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Limits of sharing and materialization of support: Indonesian Net Label Union

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ABSTRACT
The end of the 2000s saw the robust development of net labels as an internet-based distribution platform for musicians to share their music for free. The development of the Indonesian Net Label Union represents a self-organizing act to indicate the rise of a new breed of indie music generation. Sharing is employed as a uniting concept and envisioned to be a collective project to achieve a collective sustainability. It prompts direct questions of the layered support for net label. In this article, I interrogate the embodiment (and the disembodiment) of sharing as well as the meaning of sustainability. In doing so, I examine the interlinking of sharing with piracy, materialization of support from the fans' loyalties and friendship, which forms the alternative infrastructure of the net label organization.

KEYWORDS
Net label; music culture; commons; *gotong royong*; sharing

Introduction

A net label is an internet-based platform where musicians share music for free. There are other platforms to stream audio and visual files for free. Not all the musicians who distribute music for free use net label as the distribution platform. The development of the Indonesian Net Label Union (http://indonesiannetlabelunion.net/), founded in 2012, indicates the burgeoning net labels. The members of the union were the net labels from different cities – Yogyakarta (also known as Jogja), Semarang, Purworejo, Surabaya, Bogor and Jakarta. Yes No Wave, a Yogyakarta-based net label and the first net label in Indonesia, played an important role in managing the union.

What does it mean to implement sharing as a key principle in creative practices? To share and duplicate files are the norms of living and working in a "networked information economy" (Benkler 2006). Adherences to sharing prompt direct questions to the layered support for the sustainability of the artists. A net label is not usually designed with financial planning to enable money generating schemes through paid advertisements, revenue sharing on digital file sales, or selling pro accounts to the artists. This article uses the Indonesian Net Label Union and the stories of the people attached to the free music as study cases to observe how sharing is imagined and reframed.

Music as a commons

The perspective of the people that I write about here is less about music in a particular genre, but more about music as a horizon of possibilities, or a means, to be managed and maintained for

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different purposes. I propose to refer it as music as a commons, or shared resources. To think about music commons is to think about different self-organizing acts where resources, infrastructure, and access, are reutilized, revalued, recreated and rethought.

Hess and Ostrom's viewpoint about "knowledge as a resource" (2007, 8) informs my argument in thinking about music as a resource. To perceive music as knowledge first, then resource second, to follow Hess and Ostrom, can be indicated through the projection of the discovery and accumulation practices; they are projected at developing a public good for the wellbeing of the future generations. To think about music as a commons is to propose another set of valuable systems outside the usual commodity value.

Small's (1998) argument about "musicking" centers on the idea that the essence of music is in the "doing." This is an aspect of his argument that I consider in thinking about the meaning of music in my research. My contribution is to extend Small's ideas through showing that the scope of musicking can go beyond the usual performances of music – beyond the songs and the music, the musicians, and the stages. To "music" is to organize a series of action on managing the music commons.

My interest in commons derives from an active involvement with the Kunci Cultural Studies Center, an organization that I co-founded in 1999 in Yogyakarta. Two of Kunci's projects, *Media and Technology Convergence in Indonesia: Cultural Perspective on Handphone Culture and Creative Digital Production* and *Made in Commons*, have shaped my concept about "music as a commons," collective action, vernacular knowledge, and self-organizing. Through the examples presented in the next section, I try to convey this symbiosis relation in an honest and straightforward manner.

Two of Kunci's publications became the main source of the discussions to be held in both festivals organized by the union. These two books are Lawrence Lessig's (2011) *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity* and Marcus Boon's (2013) *In Praise of Copying*. They are published as part of the *Media and Technology Convergence* Project. Their Indonesian titles are *Budaya Bebas: Bagaimana Media Besar Memakai Teknologi dan Hukum untuk Membatasi dan Mengontrol Kreativitas* and *Memuliakan Penyalinan* respectively. A net label owner used the publication of *Budaya Bebas* book as a case study about copyright and Creative Commons to complete his undergraduate study in law.

Socialization and the widening circle of reform

The main activity of the union was a festival called Indonesian Net Audio Festival. According to Anitha Silvia, or Tinta, a member of the organizing committee, the organization of the festival was intended to be a *kopi darat* event – an Indonesian neologism used to refer to the various meetings that happen offline. An aim of the festival was to socialize sharing culture, through different activities that ranged from offline file sharing, radio workshop, film screening, and merchandise sale. A *kopi darat* functions as a space where net label practitioners, musicians, and fans gather and talk.

Socialization facilitates public learning process. It shows intellectual engagement in approaching sharing. It attempts to establish the position of the union as part of a wider sharing and open source movement. The festival is part of the union's strategy for consolidating the reform of the meaning of economy. The public nature of the festival indicates its intention to expand the "circle of reform" (Hayden 1982, 134–181). To make socialization a regular agenda of the union suggests a systematic formulation process and to follow Strassler's "an engineered culture" (2010, 16–18) which inculcates good attitudes and habits.

Alternative milieu

On indie and alternative

Music in a net label is often referred to as indie music. To define the meaning of indie, Luvaas' (2012, 129) research reveals that it involves redefining locality and the remaking process of identity, place, and aesthetics. The definition of local does not derive from the designated relation with tradition and nation-state, but rather involves an active process of reinvention and reimagining.

