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To be, or not to be – a punk

Identity construction within Punk subculture

By

Vanja Ljevar

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Contents

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Special thanks to "*a punk*" that I always wanted to understand.

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore punk identity. The previous work provided lenses through which we can observe punk identity as being a dynamic construct, sculpted by the processes of differentiation and assimilation. Another significant concept in terms of this investigation was authenticity, as the ultimate form of punk identity and constituent features that are supposed to be the bases of the identity. Each of these concepts were explored using interpretative repertoires that were recognized as linguistic patterns in the speech of participants. In contrast to the literature, this study shows how punks do not only use the dynamic, anti – essentialist idea of identity, they also have the quite stable idea of identity that changes in regard to different topics. Therefore, the aim of this research was to denote when and why these repertoires were used and how they enhance one's sense of self.

Chapter 1 | INTRODUCTION

Seventies were difficult years for many working – class teenagers in the UK. It was a period of recession and many young people found themselves feeling gloomy, fatalistic and hopeless in the current economic situation (Eriksen, 1980). At that moment, the popular rock music was more about escapism, rather than reflection, while young people were looking for something what will express their concerns more exclusively (Simonelli, 2002). Their general oppression can be summarized into four major categories, which are: increased economic exploitation, a narrowly defined, and even stifling educational process, the contradictory character of the family and finally the tendency to turn anything marketable into a commodity, which treats youth more and more as only a market of consumers (Eriksen, 1980).

As a result punk rock appeared. It was an expression of an extremely broad realm of social issues, particularly dead-end jobs and welfare lines, given the current economic situation in England (Eriksen, 1980). Dancis (1978) states that punk rock is basically high-energy hard rock and at its best, it represents not only an energetic aesthetic attack on the dominant trends within popular music, but also a working-class protest against youthful unemployment, poverty, government censorship and a general manifestation of cultural despair and decadence (Dancis, 1978). Punk was a rebellion not just against the rock establishment, but against the establishment at large (Simonelli, 127). To support this, it is stated in Dancis' article (1978) that even the banning of punk records by the BBC and local radio stations, at the time, was intended to build up punk's image as anti-establishment.

Eriksen (1980) considers the rock revival of the 1960s, and its "revolutionary" spirit more as an expression of collective pride, fun, self-confidence and good humor, whereas punk tended to be an expression of boredom, doubt, anger, and even self-disgust. "It was never a respectable working-class movement in the Victorian sense, but rather representative of a new vision of what being working-class meant – to be angry, politically focused and violent in rhetoric" (Simonelli, 2002: 127). The music, itself, tended to become an extremely powerful vehicle for rebellion, because it was an expression, not just in words, but also in sounds (Eriksen, 1980). For many young people, punk had become more than a genre of music, it became a lifestyle and a tool for construction of their identity. This means that punk lifestyle dictates not only the music they listen to, but also the clothes they wear, people they associate with and ideology they care about.

As Eriksen (1980) states, people are formed through culture, social practice and history. Thus, if we consider the fact that punk subculture was formed on the terrain of social and cultural life, it is worth exploring the identity construction of its members and the nature of their subculture. To start with, there are many reasons why music subculture may appeal to young people, one of which is that it provides an opportunity to define oneself in relation to others (Abrams, 2009).

Chapter 2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. IDENTITY

"*In the case of punk, identity is increasingly located*

anywhere but the eye of the beholder"

(Bloustien, 2003: 52)

Identity is defined as a subjective concept of oneself as a person and is, therefore, a form of representation (Goffman, 1959). Literature often emphasises the finite nature of an identity and describes it as a sum of distinct parts. In addition, if we could say that there is one, clear, authentic set of characteristics that do not alter across time, we would be advocating the essentialist viewpoint on identity. However, according to other authors, an *"identity is an ongoing process"* (Adams and Marshall, 1996: 436). In other words, "*the social processes implicated in identity formation are complex, recursive, reflexive, and constantly 'under construction*' (Ybema et al, 2009: 301). Punk identity can be observed as a distorted reflection of the society, so the core of its dynamics lies in the fact that it has to be continuously redefined in order to be opposite to current and ever – changing societal norms and trends. Alongside to this statement is the observation that this can be accomplished only through the constant

interaction, so anti – essentialist approach to identity is suitable in the pursuit of discovering the essence of punk identity. Some might go so far to say that "*some social phenomena, like identities, clearly do not have essences*" (Sayer, 1997: 453).

In the sociological sciences, the self and identity, in the form of the individual and the group, have been considered by numerous influential sociologists (Adams and Marshall, 1996). There are some authors that observe identity as a "*social construction of the self as a dramatic or performative role and in particular the way we construct the self and convince other people that we are who we "appear to be*" (Clark, 2008: 510). To support this, Baumeister and Muraven (1996) claim that this is because identity cannot be observed in a vacuum. Society has an important contribution in creating and shaping identity of an individual. This influence can be seen if we observe how identification has changed through the time. For example, dress code used to be a sign of a social rank, as well as gender (Butler, 1999.) However, changes in social relations and the improvement in self – knowledge removed identity from the realm of the obviously visible and became understood as inner, hidden entity that is expressed in one's actions and roles (Baumeister and Muraven, 1996).

Indeed, the identity observed from Goffman's (2008) stance, is a result of a performance that is projected at the target audience. There are, also, two kinds of performers, the one that is completely immersed in his/her own act and honestly believes that the version of reality he/she is presenting is true. The second ones are the performers that are cynical and fully aware that their performance is a mere act. Both have to be taken into account because the way in which people imagine the world to be and imagine the ways that other exist in the

world is crucial for identity construction. It is therefore about a continuous profiling of who we are in relation to society that marks us as individuals (Clark, 2008).

Bennett's (2006) investigation also denotes that there might be differences in perceiving punk, depending on the age of the fans. For example, young punks consider the collective celebration of punk to be physical embodiment that characterizes the crowd at the punk concerts, while older punks feel that their knowledge, experience and self-ascribed status that has been acquired through a long term commitment to the punk scene, is enough to establish their punk identity (Andes, 1998). The validation in any other sense is no longer needed, because visual shock – tactics have been replaced by understanding that punk as an identity must be managed and negotiated in the context of other everyday circumstances. Nonetheless, in both cases punk is seen as a collective identity that survives as a result of shared commitment of its fans (Bennett, 2006).

Initially, punk was understood as a sign of white youngsters becoming aware of their own identity, and its ideology was a base for their identity construction (Worley, 2012; Lewin and Williams, 2009). It is relevant to understand that social identity is a part of individual's self-concept and arises from the idea of one's membership in a social group, together with the importance attached to that same membership (Abrams, 2009). This means being like and being liked by others within a certain group and seeing things from the group's perspective (Stets and Burke, 2000). In other words, there is a shift toward the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of self as an individual (Brewer, 1991; Tajfel, 2010).

For the punks, the self-determination was made through the music they played and listened to (Sabin, 2002). Accordingly, there are assumptions that others can make inferences about one's personality and people may even make a statement about who they are and who they are not, both through music preferences (Abrams, 2009). However, their identity also emerged through the "*clothes they wore, the fanzines, flyers, and other art they created, and their lifestyle as a whole, as they strove to be self-invented people in every aspect of their lives*" (Wolf, 2007: 7). Thus, we can see how the punk subculture is no exception in assessing the commitment to a group according to particular consumption activities (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995).

However, it is still problematic to assume the direct relationship between the punk style and identity, because of its changeable nature and the lack of uniformity (Worley, M. (2012). This is where it is highly relevant to recognize "*subcultural capital*", that will further on be recognized as a set of beliefs, ideology and attitudes, also an important factor in creating an authentic punk identity in addition to "*having a right hairstyle, behaving in an anti-social manner and liking the appropriate music*" (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1990: 271). Every person that uses an anarchy symbol without understanding it is considered by an older punk a poseur, as "*punk is not a show, it is a state of mind*" (Bradshow, 2007: 8). This is why it was even said that it is sometimes "more punk" to come to a show in a business suit, than a Mohican (Ladouceur, 2014). In other words, punk is what you make it and paradoxically, this, as the essence of punk, is only realized by the 'true' punks (Muggleton, 2000).

Punk is created on the foundation of rebellion and the urge to be different from existing establishments. Moreover, the image of "degenerates" was cultivated by rejecting so much of

the society that rejects them (Eriksen, 1980). As Hogg and Abrams (1998) claim, the social categories in which individuals place themselves exist only in relation to other contrasting categories that further on are the tools of executing power, prestige and status over the contrasted category (Abrams, 1988). The concept "us versus them" can be partially be observed through this phenomenon. This leads us to the point that sociologist might have given a very good basis for identification of trends of exclusion and show how a common cultural identity is constructed in relation to "normalization". This normalization further on exposes the rules for assimilation. However an even deeper understanding comes from a psychological stance. Psycho – social approach to identity takes into account the social, cultural and psychological dynamics in the processes of the identity creation. In addition, previously mentioned concept "us versus them" remains unexplained from the sociological point of view because it misses a sense of emotion and motivation in the construction of the self. In addition, Clark (2008) also states that identity is not just a social construct and this is why we cannot ignore the psychological perspective of an individual, as - identity is a "complex amalgam of both of these".

However, this concept is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, authors claim that understanding punks as rebellious and non-conformists is oversimplified, since their rejection of the mainstream society and authority is not framed in black and white (Lewin and Williams, 2009). It is rather the rejection of the cultural objects they aim at. In other words, rather than exhibiting disdain for authority and establishment, they expressed the strong disinclination toward the idea of mindless internalization of the rules the authority and establishment made. Secondly, there is a certain paradox here, concerning the irony of rejecting the socialization while participating in punk subculture, that is, their own micro society. This can possibly be understood as collective expressions and celebration of individualism (Lewin and Williams,

2009). To support this, Sabin's book emphasizes that punk means absolute freedom for the individual, as it states "*you choose to obey or disobey for your own reasons*" (Sabin, 1999: 129). What they wanted is the freedom to make their own choices and viewpoints, thus the concept of DIY is applicable not only to their style, but also to their ideology (Lewin and Williams, 2009). To conclude, Lewin and Williams (2009) state punks did not emphasize political resistance, but rather their ideological beliefs, freedom of self-expression, not just as punks, but also as human beings.

