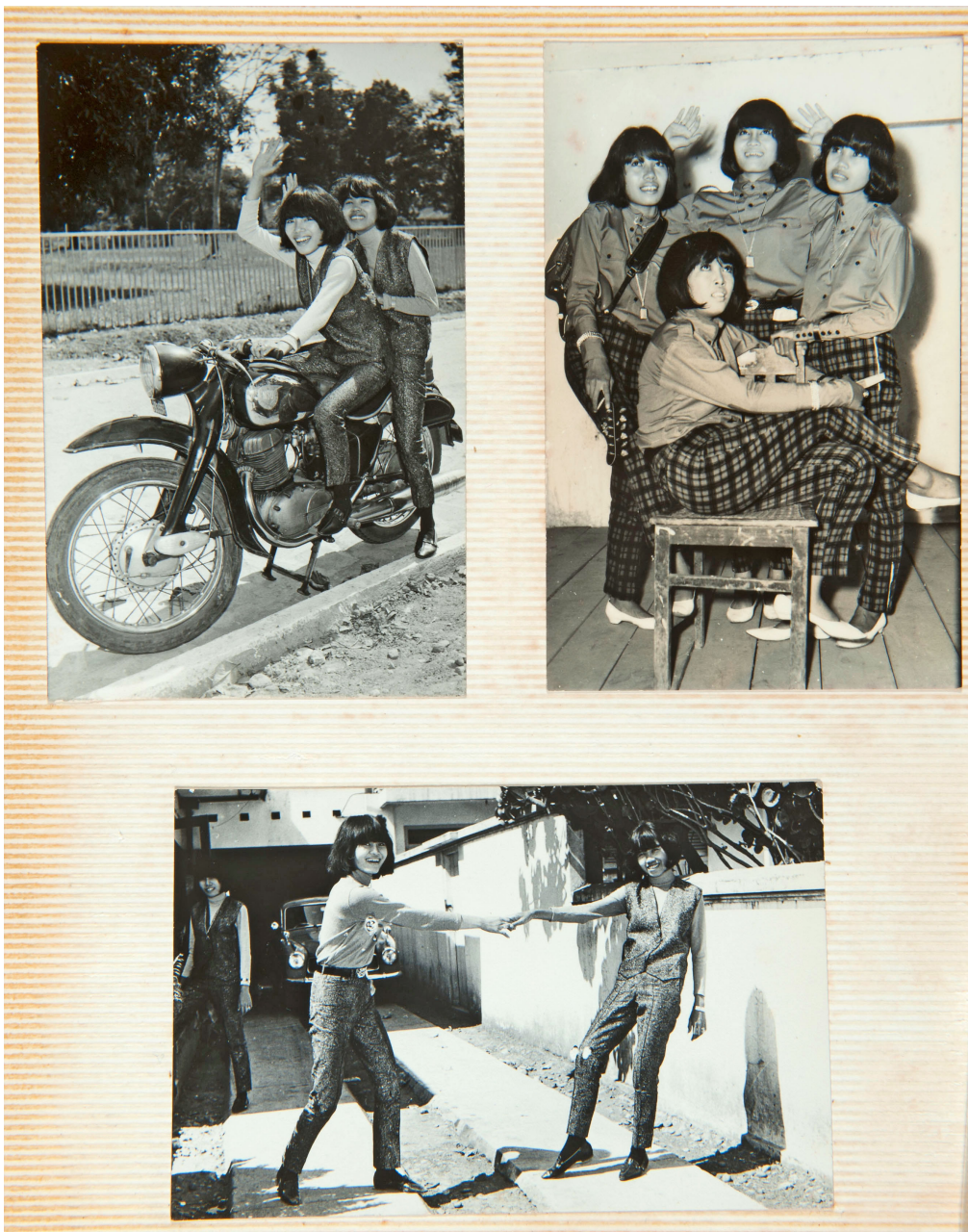Alice Ridgway
Masters Thesis: Cultural History
Tutor: Willemijn Ruberg

Sixties Countercultural Style in the non-Western World: Youth Culture in Indonesia and Mali

Dara Puspita, photo -album, *Untitled* (1965)

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<u>Contents</u>

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Introduction

The Beatles, *Mad Day Out,* Don McCullin (1968)

Os Mutantes, *Untitled*, Gilberto Gil (1968)

The two photographs above were both taken in 1968 and display similar visual qualities. They both embody a playful attitude and style through their postures, expressions and clothing. This is a style commonly associated with Western youth counterculture in the sixties and its popular connotations of free love, rock 'n' roll, hippies and rebellion.[1] However, one image was taken in the prosperous post-war economy of 'Swinging'[2] London, and the other in the authoritarian military dictatorship of Brazil. Interestingly, in these vastly different cultural and political contexts, these youths seem to express themselves through a similar stylistic image. Despite this, historians largely consider counterculture a Western phenomenon.[3] It raises questions as to what other overlooked youth movements were taking place around the globe in this decade. This study wishes look beyond the romanticised and nostalgic historic accounts of Western countercultural style [4] and examine the non-West to see if photographic records can display evidence for a non-Western countercultural style.

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[1] Laurel Forster and Sue Harper, *British Culture and Society in the 1970s: The Lost Decade*
[2] Ibid.
[3] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition* (California 1995) 2.
[4] Robert Perlstein, 'Who Owns the Sixties?' *Lingua Franca* (1996) 2.

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Countercultural style is not a product of the sixties. In the eighteenth century, the Romantic era embraced an intensely emotive aesthetic in the arts, literature and in their style as a reaction against the scientific rationalisation of the natural world.[5] Furthermore, in the nineteenth century, Bohemianism offered an alternative lifestyle in which like-minded artists challenged established social norms through the practise of free love, frugality and a nomadic sense of adventure. This was also embodied in their style in which women often denounced the restrictive Victorian corsets for the now cliché image of flowing skirts with adornments of flowers in dishevelled hair.[6]

I have chosen the sixties as the decade of study as they mark the complexifing of counterculture with the emergence of the teenager as a consumer.[7] This new age group, neither child nor adult, was created through the coming of age of the baby boomer generation who enjoyed increased leisure time, disposable income and access to an expanded university sector in a prosperous post-war economy.[8]

Combined with this, the advent of rock and roll due to the popularity of jazz and an adoption of African-American music by white youth, a circulation of radical literature by authors such as Herbert Marcuse and Frantz Fanon in university campuses, and a communal outrage over the Vietnam war, all created conditions in which youth counterculture would thrive.[9]

Counterculture will be defined in this study as the pursuit of an alternative communitarian lifestyle and radical political thought, opposed to social convention.[10] This is in keeping with the definition as coined by Theodore Roszak in the sixties. The term has since been broadened and changed by historians to account for the introduction of media culture, the internet and the changing meaning of mainstream society.[11] Furthermore, some historians dispute the overtly political stance needed for youth movements to qualify as

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[5] Aidan Day, *Romanticism* (London 1996) 3.
[6] Suzanne Cooper, *The Model Wife: The Passionate Lives of Effie Gray, Ruskin and Millais* (London 2010) 87.
[7] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture,* 5.
[8] Christopher Gair, *The American Counterculture* (London 2007) 10.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition*, (California 1995) 2.
[11] Ken Gelder, *Subcultures: Cultural Histories and Social Practice* (London 2007) 4.

Alice Ridgway
4214218

countercultural.[12] However, this study will stress the need for a radical political grounding for youth groups in order to ensure that the definition maintains a narrow focus for analysis, relevant to the profound political climate of the sixties.

Counterculture has had a complex relationship with style. In order for clothing and style to be countercultural embodying the radical lifestyle choices of Western youths, it would need to subvert the existing autocracy, which in the case of the sixties was the American capitalist system. However, it is now hard to ignore that many Western youths relied heavily on consumer goods in order to embody the style of the countercultural communitarian.[13] Visually, their style looked radical: kaftans, paisley prints, fancy dress and short hemlines opposed the mainstream of smart suits and modest dresses. However, the acquisition of these clothes often operated within the prevailing American system of consumerism, it did not challenge it.[14]

In addition to this, it is now argued by many contemporary historians that the pursuit of an individual style that visually opposed the American mainstream encouraged an inward looking narcissism amongst participators in Western counterculture, which had more in common with traditional American individualism, than countercultural communitarianism.[15]

To add further insult to injury, this rebellious image helped to enforce consumerism: by constantly modifying their appearance, Western counterculture motivated the rest of society to carry on consuming in order to keep up with the latest hip and rebellious style.[16] Contemporaries regard counterculture today as having mutated into a 'self-obsessed aesthetic vacuum, stripped of its subversion and originality…that mirrors the doomed shallowness of mainstream society.'[17]

This study will hope to show that whilst elements of Western countercultural style looked radical on a superficial level, when we dig deeper, it

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[12] George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance since the Sixties* (London 1996) 3.
[13] Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (London 1996) 3.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Martinez Martinez, *Countering the Counterculture, Rereading Postwar American Dissent from Jack Kerouac to Tomas Rivera* (London 2003) 74.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Douglas Haddow, Hipster: The Dead End of Western Civilization, *Adbusters,* (2008) accessed 9 July 2015 <https://www.adbusters.org/magazine/79/hipster.html>

Alice Ridgway
4214218

often seemed to fail to challenge the dominant political system. Instead, I will argue that countercultural style appears to have operated within this system of consumerism and individuality.

This study has opted to employ non-Western case studies (which will be outlined later in this study) to see if this paradox between consumerism and counterculture is still evident. This choice has been made as the non-Western world has been predominantly studied in this decade through the process decolonisation,[18] the act in which Western powers returned independence and autonomy to the countries they had previously controlled through colonisation in Asia and Africa.