The people in this essay are referred to as *tokoh skena*, the figures of the (indie) scene, because of their prominent position in the scene. The music of a net label is the product of selection process, which reflects their personal taste and intuition. Such subjectivity is a crucial aspect in selecting and guiding the taste of the public to navigate the flowing music material from countless channels.

This article does not focus on the textual and aesthetic realm of indie music. Rather, the focus is on the indie principle as a means to practice alternative ways against mainstream-conventional procedures. The alternative principle takes center stage in the analysis. But the alternity narrated here cannot be easily pinpointed as "invitation to disorderliness" towards the "New Order's regime obsession with order."[1]

What I mean by indie is situated in the readiness for taking alternative approaches to control the cycle of cultural production and to consciously frame the activities within the wider social context. Collectivism and the institutionalization of cultural production are the strong elements to indicate contemporary Indonesian cultural projects. Creating an alternative space has been a self-organizing habit to develop by a new generation of cultural activists as a model platform for fulfilling their visionary ideas.

The development of the Indonesian Net Label Union serves as a self-organizing act to show the rise of a new breed of indie music generation. The union activists are musicians, indie band managers, music writers, and producers. They are cultural producers with visions and plans, who use sharing as a way of working that goes beyond music distribution. Sharing is employed as a uniting concept and is envisioned to be a collective project to achieve a collective sustainability. To work together as a union indicates the desire for living together as a community.

Cultural activism

Having a band, playing in a band or being an *anak band*, a member of a band, or having a connection with a band, constitutes a popular leisure activity of urban youth. It is associated with being cool and seems to be the default lineage of net label activism. Other lineage of net labels forms and is formed by the production of space for new ideas in art and cultural production. They produce various cultural activities and help shape the cultural landscape of the city. Their involvement in the union emphasizes different initiatives and roles in managing their relations with music.

Jogja is labeled as a *kota pelajar*, a student city. It is considered a good place to send children to study in the city. It has also earned a reputation as a measure of Indonesian contemporary art. It is home to many important artists, galleries, studios, and cultural centers. Artistic and intellectual exchanges in the form of residencies have established the dynamic cultural mobility to connect Jogja and other domestic and international cities. Different forms of traditional art and other art activities related to Javanese tradition still hold a strong currency in raising the inflows of domestic

and foreign tourists in Jogja. Within this context, net label activities provide the ingredients for the formation of an alternative map of art and culture. To illustrate this, in this section I describe the pliability of the net label through narrating the stories of the union key activists. Their stories are important given the horizontal structure of the union. The position of director is made non-existent. It emphasizes collectivity as a key discourse.

Wok the Rock, or Wok, is a visual artist and musician who played an important role in managing Yes No Wave (http://yesnowave.com/). He was the most respected person in the union. He was highly regarded as a leader though he often refused to be perceived as such. Before founding the label, he had been actively involved in Ruang Mes 56, an artist initiative and alternative space for contemporary photography and visual culture. While engaged in Mess Boys' activities, he maintained his activities outside of the group – publishing music of fellow punk bands through the Realino Records label, organizing music gigs, and producing various zines. The exhibitions organized by Ruang Mes 56 have always been known for their good music ambience. Gigs and DJ acts were regular parts of the exhibition openings. It turned Ruang Mes 56 into a testing ground for new music. The two forms of alternativeness, art space and music stage, became the vessel through which Wok learned the skills needed to run a net label.

Anitha Silvia, or Tinta, is an avid music listener and keen fan. Her involvement in the union is the result of enthusiasm for finding people with similar music references. Before finding Yes No Wave as an important music source, she used to depend on MySpace to find the music that she liked and to connect with those of similar music references. Tinta is also an active member of C2O, a Surabaya-based library and cultural space (http://c2o-library.net/). In performing her day job at an event organizing company in Surabaya, she utilized her work experience at C2O and diversified them into various cultural activities for the broader public. C2O actively engaged to capture the multifaceted aspects of the city through history, people and culture. The organization broadened its activities to make a net label to release the music of Surabaya-based musicians and record the social and cultural life of the city. Sharing music is a way to contribute thoughts and voices to the city.

The distribution function of Jogja Berdikari (http://jogjaberdikari.blogspot.com/), founded by Adya Mahardhika in 2008, stemmed from a documentation process. Adya was a member of a punk band, Jiwalangkaji; Berdikari is an Indonesian neologism for being independent. Adya established the label to promote and document the works of indie musicians from Jogja. Likewise, Mindblasting (http://mindblasting.wordpress.com/), founded by Arie in 2009, is envisaged to be part of the infrastructure of Indonesian music archiving practices. Arie was a postgraduate student of Hospital Management System at Gadjah Mada University. He holds a bachelor degree in Law from Jember University. Apart from his fondness of music, which serves as a foundation of his networking with Jogja cultural scene, his closeness to the city is enabled by regular travel to Jogja for his studies. Since 2010, Mindblasting has been transformed into an audio library. To Arie, curating is a process that needs to be omitted in net label operationalization (Aribowo 2016, 114).

The politics of taste as an essential element in the process often makes curation a rigid mechanism, and transforms a net label into a gated community. Inherent in the view is the thought that a net label is a space to gather music works that would otherwise be homeless. Again for Arie, the real value of a net label lies less in its function as an online platform, to distribute music that often cannot find a home in more established channels, but more in its capacity to document music. A net label is perceived to be a tool of documentation. To employ documentation as a principle in a net label means to use it as a tool of inclusion. Music is seen as an artifact and *bukti sejarah*, historical proof that needs to be collected.

