Shared enemies, shared friends: the relational character of subcultural ideology in the case of Czech punks and skinheads

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In an attempt to discuss punk subculture, it is impossible to treat it as an isolated phenomenon. Punk subculture in Czechoslovakia began to form before 1989 in a society substantially isolated from the milieu where punk was born. Punk was imported to a society significantly determined by a political system which called itself socialistic, claimed allegiance to the idea of communism and whose primary characteristics, regardless of the name or ideas, were above all isolation, repression, fear and conformity as the only way of "decent" living. In the same totalitarian regime, right in the middle of a slowly establishing punk subculture emerged skinhead subculture.

The political system was to change soon, but skinheads had become loyal fellow travellers of punks even up to today. It even seems that the relationship of these subcultures, while taking different forms, became one of the key driving forces which kept both subcultures alive. Similar to the situation all over the world, punk subculture underwent many changes, being in different times inspired by various models, emphasising or suppressing various elements of its original ideas and creating new ones.

In discussing punk subculture, we will consider all these aforementioned aspects. We claim that the character of the dominant society significantly influences the character of subcultures, because the subcultural identity of their members is constructed in relation to the mainstream. Elements of mainstream culture, which are seen by subculture members as symbolising key flaws of dominant society, are reinterpreted or even negated. This is how the

constitutive elements of subcultures are formulated and the extent of their internalisation determines the authenticity of members of respective subcultures.

To grasp this process analytically, we will try to conceptualise the subcultural ideology as a kind of counterpoise of subcultural style, which is the other aspect that shapes subcultural identity. At the same time, we assert that when subcultural identity is for some time formed in the relation to the other subculture, it creates a tradition to which all actors from both subcultures have to relate either willingly or unwillingly. And we also maintain that as well as in the case of other kinds of collectivities, it is relevant to focus on processes of cultural diffusion, reinterpretation and even acculturation through the various practices of actors as members of a subculture.

In this chapter, we will try to analyse the punk subculture in Czechoslovakia and in the Czech (and in part also Slovak) Republic respectively in accordance with these three perspectives. According to Norwegian anthropologist T. E. Eriksen, "[m]usical discourses are fields where identities are shaped, and for this reason, the global flow of popular music can be a fruitful field for studying contemporary cultural dynamics..." (Eriksen 2010: 299). By the example of punk subculture acculturating in changing society we would like to analyse some social phenomena and processes that are characteristic at least for the part of Euro-American culture usually designated as post-socialistic. These processes, as we would like to show, are better understood by analysing punk subculture from its beginnings in the relation to skinhead subculture, or more precisely by analysing both subcultures alongside each other. The reason for this decision and at the same the motto of our chapter can be encapsulated by these two quotes:

I remember one accidental meeting of a few punks and skinheads in the early nineties. I was sitting there wondering who was sitting in front of me, then acknowledging one

of skinheads: "Hey, I know you. I kicked you in the head at the Výstaviště[1]*... Sorry for that." And he answered: "Don't mention it, if you were lying on the ground, I would have kicked you too." And then both of us continued conversations with their own friends... (Cook, male, 42)*

As punks won't die out, so the skinheads. (from the interview with Buqičák, skinhead, in Trachta 2011: 126)

Subcultures as collectivities to start with

To conceptualise the type of collectivities represented by punks and skinheads, we will use the concept of subcultures. According to the anthropological concept of culture in its broadest sense, we see subcultures as groups characterised by a specific set of norms, values, behavioural patterns and lifestyles which distinguish itself from a dominant society. Even though the members of subcultures see themselves and are seen by dominant society as different, at the same time they are not completely excluded from dominant society and they actively participate to some (lesser or greater) extent in its functioning (see Gelder 2005).

More than a manifestation of class resistance, as subcultures had been perceived by CCCS scholars (Hall and Jefferson 1993, Hebdige 1979; etc.), we understand subcultures as a manifestation of a "free" choice of an alternative to the mainstream (Thornton 1996, Muggleton 2000). Even though this choice might be influenced by structural limitations, it is not strictly determined by it. At the same time, we see subcultures as collectivities, which do not have strict boundaries, but are to a certain extent fluid and ever changing (Bennett 1999,

[1] First huge street fight between punks and skinheads at the anarchist demonstration against the Jubilee exhibition which took place at Prague Výstaviště in May 30, 1991.

Muggleton 2000).

We see these formations primarily neither as youth subcultures, i.e. as a mere manifestation of adolescent individuals, nor as music subcultures, i.e. collectivities based primarily on shared music. Drawing on Hodkinson's understanding of goth (Hodkinson 2002), we claim that music is just one of shared elements, but neither the only one nor the most important one.

Based on these assertions and drawing on various sources that conceptualise formations we designate as subcultures, we will base our analysis on four analytical concepts – subcultural identity, subcultural capital, subcultural style and subcultural ideology.

Subcultural identity (e.g. Božilović 2010) we define as one of the forms of social identities, founded on perceived affiliation to subculture as one possible social formation within a dominant society. In accordance with the constructivist paradigm, we understand social identities as multiple and constructed, i.e. relational, situational, negotiated and performative (Jenkins 2008, Eriksen 2007). Because we perceive other concepts (capital, style and ideology) as contributing to the shape of subcultural identity, we will use this concept as primary analytical tool. But it is the combination and the extent of importance of the other mentioned concepts we would like to emphasise in this chapter.