Lastly, representing punk identity as a simple negation and leaving that definition to create a universal meaning of punk is not sustainable, simply because punk is a moving target. Punk is redefining itself to create a balance between the subversion and conformity (Bradshow, 2007). Being different both positively distinguishes participants from outsiders, which raises the notion of differentiation, whereas the clear signals of a wry desire for similarity with insiders leads us to the concept of assimilation (Force, 2009). Thus, it is worth exploring whether the genuine punk identity is created as a balance between these two processes.

From the psychological stance there are two theories that dominate in the field of exploring identity and its interplay with the social world: *social identity theory* and *identity theory* (Stets and Burke, 2000; Hitlin, 2003). The first one focuses on the social groups and the second one on the roles. Both link the individual and the social world through a conception of the self, being composed of various social identities. Social identity theory puts a focus on the commonalities among people within the group, but also on differences between the people from different groups (Hogg, 1995). On the other hand, identity theory has a viewpoint that individuals are a compilation of different roles that become salient as situations call for them

(Stryker, 1980). In social identity theory and identity theory, the self is reflexive in the way that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications. This process is called *self-categorization* in social identity theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell 1987); in identity theory it is called *identification* (McCall and Simmons 1978). Both of them refer to already mentioned process of differentiation.

What these two theories have in common can also be explained in relation to the previously mentioned process of assimilation. In the social identity theory this process is called depersonalization, when an individual sees the self as an embodiment of the in-group prototype, rather than as the unique self. A central cognitive process in identity theory is self-verification, or seeing the self in terms of the role embodied in the identity standard, so the person behaves so that consistency with the identity standard is maintained. In other words, both theories accept that the self both exists in the society and is affected by the society, because socially shared meanings are incorporated in one's prototype or identity standard (Stets and Burke, 2000).

However, Hitlin (2003) states that understanding the values as the core of personal identity can possibly round out and unify the two approaches by offering a framework that understands synergy made of roles and group membership. In other words, "*all members can place priority on certain values, but also possess important individual differences in the constellation of values and identities that that make up their sense of self*" (Hitlin, 2003: 133). Values can be explained as "*desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as a guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity*" (Schwartz, 1994: 21). Individuals' values are deeply personal, but at the same time socially patterned and

communicated, and offer an understanding of the link between self and social structure (Hitlin, 2003). Although the basis of self-classification is different in the two theories (group/category versus role), theorists in both traditions recognize that individuals "*view themselves in terms of meanings imparted by a structured society*" (Stets and Burke, 2000: 225). These views are constantly changing, thus, we could say that the identity itself is changeable that once again emphasizes its dynamic nature.

To conclude, it can be said that identity is not simply a product of society in a sense of being a programmed developmental pattern, nor is it entirely a result of free choices by the individual, nor is it simply a compromise between the opposing forces of individual needs and socialization pressures. "*People do not simply turn out the way society dictates, but neither can they develop identity without regard to the sociocultural context*" (Baumeister and Muraven, 1996: 415). The context is exactly why we need to observe the fact that social and personal identities are no longer salient, thus not on the opposite sides of a continuum (Howard, 2000). Following such routines permits the simultaneous construction of their personal identities as human beings and their public identities as social actors (Ybema et al, 2009).

2.2. DIFFERENTIATION

Social identity can be viewed as a compromise between assimilation and differentiation from others, where the need for deindividuation is satisfied within in-groups, while the need

for distinctiveness is met through intergroup comparison (Brewer, 1991). The main reason why exploring distinctiveness in the process of identity construction is relevant can be explained through the definition of identity as a representation. A notable feature of any system of representation is that concepts are not meaningful independently of each other, but are rather defined in relation to each other, involving a process of differentiation. In other words: we cannot have a sense of who we if we do not know who we are not (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, and Breakwell, 2000). In addition, distinctiveness theory suggests that people tend to identify with other people who have mutual characteristics that can be identified as rare in that context (McGuire, 1984). This is due to attention-grabbing salience of distinctive characteristics that is the base for social identification (Mehra, Kilduff and Brass, 1998).

Distinctiveness is obvious in every aspect of punk subculture. As many authors state: punk drew lines: it divided the young from the old, the rich from the poor (Grossman, 1996). It was not simply a way of dressing or even a style of music; punk was about living the idea of rebellion against authority. "*It is reasonable to assume that the primary function of these interests was to make this differentiation unmistakably clear*" (Merriam and Jepperson, 2000: 143). Loving punk in the seventies required a genuine bent for difference, as there was a definite "us versus them" attitude prevalent throughout the movement since its inception (Academic.mu.edu, 2014).

Understanding why young people choose to become part of a certain group in these conditions is understandable if we consider their need to socialize with people that best fit expressing the differences in comparison to people in their environment (Abrams, 2009). As Clarke et al. (1976) state, subcultures shape around the distinctive activities and "focal

concerns" of groups. It is a way they can differentiate themselves, as Mods, Punks and Rockers wore different clothes, listened to different music and thus associating more strongly with people within their group than others outside their category (Abrams, 2009). In addition, "*members of adolescent subcultures (such as punks, Goths and so on) engage in a continual process of mutual construction of group boundaries*" (Abrams, 2009: 305). One of their methods was their adoption of extreme artistic and social attitudes that represented a part of a total rejection of conventional society (Becker, 2008).

The significance of social identification in the definition of self is often neglected (Brewer, 1991). The concept of social identity represents an important link between the psychology of the self and the psychology of group behavior and intergroup relations (Brewer, 2001). Social identity is a part of individual's self-concept and arises from the idea of one's membership of a social group, together with the importance attached to that membership (Abrams, 2009). It entails the shift toward the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of self as a unique person (Brewer, 1991).

Related to the concept of social identity, it can be emphasized how many authors state that compulsory aspects of identity constructs are *assimilations* (manifesting similarity to others) and *contrast* (expressing distinctiveness). In that sense, as much as punk presents the desire to be different, it is also a "hunger for fellowship with like-minded souls" (Wolf, 2007: 2). Brewer (1991) views social identity as a reconciliation of opposing needs for assimilation and differentiation from others. Perceiving oneself as a unique individual is unsettling, while perceiving oneself as a member of a large scale social category is insufficiently self-defining

and does not provide a guide for behavior (Brewer, 1996, 2010). Thus, Brewer (1991) argues that people are looking for a balance between distinctiveness and assimilation within social groups and situations, which is supported by optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT).

Optimal distinctiveness theory assumes there are two motivational principles, a need for differentiation of the self from others and a need for inclusion of the self into larger social collectives that act in opposition to each other (Vignoles, Chryssochoou and Breakwell, 2000). Furthermore, the group one perceives as the one he/she belongs to is called *ingroup,* whereas the groups that are in conflict with one's own are the *outgroups* (McGrath and MacMillan, 1992). Members who feel their distinctiveness is either too low or too high will compensate by elevating evaluations and change the stereotypes of their in-groups (Abrams, 2009). One who feels too different from his or her in-group will make an effort to find commonalities between themselves and other members of the in-group by making in-group comparisons. On the other hand, one who feels too similar to a group will try to identify themselves as distinct from this in-group (McMahon, 2008).

What is relevant for the notion of in-groups and out-groups is the assumption that being in a group affects the way the reality is perceived and interpreted. In other words, individuals might interpret an identical behavior entirely differently depending upon whether the actor was part of the in-group or the out-group (McGrath and MacMillan, 1992). This, for example, could raise the question of violent acts within punk subculture that can be justified by the punks themselves solely based on the fact this happened in the in-group. In-group members tend to see themselves as strong, capable, virtuous and to perceive out-group members as weak, inferior, incompetent (McGrath and MacMillan, 1992).

In his book "*Outsiders*" Becker (2008) uses the example of musicians to explain how musicians feel about themselves in comparison to the "outsiders". "*The whole system of beliefs about what musicians and what audiences are is summed up in a word used by musicians to refer to outsiders – "square*". The term refers to the kind of person who is the opposite of everything the musician is, or should be, concerning the way of thinking, feeling, and behaving (Becker, 1951). What separates musicians from squares is the "mysterious artistic gift", which cannot be acquired through education, thus the outsiders can never become the member of a group. It goes so far that insensitivity and ignorance of the square are proved by every item of dress, speech and behavior that differs from that of the musician (Becker, 1951). The musicians consider "squares" completely ignorant and differentiate form them, because: "*you know that they don't know what it's all about*" (Becker, 1951: 139).

Thus, "*distinctiveness principle has been understood to guide the processes of shaping identity*"(Vignoles et al, 2000: 338). "*Such comparisons are aimed at maintaining or achieving positive psychological distinctiveness and hence positive social identity for the in-group*" (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1990: 258). In general, distinctiveness is important for identity because of the social value of distinctiveness itself, as a means of self-enhancement through social comparison, as a fundamental human need and as a basic property of self-definition (Vignoles et al, 2000). "*On a social level, people will act especially in ways that show their distinctiveness to others*", but this can also be constructed on an individual level, as well (Vignoles et al, 2000: 337).

Distinctiveness also has another purpose. People are sometimes deliberately marginalized, because then they are presented as destructive to existing patterns and order, thus power has to be exercised over them (Douglas and Kalender, 1993). Moreover, it can be stated that *deviant* is anything that varies too widely from the average (Becker, 2008). "*An individual, a people, or a nation, would never need to posit itself as sovereign unless there was some other power out there threatening the stability and inherence of the first "one."* The claim to sovereignty, then, is always a *"rounding off "*; we exclude certain things from our purview of what is right, what is permissible, in light of what is acceptable and safe in our household" (Arola, 2007: 292).

In that sense, homosexuality is illness because heterosexuality is the social norm, just as divorce is a failure in comparison to a successful marriage (Becker, 2008). Further on, crime, art and participation in social affairs, are all a sort of deviation (Becker, 2008). The marginalization of the deviants is supported by the assumption that men must keep holiness in their live as an order, not confusion. Every differentiation means defilement, because: "this is a universe in which men prosper by confirming to holiness and perish when they deviate from it" (Douglas and Kalender, 1993: 50).

However, the difficulty of leading this kind of lifestyle lies in the fact that:"*No man is an island*", so accordingly, no group of people is completely independent from the rest of the world. So without the society, we cannot claim we are distinctive enough, because there would not be an object to be distinctive from. Secondly, there are some practical reasons. Clarke et al. (1976) posit that the members of a subculture still belong to the "parent" culture from which

they derive, so their membership does not protect them from the determining matrix of experiences and conditions that shape their class as a whole.

