

The thesis is focused on subcultures as a specific form of postmodern collectivity as well as one of the important frames for identification and socialization processes in the postmodern society. The relations between these three fundamental themes – postmodernity, subcultures and identity – are examined from the perspective of symbolic interactionism, post-subcultures theory and cyberethnology.

The basic argument is that specific (social) conditions of postmodernity influence (amongst others) the creation and the nature of new forms of sociality (e.g. subcultures, neo-tribes, youth cultures), as well as the identity of these social groups and of individuals. Postmodern identity must be searched for, chosen, built-up and represented by the individual in a continual process. Due to the transparency of postmodern society, this actualisation of the self-identity depends on outside conditions, personal life politics and achieved status rather than on the ascribed one.

Largely, the origin of the subcultural collective identity is based on a tendency remain in opposition to the commercial and passive mainstream. The borderline between subcultures and the dominant culture is not fixed but influenced by postmodern processes and consequently blurred. Rather, the difference between them is constructed and expressed through symbolic representations and enactment in fields like fashion, music, language, media etc. Within theoretical practice, the identification of subcultures and within subcultures is demonstrated by research on the areas of metal and otaku subcultures in this thesis.