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## **YOUTH SUBCULTURES**

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*In this article an attempt is made to define the concept of youth subcultures, to consider some popular youth subcultures, as well as to analyze their features. The article will be interesting to a wide range of readers, especially students, to anyone interested in ethnography.*

*Keywords: youth subcultures, punks, skinheads, hippie, emo, goth.*

*В данной статье совершается попытка дать определение понятию молодежные субкультуры, рассматриваются популярные молодежные субкультуры, а также проанализированы их особенности. Статья будет интересна широкому кругу читателей, прежде всего, студентам и аспирантам, всем тем, кто интересуется этнографией.*

*Ключевые слова: молодежные субкультуры, хиппи, готы эмо, панки, скинхэды.*

*У даній статті здійснюється спроба дати визначення поняттю молодіжна субкультура, розглянути найпопулярніші молодіжні субкультури, а також проаналізовано їх особливості. Стаття стане у пригоді широкому колу читачів, перш за все студентам, усім, хто цікавиться етнографією.*

*Ключові слова: молодіжні субкультури, панки, емо, готи, хіппі, скінхеди.*

Today the life of many young people in many countries of the world is influenced by popular culture.

Subcultures are the groupings that have interests different from those of the mainstream culture. In the broadest sense, a subculture is any group within a large complex culture, who has interests that vary from those of the mainstream culture. But in a most specific sense, a subculture is a group with a distinct style and identity. Different subcultures have their own beliefs, value systems, fashion and favorite music. A particular cultural grouping is a way for young people to express their individuality. The young follow certain stereotypes that are imposed on them through TV, movies, and music. In their lifestyle they try to imitate the images of their idols. Other young people are sports and music fans. They frequent stadiums and huge concert halls. They follow their idols in their tours and support them. Unfortunately they are intolerant to those who don't share their view. It's a specific aspect of the youth subculture that can't be ignored. Very often subculture is the culture of those who are dissatisfied with their place in society. Different subcultures have their own beliefs, value systems, fashion, and favourite music. For example, Rastafairians' subculture was based on nostalgia for a lost world. They idealized Africa. Rastafairians were Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Britain. They began to wear distinctive clothes, camouflage jackets, large hats in the red, gold and green colours of Ethiopia and put their long, uncut hair in dreadlocks. They brought to us such tapes of music as ska, reggae and hip-hop [9: 273].

So, subculture is a youth-based subculture with distinct styles, behaviors, and interests. According to subculture theorists such as Dick Hebdige, members of a subculture often signal their membership by making distinctive and symbolic choices in clothing styles, hairstyles and footwear. However, intangible elements, such as common interests, dialects and slang, music genres and gathering places can also be an important factor. Youth subcultures offer participants an identity outside of that ascribed by social institutions such as family, work, home and school.

Social class, gender and ethnicity can be important in relation to youth subcultures. Youth subcultures can be defined as meaning systems, modes of expression or lifestyles developed by groups in subordinate structural positions in response to dominant systems — and which reflect their attempt to solve structural contradictions rising from the wider societal

context. The study of subcultures often consists of the study of the symbolism attached to clothing, music, other visible affections by members of the subculture and also the ways in which these same symbols are interpreted by members of the dominant culture. The term *scene* can refer to an exclusive subculture or faction. Scenes are distinguished from the broad culture through either fashion; identification with specific musical genres or political perspectives; and a strong in-group or tribal mentality. The term can also be used to depict specific subsets of a subculture, habitually geographical, such as the Detroit drum and bass scene or the London Goth scene. A quantity of scenes tend to be volatile, imprudent to trends and changes, with some participants acting elitist towards those considered to be less fashionable, or oppositional to the general culture although others do endow with mutual support in marginalized groups. In-group behavior can sometimes elicit external opposition. Subcultures that show a systematic hostility to the dominant culture are sometimes described as countercultures.

Early studies in youth culture were mainly produced by functionalist sociologists, and focus on youth as a single form of culture. In explaining the development of the culture, they utilized the concept of “anomie”. Talcott Parsons argued that as we move from the family and corresponding values to another sphere with differing values, we would experience an “anomie situation”. The generalizations involved in this theory ignore the existence of subcultures.

Marxist theories account for some diversity, because they focus on classes and class-fractions rather than youth as a whole. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson described youth subcultures as symbolic or ritualistic attempts to resist the power of bourgeois hegemony by consciously adopting behavior that appears threatening to the establishment [5]. Conversely, Marxists of the Frankfurt School of social studies argue that youth culture is inherently consumerist and integral to the divide-and-rule strategy of capitalism. They argue that it creates generation gaps and pits groups of youths against each other (e.g. mods and rockers) especially as youth culture is the dominant culture in the west.

Interactionist theorist Stan Cohen argues youth subcultures are not coherent social groupings that arise spontaneously as a reaction to social forces, but that mass media labeling results in the creation of youth subcultures by imposing an ideological framework in which people can locate their behavior [2]. Post-structuralist theories of subculture utilize many of the ideas from these other theories, including hegemony and the role of the media. Dick Hebdige describes subcultures as a reaction of subordinated groups that challenge the hegemony of the dominant culture [6]. This theory accounts for factors such as gender, ethnicity and age. Youth can be as a subordinate group in relation to the dominant, adult society.