Youth, media culture, and illicit sharing

The important role of the internet in shaping the dynamics of Indonesian society has been recognized. During the New Order era, as argued by Hill and Sen (2005), the internet was the source where uncensored news and information could be found, thus it became a fertile medium for the seeds of civic movement.[2] How the internet is accessed narrates the process of building a set of strategies in dealing with, controlling and managing it. The internet has proved to be a field, using the words of Lim (2003, 242), "full of holes" where the control of the state is continuously being contested. In the early internet era, when an internet connection was regarded as luxurious, a *warnet*, an abbreviation of "warung internet," an internet shop, was a reliable place to access the internet. Being in a *warnet*, to access the alternative channel where the forbidden materials were flowing, thus acquired a certain sense of freedom.

In her other work, Lim (2013, 6) states that the coming of social media transformed the internet into a "convivial medium" where the youth exercise their participation in an "act of consumption as well as the production and distribution of ideas, knowledge, and culture." As the story of the internet's transformation tells us, it becomes a site where the exercise to take part in what Jenkins (2006) coined "participatory culture" is carried out. Making personal websites are considered an easy task. Platforms for communication in the internet progressed to be dynamic mediums, which opened up the users' productive capacities. Using technical terms, Lessig (2008, 51–84) said that, compared with the platforms' static "Read/Only" state, such development enables the users to have "Read/Write" access, a possibility to express their thoughts. Benkler (2006) examines the emergence of new social practices where such participatory culture is translated and operationalized to form self-organized peer production works. According to Benkler, these works aim to redefine the existing hierarchy in the "networked information economy" and present a "nonmarket" approach to challenge the dominant "proprietary business models."

As downloading became one of the main activities in a *warnet*, many *warnet* owners store music, film, e-book, articles, and catalogs them according to their genre in the computers. A *warnet* with many audiovisual and text material collections would attract many customers. Having a part-time job in a *warnet* attracted many youths since it would enable them to surf the internet for unlimited hours. The usual distribution route for musicians was to produce demo tapes, which resulted from countless hours of recording sessions in studios, and send them to radio stations or recording companies. The slow selection system often made these demos pile up and go unnoticed in rooms or in storage areas.

Some musicians quickly recognized the importance of a *warnet* as a site to get valuable material, and to turn it into the fastest route for music distribution. Before founding Mindblasting, Arie used to work in a *warnet* called Waroenk Net in Jember. It was a *warnet* with the fastest internet connection in Jember, a town in East Java, where he spent his college years. Many of his friends requested him to put the files of their music in the music folder in the computers. He would play one or two of their songs during his work shift. As a result, some *warnet* users would approach him and ask about the songs.

Bottlesmoker, a Bandung-based band is another case in point. In the early years, Angkuy put the files of Bottlesmoker into the "International Music" folder in the computers in *warnet*s, which were available in large numbers around Padjadjaran University where he studied. He went to many *warnet*s to do the same thing. Depending on whether the money was available, the band would burn the music onto CD-R discs and send them as promotional tools to radio stations or to fans in other cities. Their *warnet* strategy seemed to work well, because users of the internet shops started talking about

them. They started to receive invitations to perform in small gigs in Bandung. Clothing *distros* in the city started to endorse them through providing various outfits for everyday use and performance. Today, they have received many invitations to perform at important music festivals abroad. Free distribution is a stepping-stone to win acclaim and gain different forms of advantages.

Blogging culture is another important complement to the development of net label. Blogging is an accessible platform for posting texts or pictures, uploading, downloading and streaming new sound experiments. Sharing thoughts in blogs, mostly created using free web hosting services, and making zines are two things considered important to develop writing skills (important for writing liner notes for a particular album). Hilman Fathoni, the initiator of Ear Alert Records (http://earalertrecords.blogspot.com/), for example, was also an activist at Mahkamah, a student press department of the Law Faculty of Gadjah Mada University. He was also a prolific zine maker.

The establishment of Ear Alert Records shows the close connection between blogging culture and illicit sharing practices. Before operating Ear Alert Records, Hilman made a blog where he put music files that he liked and allowed people to access them. He named it "Empetrinan Indonesia," a play on the Indonesian word for MP3. The slogan of the blog is "Sharing is *embuh*." "Embuh" is a Javanese word, which means "whatever." The goal was, as he said, "*mem*-public domain-*kan semua*," to put his music collection in the public domain area. In practice, it meant downloading audio material he liked, and uploading it again in a website that he created. While Hilman acknowledged the practice could be regarded as piracy and *jahat*, evil, within formal regulations, to him the website served as *ruang romantis,* a personal romantic space, to cater for his own nostalgia.

The source of the music in his blog is varied. Many "holes" in the internet provide free abundant music resources, which Hilman used to create his collection. "I depend on these illegal blogs to enrich my musical horizon," he said. Some parts of the collection were derived from his favorite CDs. He ripped them, made picture to accompany the postings, wrote 2–3 lines to promote the music, and then uploaded everything onto the blog. To store all the files, he chose a hosting service called Megaupload (http://www.megaupload.com/). Following the shutting down of Megaupload by the United States Department of Justice in 2012, his blog was curtailed. However, the blog still exists; only the links to the songs are dead. The character of the MP3 format and the openness of the internet fill the format with dynamism. But it can stop moving or be forced to stop due to the power of the authorities who regulate the legal meaning of piracy.