In the world of jazz musicians: "*the square is in a position to get his way: if he does not like the kind of music played, he does not pay to hear it a second time"* (Becker, 1951: 139). In addition, there are some more practical reasons: "*if you want to make any money you gotta please the squares. They're the ones that pay the bills, and you gotta play for them"* (Becker, 1951: 140). Also, concerning the punk style, it is mainly those who do not have to work for a living who can afford the outrageous blue, green and orange punk hair styles and gold safety pins, because the working class generally cannot choose to go to work with orange hair (Eriksen, 1980).

As the extension of this, we are determined by more than ourselves, thus pure autonomy is logically untenable position to adopt (Arola, 2007). Yet, the punk subculture aims for the model of being more authentic, more autonomous, and more punk. In doing so, punk eventually reflects the society it comes from, because as Arola (2007) states, if we attempt to define ourselves as oppose to mainstream, rather than attempting to articulate a new understanding of the subject, we will remain in the same domain of self-understanding. In other words, we will end up screaming at the wall that we built up as the attempt to tear it down.

2.3. AUTHENTICITY

"You're not punk, and I'm telling everyone/save your breath, I never was one

You don't know what I'm all about/like killing cops and reading Kerouac"

(Jawbreaker, "Boxcar")

Max Paddison (2004: 201) suggests that "*in its most straightforward and everyday sense, the term 'authenticity' refers to the 'real thing,' the original, the unique, as opposed to the illusory, the imitation, the reproduction, the fake, the counterfeit, or the mass produced*". In addition, Bourdieu (1984) states that one's authenticity is revealed through processes of interaction, of finding symbols with a shared cultural value, which are both temporally and spatially bound to one another. Indeed, according to Force (2009), these symbols that are both material (safety pins) and immaterial (aesthetic standards) become identity materials. Authenticity can be a result of consumption styles, which are dominated by three cultural processes: the publicized possession of consumer goods, stylized presentations of self, and conversational display of acquaintance with punk esoterica (Force, 2009). However, just like religions, subcultures have their own ideals, ethical codes, rituals and aesthetics. And as in religions, members express their devotion to their group and their faith through modes of dress. But like devout members of religious groups, goths, punks, mods and ravers will tell you that it is not really about the outfits. It is about what they stand for (Ladouceur, 2014).

If we observed punk identity as a continuum, one extreme would be "that guy", whose membership might not be validated by other punks, due to the fact they are either a self-proclaimed members, considered as "part time punks", they "try too hard", or simply cannot stand within the ever-changing boundaries of "punkness". On the other side of this continuum is an authentic punk. However, there can be no strict boundaries of punk identity, because punk is dynamically constructed and reconstructed through the interaction of its participants, it has fluid boundaries that are constantly being redefined by members of the subculture (Sabine, 2002). However, it is defined is that the practice or "doing" of authenticity is made up of concrete interactional events, as stated by Force (2009). Indeed, Abrams (2009) emphasises that identification with a social group is fostered and maintained through social support from other group members. In other words, one identifies oneself and is identified by others, by being located in a common world (Hogg and Michell, 1996). Thus, this interaction reveals symbols that have a shared cultural vale, but also raises the bar in terms of attaining the authenticity (Force, 2009).

If we consider the extreme recognized as "that guy", Lewin and Williams (2009) made a contribution by exploring punks' disapproval for people who take on different roles, in order to earn social approval. The punks interviewed in their article stated that authentic individuals possess a nonchalant, self-assured attitude (Lewin and Williams, 2009). Otherwise, it is just a person who 'tries too much'. This indicated a *conscious* participation in an identity competition and violation of the "*allegedly natural, not self-consciousness purity and nonconformity of punk*" (Force, 2009: 301).

The reason for questioning the genuineness in the first place, arose as soon as punk clothing started being rapidly commoditized, and in order for both producer and consumer to differentiate themselves, this process was reflected in the evolution and mutation of punk fashion and preferences (Sabin, 2002). However, soon there was a tension within punk that arose from the value attached to authenticity, which some authors refer to as "the tyranny of authenticity" (Brown, 2011; Arola, 2007). Even though their assimilation is explained as creating their own family for all those ostracized by their families because of their appearance or political beliefs, there was an amount of dedication required to be considered a true punk (Critical Legal Thinking, 2011).

One of the practical examples of difficulties are the commitments such as the family and jobs, that may limit the amount of time and money a punk can devote to attending gigs or other activities that support their punk status (Benett, 2006). The possible solution to this lack of commitment was a creation of multiple potential identities. As stated in Abrams' article (2009), people can have multiple group membership, which however, lessens in authenticity of "punkness". This is why people who had a so-called "convertible haircut" that could be acceptable for work on Monday, were referred to as posers and "part time punks" (Academic.mu.edu, 2014). There is also the issue of different levels of engagement, because there is a huge difference between the hard core 'activist' for whom the subculture is a way of life and somebody who dips in occasionally by buying a record or going to a gig (Sabin, 2002).

Thus, according to Vannini and Williams, (2009) authenticity is a particular language of the self, an intensely sentimental type of discourse, a way of speaking about *who I am* and

my identity attached to authenticity (Brown, 2011). As mentioned previously, punk identity can be gained by creating a balance between the process of differentiation and assimilation. Moreover, Arola (2007) states that the process of cultivating the uniqueness of the self can be described in terms of both addition and subtraction. In the case of subcultures, it is especially relevant to mention how they are distinguished in terms of what they are not, so from this perspective, authenticity is drawn from external contrasts (Force, 2009). This is the *process* of creating the punk identity.

The second assumption is related to the *tools* punks use to express their authenticable identity which are represented as "both learnt (education in dress codes, music, the taste preferences of others) and unlearnt (innovation, style) variables which locates punks within its own system of fluid values" (Sabin, 2002: 8). Thus, it can be arqued that punk identity is the result of combination of shared cultural resources, that is subcultural capital and visible resources, which can be referred to as possessions and style (Force, 2009).

2.4. POSSESSIONS AND STYLE

"*I'm all lost in the supermarket*

I can no longer shop happily

I came in here for that special offer

A guaranteed personality"

The Clash, "Lost In The Supermarket"

Consumption and possessions as an extension of the self have a leading role in defining and communicating identity (Hogg and Wilson, 2004). It is well known that "*consumer goods can have a significance that goes beyond their utilitarian character and commercial value*" (McCracken, 1986: 71). Exploring punks from this viewpoint is interesting concerning their ideology of negation of the mainstream culture and DIY aesthetics. For punks, "DIY" refers to producing commodities and performing without any financial support (Thompson, 2001). Punk became a form of conspicuous consumption, one where those who chose to identify themselves as punk adopt mainstream commodities to create a sense of identity (Schouten and McAlexabder, 1995; Hogg and Michell, 1996). In addition, Goffman (1959) claims that when individuals come in contact with other people, they will try to guide the impression others make of them by changing or fixing their setting, appearance and manner. However, simply owning records, for example, is not sufficient on its own to authenticate punk identity, because other members must know that not only you own them, but that these are the "good" ones as well (Force, 2009). Thus, previously mentioned impressions are controlled by the purchase, display and use of goods that could communicate symbolic meanings (Belk, 1988).

Punks' and punk business' relationship with commodification and capitalism is, at best described as conflicted (Force, 2009). They usually see popular culture as a monolithic block of capitalist conspiracy and manipulation (Eriksen, 1980). In addition, they consider that advertising/media industry is manipulative and shapes and influences people in diverse ways (Eriksen, 1980). On the other hand, there are several reasons why this boycott of consumption is not exactly successful in the punk world. Firstly, this can be observed as a mere paradox, because it seemed that money talked just as loudly to the punk bands, as it did to any other rock band, because even though their music was basically anti-commercial, many bands sought commercial success (Simonelli, 2002). In addition this paradox can be best described by the words of Johnny Rotten: "*I am against the whole of the middle-class bit: tellies, cars, possessions. But that don't mean I won't get corrupted by middle-class values too. I've just bought a pad near Chelsea football ground. I gotta live somewhere. I was living in a place with water running down the wall not that long ago. I gotta have a washing machine too. I'm sick of going to the launderette*" (Simonelli, 2002).

Secondly, as already mentioned, membership in the punk subculture is evaluated through the shared commitment to particular consumption activities (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). This means that style in a subculture is pregnant with significance. For example, the safety pins, clips, chains and ripped shirts all represented the damage that a culturally barren professional society had foisted upon their bodies and their lives (Simonelli, 2002). In other words: "*we are intrigued by the most mundane objects, – a safety pin, a pointed shoe, a motor cycle – which, none the less, like the tube of vaseline, take on a symbolic dimension, becoming a form of stigmata, tokens of a self-imposed exile*" (Hebdige, 1995:2).

Thirdly, punk itself is a style and seeks to differentiate its members. "*It is for this very basic reason—the power of adornment to differentiate—that style-conscious subcultures such as punk and hip-hop seek new fashion codes and invert old ones*" (Force, 2009: 291). Lastly, punk is related to music and being an authentic member means owning recordings in the form of CDs, vinyl records and other possessions that represent an entry level to punk (Sabin, 2002). Also the style of consumption matters, because for example, a record purchased at a show indicates you attend performances and thus is preferred over purchasing via mail order or in-store (Force, 2009). A rarity of some of these possessions also presents the commitment to this subculture and it would be clear that "*publicized consumption style is a highly nuanced symbolic activity with fateful consequences for the production of authenticity and status"* (Force, 2009: 296).

On the other, it is rather problematic to assume the direct relation between the punk identity and the presence of elements such as 'pink hair, safety-pins and bondage gear', simply because, due to its changing nature "*any attempt to grasp punk identity by its 'uniformity' is doomed to failure*" (Bloustien, 2003: 53). Lewin and Williams (2009) state that earlier exploration of the punk subculture overemphasized the style and consumption, thus displaying the punk as a culture of display. This as well means that some other aspects that create punk authenticity were overlooked or in other words, outsiders can always adopt aspects of a punk style, but unless they understand the punk ideology, they cannot be 'punk' (Lewin and Williams, 2009). These artifacts and knowledge which are recognized as 'hip' and sophisticated within a specific subculture are previously mentioned subcultural capital (Jensen, 2006).