Post-colonialism has also had a large impact on the study of the non-Western world in the sixties. Post-colonial history is the investigation of all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day.[19] It aims to overcome the binary divide between Western and non-Western civilisation. Edward Said presents this divide in his polemic text, *Orientalism.* In Said's analysis he states that through colonial control, the west has condemned non-Western societies as stationary and undeveloped, creating a view of Oriental culture that is negatively reproduced. He argues that implicit in this fabrication is the notion that Western society is developed, rational, flexible, and superior.[20]

Franz Fanon also prominently commented on the effects of colonialism in his text *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (black skin, white masks) in which he outlines the psychological damage that years of racism and dehumanisation implemented through colonial rule has had on oppressed black people.[21]

The historic narratives of decolonisation and post-colonialism can be regarded as the less palatable actualities of the time in the eyes of the Western world, seeming far removed from the utopian potential of Western youth culture. However, it can also be seen in a positive light, when looking from a non-Western perspective, as a time of liberation when youths had agency in creating

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[18] David Birmingham, *The Decolonization of Africa* (London 1995) 2.
[19] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London 1989) 5.
[20] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York 1978)
[21] Hussien Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (New York 1985) 3.

their own identity and exercising their freedom in their countries that were recently granted independence. [22]

It is peculiar that counterculture has largely been considered a Western phenomenon.[23] Especially as the sixties are regarded to be the age when global interactions prevailed with the rise of plane travel, radio and television, which encouraged the circulation of differing cultures across the globe.[24] This study wishes to bring together these aspects of the sixties - counterculture and the non-West - in order to create a global history of counterculture. This is in effort to expand the notion beyond Western exclusivity, whilst introducing a post-colonial and global perspective that gives positive agency to non-Western culture.

Theory: Global History and Post-Colonialism

Historians of global history and youth culture can be regarded as divided by two predominant notions. One perspective considers the globalisation of youth culture as the 'culture industry' in which all aspects of new culture from across the globe are seen to identify with and conform to Western culture.[25] Kahn and Kellner argue that Western capitalist states enforced youth culture on other countries and that youth culture is dangerously ethnocentric and imperialist.'[26] From this perspective, the forcing of Western culture on other countries through capitalism could be seen as the continuity of colonialism through other means. However this strips youths of agency in forming their own identities and fails to move beyond the negative and binary implications of Said's theory in Orientalism in which the west continue to dominate over non-Western countries.

Others historians see global youth culture as promoting a progressive diversity through the notion of hybridity.[27] In this view, youth are empowered by new cultural opportunities seen in other countries. This invites them to question

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[22] Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (Edinburgh 2006) 158.

[23] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture,* 2.

[24] Christopher Gair, *The American Counterculture* (London 2007) 9.

[25] Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner 'Youth Culture' in W. Donsbach (ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* (London 2008) 2.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

cultural and political attitudes in their own societies and take elements from different countries and adapt them into their own form of hybrid culture.[28] This study will use this latter idea of global youth culture to explore the countercultural style of non-Western case studies in hope to bridge the gap between counterculture and post-colonialism by creating a global history of counterculture. By exploring this notion thematically, this study hopes to avoid the binary division of the West and non-West that ascribe power to the former, implicitly by reinforcing the weak and underdeveloped nature of the latter.[29]

In addition to this global model, I wish to utilise the theoretical perspective of Homi K. Bhabha, a prominent figure in contemporary post-colonial studies, in order to connect style and political agency and to promote an empowered history of the non-West. Bhabha claims that the colonised subject has the power to elude the clutch of authority of the colonised through the exercising of their identity.[30] He states that by mimicking the colonial manner and creating a hybrid culture of this by combining Western culture with their own traditions they form an 'unknowable element' of the native character.[31] He argues that his 'unknowable element' is a form of subversion, which the colonist cannot gain control over. This characteristic of indecipherably is used by the colonised to work beyond the binary divides of the west and powerful and the non-west as weak.[32] Bhabha claims that this means that colonial supremacy is never total; it is always prone to the subverting effects of ambivalence and difference.

Bhabha's argument therefore undermines the clear-cut power relations between the colonial power and the colonised that are stated by Said. This argument is stated with regards to countries that were still under colonial power. However, it can be used with regards to the sixties and post-colonialism as the unequal balance of power still remained between the west and non-west through cultural, economic and political means, despite the breakdown of the

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[28] Ibid.
[29] This study will make this distinction of place through utilizing the terminology 'west' and 'non-west' which, although could risk sounding reductive, is currently the most accurate and clear way to explain this notion in academic writing. It is the connotations surrounding these binaries that this study wishes to combat, not the terminology itself.
[30] Homi, K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London 1994) 197.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (Edinburgh 2006) 158.

physical occupation of these countries.[33] Furthermore it complements the aforementioned theory of global youth culture, in which youths use the influence of other countries, including the West in order to subvert and challenge their own political situation.

Methodology: Photography as a source

I will apply Bhabha's post-colonial theory to my analysis of countercultural style through photography. The aim of this is to ascribe agency to the colonial subject by overcoming the binary notion of the west as powerful and the non-west as weak and to discover whether there was a non-Western countercultural style. This can be regarded as an ideological approach to the analysis of visual culture and photography.[34] This approach aims to demonstrate how texts can be examined in order to expose the underlying ideas, values and beliefs they embody about society and politics, past and present.[35]

I have chosen to assign photographs as the main primary source in both case studies for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is practical to study fashion and style from a photographic perspective as they manifest themselves visually. Whilst interviews and text can add information about the intent behind the aesthetics of an outfit, the performative traits of a person's style are best viewed through an image. From this angle, the photograph is valued for its ability to capture a lasting image of past reality.

Secondly, using photography is considered a textual approach, as it involves the reading of sources rather than anthropological investigation of a culture through fieldwork. Entwistle comments that 'clothes take on the form of the body, they get crumpled, creased, ripped and so on.'[36] She furthers that textual approaches therefore do not tell us of the many other aspects of fashion and dress, representing clothes in an idealised form, which she regards as

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[33]Ibid.
[34] Richard Howells and Joaquim Negreiros, *Visual Culture* (Cambridge 2012) 83.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Joan Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion Dress and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge 2000) 71.

reductive.[37] However, as this historical study looks at clothes from the sixties, an anthropological approach is not possible. An alternative method of investigation would be to study preserved artefacts of clothing from the era however this would be less useful for investigation, presenting them as lifeless objects, dissociated from the subjects that embodied them. Instead, through photography, clothes will be seen dynamically, in relation to the people who wore them. Furthermore this study looks at how clothes are used as a vehicle for political expression and forming identities, and how people use clothes as a form of self-expression. Therefore the additional contextual information provided in a photograph is of great significance.

It is important to recognise that photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are.[38] This is a viewpoint disseminated by the introduction of visual culture into historical analysis through the reading photos and images. Photographs, painting and digital media are now valued as a way of understanding the past, offering new forms of meaning and information conveyed through visual culture by the photographer, the subject and the context surrounding them. [39]

Using photography should be seen as an opportunity to ascribe agency to non-Western cultures that have previously been denied a voice to present their own version of historic events to a Western audience. The authority of the camera has the ability to control and impose conformity on an individual's behaviour through its constant watching and policing of everyday life.[40] Susan Sontag furthers this point by asserting that 'to photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge—and, therefore, like power.'[41]

By using photo albums that Dara Puspita have themselves curated, and photographs from Malick Sibidé's private photo studio, subjects are given agency and self-expression in their poses, clothing and environment, allowing them to present their own history, rather than one that is initiated by an external party.

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London 2014) 4.
[39] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *Visual Culture: An Introduction* (London 1982) 5.
[40] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York 1995)
[41] Susan Sontag, *On Photography,* 4.

Alice Ridgway
4214218

I will also give agency through the way I analyse the photographs, combining an ideological approach influenced by Bhabha with the methodological tools outlined by Gillian Rose in *Visual Methodologies.* Rose states that interpretations of visual images broadly concur that there are three sites at which the meanings of images are made: the production of the image, the image itself and the audience of the image.[42] In turn these can be considered from three different aspects. Technological: the type of image (in this case the photograph); compositional: the content, colour, space and form of the image; and social: the range of economic, social and political relations that surround the image.[43] Having taken these modes into consideration, my own framework of photography analysis, specific to this study, can be divided into three parts:

Photograph: how was it produced, what is the photograph like on a physical level and who is the audience? I will describe the photograph in a literal sense by asking what and who is in the photo, what is the posture and stance of the people in the photo, what is excluded from the photo, and where has it been taken.

Composition: looking at the stylistic form of the photograph, how was this produced? What is the setting? What are compositional aspects, lines, lighting, tone and unity of the image? I will consider how the subjects occupy the space around then, who has ownership of this space and the position of the audience in this composition.

Social: what is the context behind the production of the image, the image itself and its relationship to the audience? It is particularly this section where the ideological analysis will be most implemented.

By combining these elements, this methodological approach hopes to answer the following sub questions:

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[42] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, (London 2012) 13.
[43] Ibid.

- Does clothing and style in the images challenge the existing social order in the local and global political systems?

- Do these clothes represent a communal or an individual style?

- What elements of the style in these case studies can be regarded as a global hybrid of the west and non-west?

This is in order to answer the larger research question: *do these photographs give evidence for a non-Western countercultural style?*

In order to achieve this aim, this thesis will progress in the following format. Firstly, I will elaborate on the method of this study but explaining why I chose these particular case studies. Next, I will outline the relevant historiography and theory regarding fashion, clothing and how this is closely related to politics, both personal and social. Having done this, I will deconstruct the failures of Western counterculture, before moving onto to my main analysis of the two case studies through the method stated above. Finally, I will conclude my findings.

Case studies

There are many non-Western countercultures that could have been selected for this study. The rebellious dancing scene in Tokyo, or the progressive Tropicallia music scene in Brazil, for example. However, having access to photographic sources for the following case studies from the Tropenmuseum means that their study will be much more fruitful. Furthermore, I wished to use case studies from a relatively prosperous social-economic background in order to mirror the social conditions in which countercultures in the west were created.

