly heteronormative and heterosexist (see Lingel and Golub 2015), so queer archiving struggles for representation just as queer identities struggle for legitimacy. This chapter also considers tattoos as symbolic telegraphing

³⁰ Mead, C. 2017. Curating Queerness as an Activist Practice. *Curating the Contemporary*. Accessed 30 June 2017 <https://curatingthecontemporary.org/2017/05/18/curating-queerness-as-an-activist-practice>

³¹ A keyboard warrior is defined as someone who posts angry messages or likes to get into arguments on the internet. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/keyboard-warrior>

and, since both zines and tattoos have some connection to temporality, I acknowledge throughout what Halberstam (2005) refers to as queer time and Muñoz (2009) refers to as queer futures.

Curating the Virtual Punk: Queering Social Media

To show the shift between physical and online/digital space, emerging scholarship in relevant fields is briefly considered to theorise how queer punx make up virtual space; through online community building, and through resistance to the heteronormativity of social and digital media. Sociological perspectives on how queerness fits into (or rather does not fit into) the development of virtual spaces beyond sexual health and knowledge praxis is still at an early stage. Below, I reposition queer time and space as curators of virtual worlds. The queer(ed) body textualises virtual spaces and brings them into *doing work* in physical place. For example, secret Facebook groups, blogs, online events, selfies, hashtags and digital zines, as well as more formal queer media, become vehicles for queer space and identity making - both virtual and material. They shape the scene, rather than being shaped by it. While the internet is, to some extent, a space that illuminates visibility, identity and connection, it is no less normative than other realms of life. Thus, when represented online, the diverse and nuanced experiences of young people's lives risk erasure. It is preferable to view online sites as visual and reflexive cultures; where bodies, times and practices converge as doings beyond the implicit narcissism that is often relayed about the online self in public discourse (Mortensen and Walker 2002; Walker 2006; Walker Rettberg 2014: 17).

Subcultural praxis and online engagement has received increased academic commentary in recent years (Robards and Bennett 2011). For example, there have been studies of the online presence of: 'emos' (Chernoff and Widdicombe 2015); 'ravers' (Wilson and Atkinson 2005); 'straightedgers' (Wood 2003); and 'psytrance' (Greener and Hollands 2006). These subcultures have been described as rooted in cybercommunities; with justifications for such a view being that these youth music cultures came into being at the inception of the internet. Thus, this timeline distinguishes punk, hardcore and queercore from the aforementioned subcultures; punk cultures have existed since the late 1960s, transitioning later to online participation.

Consideration of social media use among drag performers provides a useful comparison to queer punx online culture. In tracing 'what happens when intended use of a given technology runs up against unprecedented users, uses and workarounds' (Lingel and Golub 2015: 537), a complex picture of subversion comes to light. Facebook users were found to create their own performative

drag spaces within the confines of ‘a design ethic of singularity and simplicity, fundamentally at odds with technological preferences (or needs) for complexity and mess’ (Lingel and Goleb 2015: 537). They re-purposed Facebook to answer their need for less prescriptive tools for interpersonal communication. I argue that queer punx find similar tensions in dominant communication technology platforms and re-purpose them. Work that has been undertaken in other subcultural sites, such as goth (Hodkinson 2002), body modification (Lingel and boyd 2013), and emo (Chernoff and Widdicombe 2015), reflects the dynamism of these communities to re-purpose dominant technologies to better embody nuanced localities and their norms. One example of this in a punk context is the division of hardcore into geographical places, resulting in ongoing battles for legitimacy over acronym use, both online and offline. For example, one regional point of contention in Australian punk is whether the acronym NCHC means Newcastle City Hardcore or North Coast Hardcore. There has been a long-term war over the acronym, which some have taken more seriously than others.

In media studies, there exists ample research on the ways social media can be leveraged to build an online following, with a significant focus placed on the labour entrenched in such practices (Kirsner 2009; Baym 2012, 2014, 2015; Litt 2012; Marwick and boyd 2012). While these studies are useful in theorising labour as a sociotechnical application, it can be argued that queerness reworks the dominant singularity of social media platforms. For example, queer punx (whether performers or audience members) employ DIY and DIT strategies in their social networking, rather than relying solely on the performer(s) as a point of (fandom) connection. Such a strategy is evident when queer punks ‘shout out’ via Facebook for a venue recommendation, a place to stay overnight, to borrow gear, to ask if there are other bands that want to play a show or to contribute to a zine. The concept of relational labour is a way to understand ‘the processes of managing social ties that demand continuous, intimate interactions, often in ways that provoke users to reconsider the affordances of social media platforms themselves’ (Lingel and Golub 2015: 540). However, the use of relational labour in the context of facilitating queer punx inclusion and continued scene participation describes a reframing of what it means to be both queer and punk online.

It is important to consider the *reading* of digital zines and (tattooed) bodies to understand the utility of (un)hidden queer narratives in punk histories. Zines and bodily practices, such as tattooing and piercing, have been identified as subcultural practices of record-keeping and expressive artefact production (Wright 2009; Honma, 2016). Yet they are also tools of curation. They archive symbolic

communication. Drawing on knowledge as an insider of the punk scene, I contextualise theoretical models of queer futures (Muñoz 2009) and symbolic telegraphing to map the affective atmosphere (Anderson 2009) manifested in queer(ed) punk spaces. The reading and writing of queer bodies and zines are theorised as streams of affect; remembering, associating, knowing and unknowing. These histories and their associated artefacts highlight the important role of pleasure that punk plays in the everyday lives of individuals and communities (Collins 2015: 87-88), as well as the life-long 'adolescence' that queers often embody (Halberstam 2005).



Figure 19: Show poster for queer punk gig in Sydney reflecting iconography of queer culture.

Online Platforms

Many of the stories recorded below as part of longer fieldwork conversations with queer women and gender non-conforming people in punk are about contemporary western feminism. The excerpts form part of a broad discussion about feminism in general, rather than specifically feminist punk discourse. However, in these quotes we find that the disentangling of queer punx identity curation from feminism and body politics seems to be unattainable. In the narratives collected, I found that online and bodily record-keeping is a primary mode of 'identity curation' for queer women and non-binary people. As previously, the term *identity curation* emphasises the way that queer punx synthesise the representations they put forward in social worlds, and simultaneously use to (re)form their identities. 'Curation' may connote a considered particularity to the kinds of embodiments one chooses to perform, however the term also recognises the embedded autonomy of living a queer life. By piecing together various forms of symbolism, communication and information, queers construct identities and embodiments that are representative of their most desired self. Muñoz (2009) describes the queer aesthetic as a catalyst for envisaging future queer worlds, and it is used here to theorise the performative and discursive methods that queer punx utilise in queer world making,

Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing. Often we can glimpse the worlds proposed and promised by queerness in the realm of the aesthetic. The aesthetic, especially the queer aesthetic, frequently contains blueprints and schemata of a forward-dawning futurity (Muñoz 2009: 1).

In the quote above, the words 'lets us feel' describes the collective affect of the world, and the imagining of 'new worlds' (Muñoz 2009: 1). Muñoz implicitly theorises queerness as mobility, moving beyond the here and now to conceptualise the potential for queer futures. For Muñoz, queerness is essentially about insistence on potentiality, or the concrete possibility for another world. Muñoz's theory of futurity is used to grasp queer identity curation in punk scenes; imagining new places of possibility. For queer punks, the potential of the future looks brighter than the here and now, however I recognise that Muñoz's concept of utopia does not necessarily denote a *better* future. Rather, a utopia is the 'nexus of cultural product before, around and slightly after' (Muñoz 2009: 3); a historically specific time. In this chapter, that 'time' is the advent of digital platforms, which have transformed some of the ways that queer punx relate to punk subculture.

In one interview, Helen explains that online spaces have opened realms of possibility for queer women and gender diverse people to: firstly, converge and share information; and secondly, make known the often invisible circumstances of punk scenes, which may be so insular they remain stifled. In that conversation, Helen and I discussed the emergence of ‘call-out’ culture³² in punk spaces, either online or away from keyboard (AFK). Helen attributes the increase of willingness to call out men’s unacceptable behaviour and language within the punk scene to media coverage and the spread of online forums,

I think that explosion of social networking and people communicating and the news and current views and stuff like that online, like people have forums to talk about that shit like, that’s really exploded in the last 18 months (Helen, 28, Melbourne).

