

Joint Dissertation Review

Name of the student:	Alex Kurki
Title of the thesis:	The Politics of Prague's Metal Scene
Reviewer:	Eliška Tomalová

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

The thesis examines the links and interactions between the worlds of music and politics, in particular the case of metal music and Czech politics. The author seeks to answer the following research question: "how does involvement in Prague's metal scene interact with attitudes towards political participation?" (p. 3). He is working with two hypotheses: "members of Prague's metal scene will have negative opinions on politics, as a result they will be less likely to participate" (H1) and "if they participate, they will still have negative opinions on politics and will express support for anti-system parties and ideas" (H2, p.7). The literature review (incorporated both in the introduction and theoretical chapter) is complex and shows author's insight into the relevant academic debates.

2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

The thesis represents a case study. The choice of the case is well explained (main arguments being the historical context: "history of politicized music subcultures" - p. 6, and the lack of studies on metal music, as current literature "focus on hard rock punk or skinhead scenes" - p. 6). The discussion on methods (combining the analysis of primary literature with semi-structured interviews and survey responses) used is very comprehensive and the author also shows he is aware of the limitations - relative to the scope and generalizability of the study (p. 11) and to the formal aspect, especially the language barrier (p.11). From a theoretical and conceptual point of view, the study is framed in a broader sense by anthropology and political science and more specifically, by subcultural and metal studies (looking at Prague's metal scene a subcultural unit), giving the reader a pluridisciplinary and balanced perspective on the topic." The author used a variety of academic sources and interviews. Their choice, in my view, is too limited to anglosaxon literature. On the other hand, the scope of the field work is impressive and represents one of the main assets of the research.

3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The thesis achieves the goals its author presents in the introduction, answers the research question and explains how the hypotheses developed. I welcome the way how the author identifies the weak points in current academic literature on music and politics – showing that "traditional forms of identity and belonging based on class, family ties and nationality become fragmented, identities relating to consumption and lifestyle – rarely examined in political science – may be potentially linked to political viewpoints" (p. 51). I suggest that during the defence, Alex Kurki explains how these categories can contribute to further research in a more general level, giving it not only case study potential but could also be applied on more cases in the field (using comparative methodology, for instance).

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

From a formal perspective, the thesis meets the relevant criteria in terms of language, academic standards and citations. It is reader friendly.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

Strong points:

- The thesis represents a balanced pluridisciplinary work
- A well developed analysis of the concepts and theoretical approaches linked to the topic
- Field research and interviews
- The choice of the topic: the thesis fills in the gap in academic literature on subcultural units and their political participation

Weak points:

- The representativeness of the sample, due mostly to language limitations
- The limited sources (mostly anglosaxon literature) also probably due to the linguistic barrier
- The study is too focused on the Czech case, the conclusion should take into account the future research potential of the study

Grade (A-F): B	
Date:	Signature:
June 10th 2019	