

University of Lund
Department of Sociology
SÖX 203 - Cultural Studies and Contemporary Cultural Theory
Master Course
Autumn term 2004

Hierarchy through Anarchy

- performing punk and the outline to a theory of scene

Author: Erik Hannerz

Supervisor: Magnus Ring

ABSTRACT

SÖX 203 - Cultural Studies and Contemporary Cultural Theory

Master Course

Author: Erik Hannerz

Title: Hierarchy through Anarchy – performing punk and the outline to a theory of scene

Keywords: Punk, scene, properties, performance, subculture, crust, stratification, social construction

The purpose of this study is to analyze and theorize punk and to investigate how punk is being performed. But also to counter previous descriptions of punk as a subculture, counter-culture or field and present the outline to a theory of scene. The question at issue in this study is; *how can punk be described theoretically?* This study is divided into acts. The first act introduces the reader to the subject, the purpose of the study and the key concepts used. The second act deals with the methodological considerations. In act three the Birmingham School's subcultural theory and Pierre Bourdieu's notion of field and capital are outlined. Act four is the first theoretical act which introduces the reader to the concept of scene. Thereafter the properties – the markers of distinction - of the scene are presented in act five. Act six deals with the stratification of the scene. The final theoretical act is devoted to the role of production in this stratification. Act eight involves the concluding remarks. Throughout this study punk is described, based on Erwin Goffman, as a performance, punk, it is argued, is a scene based on a few general themes which are subjectively interpreted into rules and manifested through the use of properties. The conclusions presented in this paper are that field and subculture are not enough to describe punk, as these concepts are not flexible enough and do not take into enough consideration the individual. The concept of scene involves seeing the individual as an actor who creates the structuring not the opposite. There is no true punk instead commitment and the subsequent stratification is based on how the actors perform within the scene. Punk relies on the actors' desire for distinct positions therefore the manifestations of punk are subject to change as the actors reinterpret the themes in order to maintain or better their positions. Punk is a subjective performance disguised as something general as the actors adhere to the general themes and negotiate, create and reproduce meaning. There is thus a link between the actors' performances and the structuring of the scene as the scene provides the actors' distinctions with a meaning. Scenes are always in motion as the themes and the structuring of the scene are reproduced as the actors interact and react toward each other. Punk, it is concluded, is not a question of what you do; it is merely a question of how you do it.

Punk hierarchy¹

You are drawn to punk to get away
From the rules and ideals of society
From people that lick upwards and kick downwards
You end up in the same shit anyway

Fucking punk hierarchy

The more politically active, the more important
The more old punk singles, the higher up
Start your own record company and you'll be accepted
But if you make any money you're out in the cold again

You get accepted for playing in a band
While others are frozen out despite that they do all they can
People do not open their mouths cause they are afraid of getting shit
If anything they say can be deemed as critique
...Fucking hypocrisy

Kontrovers, 2003

¹ The song is translated from Swedish into English by the author and the translation has been approved by the band. The original lyrics are:

Man söker sig till punken för att komma bort/Från samhällets regler och ideal /Från folk som slickar uppåt och sparkar neråt/Men hamnar i samma skit ändå/Djävla punkhierarki/Ju mer politiskt aktiv desto mera viktig/Ju fler gamla punksinglar desto högre upp/Skaffa ett skivbolag så blir du respekterad/Men tjänar du en spänn är du ute igen/Man blir accepterad för att man spelar i ett band/Medans andra kan bli utfryssta fast de gör så gott de kan/Folk öppnar inte käften för de är rädda att få skit/Om något de säger kan tolkas som kritik/...Jävla hyckleri

Contents

Acknowledgements vi

ACT I

1.1. Purpose and the Questions of Issue	1
1.2. Punk as a Research Object	2
1.3. Scene, Properties and Deviant Conformity	4
1.4. The Themes of the Scene	5
1.5. Definition of Crust	6

ACT II

2.1. Becoming Accepted	8
2.2. The Case	9
2.3. The Interviews	11
2.4. The Analysis	12
2.5. The Limitations	13

ACT III

3.1. The Birmingham School	14
3.2. Pierre Bourdieu and the Concepts of Field and Capital	15
3.3. Critique of the Birmingham School's and Bourdieu's Stress on Class	16
3.4. Critique of the Position of the Individual	17
3.5. The Outline to the Theoretical Parts	19

ACT IV

4.1. Scene is to be Seen	20
4.2. The Structuring of the Scene	20
4.3. Scene as the Global Local	22

ACT V

5.1. Properties	25
5.2. Produced, Consumed and Performed Properties	26
5.3. Declassification and Endorsement as Performed Properties	27

5.4. Performing Properties as a Sign of Commitment	31
---	----

ACT VI

6.1. Hierarchy through Anarchy	35
6.2. Music as Strategy	36
6.3. Continuity through Change	38

ACT VII

7.1. The Interesting Position of the Punks Orthodoxy	40
7.2. Producing Freedom	41
7.3. Passive and Active use of Properties	43

ACT VIII

8.1. Concluding Remarks	45
--------------------------------	----

Endnotes	47
-----------------	----

APPENDIX

Presentation of the Interviewees	52
---	----

Bibliography	53
---------------------	----

Acknowledgements

I want to take this opportunity to thank those who have made this paper possible. First of all the kind folks at **Vetenskapsrådet** who funded the project - at the department of Sociology at the University of Uppsala - of which I was a part, which has enabled me to investigate punk the last couple of years. Secondly my mentors and unofficial supervisors Lars Holmberg at the department of Sociology at the University of Uppsala and Ron Eyerman at the University of Yale, thank you for getting me into writing about punk, for encouraging me, listening to me and for believing in me, I cannot thank you enough. Also I would like to thank my supervisor at the department of Sociology at the University of Lund; Magnus Ring, for all his advices, the discussions we have had and all the time he has put into this paper. I want to thank all the punks, especially Daniel, Lasse, Linus, Robert, Kalle and Tobias, who by telling me their stories and letting me be a part of their everyday life made this paper possible. My two informants - Theo and Johnny - thank you for everything, you are the best. Thank you William Lewis for reading my paper and correcting my English. Lastly, thanks to the following bands and people who have all contributed in their own way to this paper: Sara, Gkung, Anders Ackfeldt, Gamle P, Monica, Magnus, Emma, Frida, everyone at Hemgården, the nice people at Bad Taste, Kontrovers, Semi, Bulldom, Knock-Up, Spazzer, Superman Is Dead and the Bali-punks.

ACT I

– Where the intentions, questions of issue and background of the study are outlined

1.1. Purpose and the Questions of Issue

Let me start by telling you a joke:

A punk and his non-punk friend are walking down the street. The punk is dressed completely in black except for the white contribution in the form of band names and political statements scribbled on his pants and jacket. His hair is cut short at the front and forms several dreadlocks at the back. He's got tight black pants covered with holes and his shoes are also torn. His friend is dressed in plain jeans and t-shirt. They walk down the street when the friend turns to the punk and asks; "can't you explain to me again what punk is?" The punk looks at him and answers; "you know, it is so hard, punk is everything. It is to say 'fuck you' to the whole establishment. It is to do what you want. To break free from the rules and norms of society, you know". The friend asks; "so it is not only about style?" The punk sighs; "punk is an attitude, it does not matter how you dress, it is in your mind" The friend looks at him in disbelief; "I'm not sure I understand..." The punk looks around spots a garbage can further down the street, runs towards it kicks it down, throws everything out on the street while cursing at passer-byes. Standing in garbage to his ankles he turns to his friend; "you see, this is punk!". The friend nods understandingly and they continue walking. A couple of blocks later they pass another garbage can. The friend kicks it down, throws everything out on the street, screams and triumphantly turns to his punk friend; "hey, look at me, now I'm a punk". His punk friend turns around, takes a look, then starts walking the other way and answers; "no, now you are a poser!"

I like this joke a lot. It has always made me laugh and I have retold it to many of my friends over the years. But I have never actually analyzed what it actually implies and the questions it raises: On what grounds is the friend deemed a poser? What makes the action of kicking down a garbage can punk in one case and not in the other? If punk is an attitude why is the punk dressed in such a specific manner? Over the years I have heard so many punks describing punk as something more than style, that being punk means being yourself, hell I have probably said it myself a hundred times. However if we look at punk from a sociological point of view, it becomes rather obvious that this is not the case. Instead it does matter what you wear, what you do and more importantly – as the joke implies – it is a matter of how you do it.

My aim with this study is to investigate how punk is being performed and how meaning is produced and reproduced. I want to analyze and theorize punk, but also to counter previous descriptions of punk as a subculture, counter-culture or field. It is surprising how punk has become probably the most used example of what constitutes a subculture and how the concept of subculture has been watered down theoretically over the years. Furthermore my intention is to once and for all put an end to the rumour that punk is dead and to provide a theoretical model which can explain how punk is constantly in motion. In doing this I will also introduce the outlines to my own theoretical propositions regarding scenes, themes and properties.

The question at issue in this study is; *how can punk be described theoretically?* But in order to do so I need to ask *how punk is lived out by punks?* This study is built upon the ontological assumption that the world we live in is socially construed through social action and interaction between human beings. Consequently questions such as *how is punk construed through interaction* and *what role does objects of distinction play for the actors in defining them and others as punk* are of definite relevance. These are the questions I intend to answer in this paper, but first the outlines to the research field and the case needs to be introduced and defined.

1.2. Punk as a Research Object

Punk has been studied by sociologists on numerous occasions, starting with Dick Hebdige in 1979. Hebdige's focus was to include race in the analysis of subculture and to investigate how white working-class subcultures – punk and skinheads – are formed in relation to black cultures and how style is created as resistance against the dominant culture. Hebdige leans heavily on the Birmingham School's subcultural theory – of which he was once part – especially John Clarke's theories on defusion and diffusion. These will be explained later.

Lauraine Leblanc (2002) has investigated how girls construct and negotiate a female identity in a male dominated subculture such as punk. By becoming punks Leblanc argues that the girls in her study seek a safe haven from the mainstream gender norms. Since punk is a male-dominated culture these girls negotiate between their femininity and the masculine image of punk and resist them both in constructing their gender. The masculinity of punk, according to Leblanc, is mirrored in the stylistic features; leather jackets, combat boots, shaved heads, tattoos, rebelliousness, slam-dancing and a commitment based around these features (2002:109). I will return to Leblanc in the chapter on methodology.

Kathryn Fox (1987) describes punk as a counter-culture where stratification is seen in relation to the actor's level of commitment and how different levels of commitment constitute different segments in the counter-culture. Fox' study is of definitive interest to me and I will further develop her thoughts in the chapter regarding how commitment is being performed.

Petter Karlsson (2003) has studied the crust punk scene in southern Sweden and Copenhagen. Karlsson's study is an ethnological study and carries few theoretical implications. It is more of a description of how crust punks live their lives. Karlsson's point is that inactivity constitutes a big part of many crust punks' everyday life and meaning is constructed based on this inactivity. For Karlsson being crust means getting away from a

society which has nothing to offer and create an alternative, the focus here lies on do it yourself. I would have liked to have seen a further investigation of how meaning is constructed and why inactivity is so important, however Karlsson's study is a useful description of what crust is and what it implicates.

Gina Arnold's *Kiss This* (1998) is more of a journalistic study of punk. Arnold investigates the links between punk and mainstream culture, major corporations and extreme sports such as snowboard. It is definitely of interest, especially her observations on elitism and exclusivity within punk. The kind of punk investigated is melodic punk which is rather unfortunate since this kind of punk is so closely linked to the mainstream that it is hard to distinguish between them. The large underground segments of the scene are neglected.

James Lull's *Trashing in the Pit* (1987) is an ethnographic study of the punk subculture in San Francisco. Lull focuses on how communication is mediated through the use of symbols within the subculture and how they carry out their lifestyles. Lull extensively describes the stylistic features of the scene; dress, appearance, music, lyrical themes and rituals, but also living quarters, food preferences and attitudes towards religion and money. Lull's study is excellent for those interested in looking back on how punk was once performed, what has changed and what is still prevalent. Except for a few small mistakes - misspelled band names etc - my only critique is a lack of theorizing and the use of the concept of subculture to describe the punk-community without investigating the theoretical implications of such a use.

This not only goes for Lull, even though Leblanc's study features an extensive introduction - including both Hebdige and the Birmingham School - she still calls punk a subculture, even though 55 % of her interviewees are middle- or upper middle class (Leblanc 2002:27). Fox on the other hand calls punk a counter-culture without taking into consideration what this implies and both Arnold (1998) and David Muggleton (2002) refer to punk as a subculture. It seems as the term subculture has gotten its own life freed from the theoretical implications that once surrounded it. I will therefore present - in the chapter preceding my theoretical propositions on scene - the Birmingham School's subcultural theory and explain why I will not use it.

The research presented above cover different aspects of punk - style, commitment, the relation to the mainstream and how punk is lived out by its members. My contribution to the research on punk is that I intend to combine these aspects into a theoretical model which so far, in my opinion, have not been done successfully. I will also counter some of these writers since I cannot see punk as something essentially real, but as a performance. I will now introduce the

theoretical concepts used throughout this paper to describe punk theoretically; scene, themes, properties and deviant conformity.

1.3. Scene, Properties and Deviant Conformity

The way I define *scene* indicates that it is a place to be heard and seen. Erving Goffman states that interaction serves to control the definition of the situation and describes the individuals' activities in doing this as a performance (1990:26). The concept of scene signals and captures this performance and as such it is presented together with a script and different *properties*.

Punk, as I see it, is about a script which is put on display through the use of properties.

Properties involve not only the stage props but also the costumes, the make-up, the backdrop, the words in the script; in short all the objects which enable a performance to take place. The scene is simply a shell, an arena upon which interaction is performed through the use of properties and the scene provides meaning to this performance and the actors' distinctions from other actors. The scene constitutes a space within society, it is merely an aspect of social life, not the foundation of it.

The actors' distinctions are rooted in what I will call *deviant conformity*, to break the conventions of an established group while adhering to the frameworks of the scene. This, I argue, is essential in performing punk¹. Being punk signals a need for individual differentiation in order to present oneself as "more punk" and thus make a distinction towards the other performers and claim a distinct position within the scene². The joke with the punk and his friend encompasses this need in illustrating that punk is to act in accordance with an attitude – in this case "fuck everything" - but if you copy someone else you are simply a poser. Johan Fornäs argues that subcultural identities cannot be said to just rely on homologies they also include heterologies as in internal differentiation and diversity (1995:114), I agree, but I argue that this internal differentiation still needs to be homologous³ with the other actors' values and beliefs, if not it does not have a value of distinction. You cannot walk into a punk show wearing a yellow jumpsuit and expect to be accepted simply because you are different. Instead I will show that this differentiation must be backed up by a presentation of the actor's commitment to the scene's general themes.