Drawing on Sarah Thornton's application of works of Pierre Bourdieu (1984), we will understand subcultural capital as an objectified and embodied means of "confer[ing] status on its owner in the eyes of relevant beholder" (Thornton 1997: 202). Although Thornton defines subcultural capital in terms of objectification and embodiment, it is important to point out that it may also take an institutionalised form. As Slačálek (2011) argues in his fieldwork on Czech ravers, the institutionalised form of subcultural capital is established by affiliation with or membership of particular sound system. Subcultural capital we thus define as objectified, embodied or institutionalised means of gaining prestige in the eyes of members of a particular

subculture. We assert that various forms of subcultural capital, i.e. what is appreciated in particular subculture, have an important influence on the subcultural identity of its members.

Based on this perspective, it is important to consider to what extent is either subcultural style or subcultural ideology emphasised in the establishing of subcultural capital of particular subculture. In accordance with classical definition of subcultural style based on the works of CCCS scholars (see e.g. Clarke 2003, Hebdige 1979), we understand it as comprised of three components:

> a 'Image', appearance composed of costume, accessories such as hair-style, jewellery and artefacts,
>
> b 'Demeanour', made up of expression, gait and posture. Roughly this is what the actors wear and how they wear it.
>
> c 'Argot', a special vocabulary and how it is delivered. (Brake 1987: 12)

Unlike CCCS scholars, we do not see subcultural style primarily as a means of manifestation of class resistance, but more as matter of taste. Which might be, on the one hand, influenced by habitus and thus also by the structural aspects of society (Bourdieu 1984), but which is, on the other hand, also exposed to "free" choice (Thornton 1996, Muggleton 2000). According to Polhemus (1998) the "free" choice is a enabled by the "supermarket of styles", as he designated the situation of late modernity, in which style might be separated from corresponding identities.

The last concept which we nonetheless regard as crucial for our analysis is subcultural ideology. Although ideology is relatively frequently used in scholarly work dealing with subcultures (e.g. Hebdige 1979, Thornton 1997, Hodkinson 2002), it is also often used non-reflexively (e.g. Jancovich 2002, Winge 2003). Because different traditions use this concept

differently (see e.g. Geuss 1982, Thompson 1990), it is of utmost importance to state explicitly how we understand this concept.

The concept of ideology in discourse of subcultural studies

The concept of ideology is usually understood in two different meanings. The first one, labelled *critical* by Thomson (1990), is based on the Marxist interpretation of society. In the Marxist paradigm, ideology is cohesive complex of ideas, which serves the elites as a tool for maintaining hegemony over the rest of society. At the same time, it is also seen as an unconscious or as false consciousness. In this respect "[i]deology represents the 'imaginary' relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althuser cit. in Brake 1987: 4). On this concept of ideology were based works of CCCS scholars corresponding with the understanding of subcultures as a resistance to the hegemony of dominant society which is exercised through the dominant ideology (see Hebdige 1979, Hall and Jefferson 1993).

They do not give any regard to the ideology of subcultures or subcultural ideology other than with regard to the subculture's ideological challenge to the dominant culture's hegemony (Hebdige 1979). Subcultural ideology *per se* is taken as unimportant.

Subcultural ideology thus did not come into focus until the work of scholars of the Manchester School. The above mentioned Sarah Thornton used concept of subcultural ideology as a "means by which youth imagine their own and other social groups, assert their distinctive character and affirm that they are not anonymous members of and undifferentiated mass." (Thornton 1997: 201). Nonetheless, she still saw it in a critical perspective as a tool by which it is possible to achieve particular goals. For Thornton, "[t]hey are not innocent accounts of the way things really are, but ideologies which fulfil the specific cultural agendas of their beholders." (Thornton 1997: 201). Other contemporary scholars (e.g. Hodkinson

2005) use this concept similarly.

The second concept of ideology, which stands in opposition to the first one, is the ideology in the *neutral* sense (Thompson 1990, also Geuss 1982). It is seen as a complex of ideas which influence and guide goals, expectations and actions of individuals, but without automatically postulating that it has to be used as a tool of hegemony. Ideology in this sense, which proceeds from works of French philosophers of the turn of 18th and 19th century, was elaborated in an anthropological tradition that perceives ideology primarily as an analytic tool, not a tool of hegemony (Geuss 1982). Ideology is thus seen either as a one element of a sociocultural system (alongside with social structure and technologically-economical means) (Service 1966, Sahlins 1968) or as a distinctive cultural system, i.e. a complex of shared meanings externalised though the use of symbols (Geertz 1973). Both perspectives also accept Mannheim's claim that ideology is "the outlook inevitably associated with a given historical and social situation" (Mannheim 1936: 111).

In the field of subculture studies, there is some parallel to the concept of ideology in a neutral sense in Albert K. Cohen's *frame of reference* (Cohen 1997: 51), which he sees as "the glass consist[ing] of interests, preconceptions, stereotypes and values" through which each individual perceives the social world. Since Cohen understands human agency in a psychosocial perspective as the incessant solving of emerging problems and coping with induced stress, he sees subcultures as established on the basis of affiliation of individuals with the same problems who cope with the same stress by the same means, i.e. individuals with a similar *frame of reference* (Cohen 1997).

Drawing on works of these scholars, we understand subcultural ideology as a historically and culturally determined shared system of values which members of a subculture adhere to, norms which they approve and attitudes which they express as members of particular subculture (see Heřmanský and Novotná 2011).

As might be seen, we draw in the first place on the neutral conception of ideology based on anthropological perspectives while accentuating Mannheim's stress on the historical and cultural determination of ideology.