Here, Helen is describing the way that the queer(ed) body textures virtual spaces and brings them into *doing the work* of calling out unacceptable cismale behaviour in physical places. She notes that interactions online have an effect on the physical places where she participates, and so callout culture is becoming normalised in material social spaces. The practice of calling out disrupts a taken-for-granted history in punk spaces which implies that cismen are the ‘owners’ of what occurs in these spaces. Even more so, Helen points to social networking as an extension and reflection of that which occurs offline rather than being separate from it. Spaces become queer(ed), online and offline, by the interaction that occurs within them, creating a flow of information that manifests itself across both platforms. Alison explains more or less the same point about cross-platform work,

There seems to be a really big resurgence of feminism happening within Melbourne music... I think women make an experience and do music really differently and it’s nice just for us to decide how it goes sometimes. And the best way for everyone to get a say on how something turns out is using the internet to petition for opinions (Alison, Melbourne, 25).

Using online platforms to reach and generate a plethora of queer(ed) knowledge highlights DIT as a method of identity curation. Alison explains that by ‘petitioning’ women in punk for a variety of opinions, music can be made more diverse, while converging on points of similarity. Her phrase

³² Call-out culture refers to the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organisers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language use by others (see Ahmad 2015). Accessed 30 June 2017. Retrieved from <http://handbook.law.utoronto.ca/sites/handbook.law.utoronto.ca/files/users/alzner/A%20Note%20on%20Calling%20Out.briarpatch.pdf>

‘women make an experience’ highlights the curation of gendered experiential foundations. The experience does not simply happen; it is made and re-made through their labour. For example, Alison is happy to engage in petitioning the internet for opinions on generating safe(r) spaces because, as a white, ciswoman, she acknowledges her privileged position compared to trans and non-binary people, and also to people of colour. However, she admits that this labour comes with some emotional exhaustion,

I will always check with people that what I am doing is okay, because I know how quickly things that seemed totally fine can like, not be fine. But yeah, it can get tiresome, mostly explaining the concept of equity to people. Like, not equality but equity. And how we need that to make a better, or safer scene (Alison, 25, Melbourne).

Alison is describing the labour intensive work of resistance that goes into alternative scene formation, and the potential to make a *better* scene for the future. Recognising the distinction between equality and equity, Alison invokes an intersectional approach to the futurity of her scene. She perceives equality to be an end goal, but sees equity as the approach to get there. In other instances of discussing the future of queerness in punk scenes, informants seem reluctant to use a word like *better*. Speaking from my own biographically reflexive position, this may be because ‘better’ somehow downplays the emotional and relational labour that queer people are doing here and now. Work is being done by queers and people of colour to create and occupy safe(r) spaces. So, while the scene may not be ‘the best’, it certainly acts in some way as a place for continued engagement. On this basis, rather than *better*, the term safe(r) is used to frame the possibility of an inclusive queer punk scene. Notably, Alison added the term ‘safer’ after she said ‘better’.

Not all of those who offered their voices to this research agree that social media and physical place exist seamlessly. Beth notes that while online social spaces offer room for communication and collaboration, she problematises the tension between being an online contributor and offline spectator,

It’s just a mobilisation that’s been happening lately and I think it hadn’t had a light shone on it until possibly a bit more recently with a lot of internet community building. But yeah, my main concern is that the internet should translate into real life. ‘Cause that’s how things actually happen, you know? Yeah, it’s just hot air. Like I’m definitely a person who exists better in real life than I do on the internet. Some people are so active on the internet but like in real life hold

off a lot. But the internet is a strange world and I still don't know how I fit into it (Beth, 30, Melbourne).

Beth's concerns about possibly being lost in translation between online and offline spaces were referred to by several informants, particularly those over the age of 27. Those over 27 may have experienced the punk scene primarily offline (face-to-face) during their formative years. Yet the implied tension between online/offline spheres speaks to the matter of authenticity. For some informants, progress can only be considered to be achieved through enactment in the physical place. So, for informants such as Beth, this needs to be overt and reportable otherwise it is perceived as simply 'hot air'.

In contrast to Beth, Alison identifies secret Facebook groups as a tool of convergence for women and queers in punk spaces, one which provides the opportunity to make the unknown, known,

It started with secret, online women's groups that were happening. And I was involved in two of them and now this third one's happened, that I'm involved in by the way, not in general, [it] was literally for I guess outsider women. [Name of group redacted] is what it's called and it's like, 1000 women who are involved in the scene and they speak to each other all day. We speak to each other all day. So it's this constant thing. It's a closed Facebook, it's like a secret Facebook and it's not just about music but people do talk about the thing and you know like, the other day we had our last residency and we had these women's bands, lots of women involved and all the [group members] came and I didn't even know half of them, but they came because of this. And because they know it's going to be a safe space and they know there's going to be people there with similar politics, you know? They know if someone, some guy tries to feel them up in the pub that we'll go him (Alison, 25, Melbourne).

Alison insists that this private online platform is a key motivator in the resistant engagement of punk by queer women and gender diverse people. Without these groups Alison feels that the disparate 'outsiders' would have less access to punk scenes. The term 'outsider' here is applied to women and queers who may not be familiar with punk discourse, but who share much of the same ethic.

Importantly, Alison understands the Facebook group to be a constant in her day to day activities. She uses the platform to extend her physical experience into the digital world, which can then be (re)formed into physical place. For example, Alison's reference to the situation of; 'if some guy tries to feel them up in the pub that we'll go him', speaks to the cyclic possibilities of information sharing. The experience of being 'felt up in the pub' is one that almost all project informants spoke about. The use of the 'secret' Facebook group to capture this experience, share its effects and solidify its meaning brings forth the opportunity for challenging the practice. Furthermore, the group provides collective resistance against overt or symbolic violence in both online and offline spaces. In terms of queer futures, the experience of *knowing* recognises that emotional and relational labour produces a series of possibilities. The constant investment in affective communication is, in itself, a form of doing work through which participants in feminist, punk and queer punk calibrate their narratives. These narratives then act as signposts for solidarity and engage the affective transference of emotion. Young women punks are actively curating their queer identity in telling online stories that challenge cismale dominance and symbolic violence.

Notably, Alison and Beth both comment on the process of identity curation as it translates from online and offline discourses. '[T]hey know there's going to be people there with similar politics' (Alison), and 'I'm definitely a person who exists better in real life than I do on the internet' (Beth) are both statements that speak to bridging online and offline lived experience. While the two statements might seem opposing, they describe the nuance of creative self-making. On the one hand, Alison anecdotally considers the futurity of a space by being able to fashion an event around likeminded politics. On the other hand, Beth considers what is 'real' to be what happens offline, which in itself speaks to Beth's identity curation. She interprets that for her, what occurs online is not necessarily an accurate depiction of her selfhood.

Archiving music, events and communications through online platforms also presents as an important contribution to futurity for those involved in the queer punk scene. Ren points out that people recording and photographing shows and uploading them to digital platforms, such as Soundcloud, increases accessibility and in turn, harnesses the accessibility of a DIT ethic,

The thing that I think is really cool is lots of people that go and sound record shows and make Soundcloud blogs. That I reckon is mad. Also I really appreciate people that photograph it and document it, which is cool. There's this guy that's really good at it, he's always at every

gig, regardless of genre, always documenting it, always including people, just has his head above like, what everybody's up to and is excited by what everybody's doing and I think that people like that, even if they're just doing it for fun, they don't realise that what they are doing is really important. And they're documenting, they're almost writing the history of the music, you know, with their photographs and their quick write up and whatever else (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

The act of capturing punk through recording and photography is not new. It speaks to the anti-consumerist perspective of punk as a subculture, even if the contemporary mode of sharing recordings is done through capitalist means (for example, Soundcloud and Bandcamp profiles). Notably, file hosting sites are accessible to bands and artists regardless of their popularity, their following, or their genre and record label associations. This means that access to both produce and consume what would have been a niche sound has been widened to allow queer bands to take up space in punk discourse. However, since queer punx are still under-represented in the dominant narrative of the scene, the importance of capturing their histories in order to re-tell the story of punk speaks to a queer world-making. By gathering and archiving queer punk histories, a cornerstone of future possibilities is made known. Certain queer punk atmospheres, or even their constellations around dominant knowledge, can be represented as a kind of retelling, rather than a separate stream of involvement in the space. As the quote above shows, Soundcloud blogs that document gigs can be accessed by queers in the scene as well as others. That documentation speaks affectively to some of their own queer experiences in those places and at those times which underpin identity curation. Like zines, the recording of punk time and space not only posits the self at a particular place, but archives the possibly of (re)doing or (re)making. Ren goes on to say,

Being able to look back at shows and even band practice or parties makes me sometimes cringe and sometimes be stoked. Like, what the fuck was I thinking? Or yeah, that was a huge time (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

By having access to 'look back' at their experiences and the experiences of others, Ren is consciously able to sculpt identity to better fit both presentation and politics. This is also a form of identity curation. For example, Ren and I discussed shows we had been to in the past, places that bands had played, politics that we rejected and people that we had engaged with that we would rather not admit to. However, Ren also spoke of the importance of (un)knowing in terms of futurity,

I don't wish those recordings didn't exist, cause then I might not remember who I definitely don't want to be (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

So, Ren uses the past to signpost the future and in doing so, negotiates the ever-changing boundaries of identity politics and queer self-making. For Ren, the ability to reach into the past is critical to personal curation of identity as a non-binary queer person. Queer punx spoke often along these lines and so Ren's articulation here represents a broadly-felt, collective affect of queer archiving. We can see this same creation of a fleeting-yet-concrete utopian affect described through the production and distributions of zines.