1.4. The Themes of the Scene

In her book *Kiss This* Gina Arnold presents what she calls the three rules of punk; “*loud fast rules*”, “*do-it yourself*” (DIY) and “*don’t suck corporate cock*” (1998:94). The first one regards the music; it is supposed to be as fast and loud as possible. DIY governs action; release your own records, make your own shirts and book your own shows. The third one, “*don’t suck corporate cock*”, signals you should not profit from the scene, sign for major labels or be played in commercial media, punk is to stay away from the mainstream⁴. Breaking any of these results in the actor being labelled as a sell-out; the actor has sold his or her ideals for personal profit, as Arnold notes “*‘cashing in’ is just another way of saying ‘selling out’*” (ibid:xiii). I agree with Arnold that these are general aspects of punk. You just have to open up a punk fanzine⁵ or read the lyrics sheet from almost any band to see that this is the case⁶. However I do not agree that these are rules, there is no written manifest for punk stating how to behave, how you relate to these aspects is arbitrary, as rules they are subjective. Therefore I would like to call them *themes*⁷.

Themes are certain general aspects of the scene which differ from time to time. Themes are not just phrases, they are so much more than that; they are *social and historical constructs* which means that relating to the themes is relating to their social history. This is where the socialization of scene becomes essential to provide the new actors with a background to be able to understand the themes as something developed through time. Any individual in society can call herself punk, and as such she is punk. However the themes of punk are general in the sense that in order to become accepted and claim a distinct position the actor has to *relate* to them, they are interpreted into rules and become the foundation upon which the actors build their performance. If we look at these three themes we can see that they are combined in signalling a distinction from what is outside the scene, the musical theme signals a distinction towards other kinds of music, for example hip-hop or reggae, DIY regards keeping objects within the scene, it is a distinction against mass media and the music industry. The third one captures an attitude that also lies behind the two others and thus connects them together; punk is anti-mainstream. As Fox writes; “*the consensual values among the punks, as ambiguous as they were, could best be understood by their contradictory quality with reference to mainstream society*” (1987:345).

Calling yourself punk is thus a distinction in itself, by stating that you are punk you are at the same time defining what you are not, that is you are not like everybody else⁸. Punk is

deliberately performed as a deviation from society's norms, Erving Goffman names these actors "desaffiliates" (1972:147). Punk is a choice to be different; a distinction from what is "normal" and mainstream as demonstrated in the following incident that occurred in Copenhagen as I was talking to a young female crust punk in a park:

Eva tells me about the hierarchy at Ungdomshuset in Copenhagen and how you have to be "so" punk to be accepted. She complains about all the new "fashion-punks" that have come around and how obnoxious they are and that they are too young to understand the scene. She starts telling me about something when a dog suddenly interrupts us, a small boy hesitantly comes up to get the dog. We start talking to the boy, his mother comes running, she shouts at him, at us, calling us freaks, Eva tells her to fuck off. We continue the discussion as if nothing has happened. Later Eva tells me that this sort of thing happens to her all the time but that she doesn't care, fuck 'em all she says (Field notes)

In developing the scene, the dissociation from something is essential, for example the mainstream, but this also works as a unifying feature as Robert, one of the punks participating in my study, says:

Punk should be something that sticks out and you should grow stronger with punk because everybody else harasses you. That's why all punks can probably gather under one flag that we are all outcasts irrespective of whether we listen to melodic, skate or crust punk. (A:330-3)

To illustrate the desire for deviant conformity - how the themes of the scene are interpreted differently by the actors - and how the manifestations of these interpretations - the properties - are used as to signal a distinction from other actors I have chosen to investigate how punk is being performed by interviewing and studying crust punks⁹ from Malmö and Lund. The reason behind this is because the stress on how to adhere to the themes are harsher in crust than in many other types of punk, thus the process of the declassification of properties and the desire for deviant conformity, as we shall see, is more obvious.

1.5. Definition of Crust

The English hardcore punk band Discharge was essential for the emergence of crust punk since crust punk can be said to constitute a synthesis of the American and the Swedish development of the English hardcore punk - the beat used in crust is a fast 2/4 drumbeat¹⁰ called D-beat, as in Discharge beat. English hardcore was developed in the late seventies and early eighties as a reaction towards the increasing connection between certain punk bands and the mainstream (Joynson 2001:16). The singing in crust is basically screaming, there are no tones, just screams. Songs are simple with both guitars and bass distorted and raw chords.

Lyrical themes have differed from time to time but anti-war lyrics, personal and angst-ridden inward looking lyrics dominate and the imagery used on clothes and record sleeves are built around high contrast and are mostly black and white¹¹. Crust style is basically black tight jeans, a black shirt, black nylon or textile jackets all of these marked with patches and badges. Leather is not common in crust since a lot of crust punks are vegans. Crust hair style is either dreadlocks or a “crust mullet” which is short at the front and dreaded at the back. The attitude is based on fuck everything but at the same time as it is characterized by a political correctness, as Daniel one of the punks in my study says:

Punk for me means (...) to fuck everything (...) To fuck all the ideals and unwritten laws and all this society crap that is only followed by normal people (...) but at the same time show more respect to things that are actually more important which normal people do not show respect for. (B:179-185)

In this case Daniel cites racism and sexism as examples of this. This political standpoint signals a stricter interpretation of the themes, as fuck the mainstream and DIY are turned into stepping out from society, claiming an autonomous position. However this political correctness has not always been the prevalent within crust. Especially in Sweden about ten to fifteen years ago a lot of crust punks ate meat and were politically incorrect¹².

Crust is thus always in motion, changing politically and stylistically, as well as the scene as a whole then the question arises how to investigate such a phenomenon. If the actors within the scene construct their distinct positions by making distinctions from the other actors as well as from what is outside of the scene how do we make contact with and get information from these actors? The methodological aspects thus become crucial in conducting a study describing a phenomenon based on internal and external distinctions, especially when the researcher is a punk himself. Therefore I will now present the methodological considerations.

ACT II

– Where the methodological considerations and the research process are discussed

2.1. Becoming Accepted

According to Max Weber sociology is always value-relevant, in the sense that in conducting a partial study - choosing specific aspects over others - the logic and method of the study is based on the assumptions and the values of the researcher and are thus subjective (quoted in Muggleton 2002:1). I am already a member of the scene I am set out to study and I participate as a full member - what Adler and Adler call, a “complete membership role” (1994:380). I am thus studying a phenomenon I participate in constructing. This means that in conducting this study in part I have had to test my theoretical aspects on myself. I have never seriously played in any bands, consequently as I moved to Lund in 2003 from Uppsala I could not rely on *what I had done in* order for punks to consider me a part of their scene. Instead, in becoming part of the scene I had to seriously consider what properties I consumed and thus performed in order to fit in and become accepted. I had to pass through a lot of people and gain their acceptance in order to interview the punks in positions of authority. I had to present myself as committed; to prove my role as a punk, and not only punk but the “right” type of punk.

Becoming accepted meant taking out and wearing band shirts I put away some years ago but furthermore it meant *not* wearing a lot of the shirts I have gathered through the years. It also included making people aware of me, I went to as many small local shows as I could, trying to be seen as committed and sociable, performing my commitment by wearing the “right” shirts, claiming I listened to the “right bands”, telling stories of my previous experiences with punk, citing which bands I had interviewed and hung out with. In short I was attempting to prove my deviant conformity in order to become accepted. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it did not. In Copenhagen for example I got into a fight with an older crust punk because he thought I “looked like fucking snowboarder” - since I have baggy pants and always wear skate shoes - and in Malmö the following occurred:

I’m at punk art riot, alone, but I’m having a hell of a time, people nevertheless look askance at me, (...) I’m wearing jeans and my training-jacket with some pins on my right chest, some crust, some skate. A young female crust punk enters the avenue; I think she plays in a small band. She is wearing the exact same jacket as me, (...). I start to feel a bit more confident. She looks at me and then at my jacket, I nod in her direction and she leaves the room. I’m thinking maybe I can interview her (...) She comes back, looks in my direction and I notice she has put on her outdoor-jacket to hide her training-jacket even though it’s hot like hell in here. I sink through the floor. Haven’t I learned a thing, it’s so obvious, you think that by now I would have understood how important distinction is within the scene. By wearing the same jacket and acknowledging it by greeting her I’m jeopardizing her distinctive position and force her to take action, it’s just that right now I feel like I’m not worth shit within the scene. (Field notes)¹³

According to Elm and Lövgren it is essential for the researcher to question the obvious, to look beyond the first impression and this is even more important if the researcher studies a phenomenon he or she is a part of (1986:99,107). The question remains if we, as sociologists, can fully separate between our roles as researchers and our roles as social human beings. I argue we cannot. I cannot ignore the fact that I am already a native, instead my intention has been to keep a distance between my role as a punk and my role as a researcher. I cannot suddenly stop being punk, I do not stepping into a telephone booth in order to change from Clark Kent to Superman. Even if I try not to look punk, I have in large parts incarnated it, I talk punk and I act punk¹⁴. I thus have to try to separate my two roles to such a degree that sometimes I am more of a sociologist – as when I am gathering and analysing data, and sometimes I am more a punk – as when I am approaching punks, but the two will always be present to some degree.

This is probably the hardest part of my research and the biggest source of mistakes especially in collecting the data. It is easy to accept statements that I know occur within the punk scene during the interview and then during the transcription discover that I should have further investigated the specific topic. For example in this case with Robert:

Erik: Were you good in school?
Robert: ...When it comes to grades; mediocre...
E: But you could have got better grades?
R: I could have had much better grades if I only had wanted to
E: Then why didn't you?
R: Cause it was not appropriate
(A:91-6)

Instead of further investigating this, why it was not considered appropriate to have good grades at school, I accepted the statement and went on. Basically because I understood what he meant, I have felt it myself. Being punk and having good grades do not go well together. It is considered more punk to drop out and to underachieve at school. In this specific case I am thus missing out on finding a deeper meaning behind Robert's actions just because I'm thinking as a punk and not as a researcher.

2.2. The Case

Steinar Kvale (1997) uses the metaphor of the traveller to describe the interviewer. The traveller visits different places, tries to make contact with the local people and is curious and

eager to understand and develop a relationship with the people he or she encounters. The traveller *creates meaning* instead of just finding it (Kvale 1997:12). According to Kotarba and Fontana “*one must immerse oneself in everyday reality - feel it, touch it, hear it and see it – in order to understand it*” (quoted in Adler & Adler 1994:386). We have to look at the phenomenon through the eyes of those we are set out to study. We cannot simply study a phenomenon such as punk and expect to discover the attitude behind punks’ actions if we not pay attention to how punks define their situation and look for the meaning behind symbols and actions. According to Norman Denzin the aim of qualitative research (1989:5), is to reach an insight - through observations and interviews - of how people conduct their social lives and how they construe their reality¹⁵. Triangulation - the combination of several methods - is according to Denzin and Lincoln “*an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question*” (1994:2). By combining case interviews, field study and the use of literary sources my aspiration is to cover the problem in a fuller way, to combine a hermeneutic approach with a causal; in order to explain why events occur we have to gain a fuller understanding of them.

I have conducted a case-study in Lund and Malmö to try to illuminate my theoretical viewpoints, since Robert Yin recommends the case-study for answering questions such as “how?” and “why?” (1987:13). According to Martyn Denscombe a case study is simply a strategy, it is *not* a method (2000:44). The logic of the case-study is to focus on separate units in order to understand a wider phenomenon (ibid:41), to study the specific in detail to be able to learn about the general. In this case I have studied and interviewed specific punks and a specific scene to be able to understand the logic behind their actions. I have further chosen an informal case-study, which, according to Robert Stake, admits us to focus on the theoretical aspects by conducting an in-depth study of the specific case (1998:88)¹⁶. The specific case, the punk scene in Lund and Malmö, *is subordinated the theoretical positions presented in this study* and is therefore not of any other interest than the fact that it constitutes a punk scene.

The case, Denscombe notes, has to have at least some amount of independence and some rather distinctive borders (2000:50). The punk scene in Lund and Malmö has distinctive borders, both formal ones – since the scene is geographically limited and thus subject to a regional and/or local context – and informal ones - not anybody can gain direct access to the scene as it takes a certain degree of commitment to become accepted. As a rather separate unit the punk scene in Lund and Malmö thus has a certain amount of independence. As I see punk

as a global phenomenon it is of importance that I can limit the empirical study to a specific case in order to develop my theoretical propositions. The punks in Malmö and Lund listens to American, Japanese, Malaysian punk etc and as I do not have the means to investigate the whole scene, I am simply taking a “snapshot” of a local feature of the bigger global scene which I then use to illustrate my theoretical propositions.

2.3. The Interviews

I constructed an interview guide based on Steinar Kvale’s (1997) advice with themes and examples of possible questions. I then started by interviewing two crust punks who had reached a position of authority within the hierarchy and a younger crust punk who was more in the middle sections. I then analyzed these interviews and presented them in a small preliminary paper. While conducting these interviews and talking to crust punks at shows, I found that actors in the highest positions were a lot more talkative and I thought it would be interesting to investigate how their attitudes have changed as their careers have developed. I then interviewed three more punks in similar positions. Establishing where these actors were in the hierarchy turned out to be easier than I had thought since the punk scene involves a lot of stories and rumours and it is thus quite easy to find out what people have accomplished within the scene and what other punks think of them, my two informants was also crucial in this process.

As I conducted the interviews I presented myself as neutral as possible in ways of dress and appearance, something which also Denscombe recognizes (2000:140). I dressed less punk than usual, instead of putting on a shirt with a band name, I chose a plain shirt and instead of black jeans with patches I dressed in normal jeans. All this was done with the intention of not threatening my interviewees’ distinctive positions. Thus both my appearance and conduct during interviews was different to that during my fieldwork where I dressed like I normally do, that is punk¹⁷. Kvale mentions that the more spontaneous the questions are the more spontaneous the answers tend to be (1997:121) which also was my intended interview approach. However as I conducted more and more interviews the questions tended to become more and more similar, something I really did not notice until transcribing the data. Nevertheless I consider myself to have used semi-structured interviews as I tried to be spontaneous and relate to themes and stories that occurred in the interview. Consequently the interviews were often very informal, there was a lot of laughter and also a lot of inside jokes which was also my intention. I wanted the interviewees to feel relaxed and make the interview

more of a discussion. Kvale writes that interviews are far from equal conversations since the interviewer is in control of defining the situation by asking the question he or she chooses (1997:118-119), my intention was to reduce this displacement. In interviewing Robert his friend Lasse became involved by making comments and I allowed the interview to develop into more of a group discussion; letting Lasse and Robert discuss the questions with me interfering from time to time. My interviews ranged from forty-five minutes to two hours in one case, however the difference in time was quantitative not qualitative. I then transcribed the interviews and as they appear in the text the names of the interviewees have been changed as well as references to dress and appearance which could identify the interviewees.