Similarly to Cohen's usage of *frame of reference*, we see subcultural ideology as one (though not the only one) element which affiliates members of a particular subculture. In contradiction to Cohen's understanding, we do not perceive subcultural ideology as based on "age, sex, racial and ethnic category, (...) occupation, economic stratus and social class" (Cohen 1997: 52). We believe that subcultural ideology is based particularly on personal choice, which might be limited by habitus of each individual, as Bourdieu (1984) proposes, but it is not determined by it alone (Polhemus 1998, see Muggleton 2000). This is the reason why contemporary (post)subcultures are not based on class, but are rather composed of individuals with notably diverse habitus.

Even though we do not perceive ideology primarily as a tool of hegemony, we do not contest the assertion that every ideology and, thus also a subcultural one, could (but not necessarily must) serve to particular goals as Thornton asserts (Thornton 1997: 201). However, what is it used for is a quite a different question from what is its nature, how it is created and in relation to whom or what. We see these questions as equally important and, for our goal, even more than the question of its use.

In accordance with Thornton (1997: 201), we thus assert that ideology is always formed in dialogue of one's own and others' social formations. We argue that it is possible to pursue its formation in three mutually interconnected, but analytically distinguishable levels: (a) in relation to dominant society, i.e. how actors perceive dominant society; (b) in relation to one's own subculture, i.e. how actors perceive their own subculture; (c) in relation to other subcultures, i.e. how actors perceive other subcultures. These three levels are in mutual dialogue that constitutes the means by which subcultural ideology is constructed, negotiated

and reproduced. Depending on the historical and cultural situation, any of these levels might serve a major role in constituting a particular subcultural ideology.

Research methodology

To uncover the effects of all these levels, we based our interpretation on a relatively variable body of data. Firstly we used data from our own research in a form of narrative interviews with early Czech punks and also observations and informal interviews (although not quite systematical). Secondly, we used data from qualitative research of our students (Klozarová 2004, Dvořák 2006, Šarochová 2011, Novotný 2011), which we re-analysed. Thirdly we used publicly accessible sources, both visual and written. Based on all of these data, we distinguished four types of the formation of both subcultures which to some extent corresponded with historical development of both subcultures in Czechoslovakia and subsequently in the Czech and Slovak Republics. Therefore, we will structure our text diachronically, as a kind of biographical narrative, divided roughly into four periods: (1) before 1989, (2) early nineties, (3) late nineties, and (4) after 2000. We are well aware that these periods are necessarily generalised because there were local differences. This is the reason why we mean them only as an analytical tool and not as a description of the history of the relation of both subcultures. However, if we focus our analysis on what principles were at the given time constructing the identity of members of either of these subcultures and how the subcultural capital of these subcultures were formed and recognised and if we understand subcultural capital as build upon subcultural style and subcultural ideology (as we defined it earlier), we see this categorisation analytically useful. It enables us to analyse which external and internal factors influenced the form of both. We will emphasise primarily those phenomena and processes which enables us to identify key characteristics of both subcultures

at the given period. Thus, we will concentrate on the following questions: (1) what kind of subcultural ideology is constructed in each period; (2) to what extent is it important to the subcultural identity of members of either subculture; and (3) how is subcultural ideology constructed in relation to the mainstream, in relation to members of their own subculture and in relation to members of other subcultures (mainly one to the other and *vice versa*).

Before we move to our analysis, it is also important to add one methodological note. We will analyse punk and skinhead subculture in a dominant society which in the span of time we are dealing with underwent itself major changes. November 17, 1989 is the milestone marking the fundamental change of the political regime of Czechoslovakia. We will call the regime which ruled before this date as "communist", even though we are well aware that this label is by standards of political science inadequate and even confusing to some extent. The term "communist" is a native (emic) term of the non-democratic totalitarian system of Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989 and will be used as a kind of metaphor. January 1, 1993 is the date of the division of Czechoslovakia and the birth of the independent states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. Even though Czech and Slovak subcultural worlds were always very close to each other our research is valid primarily for the "Czech" region.

The birth of punks and skinheads in Czechoslovakia

The shape of both subcultures was in their beginnings markedly influenced by the political establishment or, more precisely, by its repressive tools. Information from the West spread to communist Czechoslovakia with great difficulty. Whereas it was relatively possible, even though usually illegally, to obtain Western music (by the means of foreign radio broadcasts, kerb markets of LPs, rarely also radio and later even TV programmes tolerated by Czechoslovakia government), other types of information breached the "Iron Curtain" only

sporadically and fragmentarily without proper contexts. The roots of punk in Czechoslovakia, even though dating to the late seventies, were thus in a form of musical inspiration of some experimental musicians and music publicists. It was more an intellectual than working class. With the spread of punk rock to a wider audience consisting primarily of youth, the visual attributes of punks started to spread as well. The real boom of punk rock bands took place during the 1980s. It is in this time when we could start to talk about punk subculture in the sense of a social formation consisting not only of musicians, but also of their audience sharing some kind of punk identity.

The character of punk subculture is nonetheless formed by the character of dominant society, i.e. the totalitarian repressive state. The communist regime in fact isolated the citizens of Czechoslovakia from surrounding world, be it physically (it was impossible to travel to the West) or ideologically (though censorship, jamming foreign radio broadcasts or limited possibilities to learn foreign languages other than Russian). It also strongly repressed any manifestation of individuality both of thinking and of appearance[2]. To be different meant to resign on any career advancement at least, usually also the impossibility to work in a desired profession or to study at university or even high-school. It also might lead to oppressive interventions from the part of the police or the judiciary (from frequent and gratuitous ID checks by police to detention and even imprisonment).