Zines

The archiving of experiences and identity was understood in two clear ways by informants; as zines and as bodily practice. This section traces the transformation of zines from paper and print items sold at events and via postal channels, to digitised files accessible to anyone with an internet connection. In the 1980s, when women and queers were being 'squeezed out' of punk scenes (Dunn and Farnsworth 2012: 138), a female-led resistance arose in the form of art and story-telling, which was turned into leaflet-type stacks of paper and distributed among those who wanted to see themselves represented in punk discourse. The term 'magazines' was re-purposed as 'zines'.

The creation, distribution and archiving of fanzines has been a part of punk culture since its inception; the Riot Grrrl movement itself is said to have come about as a result of zines and related pressings (Dunn and Farnsworth 2012: 139). Yet, while it was once a tangible artefact where feelings were constituted in the making and consumption of paper and print, zines are moving online, although not exclusively. The online move might appear to problematise the ephemeral context of what it means to make, own, distribute and read zines. Brouwer and Licona (2016: 77) pose the question: 'If we can understand that paper is both the strength and vulnerability of print zines, can we also understand that the digitised form is both a vulnerability and a strength?' (see also Leventhal 2006; Woodbrook and Lazzaro 2013). In other words, there are positive and negative aspects to the transformation of punk zines into online artefacts. Yet in either form, zines represent identity curation. They can be used to make known the vulnerabilities of queer women and gender diverse people in the here and now, and thereby highlight the potential of queer futures. Creative outlets such as writing, designing clothes, and making zines and music have been discussed earlier as strategies

through which queer women locate themselves and maintain their presence in the scene. The desire to create zines can be understood within the larger discourse of creating the queer punk self – one who is constantly becoming and evolving. Hardcore (or hardcore punk) was often named as the original catalyst for women engaging in zine cultures. This can be interpreted as a reaction against the implicit ‘hard’ masculinity associated with hardcore as a genre. For example, Heidi explains how forging her own path toward a queer identity (and community) within hardcore punk was through DIY publications – zines,

I wanted to be more involved, but I didn’t have the guts or really, the ability to be in a band or be on stage. I didn’t want to be in the pit either. So when I found DIY zines, I could kinda make a place for myself (Heidi, 24, Newcastle).

Using the past as a marker for how she curates her identity, Heidi relates her interest in zine culture to how she now understands her identity relationally. Her comments point to her self-construction as a product of becoming and futurity in the collective queer punx arena. Heidi originally began to craft handmade paper zines to distribute alongside hardcore band merchandise at shows or through independent distros. Her zine issues covered topics such as women in punk, rape culture, sexuality, and mental illness. Through making the zines, Heidi creatively engaged with the genres of punk and hardcore in a meaningful way while actively queering it at the same time through choice of topic (see Fenster 1993). Here we can see the resonance between a DIY ethos of punk and queer praxis that resides in the creative, self-defining characteristics of both (Du Plessis and Chapman 1997). For example, the content and production of hardcore zines by women and gender diverse people relies heavily on lived experience of what it means to be marginalised in a space designed only for a certain type of marginalisation - one of anti-establishment marginality. In analysing civic engagement among girls, Harris (2001) notes that the bedrooms of young women act as private spaces where political activism can manifest into broader enactments of resistance in the public sphere. Harris (2001: 132-133) find that young women are increasingly ‘choosing marginal, underground or virtual spaces to express themselves and engage with one another away from scrutiny’.

In this case, with a sexuality that is neither heteronormatively nor homo-normatively determined, Heidi carves out a place for herself and others like her by recording and sharing her lived experience. Using Muñoz’s (2009) theory of futurity, Heidi describes the creation of a concrete utopia, one where

her intention is to claim space and time, even if its affect is ephemeral. Similarly, Kiki's zines represented a visible component of the praxis of queer punx. She describes the effect of her zines in corporeal terms, giving the example of performing queer in the mirror,

You can have a little read in your bedroom and try it out in front of your mirror. You can go home and be like, you know maybe now I'm queer. It gives you that space (Kiki, 30, Newcastle).

Kiki alludes to how, in her own punk history, zines acted as an affective fabric which congealed her lived experience of sexuality and the authorisation she desired to act to her queer(ed) self. In the private space of her bedroom, Kiki can curate her identity as she desires with the implicit endorsement of other queers. This matches what Kunstman (2012: 3) calls 'affective fabrics', 'the lived and deeply felt everyday sociality of connections, ruptures, emotions, words, politics and sensory energies'. In this way, Kiki is working out her queer sexuality and identity through alignment with feminist iconography and grrrl power rhetoric. This finding matches that of Du Plessis and Chapman (1997) who also found queer zines were a popular vehicle for opposing the seemingly heterosexual values of hardcore. Subversively gendered zines expressing DIY and DIT culture create a space in hardcore that empowers the queer reader to engage and perform queer. The example shows it is not necessary to make punk music to be strongly affected by it and to start shaping a queer discourse around it. As De Nora notes, the influence of music transcends performance within a set space, punctuating the composition of bodies and passages of time. Music is then a soundtrack to embodied social action (De Nora 2000: 17), even while music itself acts as an affective fabric that embeds itself in broader cultural artefacts. The nexus of punk music and queer identity is thereby made visible in young women's zine production.

Digitisation of Zines

Considering that digital culture has reformed zine production, collection and archiving, Brouwer and Licona (2016: 72) offer a theoretical interpretation of zine digitisation. They call it 'trans(affective)mediation' - 'the translation, or transformation, of one medium into another medium, a crossing over and a conversion of one already existing medium into another' (Brouwer and Licona 2016: 72). This leads to a dialogic configuration, requiring us to 'analyse the ways in which affect and emotions take shape through movement between contexts, websites, forums, blogs, comments, and computer screens' (Kunstman 2012: 3). It is productive to consider the changing landscape of online/offline zine production and consumption through the concepts of affective fabrics and

trans(affective)mediation, since they are useful for framing identity curation and connections to queer futurity.

The digitisation of zines, as preservation, holds the potential to broaden, complicate, and make accessible, the contested cultural/historic narratives and landscapes about which readers and creators feel strongly. Digitisation may, indeed, provide opportunities not only for broader access but also for distinct sensory experiences and possibilities (Brouwer and Licona 2016: 72). Moreover, the digitisation of what was once such a fragile form of paper expression can be considered revolutionary in terms of accessibility. Yet at the same time, the original print zines offered a tangible affective engagement. Above Kiki describes ‘going home’ to use the zine to make a queer identity in front of the mirror. Heidi describes engaging with the (paper) zine as place-making - creating concrete utopias. The original paper zines invited the imagination of queer punk women. They functioned as ‘affective fabrics’, drawing together spaces, places and identities as an act of identity curation. Online zines are, of course, closely related in affective potential, yet the translation of paper zines to digital was questioned by several informants. They are fond of paper zines,

I love zines at shows. I always flick through them and see if there is anything I’d like to read. I wouldn’t think to look one up online unless I was googling something else and there was a zine about it. I guess I spend a lot of time behind a screen. Reading a zine is something I’ve always done on paper so I guess it doesn’t occur to me (Lisa, 30, Melbourne).

Lisa describes the process of reading a (paper) zine as an affective state. She relates screen time to her daily work routine, so for her, reading a zine is a different experience achieved by ‘flicking through them’. For her, paper zines are a tangible part of the affective fabric of a show. Allie also points this out,

I don’t buy zines anymore, but I keep a little collection in my bookcase. I rarely look at them, but it’s nice to know that there is a little bit of history being preserved in my lounge room (Allie, 25, Newcastle).

Both Lisa and Allie identify the preservation of zines in paper form as an important part of archiving punk narratives, of curating their queer punk identity.