2.4. The Analysis

There is of course a risk of going native; that I would identify with the specific phenomenon I study to the extent that in analysing the findings I act as an insider and not as an outsider (Kvale 1997:112). This would mean I risk forgetting how I learned the information in the first place and thus influence my analysis (Silverman 1993:49). To minimize this risk I have been careful not to use too many conceptions that are prevalent within the scene in analysing the data. Anselm Strauss differentiates between two categories of coding – “in vivo codes” and “sociological constructs” (1987:33)¹⁸. In vivo codes already occur in the text, they are drawn from the very performers we are set out to investigate; they already exist prior to our arrival. According to Strauss in vivo codes combines “analytic usefulness” and “imagery” the former since they relate to other codes with an already existing meaning and thus, as Strauss points out, “*carries it forward easily in formulation of the theory*” (ibid:33). In this paper I will use some in vivo codes such as *sell-out* and *crust* and how they relate to each other, however I have mainly used sociological constructs – which, as the name implies, are codes created by the researcher. Sociological constructs are a combination of theoretical and empirical knowledge; they add sociological meaning to the codes, in contrast to the in vivo codes, by transcending the implications of the field and provide a broader view of the subject (ibid:34). Therefore they are vital for my study since they force me to act as a sociologist rather than as a punk in analysing the data. In this study *properties* and *themes* are examples of sociological constructs used as tools to distinguish between the interviewees and to explain what their distinctions signify and reveal about their identity.

I thus apply the study of *cultural distinctions*¹⁹ in analysing the data. According to Petri Alasuutari the study of cultural distinctions is to thoroughly investigate the data and to focus

on how it tells a story (1995:63). We are not concerned whether it is true or not, we are only interested in how the respondents' views and ideas are constructed through classifications and distinctions we focus not on what is said but how it is said (Alasuutari 1995:65). According to Harvey Sacks our goal should be to investigate when and how descriptions are made and thus describe the apparatus behind this production of description (in Silverman 1993:80). How people then behave in relation to their social identity thus becomes a way of performing some activities and avoiding those which are not in accordance to his or her identity.

2.5. The Limitations

Focusing on finding and interviewing punks in positions of authority meant limiting my scope of potential interviewees. Unfortunately I was not able to find any female punks that occupied such a position. That is not to say that there are not any, only that I was not able to reach any. I thought about interviewing female punks in a less elevated position, but I rejected the idea since it would give a distorted image on gender relations within the scene. Focusing on gender would have been a totally different study and would probably have resulted in me merely reinforcing the theoretical claims made by Leblanc (2002), and that has never been my intention. I want to focus on how punk is performed and how this performance affects how the actors view themselves and others. I see no reason to separate between genders when I do not separate between ethnicities or classes. Instead this will be a latter quest.

I am also aware of the critique surrounding the ability to generalize from case-studies, but as Yin has remarked (1987:21), my point here is not to generalize to a wider population but to the theoretical aspects. As Schramm writes; *"the essence of a case study (...) is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions; why they were taken, and with what result"* (quoted in Yin 1987:23). Petri Alasuutari states that generalization is not the right word to apply to qualitative research - instead he proposes the word *relate* (1995:156). How the analysis relates to something bigger, something situated outside the material. My theoretical intention is to illustrate the theoretical propositions presented in this paper, not to generalize my findings to every punk in the world.

ACT III

– Where relevant theory and the concepts of subculture and field are presented

3.1. The Birmingham School

In the introduction to *Resistance through Rituals* Stuart Hall et al define culture as a framework within which social groups express their social and material lives (1993:10). Culture becomes the way a group handle “*the raw material of their social and material existence*” (ibid). A class culture thus consists of the way a specific class experience and conduct their daily lives. Since Marx argues that the class that controls the means of production also controls the ideological production (Marx 1974:64), a materially subordinated class thus becomes culturally inferior as well. Within each class culture there exist several smaller cultures; these are what the Birmingham school calls *subcultures*. The point being here that there exist somewhat pure social relations based on material conditions and that the subcultures are ideological reactions to problems encountered within the working-class in the confrontation with the dominant culture. Hall and Jefferson do mention subcultures within the middle-class (1993:10), but these are not further developed, instead the Birmingham school focus on the rise of middle-class counter-cultures instead of incorporating middle-class subcultures in their conception of subcultures. As I intend to show, this becomes a problem for the Birmingham School since punk cannot be said to be either.

John Clarke (1993) of the Birmingham School argues that the dominant culture attempts to incorporate the subculture in order to disarm and destroy it. According to Clarke mass media diffuses the subculture by concentrating on certain aspects and turning individual features into stereotypes, depriving the scene from its meaning and thus turns it into something apolitical. Clarke argues that this is due to fact that the dominant culture in order to get hold of a new lucrative market, needs to ‘clean’ the symbols from their significance, to make them neutral objects ready to be consumed (1993:187). In order to fully exploit the subculture, Clarke argues, the stylistic features does not only have to be diffused they also need to be defused; dislocated from their original context and transformed from a lifestyle into a style of consumption, this especially concerns music and dress (ibid:188). Interestingly enough Clarke - and Dick Hebdige which leans heavily on Clarke’s definitions - thus recognizes the subcultural context as vital to the subculture, the context provides it with meaning, but unfortunately neither Clarke nor the rest of the Birmingham-school investigates this further with the result that the measure of commitment to this meaning, the subsequent stratification, and the attitude behind this meaning are completely ignored, something I will return to in the chapter regarding hierarchies.

3.2. Pierre Bourdieu and the Concepts of Field and Capital

A field, Pierre Bourdieu argues, is constituted of individuals gathered around something they all agree is worth fighting for and are willing to fight for; the symbolical capital of the field (1986:15). According to Bourdieu capital is “*a social relation, i.e., an energy which only exists and only produces its effects in the field in which it is produced and reproduced*” (2003:113) and the logic of each field determines which characteristics are relevant to the field and are being used as the field’s specific capital. The social world consists of different fields - hierarchically ordered -within which individuals strive for distinct positions. The field, Bourdieu argues, consists of the new, often young, pretenders to the throne, and the orthodoxy who already have access to a position of authority and whom therefore strive for the maintenance of the status quo (1986:15). The orthodoxy tends to stick to conservative methods in order to protect its accumulated capital from being displaced within the field, to preserve their legitimacy. Their supremacy depends on the size of their capital and how well they can succeed in transforming symbolic capital into economical (ibid:79). According to Bourdieu a social position, and the subsequent lifestyle is always in relation to some other lifestyle, it cannot be seen alone, what is considered as taste within one group is always distasted by another group (ibid:18). In using objects of distinction, for example saying that we prefer Beatles over Mozart, we are signalling our own position within the hierarchically ordered fields. The point of this is the reproduction of the differences between classes. Distinction becomes a way to separate between different social strata and maintaining that difference.

Bourdieu’s point is that if an object of distinction is diffused it will lose its value of distinction for the group it was originally intended for. Bourdieu takes popular music and fashion as examples of objects which are perishable and therefore cannot make use of their standings as objects of distinction in any other way than focusing on change, on differences in time (ibid:99-100). The objects’ values are dependent on the temporary distinction between what *is* new and what *was* new. According to Bourdieu epoch-making, the break-through of a new style, means sending the old dominating styles to oblivion, deporting them to honorary positions without any real value. Making epoch does not merely mean creating something new but it also involves forcing the other producers within the field to react, either by following the new trend or to distance themselves from it (ibid:95). However since the market is hierarchical the object can still maintain a value of distinction for consumers on another

level. When a specific object loses value for one group it can be picked up as an object of distinction by another group in a less privileged position (Bourdieu 1986:104).

3.3. Critique of the Birmingham School's and Bourdieu's Stress on Class

The biggest obstacle with the Birmingham school's subcultural theory, as I see it, is its focus on subcultures arising from the working-class and counter-cultures from the middle-class²⁰. Since Marx ideally speaks of an upper and a lower class the Birmingham school's unwillingness to include middle-class subcultures is to some extent understandable. The middle-class is a part of the dominant culture but still it is subordinated the upper-classes (Hall et al 1993:60). Using subcultural theory to describe punk becomes rather difficult since writers such as Jon Savage (2001), David Laing (1985) and David Muggleton (2002) have pointed out that the early English punk scene formed within the middle-class, mainly around art-colleges (see for example Laing 1985:121-3). Members of Sex Pistols as well as members of The Clash attended art-school and Sex Pistols first shows were at art-colleges (Savage 2001:129), consequently the first English punks were drawn from this environment. Further McNeil and McCain (1996) have described a similar connection in the early New York punk scene in 1973-76²¹. This is a definite problem with the Birmingham school's subcultural theory, since it cannot handle the rise of subcultures from the middle-class without calling them counter-cultures. According to the Birmingham School counter-cultures differ from subcultures in several aspects; subcultures are described as sharply articulated collective groups, as for example a gang, counter-cultures on the other hand are decentralized and individual and in contrast to subcultures tend to seek alternatives to dominant institutions such as the family, school and media²² (Hall et al 1993:60). The problem is that punk cannot be said to either. Punk, as we shall see, is centralized in the local context at the same time it is decentralized as the themes make punk global it is also not a question of developing alternatives to the dominant culture as an end itself but the alternatives created are the fruit of the desire for deviant conformity. Furthermore counter-cultures still become a question of class in the end.

The issue of class also becomes a problem when applying Pierre Bourdieu's conceptions of field and capital to punk, since the conceptions of field and capital focus on a distinction originating in the upper classes, while according to my opinion in the case of punk it attracts members from the middle-class but also from the working-class and in some cases actors from the upper class²³. Bourdieu focuses on the conservatism of the dominating classes and

the Birmingham school on the resistance of the dominated. As I intend to show punk is not about claiming a collective resistance or maintenance, it is about securing the different actors' distinct positions, positions which I argue are regardless of class-background.

Furthermore I cannot see how punk can be placed in Bourdieu's social world where fields are hierarchically ordered. The themes presented in the introduction reject the basis of this stratification, that is, what is considered as taste within these fields. Having economical or cultural capital is worthless within the scene, in a way it is actually a disadvantage, if you are rich or if you are intellectual in can easily be turned against you since these types of capital are discredited within the scene. I would not go so far as to call punk an autonomous field since it does have links to the mainstream but I cannot see where else it would be placed in Bourdieu's theory. A scene is merely an aspect of society it is not the foundation of it as Bourdieu argues that fields constitute society. Scenes do not have to be connected to a hierarchal structuring since they are only facets of a perceived reality not a prerequisite.

The problem here is caused by the assumption that class is the decisive variable and that this assumption is already present before applying the theory to "real life". To solely focus on class-background as the decisive and generating variable is to neglect the importance of *external* relations - such as a condemning attitude towards the dominant culture and the mainstream media and fashion – and *internal* - as in a condemning attitude regarding relations within the own group towards mainstream media and style - that are of importance in forming the scene's stylistic features. The way I define scene connote that the scene is not tightly sealed off against what is outside of it, the boundaries of the scene acts like a swinging door, scenes are open from time to time to outside influence and as such they are also a constant reaction towards these influences. As a consequence anyone can perform in a scene, but in order to gain acceptance an actor has to follow the script and act in accordance with the themes governing the scene otherwise the actor will suffer sanctions²⁴.

3.4. Critique of the Position of the Individual

Furthermore one can wonder if subcultures primarily constitute answers to problems experienced by the working-class in its encounter with the dominant culture then why do mods, teddy-boys, skinheads and punks not resemble each other more, since they all according to the Birmingham school rise from the working-class? Dick Hebdige (1988) touches this subject in *Subculture- the Meaning of Style*, he criticizes the Birmingham school,

of which he is part, for not paying enough attention to historical context and focusing too much on style. According to Hebdige, class is not a constant since its relations are altered historically (1988:80-3). Hebdige definitely has a point when he argues that the “raw material”- the social relations based on material conditions - cannot be said to be “raw” since it is constantly affected by the historical context and mediated through the institutions of the dominant culture - that is the school, family, police etc²⁵. This is, according to Hebdige why there exist differences between different subcultural groups. A specific subculture reflects a specific context and if different subcultures arise in different historical contexts they cannot therefore look the same. So if the historical context and class relations change with time, then it would be natural to assume that subcultures, since they are answers to these relations, would change as well. But according to Hebdige changes within the subcultures equals the demise of the subculture (1988:96). Subcultures are thus presented as something static or alternatively as something completely fluid that breaks down and takes a new form every now and then. All together this gives the Birmingham school’s subcultural theory and Hebdige’s claims a static and deterministic trait, there is no room for changes or other alternatives and the relation between the subculture and the outside is presented as one-dimensional. Subcultures are determined by social relations more or less “raw” and when the context changes the subculture disappears and another takes its place.

I argue that punk cannot sufficiently be described through the use of subculture or field and capital, since these are not flexible enough. The problem with Bourdieu and the Birmingham School as I see it is a social and structural determinism; the structure directs the ideology. For Bourdieu distinction becomes the means of preserving the dominance of the dominating upper classes, as Garnham and Williams note: “*The fields are hierarchically organized in a structure over-determined by the field of class struggle over the production and distribution of material resources*” (1980:215). Likewise in the Birmingham school’s theory the raw material of a class determines its social conditions. My point is that this is not taking into enough consideration the individual actors, as Muggleton has pointed out regarding the Birmingham school; the subculture acts, not its members (2002:23-24). The actor for Bourdieu becomes a structured individual as habitus becomes the structuring of the structures, the internalisation of the social conditions; the structure forms the individuals which then affect the structure. My definition of scene on the other hand suggest that actors create the structuring of the scene, a structuring they then adhere to.

3.5. The Outline to the Theoretical Parts

Nevertheless Bourdieu's theory is essential for elucidating the structures within the scene - in this case the stratification within the punk scene - the problem, as I will show, however is that Bourdieu's theory cannot explain this structure. Instead I have thus made use of Erving Goffman's thoughts on performance. Goffman writes that a performance is "*all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants*" (1990:26). Front, Goffman argues, is the part of the performance that appears in a general and fixed way, it involves the setting – furniture and décor – and the stage props. The front region is the place where a specific performance takes place or is about to. Goffman argues the setting is usually fixed so that the performers who need the setting for their performance usually have to arrive at the specific place in order to initiate the performance and then terminate the performance when they exit the place. Goffman's theory is in itself not enough to explain punk since it does not elucidate the structures behind the actions, but it is useful in explaining why these structures exist and how they are reproduced. Both Goffman and Bourdieu see the individual as strategic, however Goffman misses out on describing the structures behind this strategy and Bourdieu on explaining this on a micro level.

Therefore in combining Bourdieu and Goffman I will now introduce the outlines to my theoretical proposition of scene and properties. I will start, in the fourth act, by explaining what the concept of scene implies and how scenes are structured through the interpretations of the themes. From there I will investigate how this makes scenes global at the same time as they are local. The fifth act is devoted to properties and how they are used in the actor's performance to signal a distinct position. I will then in the sixth act turn to how the use of properties stratifies the scene. The seventh and last theoretical act concentrates on the importance of production in stratifying the scene. Throughout this paper I will from time to time return to Bourdieu in a kind of dialogue to be able to elucidate the theoretical differences between Bourdieu's theory and my own and show to what extent Bourdieu can be used.