This is the reason why the spreading punk subculture did not have anything in common with its beginnings in Czechoslovakia except for keen interest in the same musical genre. These punks were usually working-class youth from vocational schools with their only prospect within the communist regime to work in factory. These were the youth that did not mind to remaining on the margin of society. This kind of social structure had a considerable

[2] For accounts of repression of long-haired people called *vlasatci* or *máničky* see Pospíšil and Blažek (2010).

effect on what was meant by punk at the time. Not only were the punks not intellectuals, but they also usually did not speak English, which meant that they were not able to understand the lyrics of their foreign idols , let alone consistently inquire into its ideology: "*[w]e were weirdoes among other punks, because we translated the lyrics and searched the fundamental wisdom of life in them. They saw us as nutcases for always concerning ourselves with it [ideology], because for them it did not matter.*" (Cook, male, 42).

Contrary to subcultural ideology, the image of the Western punks was obvious and understandable for their Czech "imitators". However, artefacts which may serve to assemble punk design were as inaccessible as anything else from the West. This led to massive development of the D.I.Y. principle and Czechoslovakia punks adapted available clothes and accessories to their notions of punk style acquired through fragmentary information gathered mostly from western media or from LP covers. Thus they e.g. dyed white medical trousers or airbrushed Czech military boots (called *kanady*) so it resembled Western models.

Creating a punk outfit was a considerable personal investment (in regard to imagination, time and creativity), but also considerable risk, because it was the punk image that irritated the official communist authorities the most.

The striking visual difference from the mainstream which epitomised the denial of "positive" social values (i.e. communist regime ideology) and which was seen as an import from "enemy" West was one of key reasons why the communist regime ascribe to punks the role of the opposition and subjected it to repressive coercion (for details see Vaněk 2010). This happened despite the fact that conscious and intentional political opposition applied only to small part of punk subculture. At least in the second half of eighties, punk was definitely stigmatised as an enemy of communist regime.

All these aspects took part in shaping of punk subculture of the eighties. Subcultural capital and also subcultural identity were based on the subcultural style, which mainly

through the means of image manifested disinterest in mainstream values and disdain for the normative system of dominant society. The subcultural ideology of punks from the West reached communist Czechoslovakia in fragmented shards and without proper context which led to its misinterpretation[3]. It was reduced to clearly intelligible symbols like the Circle A: *"A in a circle, it was intelligible to everyone. Anarchy means chaos, everyone understands that, they knew it even from school."* (Cook, male, 42). While this fairly simple ideology was shared rather intuitively, it was more and more reinterpreted as a resistance to communist regime or even communism *per se*, because it was the communism who in their eyes represented dominant society. But that was the reason why it became even more appealing to some people*: "We wanted to be different, and this was the most different thing we knew."* (Tuner, male, 43).

From this milieu also emerged the first skinheads. When they first appeared in the eighties, they were just small and unique part of punk subculture (Zástěra 1991). Similarly to punks, skinheads also wanted primarily to provoke contemporary society and at the same time be different than punks.

> *I [punk] have been going from Jilemnice to Hradec [Králové]. There lived the Duben cousins [...] and five of us always spend a weekend together. And one day, one of Duben appeared in a bomber jacket. I was asking him: 'What is the jacket about?' And he answered: 'Just a normal jacket.' And then we all knew that he was a skinhead now. But we continued to spend the time together..." (Cook, male, 42).*

[3] Similar trend happen in sixties when *vlasatci* (*máničky*) were inspired by various visual attributes of ideologically different subcultures of *mods*, *rockers*, *beatníků* a *hippies* (Blažek and Pospíšil 2010).

Both subcultures were at first almost identical. The subcultural identity of its members was built primarily on subcultural style which was distinctly different from contemporary dominant society. It was manifested not just in image but also in preference of socially unacceptable music, because members of both subcultures listen both to punk rock and Oi!. Even though members of both subcultures declined to join the ranks of standard social structures of dominant society, they were practically ignorant to subcultural ideology in the form that took shape in the West: "*[I]t was not uncommon for someone to listen to The Exploited, The Clash or The Sex Pistols, and at the same time be racist and not see it as a problem.*" (Scribe, male, 41).

Punks were at that time highly critical of the Roma and some punk rock bands even had racist lyrics: *"Šantrůček from Šanov*[4] *sang at that time: 'We will tip the dustbins over and will go after the blacks..."* (Worker, male, 36) (Dvořák 2006, apendix, interview no. 6). Similarly, the Slovak punk rock band *Zóna A* criticised Roma in a song *Cigánský problém* (*Gypsy Issue*) for their criminality, school truancy and abuse of social and health care. Subcultural ideology was not formed on the basis of foreign inspirations (and if so, just remotely[5]), but mainly in the relation to the situation in contemporary Czech dominant society. It was based on the differentiation from the communist regime and its establishment. And it was this position of resistance which was also enforced on them by the communist regime that created a key foundation for interconnection of both subcultures: *"The swastika as a symbol of resistance against communism was shared by all of us [punks and skinheads]"* (Scribe, male, 41).

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[4] *Šanov 1* was a Czech punk rock band founded in 1987 in town Teplice.

[5] An important source of inspiration was e.g. a paper in a magazine *100+1 Zahraničních zajímavostí* (100+1 Foreign Curiosities) called *Holohlavci, to jsou, pane chlapci* (Baldheads are really great guys) (issue 18, 1986).

It is also important to emphasise the small scope and interconnectedness of these subcultures generating strong interpersonal relations between members of both subcultures which dampened potential conflicts.

> *At that time, it was the wave of Oi! and punk together... we were going to gigs of Orlík... and there were a mixture of punks, máničky and skinheads together [...] This kind of alliance between punks and skinheads lasted just a little while.* (Leisure, male, 38) (Dvořák 2006, apendix, interview no. 3)

If you lose an enemy, you have to find a new one...