Over the 15 or more years I have spent in punk scenes, I have collected dozens of paper zines and almost without exception I recall the show at which I bought it, or the person who gave it to me. Paper zines remark gender, friendship, pain and joy. These remembrances archive my queer punk history, and offer a nostalgia which informs my future. Brouwer and Licona (2016: 73) point out a risk of digital zines; ‘digital archiving risks extending and accelerating the vulnerability of zinesters’ ideas and idioms to those who won’t or don’t know how to care for them’. The content of online zines by and for queer punk women and gender diverse people can be accessed by people who want to send hateful messages, or hack them. Thus, wide access and dissemination of zines reduces their affective capacity for safe identity curation at the personal level. Many of the informants however, acknowledge that perhaps the vulnerability of online zines to risk is outweighed by the value of their accessibility, particularly to young queers who may not have developed networks within the punk community. Informants also mentioned that people of colour and transpeople might find online resources a safe(r) space to divulge, consume and share information; to enact their own identity curation, for example,

I mean, while I know what it is like for me to sit and read a zine, I understand that it’s a privilege to do so. There are definitely people out there whose stories never get recorded because they do not feel safe enough to record them and then physically be in that space. So if those people are making zines online and sharing them, firstly we as white, cispeople have an opportunity to learn from them, and secondly, these minority groups have a voice (Alice, 28, Melbourne).

Alice is reflecting on queer futurity. She implies that white, cispeople learning how to make more inclusive spaces is a productive outcome of digitising zines. Thus ‘digitisation of print zines is an urgent, radical, and also always potentially transformational and political act’ (Brouwer and Licona 2016: 74). Many of the fieldwork conversations led into discussions of how queer world-making shapes punk spaces, and the purpose of continued labour to build safe(r) environments for all in punk. That goal needs the commitment of queers and gender diverse people who produce and consume zines to ensure their ongoing availability as both archives and platforms that generate future actions. While zines in general represent an important historical underpinning of punk subculture, in online form they foreground the potential to make safe(r) and more inclusive spaces within punk communities. Sedgwick (1993: 8) wrote of the ‘open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically’.

These past considerations by Sedgwick make a worthy contribution to contemporary discussion of zines and their futurity. Through the digitisation of zines (as well as posters, record inserts, lyric sheets and set lists), subjective meanings can be reconfigured and widely distributed; creating the capacity for action as well as some unpredictable effects. Online zines and digital archives mean that vital contributions to the scene are preserved for the future. There was recognition of this in some accounts,

If I could look back and have a discography of records that I could put on and had been part of and had created, I think that is something that is worthwhile, give me a sense of purpose or worthwhile or something, you know. I care about music history myself, including Australian and New Zealand music history and I think having a small dent in that, even in a very minor way, would be a wonderful thing (Helen, 28, Melbourne).

The sentiment of contribution to lived experience and ongoing participation in punk scenes is two-fold. Firstly, by naming the process of inclusion in history as ‘making a dent’, Helen reveals history as a story to be infiltrated, a dominant recording of time and space that her music archiving ruptures. Secondly, Helen interprets archiving histories as ‘worthwhile’, a word signifying personal success. Earlier in the thesis, an outline of the meaning of ‘worthwhile’ subjects, rather than good or bad, was used to conceptualise how informants engage with continued participation in punk scenes. Here it is used in the same semantic context.

Zines function as subjective artefacts of punk communities. Whether digitised or tangible, zines offer a place of knowing and unknowing, a record of certain spaces and times, and of affective memory. They render accessible information that would disappear without proper care, consequently forming archives for future world-making. Using Brouwer and Licona’s (2016) work, the *affect* of digitising zines suggests that, rather than reducing the impact of consuming zine content, it brings forth new possibilities for affective engagement and queer identity curation. The following section examines the bodily praxis of tattooing, both online and offline.

I was getting my bearings; figuring out how to travel to shows and which ones I'd go to. After a while, I realised that I hadn't seen anyone who looked like me or any of my friends in what seemed like forever. And I'd never felt more lonely and disengaged from my life. Then, one day I got off a train in Hackney and saw a man walking towards me wearing a Punch shirt. I'm pretty sure he thought I was mad, but I asked him to hug me and he did. I felt a little less small for a few days afterwards (Field notes, 18 May 2015).

This reflexive account illustrates the deeply embedded subversion of queer and punk visibility and its connections to identity curation. I felt 'small' in an unfamiliar global city without a sounding board for identity reflection. This example demonstrates that symbolic telegraphing of punk queer identity forms part of curating a sense of self and community. We see ourselves in others and they see themselves in us. There was specific subversive knowledge encoded in that Punch logo, one that represents a short-lived queer band whose influence on the punk scene, particularly in Australia, may be considered minimal in heteronormative scenes. Yet it reminded me of home, watching Punch play in a tiny room at a local pub. While semiotics are a key facet of meaning-making in any collective, the particularity of diverse styles of punk aesthetics work to convey genre, era and political alignment. For example, a NOFX³³ logo does not produce the same affect of collectiveness because its meaning does not align with my own politics or aesthetic tastes.

Mary describes the familiar aesthetics of punk as 'nuances', and almost like a language,

I think there is a 'look' but it is so broad. Like, I know that people think punks all look the same, and maybe we do, but it's really nuanced. A pin, hair, shoes, tattoos, tote bag. Simple things signal to me that someone is into something I am into (Mary, 26, Brighton).

Mary alludes to tattoos, which are a deep mode of punk aesthetic signification. Other informants also spoke of tattoos in that way, so we can conceptualise their utility as more than simply as a surface signifier of punk membership. It can be argued that tattoos signify as forms of communication and memory, of identity curation. For example, Huang's (2016) auto-ethnographic account of navigating between queerness and the normative broader world highlights the role of tattoos as

³³ NOFX is an all male, American punk rock band from Los Angeles, California. They were formed in 1983 by vocalist/bassist Fat Mike and guitarist Eric Melvin. Their style has been called punk rock, skate punk, ska punk, melodic hardcore and hardcore punk. While they are known to touch on social issues in their lyrical content, the band have been criticised for further reproducing heteronormative, homophobic and abusive social norms. See <http://www.avclub.com/article/nofxs-fat-mike-assaults-fan-stage-apologizes-tweet-211561>

placeholders for acts of healing, meaning-making, and commemoration. Tattoos were identified as key elements in making otherwise fleeting or difficult-to-capture understandings of oneself and one's journey. This is embodied memory-making, beyond recall or chronology; tattoos are a way to make physical that which is ephemeral (Hewitt 1997). As one of the queer punk women described it, 'we need to remember our stories 'cause no-one else is writing them down for us' (Alice, 28, Melbourne). Tattooing establishes a platform for material identity curation; tattoos can be cheap, simple and self-designed (DeMello 2000). They provide a significant means of giving prominence to marginalised personal and cultural narratives (Talvi 1998).

For many people tattoos are secretive, unspoken-of, and discreetly placed (Roberts 2012). For others, tattoos may be noticeable, but the weight or valency of them still remains concealed,

I guess it means something to me, to be permanently marked with stories. I don't like to think these things [tattoos] are too serious, but yeah, they all mean something, either good or bad (Ren, 28, Melbourne).

Queer/punk tattoos may be visible, but form a kind of hiddenness by their sometimes obscure or abstract nature. They narrate non-heteronormative histories (Ahmed 2006). They are a permanent reminder of the spaces a queer punk has moved away from and towards. The queer violation of social norms starts with their gender/sexuality and culminates in marks on the body (Beeler 2005). However, within the field of punk queerness, tattoos are polyvalent and serve additional functions beyond expression of personal identity. They speak to a collectively-read curation of queer identity. In that sense, they fit well with Muñoz's (2009) concept of *queer concrete utopias*. Queer punk tattoos, and the bodies they exist on/in, are physical objects that manifest particular spaces by their presence, within which the affects associated with queer punkness can be temporarily stored and experienced; desire, fear, bravery, and most importantly that fleeting sense between knowing and unknowing, a shadowy understanding of where wearers of these tattoos are situated in relation to queer others and the broader world. Tattoos configure the body as queer and provide a resource for others to make their identities,

I follow a bunch of queer and trans artists online, like on Instagram and Facebook, because I like to see how other people are configuring their bodies and the spaces they exist in. It's kind of like curation? You can watch someone become a part of history, or help someone else to record their own history (Alice, 28, Melbourne).

To counteract the ephemerality of queer tattoos, other ways of archiving occur. For example, users of photo-based online service Instagram constructed the hashtag #QTTR (shorthand for ‘queer tattooers’) to denote a specific group of people who are both queer themselves, and produce queer(ed) tattoos. Another hashtag, #queerpunx, also produces photographs of tattoos, although they are dispersed amongst other common documentable queer punk interests, such as performances, protests, and political statements. These examples illustrate that there is a developing body of documentation on queer punk tattoos and other visual artefacts which queer punks produce in the world. These hashtags are archiving the archives, with the potential for the photographs collated under them to be stored and publicly accessed long after the bodies that bear them have passed away.