Net label, piracy, and creative commons

MP3 is the common format of files that circulated within net label. The reproducible character of the format accelerates the notion of sharing that is promoted by net label. It sustains cross-copying activities and wider interaction between music fans. The intangibility of MP3 files encouraged the attachment of the "technology of piracy" label (Hu 2005). In his study of the history of the MP3 format, Sterne (2012, 208) asserts that piracy is "a central catalyst in the MP3's rise to preeminence and the growing value of MP3 patents." Such a label attached to the MP3 format, combined with file downloading as the main mechanism employed to distribute music releases, are factors that keep net label on the alert for being accused as supporting piracy. Pirated CDs (containing MP3 files) are usually sold in cheaply in shops on the streets and malls in Indonesian cities. The free aspect of sharing, practiced in net label, suggests that they can be obtained without money. It alludes to the *gratisan*, free things collected through a pirating mechanism.

The usefulness of pirating techniques within the local music consumption and listening culture is usually discoursed on within everyday conversation. Saying piracy is openly useful, however,

remains problematic. The introduction section of the union website is a case in point. It starts by stating that the music piracy level in Indonesia is high. There is no further discussion about it. Instead, the following account details the examples of musicians who successfully distribute their music in digital format and sell physical albums at the same time.

My assumption is that this is the avenue through which the union states its views on free downloads and piracy. "Free download" does not always invoke a negative connotation of a mechanism that is to musicians' disadvantage. In net label practices, a free download is not the same as a free download in piracy, because consuming digital files does not necessarily reduce the desire to purchase the "actual" albums.

As MP3 is becoming an increasingly ubiquitous format, many fear it would bring a greater financial loss to physical releases distribution. For the same reason, while expressing support of the rise of net label, some musicians I talked with during my fieldwork were reluctant to release their music through the new platform. But the fear is less about rampant piracy and how it might bring a direct reduction in income, but more on the fear that MP3s would make their music *tidak ada bentuknya*, formless, intangible.

This does not mean that distributing music digitally is not preferable. The MP3 format is the most popular music format. To produce an album, from which the digital files are dispersed, copied in countless (in licit or illicit) ways, played and stored in phones, laptops, and other gadgets, is an indication of a popular musician. Some musicians thought that the digital format is preferable only if it is augmented with albums in physical formats, where the possibility to profit from it is kept open.

A net label does not sell MP3s, yet the possibility to do so is open. To sell albums in physical formats enables the musicians (and the net labels too) to be rewarded through their creative works. Some net labels extend their production beyond digital format. Yes No Wave and Mindblasting are two members of the union which produce CDs or records apart from their MP3 products.

While copying, along with downloading, duplicating, and storing, has been part of the common techniques for collecting, distributing, and storing digital materials, the discourse on the performance of copying, however, often revolves around the illegal-criminalized practices (Yar 2005). The organization of anti-piracy campaign tended to shrink fair use and public domain (Sundaram 2010). Cited in Sundaram, Litman (2000) argued that, as a digital term, copying is conflated with pirating practices, which in turn makes it part of the discussion about piracy.

In this context, the application of Creative Commons, herewith abbreviated as CC, as a mechanism to regulate the licensing system of music in the net label distribution demonstrate a gesture of critical voices towards the mainstream copyright regime. In Indonesia, the application of Creative Commons did not emerge in an organized way, it is rather scattered. There is a layer of reasons behind the regulation use. Active support came from a group of designers and small publishers, who advocated new ways for consuming, producing, distributing, and regulating cultural products. Under the control of the aggressive copyright regime, the encouragement of CC to reproduce creative spaces is appealing. It encourages many people to copy and paste all symbols from the CC website to their own websites.

An attempt at turning the gesture into a clear statement was part of a talk about CC during the Indonesian Net Audio Festival, bringing together speakers from Creative Commons Indonesia and net label practitioners. This is what marks the difference between net label and other free music distribution, which might apply CC. A net label might have different licensing system. But many net labels under the union are licensed their music using CC. The understanding of net label activists of CC is varied.

CC encourages their users to recognize the creation of territory where the authorship of cultural products is regulated differently, through applying different licensing mechanism. The meaning of free sharing and creative appropriation encouraged by CC is premised on respect for authorship. The vision of CC is built on the realization of the Internet as an arena of developing public digital knowledge. The design of the licenses and tools created by CC aims to encourage the rise of responsible media users as well as respect of cultural producers. To serve as an infrastructure to build commons in the digital age, they are "legally solid, globally applicable, and responsive to our users' needs."[3]

This essay provides a limited space to discuss the talk at length. It turned out to be a usual presentation event, detailing the workings of all the CC symbols. It prompts a question whether the aim was to expand the circle of CC users in the country. At once it brings to further questions whether it serves as the logic of expanding public domain music, which in turn help materializing music as commons. The establishment of Creative Commons Indonesia managed to capture the attempt at bringing the new concept of licensing system in the Indonesian context through the translation of CC licensing system into Indonesian. The enthusiasm of those who engaged in the union as well as the festival indicates the entwinement of copying culture in the everyday music practices. But this did not stimulate the CC talk to cover, in depth, the diverging views on sharing and authorship and critique the dominant views on piracy.