The first case study I will employ is Dara Puspita, a girl band formed in 1964 from Indonesia. The members, Titiek Adji Rachman, Susy Nander, Lies Adji Rachman and Titiek Hamzah were the first all-girl band in Indonesia to write and perform their own songs. Two band members were sisters from a well-to-do family and the other two were friends. The group was heavily influenced by the

iconic Western band The Beatles and often wore matching androgynous outfits on and off stage that imitated their style.[44]

I will be using the band's own photo album with personal photographs from their world tour in the sixties, alongside an interview with the band member Lies Adji Rachman, in order to assess their relationship with style and counterculture. The photographs in the album spanned from the early sixties to the late seventies. To narrow down my selection from over one hundred, I first selected photos from the relevant decade. I then selected photos from the bands world tour in the sixties where they visited different countries in order to achieve a thoroughly global study. This left me with twenty photos of which I chose the ones I felt had the most striking composition and clearly displayed the bands clothing. There is now a selection of ten photos to analyse.

I will investigate the countercultural aspects of Dara Puspita using the method I have outlined. I will pay attention to the global level of subversion and the question whether the adoption of the Western style of the Beatles should be seen as a homogenisation of culture or if Dara Puspita actively created their own style through a hybridity of different forms. I will also look from a local level at the authoritarian regime and political climate in Indonesia and if this resulted in a more authentic counterculture that was opposed to the consumerist elements of Western counterculture.

Secondly, I will look at a dancing social club in Bamako, Mali, as photographed by Malick Sidibé. The photographs show a youth movement photographed by a local who embraced Western styles at a time when curfews were set and youths caught wearing mini-skirts, tight skirts and bell-bottom pants were sent to re-education camps.[45] Similarly to Dara Puspita, I will investigate whether this countercultural group were radical on a local level due to their wish to embrace Western style in a political system, which enforced traditional dress. I will then use Bhabha's views to investigate whether the newly independent youths from Mali were simply conforming to Western style or if there were political factors deeper than the superficial material consumption and individuality of Western counterculture.

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[44] Alice Ridgway, Interview with Lies Adji Rachman (02 July 2015)
[45] Manthia Diawara, The Sixties in Bamako, *Politics and Culture* 1: (2002) accessed: <http://politicsandculture.org/2010/08/10/the-1960s-in-bamako-manthia-diawara-2/>

The collection of Sidibé's photographs was not as expansive of that of Dara Puspita, therefore less of a rigorous selection had to be made. The Tropenmuseum's album contained twenty-three photographs spanning from the sixties to early seventies. I narrowed these down by researching the photographs to obtain the dates they were taken and then chose seven that were taken throughout the decade of the sixties that exemplified the most radical fashion choices useful for this study. I have chosen to use fewer photographs for this case study as the fact that they were taken by a professional photographer means that they have a richer scope for analysis regarding the composition and style. I will also make use of an interview of Malick Sibibé that featured in *The Guardian* newspaper. Jerome Sother originally conducted the interview by video in 2008 for French art centre GwinZegal.

As both case studies make use of interviews as a source, it is important to note some of the positive and negative factors when employing oral history. Traditional historians often regard oral history as personal memory, which they criticise for its misremembering or exaggeration of the past.[46] However, oral history is useful when writing the history of neglected groups in society, in this case, non-western youths of the sixties. There is a lack of historical documents preserving the history of these people that promotes human agency or self-expression. Whilst it is important to recognise that interviews conducted years after the events in question can be subject to nostalgia, or exaggeration, it is more favourable than the alternative method of using records that fail to consult the subjects directly.[47]

To minimise the effects of misremembering or exaggeration in the interview that I conducted with Lies Adji Rachman from Dara Puspita, I used the photographs as a common visual reference between us to make the recollection of the past more tangible. Furthermore, I asked practical questions with regards to style, travel and politics rather than asking sensitive questions that could be more prone to an emotive response. In addition, with the Malick Sibibé interview, I have also tried to focus on the more practical information that he

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[46] Penny Summerfield, Culture and Composure: *Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews, Cultural and Social History* 1: (2004) 65-93
[47] Ibid.

presents in order to avoid overly emotive oral history. These choices hope to ensure the credibility of my primary research in this study.

Having outlined the relevance, methodology and theoretical background of this thesis, I will now explore the historiography significant to this study.

Historiography: Non-Western fashion

Global historians argue that non-Western fashion is yet to emerge as a discipline in its own right. Karen Tranberg Hansen states the need to incorporate the non-Western world into fashion theory.[48] She argues that non-Western fashion is largely studied from the perspective of ethnography of costumes and 'traditional' dress, whilst the west is seen as modern and advanced with regards to fashion.[49] She presents the need for scholars to understand fashion as a global phenomenon in order to break down conventional Eurocentric fashion boundaries that regard the West as advanced and the non-West as inferior.[50]

This is something that has been addressed by Jean Marie Allman in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*. In this collection of essays Allman wishes to challenge Eurocentric paradigms by dismantling the tradition verses modern binary, demonstrating that tradition does not exist either prior, or in opposition to, the modern.[51]

In one essay 'Dressing Dangerously: Miniskirts, Gender Relations and Sexuality in Zambia,' Karen Tranberg Hansen regards local reactions to the miniskirt to reveal the deeply embedded cultural assumptions regarding hierarchical gender relations. She notes how attitudes to the miniskirt change in different epochs with changing social and political dynamics.[52] In the sixties locals blamed foreign influence for the influx of young girls wearing miniskirts. Hansen states that in the debates' revival in the 1990s sexuality was the primary cause of concern, the foreign origin was no longer an issue. She also comments on the growing political resistance of women in Zambia to this regulation of

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[48] Karen T. Hansen, The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion and Culture, in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33:2 (Oct 2004) 339-392.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Jean Allman, *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress* (Indiana 2004) 180.
[52] Ibid.

clothing, showing how individuals have the agency to challenge institutional power with regard to clothing.[53]

Hansen takes a global approach using the miniskirt, a worldwide fashion phenomena, to chart changing social opinion, whilst showing how many Zambians adopted Western fashion in the sixties. By demonstrating the global circulation of clothing in the sixties she shows that non-Western countries should not be defined by their traditional dress in historical enquiry. She also shows that this Western influence is more complex than some explanations may state, and that we must look for beyond the reduction notion that Zambians were mimicking the West or this was part of the Western 'culture industry.'[54]

Outward appearances: State and Society in Indonesia, is also a collection of essays that wishes to promote non-Western fashion. It does so by looking at the cultural and social implications of fashion in Indonesia.[55] In one essay Jean Gelman Taylor also uses gender as a focus examining photographs to show how the colonial state promoted differences between men and women, and between notions of the public and the private. She states that there was a postcolonial impulse to dress men with power through Western-style suits and women with 'traditional' costume and political subordination.[56]

In another essay, Sekimoto depicts how Indonesians presented themselves as components in a state machine when dressed in uniforms for Independence Day celebrations. Stating that they displayed civic-minded neatness, progressiveness, and discipline, manifested not only in uniforms, but also in the public decorations, projects, and programs organised for the day's commemorations.[57]

These essays largely show the controlling nature of clothing in Indonesian and African history, which was enforced through institutional power (although Hansen does show elements of human agency in the choice taken to adopt the mini skirt.) Through my study, I wish to add to the literature on non-Western fashion by looking at counterculture captured through photography in order to

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner 'Youth Culture' in W. Donsbach (ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* (London 2008) 2.
[55] Henk S. Nordholt, *Outward appearances: State and Society in Indonesia* (Leiden 1997)
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.

understand whether young people subverted the local and global political system through their dress in the non-West, specifically Mali and Indonesia. This is in hope to overcome Eurocentric narratives of non-Western fashion and instead promote a global discourse. Furthermore, it hopes to ascribe agency to the subjects in these cultures by utilising the post-colonial theory of Bhabha.

I will now look deeper into the discontents with Western countercultural in the sixties that have been outlined in the introduction. This is in order to understand the specific criteria that non-Western counterculture style will need to meet in order to be considered subversive beyond its atheistic.

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Chapter One: Western counterculture

I will firstly outline the relevant history of Western clothing and fashion in order to give a wider contextual background to countercultural style. I will then pay particular attention to American counterculture, as it is the American capitalist system that is regarded as having the most powerful influence on the economies, politics and culture of the rest of the world.

The history of fashion

Sociologist Joanne Entwistle importantly notes that human bodies are dressed bodies, and that 'the social world is a world of dressed bodies.'[58] She states that clothing is a basic fact of social life and should therefore be seen as being a strong bearer of cultural meaning,[59] making it of upmost importance for historical enquiry.

Bourdieu was one of the first sociologists to advocate the importance of the clothed body as the bearing of status and distinction through his notion of habitus. He analysed how this battle for distinction involved economic, social and symbolic power.[60] He states that before the rise of modernity, clothing had the power to reveal the social status of individuals through their uniform or styles of dress. For example, miners, butchers and bakers could all be identified, and therefore categorised by class, through their appearance.[61] This can be seen as a way that clothing controlled the public and prevented social mobility. However, through the rise of modernity, the anonymity of city life and a changing class structure, social divisions are no longer so apparent through styles of dress.[62]

More contemporary attitudes to clothing in history have been influenced by this rise of modernity. The adoption of street styles by the public has resulted in some historians arguing that fashion has been democratised and the power of elite institutes in fashion is now less central.[63]

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[58] Joan Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge 2000) 2.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: social critique of the judgment and taste* (London 1984)
[61] Bourdieu, *Distinction: social critique of the judgment and taste*
[62] Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body,* 74.
[63] Ibid.

Alice Ridgway
4214218

This notion is explored by Dick Hebdige, who argues that the fashion styles of Britain's working-class youth subcultures in the late 1970s challenged the dominant political system through symbolic forms of resistance.[64] Hebdige defines style as constructed through a combination of clothing, music, dance, make-up and drugs. Appropriating the safety pin as a punk symbol to signify rebellion and anger from its previous links to its practical function of mending clothes is one example of this resistance.[65] Hebdige argues that this form of common resistance united the subculture against mainstream British politics.

However, many historians criticise Hebdige for his nostalgic portrayal of youth culture and its stylistic elements.[66] They argue the he idealises punk culture to have greater political significance than its negative 'anti-utopian' ideology allows.[67] I hope demonstrate the parallels of this criticism with Western countercultural style. In order to review these discontents in greater depth I will use the definition of counterculture stated in the introduction - the pursuit of an alternative communitarian lifestyle and radical political thought, opposed to social convention - as a measure.