The fall of communist regime in 1989 constituted an important change for both subcultures. Firstly, both subcultures lost their mutual enemy. Secondly, the loosened social atmosphere brought an increased tolerance to any difference, because the normative system of Czechoslovak society had to be yet recreated and at least for some time dominant society was open to various types of activities, even deviant ones. Thirdly, the fall of "Iron Curtain" enabled information from West to flow freely into Czechoslovakia.

The loss of opportunity to differentiate themselves from the communist regime led both subcultures to search for another option on which their members could base subcultural identity. In the early nineties, the dominant society in deep transformation did not provide a clear and intelligible ideology from which members of subcultures can differentiate themselves and as such was unable to serve as a distinguishing principle. Both subcultures thus turned to inspirations from West, though to the most clear and explicit ones. They embraced a specific subcultural ideologies, but not the ones that was traditionally connected with their subculture (i.e. that gave the rise to these subcultures in the West), but the

contemporary ones, which differed substantially. Skinheads were inspired primarily by German and British skinheads and relatively quickly begin to accept ultra-right wing thoughts. In the punk subculture, there quickly became prevalent the section, quite marginal until then, which since the later eighties started to flirt with anarchism. This section of punks founded an organised anarchist movement[6] and organised various protest meetings and demonstrations usually against racism, fascism or compulsory military service, but also against visit of contemporary US President George W. Bush in Czechoslovakia (12.1.1991) or openings of new Mc Donald's restaurants. They found support mainly in anarchists from Italy, Germany and Spain.

Politicisation of both subcultures resulted in open violent conflicts between punks and skinheads, in the beginning based on different political ideology (radical left versus radical right), but gradually became conflicts based on (presumed) antagonism of both subcultures *per se*. If a punk regarded racism as the most severe danger then the skinhead was its personification. If a skinhead fought against anarchism then he had to battle punks. These interpretations were supported also by media representations of both subcultures reproduced throughout the nineties, which in some moments took even the form of moral panics (see e.g. Cohen 2002, Goode and Ben-Yehuda 2009). Skinheads were represented by media exclusively as neo-fascist and neo-Nazis, punks as anarchists, deviants and junkies. Sections of both subcultures that did not side with any of these currents became marginal both in the eyes of dominant society and subcultures as well.

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[6] The relatively strong tradition of Anarchism in Czech lands of first half of twenties century was almost totally suppressed in the communist regime. Revitalisation of anarchism happened in the eighties to great extent due to the spread of punk subculture. One of the first organisation was *Československé anarachistické sdružení* (Czech anarchist association) founded in October 1989.

The crucial role in relations between both subcultures played the skinhead band *Orlík*, which managed to achieve commercial success in the mainstream media. Thanks to its popularity, the skinheads became highly popular among the masses. In the streets of Czech cities, and especially in housing estates, there emerged tens of groups of so-called "kinder skins", thirteen to fifteen years old boys, who listened to *Orlík* and adopted the message of their "patriot" songs. Punk did not become popular to this extent, which led to a considerable inequality in numbers of members of both subcultures.

An antagonism of both politicised subcultures was reproduced, for instance, in the lyrics of aforementioned skinhead band Orlík as in their song *Až nás bude víc (When there will be more of us)* in which they sang "Hey cock-a-doodle-doo, beware of oi, don't go into streets, be afraid of skinheads..."[7] (Ašenbrener and et. al. 2011). Punks thus became hunted animals for skinheads and they in turn saw skinheads as their greatest enemy.

Mutual exclusion was also supported by fact that younger members (e.g. the aforementioned "kinder skins") did not remember the affiliation of both subcultures in the past and growth of numbers did not allow for maintaining relations between both subcultures on a personal level. The line between new members of both subcultures was clearly demarcated and collectively lived as the generation of punks and skinheads from the era of communist regime were more or less forced to adapt to this new situation. However, they were also able to cross it.

> *I [punk] was with my brother in Labour Day [demonstration] which we have been organising and the skins were ready to assault us. We were standing there, groups of skins and punks were taunting each other, cops everywhere. And beside me appeared*

[7] 'Kykyrý' (in Czech the sound of a rooster) refers to similarity between rooster's comb and mohawk hairstyle.

the Procházka brothers[8], which I knew from the past, so we began to chat. And then the cops came shouting "get away from each other". And all of us: "Why? It is our business, what we are doing", because we all have an aversion to cops which we shared from times before [Velvet] revolution. So we argued with them [cops] for a while, and then we decided to fuck it off and all [four] of us went to the pub together. (Cook, male, 42)

Whereas before 1989, punks and skinheads were associated with each other by simplified subcultural ideology based on resistance to the dominant society represented by the communist regime and ignorance of original subcultural ideology of these subcultures, after 1989 it was quite different. Because they were eager catch up with subcultures from the West at least the major part of both subcultures became politicised and radicalised with persisting ignorance of the original roots of both subcultures which resulted in a clear demarcation between them.

The more superficial was the knowledge of "traditional" subcultural ideology, the more members of both subcultures distinguished between each other. This mutual antagonism was the basis for the reinterpretation of subcultural ideology shared within each subculture regardless its particular offshoot or currents.

In contrast to previous period, the subcultural ideology does not form primarily in opposition to dominant society, but in opposition to the other subculture and its ideology. An authentic punk or skinhead was not just an individual who shared these borders between subcultures, but the one who strengthened them. Subcultural style just served to express this ideology because, as a form of subcultural capital, it was now substituted by *practice* meaning an active drawing of attention to the dangers that the other subculture presents or even

[8] The Procházka brothers were important figures of skinhead subculture in early nineties.

physical attacks on it.

