

Geography of Subcultures: Punks and Skinheads in Prague

Author: Michaela Pixová

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the geographical aspects of subcultures, specifically those considered so-called “youth subcultures”. The research is focused on two typical examples of youth subcultures – punks and non-racist skinheads. The aim of this thesis is to elicit some of the ways subcultural identity may influence one’s spatial behaviour, perception, decision-making and choice of localities. The research was accomplished by means of qualitative research methods, such as participant observation, structured interviews and informal interviews.

The beginning of the thesis is based on theory. The first chapter is concerned with the discussion of literature and evaluation of resources, while the second chapter is concerned with the description of subcultures, both as a phenomenon in itself and as concrete groups punks and skinheads in the case of this thesis. The rest of the thesis is based on the research itself. It is divided into three chapters: methodology, review and characteristics of the localities used by subcultural members, and finally the formation of subcultural centres and their meaning for subcultural members.

One of the most important chapters is one dedicated to reviewing localities and places often used and visited by punks and skinheads, including clubs, pubs, bars, restaurants, clubrooms, squats, rehearsal rooms, specialized shops or football stadiums. All places were explored and described. The descriptions focus on location, accessibility, spatial features, enterprise specialization and offer. They also focus on the typical visitors, customers and users, including the staff and owners. Special attention is paid to user relations and activities, especially the ones taking place within pubs and clubs. The description of each place or locality (or groups of them) also contains the information collected from respondents; selected members of either punk or skinhead subcultures. The interviews with the respondents focused on their relationships to the places listed in the review above, aiming to detect some of the most important linkages between their subcultural identity and their spatial behaviour, perception, etc.

The last chapter is the result of the collected information analysis. This chapter attempts to explain how subcultural centres are being formed and what their essential attributes are. It also attempts to outline their meaning for subcultural members, the way they decide among them, as well as the factors important for their localization.