When considering the relationship between the way knowledge is experienced and expressed through tattoos when compared to other documentation, it is apparent that the act of embedding words or images in flesh permanently modifies the way these symbols are understood. Any knowledge or affect produced by these tattoos may echo those of other means of documentation or signalling, but they are also a unique means of concretising queer narratives. They are an expressive medium in their own right, equally open to interpretation like any other form of archive. Yet, while the discussion of tattoos has so far revolved around their role as an archive of personal and collective memories, emotions and perspectives, tattoos also play a socially pro-active role in communicating queer punk aesthetics, standpoints and identities,

I have this friend who has the most beautiful tattoos. The time and creativity and cash that went into them is huge. But her family is real weird about them, thinks she has denigrated her body or something. It’s sad that they can’t see past stereotypes and see that this person’s tattoos are a way for her to like, signpost her community, let other people see that she is part of them. It’s the way she engages with her community without talking (Lisa, 30, Melbourne).

For queer punks, tattoos are a versatile and embodied means of self-expression that signal identity. In the same way that homosexual men traditionally communicate(d) their desires and community affiliation through symbols, such as handkerchiefs and earring placement (Fischer 1977), the tattoos of queer punks telegraph their queer punkness in a way that is registered by likeminded people. The nexus of queerness and punk highlights a specific affective atmosphere of collective unsafety. In the words of queercore band, Limp Wrist (2006), ‘two men were hung in the Middle East just for being gay, some Texas punks got killed ‘cause someone thought that they were strange’. Both queers and punks are considered outsiders in the mainstream world. Some retaliate by using tattoos to delineate

their rage and mark an outright rejection of the hetero/cisnormative world that they experience as dangerous, and sometimes lethal (Langman 2008), as well as the homonormative world of gay assimilation and centrist politics (Pitts 2003).

Kosut (2000) described tattooed bodies as distinctly communicative, descriptive of both the individual and the world they exist in. Tattoos signify individual approaches to representing collective histories, and pathways to expressing these journeys visibly to produce a particular message for particular audiences (Rowse, Kress, and Street 2013). By extension, the social semiotics of queer tattoos produces an external sign of symbolically contending with shame and fear. By focusing on creation, identity-affirmation, and political visibility, queer punk tattoos produce a kind of 'queer exuberance' (Bradway 2015: 183) which seeks to operate beyond, or at least *beside* fear, paranoia and cynicism. This reflects Sedgwick's (2003) *reparative reading*: contending with what it is that scares, repulses or otherwise contradicts us, in order to construct a more complete picture of where we are situated, what we desire, and the things we are capable of as queer punks. Queer tattoos are illustrative, and designed as a signal to others of what one is, where one belongs, and the emotions these relations produce: 'I know my people, I can see it written all over them' (Alison, 25, Melbourne).

When contemplating that kind of curation that looks to futurity, it seems appropriate to return to the structured documentation provided by Instagram and other photo-based mobile applications. The current queer/punk tattoo landscape, as seen through the lens of social media (and Instagram's #QTTR hashtag, in particular), varies from highly stylised, well-executed, and studio-based creations to homemade, blunt and stylistically simple designs. The tattoo images and themes are diverse; the exceptionality lies in the intentional tagging of these images as queer. By queer-punking what might otherwise not be read as such, queer punk tattoos and the people who give and receive them are imbuing additional meanings and depth in these images, diverting the gaze from any simply literal understanding. As indicated earlier, the simple image of a bird, two hands, an innocuous triangle, may be transformed. Understanding the relationship between queer punks and their tattoos allows for a new lens on an incredibly old art, heightening the role of the tattoo as an authorised marker of sexual and gender Otherness, referring subversively back to the previous role of a tattoo as the sign of a heretic, criminal or outsider.



Figure 21: Riot grrrl knuckle tattoos set in pastel lace and fur. Photo reproduced with permission, 2017.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have addressed queer futurity, affective fabrics and symbolic telegraphing to galvanise modes of identity curation and how we come to map them. By exploring the future of queer punk as implied by those who participate in the scene, I propose that action, language, tattoos, artefacts and bodies in the present are catalysts for queer punk becoming in the future. Individual conceptions of queer time and space were interpreted and reinterpreted as processes of transformative identity curation; one that is always becoming and can be imagined as a utopian future; one which, for queer punx, offers potential for *getting better*.

In documenting the struggle for young queer women in punk to be viewed as legitimate, I have explored the alternative means that queer punx use to claim space and territory in a scene weighted with heteronormativity. By reconfiguring online spaces, queer punx resist dominant coding of their sexual preference and identity. They generate offline spaces (such as gigs and events), which speak to a broad politic of resistance, and archive these to constitute queer identity curation. Using call out culture and secret Facebook groups as examples, I have highlighted how young women as queer punx find resonance in each other's 'backing up' of individual ethos and in turn, how this contributes to a reflexive engagement with identity curation. The act of finding ourselves in histories, and in each other, destabilises the taken-for-granted heteronormativity of both online and offline punk discourse. Ultimately, in this chapter I have foregrounded identity curation as a mode of becoming, belonging,

symbolism and futurity. By interweaving these conceptual standpoints, a static state of identity is disqualified and reconfigured as a dynamic and fleeting entanglement of praxis in the production of a young, queer woman or non-binary person with a legitimate place in punk. The following and final chapter provides a connective synthesis of the research so far, highlighting some original contributions to empirical and theoretical landscapes within the social sciences. Identified concepts of hypervisibility, identity curation and technologies of embodiment are revisited, and strategies of resistance against patriarchal and normative suppositions are brought together, to reflect on how we might conceptualise queer punk in the future.

Chapter Ten: The Shape of Queer Punk to Come

This thesis has developed a number of findings that engage the research aims stated in Chapter Four:

- 1) To explore the construction and meanings of queer identities for young women engaged with punk subculture in Australia and the UK.
- 2) To expand on previous research to encompass creative self-making of punx women; the use of art, community groups, self-publishing as well as music and music activity in navigating queer identities.
- 3) To analyse whether groups of young women from urban, regional and metropolitan locations have similar or different experiences in their queer punx narratives and whether these narratives broaden the histories of punk.
- 4) To discuss the relationship that young, queer women have with queer sexuality and creating selfhood in terms of what it means to be queer punx and how representations are produced authentically and visibly.

In order to provide a synthesised account of specific findings, I will address these aims in sequence, before moving to a general explanation of project findings.

Queer Identities of the Other: The Significance of Queer Identity Curation

The first aim was to explore the construction and meanings of queer identities for young women engaged with punk subculture in Australia and the UK. What has become evident from this study is the dynamic way that queer and gender diverse people *curate* their identities as queer punx, even when this curation is at odds with dominant historical and cultural narratives of punk. In this sense, curation signifies a form of resistance. Becoming queer punx is evidenced through the way young people are negotiating spaces and times through doing work of various kinds, offline and online. This *doing work* is seen as an investment in the scene and in turn, ourselves. While the particularity of doing identity appears differently for each informant, it is this work that ultimately binds queer identities together for young women and gender diverse Others in the punk scene. In this way, *collectives of embodiment* transcend marginalised groups in the scene, even if for fleeting moments. Using affect theory to describe the utility of transformative and ephemeral experiences has helped explain the way that queer women's collectives and intersectional collectives both form and disband,

and how these interlockings and non-interlockings contribute to dismantling some of the masculine homosocial constraints of punk scenes.

Empirically, I find *collective identity curation* to be a more appropriate conceptual framework than collective identities in punk. Firstly, because collective identity theory implies that groups of people find visceral ways to connect, which must be readable by an audience. In contrast, identity curation, which this thesis project suggests happens through practices of authorisation, appears as subtle and ephemeral. It may not be immediately decipherable to heteronormative others, even within the punk scene. Secondly, the readability of queer punx is theorised as *hypervisibility*, and in this regard, the idea of curated identities allows for complex and nuanced ways of doing to be addressed. Finally, the overarching collectiveness of the resistance demonstrated by young queer women in punk must be acknowledged. Therefore the notion of *collective identity curation* acknowledges that changes may take place, no matter how small or how dramatic, to singular subjects without the boundaries of the collective shifting, or needing to shift.

It was also established that while queer(ed) bodies in punk exist in liminal spaces, the politics of queer performativity in subculture is reproduced in everydayness. We saw from the accounts of Rebecca, Mary, Katy, Nat and Maggie that to enact a queer identity in punk is to do so in wider society, to the extent that these young women were unable to disentangle specific politics of punk from their everyday experiences. If the personal is political, as feminist discourse claims, then young women as queer punx are central to reconfiguring patriarchal norms embedded in subcultural discourse and in turn, sociocultural discourse. It is in the acknowledgement of doing the work of everyday curation of identity that queer punx find mutuality.

