Today's youth subcultures: Resistance or corporation

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Abstract

Aim: This research aims to analyze the recent changes in two different youth subcultures. Subcultures today contribute heavily to the multifaceted framework that exists today. However, they lack any sort of coherence outside of the realm of mass culture. In other words, youth subcultures become embedded in the system they once protested through mainstream media.

Methodology: This research relies on information gleaned from a thorough review of the relevant literature.

Findings: Existing facts and data are critically evaluated, revealing that modern subcultures are formed with a structure to help individuals find the content most appropriate to their desires and needs, satisfying them aesthetically and in terms of other senses and enhancing the relationship of cultures with life.

Novelty/Implications: Instead of using the term "subculture," this research has carefully examined terms like "neo-tribes," "lifestyle," and "scene" to highlight the dynamic nature of youth subcultures. This research aims to gain insight into the nature and current relevance of youth subcultures.

INTRODUCTION

Evolution of Youth Subcultures

The 1950s Afro-Caribbean immigrants to England and the rise of the "teddy boys" from the working class are considered the birthplace of youth subcultures. On the other hand, in the 1960s, a new youth subculture known as the "beats" emerged in America, rejecting property ownership, the workforce, and conventional dress. The growth and success of the 'beat' movement is an outward manifestation of a deep and pervasive social shift that has been underway for quite some time and is experienced in different ways. As Storey (2000) has pointed out, the consumption structure has significantly shifted in recent years. By this time, the working class had amassed enough wealth to buy things they wanted rather than things they needed. During this time, the working class established its identity through consumption patterns.

In addition to harkening back to the bohemian culture that emerged after World War I, this subculture began to emerge in the second half of the 1960s. It evokes the previously experienced avant-garde high culture in terms of components such as loose clothing, a free and easy attitude, a rejection of conventional art styles and other high culture products like in Dada's example, drug use, quoting black culture and public culture, and defending radical political ideals. The novel aspect of the cultural array it supports is the widespread adoption of high-culture fashions in low-admiration cultures, the breadth of its audience, and the depth of the variation it contains.

, The youth subcultures of this era, had much in common, and they all opposed various aspects of the established society, including the inclination toward war, economic inequality within the society, generational divide, and hypocrisy brought about by a clear gulf between the policies implemented on social values. Children of today are more likely to deal with social issues than with issues of individuality, and they react to the fact that they are caught between two worlds (Gans and Incirlioglu, 2007). As a result, the youth cultures of the 1960s emerged

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within the framework of 'counter' cultures and were shaped by the ideals of equality that these cultures represented.

Wicke (2006), writing about the emergence of youth subcultures in the 1960s, argued that, unlike older generations, today's young people shouldn't rush to adulthood and seize the opportunities adults offer as soon as possible. He also claimed that the change benefited the consumer goods industry (Wicke 2006). It is, therefore, prudent to put money into this sector. Shaping the spending habits of young people during this period will also demonstrate its absolute impact on the future. For financial gain, market strategists target the fashion, cosmetics, recreation, media, and media-related music industries to enter and invest. Rock 'n' roll has evolved into a musical and cultural movement that responds to artistic and socio-political expectations, and it has taken on a novel shape for everyone to listen to it over time by creating "clear and harmless" alternative symbols, as a result of the youth discovering their own needs and consumption habits (Wicke 2006).

In the 1970s, timbre broke away from the traditional bonds between music based on individual expression and became a raw material with its own sensual value. As a result, "how it is made rather than what is made" became the guiding principle in the philosophy of music production. The music itself embodied a sensual, imaginative, and corporeal experience. The goal is to regain agency in defining the nature of the cultural process and to rein in a cultural landscape that has been subtly shifted in an interest-driven direction by creativity. In particular, the essence of the rock experience is formed through the cooperation of the people who make rock music and their fans to shape the characteristics of rock music. Furthermore, young people have gathered in an endless feast because of culture, music, and politics; they have shed the mask of 'consumption' and declared war against the system on a broad front. When placed in this context, rock has retained its traditional role as a source of inspiration for those who seek to effect social change (Wicke 2006).

As a symbolic response to the decline of working-class culture, the youth of this period's subcultures form hierarchies to maintain traditional working-class viewpoints while also attempting to take advantage of the opportunities and resources a wealthy society offers. It is possible to see an effort to stand out in the appearance and clothing of a 'quote*'mode, even though the jobs they engage in typically pay low wages and offer limited career prospects. This exposure appears as a fictitious link to the actual conditions of the class located at the top of the social hierarchy. Even though they may share many of the parent culture's traditional values, such as speech patterns or rituals, the wealthy consumers' musical tastes and fashion choices give them away as hedonists. Therefore, how they try to make peace with this contradiction can be a window into the composition of different subcultures.