Thing economy

The intangibility character of MP3s has triggered a series of thoughts to balance it with concrete plans for the economic stability of musicians. It becomes an unlimited space to explore the file's physical dimension. For example, Zoo, a "math rock" band, released an album in the form of two layered-stones and between them is a disc. To Die, a "noise band," released an album in the form of a lunch box. Frau, a solo performer, released an album in the form of a music sheet book so that her fans could play her songs on their guitars or pianos. Their position is difficult to pin down – somewhere in between albums and tokens. They attempt to make visible originality an aspect of an artist who has been flattened by digital files.

Through making unconventional forms of albums, music is materialized and transformed into brilliant objects to collect. This underlines an intention to maximize the desires for collecting musical artifacts among fans.

The cheap value of the digital files suggests the abundant character of MP3s. They are easily being reproduced and found, to the extent that they are almost valueless. Another aspect to suggest the abundant character, in relation to the development of audio storage technology, is a condition that Sterne (2009, 57) referred to as "small moments of willful forgetting." It does not derive from simple carelessness, but from the confidence in the existence of things. Since they are abundant, the concept of seeing them as entities with a vulnerable nature is minimal. This is an aspect that encourages some net label activists to regard their activism as part of a documentation project. According to Adya, Jogja Berdikari's initiator, a net label should pay more attention to the documentation aspect, so that, in his words, "the musical energy would not dissolve into nothingness." In accordance with this view, my observation shows that many fans also use documentation as a reason to justify their acts of purchasing merchandise and physical albums. Documentation becomes a cause and a means clearly seen in the musical stuff economy.

Many musicians who distribute music for free through net label make merchandise – T-shirts, tote bags, pins, and posters. Artists often make the merchandise themselves and act as sellers. The

rationale justifies money circulation, and at once complicates the notion of commodities and sharing. The practice of buying merchandise does not point to the practice of engaging in usual commerce, but goes beyond that. From the perspective of the artists, financial resources that derive from merchandise selling mean promises to underwrite future art production. From the perspective of those who buy the merchandise, buying is perhaps the most convenient way and the shortest route to support the "production department" of the artists that they like. It provides a way to contribute to the sustainability of independent production. Inherent is a deep respect and goodwill towards the most able artists.

Different forms of merchandise are sold through various channels. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram become important distribution channels. Yes No Wave opened Yes No Shop, a store dedicated to merchandise and physical releases, in 2013. Some performance venues own shops, which serve as distribution outlets. Another distribution route was through shops managed by artist-made spaces or alternative spaces. These things circulate within their "indie cosmology" (Fonarow 2006, 28) and are a product of careful consideration process. The physicality of the spaces often translates into conversations and the environment, which help shape the distinct qualities an artist hopes to maintain.

The physicality of MP3s also emerges into moments of social interaction between net label activists, musicians, and their fans. The organization of the above-mentioned festival, with meet-and-greet opportunities, developed by the Indonesian Net Label Union, is a case in point. Offline sharing booths are intended to facilitate an interaction between a net label and music fans. Bagus Anggoro Mukti elaborates on the rise of physical releases, merchandise, and other things that are manifest in the growing of *lapak*, a non-permanent booth as a trade mechanism. Growing out of his personal experience as a manager of Yes No Shop, the official merchandise department of Yes No Wave, Mukti describes the potential role of a shop manager on the front line of indie music discourse (Mukti 2016, 87–101). His research show how the development of *lapak* has moved beyond its business function, become a supplement to gigs, and provides many avenues of information or gossip exchange among the indie music scene community.

The phrase "support local product" has been popularly used to encourage people to support the "creative products" of production that arise from outside the mainstream mode of production. The usage of the phrase is considered in the context of encouraging people to respect the works of the children of the nation, and to realize it in the act of buying. In many distribution places, music merchandise and unconventional formats of albums are often mixed with other elaborate-creative objects produced by indie production. This reflects the taste and aesthetic preferences of the shops. These things are all for sale. Supporting local products means *buying* them. It links to the capitalization of the value of indie production. Money comes into view.

The audience, be it as dedicated fans or enlightened participants, still constitute cohort deriving revenue and a profitable financial return. Profit and fans are two elements to stimulate the dynamics of relations between merchandise sales, the life of the band, and the places where distribution activities and music-based social interactions take place.

Donation

On the Yes No Wave website there was an invitation to support the net label through donation and merchandise purchase. It read: "You can donate at any amounts you want using PayPal. Your donation can keep us still alive and kicking. You can also purchase our merchandise as your donation." Yes No Wave uses the concept of a "gift economy" to explain the rationale of their sharing

practices. I perceive it as part of their intellectual engagement to approach sharing as both concept and practice. However, it makes me wonder what kind of solidarity will emerge from this. It leads me to ask whether Yes No Wave people associate gift giving with social solidarity, as Mauss (1974) said.

Donation is an activity usually associated with philanthropy. There is a set of ethical principles, often intersecting with religious values, that underlies donation practice. Voluntarily contributing something for a good cause is noble. It contributes to the broader community wellbeing and to economic welfare. This principle is what underpins its appropriation for harnessing people's participation in contributing their resources to various art and cultural activities.