ACT IV

– Where the concept of scene is introduced and presented as the global local

4.1. Scene is to be Seen

I define scene as a negotiated social space within society which becomes a scene when at least two actors define each other as members of that scene. For example if two punks meet on a street corner and do not recognize each other as punks it is merely a street corner, however if they interact and discover they are both punks the street corner becomes a part of the punk scene. The scene's meaning is thus negotiated through the different actors' interactions and reactions towards influences both outside and inside the scene. The actors decide and construct the scene. Bourdieu's notion of field – on the other hand - recognizes field as a social space where the space determines how the actors behave, just as Goffman argues with the frontstage of the performance. Goffman argues that the setting of this frontstage is usually fixed so that the performers who need the setting for their performance usually have to arrive at the specific place in order to initiate the performance and then terminate the performance when they exit the place. On the contrary a scene, as I see it, is centred on the actors which gives it a relatively freedom in space, since the sign-vehicles - objects functioning as distinctive markers - are being moved around with the performers, it is not something which exists prior to the performers' arrival²⁶.

4.2. The Structuring of the Scene

As I see it the actors create the scene's structure over time as rules and guidelines and the subsequent sanctions constitute hierarchies. By combining Goffman and Bourdieu I intend to show that the actor adapts herself to the structure – as when punks are socialized into becoming punks, learning what to wear etc – but this structure is created by the actors and as such they can change it– as when the scene is in constant motion through the distinctive actions of its members. Thus the structure becomes more of a *structuring*, it is not something essential instead the actors have the power to influence and change the structure basically because the ideology directs the structure and not the other way around. This gives scenes flexibility.

The structuring of the scene consists of the themes, this is the scene's meaning, it is what distinguishes the punk scene from other scenes and from the mainstream and it is made up, interpreted and acted upon by the actors as they create rules and hierarchies in their desire for distinct positions. The themes are general in the sense that they are recognized by actors in the scene as being essential, they are prevalent and discussed in lyrics and in fanzines and fed to

newcomers as they are socialized when entering the scene. The actors are taught to *relate* to them in order to become accepted within the scene. But themes are not something fixed, instead they are negotiated through time and as such they are subject to change; they are simply themes, they can easily become transcended²⁷. Themes are socially and historically constructed and have to be related to as such. This means you cannot just interpret DIY as building your own house, you have to learn what events and reactions which have formed the theme in order to relate to it in such a manner that it is recognized by other actors. Instead the rules of the scene are created by the actors as they interpret these themes. As such they are thus arbitrary; they are the subjective interpretation of the general.

The creation of rules becomes the foundation upon which the actor performs, how she chooses to present herself. For example consider the following excerpt regarding the use of bar-codes:

Robert: It's such a classic thing, it's such a border between DIY and what is not, and that is the bar-code, because you have it so that distribution companies can handle records.

Lasse: On our first record, the 7 inch...

R: There is a bar-code...

L: With hands behind it so that it looks like prison bars (A:854-9)

Robert and Lasse interpret the DIY theme as not putting a bar-code on a record since it means distributing the records yourself. In performing punk they consequently do not include bar-codes. Not using bar-codes is presented as punk, thus using them would not be punk, hence the use of a bar-code turned into prison bars. The interpretations of the themes thus always signal a distinction towards other interpretations. The scene is stratified as the actors claim a distinct position by performing a commitment - to what extent they let the themes direct their performance - presenting themselves as more punk than other performers. Consequently they act as if their interpretation is the most accurate, closest to a conceived true meaning of punk. This is how the structuring of the scene is constructed; it is merely a sidescene, a false front in front of which action is performed, *the subjective disguised as the general*.

In a way performing punk means gathering around the Emperor and not only praising his new clothes but competing between each other as who can see them best. But there are no clothes, no essential meaning, the Emperor is naked. The structuring of the scene does not exist outside the actors, it is just the *fake performed as the real*²⁸. However when this is pointed out – as when a punk band puts a bar-code on their record and still claim to be punk - the scene's

meaning is questioned and its deceitful appearance suddenly becomes apparent. Those who have claimed this not to be punk are forced to react. Either they can accept that the Emperor is naked, that the rules are subjective and therefore arbitrary and admit that bar-codes can be punk. But then they would risk their distinct position, since they claimed it based on this distinction. Or they can react by putting sanctions on those who have pointed out that he is naked. By expelling the deviators - calling them sell-outs based on the use of bar-codes - they can reinforce their distinct position by making a distinction towards those who have broken the “rules” and thus strengthen the idea that these are objective. This is how meaning is constructed through actions and interactions between the actors as they strive for distinct positions within the scene. This meaning is constantly negotiated. Value and symbols are arbitrary but that is not to say that members of a scene do not conceive their negotiated meaning as the original and as such it is defended if threatened. The themes are the script, interpreted differently by the different actors, manifested in the selective use of properties as a measure of commitment which stratifies the scene. This is the driving force behind the actors’ development as well as the scene’s, since the actors’ distinctions create and reproduce the themes.

Berger and Luckmann (1991) argue that what we in our everyday life consider as reality is socially constructed and that this is what sociology should investigate. One of the questions Berger and Luckmann pose is “how is it possible that objective meanings *become* objective facticities?” (1991:30, Italics in original). What I propose is that this view can be linked to the structuralism of Bourdieu in using Goffman’s stress on performance. We have seen how the themes of the scene constitute the structuring of the scene, as they are related to by the actors within the scene. The actors interpret the themes into rules and act upon these as to make distinctions from other actors. The rules are thus subjective but as actors react and punish other actors for the latter’s perceived misinterpretations the former signal that their interpretation is the *real objective one*. This process of negotiation and the production and reproduction of value is what makes the themes general and conveys an image that there is a true meaning. But this also carries that scenes are global as they are locally interpreted.

4.3. Scene as the Global Local

The structuring of the scene can be traced through the interactions of yesterday to understand the interactions of today, but it cannot predict the interactions of tomorrow as it is in constant change. The structuring of the scene is thus just as temporary and flexible as the properties

which comprise it. As we saw in the previous chapter the scene's themes are created and reproduced as the actors interpret them into rules. These rules signal a distinction from other actors and are related to – by the actor - as something objectively true. This structuring makes it possible for the scene to be global at the same time as it is local. The global aspect of scene is the abstract, the sum of the actors and the local scenes, past and present properties such as actions, myths, symbols, but also the subjective rules. In short the global aspect consists of the themes as historically constructs since the themes are the outcome of this process. The local scene is the concrete aspect of the global, the global gives meaning to the local scene and connects it with other local scenes, without the former the latter would merely be an, to a specific context, isolated phenomenon. This way it is possible for a Swedish punk to connect with for example a Polish punk, the structuring of scene provides their interaction with meaning even if their local scenes are different; in this way the local scenes becomes connected:

Tobias: We have a lot of punk bands sleeping at our place when there have been shows (...) it is a entire network of people and sometimes you get a note saying if you ever get to ... London then call me and you can stay at my place, it's free. And then you can stay there for free for a week, so it is quite often a kind of an unforced barter (laughs). People have slept here, or some friend of someone's has slept here ... then you can sleep at some of their friends there. (C:318-324)

Naturally the local scenes are not identical, that would be to ignore the influence of the local context. Instead they are all attuned to their specific time and space²⁹. The global aspect provides the local scenes with a framework, only in the local scenes does the global scene take shape as the themes are interpreted into rules, as such the general themes can only be traced through the local past and present scenes. The properties – the manifestations of these interpretations - used in one local scene might thus be different from properties used in another local scene and the same properties can be used for different reasons³⁰. The properties consequently do not have to be global, but the general themes behind them– the structuring of the scene – are, otherwise punks would not be able to interact between different local scenes. Essential here are the institutions within the scene that hold it together and communicate the themes to the local scenes. Global fanzines such as Maximum Rock 'n Roll (MRR) and Profane Existence (PE), distribution-networks and independent record labels, connect the local scenes by reinforcing their connection to the global aspect of the scene³¹.

This is one big disadvantage with Bourdieu's notion of field, since it merely recognizes a connection to a specific context; the question remains whether fields can be global. If one

could assume that there were global fields with different local fields they would naturally look different, as they would be attuned to the local context and one could then assume that they would face different problems with different markers of distinction. The punk scene in Malmö cannot look exactly like the scene in Jakarta since the local context is different, and the properties used would assumingly look different. Bourdieu does take into consideration that a group's social distance to a specific capital must include the geographic distance; how close they are to the centre of attention (1986:276). Thus we can assume that Bourdieu simply would have stated that the Jakarta scene would have a disadvantage since it is too far from the centre. But what Bourdieu does not investigate is the possibility that the centre of attention can move around instead of being presented as something fixed, just as epoch-making means the expulsion of the "former new" to the past. Shifts come and go within the punk scene and as they do I mean that the centre of attention is dislocated from one place to another. This is possible through reactions towards changes in the context. However Bourdieu does not mention whether the centre of attention, the institutions and the dominating actors can become surpassed as another field within a bigger field in another context becomes dominant. Instead he once again loses touch with the local and the global in focusing on the French society, citing Paris as the centre of events (ibid:276).

Scenes are thus created and constantly reproduced as actors react against events and actions occurring either outside the group or within it. As Moore puts it "*visual style is more than a set of clothes to be discarded at will, rather an attitude to life given expression in apparel and behaviour*" (quoted in Muggleton 2002:125)³². The themes are developed as the actors' response to problems occurring either within or outside the scene. In this sense the structuring provides continuity over time and space, a continuity which is created through constant change. The scene is held together by the interactions of the performers and the fact that they recognize the themes and the scene as something true. The scene's meaning is created through sanctions and reactions, connecting the global aspect with the local - as the themes are interpreted in a specific context and used as distinctions - but it also makes these actions possible by providing them with meaning. Without the scene the desire for distinction through the use of punk properties would be meaningless as it imputes them with meaning. *Continuity is thus made possible through change* something which only is possible because of the flexibility of the objects used in this process; the properties of the scene.

ACT V

– Where the properties of the performance are introduced

5.1. Properties

As we have seen the concept of scene involves seeing punk as a performance and as such it needs to be flexible and quickly attune itself to changes in the script and the context.

According to Goffman (1990) a performance is the presentation of one character to another in a specific time and place. During this performance the performer conveys information through different “carriers” to the other performers, information which enables them to define the situation. Again if two unacquainted punks meet on a street corner and the carriers presented by the two actors are not enough to convey the information that they are punk, their interaction is not within the punk scene. Punk I have shown is about certain general themes which are interpreted by the actors into rules and manifested through the use of distinctive markers which serve the purpose of securing the actor’s distinct position. Therefore the markers used to convey the image of the performer - not only as a punk but as a committed punk in a distinct position - are of great importance. I shall call these carriers *properties*, they are the distinctive markers used in this performance.

Properties include the costumes, the make-up, the rituals, the terminology, the music; the objects which enable the performance to take place. They are produced and consumed within the scene with the intention of being used as properties; they are the property of someone. The properties of the scene are the manifestation of the actors’ interpretations of the themes and as such they are flexible, temporary, just as a backdrop or props used in a play they can become abandoned after the performance or used again on another occasion. The structuring of the scene - which itself is temporary - provides the properties with a meaning just as the script gives meaning to the backdrop and props used in a play. Without the script these would simply be conceived as fake or misplaced. As we saw in the previous act the structuring of the scene becomes jeopardized if it is revealed as fake when rules perceived as objective are revealed as subjective, so are the properties subjected to a need for homology. Just as a bad actor or a bad sidescene can make us aware that the play we are watching is fake - that it actually *is* a performance - a misplaced symbol or an object of distinction - which is conceived by other punks as not in accordance with the structuring of the scene - makes them question whether the actor is punk or fake. Tobias mentions when such ruptures occur:

If someone who wasn’t twelve years old arrived and wore a Blink 182-shirt and came to a crust show and the person was after all twenty, twenty-five years old I’m pretty sure people instinctively would think ugh no! What is his interest in going through my records? (C:380-3)

Properties are used as distinctive markers but they still have to adhere to the structuring of the scene, otherwise they have no value of distinction— as in wearing a shirt with a mainstream band – and the other actors will react. Again if the belief in general punk rules are revealed as something subjective this threatens the distinct position of those who believe in the rules’ permanent character and this often results in the expulsion of the deviator.

Properties are not equalled to capital in the sense of Bourdieu’s, instead they are quite the opposite. Capital, as I understand it, is a more permanent investment and as such it is something you tend to defend and keep. To give up capital would signify a loss, a defeat, just as you would not throw away your doctorate just because having a doctorate is something which becomes more and more common. Properties on the other hand are perishable in their nature; it is just a temporary symbol for something else, just as a sidescene of a house in a play is a symbol of a real house, or as a crust haircut is a temporary symbol for punk, it is something which through the help of the structuring of the scene – the backdrop upon which the performance is acted - becomes meaningful and as such it is bound to be abandoned eventually. Properties need to be temporary, they are merely a reflection of the structuring of the scene and as the structuring of the scene is not something static properties too are perishable. Properties can thus be seen - just as scenes can- as empty shells which are filled with meaning as they are used in accordance with the structuring of the scene.

5.2. Produced, Consumed and Performed Properties

I differentiate between *produced*, *consumed* and *performed* properties. Produced properties may be setting up your own record label putting out records, making a fanzine or playing in a band and thus producing songs, records, stickers, t-shirts, - in short producing objects which in turn can be consumed and performed. Consumed properties simply mean acquiring already produced properties³³. Performed properties are the most interesting form since they are *the selective use* of produced and consumed properties, it signals the use of specific properties but it also excludes the use of others.

According to Goffman (1990), an individual accentuates some parts and conceals others when in the presence of other performers. The performed properties constitute this process of accentuation and concealment. For example recording a song is producing properties but choosing to not record a song is performed properties. As Lasse notes:

We've (...) taken so many stands to in some way avoid being viewed as less punk (...) We released a demo tape in 1996 and [cites a member in a known crust band] told us what the fuck this song has a double pedal (...) It was something that we had thought about, that it is not crust with a double-pedal. We had thought about it a lot and thought, what the fuck, let's use a double-pedal it sounds so much better and then obviously we were criticized as we had feared and we felt like ok then we can't use it, one has always been so fucking directed by what people in the punk scene thinks that one has limited oneself, and we have removed a hell of a lot of riffs, songs we have removed because what the fuck this is not crust, this is not good enough. (A:841-54)

This is one example of how the image of punk is being created. *Being punk is performing punk*, it is not simply producing an object; it is a conscious move which takes several aspects into consideration. In this case Lasse and his band recorded a demo and tested it on a punk in a higher position to hear his opinion, looking at Lasse's statement this was something deliberate, they were worried their use of a double-pedal would not be considered as crust. As this was the case they simply removed the double-pedal and then released the demo. The end product is thus not pure but involves a lot of considerations, as is reflected above in the distinction between what is considered crust and what is not and the precautions taken to avoid being seen as less punk. In this case recording the demo is an example of producing properties, to change it and replace a beat with another is performed properties. What you do is produced properties; how you do it is performed. Likewise going to a show is consuming properties as is buying a record or a t-shirt but choosing to put on a specific shirt over others before going to the show or some time after the show telling others you were at the show are examples of performed properties. Consequently rumours, anecdotes and the like are performed properties. As a result every actor within the scene can be said to produce some amount of properties since in using performed properties they give birth to properties which can be performed by others³⁴. For example if a performer tells other performers that he went to see Dead Kennedys³⁵ play in 1979, then the others too can use this, in telling others they know a guy who once saw Dead Kennedys with the original line-up. Consumed properties; going to the show is turned into performed properties; an anecdote which then is used as such by others. Likewise becoming socialized within the scene is to consume properties; you learn how to use properties and the terminology, in short how to perform what you consume.