Western countercultural style and its discontents

Recent historical thought by Morgan Shipley in 'Hippies and the Mystic Way: Dropping Out, Unitive Experiences, and Communal Utopianism', shows that some historians still regard American counterculture of the sixties as radically subversive. Shipley suggests that the act of 'dropping out' (which he defines as expanding consciousness through psychedelic enhancements) of society was a radically political act with the potential of creating a new utopian society based on altruism and community.[68] However, this work denies the paradoxes between countercultural style and consumerism, which fail to challenge the American capitalist system.

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[64] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London 1979) 5.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Brian Torode, Reviewed Work: Subculture: The Meaning of Style by Dick Hebdige in *Contemporary Sociology* 10:6 (1981) 875.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Morgan Shipley, Hippies and the Mystic Way Dropping Out, Unitive Experiences, and Communal Utopianism, *Utopian Studies* 24:2 (2013) 232.

In his polemic work *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism,* Thomas Frank proposes that counterculture was essential to the creation of a new form of capitalist consumption that evolved in the sixties. Frank argues that counterculture, far from being a critique of consumerism, is actually the central ideology of consumerism in our time. The new countercultural pioneers became 'rebel consumers'[69] who expressed their individuality through their unusual consumer choices, such as lessons exploring spirituality, taking LSD or, most relevantly, wearing alternative clothing.

He furthers that the constant superficial rejuvenation of counterculture made it the ideal basis for consumer culture as material items were also constantly reinvented and therefore needed to be re-bought and re-consumed.[70] This reveals how countercultural style failed to challenge the dominant social conventions with regards to consumption, but adopted them, and therefore cannot be defined as an effective counterculture.

Warren Hinckle observed the paradoxes of this relationship at the time, writing about them in an essay that appeared in *Ramparts* magazine in 1967. He commented that in the famously countercultural area of San Francisco, Haight-Ashbury, he observed paisley shirts, blue and white striped pants and pre-mod Western Levi jackets on the 'bearded and beaded'[71] inhabitants. Whilst this style counters the 'white shirt, long tie and new suit'[72] that the counterculture viewed as the plain clothed mainstream American, Hinckle states that these inhabitants were 'brand name conscious' and 'frantic consumers.' He asserts that 'hippy merchants' sold high-priced mod clothing and trinkets,' revealing the commercial nature of hippie countercultural style, which followed the consumer behaviour of larger American society, despite its countercultural image.[73]

This is also evident in the radical manifesto of Jerry Rubin, the founder of the political group 'The Youth International Party' (The Yippies.) His book calls for the revolutionary overturning of the American system, considering style as having a powerful potential in this subversion. However, alongside encouraging

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[69] Frank, *The Conquest of Cool,* 3.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Warren Hinckle, 'The Social History of the Hippies' in *Ramparts* (March 1967) accessed < http://www.unz.org/Pub/Ramparts-1967mar-00005>

[72] Jerry Rubin, *DO It! Scenarios of the Revolutio,* (London 1970) 106.

[73] Hinckle, 'The Social History of the Hippies'

other youths to stop cutting their hair and stop wearing smart suits, he also references buying vests, costumes and a gold suit in order to enhance his own subversive political rigor.[74] Furthermore, he regards television and advertising as important tools for countercultural revolution, all of which exist alongside American social convention, they do not challenge it.

Countering the Counterculture: Rereading Postwar American Dissent from Jack Kerouac to Tomás Rivera Manuel, can be used to further exhibit the failure of Western countercultural style to effectively challenge the mainstream with regards to creating a community.

Martinez states that 'the beats chose to reconstruct the individual in terms of a nineteenth-century ideology of the self that celebrated "self-reliance," personified by the classic icons of individualism: the pioneer, trailblazer, and cowboy.'[75] The author suggests that these images were commonplace in the 1950s with the rise of television and the film genre of westerns.

This aesthetic notion of an individual radical like the cowboy was continued in American counterculture, far from creating a radical society based on community, it is in keeping with the 1950's popular image of a trailblazer and a history of American individualism. This demonstrates how countercultural style failed to challenge the prevailing American system as it inception was based on tradition and individuality, not establishing an inclusive community.

Through this, it is apparent that American countercultural style did not pose an effective subversion of the American system beyond its aesthetic. When we look at the consumption habits and ideology behind their style, instead of opposing the mainstream, it worked within it, indulging in consumer behaviour and individualism.

I will now analyse the photographs from the case studies of Indonesian girl band Dara Puspita and youth social club in Bamako to understand whether these photographs give evidence for a non-Western countercultural style, in order to add a global dimension to the study of counterculture and fashion.

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[74] Rubin, *DO It! Scenarios of the Revolution*
[75] Martinez Martinez, *Countering the Counterculture, Rereading Post-war American Dissent from Jack Kerouac to Tomas Rivera* (London 2003) 74.

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Chapter Two: Dara Puspita

In order to effectively answer this research question, I will firstly give a historical background of the decolonisation of Indonesia and then subsequently on the social and political climate in the sixties. I will then implement the analytical framework on the chosen ten photos that can be viewed in the appendix.

The sixties in Indonesia

Indonesia declared their independence from the Netherlands in 1945, although this was not officially recognised until 1949. The Netherlands had gained control of Indonesia (at the time known as the Dutch East Indies) in 1800, yet they had established a powerful trade influence there since the 1600s. Their occupation was predominantly ended by Japan's brutal take over of the Dutch East Indies in World War II, after which they failed to reclaim the territory.[76]

Sukarno became the first Indonesian president and encouraged Indonesian unity through staunch nationalism after centuries of colonial control. The country was part of the non-alignment movement, which advocated a middle course for states between the Western and Eastern blocs in the Cold War.[77] The aim of the movement was to ensure the national independence of non-aligned countries in their struggle against imperialism and domination by other global powers.

Though Sukarno was not a communist himself (he was part of PNI, Partai Nasional Indonesia) he strongly sympathised with other communist countries and was frequently accused of being a Marxist.[78] Sukarno maintained a 'fierce paranoia toward Western influence' and condemned that 'terrible ngak ngik ngok sound from abroad.'[79] This led to a political climate in which leather shoes were confiscated, barbers were prohibited from giving Beatles' style haircuts, and long hair on boys was cut in order to stop outside Western influence permeating Indonesia. Other political officials adopted his views, going so far as

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[76] Chris Penders, *West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962* (Hawaii 2002) 4.
[77] Hsu, Hua, 'Blame That Tune' Indonesian pop music in *Artforum International,* 49 (2010) 28.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

to organise a public bonfire in Semerang, Java of records by Elvis Presley and Tommy Sands.[80]

The emergence of Dara Puspita was therefore rebellious with regard to the political situation that surrounded them in Indonesia. From the photo-album we see their cropped bowl-like haircuts and matching suits that are clearly evocative of The Beatles and show the influence of the West.[81] I will now look closely at the ten photos to see what else they reveal about a countercultural style in Indonesia.

Photo analysis

Photographs 1 and 2 (figure 1) are both taken in 1965 and are unnamed. They express the aforementioned Beatles style clearly. The photograph appears to be taken by spectator or friend in dressing room or rehearsal room, depicting the band behind the scenes of their on stage persona, creating a relaxed and intimate environment that the audience is exposed to.

Photograph 1 portrays the band posing as a group. The two girls in the middle link their right arms; their left arms are placed around other band members. We also see hands of the other girls clasped together behind their backs. The two middle girls look up and to the left confidently, while the other two are ducked lower down and are smiling. This strong group pose where all hands are being held together shows a close unity and positivity between the band members. Their matching clothing reinforces this bond: glittering waistcoats and polo necks and with the iconic Beatles style bowl cut hair do.

In photograph 2 the band adopt their instruments as props for a photograph. They hold them not as if they are playing music, but as if to display an action shot and illustrate to the viewer that they are a dynamic girl band. The drummer holds one stick in their air, smiling and looking to the camera. The photograph shows the unity of the band and how each musician is part of a whole unit.

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[80] Ibid.
[81] Alice Ridgway, Interview with Lies Adji Rachman (02 July 2015)

Photograph 1 and 2 appear to be by an amateur photographer. With regards to the composition, the band members and their instruments are the focus of the photo. They take control of the space around them. The off stage space is made private by the thick black curtain in both photos which creates an environment of secrecy to which the audience are spectators. At the same time the audience is invited to become part of this secret, having witnessed their welcoming happy poses with their instruments. This secretiveness adds to the rebellious image of the girls regarding the autocratic political climate of Indonesia, the photo is private and there are no onlookers.

The combination of these clothes, poses and occupation of private space create a communal environment for the band and others subverting mainstream society. Their waistcoats are collarless, which was an important distinction from other suits. Despite most pop stars wearing suits at the time, the particular suits of The Beatles were not conventional. They had a round neck in silver gray with braided edges, three pearl buttons on the jacket, single-button flared cuffs and flat-front pants with no side pockets.[82]

By dressing like The Beatles and adopting their haircuts they create a global connection to Great Britain and the west from Indonesia. This is furthered by their united group poses which are reminiscent of The Beatles album cover 'Help' in which the band spell out the mysterious letters 'NUJV' in flag semaphore. Dara Puspita's coded body language subversively identifies with The Beatles. Through this identification and symbolism, which would only be evident to other youths who had prior knowledge of The Beatles, they express their solidarity to the Western counterculture, creating an exclusive group through a stylistic code. They subvert the political system through this influence. However, it should be noted that their clothes are also modest; they do not wear dresses or expose any skin. Their clothes represented a rebellious image however they were still partially confined by the rules of the system. Therefore this use of a stylistic code has even more importance as a way of working around the constrictions put in place by the government.

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[82] Douglas Martin, 'Dougie Millings, 88, the Tailor for the Beatles,' *New York Times*, (October 8, 2001) Obituary section.