Returning to the view of a "gift economy" on which to base Yes No Wave practices, the *gift* is conflated with another term in the giving category – *donation*. These two terms refer to the same thing. They are perceived to be the essential factor in participation. In addition, it includes an ethical dimension to the work production process. In conceiving of a particular capacity and resources as a donation (in-kind value), perhaps one would be aware of it as a special quality. Unless it has this standing, it cannot be meaningfully donated or given away. The involvement with a cultural project, with a good cause, becomes a new trope, and today signifies an enlightened attitude. Likewise, in these circumstances these recipients of the donation also perceive it as significant.

I find it useful to contextualize how donations with other new ways of funding art projects have been practiced widely in Indonesia and beyond. *Gotong royong* is a set of norms that regulate the relationship between people in the population, and the relationship between the state and the population. *Gotong royong* describes the state's normal means of mobilizing people's participation in various development projects. It constitutes a political imagination, to be activated as the foundation of a cultural project. When an activity is done in the spirit of *gotong royong*, labor is valued as fleeting, abundant, and free. According to Bowen (1986, 545–561), such labor is "to be donated and not purchased" because it is assumed that those living in a community "are willing to work in *gotong royong* fashion, that is without pay." According to Bowen, the success of *gotong royong* is constructed from its installments as part of traditional rural society. Collective work is acknowledged as a common work method. This is all conducted on the basis of reciprocal relations.

Crowdfunding, a collective financial scheme, is one of the new mechanisms that have been increasingly applied. Underpinning the organization of the scheme is internet culture and the public participation enabled by it. Brabham (2013, 37) describes it as "a funding model whereby individuals use the Internet to contribute relatively small amounts of money to support the creation of a specific product or the investment in a specific business idea."

In *gotong royong* and other public participation schemes initiated to sponsor development projects, the voluntary aspect disappears because it emerges as a form of request coming from above. The voluntary aspect, in crowdfunding schemes, is veneered by an invitation to support the ideas of a cultural project, and is emphasized to strengthen solidarity. According to Brabham, the success of crowdfunding within various social contexts especially where public funding for arts has decreased, adds to its popularity among artists and cultural initiators. Fundamental to a crowdfunding initiative is the loyalty of fans. It provides room to rethink independency, or *berdikari*, capabilities to stand on one's own feet, layered with the desire to maintain a sense of personality, in producing culture.

The tone of the donation request posted on Yes No Wave's website does not carry any sense of urgency. It is proffered as if it is always in readiness for nothing. Somehow it reminds me of a donation box, an *infaq* box in a mosque; it sits passively and patiently for someone to voluntarily donate money. Wok doesn't seem to care whether his proposal would generate donors or not. Since he created the call for donation on Yes No Wave's website in 2009, there have only been

two donors to his label. And he could not remember their names. These donors gave US$10 and US $5 respectively. The total amount of the donation was far from enough to support the monthly expenses – the electricity and internet fees, and the web hosting rent. Independent crowdfunding initiatives rely on spontaneity. A public invitation to donate only receives lukewarm responses. It suggests that it might take some time for Jogja people to get used to the idea of contributing money through the internet.

Friendship as infrastructure

Friendships are a form of resource, readily transformed into a labor association or partnership when opportunities arise. By referring to friendship as a resource that is readily available, I continued conceptualizing it as a form of proprietary access to an open network of feelings and services between individuals. It is open since initially it is never intentionally aimed at achieving particular goals. The process of formulating these goals run in parallel with the deepening of understanding on the potential capacity that lies within every individual constituting the circle of friendship. Friendship thus is a kind of situation that can be transformed into parts of a support system or infrastructure for the arts.

One meaning of friendship, to follow Giorgio Agamben (2009, 26), is a state that would "open up a privileged point of access." The logic of the support system practiced here derives from the classic notion that *relasi* (relation) and *koneksi* (connection) are infused with a productive character.[4] Among the artists, the productive *koneksi* is termed as *kolaborasi* (collaboration), which is celebrated as a new method of production in the art scene. The range of art collaboration is wide – from artistic ideas of collaboration amongst a group of artists, the realization of an artistic idea by a local artisan, to the mutual fulfillment of resources between different individuals or collectives in the creative arts.

The labor based on friendship practices, to follow Michael Hardt, can be referred to as "affective labor" (Hardt 1999, 89–100). Although, as Yochai Benkler asserts, affective labor is susceptible to commodification, it is still available to facilitate social exchange (Benkler 2006, 96). In this section, I portray Wok's attempts at fostering friendship, building it up over time, and benefiting from it. Further, in Hardt (1999), the affective labor features immateriality, from which anti-capitalist projects often find their ground. However, the immaterial labor, to again use Hardt, does not necessarily mean that it is located outside of capitalist production.

While emphasizing the notion of friendship as the basis to support the well-being of a net label, my intention is to point to the diverse economy not only as an arena to demonstrate strengthening of support, but also to reveal conflict and friction potentials, all sorts of incompatibility, awkwardness, and anxieties.

The productive *koneksi* indicates its infrastructural capacities, or the possibility of people to transform into infrastructure as argued by AbdouMaliq Simoné. The idea of "people as infrastructure" proposed by Simoné, derives from the extension of the idea of "infrastructure" to "people's activities." Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's "representations of space," which describes the close interrelation between *places*, *people*, *actions*, and *things*, Simoné's "people as infrastructure" defines adeptness at generating "maximal outcomes" from the tentative and precarious processes of remaking the city and urban environment, which in turn shapes how one lives, makes things, and collaborates with other people (Simoné 2004, 407–411).