The consumption rituals of a subculture help to shape that culture's unique identity. Research has been done to identify the distinct groups of consumers and to define the degree to which their needs are met by the goods prepared by the current market. As Hall and Jefferson evaluated in their book titled "Resistance through Rituals" (Clarke 1993): In this phase, people in the group are likely to find common ground around shared goals and ideals, as well as shared interests and activities. It's safe to say that music is the most consequential. Perhaps the most engaged form of music listening is characteristic of a particular subculture. Subcultures use music as one of the tools to define themselves apart from the mainstream, create a sense of community, and keep their culture fresh and relevant. This is not an attempt to downplay the music industry's economic and cultural clout; rather, it's an accusation that the pop music field, like all commercial popular culture fields, is rife with conflict. It was argued by Chambers (1985). People started buying cassettes, dancing to music rhythm, and living to music beats that showed the great potential of pop only after the commercial power of cassette companies was acknowledged, the convincing attraction of radio was accepted, and the suggestions of music media were started to be observed.

Belonging to a youth subculture primarily expresses a particular musical taste and a shared act of creation centered on this music consumption. Riesman (1950) argues that the importance lies less in the reality or creativity of a group than in its ability to create a group sensation through music. Even if no one is physically present to serve as the listener, a group is formed through the act of consuming music, and a connection is formed between the group members through their shared imagination (Riesman 1950). Hebdige (2004) painted a bleak picture of the economic climate of the 1970s, and he discussed how the punk movement arose due to an ambitious eclecticism that combined seemingly unrelated but ground-breaking musical styles. The punk genre's distinctively rebellious sound undermines the music industry's attempts to keep its listeners in check. Essentially, punk is anti-business

(Gottdiener 2005). According to Hebdige (2004), although this movement is prominent among the music-based youth subcultures and is often described as more significant than commercial pop music as an expression of rebellion, these young people ultimately communicate through consumption movements (Blair 1993).

Hebdige (2004) also alludes to the concept of 'bricolage' to vividly depict how people's clothing styles were influenced by this novel music in an eclectic manner, which in turn helped the punk attitude transform into a fully configured subculture. In contrast to the mainstream functions of media and cultural products, bricolage highlights creative processes armed with subcultural purposes. During the bricolage process, members of different subcultures appropriated the meanings and connotations of a common term or phrase and applied them to their own contexts. Products are combined or altered in ways the manufacturer did not intend, and commercial items are viewed from a new angle to generate contradictory meanings. By illustration, Punks accomplish the end, as mentioned earlier, when they don dog collars as fashion accessories. When taken together, homogeneity and bricolage define the resistance power of subcultures, which collectively oppose things with all conformist and commercial rights and copyright, against coverage by the 'mainstream media' and other dominant social powers (Laughey 2010). By using specific behavioral patterns, speech patterns, musical preferences, etc., subculture youth establishes the symbolic form of contention against both the hegemon and parent cultures. Because the culture industry successfully markets subcultural insurgency for consumer and financial gain, this model predicts that subculture youth will eventually return to ideological harmlessness with commercial partnership from originality and opposition. According to Hebdige (2004), 'youth cultural styles' can begin by putting up a symbolic fight, but these conclude by establishing new values and styles, new products and industries, or reviving the former ones."

Post Subcultural Theory and Its Key Concepts

Despite the deterministic influence of Hebdige (2004) and CCCS on subculture studies, especially the studies conducted in England during the recent years have shaped a sociology convention attempting to demarcate from CCCS approaches. These novel approaches, shaped by a series of concepts including 'post-subculture' (Muggleton 2002), 'post-culture' (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2007), 'beyond subculture' (Huq 2007), started to address the subculture concept especially at a level that is generally ignored by CCCS.

The studies of social theoreticians such as Max Weber, Jean Baudrillard and Michel Maffesoli should be scrutinized critically in order to better understand the progress of post subcultural theory. Postmodernists base the discussion-ground against 'theoretical orthodoxy' of CCCS on these theoreticians and starting from this point of view, instead of subculture concept, they produce new terms including 'neo-tribe', 'lifestyle' and 'scene'. Reluctance of postmodernism about focusing on social structure leads to a personal social grasp (Blackman 2005). Post-cultural thought, in addition to establishing a basis for different anthologies, produces numerous novel analytical tools and conceptual approaches and forms a significant critical approach for many studies conducted on the youth during the past ten years especially. Post-subcultural theory also plays a major role for understanding the function of culture industry to shape the identities and lifestyles of the youth (Bennett 2011).