5.3. Declassification and Endorsement as Performed Properties

According to Bourdieu there is a constant struggle within the field concerning past or contemporary objects. This struggle aims to overturn the hierarchy and thus involve an increase of the specific capital for those who invested in the right object (1986:112). Bourdieu

calls this social alchemy - to radically change the object's social quality without even touching its physical (1986:117). This can be seen in punk when for example bands bring along their own supporting acts, they are transferring value. But this is not really an investment, rather an endorsement since it lacks a permanent status. They are endorsing the specific supporting band and inviting them to profit from the bigger band's name and reputation, but it is only temporary. This endorsement means diffusing the band, by inviting them to profit from the bigger band's name the smaller band are exposed to more actors.

Produced properties, as I define them, are diffused by actors within the scene as they consume these properties and perform them. For example by bringing a band on tour, wearing a band's logo or telling other actors how good they are. Endorsement as performed properties thus also involves the hyping of a band - telling others that they are really good and praise their records, but as such it always carries a distinction. Through this the actor can gain reputation seeing that in consecrating specific properties other properties are being declassified – “they are so much better than ...” - properties which are supported by those the actor is competing with for a higher position. According to Bourdieu the further an object is diffused the lesser its status as an object of distinction (ibid:104). As properties lose their status they are declassified by the actor. Endorsement, I argue, is the positive side of performed properties as it is a supportive act, the negative side is declassification.

According to John Clarke the subcultural style strengthens the group-identity but it also distinguishes the own group from other groups (1993:180), it thus creates a distinction. The creation of a specific style is thus on one hand a denotation of what one does like but on the other hand it is also a indication of what one doesn't like. Bourdieu makes a similar point in arguing that what is considered as taste within one group is always distasteful to another group (1986:18). Thus by endorsing properties the actor can make a distinction towards other actors and thus if the time is right claim a higher position. This becomes something of a *paradox*, since in order for the properties to work as distinctive objects they have to be recognised as such by other actors and in order for them to be recognised they have to be diffused. As they are diffused however they will lose their value of distinction and will be replaced by others which in turn will meet the same faith. This means that in some way this position of becoming trendy, is the position which is closest to decline because if you become too popularized punks will abandon you to save their distinct positions. As Linus notes:

DS-13³⁶ was so fucking good at distributing their flyers at the same time as they took every gig they could, they did a lot and things went really well, so well that it actually went bad, people became annoyed that they were doing so well. (D:831-4)

Here the band diffused itself, by putting out flyers and touring a lot. In doing this they became recognized as an object of distinction and those who endorsed their properties gained a distinct position. However as they became too popular they were declassified by the actors and thus used as a distinction towards those who hyped them. In a way the band is used twice as a marker of distinction, first by endorsing them to reach a distinct position and secondly by declassifying them in order to withhold that distinct position. However as the market is hierarchical, Bourdieu argues, a declassified object can retain its value of distinction for another actors in a less elevated position (1986:104).

However Bourdieu does not further investigate how consumers can also decrease the value of the object for the ones it was originally intended for. If an object suddenly appeals to a lower rank or to actors outside the scene it quickly becomes worthless for the actors who have endorsed it, since it then has lost its value of distinction, as for example in the excerpt above regarding DS-13. Furthermore properties can also be diffused by outside forces, as when they are made available for people outside the scene, as for example when a band signs to a major label and/or is played on mainstream radio or TV and thereby made available to actors outside the scene. This becomes apparent in the following excerpt from the interview with Robert:

But I don't think that it's punk as hell with bondage-trousers and a lot of make-up, what media might describe as punk, it doesn't seem like that much punk anymore (...)
At any club you can see people trying to make a timid mohawk, they [mass media] are trying to make it popular to wear a studded belt (...) you don't want to look like that anymore when you know that you can be mixed up with some brat.
Erik: So the symbols are dislocated all the time?
R: Yeah and that's because of mass media, but only to come back again when the trend is gone. (A:472-92)

Robert speaks of a diffusion done by outside forces, in this case mass media - properties are moved away from the scene and become available to everyone - and how he distances himself from this image. Robert thus connects trends that affect the scene from the outside with trends that occur within the scene, since the latter are a consequence of the former. It becomes trendy within punk to not be trendy as in mainstream. The way of dress once cherished becomes frowned upon as it is picked up by forces outside the scene and made mainstream. However, as Bourdieu also notices, declassified objects are not abandoned forever they can be redefined and make a return, the older the better since the object then has lost its relation to a lower

group (1986:105). In this case they can return when they are abandoned by the mainstream, as Robert notes. Since scenes are open to outside influence the process of declassification becomes necessary as a means to avoid incorporation and save the actors' distinctive positions, declassification becomes a defence strategy. This is certainly a problem with Bourdieu's theory since in arguing that the process of declassification is due to factors and shifts within the field I argue that Bourdieu is neglecting the mass media's and the mainstream culture's role in diffusing and defusing the object³⁷. Linus for example explains what would happen if he would sign to a major record company or distribute his records through a major distribution:

People would start asking me and be like ohohah ... people would be jealous and maybe start trash talking me and (...) maybe take action and not review my zine in their magazine and claim that I'm not part of the scene (D:881-8)

As performing properties includes not consuming certain properties - as in Linus' account not reviewing his fanzine - stories and rumours justifying why this is done become important. By telling other actors about how a small record company is distributed by a major and that is why you are choosing not to consume their properties, you are making a distinction towards other punks who do not know this yet. As Tobias notes this can happen very quickly:

Within the crust-scene (...) there is so much backbite and (...) sometimes it feels like the rumours, no rumours spread as fast as rumours within the crust-scene. And a small mistake can mean the whole world since it is such a large network (...) the whole network could be backbiting you. (C:833-9)

It is thus of great importance to the actors wanting to keep their distinct positions that the actors do not make mistakes, they quickly need to learn how to react towards those who break the rules of the scene and thus threaten their position. This is part of the socialization within the scene, by listening to others you become aware of how to perform punk based on a selection meant to maintain or better your position within the hierarchy.

The properties of the scene, I have stated, are the distinctive markers used in this performance. Just as stage props used in a play are given their meaning from the script the themes of the scene provide the properties used with a meaning. Properties not homologous with the themes are perceived as misplaced. I have differentiated between produced, consumed and performed properties, so far I have mainly focused on the performed properties; the selective use of properties, involving endorsing some while declassifying

others. I have also touched on how important it is for the actors to keep their distinct position and deviant conformity and how this is done through the selective use of properties. I will now connect this use to the performance of commitment

5.4. Performing Properties as a sign of Commitment

As we have seen the selective use of properties signals a distinction towards other actors in order to claim a distinct position. This position I argue is dependent on the actor's perceived level of commitment:

Lasse: (If you see this really huge mohawk and really big studs on the jacket then you know it's a punk and not just a fad.

Robert: But then it is that if you choose to look that way it's such a strong case of deviation it's such a strong statement. (A:476-80)

The use of the performed properties is closely linked to the creation of hierarchies within the punk scene. Performing properties as in the selective use of properties of value is a way of presenting the actors' commitment, in short how "punk" they are and as Lasse puts it - that it is "not just a fad". Kathryn Fox (1987) mentions this in her study *Real Punks or Pretenders*³⁸. She argues that a member's position within the hierarchy corresponds to the perceived level of commitment to the subcultural lifestyle; how committed the members are if they are willing to sacrifice other identities for punk this in turn is what makes them real or pretenders (Fox 1987:344,360). Fox distinguishes between "hardcore" and "softcore" punks³⁹. The softcores are into the lifestyle and image of punk but they see their involvement as something temporary and they do not share the ideology of the group (ibid:358). The hardcore punks on the other hand set the trends and standards for the whole scene and are the ones in charge of differentiating between real punks and pretenders. According to Fox the hardcore punks' commitment is to such an extent that it has gone beyond commitment; their identity as punks is seen as permanent (ibid:352-3).

I agree with Fox that there is a stratification based on the perceived level of commitment signalled through the use of distinctive markers. However, how this level of commitment is perceived is not from a fixed perspective but from a changing one. What is conceived as more punk today, may not be tomorrow. Commitment to the scene – the extent to which you are perceived as to follow the themes of punk - is not something which is objectively recognized, just as themes it is arbitrarily interpreted. Commitment, I argue, is therefore performed, it is

simply *an image conveyed through the use of properties*. Sporting a huge mohawk or having tattoos on your forearms or neck does not mean you are more committed than anyone else. It is simply a performance, a presentation of the actor as committed, as Robert claimed above it is merely “a strong statement”. Fox mentions that the alteration of bodies by piercings, tattoos and extreme hair styles creates the image of a permanent lifestyle (1987:355). But what I would have liked to have seen is a further recognition of this as simply an image, not as sign of a real commitment but of a commitment that is *performed as real*, unfortunately Fox does not further investigate this.

James Lull captures my point when he argues that wearing a new Clash-shirt in San Francisco in the mid-eighties would probably be seen by the more dedicated members as a sign of lack of commitment (1987:228). There is thus a limitation regarding time and space which is of importance since the Clash by this time had become mainstream and cliché. However wearing the same shirt in San Francisco in 1977 would have been quite another thing, since then the Clash were not then as widely diffused, they still had a value of distinction. Secondly Lull’s point also captures the performance of commitment; by choosing certain properties over others the image of a commitment is created. Lastly this presentation of commitment needs to be recognized by the other actors otherwise it is worthless, in this case the more dedicated members. The actor’s level of commitment is created as it is recognized by other actors.

David Muggleton (2002) rejects the measure of commitment and the idea of stratifications within subcultures the way Fox suggests. According to Muggleton there are no real punks or pretenders, “*punk is what you make it*” he states and claims this to be the essence of punk (2002:2). Instead he argues that the idea of stratifications is entirely a subjective view and that this hierarchy would look different dependent on who you would ask. Muggleton’s point is that he has found excerpts in his interviews where punks describes mohawks and tattoos – which Fox identifies as hardcore characteristics - as stereotypical traits. According to Muggleton all members of subcultures portray themselves as equally committed and as genuine as anybody else and therefore stratification cannot be based on commitment (ibid:108). But I will argue that Muggleton is missing the point, it is not as simple as that the creation of stereotypes excludes stratification. Performing commitment is performing properties and since these properties are subordinated the themes of the scene, what is viewed as the “right” commitment at one time will not stay that way forever. The themes correspond to a contemporary situation and properties such as tattoos and mohawks are not frozen in time

but are subject to change. If they become diffused they lose their value of distinction for those whom desire distinct positions and become declassified. To use this process, as Muggleton does, as evidence that a stratification based on commitment does not exist, is to misinterpret the attitude behind it. Instead I would like to use Muggleton's statement that his punks regard mohawks and tattoos as stereotypical traits as evidence that this stratification does exist, if it did not then this distinction would not be of such relevance to the punks, since by distancing themselves from the diffusion of these properties they claim their own distinctive positions. I am not arguing that there is an essential punk hierarchy, instead I see it as based on a performance, but the point is - to paraphrase Thomas- that *if the members conceive the hierarchy as real it is real in its consequences*.

I further suggest that the *presence of hierarchies within the scene* means the dismissal of large parts of the subcultural theory presented in *Resistance through Rituals* (1993) and *Subculture – the Meaning of Style* (1988), since the diffusion and defusion of the subculture do not mean the death of the subculture but merely a shift within the scene as properties are declassified and thus made available to other fractions of the scene or groups outside the scene. The way I define scene connotes that a scene – in contrast to a subculture - is not defenceless and its death is not something that is inevitable, objects are not simply stolen or to use Hebdige, “frozen” (1988:96), they are as we have seen, simply declassified by the actors it was intentionally intended for since they have become popularized. The attempts to incorporate the subculture through the process of diffusion and defusion is interesting and definitely has its points and supports my theoretical proposition of scenes as open shells subjected to outside influence, but what Clarke ignores, as well as Hebdige, is once again the context, the attitude behind the acts and the following structuring. My point is that when the media presents an object as punk and it becomes mass produced as a commodity, punks will distance themselves from that object because otherwise they jeopardize their distinct position by being identified with those perceived as being of lower position; properties are simply abandoned and left to lower fractions of the scene.

The process of resistance towards the defusion and diffusion by declassifying properties of distinction suggests the existence of a stratified subculture, but although it is mentioned in the introduction to *Resistance through Rituals* that an analysis of a subculture should include looking into the biographies of the subculture (1993:57) – how it is lived out by its members – is not further investigated, something which the writers themselves recognize (ibid) and have

received some well deserved critique for (see Leblanc 2002, Muggleton 2002). The unwillingness to investigate subcultural members' subjective accounts of their reality resulted in Dick Hebdige missing out on the process of resistance against the defusion and diffusion when it occurred in England around 1977 since he mainly focused on secondary sources, instead of actually talking to punks or going to shows⁴⁰. In a way Hebdige actually shoots himself in the foot, at the same time as he is conducting research on punk's objects of resistance through the use of newspapers, he is arguing that these objects lose their original meaning and are imputed with a new meaning through the defusion and diffusion in media. Is he then not investigating, to use his own words, already "frozen" objects, objects deprived of their meaning, since these are made available to him and everybody else through mass media? If not, if they still have a subcultural meaning, as one could hope for Hebdige's sake, then is that not a sign as good as any of a resistance against the incorporation he calls inevitable and that punk cannot be seen as something tightly shut but rather as something open to influences and therefore always subject to change⁴¹?

In this chapter I have suggested that the selective use of properties signal to what extent the actor is perceived as committed to the scene. This commitment, I have argued, is not something real, but merely a performance of meant to be perceived as real just as the interpretations of the themes into rules and the defending of these turns the subjective into the a perceived objective. Consequently the performance of commitment has to be viewed together with a specific time and space and how it is recognized by other actors. This recognition is what creates stratification within the scene. How "punk" you are perceived as decides your position. I call it a *hierarchy through anarchy*, since it signals a conscious move from what is conceived as normal and mainstream as a means to climb the hierarchical ladder. Let us now turn to how the scene is stratified and how this affects the actors' interpretations of the themes.