Moreover, it was established that both on and offline spaces assist queer identity curation for young punks. In those spaces, young queer people can sense community through shared values and experiences. Given that collectives do not form in a vacuum, and nor are they constructed without effort, the process of labouring towards a safe(r) queer future may be described as a mode of identity curation employed spatially. Queer punx name the reclamation of space and time as holding a double function, one that also serves to create the self. Such a process of labour must then be undertaken as simultaneously DIY and DIT because it contributes to each kind of identity performance, individual and collective.

Young queer women as performers, organisers and audience members in the punk scene described *belonging* as a central tenet of identity curation, which, in turn, supports further scene participation. DIT was presented by them in a way that reconfigures the traditional DIY punk ethos. DIT may be described as a *technology of the collective*. DIT affords space-making possibilities for queer women and gender diverse people, which I have identified as affective spaces that are generated in the punk and queer punx scene as a result of DIT events. These spaces are often claimed as territories, either spatial or temporal, and act as a domain where queer punx can endorse the doing of identity for others, and have this endorsement reciprocated. Some of the examples include safe(r) spaces policies and *symbolic telegraphing* of shared or aligned identity. These examples shed light on the praxis of young women and non-binary people as queer punks within masculine-specific sites, such as hardcore or grindcore shows. Safe(r) spaces are outlined as an achievement of feminist and radical politics in punk territories as they focus primarily on leveraging the privilege of those who hold a place from which to speak. Symbolic telegraphing was identified as an extension of both DIT and safe(r) spaces in this context.

Ultimately, in this thesis I have foregrounded *identity curation as a mode of becoming, belonging, symbolism and futurity*. By interweaving these conceptual standpoints, a static state of identity is deconstructed and reconfigured as a dynamic and fleeting entanglement of praxis.

‘We aren’t invisible, we are hypervisible’: Queer Punx as Unknown Subjects

The second aim was to expand on previous research to encompass creative self-making of punx women; the use of art, community groups, self-publishing as well as music and music activity in navigating queer identities. An important finding relevant to that aim is that queer women and gender diverse Others in punk do not experience themselves as invisible at gigs and events or in the wider punk field. Rather, they experience *hypervisibility*, which manifests in their interpretation of how symbolic and physical violence is enacted towards them. I used the data from informants to reinterpret the ‘invisibility’ claim that is so often used to describe how marginalised people experience queer scenes. I recognise that the term invisibility is claimed in media, formal education and employment settings to denote the lack of opportunities and recognition offered to women and queer people. However, while I can certainly see similarities to the punk scene where non-male people of any kind stand out, I argue that where young queers find friction in their subcultural activity is in their visibility, and sometimes hypervisibility. They appear ‘different’ to mainstream punk participants who are usually cismen.

Using hypervisibility as a term creates a visceral connotation of being unable to hide, which is how some informants described their experiences to me. *Rather than being unseen, queer punx are reframed as unknown.* That is, they are marginalised through their unfamiliar femaleness, queerness, gender expression or sexual desire according to the usual cismale gaze. To be a hypervisible (un)known is to face dismissal as a performer, an organiser or audience member; to be targeted sexually as a woman or as a gender diverse person; to be reduced by the encoded roughness of punk spaces; and to have your legitimacy erased. For example, Ren reiterated this point of hypervisibility as a performer and an audience member. She felt she was being ignored or avoided because of her perceived femaleness. Shelley explained it in the clearest way possible, by giving me the terminology (hypervisibility) that I needed to more deeply conceptualise my analysis.

Notably, hypervisibility was evident not only at gigs and events but also online. As Alice pointed out, she often finds herself being expected to weigh in on social media discussions of marginalised people because she is a self-described and known feminist. Such an expectation constitutes hypervisibility, because she is known even in her absence from these discussions. This concept also appears in online spaces where queer punx are subjected to ridicule through symbolically violent practices such as ‘ironic’ band names (as discussed in Chapter Six) and being excluded from legitimate knowledge systems (as discussed in Chapter Seven). Rather than the dominant ‘owners’ of knowledge in punk being unaware of the presence of queer women and gender non-conforming people, they are noted by informants as pursuing irony or even veiled humour to assert their heteronormative dominance. Such an act would not be possible if queers were invisible in punk spaces and scenes.

Non-heteronormative performers (defined in this thesis as those who produce and disseminate queer punx music, art and literature), face specific forms of empowerment and disempowerment as a result of their *hypervisibility*. Yet this can be used by these people (most often women) when they act as a voice for those in the scene who experience oppression and so, become increasingly revered as spokespeople. These performers build on their hypervisibility to gain cultural and social capital through networking with local and international communities. Their voices are amplified and so have the potential to disseminate countercultural resistance to hetero and cisnormative assumptions in the scene at all levels.

Further to the experience of hypervisibility, I outlined specific groups of people who face intersectional marginalisation within the punk scene. While not exclusively queer, the individuals who comprise these particularly vulnerable social groups often align with, or become aligned with, women and queer advocates and collectives in order to create space for themselves. In this way, Katy's zine can be considered as an example of 'broadening the joining' (Lorde 1984) whereby marginalised groups, who identify with labels of oppression, are given a platform from which to be heard.

Queer Punx Narratives: Broadening the Histories of Punk

Sites

With regard to the third aim of the thesis, to analyse whether groups of young women from urban, regional and metropolitan locations have similar or different experiences in their queer punx narratives and whether these narratives broaden the histories of punk, I found there was seemingly very little work being done in regional sites such as Newcastle to effect the representation of disenfranchised minority groups. However, in Melbourne and Brighton there appeared to be greater inclusion of minority groups other than queers within local punk communities. Nevertheless, the vast majority of critical engagement with intersectional marginalisation is happening in virtual communities and online spaces. Gin's zine, for example, was open to collaboration in a global context with intent to publish content online and for free. Of course, the difficulties of whiteness and ableism within this marginalised collective are considered here too. Fleur, a queer woman of colour, highlights that whilst she sees value in this 'joining', she is critical of those who she understands to possess a 'white saviour complex'. Such a perspective illustrates the complex and dynamic landscape of marginalisation and collective resistance within punk scenes.

Archiving of queer identities, materially, online and on the body

The fourth aim of the thesis addressed the investigation of creating selfhood in terms of what it means to be queer punx and how representations are produced authentically and visibly. Zines were found to assist in the expansion of queer punx narrative. They operated for the curation of identity in a similar way to recording and archiving punk music. The entanglement of digitisation in a discussion of zines produces an argument of *vulnerability as affect*. Overall, queer punx see zines as purposefully vulnerable, and that it is their vulnerability that in part creates their meaning. Conceptually, queer futures provide a reason for vulnerability as relevant to identity curation. It was concluded that the here-and-now is not the end goal of constructing queer space. Rather, it is in the futurity of queer

utopias and malleability of queer time that queer punx ideally find themselves. In this way, queer commitment to archiving, and the possibility it suggests, are elements of the affective fabric of zine production that may be embodied differently between paper and digitised production.

The data suggests that online zines produce both positive and negative affects. However, music recordings were viewed favourably, perhaps because unlike zines, music is designed with a hope of permanence. Because of online accessibility, young women as queer punx are better able to enter the dominant landscape of punk music, rather than being relegated into the niche fringes. Digitised zines were not seen in the same manner, arguably because the perceived purpose of zines to queer punx is to be desirably niche. Using other genres of youth music activity, we see that artefact digitisation is perhaps more openly embraced elsewhere, and I acknowledge this may be a result of historical engagement - punk was born prior to the internet and live engagement is still significant.

Tattoos as Symbolic Communication and Curation

I found that memories constitute a durable affective response that consolidates identity curation for young queer women in punk. Like zines, tattoos are an archivable archive. However, when comparing the way knowledge is experienced and expressed through tattoos to other documentation, such zines and music, it becomes apparent that the act of embedding words or images in flesh permanently modifies the way these symbols are understood, both offline and online. For instance, rather than tattoos acting primarily as a signifier of cultural membership, they act as affective transmission where the tattooed queer punk and the queer punk tattoo-reader form bonds that create and transform atmospheres. In the same way that De Nora (2000) posits music as a partly written narrative, tattoos offer the potential for the tattooed and tattoo-reader to essentially fill in gaps of knowledge. These fillers reshape knowledge and are identified as the capture of fleeting or difficult- to-articulate understandings of oneself and one's queer journey, relevant to the other. This maps tattoos as embodied memory-making, beyond recall or chronology; forming part of the imagined queer self and queer Other (Muñoz 2009). Using the notion of reflexivity, I have unpacked the potential of tattoos to act as pathways to visibly expressing a queer punk journey to a particular audience. And more so, I have drawn together the nuanced formation of autonomous and collective identity curation in queer punk through illustrating tattoos as more than what we like; rather tattoos are what we fear, what we know and how we understand ourselves as contributing to queer futures.