The emphasis made to subcultural difference is one of the major criticisms of post-subculture theoreticians about Hebdige (2004) and CCCS; hence a critical perspective started to be shaped claiming that CCCS researchers ignore the routine sights of daily life this way. For instance, according to Clarke (1993), since Hebdige (2004) and other CCCS researchers focus on extraordinary sights of subcultures especially in the context of symbols, styles and signs, they actually turn their back to daily life. Whilst Hebdige (2004) upholds that cultures and subcultures should defend themselves against the rough attacks of mass culture, Clarke (1993) suggests that styles of mass culture are intertwined rather than having an antagonist relationship (Gelder 2007).

Angela McRobbie emphasized that despite a line is drawn between pop culture and youth culture in CCCS's studies on subcultures, and youth culture is described as a form of a symbolic class reality, and pop culture is considered as a sign of consumption culture, in reality, these two cultures have integrated by a relationship always progressing (Storey 2000).

Muggleton (2002), on the other hand, thinks that despite subcultural styles that intersect with postmodernist thoughts generally are unstable and multipartite, he thinks that they consist of individual identities within groups containing people from various classes. In other words, postmodernism contributes to the formation of subcultural

identities which are less partial and less collective (Laughey 2006).

The Role of Consumption and Pleasure-Oriented and Media-Based Youth Subcultures and the Production of 'Hegemonic Superstructure'

Consumption ideology seems like one of the alternative substitution strategies. This ideology makes us think that it will solve all of our problems, make us achieve a re-integration situation and return to the happy world of an imaginative field. However, this does not mean that there is no mutual relationship between the subculture youth styles and conformist fashion trends (Storey 2000). According to Willis et al. (1990), consumption is a symbolic movement of creativity. The parallelism between the mainstay of this determination and the originalities of subcultures is the most crucial component approximating the consumption phenomenon and today's subcultures.

The 'consumption subculture' concept produced in this context was used first by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) to define various subcultures interconnected based on a certain product, brand or consumption activity in the society. Such type of subcultures can emerge around music, television shows, movies or brands. The groups called 'brand groups', have the highest level of consumer-commitment.

The members of these subcultures which are formed as media-based generally (for instance, subcultures formed by the fans of Star Trek, X-Files shows) communicate with each other again by means of media (by discussion forums in Internet). Virtual platform makes us think that such type of groups provide a higher level of interaction opportunity to their members in comparison to the real one.

According to Gottdiener (2005), mass culture industries are based on a cultural creation produced by the experiences of users about new inspirations and products. Subcultures respond to ideologies opposing or conciliating mass culture. Use value, interchange value and indication value cycles are intertwined with the relationship between mass-culture industries, some of which could exist in other societies, and subcultures.

We find three separate processes for the transformation of youth subcultures to popular culture within the dominant cultural structures by means of media with the aid of Hebdige (2004). During the first transformation stage, subcultures are accused of threatening the middle class existence and 'marginalized', 'humiliated' and 'stigmatized' by means of media. During this process, media announce subcultures as threats directed to the stability and ethical (or physical) health of society and define them as 'unsocial deviant groups'. The most distinct method used by media is 'acting as an ethics guard' while it includes the cultures other than the dominant culture within the mainstream. This becomes prominent especially when it considers the deviant or antisocial acts (blasphemy, fighting, animal-like behavior and brutality) of subculture groups and shows these deviations to the society (Konyar 2008). For example, Sex Pistols group members cursed constantly in a live show in 1976 and caused a serious ethical panic fueled by English tabloids (Laughey 2010).

The main function of media is to reproduce the major definitions created by the dominant culture. More clearly, organizations including police, who is defined as the sovereign group, communication tools and judicial bodies determine and redefine the improper actions during the redefinition of the actions that were defined as deviant. Thus, it turns into a cycle (Konyar 2011).

In conclusion, media have a fire-fueling function at this stage. The response given by subculture youth who is shown as a target by media is to resort to more deviant acts generally and emphasize their deviant image and labels even more clearly. This time the situation gets worse and more vindictive and harsh sayings take place by means of media. Media play the most crucial role for both strengthening and posting these labels (Laughey 2010).