Subcultural capital is used as a tool for creating distinctiveness, allowing the holder to see himself/herself as distinguished, and to be seen in that way by relevant subcultural others (Jensen, 2006). In explaining how higher class differentiates itself from the middle class, Goffman (1959) states that there are certain aristocratic habits injected into activities as an expression of power and high rank. In addition, he mentions that it is not only "*gridle, brassiere, hair-dye and make up*", but a woman from a high society is also "*the actor on the stage*" that along with her style, also acts as this unreal, fixed, hero of the novel she identifies herself with (Goffman, 1959: 65). Coupled with possessions, cultural knowledge and the knowledge of the subculture's forms and its history is a prominent expression of punk authenticity (Force, 2009). Moreover, some authors state that authenticity itself functions as subcultural capital, enabling participants to gain and maintain status among peers (Lewin, 2008).

2.5. CONCLUSION

Punk identity can be gained by creating a balance between the process of differentiation and assimilation. Moreover, Arola (2007) states that the process of cultivating the uniqueness of the self can be described in terms of both addition and subtraction. In the case of subcultures, it is especially relevant to mention how they are distinguished in terms of what they are not, so from this perspective, authenticity is drawn from external contrasts (Force, 2009). This is the *process* of creating the punk identity. The second assumption is related to the *tools* punks use to express their authenticable identity which are represented as "*both learnt (education in dress codes, music, the taste preferences of others) and unlearnt (innovation, style) variables which locates punks within its own system of fluid values*" (Sabin, 2002: 8). Thus, it can be argued that punk identity is the result of combination of shared cultural resources, that is subcultural capital and visible resources, which can be referred to as possessions and style (Force, 2009).

Chapter 3 | RESEARCH AGENDA

3.1. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Despite the vast number of publications made about the punk identity in general, only some of them observe the process of creation and nature of the punk identity. The foundation of literature review put a light on the following research questions:

1. *How do people create their idea of being a punk?*
2. *How do they describe, make sense of and think about what it means to be a punk?*

In order to properly answer these questions, a carefully tailored decision about methodological approach had to be made. As Bryman (2008) states, there is a variety of considerations made in the process of doing the social research. To start with, the investigation on punk identity had an inductive nature. The literature covered many essential issues regarding to punks' identity, however, the approachable amount of theory was not able to answer these main research questions that arose during the preliminary research. Thus, the inductive approach is chosen in order to avoid constrains in the findings that can possibly occur in the testing of hypothesis while using the deductive approach.

Concerning ontological assumptions, it has to be first noted that it is the branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature of social entities, that is whether they are related to the external social actors or not (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Pursuing better, advanced research on people's perception of reality indicated the use of constructionism because it asserts that social phenomena and categories do not have built – in essence are not only produced through social interaction, but are always is the process of revision. This seems suitable in the exploration of punk identity if we observe it as a dynamic concept, that is constructed and reconstructed through the interaction of its participants and constantly redefined by members of the subculture (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Sabine, 2002).

Social constructionism as a type of constructionism views discourse about the world not as a reflection or map of the world, but as an artifact of communal interchange (Gergen, 1985). Moreover, it rejects any category that assumes there is an essential or core feature as a property of a member of a collective, thus every collective is observed as a social artifact (Cerulo, 1997). In addition, these artefacts are entities - molded, refabricated, and mobilized in accord with reigning cultural scripts, centers of power and products of interchanges among people (Cerulo, 1997; Gergen, 1985). Since the punk identity is observed as oppose to the society, it is worth studying this relationship through the lenses of social constructionism because it advocates the idea that people construct their reality depending on what they are exposed to in their environment. The paradox here is that the same individuals are a part of that environment and create the values that are dominant. This is why people and the society are merged and mutually constitutive. Indeed, as Gergen (1995) stated, social construction and identity politics are usually observed as a pair of star-crossed lovers, entwined in a relationship suffused with passion, provocation and perfidy (Gergen, 1995). A dynamic idea of identity is also supported by symbolic interactionism that is, however, not addressed in this research.

Concerning the above explained fact that punk identity and its meanings are co-constructed in interactions with others, it is prudent to support the social constructionism as an approach with qualitative research methods for several reasons. Firstly, because it embodies a view of the social reality as constantly shifting emerging property of individual's creation (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Secondly, it is crucial to identify the nuances of subjective understanding that motivate various processes in the identity creation (Erickson, 2012). Qualitative research allows the researcher to seek for the shades of meaning in the investigation and elicit the discovery of new dimensions of a phenomenon (Deshpande, 1983; Turner, 2010). Moreover, its tools such as observation and in-depth interviews can enable more context – sensitive interpretation of the observed issue (Bryman and Bell, 2008). This is especially significant concerning the adopted perspective that people develop their identity with special regard to the sociocultural context (Baumeister and Muraven, 1996).

3.2. IN – DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Following the tenants of constructionism, Silverman argues that the versions of the world, society and events are produced in discourse and can be decomposed and studied as a rhetorical production (Silverman, 2010). Indeed, the language is involved with the power processes and ideologies in ways that people are unaware of (Boje, et al., 2004). In line with this, Goffman states that identities are, to a greater rather than a lesser extent, more accurately seen as co-constructed or dialogical entities which are 'fabricated' through discourse, 'staged' through performance and 'fictionalized' through text (1959).

Following these arguments it is understandable why in – depth interviews were chosen as a tool for the research. Interviews are considered to be possibly the most powerful techniques for capturing valuable description pertaining to participants' experiences and points of view about a particular topic, usually unapproachable by quantitative research (Turner, 2010; Bryman, 2012). In other words, if identities are socially constructed, and if we want to understand how, then we need to focus on one context in which they are manifested – people's talk (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1990). In general, in – depth interviews are powerful tools that enable us to learn how people construct their realities and how they explain, define and experience the world, which is suitable for exploring the research questions (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

In line with this, semi – structured interviews seem more appropriate than unstructured, because even though there was some room for pursuing topics of particular interest to the participants, there was a set of questions that were meant to be covered regardless of their order (Bryman, 2012). A detailed interview schedule was constructed initially consisting of on open – ended questions, because they allow the interviewers to fully focus on the participants' perspective and they usually provide rich and detailed responses and potential probes and follow – up questions (Turner, 2010). Considering previously mentioned fact that these interviews were informal in nature, these follow - up questions were aimed at investigating participants' preferences, attitudes and opinions that seemed relevant to the topic, but also designed to enhance exploratory nature of the research and potentially generate new knowledge (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1990).

As mentioned, several questions were prepared in advance, with the possibility of alternation if it seemed appropriate (Anon, 2014), although the interview itself seemed loosely structured and flexible, because "*researchers must be able to cope with the lack of the structure and ambiguity in the actual practice of their work*" (Le Compte and Schensul, 1999: 48). In general, these were four "core" questions that were asked throughout every interview were:

1. *What is (not) punk?*
2. *How did you become a punk?*
3. *What makes you a punk?*
4. *Who is "the" punk? (In regard to authenticity)*

The first part of the interview had a set of filter questions that were supposed to help in building the rapport with the participants. Also, special attention was given the specific context of their lived experience, because one must study the contextual features in which a person is embedded to understand the utility of the individual's personal or social identity and appreciate the individuals' psychological processes and the meaning of these processes within the social, physical, and economic contexts in which they function (Adams and Marshall, 1996). This specifically relates to the section called "*Participants*". Those included questions about age, profession and general perception about themselves and their identity by asking: "*Do you perceive yourself as a punk*?" Interviews were recorded using the phone and transcribed by the researcher. The average length of the interview was half an hour.

3.3. THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

In the line with the constructivist belief that observes identity construction as a result of interaction of members in the subculture, the research itself was approached in the similar manner. In other words, both researcher and participants are involved continually in the construction of the knowledge, as knowledge itself is understood to be gained through a dynamic process (Denzin and Linkoln, 1998). As a novice researcher, author discovered that every new interview shed some light on the topic and cumulatively revealed "repertoires" that all together enabled researcher to ask more specific and better tailored questions with every

new interview. This also explains why theoretical sampling was chosen as means of data gathering (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

In order to gain better insight, it was useful to build rapport in this process (Miller and Glassner, 2004). Rapport in this research meant creating a friendly atmosphere and encouraging participant to express their opinions and beliefs, rather than being judgmental. This is especially significant because the researcher wanted to gain the access to the psychological background of the participants, since a useful condensation on the nature of self and identity from a psychological and sociological perspective offers a framework for examining the person-in-context (Adams and Marshall, 1996). However, rapport is seen as a balancing act, because too much rapport would as well mean that the interview would last too long, or that participants would answer in the way that would please the researcher (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This was the reason why following activities were undertaken: certain level of deception and consideration of researcher's outfit.

Firstly, at the beginning of the interview, researcher explained the purpose of the interview, but avoided mentioning the fact that dissertation was done as a part of the marketing course, in order to avoid the immediate hostility that would be the result of anti – consumeristic nature of this subculture that relates marketing to capitalistic ideology that is meant to "*pull the wool over people's eyes"*. This was based on the literature review and also after two participants denied to be part of the research. Also, "*deseption in various degrees is probably quite widespread in much research, because researchers often want to limit participant's understanding of what the research is about so that they can respond more naturally to the experimental treatment*" (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 142).

Secondly, a great level of consideration was given to the way of approaching potential participants. Since the impact of possessions was itself a part of the research and the researcher herself, is not punk, it was relevant to consider the clothes that would be used throughout the research. It is well known that people would rather create rapport with somebody who is within the same subculture, drawing upon the conclusions about assimilation. However, on the other hand, after initial shadowing, it was concluded that punks would be even more hostile to somebody who is just pretending to be punk, in other words – a "poseur". This is why the researcher decided to dress in a casual way, sometimes even wearing dresses and high heels, which was used to potentially start the discussion on why that particular kind of dressing is "not punk" if the clothes were "not relevant at all", which will be explained in more detail in analysis section.

