

Introduction
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are adopted by



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Introduction

Sociology is the study of different societies. The goal of this field of study is social welfare and it can be at a personal level or at a systems level.

Nowadays, sociology is molded through many channels including the internet, law, health class, religion, and military among many other disciplines. A subculture is a group of individuals characterized by different norms and values that is unique to the rest of the broader society it constitutes. Subcultures are constantly evolving, changing with times to reflect new developments; others die off whereas others reemerge after years of being alienated.

It is therefore very difficult to assess exactly how subcultures are divided using a standard means. Some subcultures are specific to a certain geographic location while others are specific to an era. It can therefore be a mistake for a sociologist to generalize and stereotype any subculture. One must delve into the specifics of an individual subculture in order to draw conclusive and accurate information about it. Subcultures are mostly subject to commercialization (Blair, 1993, p.

22) making them lose their specificity. Their styles are adopted by mass culture as fashion and once this happens, they tend to be assimilated into the main cultural practices losing the title of subcultures. Alternatively, the subculture may be forced to alien itself from mainstream practice in a bid to remain relevant and avoid imminent death. After the hip-hop subculture was adopted by businesses for commercial purposes, others started facing the same threat. It was shocking when the punk subculture's way was

introduced into the mass market because it was characterized by non-conventional ways of dressing and jewelry. Like Duchamp's 'ready made' – manufactured objects which qualified as art because he chose to call them such, the most unremarkable and inappropriate items – a pin, a plastic clothes peg, a television component, a razor blade, a tampon – could be brought within the province of punk (un)fashion...Objects borrowed from the most sordid of contexts found a place in punks' ensembles; lavatory chains were draped in graceful arcs across chests in plastic bin liners.

Safety pins were taken out of their domestic 'utility' context and worn as gruesome ornaments through the cheek, ear or lip...fragments of school uniform (white bri-nylon shirts, school ties) were symbolically defiled (the shirts covered in graffiti, or fake blood; the ties left undone) and juxtaposed against leather drains or shocking pink mohair tops (Guins and Cruz, 2005, p. 361). The American society is very diverse in race, religion and in class. This makes it one of the most unique cultures with differing opinions and lifestyles. The subcultures of the American society can be classified according to the most popular aspects such as slang, music, arts, politics and clothing. To a large extent these aspects are the ones which almost solely divide the larger culture into smaller ones.

You are what you wear

Dressing is one of the broadest areas that one can endeavor to determine the constitution of subcultures.

With the fashion trends changing constantly, it is hard to determine what is most popular as it inevitably changes. There could be a massive number of

subcultures defined by the wardrobe as fashion for yesteryears eventually finds its way back into the mainstream market. There is a group of people especially those celebrities in the music industry who are defined exclusively by what and how they wear. Lowly hanging jeans, long t-shirts, baseball caps and sneakers can all be associated with hip-hop culture. Most videos released by these artists are usually characterized by bright clothes that stand out.

This subculture is defined by the choice of clothing and footwear although not exclusively. On the contrary, other artists who participate in other genres also have their signature clothing including fashion models. It is not to say that this trend is only common in the US but even in other parts of the world like in Armenia where police are investigating a group of adherents of emo music and clothing.

Dancing is our way of life

Nowadays, there are a number of competitions that strive to unearth the best dancers everywhere around the world; not just in America. Although most of these competitions are in America, the dance culture is one that is mainly observed by the younger generations everywhere.

There is a large number of youth who are so absorbed by the dancing that they hardly do anything else. Hip-hop also influences this subculture as it does that of clothing. Therefore, the conclusion is that hip-hop is not a subculture but rather a culture associated with a large number of people.

We are urban

These are small groups of people living in urban areas, who share a common ideology.

They share a dress code, have the same patterns of behavior and even share the same views about matters of global interest. They seem to have an emotional attachment to each other and this gives them the unique characteristics that define them. “ Urban tribes are groups of people who have never married between the ages of 25 and 45 who gather in common-interest groups and enjoy an urban lifestyle, which offers an alternative to traditional family structures” (Watters, 2003, p. 68).

Our sexual orientation defines us

In the 1960's, there was a countercultural rejection of what society largely viewed as the sexually and gender accepted ways. These set the ground work for proliferation of subcultures that were defined by their sexual orientation and views.

The trend was rampant in the urban areas in comparison to other areas where traditional sex and gender norms were still being observed. As with other subcultures, this group also had its own dress code and gestures in a bid to differentiate themselves from the mainstream society. Homosexuals were the largest subculture that expressed itself through the gay culture.

However, with its increased adaptation and expression in music and designs in the 21st century, it seems to have outgrown the limits of subcultures and is now widely regarded as mainstream hence a culture on its own. There are however some subcultures among homosexuals and lesbians that stemmed

from the queer movement (Gelder, 2007, p. 56) which rejected normal behavior and whose growth has largely been attributed to academic interests in its study and theory. An example of a subculture of homosexuals is that which some African-Americans identify with and define as being on the down-low, characterized by specific attire usually adopted from the hip-hop culture.

I'm a nerd

These people also largely referred to as geeks. They are characterized by a fascination of reading and technology.

They are enthusiastic about science fiction and usually love to role play the most famous science fiction movies or just play games on the computer or other electronic gaming device.

Conclusion

Studying subcultures primarily involve studying symbolism in many aspects. While clothing and music make up the largest categories associated with different people, there are others that may be as important.

Symbolism is studied in comparison to how the wider society views the players (Hebdige, 1979, p. 129), and it is obvious in the discussion above that members of subcultures usually conform to the same norms be it physical outlook or mannerism. As subcultures may go against the grain of certain organizations, there are instances where they have been legislated against.

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