ACT VI

– Where the stratification of the scene and the process behind this are elucidated

6.1. Hierarchy through Anarchy

The hierarchy I have encountered in studying punk is not openly discussed but since it is recognized by the actors they still have to adhere to it. Consider for example the following claim by Lasse:

There is such an obvious hierarchy within DIY-punk where certain people who either have been in the movement for a long time or are said to stand for very extreme left political ideas for many years, plays in a cool band or have a cool record company, they are at the top (...) their opinion means a hell of a lot, there is a lot of frigging talk about anarchy and that no one is superior, but in reality there is just such a frigging hierarchy. (A:676-83)

Here Lasse makes several distinctions, the first is based around tradition – long-time commitment - the second is political – extreme left opinions – and the third is cultural – what you have accomplished in the scene. The creation of and reproduction of this hierarchy is connected to all of these three and are manifested through the use of performed properties. Performed properties are used to signal a deviant conformity but it also includes a presentation of the actor's commitment to the scene. Through the negative side of the performing properties – the declassification of properties of value - the actors perform to what extent they are committed to punk, in short how “punk” they are. As Lasse puts it;

If you are a punk then you should be aware of who are in and who are out and what is good or bad. (A:672-4)

To reach an elevated position the actor has to perform consumed properties to signal a commitment, since if the other actors do not recognize your performed commitment it is worthless. It is thus of importance, as Lasse notes, how you perform it, what you choose to endorse, what you choose to declassify and who recognizes it. What gives properties their value is not merely the producer, it is exerted by the whole scene as properties used as objects of distinctions have to be recognized by the other actors to become imputed with a value. The actors' needs for distinction are decisive in defining this value because in consuming properties they too contribute in creating and increasing their value. The consumer produces the product she is consuming, something Bourdieu means the economists are missing; how the object is being used and what is behind this use (1986:240-1).

By recognizing you as committed the other actors endorse you, the higher they are the better for you. Acknowledging another actor's higher position is placing you in that hierarchy as well, it is just another way of performing commitment. As the actors strive to present

themselves as more committed than other actors it creates stratification within the scene. The more you are perceived as committed by other actors, the more you have to defend it. Performing properties is showing how you interpret the themes of punk, to present yourself as more punk is to aggravate this interpretation. Consider the following excerpt:

Daniel: [My opinions regarding sell-out] has become a lot harsher, earlier sell-out was maybe to be interviewed on MTV, then it became maybe to sign to a major label and now it starts a lot earlier. (B:595-7)

Daniel speaks of how he relates to other actors' actions and how this defines what is acceptable and what is not – sell-out or punk – and how this affect his actions – he will not consume it. As you strive for an elevated position within the scene you have to show you are more committed than those around you; the definition of what is considered as punk is thus sharpened. Performing commitment is a question of who recognizes the performance. In order to claim a more elevated position you have to appeal to the higher ranks to include you; to show that you are as committed as they are. As Daniel says, sell-out being played on MTV becomes signing to a major label, which later for example becomes putting bar codes on records and so it continues⁴². By reinterpreting the themes you are making a distinction from other actors. This is how the deviant conformity is created since this aggravation signals a distinction toward those in lower positions at the same time it is a way of climbing even higher by showing commitment to the scene and thus display a distinction towards actors in a similar position as you are. Properties are performed, what was once cherished becomes declassified as the actor claims a higher position. Consequently in expressing your degree of commitment to the scene and thus indicating your distinctive position, it is of relevance what bands you choose to include in your performance on t-shirts, patches, badges or simply by saying you like them and consequently what bands you choose not to⁴³.

6.2. Music as Strategy

Consequently the higher your position the fewer amounts of properties available for your performance since less and less properties are conceived as punk. Declassification becomes essential since your position is built upon subjective interpretations and when these are threatened to be revealed as such, as when a band cherished deviates from your rules, they have to be declassified. Given that your position is dependent on other actors recognizing your performed commitment, displaying properties produced by that band would risk your

position, since other actors would not recognize your performed commitment to the same level anymore. You would be used as a means for other actors to claim a higher position by making a distinction from you. As when Daniel comments on the importance of what bands you listen to:

Oh yes I think so, it might be that you're listening to a band that is not accepted (...) within the punk scene you're a part of, and then there might be commotion (...) people do react if you do something that they do not consider punk (B:205-11)

(S)ome bands ... who release new records and do like what I think so fucking sell-out, then I won't buy the record, I won't even listen to it and if I do I won't give it an honest chance as I would have if it were different (B:464-8)

This distinction between what is deemed appropriate regarding your position and what is not illustrates to what extent commitment is performed. Daniel describes how he would not give a sell-out band even an honest chance. This means that music becomes more than a question of how good it is but of how it is produced and diffused. Music is properties and is used as such in the actor's performance, only to be abandoned when it is not needed anymore. *Music is reduced to strategy*. Linus states;

“(I)f everybody likes Tragedy it might be because they are so fucking good, I mean it sounds rather shallow but it does not have to be that way “ (D:404-6)

Note that Linus is using “might be” and “does not have to be that way” thus signalling that this is not always the case, sometimes bands are considered good due to reasons other than musical ability⁴⁴. Bands are not only judged on what they play but on the action surrounding the production as well, where it has been produced, by whom, how it is distributed and for whom, in short how the produced properties were performed; the music becomes subordinated to the scene's themes⁴⁵:

Lasse: You can't sign to a major label or appear on MTV and you shouldn't either be involved with a fanzine that is a bit too big either (...) you must not have a too expensive guitar. There are so many frigging things, like there is some kind of frigging book of regulations of how you should act to be as DIY as possible. (A:625-9)

Once again, performing properties becomes a question of performing commitment as production and consumption are turned into questions of *how it is done*. The scene is thus in constant change as its members deal with aspects of the surrounding context, but it also deals with problems that occurs within the scene. When properties are “stolen” by the mainstream and turned into fashion or are popularized within the scene these properties lose their value

of distinction and are quickly abandoned, as we saw in a previous chapter. The scene has to be flexible since the local context it is part of is changing. The punk scene is thus always in motion as its members are acting and reacting – producing or consuming in order to claim their distinction - and performing properties– choosing not to produce and consume some properties since they have *lost* their value of distinction.

6.3. Continuity through Change

This process is what keeps the scene alive. Properties are constantly declassified as outside forces threaten to incorporate the scene's properties; the scene is thus carried forward through the action of the actors. The scene gives the distinction a meaning, or if you prefer, an excuse for the actors' declassification of properties. As the actors strive for distinction the scene is constantly reproduced as to give meaning to this distinction, without the scene the distinction would lose its meaning since the attitude takes form within the premises of the scene, but even more without the distinction the scene would dissolve and become one with the mainstream. Scenes are reproduced as their members in their struggle for distinction force other members to react to their actions; scenes are the objectified result of this accumulated action. The structuring of the scene is thus linked to the actor, as it is the same premises that guide their development.

This is one reason why Bourdieu's notion of field and capital is limited when studying and describing punk, since for Bourdieu distinction is the means for reproducing the dominance of the upper classes, however my point is that the reproduction of the scene is the outcome of the need for distinction; within the punk scene the distinction is the goal itself not just a means, and in order to secure this distinction, the scene is constantly reproduced. When looking at the punk scene it seems as if people are first drawn to it to express a role as an outsider through deviant music, dress and appearance, consuming properties is the first step. As you become aware of the rules of the game and start incorporating the themes and become a punk you then learn the means of distinction in order to abandon what you were attracted to in the first place - bands, clothes and appearance - performing properties thus becomes prevalent. As Tobias says:

I got into punk through my big sisters (...) At first I listened to what they liked; the first wave that arrived with Pistols and the likes, and then I found the Exploited by myself, but they really do not mean anything for me now, except that they were the gateway to all the other punk that actually means something (C:147-51)

There are several interesting distinctions at play here, first the distinctions “they” and “I” signalling the importance of finding your own bands instead of following someone else; to claim a distinct position through performing a commitment. As performing properties becomes important, you may learn the band you have found needs to be abandoned if you want to keep that position as when Tobias says “they really do not mean anything for me now”, signalling he has abandoned them⁴⁶. Last but not least the distinction between punk that “actually means something” and your former favourites functions as an excuse as to why you let go of a band you really liked; they were meaningless. In order to kill your darlings you have to learn to use a weapon and in the case of punk this weapon is performing properties in the shape of distinction and the subsequent declassification of properties once cherished.

Performing properties is signalling a commitment and thus also claiming a distinct position within the hierarchy. By putting on show how you interpret the themes you appeal to different strata of the scene, this is how the themes creates a structuring of the scene. By performing commitment you present yourself as more “punk” than others and this is done by reinterpreting the themes. Your position within the scene is built upon this process and you will therefore defend it even if means declassifying what you used to like - as the band Exploited for Tobias – and endorse what you are perceived to like – as the band Tragedy for Linus. The actors are thus always in motion, reinterpreting the themes, trying to climb the hierarchy, declassifying more and more properties. Consequently the scene is in motion too as it is created by the actors as to provide meaning to their performances. The structuring of the scene is thus linked to the actor. How commitment is performed concurs - as we have seen - with the actor’s position but as we shall see the produced properties play a particular role in this.

ACT VII

– Where the plot thickens as the significance of produced properties is recognized

7.1. The Interesting Position of the Punk Orthodoxy

As we have seen to claim a distinct position, to climb the hierarchical ladder, it is to constantly reinterpret the themes of the scene and intensify the performance of commitment. According to Bourdieu the orthodoxy, those who have access to a position of authority, tend to defend this position by maintaining the status quo (1986:15). They become conservative as to avoid losing their amount of capital. This concurs in some way with what we have seen so far, but as we shall see this is not accurate regarding those in positions of authority. Reaching a position of authority within the scene radically changes how commitment is performed. The punks I've studied, which can be said to constitute the orthodoxy of the local scene, act in the opposite direction than they have done prior to reaching that position. They tend to become less intolerant towards those who deviate from their interpretations of the themes when they have reached a position of authority. The themes are reinterpreted again, but this time in an opposite direction. These punks tell me how they can move more freely and do not have to adhere in a strict way to the scene's themes. As Tobias says when he is asked how people within the scene view the way he dresses:

He's [referring to himself in third person] no little punkrocker anymore but he doesn't have to dress that much punk anymore, he doesn't have to wear studs, he has been in the punk scene a long time, and there will come a time when he doesn't look all that much punk anymore. (C:611-4)

The distinction lies between long-time punks and new punks and is thus a matter of how commitment is performed, a long-time punk does not have to comply with the guidelines regarding dress and appearance as newcomers do because of the amount of time he has put into the scene he is seen as punk anyway. Robert and Lasse have a similar view:

Robert: I have always disliked those who have been a part of the game for so long that they can do what they want cause they'll get away with it, but now I've reached that stage and now I can say that personally I don't care that much about sell-out. (A:773-6)

Lasse: What's scary is that people conceive it as that [being less restricted], even if we enter the stage as a crust band wearing leather-jackets, cause none of us are up to being vegan anymore, we are considered cool anyway, if we had done that before we were a respected punk band and had been a part of the movement for a long time we would have been in trouble. (A:750-3)

Here then Tobias, Robert and Lasse are making distinctions between what is tolerated and what is not, a tolerance which they portray concurs with an elevated position. They describe

how they can get away with actions that contradict interpretations of the themes which are prevalent in the middle-sections – in this case considering sell-out as not such a big deal, not dressing punk and wearing leather within the crust scene - and still being regarded as punk. Something which they state would have been impossible earlier in their careers; it thus seems that the orthodoxy within the punk scene does not behave in the manner Bourdieu describes. On the contrary Bourdieu claims that the dominating orthodoxy's desire for status quo leads to defensive strategies in order to maintain their dominant position (1986:166), something which I have not at all found in my research on the punk scene. Instead I have encountered a less radical view to selling-out and exploring different ways to play punk⁴⁷. It seems that it is more common amongst those in the middle regions to stick to somewhat conservative methods; to adhere to the rules more strictly and thus declassify everything which does not fit your interpretation of the themes, as we have seen in the remarks made by Daniel, but also in the remarks made by the others in describing how they acted before reaching a position of authority. We shall now see what role the produced properties play in defining an actor as less restricted by what is conceived as appropriate to his or her position.

7.2. Producing Freedom

The punks in positions of authority that I have interviewed all tell similar stories, how they earlier in their development had a totally different opinion regarding what was considered as punk and were a lot harsher towards signing to major labels, being played on commercial radio and how important it was you interpreted the themes of the scene. Kalle relates to how he felt the need to fit in and how it is of less relevance now:

One might have had a stronger need to be in a group when one was younger and I don't have to proof I am the same as them, I don't have to do it anymore, before one did it because you wanted to be a part of the gang (E:436-9)

We have seen how punk is made as a conscious act, negotiated and performed in accordance with the general themes but also in accordance with what is expected of your position. Otherwise you run risk of becoming labelled not-punk as in the excerpt in the fifth act when Lasse, a few years ago, was corrected and put back in line by someone in a higher position simply because the double-pedal used was not coherent with what was considered as punk. How you are expected to interpret the themes into rules is thus exerted by actors in higher positions than the actors who are directed. Therefore it comes as no surprise when Robert and Lasse speak of their achieved flexible position as something they have waited for, they have

felt restrained by the scene and now they feel they can take risks in a manner that was not possible before⁴⁸:

Lasse: (If you think about the rules that exist in making punk, we think we have been so fucking brave this time taking steps out in different directions musically, this is the first record where I feel we have done songs we want to do, that we think are ultimate without thinking how it should sound within our genre.

Robert: This time we've done what we've always felt like (...) we want to do.
(A:836-40)⁴⁹

In giving the actor a certain amount of freedom the accumulation of produced properties is vital, since it provides the beholder with a certain amount of independence. By producing properties the actor does not need to strongly withhold the image of himself or herself as punk, instead it will be done by other actors in the scene who will use these produced properties as performed or consumed properties either by getting the record, fanzine or going to a show⁵⁰. The *consumed properties are dependent properties* in the way that you are endorsing produced properties and are thus dependent that these properties stay deviant enough to count as valuable properties. In the same way *producing properties is less dependent* since it establishes your own position of being punk without you having to prove it by performing or consuming properties to the same extent since other actors by claiming themselves to be punk through the help of your produced properties claim you as punk as well⁵¹. Kalle and Linus speak about the difference between consuming and producing properties:

Kalle: People ask things like have you made a fanzine, have you made a record, in some way it feels like you are always above people who are not doing anything, I don't know why, because punk shouldn't be like that, everybody should be able to participate and do everything, but it's not like that. (E:649-53)

Linus: (O)bviously those who play in big bands are cooler than those who don't play in a band at all (...) I've never wanted to be a bystander, I didn't want to be a guy who simply pays the entrance, applauds and then leaves, instead I want to be involved like hell and that results in (...) doing all the things your idols do. (...) I have taken all the measures to make my way up (...) I started taking care of booking shows when things weren't going that good and booked shows almost on my own and at the same time I released records and put out a fanzine, that is you did all these things and then you felt, at the same time I started feeling more secure too. (D:815-20, 852-61)

Both Kalle and Linus recognize producing properties as the key to a position of authority, Linus' distinction between producing and being a bystander captures this. Linus' account is interesting since he claims that he has been aware of how to make his way up the hierarchy; he admits that he has consciously tried to reach a high position within the scene; he has done

everything you are expected to do and this has assured him a high position. Linus tells me how it used to be so important to fit in, how he in his search for identity has tried almost everything, he joined a local anarchist association, he has called himself straight edge and vegan because as he says it felt like something you had to try. Similar remarks are made by the other punks in similar positions in this study. According to Linus reaching a high position has made him more secure and confident and thus less concerned with what others might think. Something which I would explain is possible since he has produced properties to such an extent that he has quickly made a career, and has thus reached a position where he can more freely live out his identity. What he has done – putting out records, playing in big bands, editing a fanzine - establishes him as punk as actors are consuming his produced properties to make their own distinction. There is thus more room for a change, a freedom that Linus as well as the others connect to their position within the scene's hierarchy. Their performance of commitment turns from active to passive.