These outfits appear again in photographs 8 and 9 (figure 7) where we see more of the band's pursuits off stage. They represent happy posed photos that appear to want to preserve the band's time on tour. They wave at the audience, and perhaps the photographer, or other people outside of the shot. They hold hands and hang off each other in a happy and carefree way as if mid-dance. This creates a connection to their style and music, even when they are not on stage. The motorbike they pose on in photograph 9 acts as a rebellious, countercultural prop, which compliments their Western stylistic image. This shows their aspiration to be like countercultural icons in the west that they admire. Both photographs feature a form of transport, a car in photograph 8 and the motorbike, in photograph 9. They also feature dusty roads and driveways that suggest travel, change and a sense of fleeting. This is evocative of the global nature of their tour and their changing style and image as they visit many countries. It is also reminiscent of the trailblazing cowboy embedded in the traditional history of America that was adopted by Western counterculture.

In photograph 3 (figure 2) we see less connections to the west and more signs of a counterculture created through other interests and influences, suggesting the function of hybridity in their style. We see the band enjoying leisure time from their 1969 world tour in Hungary at the Hungary Variety Circus. They resided in caravans at the circus for an extended time.[83] The band members link arms with a male gymnast who stands in the middle. In the background we see the circus tent held up by ropes. The band member on left holds onto one rope as if to signify her claim to the space and feeling confortable at home in these surroundings.

The girls' clothing seems influenced by their circus surrounding. They are dressed in very short mini shift dresses adorned with sparkles and mirrored sequins. Although short, the dresses have high necks and long sleeves, reminiscent of a leotard or cheerleading outfit. They wear bows in their hair, each with large rounded, backcombed hairstyle know as a bouffant, showing a feminine and playful side to their style. Lies Adji Rachman states that the more relaxed attitude to style in Europe meant that they could experiment more with

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[83] Eliza Summerlin, 'The Power of Dara Puspita: How Four Girls From Indonesia Brought Rock 'n' Roll to the World' (2012) accessed: <http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/1270>

their own. In Indonesia, on stage they often had to wear dresses that covered their knees on stage, whereas in Europe they were free to wear dresses that just covered their bums.[84]

In photograph 4 (figure 3) we see the girls in their caravan in Hungary. Their walls are pasted with magazine pages and photos of Western band members including Mick Jagger and The Beatles. We also see a picture of Dara Puspita on the wall as if to situate themselves in the same global sixties rock n roll movement as their idols through the curation of a montage on their wall.

In photograph 4 the utilization of the teapot as a prop and the other band members opening their mouths show the unity of the band. They are shown as a family, with the lead singer Titiek acting as the mother looking after her children. This intimate photograph also presents the girls as at home in this environment, they are not performing but living their everyday lives. It can be regarded as a communitarian form of counterculture. The caravan represents an enclosed secretive, and shrine-like habitat to their musical influences that were deemed harmful by the Indonesian government.

Through the two photographs in Hungary we see the global aspect to their style. The incorporation of Western and Indonesian band posters in the environment of a Hungarian circus evidences the strong sense of hybridity in their style. The cultural connotations of circus freaks or nomads and their almost freakish or clownishly high bouffants adorned with comical bows show how this environment also influenced their style. The circus can be regarded as a form of nomadic counterculture with its rejection of a permanent home and conventional lifestyle. It represents a community existing outside of a global mainstream culture and its social and political ideals of getting a steady job or settling down. In this sense they are operating outside of their own political system but also within a global system of convention.

In photographs 5 and 6 (figures 4 and 5) we see action shots of the band performing. They wear smart suits in their Beatles-style clothing. The shiny fabric mimics the metal amps behind them. In addition their faces appear on the drum kit which makes them seem to become one with the music. This is reinforced in picture 6 where we see Titiek is wearing a tambourine over her

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[84] Alice Ridgway, Interview with Lies Adji Rachman (02 July 2015)

head and around her neck like a musical necklace. This unconventional way of playing the tambourine and using it as a fashion accessory at the same time symbolises the cohesive nature of their style and music.

Photograph 7 (figure 6) is an untitled colour image from 1968 in which we see the girls seated on a bench, each with their right leg crossed across their left and their hands placed on their legs. Although there is symmetry in their poses, each girl also has a slightly different posture and attitude. The girl on the far left wears sunglasses, looking confident and more boyish with her raised leg. The girl on the left center looks more feminine, with a straight back and her fingers elegantly laced over her knee. Through the addition of a colour image we can see that the girls each have different colour trousers on, although they adopt the same high-necked striped tops and flat white sling-back shoes. Lias states that in Europe they changed their styles. They developed to become more distinctive from one another: 'every member now had their own individual style. So they didn't perform in the same clothes together.'[85] She states that also their hairstyles started to differ towards the end of the decade, she chose to wear curls and others grew their hair longer.[86] This change is also evident through the different body language and attitudes of the girls. It could be suggested that the individualist image adopted in Western counterculture and the pursuit of a strong sense of self influenced the girls to become less uniform in their aesthetic.

It is important to recognise that the band made all of their clothes.[87] This means that they operated outside of the new Western system of consumerism. Even though they wish to be individual and change their style frequently, this can still be seen as countercultural in the climate of Indonesian politics in which uniformity and control was enforced through clothing.

Finally, photograph 10 (figure 9) shows a shot from behind the bands performance on stage, it is an untitled image, taken by 'Johnny-Ness Press,' who accompanied some of their tour. From this angle we can see the audience, a happy and smiling crowd of middle-aged men and women on the dance floor. The men are dressed in suits and the women in dresses, which are predominately modest, although one is a halter neck and above the knee. There

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[85] Alice Ridgway, Interview with Lies Adji Rachman (02 July 2015)
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

are also other spectators seated at the back of the room that are not participating in dancing to the music. We can see three band members holding base guitars and guitars which all point slightly forward and to the left. In addition this they are all wearing matching jackets and trousers in a print, which is part psychedelic and part geometric. This photograph acts as a window onto the mainstream society and their clothing, presenting Dara Puspita as a radical divergence from this. This evolution in style could be linked to The Beatles, who Lias states was their strongest influence. The Beatles also turned towards a more psychedelic style later on in the decade.

An Indonesian counterculture?

When considering the radical nature of Dara Puspita's countercultural style, it is important to note that the band state that 'their main goal was to make music and perform in many places to make people happy. They never intended to mix with politics or to provoke people. They just wanted to show their personal style'[88] despite the fact this was not allowed in Indonesia.

When consulting the definition of counterculture - the pursuit of alternative communitarian lifestyle and radical political thought, opposed to social convention – can their style be regarded as embodying this?

The photographs have shown that they did embody a sense of community through their style. This has been seen in their distinctive poses where they showed a strong sense of unity especially when combined with their matching costumes worn on and off stage.

However, they also adopted a more individual image as the decade progressed, changing the colours of their clothes and accommodating their own personal body language, as see in photograph 7. This shows the influence of American individualism over the band, which is less in keeping with this definition of counterculture. However it was rebellious in their own political climate in Indonesia. It is evident here that counterculture has different connotations depending on the context of the country.

With regards to radical political thought, it is apparent through the interview that they were not overtly political as a band, and did not seem to wish

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[88] Alice Ridgway, Interview with Lies Adji Rachman (02 July 2015)

to create a radical new society. However their wish to make people happy through their music does reveal a utopian element to their thinking. When looking at their style, in many ways it subverted the strict ban on Western influence in Indonesia. In other ways, they did adhere to the rules regarding modesty, as many of their outfits were suits that had high necks and covered their knees. In addition, their uniformity could be viewed as the result of authoritarian government implicitly imposing regularity of their style.

Conversely, when we consider the photos take at the Hungarian circus the band adopt a style that is particularly countercultural. Their circus-inspired dresses show a variety of influences, not just an imitation of the West. By travelling the world in their tour they acquire a range of styles that influenced them, which can be regarded as a countercultural hybrid. The band photographs show how they changed and adapted their style in different contexts, suggesting fluidity in their style.

The influence of music over their image should not be underestimated. The unity between the two is depicted in photograph 6 where Titiek uses a tambourine as both a necklace and an instrument. In this sense it can be argued that music and their wanting to play is a form of political thought. They wear many different clothes in order to express this and to create their own identity post-liberation, outside the confines of uniformity under the Indonesian government, which can be regarded as countercultural.

Chapter Three: Bamako youth

Having assessed the photographs of Dara Puspita, I will now look at the images from Malick Sibidé to analyse the youth culture of Bamako in Mali. Firstly, I will give some context to the country's decolonisation and liberation in the decade.

The sixties in Mali

Mali became an independent nation on September 22nd 1960, having been dominated by the French since 1898 as part of the French Sudan. The decolonisation occurred during the aftermath of World War Two. The coloniser, France, who had dominated the country since 1898, had been exhausted both financially and militarily by the war and colonies abroad were no longer a fruitful asset. The power of France diminished with the advent of new political forces on the scene – the United States, Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union. In addition to this there was also a growing unrest in the colonies themselves who expected to achieve their independence having helped in the war effort.[89] This was specified in the 1941 Atlantic charter, which stated that all people had the right to self-determination. The combination of these factors created an environment ripe for decolonisation.

Mobido Keita, a socialist, became the country's first president. The political thought behind the country's independence was strongly influenced by Aime Cesaire who stated that it was impossible to create a national culture under colonialism.[90] He furthered that independence would awaken in the individual the African personality that had for so long been suppressed. They would return to an authentic state of being which would shatter the assimilation and depersonalisation of the African under colonialism. Lumumba, Tour, Nkrummah and Keita were leaders who signified this post-colonial image through their fierce nationalism, and anti-imperialism. [91]

In order to achieve this authentic, self-actualisation of the African in Mali,

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[89] Tony, Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?* (Oxford 2002) 3.
[90] Diawara, The Sixties in Bamako, 5.
[91] Ibid.

the socialist government monitored the behaviour of people in conformity with their teachings of socialism. In order to enforce the adoption of traditional clothing, they set curfews and sent youths caught wearing mini-skirts, tight skirts and bell-bottom pants to reeducation camps.[92]

The Western dress of the youth in Sibidés photos would have been regarded indecent by the prevailing religion of Islam. Malian writer and cultural theorist, Manthia Diawara, states that the youths would have had to smuggle these clothes out of their homes and get changed away from their parents, which exemplifies that subversive nature of their dress.[93] I will now analyse the photographs in order to explore this subversion further.