Historical theorist Steven Mintz claims that until about 1950, youth subculture as such did not exist. Children aspired to (or were pulled into) adulthood as fast as their physical development allowed [8]. Marcel Danesi argues that since then, the media, advertisers and others have made youth the dominant culture of Western societies, to the point that many people retain what others consider to be immature attitudes far into adulthood [3]. This is further supported by P. Lewis, who claims that youth culture did not originate until the 1950s, with the development of rock and roll [7]. However, other historians have claimed that youth culture may have developed earlier, particularly in the inter-war period [4]. There were examples of new youth subcultures emerging throughout that period, such as the flapper.

The following features can be noted in youth cultures: style; language, music, class, rebellion, gender, art, rebellion, relationship to the dominant culture, degree of openness to outsiders, urban/rural living, etc. The following insights were gained from class interaction on youth subculture groups:

Class and Youth Subcultures. It was found that within different socio-economic groups subculture groups take on different characteristics and are based on different factors. Within the working class communities youth tend to have more interaction with parents and therefore don't seem to rebel as much against their parents as youth in middle to upper classes. Youth subcultures in working class communities will show a greater amount of gang activity, with subculture groups being defined around gangs in some areas. In middle class areas youth seem to form their subcultures around interests, such as sports.

Music and Youth Subcultures. Most subculture groups could be identified with a specific music genre and in some instances music was the defining characteristic around which the group was formed (such as with the following subcultures: Ravers, Metalheads, Homeboys, Ethno-hippies, Goths, Technos, Rastas and Punks). In other communities music is a key feature, but another factor would be the key characteristic, such as with Bladers, Bikers, Skaters, Surfers, etc.) [3: 67]

Family and Youth Subcultures. In working class families, as scholars note, families tend to have closer interaction and youth do not seem so intent on being different to their parents, whereas in other communities youth may deliberately choose a certain subculture group to reinforce their independence and even opposition to their parents. In upper-class communities (or among youth from upper-class homes) youth are given a lot more disposable income with which to engage in sports, computers, entertainment, etc. So they are able to engage in a greater diversity of pursuits – so there are possibly more subculture groups in middle to upper-class communities [3: 83].

Fashion and Youth Subcultures. It was noted that fashion plays a role in all subculture groups and that some are more strongly defined by their fashion, while others take the clothing that relates to the music or sport to define the subculture group. Working class youth tend to place greater emphasis on fashion as it is the one way in which they can show off what they own, whereas middle class youth have other things to show off, such as homes, smart cars, fancy sound systems, etc. [6: 25].

Now we would like to dwell on the most important and well known youth subcultures.

Punks. In English dictionary the word ‘punk’ means something worthless and useless. The ideology of punks is quite simple: “Say ‘NO’ to everything”. They only want to express their individuality in a shocking way – brightly colored hair, metal chains. They always wear dirty clothes and never wash. They use vulgar language. Usually punks are drugs consumers. Punk-Rock music is very loud and aggressive.

Skinheads. Skinheads are becoming more popular every day. They wear black clothes and heavy boots. Skinheads' ideology is to beat all foreigners living in any country. The main trouble about skins is that lots of them are extremely

aggressive and violent. Skinheads consider themselves to be real patriots. But none of them is eager to join army. They prefer to demonstrate their power to people who can't do it.

Hippie. Hippies created their own communities, listened to psychedelic rock, embraced the sexual revolution, and some used drugs to explore altered states of consciousness.

Emo. The term emo is short for emotional hardcore. Emo subculture expresses emotions through fashion or music. They also value acceptance, since most of them feel indifferent and unwanted by others. Emos believe after death they will be regenerated and go to a better world. They also worship death, pain, and heartache. Emos wear black or dark colors as a base color. This shows feelings like sulking, fear, mysteriousness, and confidence. The dark make-up they wear around their (boys & girls) eyes with long hair covering a side of their face, shows them trying to avoid unnecessary attention. They wear tight clothes to show their sensitivity and fragility. The thick, black framed and horn rimmed glasses show their intellectual side and their love of reading. They wear other colors like pink, purple, red etc. to show such feelings as: happiness, sadness, irritation.

Goth. The Goth subculture has associated tastes in music, aesthetics, and fashion. The music of the Goth subculture encompasses a number of different styles, including Gothic rock, deathrock, post-punk, darkwave, ethereal, dark ambient, industrial music, and neoclassical. Styles of dress within the subculture range from deathrock, punk, and Victorian styles, or combinations of the above, most often with dark attire, makeup, and hair. Gothic fashion is stereotyped as conspicuously dark, eerie, mysterious, complex, and very exotic. Typical Gothic fashion includes dyed black hair, dark eyeliner, black fingernails, black period-styled clothing; Goths may or may not have piercings. Styles are often borrowed from the Elizabethan, Victorian or medieval period and often express pagan, occult or religious imagery. Gothic fashion may also have silver jewelry [3:78].

As we can see, youth subcultures are often defined or distinguishable by elements such as fashion, beliefs, slang, dialects, behaviours or interests. Most youth subcultures are associated with specific genres of music, and in some cases the music was the main characteristic of groups such as punk rockers, ravers, metal, goth, and emo. Subcultures are not that bad as they are thought to be. Teens want to show off. But, at the same time, a lot of teens think about changing the world to the best.

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