The most distinctive subcultural reflex of the youth about the reactions reiterated and popularized by media can be explained by 'cool attitude' concept. Being cool is an expression of personal opposition rather than a 'collective political' reaction. This opposition hides itself behind an ironic negligence in place of prioritizing itself by clarion slogans. Cool desires to eliminate traditions, customs, social ethical rules and family connections of the society because these demanding and intervening connections do not leave an adequate empty space for the individuals to discover themselves. Cool is hedonist yet this hedonism arrives to the point of self-destruction frequently. In conclusion, cool personality is an expression of the combination of three main personality characteristics: 'Narcissism, ironic negligence and hedonism' (Pountain and Robbins 2002). The second stage following 'marginalization' and 'labeling' for transformation of subcultures by means of media is defined as 'naturalization' and 'taming' of

subcultures. At this stage, differences disappear. Mental activities of individuals can be distinguished from the material conditions of their existence so easily during this process that this claim surrenders to the phoniness of idealism. Media turn the 'other' to an ideological meaning at this point, and in other words they present unsocial types and noisy children and wild animals and stubborn domestic animals and equate the two at the same time or it transforms the 'other' to a meaningless exoticness, a plain object, sight and 'clown'. In the final stage, these clowns are turned into a commodity ready for marketing. In other words, at this stage, mass culture producers start to decide capitalizing the inclinations of subcultures. Styles and meanings produced by subcultures make up the raw material of the production of mass culture industry (Blair 1993).

The youth who don't have to continue the same type of life style in the society by consuming differently can also feel themselves 'free' by having an opportunity to lead different life styles since they can consume differently. The characteristic of the cultural structure within this new identity established by the middle class who has a cultural capital is consumption and demanding the different ones constantly. These claimed differences or the 'other' cultures are domesticated by culture industries and join the center culture continuously and are set up within a 'multi-cultural' identity. Beyond forming a threat in a new dominant cultural setting, the differences gain a meaning at the point of consenting to a hegemonic structure (Konyar 2011). Therefore, different and marginalized cultures start to be included within the center culture gradually. The 'multicultural' setting that emerged by this relationship-style determined between the dominant culture and the other culture now also refuses the single-centrist and ethnic- centrist literature, culture, history, religion, music, identity and language discernment (Featherstone 1996).

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Youth culture is so important commercially that the industry seeking commodities for marketing goes back in time even if it cannot find anything. Since the purpose of cultural production is to provide the greatest consumer mass for advertisers in exchange of the lowest cost, many culture products need to attract many number of consumers possible at the same time. Therefore, music, fashion and other cultures selected from 1960s, 1970s and 1980s are presented again in different forms. Such that today's youth has an opportunity to experience all of these cultural and artistic trends of the recent past within the same time frame. From this point forth, many more and many varieties of products must be generated and smaller consumer groups must be formed for each content item in the planning regarding subcultures. Today's subcultures are formed with a structure to aid the individuals to find the content most appropriate to their desires and needs and therefore to satisfy them both aesthetically and in terms of other senses and to improve the relationship of cultures with life.

Adorno's 'pseudo-personality' concept presents a sensible frame for the analysis of youth subcultures. In this context, it is a pseudo-personality expressing an individual, who has turned into a desire object and is beyond phrasing himself/herself as a social and cultural being, as he/she expresses his/her difference only by making a selection from a product range as if offering a massive variety. In other words, according to Adorno, whilst everything that seems spontaneous is in fact planned with a machine-like outright precision, today's individual can exist in the social arena only by his/her consumer identity.

As the innovative trends created by subcultures are discovered and marketed by mass industries, they are torn from those who show a deep level. At this point, it can be thought that subculture music can reverse this process by rediscovering and re-associating pop music. For instance, if it was possible to go backward from today's reggae perception to Bob Marley's reggae perception, Rastafaryan application, which explains all expressional symbols of reggae songs, can be reached. However, despite a significant section of today's youth can distinguish reggae from today's pop songs, almost none of them has knowledge about Rastafaryan culture or expressional symbols that are formed as a result of the connection of this culture with reggae songs. Internet is a crucial setting for innovative, marginal and deviant subcultures lacking economic resources and surrounded by political rivalry. However, it must be remembered that Internet can only convey symbolic culture. Moreover, as Internet progresses to become a mass media, it will be only a dream to think that this setting will remain out of the power structures.

Today, punk is considered as a part of pop culture generally. However, nostalgic term on its own cannot

explain that punk continues to exist as a popular global subculture. Writer and musician John Robb stated that punk is not merely a musical style and emphasized that this music is also an expression of a critical attitude towards an opponent ideal with a global characteristic. According to him, an 11-year old child listening to Green Day indicates that a door is opened to the opponent culture even if it is superficial (Lynskey 2009). This example can be resembled to opening Pandoras Box and can be interpreted that youth subcultures have currently a significant potential beyond transcending the apparent.

Figure 1. A frame from the comic book titled 'Persepolis' written by Marjene Satrapi, turned into a screenplay in 2007 and based on the experiences of a 9-year old girl after Iran Islamic Revolution.

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