Photograph analysis

In the first photograph, (figure 9) named *Friends of the Spanish* (1968) we see four young men striking strong poses looking directly at the camera with a bold, serious expression. They wear patterned shirts of traditional African fabric, which are tight fitting and are tucked into their high-waisted flares. They all wear flamboyant accessories including gold necklaces, rings and bracelets, and round sunglasses.

With regards to the composition, the pattern on the studio floor mimics the patterns of their shirts. It creates a sense of embodiment of physical space through the similarity and continuity of the fabric from their bodies to the physical backdrop. It is as if they are claiming back the space from their colonisers through this synchronisation of pattern. In addition to this, the featuring of the teapot shows how they create an environment that seems natural and part of everyday experience. Their bold poses are therefore elevated from a contrived snapshot to an attitude and embodied style that they exercise in their everyday lives.

The large sombrero style hat worn by the man standing on the left is hard to miss. It shows cross-cultural connections and its presence is echoed in the title

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[92] Diawara, The Sixties in Bamako, 8.
[93] Ibid.

of the photographs which emphasises the hat, making it central to the image. The noun 'friends' in the title tells us that these cultural exchanges are of a friendly and interactive nature, not based on power relations or competition. This suggests a want to establish a global youth counterculture with a style that transcends borders.

In photograph 2 (figure 10) we see two men dressed in garishly patterned flares. A guitar is placed in the center and each has one hand placed on the instrument. In the other hand they each hold a small pot of flowers. One man pushes one foot slightly in front the other as if to suggest a dance move.

The composition of this second photo denotes the importance of symmetry and comradery in the arrangement of the photograph. The background wall is plain and the floor mimics the pattern on the fabric of their flares. They embody the space around them with their strong posing but also the unity of their fabric.

The dominance of the prints of the flared trousers in this photograph implies that the two men are equal in their style. This is mirrored by their similar posture. The fact that they are both wearing sunglasses adds an element of anonymity. They seem to sacrifice their own individuality to create a group identity. By posing with the guitar and suggesting a dance move with one foot, they unite their fashion choices with music and dance in the photograph. This creates a global connection through their influences taken from music and dance around the world.

In photograph 3, (figure 11) Voici ma Montre et ma Bague (1964) (here is my watch and my ring) a smiling girl is pictured pointing to her new watch as her ringed finger faces to the camera. The bracelet on her wrist creates a triangular composition of her jewellery at the center of the photograph, drawing the eye of the audience to this area. Her proud smiling expression reveals her want to preserve this scene. This urge to want to be seen with the latest fashion is reminiscent of the consumer conformity evident in Haight-Ashbury and Western counterculture. However, Sidibé states that this was all part of the excitement of liberation. He furthers that the studio was often like a party, people would 'pose on their Vespas, show off their new hats and trousers and jewels and sunglasses. Looking beautiful was everything. Everyone had to have

the latest Paris style. We had never really worn socks, and suddenly people were so proud of theirs.'[94] This suggests that this form of consumption was a result of the freedom that came with liberation.

It can be furthered that this attitude was not a passive mimicking of the coloniser, or the 'culture industry' of the West. More accurately, it should be seen as a universal youth movement in which these youths revealed their impatience with the political teachings of the nationalist state and the spirit of decolonisation that prohibited them from indulging in consumption and the individual choice and variety that came with it. From this perspective, this photograph can be seen as countering the culture of Mali through style.

In photographs 4, 5 and 6 (figures 12, 13 and 14) we see individuals holding records. Photograph 4 illustrates a man with a record player smiling and holding out his hand as if to invite the audience to dance with him, or to hear the record. In the corner we see a record player on a wooden table with tangled wires leading to a plug socket. The man in the photograph is perhaps the most conventionally dressed out of all the characters in the photographs. He wears a plain dark short-sleeved shirt and trousers of the same colour, his shoes are black and polished. The cut of his shirt is more similar to traditional Malian dress than that of a Western suit, but it still has a modern look to it. The buttons contrast against the dark shiny fabric with a matt white aesthetic.

In photograph 5 titled *TWIST! Avec Ray Charles* (1969) we see a woman smiling, holding the record of the same title as the photograph. In a similar way to photograph 2, she suggestively points her foot forward as if to mimic the twist dance, famously linked to the song. She wears shining cross-over sandals and a long strapless dress with a traditional headdress and a single feather attached to the middle of it. With the exhibition of this record she seems to unite her traditional elements of her style with the new sounds of Ray Charles, creating a hybridity of style by combining the two together in a photograph in a similar way to photograph 4.

In photograph 6, *Un Admiration de Jimi Hendrix* (1967) we see a man seated with his legs crossed on the floor. This is unusual compared to the rest of

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[94] John Henley, Malick Sidibé photographs: One nation under a groove, *The Guardian* (27 February 2010)

the photos that display action, strong poses and dynamism in the subjects. He sits on a soft floral and swirled carpet that mirrors the swirls of the Jimi Hendrix album cover. The cross-legged pose and meditative expressive, combined with this rug and the album that he firmly clasps with one hand, creates a shrine-like, spiritual environment. The record almost becomes part of his outfit and style with the way it is so closely held to him. The jewellery that he has draped behind his ear and across his forehead embody the dazzling swirls of the record that, in turn, seem to be a visual manifestation of the distorted and exaggerated guitar sounds of Jimi Hendrix.

The three visible walls that surround the man create an enclosed feel to the photograph, the audience are drawn in the center through the repetition of square lines and rectangles that lure the eye to the focal point of the photograph, the record. This background contrasts with the embellished fabric and accessories of the man in the photo making a powerful contrast between the reality of everyday life in Bamako and the aspirations of its youth culture. This image can be seen as subversive in a similar way to photograph 4 and 5, through the combining of Western musical influence, which they seem engrossed with, and the stark background of their environment.

It is hard to overstate the significance given to music and dance by Diawara in his recollection of his time in the Mali counterculture. He states that dances like the Camel Walk and the Mashed Potato hark back to dances of the Dogon, an ancient traditional tribe in Mali. He furthers that these dances were coded and told different stories of emancipation.[95] By suggesting the movement of dance in photographs 2, 4 and 5 it implies a wish to connect to the African diaspora in a way relevant to their new liberation and emancipation. Although this youth culture adopted Western music, it used it to create a hybridity of style, and also connect to a global counterculture through this music. They seem to connect elements from modern and traditional cultural music, dance and clothing in order to create a style free from the control of the Western colonizer.

In photograph 7, (figure 16) *Danse le Twist* (1965) we see a group of people dancing the twist in a house, or communal building. The men are dressed smartly in suits, with socks, ties and black leather shoes. A young woman is

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[95] Diawara, The Sixties in Bamako, 14.

pictured in a white dress with short hair and hoop earing, also dancing. The men have their knees and elbows bent as they are captured mid-dance. One man in the background smiles as he dances, only half of his body caught in the shot. The man in the foreground has his back facing the camera. This creates an element of the unknown to the photograph suggesting a secretive and subversive nature of their acts.

The smart suits look the least countercultural out of the clothing seen in Sibidés photographs as they represent the mainstream conformity that Western counterculture aimed to destabilise. In Mali this smart style was regarded by the state as youths mimicking the coloniser and failing to get in touch with the process of postcolonial self-actualisation. However, as a participator in this youth movement, Diawara notably advises that this is to misunderstand the youth culture of the time. He argues that the youth had quickly internalised African culture and collapsed the walls of the binary opposition between coloniser and colonised. It can therefore be understood that the embrace of this style made connections beyond national frontiers with the diaspora and international youth movements.[96]

This exemplifies the validity of Bhabha's theory, as Diawara states that the attitudes towards post-colonialism by contemporaries in the sixties could not recognise this movement at the time as anything but mimicry and assimilation and an indication of the 'failure to grasp the full complexity of the energies unleashed by independence.'[97] One way we can now view these complex energies is as a form of youth countercultural style, in which these youths expressed their discontents with the Malian political situation through their clothing choices that were not condoned by the government

A counterculture in Mali?

The youth culture in Bamako can be regarded as having a more overtly political undercurrent compared to Dara Puspita. Particularly with regard to race and

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[96] Diawara, The Sixties in Bamako, 8.
[97] Ibid.

identity, we see clothing being used as part of a formation and expression of this after independence.

Once again, when looking at the definition of counterculture - the pursuit of alternative communitarian lifestyle and radical political thought, opposed to social convention – can their style be regarded as embodying this?

With regard to community, we see the creation of a communal style on a local and a global level. In photographs 1 and 2 the symmetry of the poses of each individual and the similar clothing styles and accessories create a group identity over an individual one. This communal identity is furthered on a global level, particularly through the use of music and dancing. The subjects in the photographs hold records so that they become part of their stylistic image. Often their surroundings, clothing or posture mimic the style of the music, or the style of dancing performed to the music, which creates a connection from Bamako to the rest of the world's youth culture that was also listening to these records.

When looking at the politics of this culture, the perspective of Diawara has shown the complex nature of post-colonialism and liberation, in which the adopting of Western-style clothing should not be seen as mimicking the coloniser, but can instead be seen as a subversive. Their clothing was subversive as it drew on a variety of influences, including the West, but also on older African traditions. Their wishes to buy consumer goods, was prohibited by the state in Mali and therefore represents counterculture on an internal local level. The hybridity of this consumerism which they 'appropriated from a wide variety of domestic and foreign sources: shops, stores, and hawkers; tailors; mail-order firms; locally obtained second-hands and imported' should be seen as creating a global form of counterculture and the formation of hybrids, rather than the dominance of Western culture.

Conclusion: non-Western counterculture?

This study has aimed to answer whether the photographs of Dara Puspita and the youth culture of Bamako in the sixties show evidence of a countercultural style.

It was determined that Western countercultural style often failed to meet the subversive criteria: the pursuit of alternative communitarian lifestyle and radical political thought, opposed to social convention. This is because the acquisition of this clothing was often based on the prevailing system of capitalism and furthermore, the roots of countercultural style seemed to be based in tradition and individualism rather than community and radical political thought.