The network system that the people in Indonesian Net Label Union depend on is founded on a context where another model of "people as infrastructure," locally known as *gotong royong*, operates. If being in a friendship is to possess readily available wealth, or rather labor, how can the wealth that

emerges from friendship be defined? My assumption is that it has been taken for granted that the available labor in a network of friends is abundant. It is abundant because it can be obtained relatively easily.

Friendship also refers to the "friendly" way of talking about money in Javanese culture. What is often emphasized in everyday labor negotiations is the intangibility of money. Under the flags of trust and friendship, people do not deliver their services and put them in exact monetary terms. Various terms such as *gampang* (easy), *santai* (relax), and *nanti saja* (later) are regular expressions to defer money's tangibility.

In maintaining Yes No Wave, Wok depends on the support of others in his immediate environment – the Jogja's art and cultural community. He received help from a friend who was in a web developing business to cover the web hosting. He also received different forms of help to advertise the merchandise produced by Yes No Wave – taking photographs, modeling, and styling for the advertisements.

Since 2011, Wok has shared spaces with the Kunci Cultural Studies Center, the research organization I co-founded in 1999 with Antariksa (http://kunci.or,id/). Kunci and Wok have been partners in many projects. For example, Wok developed Kunci's website and has been taking care of other things related to it. He was involved in our media and technology research project as a research coordinator of Megamix Militia, a component of the project to focus on audiovisual remix exploration.

We shared the rent fee as well as the electricity and Internet bills. There was no regulation of the usage of the rooms in our rented space. Kunci contributed more money to pay the rent fee, thus in principle had the right to use more rooms. In practice, both of us had equal rights to access them. In fact, the space has become a co-working space, where different people from our circle of friends and networks share the space to work. Between Kunci and Wok, there was a vague regulation of how the monthly expenses should be paid. Whoever had money first (*punya uang lebih dulu*) would pay the bills first. The vagueness of the agreement entailed another vagueness in the payback mechanism among us. The progressive aspect of time in the phrase suggested a situation where one shows advances in the economic life as well as its precariousness. In the context of money possession, *punya uang lebih dulu* can mean a situation when someone "happened" to have more money within a given temporality, and this situation is totally precarious. There were months where Kunci paid all the bills. And, on some occasions, Wok did the same (although rarely).

Wok's reputation as an artist earned him popularity and a trust in what he does. His personal and professional reputation is an essential factor in making his personal earnings and the possibilities that connect him with potential colleagues, which can help in advancing his career. The clients of his personal website design work mostly came from the circles of artists, musicians, and cultural organizations in Jogja and Jakarta. To apply for a residency program abroad, he would receive assistance, ranging from suggestions for filling out the application form, and providing recommendation letters, to different useful pieces of information from curators, gallery owners, artists, and other people with whom he regularly worked. I wrote two reference letters for Wok's residency applications, one of which was successful.

The organization of the Indonesian Net Audio Festival, for example, was relatively easy. This was partly because some aspects needed for the festival could be attained freely. Friendship and infrastructure overlap. The organizer did not need to pay the fee for renting the venue for the festival. They used Kedai Kebun Forum facilities, a restaurant-cum-art space run by artist-activist couple Agung Kurniawan and Yustina Neni, to organize the symposium for free. A friend lent her car to make transportation during the event easier. Some of the presenters as well as the performing bands in the festival were the people that Wok already knew. I was invited to present a paper about piracy and copying in the symposium during the first festival. While acknowledging those

deemed competent in the discourse of sharing, it points to sharing as an exchange that relies on the generosity of a network and takes place in a convivial environment.

Two years later, I was given an opportunity to help design the symposium and the book discussion of the second festival. I did not receive money for what I did for the festival, but I was offered the transportation fee to Bandung. I refused this because I have a budget for that in my fieldwork fund. I was also offered accommodation in a house rented specifically for this occasion (and to stay there with other people from the organizing committee and the invited artists). I also refused this because I preferred to stay alone in a hotel. During my three nights stay in Bandung, Angkuy of Bottlesmoker and his girlfriend took me from the festival venue to the hotel every night by car. The organizer had arranged all this for me.

I was willing to contribute to the festival because I knew that the event served as an avenue for mining data and valuable information for my research. Sharing is an opportune act. I felt like I had to do it because of the thought that, if I did, then I would have a place in a certain support system. I was happy to do it because it meant appreciation of my work. The request for a contribution still falls under the scope of my capacity. The workings of sharing depend on the recognition of things to share. It engenders a set of questions about what aspects cannot be shared, or the condition which the affect of a network questions. I reflect on that in the following sections.

The affect of a network

On one occasion during my stay in Jogja for the second phase of fieldwork, Wok and I were in a joint meeting with Eliza Roberts from Asialink, and two Sydney-based artists who were in the city as part of the Asialink's Art Residency Program. Kunci and Wok's Yes No Klub hosted both artists during their residency period. Dina of Kunci and a member of Yes No Klub were also attended the meeting.

Eliza asked Dina and me to give an overview of what Kunci is. Jokingly, Eliza said that perhaps Wok would like to do it. I presumed it was because they had met each other in Ruang Mes 56 the day before. I told Eliza about the newsletter, library, mailing list, and website being important platforms during Kunci's early years. We continued talking about our projects and how the number of our websites had been growing. I said that Wok has been helping us design the websites. Dina said that Wok was also involved in some of Kunci's activities. Wok laughed and said that he did that in his spare time, and only if he had time to do it at all. He said, "Because Kunci have money, and I need it." I tried to perceive it as a joke and began to laugh.