Embodied labour of resistance

Beyond tattoos in a material sense, queer performers were found to constitute bodily representations of revolution as inscribed by their gender presentation. Bodies act as sites of resistance and so they are more likely to become targets of labelling. A clear example can be found in Ren's case, where a cisman evaluated her drumming ability as 'good for a girl'. Here Ren is viewed as a *difficult woman* because she refuses the interlocking praxis of being complimented for fulfilling a culturally produced, masculinised role. In this way, a micro-aggression is being enacted and gender stereotyping becomes (re)produced. Another example appeared in Elle and MJ's experiences where they expressed disappointment at having to carry the burden of educating men about gender problems within their scene. Elle and MJ acknowledge the intense commitment of emotional labour and the expectations of others to educate people about respect, privilege and acknowledgement of gender within punk. In terms of location, Melbourne had the greatest number of female-identified or queer performers. As the most active scene for resistance against male dominance and heteronormativity, the voices of project participants there were represented as far more collectively challenging than for Newcastle. However, the limits of these geographical sites are circumvented by digital communities and so, the cismale gaze problems facing specific sites are not isolated to any one place. I now move to considering the thesis findings in a more holistic frame.

Destabilising Heteronormativity in Diverse Ways: Spatial and Socio-Cultural Locations

By addressing venues, their aesthetic and geographical location as well as their history and patronage, I affectively set the scene for grasping diverse punk and queer punk activity. Moreover, by selecting three sites which are steeped in historical evidence of punk participation, I have been able to address venues as differently-configured containers for affective atmospheres, as well as for technologies of memory; for identity curation. These punk spaces and places are important for queer(ed) histories in that they offer beacons for subcultural membership, resistance or avoidance. Describing how bodies - queer and otherwise - fill (or do not fill) these places where transformative moments happen offers a rich and deepened analysis that goes beyond the usual account of queer people as marginalised. Instead, they are shown to be making active and political choices concerning their participation in punk. Their choices are the result of investments made in certain scenes, collectives and performances. Yet marginality still matters. We can see from Chapter Five that queer punx are more likely to avoid venues and gigs that do not overtly or implicitly advertise safety as priority.

As an extension of what queer punks call DIT, and in the struggle for us to be viewed as legitimate within punk histories, I explored the alternative means that are employed in order to claim space and territory in punk scenes weighted with heteronormativity. By reconfiguring online spaces, which are still implicitly heterosexist, queers and queer punx resist dominant coding of their sexual preference and identity. It was shown that, through online means, queer punx are able to generate offline spaces (such as gigs and events), which speaks to a broad politic of resistance. Using call out culture and secret Facebook groups as examples, I highlighted how queer punx find resonance in each other's 'backing up' of individual ethos and in turn, how this contributes to a reflexive engagement with identity curation. The act of finding ourselves in histories, and in each other, destabilises the taken-for-granted heteronormativity of both online and offline punk discourse.

In Chapters Seven and Eight, I identified some of the affective spaces that are generated in the punk and queer punx scene as a result of DIT events, such as Grrrlfest and Y Listen. These spaces are often claimed as territories and act as a domain where queer punx can endorse the doing of identity for others, and have this endorsement reciprocated. Some of the examples included safe(r) spaces policies and symbolic telegraphing. These examples shed light on the praxis of queer punk women within masculinised-specific sites such as hardcore or grindcore shows. Safe(r) spaces are outlined as an achievement of feminist and radical politics in punk territories, as they focus primarily on leveraging the privilege of those who hold it. Symbolic telegraphing is discussed through DIT and safe(r) spaces where young, queer punx find both pleasure and solidarity, a kind of *doing of togetherness*, and expression of collective resistance.

We Grow All Night: The Futurity of Queer Punk

To create the interpretation of data, I brought together key theoretical themes such as performativity, embodiment, symbolic violence, collective endorsement, futurity and affect; re-establishing their application to queer punk engagement. I focused on identity curation, reclaimed space and strategic resistance to suggest a locus of activity and ethos, with the aim of illuminating how practices of young women and gender diverse others in punk queer the scene itself. These queerings can be subtle, but they can also be overt, and both formations give reason for continued scene participation. Finally, this project has made a feminist contribution to the histories of queers and queer punk, a site of analysis not often visited in academic and journalistic fields.

Yet there is so much more to be said of us as young women who are queer punx; our durability, resilience and desire for inclusive spaces are especially important to wider contexts of gender, feminism, music and sexualities. Importantly, it is the dismissal and relegation that we face in each punk encounter which leads to rich and reflexive practices of identity curation, thus creating a collective resource to resist the ongoing heteronormativity of the scene. As an insider/insighter, as a participant observer, I cannot understate the complexities of queerness in punk spaces, and punkness in queer spaces. In my multipurpose roles in queer and punk and queer punk communities, I have been afforded the possibility of making a contribution to knowledge, of my scene and of myself. To see the distinctions and the connections, the nuance of reality, the violence and the pleasure have all impacted my own identity curation and in turn, have made this project productive in ways that I could never have foreseen at the beginning.

Limitations of the Study

As a first acknowledgement of limitation, it was beyond the scope of this study to analyse class as a social and stratifying component of queer punx experiences. While I nod to class distinctions and neo-liberal meanings of identity politics, the social and economic classes of informants remain largely unexplored here. Of course, class plays a role in configuring punk scenes and spaces and such a perspective has been highlighted in the work of many researchers before me. I feel it is important to note here, and as potential site of future research, that class structures were spoken of only subtly in informant interviews and my participant observation. This may be because while class forms part of the intertwined nexus of intersectional lived experience, it is not necessarily where young women as queer punx experience the greatest marginalisation. Informants were much more likely to discuss their marginalised gender expression and sexuality as markers for discrimination rather than their economic position. It is also widely accepted in the punk scene that economic security is not representative of punk ethos due to its anti-capitalist values. However, these values are often more symbolic than realistic.

Another important limitation in this project, as mentioned earlier, is referring to cismen as if they were a homogenous group. As a researcher, and an insider, I acknowledge that cismen are not a homogenous group. They are also sometimes queer, they might be people of colour, or disabled, and so they too can be subordinated and marginalised in specifically gendered ways in the punk scene. A minority of cismen actively try to create safe(r) spaces for queer women and gender diverse people. Yet most do not. That trend was amply reinforced during the interview process, since queer punk

women and gender diverse people routinely described cismen in unflatteringly terms, especially in relation to the threat of violence, physical or symbolic. So that characterisation of cismen was carried through the analysis of data for the thesis. Yet that limitation suggests a potential site of research for future research, specifically how cismen respond to diversification in punk settings.

A further limitation is acknowledged. There are many moments within this thesis where ‘punk women’, ‘queer women’, ‘gender diverse people’ and ‘queers’ are used in homogenous ways. The intention was certainly to represent the diversity of gender presentations and sexualities within punk scenes, however, unfortunately the language of gender is under-developed and so, at times, both informants and I found it difficult to navigate the complexities of gender identity labelling. As previously, where specific labels such as transwoman or genderqueer were used by participants, these have been included in the analysis as gender affirming practice. Lastly, it is acknowledged that no transmen participated in the interviews. Research into the lived experiences of transmen in punk would also be a valuable contribution to the field of youth subcultural participation in future.

Implications for Further Research

As the research project progressed, it became clear that the research aims, which mention young women specifically, could have been expanded to reflect the nuanced experiences of gender diverse people who participate in punk scenes. In any future project, it might be more productive to concentrate on the queer constitution of ‘a punk identity’, rather than ‘queer punx’. By using identity curation as a theoretical tool, further research could consider how these queer embodiments of identity in punk talk - and talk back - to each other. For example, how do queer people’s identities inform the identity curation of heterosexual people in punk scenes?

Extending beyond punk, hypervisibility would be useful theoretical consideration for research into the everydayness of queer. As informants stated, their queer punkness flows over into all other elements of their lived experiences and so, should not be considered in isolation. Future research on queerness in broader social settings, such as public space, education, employment and leisure could yield important knowledge about how queer people curate navigate a challengingly unknowable, identity. Some preliminary findings from this project that were outside the scope of the thesis show that doing queer is referred to as a ‘life ethos’, which could and should be explored in more depth.