Chapter 4 | RESEARCH STRATEGY

4.1. IMPLEMENTING IN – DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Interviewing took place during July, 2014. The material that was analyzed was made of transcripts of interviews with punks in two countries: *Bosnia and Herzegovina* and *England*. Some of the advices followed from the literature were: "*try to use the language that is comprehensive and relevant to the people you are interviewing*" (Bryman, 2012: 442), so the language used in the questionnaire was adapted to the specific group of people in order to keep them seem fairly casual (Bryman, 2005). However, if the language enables researcher to unravel the complexes of identity formation and construction and reconstruction that comes over time, that still does not imply that identity is nothing but talk (Ybema et al, 2009).

Although it is generally taken as an expression of identity', in most if not all instances, 'identity talk' is enhanced, elaborated or secured through a wide variety of additional semiotics – such as bodily acts, the use of artefacts and dress codes – which may all be regarded as embodied symbolic expressions intrinsic to the adoption or ascription of particular identities

(Ybema et al, 2009). This is why interviews were conducted in a "punk environment" that were extremely informal. They took place mostly outside the punk bars or sitting on the street corners, while consuming alcohol and cigarettes in order to create a rapport with participants (Bryman, 2005). All of this resulted in conducting 14 interviews, 7 in each country. There were also 12 males and 2 females interviewed. The average length of interviews was 30 minutes. They were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Specific additional characteristic of the implementation of the interviews will be explained in the following sections.

4.2. CROSS – CULTURAL ANALYSIS

This cross – cultural analysis was undertaken for several reasons. Social settings are a source of influence in shaping the identity formation processes and societies can provide institutionalized situations where individuals can identify with others and imitate roles (Adams and Marshall, 1996). We walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. The lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it (Gamson et al, 1992). What is interesting here is how two differently constructed perceptions about prevailing societal factors resulted in creating one apparently similar subculture, following the argument that punk subculture is created as a distorted reflection of the society. Additionally, "*society is shown to sort youths and would their sense*

of self' (Adams and Marshall, 1996:437) which means that it is relevant to gain the bigger picture about participants' background.

4.3. THEORETICAL SAMPLING

As previously mentioned, theoretical sampling was used, because it indicates that the sampling of additional incidents, events, activities, populations, and so on is directed by the evolving (Schwandt, 2007). It is based on the ground theory that is described as the discovery of the theory from data systematically collected from social research. In terms of this investigation, the sample of people who were interviewed consisted of several classifications that were seen as appropriate as the research progressed. Firstly, researcher was interested in interviewing people who obviously belong to the punk scene, according to the way they dress (or behave), so only based on the way they look, they were recognized and asked to be a part of the research. This is why the fieldwork started in the most obvious place – punk pubs.

However, after several interviews, it was concluded that punk identity cannot be observed in such "naïve" sense as a pure combination of possessions, clothes and subcultural capital, so researcher decided to find people who do not obviously belong to punk scene, but still consider themselves (and are considered) as punks, regardless of their looks. For this reason, researcher used her punk friends to appoint her to these people. Aside from these two, it was researchers aim to investigate the meaning of punk identity across different age groups, since it was concluded that there is an apparent difference in defining punk, depending on the

age of participants, which was also mentioned in Benetts (2006) investigation. Thus, the age of participants ranged from 20 to 52 years. Lastly, some interviewees stated that "*punk is a male dominated subculture*", so eventually only two female punks were interviewed.

As Bryman and Bell (2011) state, sampling is not only about people, but also about the context where the sampling was obtained. In – depth interviews are supposed to be held in the environment where participants can feel free and open about their experiences and inner feelings (Miller and Glassner, 1997). This is the reason why interviews were conducted in punk pubs and places where participants felt free to talk to each other about specific aspects in a relaxed way (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). Further on, an initial shadowing and time spent with punks in these places enabled the researcher to gain the useful sociological perspective that provides a framework for examining the person – in context (Adams and Marshall, 1996).

Every participant was asked about their personal background in order to understand the subject of the research and gain insightful perspective rather than simply confirming a priori ideas. Also, since the topic of the investigation is identity, which has to be observed from several aspects and not only through the lenses of membership to a certain group, it seemed reasonable to explore every individual's background, thus obtaining better perception about their common denominator, that is membership within punk subculture. For this reason, the following is the list of each participant's personal contexts:

Participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina:	Personal background
Kameni	(27); works in a punk shop; plays in an Oi band; dresses like a punk; listens to punk since the age of 13.
Gary	(22); works for a private company; regularly has fights with his boss; the youngest in the punk group.
Marko	(33); unemployed; plays in an Oi band; one of the oldest punk members in a group.
Sonja	(24); master student; the only female in a punk group; has a wealthy background.
Sliba	(27); employed; has a collection of vinyl records and punk clothes; has many tattoos related to punk.
Fedja	(27); works as a waiter; plays in a street punk band; has a younger brother who is "*trying to be a punk*".
Goran	(30); works as a waiter; finished a master degree but cannot find a better job; does not smoke, drink or dress like a punk.

Participants from England:	Personal background
Luke	(18); studies philosophy; does not look like a punk; listens to punk since the age of 15.
Gregg	(52); musician; listens to punk since the age of 13; played in a punk rock band as a tribute to Pistols; dresses like a punk and has many tattoos.
Bob	(31); works as a joiner; does not look like a punk, but is considered as one by his friends.
Roy	(59); used to be a fashion designer, dancer and an ex drug addict.
Jack	(29); plays drums in a punk band; works for a cable communication company; has many tattoos.
James	(21); studies medicine, does not look like a punk; regularly goes to punk pubs and gigs.
Lizzy	(20); wants to be a costume designer; lived in China for 6 years; has a specific dressing style.

4.4. ANALYSIS

The analysis was based around investigation of a punk identity at the level of talk in order to answer the research questions, thus revealing patterns in the way participants talked about identity (Taylor and Littleton, 2006). As previously mentioned, the role of the language is extremely important because a constructionist perspective assumes that people and events will not be presented consistently over time, but rather through a variety of different "repertoires", depending on their function (McKenzie, 2005). This is why interpretative repertoires, as a theoretical and analytical concept from a discourse analysis, were adopted. They provide recognizable, even clichéd resources for new occasions of talking about ourselves and our lives (Taylor and Littleton, 2006).

To support the argument that language can be observed as a medium of interaction that is the underlying object of this research, Howard (2000) implies that identities are constructed through the talk and many studies analyze identity following the dynamics and talks in the everyday interactions. The talk can be observed similarly to scripts that actors adopt in a play, a parallel that is a metaphor for a socially constructed everyday world by Goffman (1959). Therefore, it was assumed that these *"relatively internally consistent, bounded language units which we have called ... interpretative repertoires"* will be able to reveal the secret behind the punk identity (Wetherell and Potter, 1988: 171).

Chapter 5 | ANALYSIS

The analysis is based around identifying: essentialist and anti – essentialist idea of identity. Within and across interviews people shifted from having one to another standpoint regarding the dynamics of identity. These two repertoires helped to structure the responses of the participants by underlying their essentialist or non – essentialist point of view. There is a thread through the literature review that explains the notions of punk identity, which was used as a structure of the analysis to emphasize when these specific repertoires were used. Additionally, literature observes the punk identity as something dynamic. However, people who identify themselves as punks also rely on a more static point of view of identity in order to be a punk. It is therefore useful to explore how these two contradictory repertoires, together, make a constituent viewpoint of the punk identity and how interviewees use different functions of these repertoires to justify their actions or viewpoints.

5.1. WHAT IS, ACTUALLY, PUNK?

"*You can't define punk. Because if you could define it, it wouldn't exist*" (Roy)

At the beginning of the research, the literature review gave a rather vague insight on the actual meaning of punk, stating that: "*Defining punk is like trying to nail Jello to the wall: you might be able to do it for a moment, but it won't stick*" (Sabin, 2002). This might be related to the often-repeated statement in interviews: "*These are no generalizations in punk. There are so many different punk scenes as well*" (Kameni). This only gives a blur sense of what punk might be, so when interviewees were asked what could possibly be the common denominator, the usual response was "*being different and against establishment*". On the other hand, it remained rather unclear what the object they try to be different from is, as well as the concept of the "establishment". Thus, the notion of punk seems as something mysterious and enigmatic, which is suitable for the dynamic, anti – essentialist lenses.

However, the definition given by many punks was also often related to an essentialist approach, because many punks described punk as either "*lifestyle*", "*music*", "*clothes*". These concepts present rather fixed traits that can be easily obtained. For example, when asked if there is anything that could compromise his punk identity, Gary said: "*I am a punk, I think like a punk and I listen to that kind of music. Nothing can change that*". From his statement, previously mentioned essentialist view is obvious, because one can simply "*think like a punk*" and listen to punk music in order to be a punk. Other essentialist definitions that will be presented, are a result of a very narrow range of terms used in a specific context and represent the scripts that punks create through the interaction to define their view on punk (McKenzie,

2005). Accordingly, the following analysis was based around several sections that seemed to be worth exploring in terms of the tenants of punk identity. The first two topics to be assessed in these terms are the processes of differentiation and assimilation.

5.2. US VERSUS THEM

The literature informed us that identity is constructed relying on the processes of differentiation and assimilation. Differentiation is usually presented through linguistic oppositions that are usually utilized to set up a hierarchy and dissociate the others from one's own characteristics. The following are examples of scripts that symbolize the difference punks make between them and "the others".

Gregg: "*Many punks look like normal people nowadays*". In other words, he perceives punks as not being "normal".

Fedja: "*It's not about trying to be different, you just are - different.*"

Hence, these statements paint punk identity in an essential way for several potential reasons. Firstly, the essentialist characteristic emphasizes that identities emerge though the articulation of similarities and differences and it seems that an intrinsic part of the process by which we come to understand who *we* are is intimately connected to notions of who we are *not*

(Woodward, 1997). This is similar to the comparison of Serbian and Croatian identity, regardless of the fact that the second one is based on ethnicity. The parallel was created because identity is marked out by difference. Serbian identity is created by distinction on what it is not, that is – to be a Serb is to be "*not a Croat*" (Woodward, 1997). Apparently, punk identity hearts its distinctiveness in relation to mainstream society, as confirmed in interviews: **"*The whole point is to go against the society*" (Marko).**

On the other hand, the notion "us versus them" asks for less flexible and fluid boundaries, because then the line between "us" and "them" could be passed easily and exclusivity would be endangered. Thus, a rather strict line tends to be made as a tool of differentiation. Also this line is the only way to stop others from stealing the subcultural capital and revealing the secret behind the punk identity. This is why the core of the concept "us versus them" is the possibility of the theft of enjoyment (Goffman, 2008; Žižek, 1993). In other words, the bond that holds a community together is the shared relationship to a "*thing*" that is only accessible to members, but constantly menaced by "*the others*" (Clark, 2008). This was even mentioned as a script in interviews **(Jack): "*We all feel connected to this one thing*"** - without, actually, defining what that "thing" was. Perhaps the best example of keeping the mystique was pointed out by **Gary** who said: **"*The most important thing is that they don't understand the way you think*".** The way of thinking can change, but the essential characteristic – no matter what kind of thinking it is, is always to be different. Even the object that differentiation is based upon is rather vague, but assists the mystery of punk. Keeping the knowledge means keeping the power, which will be discussed as a way of fighting the "*polluting others*".