This criterion was used to explore non-Western case studies in order to see whether countercultural style existed more authentically outside of the West. This was in effort to create a global narrative of counterculture, which often focused on the West whilst the non-west was excluded to histories of decolonisation and post-colonialism.

An ideological analysis of photography revealed a wide variety of styles adopted by Dara Puspita on their world tour in the sixties. It also revealed the changing meaning of countercultural style regarding their location in the world. Their clothes often changed depending on what country they were in. For example, they adopted suits that imitated The Beatles in Indonesia, which can be deemed subversive due to their Western influence. However, conversely they kept their legs covered, as this was considered very offensive by the Indonesian government, this shows their assimilation to the regime.

In Europe the band chose short dresses and expressed their own individuality a little more, although they still showed their communal spirit through matching outfits. This adoption of a variety of styles shows how they created a hybrid style of the West and non-West.

Dara Puspita were not overtly political in their thinking, which lessens their countercultural stylistic image. However, they did challenge the existing social order in their local country through their love of Western style. Although their uniformity and modesty meant that they did show some elements of

conformity. Their adoption of a circus style can be seen as more subversive on a global level as it challenges conformist customs and seems to endorse a nomadic lifestyle with connotations of misfits and a rejection of mainstream society. Furthermore, the band always made their own clothes, which means that unlike Western hippies, they largely avoided American capitalist consumption. The combination of their communal approach to style and rejection of social normalities on a local and global level, mean that they qualify as having a countercultural style in these photographs.

The youth culture of Bamako had stronger political connections to style through the wish of the youth to forge their own identity after their liberation from the French. Their adoption of Western and traditional styles and music suggests that they wanted to conform to neither the West nor non-West, but create something entirely new. This was perhaps influenced by their stationary environment (unlike Dara Puspita who regularly travelled) they had a tangible base to call their own. They adopted Western-style suits but also Malian prints, their style was often democratised through their similar dress in groups, which shows how community prevailed over the individual. It became apparent through the work of Diawara that in this sense they should not be seen as mimicking the coloniser or returning to their African roots.

Both countercultures revealed the importance of music and dance in the creation and expression of their style. In both cases their posture, props and clothing were related to music. In particular, connections to non-Western music, such as The Beatles album cover 'Help' and the dance moves associated with James Brown, were used to create a coded style in the photographs. By assimilating poses related to these, both groups added a secretive subversive element to their style. This can be regarded to have created a global network between the youth West and non-West. It was not only empowering and countercultural in these youth group, creating a hybridity of countercultural style, but furthermore, the authorities could not trace it.

This study has revealed the interconnections between youth cultures across the world and the formation of a non-Western counterculture through style. By utilising an ideological reading of photography, influenced by Bhabha's post-colonial theory, it has aimed to create a global history of countercultural

fashion. By using photography and interviews I have aimed to give agency to the subjects themselves. Although it can be argued that these sources present an idealised version of the past, they are still valuable records for cultures that have been previously excluded from history. Furthermore, the selection of photography conveys intimate, personal and posed scenes and therefore offers a more realistic portrait of this time, offering a convincing case for the evidence of a non-Western counterculture. Hopefully, in the future more case studies can be considered in order to further the history of non-Western fashion and create a global history of the sixties that moves beyond binary divisions of the West and the non-West. This would help to permeate the general recollection of the sixties to include the history of the non-West in a positive sense, not just as the less palatable actualities of the time.

Appendix

Dara Puspita Photo-Album
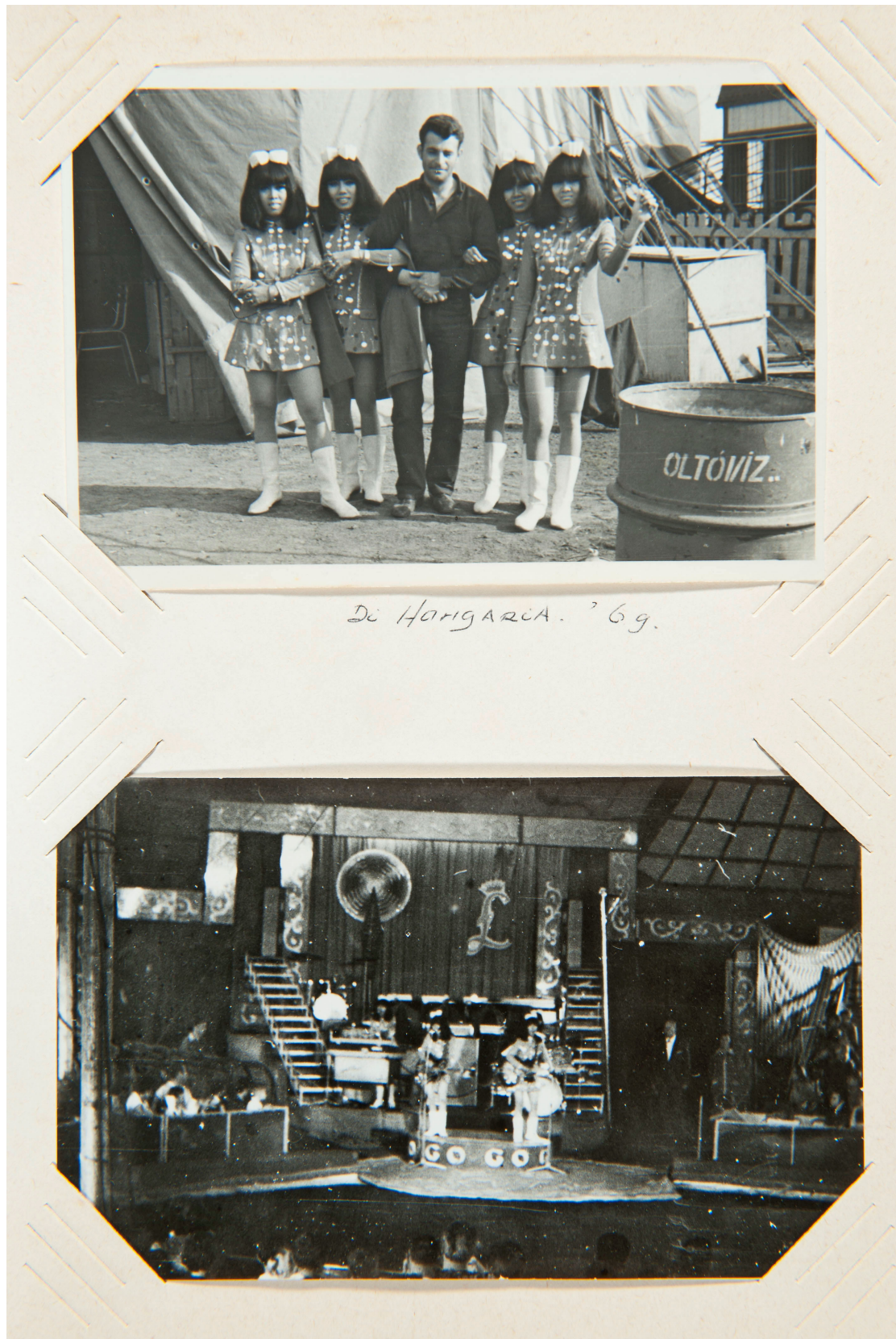

Figure 1, *Untitled* (1965)
(Photographs 1 and 2)

Figure 2, *Di Hungaria '69* (1969)
(Photograph 3, top image)

Figure 3, *Di Hungeria. Mei '69.* (1969)
(Photograph 4)

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Figure 4, *Untitled* (1963)
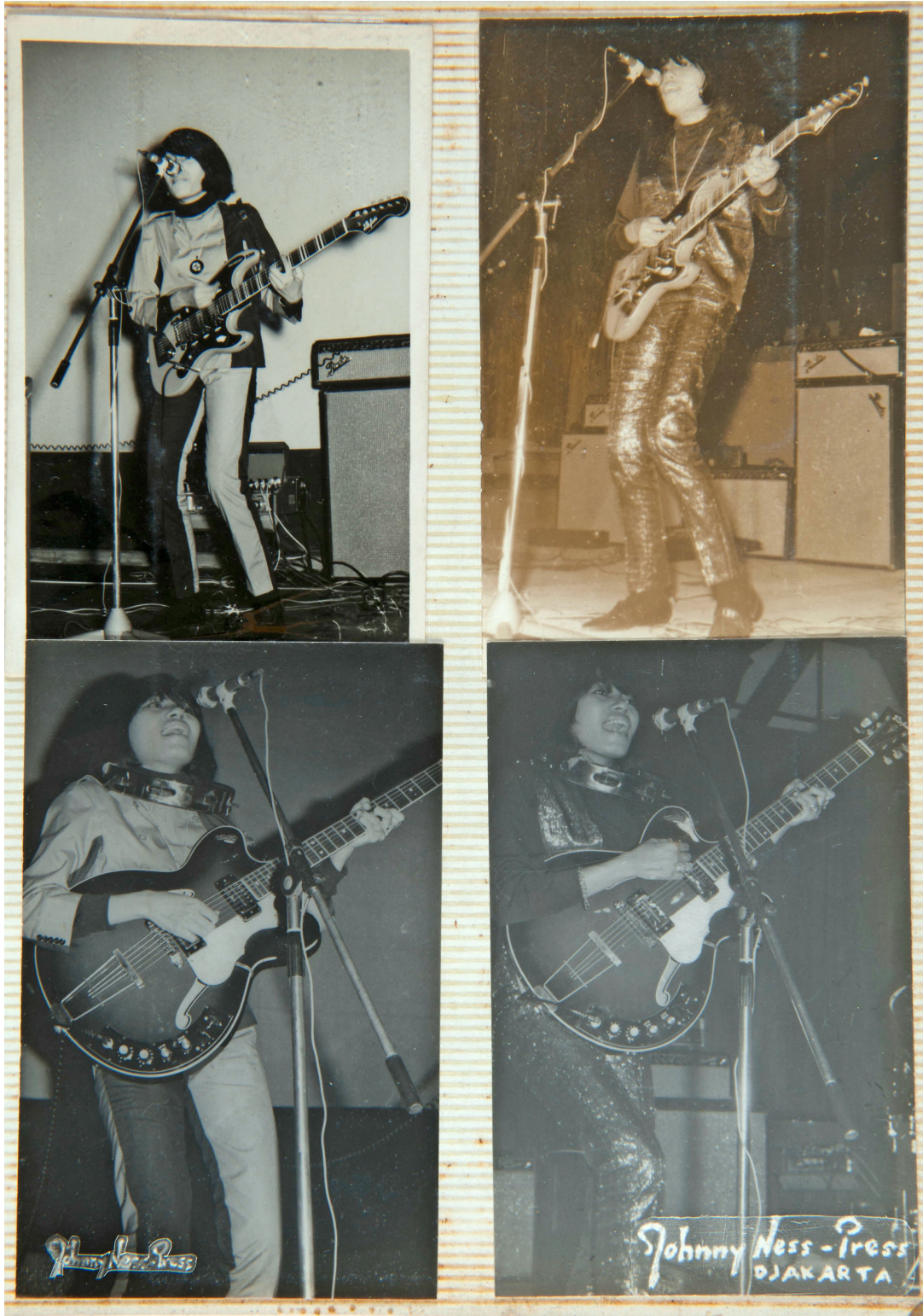(Photograph 5, bottom image)