7.3. Passive and Active use of Properties

For those who mostly have consumed properties, the performed properties tend to be the active use of these, since they have to actively present themselves as punks through the use of acquired properties, the consumed properties are thus passive. For example acquiring properties is not the most important, how to use them however is crucial, to choose one shirt over another in order to indicate one's distinctive position, as we have seen in the previous chapters. However for those who have mostly produced properties the performance of properties tend to be passive, instead the produced properties are active. On several occasions during this study I have had extensive discussions with punks just to later discover that they were actually members of the bands we had discussed. When I asked them why they did not tell me this during the discussions, they told me "you didn't ask me" or simply that they did not want to brag about it. If you have acquired a large amount of produced properties you do not have to actively use these as performed properties yourself since people below you in the hierarchy will do this and thus establish you as punk. Since actors endorse produced properties as a means to show their distinctiveness and enjoy a higher position within the punk scene, these properties are imputed with a value. Consequently the producers of these properties gain a high position and a good reputation in this process. Therefore they do not have to actively re-establish their position through the selective use of properties to the same degree as those who are dependent on the endorsement of properties as distinctive objects.

This ambivalent position is of theoretical interest for several reasons. First it illustrates that there is indeed a perceived stratification within the scene. As Lasse pointed out earlier regarding wearing leather, if there were not stratification they would not be tolerated to behave in such a manner. They are recognized by other actors as higher in the hierarchy because their produced properties are endorsed as distinctive markers. Secondly it shows that commitment is indeed performed and not something authentic or essential since they have changed their interpretations of the themes in a radical way. For example Robert, as we have seen, considered bar-codes as sell-out earlier in his development and now says he does not even care about sell-out. If commitment were something fixed and real this would not be possible. Lastly their position is a sign of the themes as being general. Even if they are less restricted by how commitment must be performed they still have to relate to the themes, since their tolerant views are dependent on other actors defining them as punk, as Linus mentioned in the discussion on what would happen if he did not adhere to the themes and signed to a major. If they would disregard the themes and for example sign to a major or make pop music they would become declassified. Consequently if their properties were not used by other actors to perform a commitment then their produced properties no longer define them as punk. They would then lose their position of authority and would once again have to rely on performing properties in order to show a distinct position. However as long as they adhere to the themes they can relax and act in a less restricted way. They know by now the Emperor is naked. But as long as they do not scream this out they can withdraw from the fight regarding who can see them the clearest. This is something Bourdieu does not mention, that a position of authority gives a certain amount of freedom.

ACT VIII

– Where the sack is finally tied together as we conclude and return to the joke

8.1. Concluding Remarks

The question of issue in this paper has been *how punk can be described theoretically*. I have chosen to present punk as a scene, a negotiated social space, where meaning is constructed and agreed upon. This scene, I have suggested, is based upon certain general themes which the members of the scene have to adhere to. These themes are then interpreted into rules by the actors. I call this deviant conformity, to stick to the collective values of the group, but at the same time claiming a distinct individual position. I have – based on Arnold (1998) and Karlsson (2003) - identified three general themes in punk which connect the local scenes to a global abstract. Scenes are stratified as the actors interpret the themes differently as a means of declaring a commitment - through the use of properties - to the scene and thus making a distinction towards other actors within the scene. The interpretations of the themes are presented as if there is a true meaning of punk, a meaning which if revealed as subjective – as when a band deviates from the actor's interpretation – is reacted upon. The themes of the scene and the subsequent hierarchy are the structuring of the scene and it is made up by actors as they interact and react towards influences inside and outside the scene. This is how the scene is reproduced; there is thus a link between the structuring and the individual.

In this paper I have also sought to investigate how punk is lived out by punks, how meaning is constructed and reproduced and what role the use of distinctive objects have in this. I have in a dialogue with Bourdieu introduced the concept of properties and differentiated between produced, consumed and performed properties. I have mainly focused on the latter since they are the selective use of the two former. I have shown how performing commitment means showing other actors how you interpret the themes. By including a band in the performance the actor endorses the band's produced properties, an endorsement which is not permanent; these properties are excluded from the performance if they lose their value of distinction for the actor. Basically a band that does not fit the actor's interpretation of the themes is declassified and presented as not punk. This is the important distinction. Performing commitment is dependent on recognition of one's performance by other actors. In order to climb the hierarchy the performance must thus be recognized as such by those in elevated positions the themes are thus reinterpreted and becomes stricter as the actor attempts to reach a more elevated position. This means that the higher in the hierarchy, the less properties are available since as the actor moves up the hierarchy, more and more properties are interpreted as not punk.

I have also shown how producing properties can give the producers a certain amount of freedom in performing their commitment. Produced properties are consumed and performed to such an extent that the producers are identified as punk on behalf of what they have produced and not how they perform their commitment. As their produced properties are used as distinctive markers by actors to perform a commitment, the producers are automatically perceived as committed punks and can thus act in a less intolerant way towards what is deemed as sell-out in other strata of the scene. This position, I have argued, is interesting since it indicates stratification within the scene, commitment as performed and the themes as general since they still have to be related to.

Let us now return for a moment to the joke recited in the introduction with the punk and his friend. Viewed in the light of what we have seen in this paper it appears to us in another way. The actions of the punk become more understandable. The punk describes punk as something general, as a collective attitude not about individual style. But if we look closer at the punk he is dependent on how his performed commitment is perceived – he is dressed “right”, probably got the “right” bands on his jacket. He is performing a deviant conformity and he is dependent on the image of punk as something general and not as subjective otherwise he would lose his position. When asked to be more specific about what punk means, the way he interprets the themes becomes obvious; punk is about being outside society – in this case behaving in deviant manner. However when his friend - who is yet tolerated only because he does not constitute a threat to the punk - starts interacting with the punk as if he was part of the scene, he becomes a threat to the punk. By acting as he interprets the themes in the same manner as the punk, he threatens the latter’s deviant conformity and forces the punk to react. The friend is deemed as a poser and the punk can maintain his distinct position. The friend has taken his first steps towards joining the scene and receives his first lesson how to successfully interact within the scene. The punk is providing him with the means he needs to become accepted within the scene, by calling his friend a poser he reinforces the claim I have made throughout this paper; *punk is not a question what it is, it is a question of how it is done.*

See you in the pit...

Endnotes

ACT I

¹ Craig O'Hara (1999:22) and David Muggleton (2002:59) recognizes this as well. Muggleton further quotes Simmel's statement that modern fashion is a compromise between complying with a group's norms and values while emphasizing individual distinction from other group members (ibid:66). Muggleton speaks of distinctive individuality (ibid:63) which he argues signifies emphasizing individuality through a distinction from a collective reference for example the mainstream. According to Muggleton distinction within the group provides the individual with means to resist the accepted norm but also to avoid fitting in on an across-group distinction, which is to adhere to the group while distancing themselves from a stereotypical image of the subculture (ibid:67). That this could also be a means of gaining status within the group is something Muggleton does not investigate. He thus falls into the same trap - as well shall see - as the Birmingham School by neglecting the structures his line of argument reveals.

² James Lull also hints that there is a need for differentiation within the scene, as he notes that some of the punks he has studied have started growing their hair long to disturb their own friends, Lull says this suggests an unwillingness to conform (Lull 1987:251)

³ In his study about the significance of rock music in a biker gang Paul Willis defines homology as to what extent the music's structure and content correspond to the values - may they be conscious or not - of the specific social group (1984:57). Homology thus refers to how an object corresponds to a lifestyle and consequently to what extent the members of this lifestyle can identify with the object.

⁴ The use of the mainstream in this paper can be equalled with "the mass culture" - cultural objects mass produced for mass consumption - for example clothes at H&M or music played in commercial radio and TV. As Storey writes objects produced for an audience that "*is a mass of non-discriminating consumers*" (2001:8).

⁵ A fanzine is a xeroxed magazine in the spirit of DIY with interviews, record reviews, ads for records, tour dates, news and rumours. Dick Hebdige states that fanzines communicates; "... *urgency and immediacy, of a paper produced in indecent haste, of memos from the front line* (1988:111)

⁶ Petter Karlsson states DIY is the driving force behind punk which connects the local with the global (2003:29). Karlsson also cites anti-capitalism as an important issue which here can be equalled with "don't suck corporate cock" (ibid:13) he further touches on the musical features as well (ibid:14)

⁷ There are other aspects in punk that aspire to become themes, for example anarchism and veganism. Craig O'Hara (1999) has claimed that all punks are anarchists but I would not go that far. Not all punks are anarchists or even have to relate to it as for the general themes. Anarchism I would say is used as properties in certain sectors of the scene as an interpretation of the general themes. It is an extension of fuck the mainstream. Anarchism has for the last twenty-five years been an accepted interpretation of the themes within punk, other ideological interpretations however have not been. One example of this is the rise of white power-punk in the early eighties. At first it was a part of the scene but not entirely accepted, then it became used as a object of distinction, to differentiate between punk and nazi-punk, Dead Kennedys' "Nazi punks fuck off" from 1981 is one example. When the right wing parts of the scene began to turn the internal distinction into an external, positioning them outside of the punk scene, the transformation was completed and resulted in a new scene, connected to some extent to the punk scene, mainly musically, but separated as it was used by the separate actors as a means of distinction. This is interesting since it elucidates how the actors of the scene create change and how scenes are always changing as a result. For further reading on punk and white power see Hamm (1994), Sabin (1999), Blush (2001) O'Hara (1999) and Ugo Corte's forthcoming essay at the sociological department at Uppsala University.

⁸ Sarah Thornton has stated that the greatest fear of an underground subculture is to be popularized through mass media (1995:208). According to Thornton subcultural ideologies are means for the members to claim a distinct position within social groups, to differentiate themselves from "members of the undifferentiated mass" (ibid:201).

⁹ For those of you who know different kinds of punk, my use of the term includes crust punk, d-beat punk and raw punk based on Karlsson's claim of a larger crust culture (2003:5)

¹⁰ I am not a drummer but it goes something like puckaduckuda puckaduckuda

¹¹ Karlsson also recognizes this as he states that crust punk is loud and fast, the lyrics are short and straight to the point and the singing is more of a shouting out the lyrics (Karlsson 2003:5).

¹² As Klas a long time crust punk told me: "*Ten, fifteen years ago it was more about eating meat, fuck everything and being, y' know, politically incorrect, it was not just (...) a reaction towards the mainstream but also to y'know straight edge and refused-like punk. Then when the mainstream bands became less political and sang about drinking beer and love, not being pc, crust went the other way; veganism, political awareness and*

correctness. Now however in some parts it is viewed as you know working-class to eat black pudding and liver paste and fuck everything again since the mainstream is getting more and more politically correct”(Field notes).

ACT II

¹³ This event, I argue, illustrates the importance of being acquainted with the field we are studying. This could have happened to anyone, but it would have been hard for an outsider to be able to detect this distinction if not knowing what to look for.

¹⁴ I do not trick anybody into thinking I am punk; I present myself as I am. Anne Knudsen states that it is important to be honest to the performers and reveal your intentions as a researcher, (1995:22). Further I have never lied about my role as a researcher, instead sometimes it has worked as to break the ice when meeting people for the first time since many are interested in what I write about and it has enabled me to discuss topics which are kind of sensitive – such as the hierarchy within the scene – in a more relaxed way.

¹⁵ Denzin uses the term participant observation over ethnography and states that such a method means conducting research, studying people’s lives at the same time as we set out to understand how they express their lives through the use of symbols (in Silverman 1993:48). Participant observation thus involves sharing the viewpoint of those we study; to investigate social processes over time in order to understand interaction between the characters. We attempt to gather first-hand information upon which we then build theories. The participant observer, according to Denzin, is not constrained by judgements preceding the study (quoted in Silverman 1993:48). By combining interviews and fieldwork we are faced with a multi-methodological means to understand, and more importantly, verify aspects of the performers’ self-representation. Ethnography thus provides us with both an objective and a subjective side of the individual’s social lives (Leblanc 2002:20). However there is a risk that it becomes too subjective since ethnography is a partial study, we are not studying the whole phenomenon but parts of it, it is thus also ungeneralizable.

¹⁶ Stake also mentions the ”intrinsic” case study where the focus lies on the specific case just because we are interested in the specific case (1998:88)

¹⁷ This is not to say the interviewees saw me as an outsider, they had all met me prior to the interviews when I first approached them but I am not conducting interviews in order to present myself as more punk than the interviewees, something which would be have been highly contra productive and rather useless. I want to investigate punks’ attitudes toward elements within the scene and outside of it, it is thus of importance that this attitude is not directed towards me, something I think could have been the case if I had not taken these precautions. This is one example of how, I argue, I have developed as a researcher and how I am able to better separate my role as a punk from my role as a researcher. I have learned to step out of the race and not compete for higher positions, even if it is only temporary. I guess this implies I am less punk nowadays, but probably a better researcher.

¹⁸ Kenneth Pike differentiates between “emic” classifications, that is distinctions that are found within the text and not created by the researcher, the latter being “etic” classifications (in Alasuutari 1995:67)

¹⁹ The study of cultural distinction must not be confused with Pierre Bourdieu’s use of the term.

ACT III

²⁰ The reason why I discuss class in this chapter bears no other relevance than it is necessary as to criticize the Birmingham School.

²¹ On the connection between the New York punk scene and its links to the middle class see McNeil & McCain, 1996:220, 227, 300 and Savage, 1991:134

²² The Birmingham School mentions hippies as an example of a counter-culture

²³ See Muggleton (2002), Leblanc (2002) and Laing (1985).

²⁴ This is also the case when it comes to outside influences, as long as they are in accordance with the scene’s rules and norms they are accepted – as when punk music is “borrowed” by autonomous left-groups - but if they are not - as when mainstream media threatens to incorporate objects used in the scene - the scene’s actors will react toward this.

²⁵ McRobbie has stated that a better description of the raw material is “uncooked” (McRobbie 1984:117)

ACT IV

²⁶ Goffman does however cite funeral cortèges and king’s parades as examples on occasions when the setting follows the performer (1990:33).

²⁷ Take for example the theme regarding the “don’t suck corporate cock” – the disassociation from the mainstream and the established – has not always been an important theme in punk. The Clash, Sex Pistols and

the Ramones were all signed to major labels. Themes are reactions to events occurring inside or outside of the scene, and as such they are not fixed in time. In the late seventies in England, punk symbols were used in the fashion industry and bands were moving towards the mainstream. Thus the theme of distancing oneself from the mainstream and the established, I argue, became important as punk's connection to the mainstream threatened the distinct positions of the actors and forced them to react in order to save these positions. As themes are developed the properties used as manifestations of these develop as well. In this case the reaction became a more uniform dress code and a faster beat and the rise of hardcore punk (Joynson 2001:16).