This static idea of separation between punks and the others is also supported by several other ways they use to deal with the others. They hide from them, avoid, shock or even scare them. **Sliba** describes this in the best way:

"*There's this symbol that we used in our franzines – a rat. It can be related to punk, because the rat is always hidden in these dark corners...*"

In addition, **Kameni** states: **"*It's a moment of shock. When we were young the point was to make others afraid, even the ones older than you*."**

In addition, the evaluative bias toward one's ingroup, explained by McGrath and McMillan (1992), was mentioned by

Sonja: "*I feel better than people who see who I'm friends with and have prejudges about us. That makes me feel so good, just because I get some kind of satisfaction and confirmation that what I'm doing is right. I wouldn't even say it's about being different, I think it's about staying away from people who are limited*." Marking others as "*limited*" shows favourability she has toward her in-group as oppose to the others.

Goran made another example of this: **"*I wouldn't say you're stupid. It's just I understood something that you didn't.*"** This fixed repertoire draws a clear line between punk groups and "the others". This is also another way of saying that in order to be a

punk, you need to be intelligent and have an open mind. In addition, **Sonja said: "*People are afraid to change anything, to stand out.*"** By denoting that others are *afraid* Sonja represents non-punks as weak in comparison to punks. Thus, this in-group out-group comparison is done as a positive evaluation of one's own group which is supported by the Social Identity Theory (Hogg, 2006).

These essentialist statements can also be understood using the insight from social psychology. Positioning the others not only as different, can also be used to present them as less acceptable and sometimes, less powerful, in order to maintain the positive evaluation of one's own group (Ybema et al, 2009). In other words, the motivation for creating the difference between "us" and "them" can be hidden in the need for maintaining the positive self – esteem through the comparison with less competent others. Mary Douglas (1966) explores this problem even deeper by explaining how "polluting others" define the way in which societal boundaries are made due to associations of pollution and dirt with danger. From her viewpoint, the construction of "the others" is a result of *the fear* of difference and as a defense there is a resulting gradation made of inferior and superior beings (Clark, 2008). Additionally, the differentiation has a function of generating power over others. This is proved through Goran's sentence; because we can see that the power is hidden in knowing something that is not available to just anybody.

5.2.1. "*Punk different*"

Even though this subculture seems pretty aggressive and expressive, it cannot be forgotten that one of the greatest ideals they have is the appreciation for other people's individualism, freedom of though and equality. This is the point where punks usually switch to a more liberal point of view and undertake anti – essentialist repertoire in order to appraise their ideology. The script that was usually used to support this: "*doing whatever you want*". Here are some examples:

Luke: "*It's a genre of music where anyone can kind of come into it. And you just turn up at the show and everyone is equal. I wouldn't say punk is a kind of elitist genre. Especially in the amateur scene. Anyone can turn up if you got a guitar and there's definitely a chance for it.*"

Marko: "*Nobody can tell you you're not a punk if you feel like one.*"

This script denotes that authenticity is difficult topic to be discussed because it depends on subjective evaluation and apparently there is no room for exclusivity. However, even this apparent "freedom" has its own boundaries. This is when the punks would switch to a more essentialist standpoint, because not simply anybody can be a punk. In other words, the notion of "*doing whatever you want*" has an extension – *"...as long as it is punk different*". This was most obvious within the conversation with **Sliba** where he was asked if somebody can come to a punk gig wearing a dress and high heels. He said: "***There are some marks of punk folklore.***

You can't wear… High heels and say you're a punk. It's not a part of that… It is about being different, but…"Punk different". A similar script was undertaken by Bob who said: *"If you're rebellion you want to be accepted by the people who are rebellion in the same way*". "*In the same way*" means that there are certain norms that need to be respected, without actually acknowledging what these are.

Thus, it can be argued this essentialist repertoire is meant to be able to create certain group boundaries, mentioned by Abrams (2009). These can defend the exclusivity aura and prevent "the others" to be the part of the club. This was reflected by **Lizzy**'s quote: "***Obviously it's not all going to be roses, there is this cliquey side to it: if you're not living the exact same way we do, therefore you're not in our club, kind of thing.*"** This is contrary to Marko's statement that anybody can be a punk if they feel like one. Here we can see the obvious conflict of repertoires, which confirms that they both have different functions, the anti – essentialist one is supposed to express their ideology in terms of freedom and equality and the static one is supposed to support boundaries around punk identity, expressed through certain norms and present the need for exclusivity.

However, even the script "punk different", has dual function. It can also advocate the anti – essentialist repertoire, because it is easily changeable and adjustable. This is in line with Sabin's (2002) argument about punk's fluid boundaries. The function of this static script is to justify, for example, an action that would usually not be represented as a typical "punk thing to do", but is justified under the veil of "punk different" repertoire. Since it is rather vague and undefined where the exact line between what is punk and what it is not as well as why is

something punk as oppose to something else, it enables punks to defend their "thing" and keep the outsiders away.

The process of differentiation thus obviously plays a great role in the identity creation. Jung explained this principle of opposites in a most simple way: "*In fact, it is a very basic point: In order to have a concept of good, you must have a concept of bad, just like you can't have up without down or black without white*" (Jung, 1971: 9). This supports the basic concept of punk as well, according to **Bob: "*I think the background of the punk is to rebel and you become a punk because you rebel against stuff.*"** However, identity cannot be defined as the absolute difference in comparison to something, regardless of these rather essentialist statements. Neither identity nor difference should be observed as something fixed without observing the greater picture that also asserts the inevitable concept of assimilation.

To introduce assimilation that together with differentiation creates the dynamics of punk identity a Hindu viewpoint can be useful: our individual egos are like islands in a sea: We look out at the world and each other and think we are separate entities. What we don't see is that we are connected to each other by means of the ocean floor beneath the waters. Or simply as **Roy** said: **"*Punks want to be kind of individual, but in a group*."** Additionally, differentiation can also be seen in a function of assimilation, because it is a tool to recognize other punks, not only through clothes, but also through some less visible features that will be discussed in the following sections.

5.3. (NO) MAN IS AN ISLAND

Gregg: "*When you find people who are similar, you are just drawn to them*."

Turner et al (1989) assert that people tend to construct group norms and conform, so the process of assimilation can be seen through the lens of conformity. This conformity is created through recruiting certain expectations within the group as mental representations necessary to gain knowledge about the specific category (Hegarty and Pratto, 2004). Interaction with others enables punks to gain a better understanding of what kind of "roles" they need to play and the scripts analyzed here can literally be seen as scripts for their play.

The role of assimilation is therefore to set the *norms* that enable establishing authenticity, whose tenants are identity features. The norms emerge through a process of social interaction when people seek for cues and signs that indicate what they can expect and present potentially the only frame for discussion on the construction and maintenance of punk identity (Hegarty and Pratto, 2004). An interesting notion here is that these norms reflect a more essentialist idea of identity, due to their fixed traits. The following are several supporting scripts about assimilation:

Gary: "*I probably wouldn't be what I am today if I didn't meet these people, because it would get lost… I guess you need others in order to continue this trend*".

Goran: "*You are not a punk if I never saw you on a gig*."

Gary adopts anti – essentialist perspective, because he acknowledges interaction to be something that affect one's identity in influences the process of identity construction. However, when it comes to other functions of assimilation, for example identity maintenance, a rather static repertoire is used. This denotes that one can regularly go to punk gigs and festivals in order to maintain the punk identity. However, as soon as a slightest notion of defining what these norms, actually, are, punks would become extremely defensive, changing their repertoire to another extreme, taking on anti – essentialist viewpoint.

Kameni*: "We're not a cult! We don't organize regular meetings you know!"*

Thus, it can be claimed that some norms in terms of assimilation do exist, however these cannot be observed only through lenses of essentialist viewpoint of identity. So it cannot be simply stated that in order to refresh the identity one can simply regularly go to gigs and festivals. This repertoire is possibly taken on because of the danger of trivialization and could perhaps be interpreted as their defensive mechanism that has to defend the previously mentioned "Thing". In other words, "*any attempt to grasp punk identity by its 'uniformity' is doomed to failure*" (Bloustien, 2003: 53). This perhaps explains the norms that concretization of this subculture would potentially take away the enigma it has. This is complementary to the script "punk different", because it denotes that certain norms exist, but just as punk itself, can hardly be defined. This was also an issue in exploring authenticity that can be observed on the bases of these norms, which will be asserted in the following section.

5.4. HOW PUNK ARE YOU?

As seen in the previous section, both differentiation and assimilation are relevant processes in creating punk identity and authenticity. As previously mentioned, assimilation plays a great role in creating authenticity, especially in terms of norms, because constituent features seemed to be the most reliable tool for investigating authenticity (Hegarty and Pratto, 2004). However, several issues have risen in the process of exploring punk authenticity. Firstly, when asked if it was possible to make a scale for "*how punk somebody is on the scale of poseur to an authentic punk*", which would denote a static idea of identity, a typical script that was revealed was concerned with incommensurability of punk members in terms of subcultural capital, supported by the dynamic concept:

Kameni: "*There are so many different punk styles, like Oi, hardcore punk and they all have different ideology and lyrics.*"

In addition, if we talk about authenticity in terms of visual features, there is a difference between people who dress like punks and people who do not:

Bob: "*Paul says I'm probably more punk than him. Someone looks at me in the street, I'm not a punk. Someone looks at him in the street, he's a punk. But I probably have more of a mentality of a punk than he's got.*"

So there is a script of stereotypical punks that relates to a more essentialist idea of identity, but is dismissed according to **Luke: "*I think it's impossible to discuss this unless you're dealing with stereotypes. Like "How British are you?" and the questions would be like: do you drink tea, do you eat fish and chips? And that excludes a lot of people like me, who like having black, single coloured hair, unidentified*."** Thus, these dynamic repertoires dismissed any notion of comparison. Accordingly, if any comparison was undertaken as a topic of discussion, punks would adopt a more static repertoire, simply because there need to be some fixed traits that are an object of comparison, as well as the norms for evaluation. This is possibly best seen on the example of comparison between younger and older members.