Enemies within own ranks and rediscovered lost friends

In the course of nineties, the transforming society of Czechoslovakia (which became the Czech Republic in 1993) came close to the Western societies in terms of its structure, values and normative systems. The most important change in relation to subcultures became the transformation of various currents of thought into legitimate political formations acting on the political stage. At the same time, conformity had started to be seen in dominant society as an appreciated value. In such a situation, political formations striving for success were rather weakened then strengthen by their actual or even past associations with non-conformity, which was personified by both subcultures. This was one of the reasons why political interests vanished from these subcultural formations. It was mainly representatives of ultra-right wing currents, who tried hard to penetrate politics on high level and who were hindered in their endeavours by its association with skinheads and their reputation of neo-Nazist, racist and violent brutes.

With some hyperbole it is possible to say that both subcultures advanced from phase of adolescence to the phase of early adulthood, in which they cannot be contented with the subcultural ideology based on mutual differentiation from each other[9]. Members of both subcultures reacted to media induced moral panics, which greatly distorted the representation of both subcultures as well. Because of this, there was growing emphasis within both subcultures on subcultural ideology based on its traditional form, i.e. the roots of particular subculture. Actors showed more interest in the history of their subculture and discussions

[9] The metaphor of growing old is not accidental. This process is associated with the process of members of both subcultures growing old.

about its character in Czechoslovakia (and later Czech and Slovak Republics) compared to its character in the West turned up in various zines.

Polarisation of particular ideological currents thus appeared within both subcultures. A significant part of anarchist punks gradually split from the punk subculture and remained anarchists without need for manifestation of subcultural identity. The main role in punk subculture regained actors who identified with punk subculture *per se* instead of active anarchism.

Similar trend became even more important among skinheads. As early as the early nineties, radicalisation and politicisation became oriented in two directions: the first one, inspired by the West, headed towards neo-Nazism, the second one drew from Czech history and formed itself as a unique Czech offshoot of skinheads, called *kališníci* (the Calixtines). Although *kališníci* were radical nationalist, they were also strictly against neo-Nazism[10].

While mass media still represented skinheads primarily as neo-Nazis and racists, there was growing feeling among some skinheads that their skinhead identity was "stolen" from them by ultra-right wing supporters. These skinheads began searching for skinhead roots (seen in the British working class youth of sixties), rejected being identified with extreme wings of political spectrum and formed depoliticised or alternative currents of skinhead subculture. Nevertheless, these currents differed from each other according to whether they put the accent on subcultural style or subcultural ideology.

Anti-fascist skinheads, mainly SHARP (*Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice*) but also

[10] *Kališníci* were formed from audience of aforementioned band Orlík. The key aspect of their ideology was legacy of Hussite movement of the fifteenth century seen as a greatest period of Czech history symbolising national pride. Their subcultural ideology was based on radical patriotism and nationalism, emphasis of traditional values like family and aversion against anything non-Czech.

RASH (*Red and Anarchy Skinheads),* continued in the subcultural ideology of the original (British) skinheads. On the other hand the ultra-right wing, represented by *White Power Skinheads* (particularly by members of organisations *Bohemia Hammerskins* and later *Blood and Honour Bohemia*) also grew both in strength and numbers. This meant that the skinhead subculture was becoming greatly diverse, while former *kališníci* were filling ranks of both these groups and simultaneously their section tried to form a patriotic, so called "traditional" skinheads who rank themselves among apolitical skinhead currents.

Even in this case, subcultural ideology projected itself into subcultural style. While in early nineties skinheads used their subcultural style primarily to distinguish themselves from punks, later they began to put more accent to distinguish themselves from other currents within skinhead subculture. With the differentiation of skinhead subculture, initially undifferentiated skinhead style consisting of a bomber jacket, army boots and jeans or army camouflaged trousers, in which subcultural ideology was manifested almost exclusively by patches with selected symbols also begin to differentiate. Those, who consider themselves to be apolitical skinheads, wore more frequently clothes of "traditional" "skinheads brands" such as Fred Perry, Lonsdale, Everlast and Ben Sherman, while the ultra-right wing skinheads wore their own brand Thor Steinar. Redskins manifested their subcultural identity by wearing red braces or red bootlaces. Similarly, punks diversified their style according to their preferred subgenres of punk rock[11]. This diversification was also enabled by the emergence of clothes shops specialising in street wear.

The most consistent use of style as a means of differentiating between both subcultures appeared among these actors, who saw a solution in suppressing the subcultural ideology of both subcultures referring to the common historical roots in both the 1970s in Great Britain,

[11] E.g. punk 77 and punk 82, for detail accounts of differences in style among punks see Klozarová (2004).

and the 1980s in Czechoslovakia. The result was blending of skinhead and punk style called "skunx", which might be seen as a hybrid subculture. Both punks (see Klozarová 2004) and skinheads (see Dvořák 2006) can became skunx without changing their subcultural identity. This phenomenon cannot be interpreted just as a result of the commodification of elements of both subcultural styles, even if most of street wear shops offered components of both styles and they were frequented both by members of subcultures and dominant society. Making use of components of "opposite" style can be interpreted as an intentional declaration of sympathies with the other subculture, an apolitical stance and even anti-fascism among skinheads or recognition of apolitical stance of some skinheads among punks.

In the beginning, these changes were accepted with considerable hesitation.