Taking another angle, intersectional reflexivity requires consideration more deeply of personal experiences, perspectives, entanglements and privilege, and how these may influence research and

scholarly outputs. For example, the literature review for this project made prominent use of the scholarship of queer, trans and non-binary people. The use of work by scholars who identify as queer, trans and non-binary is not only academic but personal and political. This also applies to the author of this thesis. The voices of queers should be prioritised in queer writing because it is their stories that become the axis for sharing narratives. In a practical sense, even if the researcher is queer themselves, reflexivity must be undertaken as a routine exercise, with the researcher addressing the questions made available through a biographical reflection scheme using a first-person approach, and through constructing everyday written responses, such as field notes or a reflective journal. Queer is a collective term. I propose the importance of collectively discussing those reflexive responses with queer and non-queer peers and colleagues, so that diverse perspectives and feedback are available.

Lastly, it seems that there is much more work to be done on the queering of academic scholarship. Perhaps this speaks more broadly to my own DIT politics - wanting to acknowledge that I was never alone in this process, and that the everyday support I was offered by my own group of friends and their friends (and their friends) before I ever considered undertaking a PhD; this remains integral to how the project came together. Further consideration of the role of informants in insider research within youth sociology, particularly where the collective plays such a vital role in its existence, could draw out more thoroughly how these relationships advance - or limit - methodological and epistemological knowledge.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The findings of this project could inform broader social, educational, or employment policy in contexts of marginalisation based on gender in traditionally white, middle-class male-orientated space and place. The data showed that symbolic violence against women and non-binary people is perpetrated covertly and often, unremarkably. This type of enactment is not localised to punk sites and could be explored in more depth at a range of political and procedural levels. Where my project findings may be of interest to an educational, employment, disabilities or policy sector is in the strategies of resistance that young queer people employ in subcultural scenes to better negotiate boundaries of power.

The linkages that I draw between my project and social practice are highlighted through the ways that queer punx are seen to take up theory to better inform their practices of resistance and reterritorialisation, particularly in fields of intersectional inclusion. These include the correct use of preferred gender pronouns; understanding the impacts of social, medical and psychological phenomena related to gender; risks of harm in disclosure; and ensuring of safe(r) spaces. My findings suggest a praxis-based approach to strategies of resistance in policy initiatives and how they might be interpreted in ‘real world’ settings.

Ultimately, my research findings could promote and facilitate strategies for strong engagement with critical and intersectional theory at an interdisciplinary level across a range of government and non-government organisations to better inform the practice of building inclusive, safe(r) spaces across knowledge platforms. The potential here would be to develop mechanisms and resources to ensure that academic and professional spheres are informed and updated on contemporary local, translocal and international issues that relate directly to equitable outcomes for queer, trans, genderqueer and non-binary people, with a particular focus on being an ally to these marginalised groups.

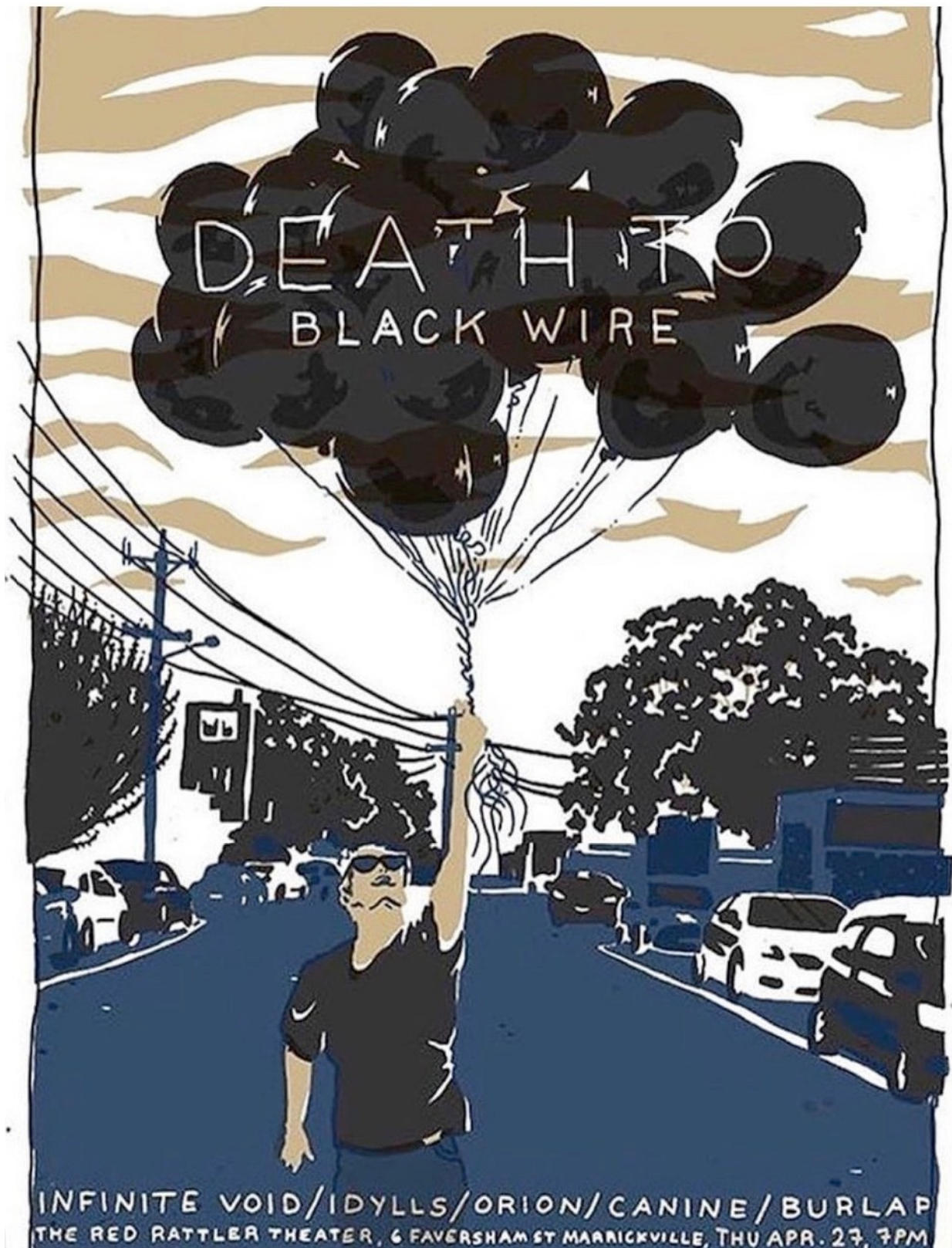


Figure 22: Birthday celebration photo as seen in figure 11, re-made into show poster for Blackwire Records last gig, April 2017.

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Appendix 1: List of Informants

Pseudonym	Age	Location	Quoted	Pseudonym	Age	Location	Quoted
Alice	28	Melbourne	Yes	Joanne	24	Newcastle	No
Alison	25	Melbourne	Yes	Katy	23	Newcastle	Yes
Allie	25	Newcastle	Yes	Kiki	30	Newcastle	Yes
Asha	29	Melbourne	Yes	Kim	23	Melbourne	Yes
Ashley	30	Melbourne	Yes	Lisa	30	Melbourne	Yes
Beth	30	Melbourne	Yes	Lola	25	Newcastle	Yes
Billy	21	Brighton	No	Maggie	29	Newcastle	Yes
Carrie	22	Melbourne	No	Mary	26	Brighton	Yes
Casey	28	Melbourne	Yes	Michelle	29	Brighton	Yes
Chrissy	30	Newcastle	Yes	Millie	20	Newcastle	Yes
Dana	30	Melbourne	No	Molly	24	Melbourne	Yes
Debbie	26	Melbourne	Yes	Nat	28	Newcastle	Yes
Elle	28	Melbourne	Yes	Nicky	24	Brighton	No
Ellen	25	Newcastle	Yes	Nina	30	Brighton	No
Emma	23	Newcastle	Yes	Pip	24	Newcastle	Yes
Fleur	26	Brighton	Yes	Rebecca	28	Melbourne	Yes
Gemma	22	Melbourne	Yes	Ren	28	Melbourne	Yes
Gin	23	Melbourne	Yes	Rose	25	Newcastle	Yes
Heidi	24	Newcastle	Yes	Sara	25	Brighton	Yes
Helen	28	Melbourne	Yes	Seb	25	Melbourne	No
Jack	30	Melbourne	Yes	Shelley	28	Melbourne	Yes
Jamie	25	Melbourne	Yes	Sienna	27	Melbourne	No
Jeanette	30	Newcastle	No	Tegan	27	Newcastle	Yes
Jez	26	Brighton	Yes	Victoria	21	Melbourne	No
Joanne	24	Newcastle	No	Winona	27	Brighton	No