5.4.1. "*Young versus Old*"

In general, almost every punk would say that punk is **(Gregg): "*…more of an attitude, a lifestyle. Not just music*")**, and refer to a more dynamic concept of the identity. However, later on in the interview Gregg and the others would continuously repeat that **"*Now it's really just music*"**, which expresses the essentialist idea. This means that one can simply listen to the music and be a punk, which accordingly affects the level of authenticity as well. In order to analyses these two contradictory repertoires it is relevant to take into account that even though they both talk about punk, they refer to different punks, in the first case punks in the past and in the second one - in the presence, when they actually refer to older and younger member. In the interview Gregg said he started playing at the age of 16 and states: "*We thought we were punk at the time*." This means that he refers to himself as being more genuine today and

indicates that punk identity has to be something that is created and co – created throughout time, obviously taking on the anti – essentialist repertoire.

This was recognized in the paper "Being Versus Doing Punk", by Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1990), which found that the punks tend to refer to the presence as being inferior to the past in terms of authenticity. The reason for this is their belief that punk subculture had some features in the past that they found preferable in comparison to the features that exist today. There was a support for this statement within the interviews conducted for this research as well. An example is **Jack**'s quote about Ramone's T – shirt: ***"Punk has become a fashion, when it used to be a principle. Today it's more about the fashion as oppose to a way of thinking."*** This is probably why many of them believe that as older the members are, more genuine they become, which was confirmed by Lewin and Williams (2009). In other words, the younger the members are, the more appropriate is the essentialist idea of identity to describe them. This is potentially because the circumstances are changed today, and new members do not have the same basis in terms of societal norms, to create their identity upon, or simply because "*they were not there*" when the "*real*" punk was made.

5.4.2. "*Bankers*"

Additionally recognized script states that there is no such thing as a *complete authenticity*, simply because punks are a part of the society and occasionally, no matter how

punk they are, they need to make compromises. The following are the examples of anti – essentialist repertoires to support this:

Gregg: "*It's impossible to achieve this authenticity 100%, you have to put food on the table, and you have to pay the taxes…*"

Lizzy: "*It's a punk way of life, but I guess if you live this "party all the time – living on the edge life, you are fucking crazy, because it can really stress you out."*

These are anti – essentialist scripts because they emphasize the dynamic concept of punk identity that is adjusted to societal norms. In addition, some punk did not even want to be labeled as punks. Potential reason for this is perhaps because punk identity demands a high level of deindividualization, which was suggested by Stets and Burke (2000). Punks are sometimes not ready for this, as they do need to compromise with the society as well. In addition, many of the interviewees thought that authentic punk is an unachievable concept and feel that they are not dignified enough to be referred to as "a punk".

The best way to explain the anti – essentialist repertoire raised is possibly through the script we can refer to as "bankers". Namely, being the member of this group was a category that is throughout interviews explained more through the comparison of what "not being a member" means and many of them said bankers. These are, as **Lizzy** said: "***Corporate assholes that treat people like shit. You can't choose where you'll be born. But you can choose whether you'll become a banker.*"** This talk is about behaviour, attitude and beliefs that are completely opposite to the ones that punks have, but can also relate to the way of dressing, and

is an example of an essentialist idea of identity, because the object of differentiation is something fixed.

On the other hand, when being asked "*Who is more punk, a man who walks inside the punk place in a suit, or the one with a Mohican"*, many punks said – a man in a suit. **Gregg** explains this as**: "*It's about anti – conformance. It's about being different.*"** To support this, **Sonja** said: **"*I believe you can do anything in your life, even be a successful lawyer and still be a punk*".** These are the two examples of anti – essentialist repertoire, because according to them, one can have changed and adjusted identity, in terms of prevailing societal norms, and still be a punk. Interestingly, punks went so far to take on completely contradictory scripts, going from one extreme to another. The potential explanation for this anti – essentialist view might be its function to justify the compromises punks need to make in everyday life, living within the society they inevitably belong to (Eriksen, 1980).

This repertoire is useful, because if people only had an essentialist idea of punk, it would be difficult for someone to become for example, a banker, and maintain their punk identity. It makes sense to use this script along with a set of decisions one needs to make in order to compromise, but at the same time wants to keep the aura of authenticity. This can also be confirmed if we take into account the backgrounds of representative interviewees. Lizzy is a 20 year old student that lives her punk lifestyle with no boundaries in terms of a regular job. On the other hand, Sonja is a master student with the perspective to get "the suit".

5.5. IDENTITY CONSTITUENT FEATURES

5.5.1. FASHION

"*My body is a cage, I'm standing on a stage."*

Arcade Fire

Nancy (2007) argues that the human identity is embodied in terms of our appearance, because there are no other clear and visible evidence of our existence, since the soul itself is not visible. Following this argument, we can recognize the body and its modifications as supportive features in creating the role we play more convincing (Goffman, 1959). Moreover, punk itself is a style and seeks to differentiate its members. "*It is for this very basic reason—the power of adornment to differentiate that style – conscious subcultures such as punk and hip – hop seek new fashion codes and invert old ones*" (Force, 2009: 291).

If we firstly take into account the differentiating function of the punk outfit, it was interesting to discover several functions it has: to start with, it can be seen as a sign of true commitment within older members secondly, thus a confirmation of authenticity; as means to recognize poseurs, or the lack of authenticity and lastly as an entering criterion to the group.

Roy said: "*I used to make clothes in the seventies and I believe that music and fashion and drugs go together in a way*."

Fedja said: "*I always wore Dr. Marten's boots, Mohican… Because I like it. It identifies you from the start*."

When being asked how he would recognize a punk, **James said: "*By the way they look, I guess."***

These are examples of static idea of identity because one can simply wear punk clothes and be recognized as a punk. In addition, it is noticeable that even when they mention the differentiation process as means of expressing identity, there are still traces of certain uniformity that were explained previously through the script of being "*punk different*". However, it is worth noticing that some of the scripts concerning the fashion also supported a more anti – essentialist idea of identity.

Sliba:"*It's not about the fashion. For example I don't even look like a punk. It's stupid; they are just a bunch of poseurs. I'm actually really annoyed by this! I do have the fucking boots, but I don't want to wear them on gigs on purpose, because that's punk for me. I don't need to look like a punk, yet everybody in town knows that I am*."

The underlying reason for this anti – essentialist stand point has several explanations. **Luke** demonstrated one: ***Originally it all started with the outfit that was supposed to show the nonconformity and individualism. However, it became a norm which is in my opinion a bit***

***inherited contradictory. Because it doesn't matter how you look, and what kind of music you're making... If you do it because you want it, I think that punk mind-set.*"** Here is the notion of norm again, that caused previously revolting reactions within punks. In addition, **Lizzy's** dynamic repertoire is in the function of emphasizing the difference between the past and present punks. She said**: "*Many things that are now turned into fashion used to be simply practical.*"** This is an addition notion of past as being more authentic than presence in terms of fashion.

Lizzy also confirms Sabin's (2002) assumption about commoditization. She said: "***I guess it's also because punk has become such a commoditized category today, so people can just subscribe to it and not necessarily because of the essence."*** This obviously created this urge to make a clear cut, in order to save the true "essence" and ways punks create this separation are previously mentioned. This as well means that some other aspects that create punk authenticity were overlooked or in other words, outsiders can always adopt aspects of a punk style, but unless they understand the punk ideology, they cannot be 'punk' (Lewin and Williams, 2009). These artifacts and knowledge which are recognized as 'hip' and sophisticated within a specific subculture and will be further on referred to as subcultural capital (Jensen, 2006).

5.5.1.1. “Poseurs”

An example of how to get most easily judged by punks is wearing a Ramones T-shirt, which was noted several times in the interviews, as **Jack** previously mentioned**: “*These kids go around wearing Ramones T-shirt, which they bought it in a fucking Primark and don’t even know who the Ramones were*.”** This again denies the notion that “*you can do whatever you want*” and addresses another interesting fact – punks can be even more hostile toward the people who want to be a part “of the club”, but do not meet the punk standards. In other words, unlikeable in-group members will be evaluated more negatively than unlikeable out-group members, which was noted as a black – sheep effect (Marques and Yzerbyt, 1988). This is especially interesting the case of exploring the attitude of punks against poseurs or other members that for some reason do not fit in the ideal norm of punk subculture. The fear of a theft of enjoyment that is previously mentioned could be the potential underlying reason for this phenomenon.

Talking about fashion as entering criterion inevitably draws the concept of young and old members. Earlier on, we could see how Fedja relied on the essentialist repertoire when he refers to clothes, but when he discusses the commitment in terms of young and old members, he starts to switch toward the less stable notion of identity.

Fedja: “*People who see it as a way of dressing… Well, as they take off that clothes, they leave this story, too. I think the people who are the most extreme in this kind of things*

***are the ones that care the least about punk. On the other hand, there are people who treat this clothes as their fashion for their whole life*.”**

The reason why he switched to a dynamic repertoire is because he wants to emphasize the difference between the poseurs and “real punks”. According to Fedja, the time spent in punk clothes is the best signal of who is more genuine, thus emphasizing old members as genuine punks and younger ones as “guilty until proved innocent”. The previously mentioned black – sheep effect is probably most obvious within the fashion concept, since there are so many people who are marked as poseurs for exploring and adopting punk style without **“*understanding the essence*”** (**Lizzy**). They are usually the ones that see punk fashion as a trend and are strongly rejected by the “genuine punks”.

Potentially one of the reasons why the poseurs are so detested within the punk society is because it takes a lot of commitment sacrifice and fight to maintain the punk fashion throughout the years, to be eventually misjudged as a poseur that wears that clothes only for a season or two. **Gregg**, who is 52, and still wears punk clothes said that he just: “***Ended up being that way*.”** However, he still does not deny authenticity of people who are “successful bankers today”, which links to previously discussed anti – essentialist concept of managing punk identity in the context of everyday circumstances.