> *Punks though you were a Nazi, gypsies as well, Nazis called you left-wing, so for the classic [traditional] skinhead the situation was always worse than for a punk. Because punk identity was clear and intelligible, but that of the classic [traditional] skinhead was not.* (Merchant, male, 38). (Dvořák 2006, apendix, interview no. 4)

Yet these diversifying trends gradually broke through within both subcultures. Due to this phenomena, both subcultures became closer once again but not on the basis of ignorance of traditional (original) subcultural ideology, but on the contrary because of its thorough knowledge. This knowledge is then either emphasised (among apolitical skinheads) or demonstratively suppressed by a blending of both styles (among skunx). In-depth knowledge of subcultural ideology of various currents within both subcultures is then recognised as a form of subcultural capital which creates a basis for diversification and also hierarchy of both subcultures. To be a skinhead or punk did not demand to following a current trend of subcultural style but in to choosing to follow this or that ideology. Subcultural identity is thus

constructed on the basis of acceptance of particular subcultural ideology, not a particular style. Ideology among skinheads is then primarily constituted on the basis of differences among these currents, i.e. in relation to their own subculture and not in relation to dominant society or another subculture.

After the subculture... or maybe not yet?

The last mean of construction of subcultural identity that we have identified is also determined by the character of the dominant society in which subcultures constitute themselves. The most important factor in this respect is that all local cultures seem to be characterised by blurred borders and are almost impossible to be easily demarcated[12]. It is possible to think either of socially determined translocal cultures or of locally modified versions of global culture[13]. It is the intensification of globalisation that influences the character of contemporary punk and skinhead subcultures.

The main currents of both subcultures are becoming gradually more and more vacant both ideologically and stylistically, which might be exemplified by punk subculture. Commodification of punk brought about the incorporation of punk style into the mainstream. Due to pop idols such as Madonna, who in certain moment of her career appropriated elements of punk style, and the mainstream peak of pop-punk bands like Green Day or Blink 182, punk became popular among the masses. But it was punk in its pop punk form, which meant without a clear and distinguishable ideology and style. Due to this, the punk subcultural style lost most of its provocative potential for prospective members of the punk subculture

[12] For anthropological critique of concept of culture see e.g. Eriksen (2007) or Abu-Lughod (1991).

[13] For concept of glocality see e.g. Appadurai (1996) or Gupta and Ferguson (1992).

and as an opposition to mainstream it thus became uninteresting. The provocative role was taken over by other subcultures which emerged in Czech society such as *ravers* (called *teknaři* in Czech), *hip-hopers* or *emos*. These subcultures established themselves in Czech society which was already globalised and they were thus able to efficiently make use of its tools like e.g. the emo who uses the virtual space as their primary medium (Heřmanský and Novotná 2011, see also Holíková 2012). The commodification and ideological vacancy of punk thus led many original punks to *ravers* (freetekno), which were probably seen as an alternative facilitating autonomy, freedom and escape from "the system" (i.e. establishment).

However, the structure of skinheads is also changing. There is an observable decrease in numbers of skinheads declaring anti-racist attitudes (especially SHARPs) in favour to apolitical skinheads. It seems that due to the vanishing representation of skinheads as neo-Nazis, be it because of the withdrawal of actors sharing neo-Nazis ideology from this subculture or because of this representation was not attractive for media anymore, skinheads did not feel the need to declare their identity of active anti-racists (the one of SHARP), but they embrace identity of the traditional skinhead instead (see Novotný 2011). However, according to some recent studies (Stejskalová 2011), racism is implicitly present even among these traditional skinheads who declare themselves as apolitical.

Yet the mass media seems to play quite an important role in the world of subcultures. Due to the aforementioned processes, representing skinheads as neo-fascists and punks as anarchists ceased to be attractive and interesting for mass media. The attention of mass media was caught by new subcultures, which became targets for recent moral panics. Thus ravers (freetekno) are depicted in the mass media as junkies and asocial individuals, hip-hoppers as vandals who devastate public space with graffiti and emos as self-harmers and suicides[14]. It again results in these "new" subcultures rather than punks and skinheads being more attractive

[14] For moral panics on emo in Czech Republic see Heřmanský (in print).

for potential new members.

This is also supported by one characteristic of contemporary society. Due to late modernity in which “anything goes” and “no one is shocked anymore by almost anything” the punk and skinhead style ceased to be a manifestation of difference (not mentioning the aforementioned commodification). Elements of the subcultural style neither offend dominant society anymore nor are they capable to express a subcultural ideology related to it (see Muggleton 2000). No matter how the need to distinguish oneself from dominant society remains important for some segments of society, it is not the difference in style (because as we noted earlier, this does not work), but a difference in ideology which reaches through generations and is not based on social stratification. Also, appreciated ideological differences which are realised in so diverse phenomena such as organic food, natural birth or communal living are too complicated and too ambivalent to be seen as distinct subcultures. The supermarket of styles (Polhemus 1998) became also the supermarket of ideologies, music and behaviour. A typical example being bands consisting of members of different subcultures playing a music genre not associated with any of these. Music as a one of constitutive elements of subcultures is losing its recognisable and integrated and thus integrating ideological connotation.

Punk and skinhead subcultures remain to some extent interesting for those youth who want to distinguish themselves from the dominant society which they perceive from a generational perspective. But these actors usually neither possess enough subcultural capital nor are they mutually related by shared subcultural ideology and subcultural style stemming from it. Although these actors from on the “periphery of scene”[15] have always been part of

[15] Inspired by skinhead fanzine Bulldog, Klozarová (2004) distinguished within punk subculture actor from, the “centre of scene”, “from periphery of scene” and “parasitising on the scene”. The first ones are usually older then 18, actively participate in its activities, are

subcultural worlds, their situation is now quite different. While in the 1990s they either have left subcultures when they grew up or accumulated enough subcultural capital to move into the "centre of scene" of the corresponding subculture, their subcultural membership now fluctuates from one subculture to another (see Šarochová 2011). This trend corresponds with Muggleton's (2000) assertion that (post)subcultures are fluid, permeable and hybrid. A relatively strong relation to subcultural ideology remains important among some members of subcultures of the older generation due to the large amount of accumulated subcultural capital. These members also sometimes demonstrate a relatively rigid style, although usually manifested in particular subcultural events like concerts or festivals (see Pixová 2011).