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Figure 5, *Untitled,* Jonny Ness-Press, Djakarta (1963)
(Photograph 6, bottom left image)

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Figure 6, *Untitled* (1967)
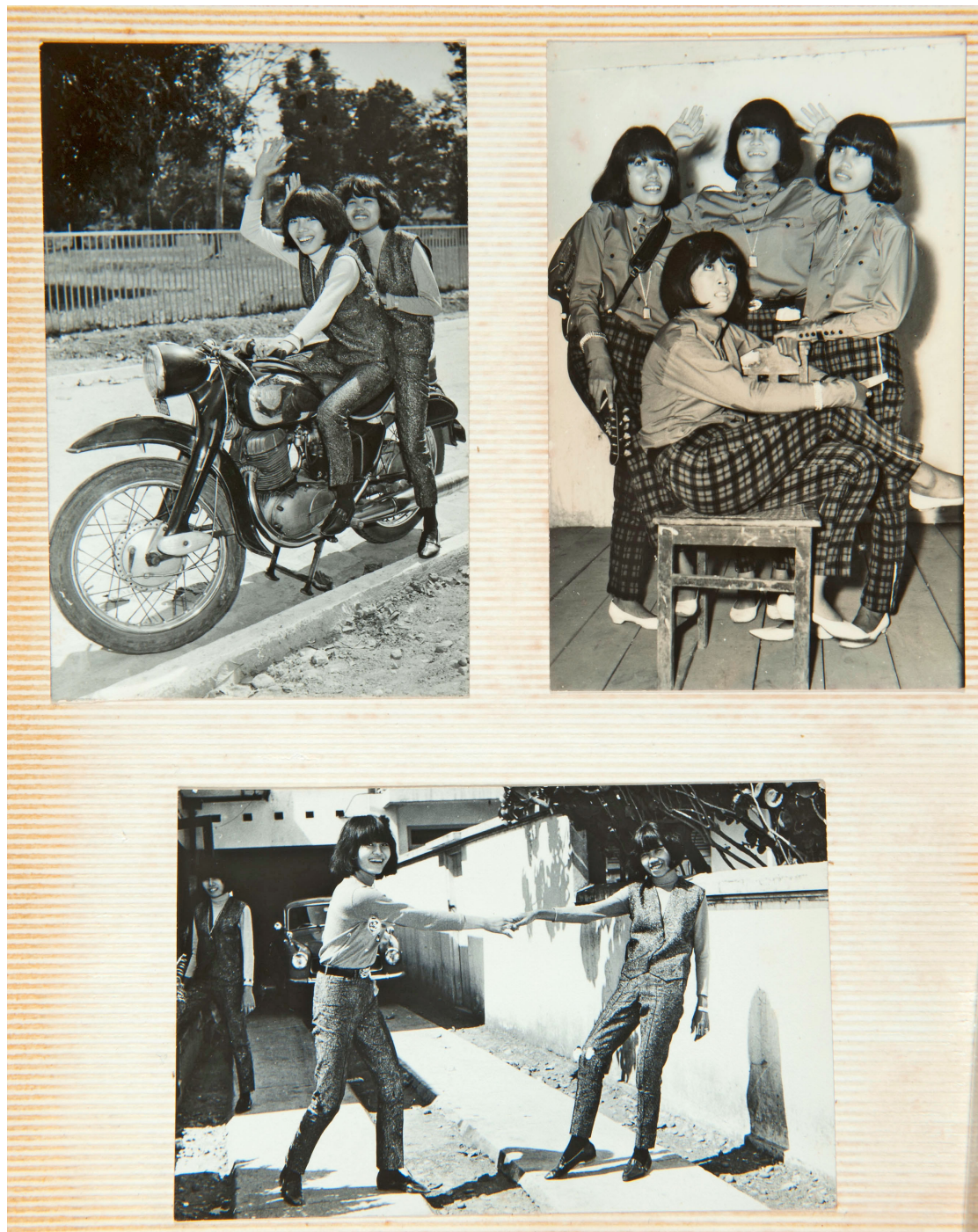(Photograph 7, top image)

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Figure 7, *Untitled* (1965)
(Photographs 8 and 9, top left and bottom image)

Figure 8, *Jan, Bonang 7 MKT*. Johnny Ness-Press (1967)
(Photograph 10, bottom image)

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Malick Sibidé Photo-Album

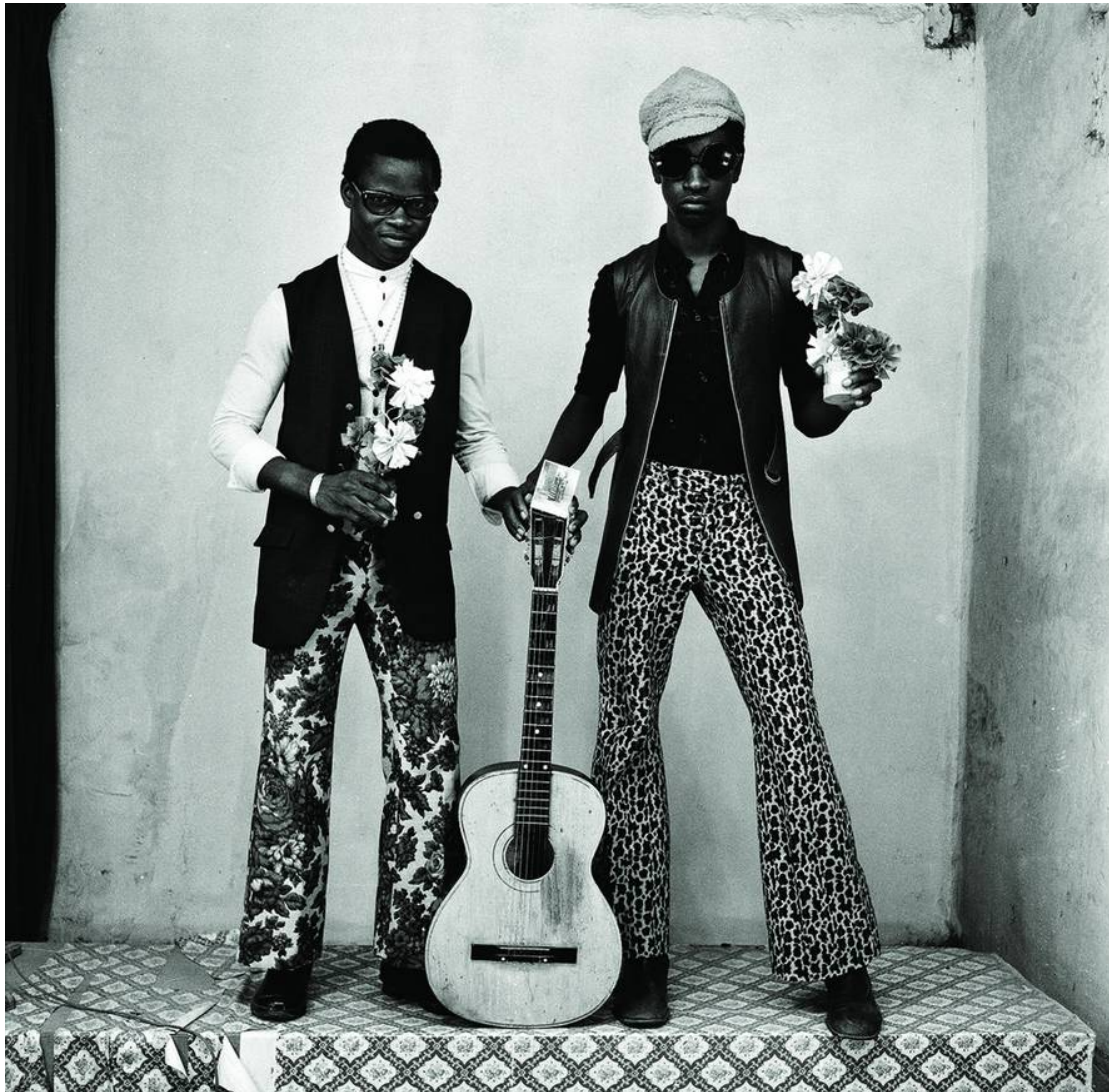Figure 9, *Friends of the Spanish* (1968)
(Photograph 1)

Figure 10, *The Two of us with Guitar* (1968)
(Photograph 2)

Figure 11, *Voici ma Montre et ma Bague* (1964)
(Photograph 3)

Figure 12, *Pret Pour Le Pachanga* (1965)
(Photograph 4)

Figure 13, *TWIST! Avec Ray Charles* (1969)
(Photograph 5)

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Figure 14, *Un Admiration de Jimi Hendrix* (1967)
(Photograph 6)

Alice Ridgway
4214218

Figure 16, *Danse le Twist* (1965)
(Photograph 7)

Alice Ridgway
4214218

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