5.5.2. MUSIC

Music can be understood as a major constituent part of punk subculture, if nothing then because it is initially a music subculture and there is a vast support in literature that claims punks used music not only to express themselves, but also as self-determination tool (Sabine, 2002). There is an essentialist repertoire that states it is perhaps the main part of the identity:

Goran: "*I don't drink, smoke or dress like a punk. But I listened to this music for my whole life and everybody in this city know I'm a punk*."

Roy: "*It's the music, the lyrics and the beat. And you need to like it… Love it! Passion. Fashion, passion, music."*

Luke: "*I started considering myself a punk when I really got into the music and it was understanding what they're saying and agreeing with that*."

According to these essentialist statements, punk identity is one to be easily obtained, as listening to music can be enough to be a punk. Similarly to fashion, music is the entering criterion, but also something that stays an internal feature of a punk identity. It has a multiple function, so it is not only used to express the anger and discomfort with the social trends, but it is also a tool for generating ideas and gaining new "scripts" that become widely accepted within punks.

However, trying to grasp a meaning of punk only through music and ignoring other factors can seem like a dead end street. When being asked can someone simply be identified as a punk, only according to their music taste,

Kameni said**: "*I'd say it's about the music, because it's easier to play another song to somebody, than change his attitude*."**

Additionally **Gary** stated**: "*If you just listen to the music, and do not share our attitude, you are not a punk.*"**

This is the obvious switch to a more dynamic repertoire that signalizes how regardless of the recognized value the music itself has, it is not enough to create an authentic punk. The potential reason for this shift from fixed to dynamic repertoire could be that even though the music might be one of the most relevant features of punk identity, the commitment to maintain punk identity asks for more than simply listening to music and denotes, as in the previous section, how subcultural capital in terms of attitudes and ideologies plays even greater role.

Chapter 6 | DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study has looked at the punk identity and as we have seen, there are several topics that can be used to discuss of how people create their idea of being a punk and how they describe, make sense of and think about what it means to be a punk. Therefore, contribution of this study has been to widen the findings of the existing literature, by illustrating how punks switch from clean stable to dynamic idea of punk identity. In other words, participants tend to switch between essentialist and anti – essentialist point of view as oppose to the current literature that suggests that punk identity is an "on – going process" concept, advocating solely the anti – essentialist position (Adams and Marshall, 1996). To explore this issue fifteen interviews with punks have been conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Kingdom. The limitation of the study was a rather small sample size. Other than that, some cultural differences between the punks from Bosnia and Herzegovina and England were not addressed, which might be the impact on the further research. Additionally, since the talk is the object of the investigation, it is possible that some "shades of meaning" were lost in terms of translation from Serbian language to English along with the bias coming from the fact that the researcher is not a native English speaker. Some of the most noticeable switches form one point of view to another are presented through the following table:

	ESSENTIALIST REPERTOIRE	**ANTI – ESSENTIALIST REPERTOIRE**
DIFFERENTIATION	Fedja: "*It's not about trying to be different, you just are - different*." Jack: "*We all feel connected to this one thing"* Lizzy: "I*f you're not living the exact same way we do, therefore you're not in our club, kind of thing.*"	Luke: "*It's a genre of music where anyone can kind of come into it. And you just turn up at the show and everyone is equal.*"
ASSIMILATION	Goran: "*You are not a punk if I never saw you on a gig*."	Kameni: "*We're not a cult! We don't organize regular meetings, you know!"*

AUTHENTICITY	Gregg: *"(Punk is) More of an attitude, a lifestyle… Not just music."* Lizzy: *"You can't choose where you'll be born. But you can choose whether you'll become a banker."*	Jack: *"Punk has become a fashion, when it used to be a principle."* Sonja: "*I believe you can do anything in your life, even be a successful lawyer and still be a punk*".
FASHION	James: *"(I would recognize punks) by the way they look, I guess."*	Kameni: *"It's just the clothes you can get in the shop. But what we know in between us cannot be bought that easily"*
MUSIC	Luke: "*I started considering myself a punk when I really got into the music.*"	Gary: "*If you just listen to the music, and do not share our attitude, you are not a punk.*"

In terms of authenticity, but also related to constituent features, many punks have raised the issue of difference between punk that it used to be in oppose to punk that exists today. When they refer to present punk they use a script that supports essentialist idea of identity, acknowledging how it became trivialized within current members and lost its essence. On the other hand, when they refer to the past with a dynamic repertoire, this signalizes their preference to the past by appraising its authenticity, both in terms of visual features and subcultural capital. This confirms the findings of Benett (2006) and Andes (1998).

Similarly, static repertoire is used to describe one's entrance to this subculture. It paints punk in rebellion colours and clear signals of being different. On the contrary, older, more experienced members seem to have a more anti – essentialist stand point where punk represents more than obvious features and regularly going to a punk club. Having said this, at the beginning of one's punk "career" punk identity seems to be an easy identity to have. One can simply dye their hair and have piercings and tattoos. Later on, punk identity seems to be more difficult to be managed, concerning the recognized value of subcultural capital. In other sense, this compliments the notion of punk identity as being dynamic, simply because we have an apparent change in terms of the past and the presence. If punk is observed as the distorted reflection of the society, this gives us the confirmation that punk is changing as the society trends are indeed constantly changing as well.

Related to previously discussed issue, is the notion of poseurs that is inevitable within any discussion about punk authenticity, clothes and other features. If we observe a common denominator of the interviews made, it could be argued that being a punk ideally involves a certain level of commitment, sacrifice and long term persistence. Essentialist repertoire perhaps

has a function to appreciate how much punk identity means to a punk and to emphasize the value of every of these norms and the commitment they demand (Eriksen, 1980). This is potentially the reason why punks detest the idea of being confused with people who are punks for a season, almost offending their subculture by making it trendy while omitting its true essence. This links to Sabin's argument that punks expressed disapproval of punk becoming such a commoditized category today, because the fashion and other features used to carry a much deeper meaning. This, again, relates to the comparison of punk now and then.

Additionally, the greater essentialist value of the concept it is, the more controversy there is about it. This could be best seen at the example of fashion, where the most valuable evidence one can use to prove their "punkness" was the period of time they spend in that clothes (Benett, 2006). On the other hand, if punks only used essentialist repertoire, it would mean that any of these norms can easily be obtained by just anybody. This is why punks slipped into a more dynamic repertoire, creating the notion of subcultural capital that is more difficult to be obtained. There is also a fixed notion of "the thing", which is similar to Becker's notion of the mystical musical gift, unobtainable through the education. Even though this is a static script, this undefinable concept has only one function – to maintain undefinable, thus protecting the subcultural capital from the "polluting others" and potential "theft of enjoyment. In other words, it supports the notion "what can be counted, doesn't count".

As previously mentioned, when people enter the punk subculture they use the clear signals to emphasize their belonging to this group, which is marked by the essentialist approach. On the other hand, older punks have to make compromises because even though they want to maintain their punk identity, they have to find a job, get married, etc. (Benett, 2006;

Eriksen, 1980). This is where they switch to a anti – essentialist view while describing how it is, for example acceptable to be a banker, possibly trying to justify the necessary compromises that need to be made, but they still do not want to give up on their punk identity, similarly to the script "punk different."

As the literature suggests, punk culture is based around appreciation of equality, freedom and individualism. However, this is conflicted with the certain norms that have risen in order to mark the line between "us and them". Thus is can be argued that essentialist repertoire sets the norms that are also the bases of exclusivity and authenticity, whereas anti – essentialist repertoire enables punks to hide a level of hypocrisy in terms of being exclusive, because it emphasizes how they support individualism and "doing whatever you want". So, according to the essentialist scripts, previous phrase that supports their ideology, also has an extension *"…as long as it is "punk different"*. This is an essentialist script because it acknowledges that there are certain norms that still need to be respected. On the other hand, being "punk different" also has a dynamic nature, because these norms remain unrecognized and vague, thus enabling punks to use this script to maintain their punk identity and justify themselves even when they are involved in some actions that would not necessarily be recognized as "punk". Literature supports this finding by stating that multiple potential identities are created in order to cope with compromises (Abrams, 2009).

As noted, the research on punk identity started off as an exploration of a dynamic concept, thus, anti – essentialist viewpoint was undertaken. However, through the research, an apparent essentialist characteristics of punk identity were identified according to the scripts that have different function. A simple example of essentialist repertoire would be: "*You're either a punk, or you're not*" (Kameni) or "*When punk is in your system, it can't get out*"

(Gregg). These statements pain punk identity as something stable and unchangeable, possibly with a function to protect it from the previously mentioned "theft of enjoyment", by presenting the essence of punk identity as something unattainable. However, in terms of the dynamics of punk identity it is also important to observe the wider picture. This means that this investigation has to take into consideration a different frame of reference, that is, not to get too close to miss the wood for the trees. In order to explain how the different perspective can be conducted, a simple example from physics will be used: if the person on the train moves with the same speed as the train, but in the opposite direction, for the external observer it might seem that the person is not moving at all, even though it is. Equally, it is only when viewed from an external frame of reference that it can be seen that both society and punk identity are constantly changing, with punk ideals changing to oppose those of society. This was also confirmed by acknowledging the difference between punks in the past and current members.

This research can confirm the assumption that punk identity can be observed as a dynamic concept (Adams and Marshall, 1996). However, it enriches the existing body of literature by revealing some essentialist claims as stabilized moments in a constant process of identity formation and re – formation (Ybema, 2009). Thus, while certainly not disputing the situated legitimacy of the actors' voice, we can understand that punks use essentialist repertoires to create their anti – essentialist identity. Even though they seem as definite, fixed traits, the mere fact that punks make these switches from one repertoire to another, once more reflects the dynamics of their identity. In addition, the idea of repertoires acknowledged here was used to emphasize that punks rely on either static or dynamic standpoint, depending on their function to justify, explain themselves or simply put – be punk. This can possibly be analogous to moves of a ballet dancer, because it encompasses the way different moves (terms,

metaphors) may be invoked according to their suitability to an immediate context (Potter et al, 1990).

Chapter 7 | LITERATURE

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