Even though both punk and skinhead subcultures are still present in Czech Republic, they remain here in its subcultural form only as residues. They are collectivities more fit for another world. Their potential members gradually dissolve in the extensive choice of other subcultures and punks and skinheads thus became only ones of many subcultures differentiating from the mainstream, not the leading and most visible ones. This does not mean that they disappeared from world of subcultures for good, only that it is difficult to recognise their distinct character in contemporary society and to identify the basis on which they construct their subcultural identity.

Similarly to other contemporary subcultures, they form rather networks of local idiocultures (Fine 1979) based primarily on personal relations between actors. Similarly to other social groupings the "local" should not be understood just in a physical sense but also in regard to virtual space. Even here there are in fact "places" where relations are built and various subcultural identities constructed and manifested in corresponding subcultural styles.

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aware of its history and share its style, i.e. they possess the most of subcultural capital. The second ones are usually younger and punk is more an image then a lifestyle for them, while the third ones only abuse the punk image. See also Novotná a Dvořák (2008).

In this sense, both punks and skinheads acquire a forms of trans-local scenes (Peterson and Bennett 2004). What they retain in common are their notions of the embededness in punk or skinhead tradition, however, the practice which they use to manifest it varies greatly.

Conclusion

This chapter tried to show our understanding of social processes which are involved in the formation and reformation of subcultures as a social groupings with a distinctive system of values, norms, behavioural patterns and lifestyle. Punk and skinhead subculture in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic served as an example that the character and form of subcultures are not rigid, but to great extent historically and culturally determined. Their analysis and interpretation thus must take into consideration a wider context which means not just how is it defined by its actors, but also against whom or what they differentiate themselves and what practices make this differentiation happen. Drawing on sociological, anthropological and subcultural studies perspectives, we thus defined an analytical category of subcultural ideology and focused on how it is constructed and how its character influences the subcultural style which brought us to question how subcultural identity is constructed and what kind of subcultural capital saturates it. We thus focus on subcultural ideology as negotiated on three levels. The first level was a redefinition of values and norms of the dominant society. After all, disapproval of the values and norms of dominant society is the basis for the emergence of subcultures.

However, analysing the mutual relation of mainstream culture and subculture in a highly variable and transforming society enabled us to focus also on situations when the mainstream culture is weakened, intelligible and ambivalent. It seems that in situations like these, subcultures tend to look for other partners to distinguish themselves against. If there is

another social formation with its own intelligible value and norm system, it might serve as a counterpart against which it is possible to differentiate. Thus, differentiation, i.e. basic principle of subcultural existence, might be founded in relation to the other subculture. The conflict of ideologies (understood as shared norms, values and attitudes) then seems to be fundamental not just for the establishment of subcultures but also for their very existence. As we have also shown, the most important element does not have to be the content of the subcultural ideology, i.e. what ideas are perceived by actors as the most significant, but the relation between subcultures who differentiate against one another. The character of subcultural ideology is actually always negotiated in relation to another (sub)culture. If the partner is not available, is not attractive enough or does not "cooperate" in this mutual relationship, the subculture starts to disintegrate, which might take various forms. E.g. it might acquire a partner in itself and divide into several offshoots or blur its borders and blend in the dominant society. And, on the contrary, if the ideology of (sub)cultural opponent is apparent and consistent, the subculture unites and creates more distinctive borders.

At this point, we would like to make one more theoretical remark – we will return to possible interpretation of collectivities like punks and skinhead through the use of various theoretical concepts. We are firmly convinced, as Williams put it, that "[r]ather than pit concepts against one another as if they were all epistemologically equal and competitive, scholars might instead focus on the cleavages and boundaries among concepts, recognising that some [...] phenomena may be best understood as subcultural, and others not". (Williams 2007: 578)

In stressing the importance of subcultural ideology, it might seem that the concept of counterculture (Roszak 1969) should be more proper. This concept is however based on differentiation from dominant society and thus is for us too limited. Dominant society is only

one of the possible entities against which a subculture can differentiate itself. Thus subculture can also be thriving even if its relation to dominant society is to a significant extant vacant.

Considering the changeability of subcultural ideologies and thus the character of both subcultures, it might be proper to use the concept of neo-tribes (Maffesoli 1996, Bennett 1999, 2005) which aptly accentuate the volatility, changeability and absence of clearly demarcated borders of collectivities which we were interested in. But, it was the very fluidity of this concept that did not allow us to analyse and interpret to full extent cultural dynamics of those collectivities which we focused on.

Thus, after many discussions, we returned to the concept of subculture as we defined it earlier, because it allows us to use those analytical categories which enable interpretations of those social phenomena we identified as important in our effort to understand character of punk in Czechoslovakia and the Czech (and partly also Slovak) Republic. We hope that our narrative of the relationship between punks and skinheads demonstrates not just that subcultural ideology is negotiated on three levels, i.e. in relation to dominant society, other subcultures and even within one's own subculture, but also that these levels are mutually interconnected. While an accent put on one of these levels is in close relationship to the other ones, the most important one seems to be their mutual interaction.

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