To build a partnership, which is based on friendship, is to bear in mind that a series of feelings and gestures are accurate measurement tools to value it. At the same time they are tools that can complicate the expectation on a partnership. In the case of Wok and me (or Kunci in a wider scale), even though our partnership was working well, but what was hinted at from what Wok had said at the joint meeting – that he considered our partnership as a business cooperation first and the intertwinement of friendship and partnership second – left me with an uncomfortable feeling. Although in many cases friendship is an assured thing to rely on, it remains in constant conflict. Friendship is an unstable matter. The friendship composition is always being reconstructed. The foundation on which the strength of friendship is built upon is always in question. The certainty and success of friendship seem to be constantly unfixed; as though they are always on their way to somewhere.

On being the mother of the union

After the Second Indonesian Net Audio Festival, in Bandung, I met Tinta again in Jogja. She told me a lot about what she thought of the festival. It seemed that many net label practitioners who

participated in the event perceived net label as another online platform for music distribution. She was disappointed in the organizing of the festival.

She felt that there has been a lack of support from within the members of the union. During the preparation period, there was a lack of understanding about the immense amount of work she had to do in order to make things happen: traveling to Bandung every month, doing all sorts of coordination with the festival partners. It required money to cover accommodation and meals while staying in Bandung. There were times where she was not in a position to be able to allocate her personal money for it, and she had to find a way to manage that using the recently formed network. When she tried to get down to the nitty-gritty of the festival, tried to bring these details up in email conversation with other members of the union, there was no reply. She said that it was as if the union failed in the attempt to educate the music community about sharing.

At this point, we might ask whether an intention to join the union was accompanied with a certain expectation. The union did not promise anything, except perhaps that participation would validate the inclination of the members towards sharing practices. The structural design of the union – no leaders at the top of the hierarchy – indicates the collapsing hierarchy of the organization. It suggests an equal position among the members. Would it necessarily lead to changes in the habit of taking initiatives in organization?

In the previous section I have described kindness as a resource to be expected from a network. Kindness is also a cultural investment to be treated in kind. A situation, which does not seem to lead to productivity, but rather unkindness, would be taken as dry, unwillingness, and not very useful (Swaragita 2016, 119–120). The kind of kindness that Tinta had expected from her union fellows was concrete appreciation. Emails that received no replies did not count. Monetary contributions, perhaps, would have been much appreciated, although this was left unsaid.

The silence of the other union members regarding Tinta's emails shows that a horizontal organization brings forward new challenges around authority and work coordination. It might take more effort to extend a sharing-based organization into a material support system. Not everyone is willing to share free labor.

Being the only female among other core members of the union, Tinta once told me, a long time ago, that she often felt as the "mother of the union." In order to work together, one must be ready to make sacrifices. If the meaning of sacrifice is extended, it would cover the preparedness to attend unexpected needs in order to achieve a shared goal. Suddenly I thought how the expectation for readiness to make sacrifices uncomfortably fits with Tinta's designated role, perhaps something that goes along with her caring instinct, as the mother of Indonesian Net Label Union.

As we walked back from Kedai Kebun Forum to Kunci, she said that in general she felt that everything is OK. All these things did not make her want to withdraw from the union. "At least I can add this [the experience of leading the organization of the festival] as a valuable activity to my CV," she said.

Conclusion

To share creative works is an open possibility, so long as there is a prospect of profit. Sharing necessitates the creation of condition when the expectation from it is clear. The kind of expectation to emerge from sharing, to concur with attempts at de-commodifying music, is directed to move away from mere financial gain. But how can this be used to reason out the sustainability of future works and economic autonomy? The implementation of donation and merchandise sales to materialize support from fans demonstrates that the materiality of money and format persists.

Various forms of sharing and illicit-sharing advantages, with the ambivalence attached, feel too sticky to explain in a black-and-white manner. Enthusiasm for pirating techniques occupies an ambiguous spaces in everyday conversation. Through a series of discussions and talks during the festival, the union had tried to build intellectual moments to facilitate dialogues about it. It failed.

This article narrates the organization of the union as well as the net label that is preconditioned by the construction of an alternative infrastructure, founded on the bases of cooperation, collaboration, friendship, which combined with piggybacking. The last parts of the article show discrepancies between sharing and working together. To share is to hope for something. But until hope becomes real, sharing feels taxing. It is still too early to speculate on the direction of sharing discourses initiated by the union. The union faces concrete challenges over whether it can transform into a more reliable support and caring network.

Notes

1. It is pointed out by Hill and Sen (2000) in their study of alternative music, as quoted in Baulch (2002, 222).
2. See also Nugroho (2011, 2012) to learn about the role of the internet as an important tool in advocating social movement in Indonesian NGOs activism.
3. For more details, please see the website http://creativecommons.org/.
4. *Koneksi* also refers to an access to individuals or a group of people of high social standing. To have such access means to have the opportunity to secure certain advantages and bypass formal bureaucracies at once. To have connection is associated with corruption, collusion, and nepotism. The popularity of "KKN," an abbreviation for *Korupsi, Kolusi, dan Nepotisme* indicates that the corrupt connection is rampant. During the New Order era, "KKN" was emblematic of the Soeharto regime.

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