²⁸ Do not worry I DO see the analogy to Baudrillard, however there is a difference where Baudrillard speaks of hyperreality as something that has replaced reality, I argue that in the case of punk the structuring of the scene has never been real, it is not a copy of a copy of something real it is just the fake performed as real and reality in this case has not existed.

²⁹ Straw defines scene as "*a cultural space in which a range of musical practises coexists*" (Quoted in Bennett 2000, s 64). In part I agree with him, the scene definitely constitutes a cultural space, it is situated in a specific time in a specific place, but the global aspect of scene has no connection - other than when it takes physical form in the sense of a local scene - to a context. It can still constitute a cultural space although however this space is not limited in time. The latter part of Straws definition is true for the global aspect of scene since it consists of the local scenes, but it can also be true for specific local scenes that are comprised of several small clusters. For example Lund and Malmö where the local punk scene encompasses several aspects, skate punks, street punks and the most vibrant the crust punks, together they constitute the local punk scene and together with local punk scenes all over the world they are a part of the global punk-scene.

³⁰ In Bali for example I hung out with punks who had crossed over swastikas on their jackets, I was amazed to see that they too were part of the anti-fascist movement which is prevalent within European punk scenes. However as I noted this they looked at me in disbelief, in fact they were using this symbol to signal their fuck-the-establishment-attitude, since the inverted swastika is used in Hinduism to symbolize the universe and by wearing this symbol they were saying fuck Hinduism to their Hindu parents, teachers and local government.

³¹ Both MRR and PE include sections in every issue reporting on different local scenes around the world from the former Soviet Union (PE # 42) to the Malaysian punk scene (MRR #244)

³² The first punks for example in New York 1973 can be seen as a reaction of different actors to the established structure of the rock scene (see McNeil and McCain 1996:148) - an attitude is objectified into dress, music and appearance - the punks in London 1976, in turn adopted the American scene but it was also a reaction towards the English establishment (Hebdige 1988:25, 28). Here then the reaction is turned towards elements within the scene - the New York style - as well as outside forces - the British society. As punk developed in England, this scene became the source of inspiration. When the English scene in the late seventies was threatened by outside forces to become incorporated in the mainstream, actors reacted toward this and thus against what was established within the scene, and the rules and guidelines governing the scene were hardened (Joynson 2001:14-16). The American punks of the early eighties accepted this change and used it as a reaction towards the American establishment; only to, in the late eighties, react against the commercialisation of the scene and the establishment within the scene (Blush 2001:14, O'Hara 1999:154-160).

ACT V

³³ That is not just buying but also burning a CD, downloading music from the web, copying a cassette, exchanging mix tapes, scribbling the name of a band on your jacket etc

³⁴ This would have been possible to explain with Bourdieu's theory if the social capital - who you know and who knows you - were not as underrated, I would have liked to see it as an extension of the symbolical capital. Bourdieu does mention the importance of credits - people investing their belief in your objects - but I miss a further investigation of the role of the social capital in this process.

³⁵ Dead Kennedys is probably one of the biggest punk bands of all times, they are still around but with a different line-up, seeing them with the original line-up in 1979 before they went big is quite exceptional

³⁶ DS 13 was probably the most acknowledged Swedish hardcore punk band in the late 90s early 2000.

³⁷ Sarah Thornton does acknowledge that the difference between being high or low in subcultural capital is associated with media coverage (1995:203) and that the greatest fear of an underground subculture is to be popularized through mass media (ibid:208), however she does not investigate this further. Instead she defines subcultural ideologies as means for the subcultural members to claim a distinct position within social groups, to differentiate themselves from "members of the undifferentiated mass" (ibid:201). Instead of focusing on why this is so important, to question whether this distinction also occurs inside the subculture between its members and if it is only made in speech and attitude, she leaves it at that.

³⁸ Pretenders in this case does not equal Bourdieu's use of term which means the aspirants to the throne, in this case pretenders means fake.

³⁹ Fox also mentions “preppie punks” and “spectators” however they will not be considered here as their roles are peripheral.

⁴⁰ Hebdige’s “Subculture- The meaning of style” is actually full of small errors indicating careless research. For example he claims that the fanzine “Sniffin’ Glue” had a picture showing three chords with a text which said “*here’s one chord, here’s two more, now form your own band*” (Hebdige 1988:112). In reality the text said “*This is a chord...This is another...This is third...Now form your own band*” and was published in a fanzine named “Sideburns” (Jon Savage has the picture in his excellent book “England’s Dreaming” 1991: 280). Hebdige further claims Johnny Rotten dropped the infamous line “*We are into chaos not music*” (Hebdige 1988:109). This time Hebdige at least managed to get some things straight. Sex Pistols said it but it was Steve Jones not Rotten (Savage once again has the right quote 1991:151). Instead Rotten was cited having said that in an English newspaper which hints that Hebdige really did not have the energy to interview any punks.

⁴¹ Osgerby for example argues that a subculture is subject to constant change and that different styles develop over time (1998:76)

ACT VI

⁴² This inevitably leads to creating an exclusivity which borders on elitism, since the control of the diffusion is so important that only a few institutions and agents can be trusted. The biggest punk fanzine Maximum RocknRoll (MRR) refuses to review, feature or advertise bands on major labels and many of the smaller fanzines has followed this policy. This also affects the local scene and how to gain admittance to the scene. As Tobias says: *Before punk was really open (...) if you’re punk then you’re punk and then you’re welcomed to join the scene regardless what you are and how you are as long as you are punk in some way (...) sometimes it feels like [punk] can alienate people now, off and on it just as elitist as any other society.* (C:336-41)

⁴³ As Petter Karlsson argues the use of patches, badges and other symbols such as hair styles and clothes are used as means of communication for the crust punks, in order to fit in and create a feeling of togetherness (Karlsson 2003:16-7).

⁴⁴ As Tobias says: “*Personally I think that you are caught up in whether you want it or not, I mean sometimes the bands are fucking good ... But it is kind of weird that there is such credit for some bands, but that’s the way it is*” (C:583-5). Note that both Tobias and Linus signal that this is not always the case.

⁴⁵ When both stylistic and musical features are subordinated the actors’ interpretations of the themes there are thus room for people outside the scene, non-punks, to act and be accepted in the scene if they are engaged in actions that are viewed as homologous with the actors’ interpretations of the themes, for example squatters or the autonomous left. However they do not become full time actors but more of *visiting actors*, as long as their properties are homologous with the actors’ interpretations of the themes they can perform within the scene even if they are not punks.

⁴⁶ Abandoning a band means abandoning them as an object of distinction, to not cite them as your favourite band or wear their band logo, you can still listen to the music, and the band can still be well respected, as when Tobias mentions the well diffused punk band Exploited: “*(W)hen it was (...) much more important for me what people thought of and about me then I would never have walked around screaming well I listen to the Exploited and they’re good, (...) it’s not something I would have denied, but it’s not something I would have told everybody either.*” (C:588-591)

ACT VII

⁴⁷ However Bourdieu describes the orthodoxy’s strategies as discrete and reserved, that their superiority is shown through their refusal to brag about their accumulated capital and show it off (1986:166) which concurs with my findings, punks in the highest positions do not have to show off since their accumulated actions and accomplishments consecrate their status as punks, as is further discussed in the discussion on active and passive use of properties

⁴⁸ When speaking about the pretenders to the throne and their relative freedom Bourdieu cites the fashion industry in which the pretenders are able to explore commercial strategies that cannot be explored by the dominating groups without losing their prestige and exclusivity (1986:80). In the light of the excerpts above this is rather the opposite within the punk scene where it seems like it is only when you have reached a position of authority that you can take such risks, as when Tobias was asked how Subhumans - a well known punk band - can get away with putting out a record on Fat Wreck Chords - a large independent label connected to the mainstream – he answers “*But think about what an unbelievable punk credit they have*” (C:882) or when Robert and Lasse speak about their musical development.

⁴⁹ This last remark is not meant to be read as a promotional remark, as in mainstream press releases or interviews with bands, where the band has been limited by the record label or their musical talent. Here it refers to

something which was impossible before due to limitations of the scene, what was accepted. It is a distinction regarding being limited by the actors of the scene and being able to act more freely.

⁵⁰ Or telling inside information or anecdotes about the producer and thus hinting that they know the producer and thus claim a higher position

⁵¹ It is important to note that producing properties gives *a certain amount* of independence, that is, it is more of a way of making you less dependent on the guiding principles than those below you in the hierarchy, since the consumers and performers make you punk they can also break you by claiming that you are not punk and declassify your produced properties by calling you a sell-out.

APPENDIX

Presentation of the interviewees

Daniel was 19 years old when the interview was conducted. He comes from the south of Sweden and was brought up in a fairly big town. Daniel got into punk when he was ten years old, but did not become involved within the scene until he was twelve. He has played in several bands none of which can be said to have reached beyond the local scene

Kalle was 27 years old at the time of the interview. Kalle comes from a small town in the middle of Sweden and moved to the south of Sweden a couple of years ago. He got into punk through skateboarding when he was ten, and has been involved in several bands and record companies

Lasse is from a big town in the middle of Sweden and moved to the south of Sweden when he was still in school. He got into punk through skateboard when he was fifteen and was 28 years old at time of the interview. Lasse has played, and still plays in several internationally known punk bands

Linus was 21 years old when the interview took place. He is from the south of Sweden and got into punk when he was fourteen. Linus has played, and still plays in several internationally known punk bands and are involved with distribution and setting up shows

Robert is from the south of Sweden. He grew up on the countryside then moved to a small town outside of Malmö. He was 27 years old when interviewed. He started skateboarding when he was ten and got into punk through skateboard movies and magazines when he was fifteen. Robert plays in a well respected and internationally known crust punk band.

Tobias was 29 years old when the interview was conducted. He is from a small town in the south of Sweden. He got into punk when he was ten but began to see himself as punk when he was fourteen. Tobias has plays in several well respected and internationally known punk bands.

Bibliography

- Adler, Patricia A & Adler, Peter** 1994: "Observational Techniques" i **Denzin & Lincoln (eds)**: *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications
- Alasuutari, Petri** 1995: *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies*, Sage Publications
- Arnold, Gina** 1998: *Kiss this - Punk in the Present Tense*, Pan Books
- Bennett Andy**, 2000: *Popular Music and Youth Culture- Music, Identity and Place*, MacMillan Press
- Berger, Peter & Luckmann, Thomas** 1991: *The Social Construction of Reality – A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Penguin books
- Blush, Steven** 2001: *American Hardcore*, Feral House
- Bourdieu, Pierre** 2003: *Distinction – a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Routledge
- Bourdieu, Pierre** 1986: *Kultursociologiska Texter*, Salamander
- Clarke, John** 1993: "Style" in **Hall Stuart & Jefferson (eds)**, *Resistance through Rituals- Youth Subcultures in post-war Britain*, Routledge
- Denscombe, Martyn** 2000: *Forskningshandboken – för Småskaliga Forskningsprojekt inom Samhällsvetenskaperna*, Studentlitteratur
- Denzin, Norman K.** 1989: *Interpretive Interactionism*. Sage
- Denzin, Norman K & Lincoln Yvonna S.** 1994: "Introduction – Entering the Field of Qualitative Research" in **Denzin & Lincoln (eds)**: *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications
- Ehn, Billy & Löfgren, Orvar** 1986: *Kulturanalys. Ett Etnologiskt Perspektiv*. Liber
- Fornäs, Johan** 1995: *Cultural Theory and Late Modernity*, Sage
- Fox, Kathryn J.** 1987: "Real Punks and Pretenders: The Social Organization of a Counterculture" in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 85
- Garnham, Nicholas & Williams, Raymond** 1980: "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture – an Introduction" in *Media Culture and Society*, 2 (3)
- Goffman, Erving** 1972: *Stigma- Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Simon & Schuster Inc,
- Goffman, Erving** 1990: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Penguin Books
- Hall, Stuart et al** 1993: "Subcultures, Cultures and Class – A Theoretical Overview" in **Hall, Stuart & Jefferson Tony (eds)**: *Resistance through Rituals- Youth Subcultures in post-war*

Britain, Routledge

Hamm Mark S 1994: *American skinheads- the criminology and control of hate crime*, Preager Publishers

Hebdige, Dick 1988: *Subculture- the Meaning of Style*. Routledge

Joynson, Vernon 2001, *Up Yours! A Guide to UK Punk, New wave and Early Post Punk*, Borderline Productions

Karlsson, Petter 2003: *Allt é Skit – en Etnologisk studie av Kängpunkskulturen i Södra Sverige och Köbenhavn*, Etnologiska Institutionen, Lunds Universitet

Knudsen, Anne 1995: "Mercedes-modellen – Feltarbejde blandt de U-eksotiske" i *Tidskriftet Antropologi* nr 31

Kvale, Steinar 1997: *Den Kvalitative Forskningsintervjun*, Studentlitteratur

Laing, David 1985: *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock*. Open University Press

Leblanc, Lauraine 2002: *Pretty in Punk- Girls' Resistance in a Boys' Subculture*, Rutgers University Press

Lull, James 1987: "Trashing in the Pit: an Ethnography of San Francisco Punk Subculture." in *Natural Audiences*, **Lindlof, T.R.** (ed) Ablex Publishing

Marx, Karl 1974: *The German Ideology*, Lawrence & Wishart

McNeil, Legs & McCain, Gillian 1996: *Please Kill Me- the Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, Abacus

McRobbie, Angela 1984: "En Feministisk Kritik av Subkulturforskningen" in **Fornäs, Johan et al**, *Ungdomskultur: Identitet och motstånd*, Akademilitteratur

Muggleton, David 2002: *Inside subculture – The Postmodern Meaning of Style*, Berg

O'Hara, Craig 1999: *The Philosophy of Punk- More than Noise*, AK Press

Osgerby, B. 1998: *Youth in Britain since 1945*, Blackwell

Sabin Roger 1999: "I Won't Let that Dejo By – Rethinking Punk and Racism" in **Sabin, Roger (ed)**: *Punk rock: so what? The cultural legacy of punk*, Routledge

Savage, Jon 1991, 2001: *England's Dreaming- Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk rock and beyond*, St. Martins Press

Silverman, David 1993: *Interpreting Qualitative Data – Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction*, Sage

Stake, Robert E. 1998: "Case Studies" i **Denzin & Lincoln (eds)**: *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. Sage

Storey, John 2001, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture – an Introduction*, Pearson Education

Strauss, Anselm L. 1987: *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, Cambridge University Press

Thornton, Sara 1997: "The Social Logic of Subcultural Capital" i **Gelder, Ken &**

Thornton, Sarah (eds.): *The Subcultural Reader*. Routledge

Willis Paul 1984: "Symbol och Praxis – Rockmusikens Sociala Betydelse hos ett Motorcykelgäng" in **Fornäs, Johan et al,** *Ungdomskultur: Identitet och motstånd*, Akademitlitteratur

Yin, Robert K. 1987: *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. Sage

Fanzines:

Maximum Rocknroll 2003: #244, September

Profane Existence 2003: # 42, Spring – Summer

Records:

Kontrovers 2003: *När spelreglerna ändras*, Putrid Filth Conspiracy