Lund University
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Pushing Authenticity

Challenging Narratives and Performances on Women's Subcultural Participation

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Master's Thesis SOCM04 Cultural Criminology 30 credits
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Abstract

This thesis examines women's subcultural participation based on ethnographic fieldwork and 73 interviews with women within the skateboarding and rave cultures. The study explores and develops how we view female participation. From a theoretical perspective, subcultural scholars have a tradition of assuming subcultures as masculine, viewing masculinity as the norm for authenticity. These assumptions have led women and femininity to being marked out as inauthentic and mainly explaining their participation as gender resistance. This viewpoint has affected everything from the research design in general to research questions, methods and the data collection in particular. Revisiting the relations between the subcultural, identity, meanings, authenticity and gender, and viewing subcultures as open for interpretation, this study suggests that subcultures can be constructed as masculine, feminine or neither. The study argues that gender resistance is a small part of subcultural women's participation. Instead, their participations, identities, authenticities and meanings are constructed around boundary work towards the non-subcultural. It is only through establishing these boundaries that gender resistance can be articulated as meaningful. The methodological strategies and conclusions of this study demonstrate that how we tend to view women's subcultural participation needs to be reconsidered.

Keywords: cultural sociology, subcultural theory, gender, ethnography, rave, skateboarding, authenticity

Popular Science Summary

Are subcultures masculine? Do you have to be a man to be seen as authentic within subcultures? And what about women in subcultures? Do they have to tone down their feminine traits to be viewed as authentic? Previous research on subcultures often suggests that this is the case and is usually based on a masculine position. To explore the matter, I decided to ask women within subcultures themselves. I was interested in how they viewed the subcultures, how they thought subcultural participants should behave and how they enacted this. I wanted to see how they perceived gender and what they believed their participation gave them. Over the course of two years, I have interviewed and followed 73 women in the skateboarding and rave cultures. Their experiences, appearances and stories indicate that previous research has missed a lot. The women did not regard the subcultures as masculine, but rather claimed that it does not matter which gender you are. The most important thing for them is that you are true to yourself and that you are dedicated to the subculture. However, there are different ways of 'being yourself', and there are even different ways to show your 'dedication'. This finding agrees with previous research conducted on men. The most central finding was a distance, a freedom, from everything that was considered as not being a part of the subculture. By constructing such a distance, a difference between the subcultural and that which was not the subcultural could be maintained. For female participants, this distance could contain gender, but this only became meaningful through the other differences and distances from the non-subcultural. With this conclusion, it becomes obvious that we need to look over how we view women within subcultures, as well as other deviant activities such as criminal networks, to better understand their actions.

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Introduction

What attracts women to participate in subcultures? Are subcultures masculine according to them? Is subcultural authenticity masculine according to them? Are they participating in subcultures due to rebellious traits, attempting to resist gender norms? Or are there also other meaning structures at work? Are they perhaps participating on the same basis as subcultural men? These questions can only be answered through studying subcultural women. So for this thesis, I did exactly that. I have been following and studying women within the rave and skateboard cultures, doing extensive ethnographic fieldwork with different kinds of participants, different activities, and in different field settings. While previous subcultural research has made assumptions about women's subcultural participation, I have obtained the answer directly from the women themselves. I have not included male participants since this thesis, thematically, is about women participating in subcultures. Theoretically, the study explores women's subcultural participation and how they construct identities, authenticities and meanings. This thesis departs from the standpoint of subcultural women, exploring their embodied experiences within subcultures.

Many valuable studies have investigated female participation in subcultures such as Leblanc's (1999) study on punk or MacDonald's (2001) on graffiti (see also McRobbie & Garber 1976; McRobbie 1991; Thornton 1995; Porter 2003; Thorpe 2006; Mullaney 2007; Laurendeau 2008; and Fransberg 2018/2021). However, they tend to depart from a dominating masculine perspective, describing female participation in relation to that of masculinity rather than viewing women as having their own agency (Naegler & Salman 2016, 356-7). Oftentimes, scholars enter the field with presumptions where they rely heavily on narratives from male participants, putting themselves at risk of endorsing a singular male perspective. Ultimately, this comes down to tendencies within the subcultural tradition to view subcultures as homogeneous with singular structures of

meaning (Hannerz 2015, 14). This homogeneous assumption had led to female subcultural participation often being singularly explained as a result of gender resistance (cf. McRobbie & Garber 1976; Leblanc 1999).

Research Aim

In contrast to previous researchers, who have entered subcultures with presumptions, I entered the cultures of rave and skateboarding with an open mind about how my participants perceive their participation, and how they construct the subcultural, their identities, and subcultural authenticity. Specifically, I am interested in how their participation provides meanings, what these processes of meanings contain and which part gender plays in relation to this. This thesis departs from the following research questions:

How can we understand gender (in relation to participation, identity and authenticity) within subcultures?

How do women within the rave and skateboarding cultures construct, negotiate and perform subcultural authenticity, meanings and identity?

How do they construct subcultural boundaries, as well as gender boundaries, between the non-subcultural and the subcultural?

The cases of Rave and Skateboarding

In many ways, this thesis concerns how we theoretically and epistemologically view female subcultural participation. In exploring this, I am departing from the cases of rave and skateboarding culture.

I first had the idea for this study during my bachelor thesis when I conducted fieldwork at raves (Nilsson 2019). My main focus during that time was not solely female participation, but during the fieldwork I was fascinated by the stories and performances of the women I followed. They described, in line with previous research (Sjö 2005, 36), the raves as free zones from sexual objectification and traditional gender norms. After

completing my bachelor's degree, I continued doing fieldwork, shifting my focus, and solely focusing on women within the subculture. I realized that there were a lot of subcultural studies done on men, but fewer relying solely on women's perspectives. I decided to incorporate another subculture as a means to examine if the performances and stories were something unique for women within the rave culture, or if this could be found in other cultures as well. Skateboarding became my choice since I wanted a subculture which was more numerically dominated by male participants, and a subculture where the physical body and the activity itself played a more central role. Although rave is also a highly embodied activity, one can attend a rave without dancing, however, one cannot be a skateboarder without skating, utilizing the techniques and operating the skateboard (Nilsson 2010, 87). In many regards, I wanted to examine the case of an extreme activity, where the activity, from the eyes of society's prejudices, 'requires masculinity' (Pomerantz 2004) to investigate gender further.

By including participants from both the skateboarding and rave cultures I have been able to compare the participants' narratives, experiences and performances, and avoid a standardized representation (Gubrium & Holstein 1999, 563). Expanding and broadening my sample also helps me to move away from a simplified notion of culture and identity (Geertz 1973, 314-315). Both skateboarding and rave are different subcultural cases to study, although similar subcultural patterns certainly exist. Including data from both subcultures has made it possible for me to disregard that the experiences of the participants are just isolated cases in one subculture.

The Rave Culture

Tracing the history of rave culture is no easy task. Within the culture various historical stories exist. However, most stories tend to start with the underground clubs, house and garage scenes of New York and Chicago during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's where a significant proportion of the ravers were black and gay (Rietveld 1998; Fikentscher 2000;

Lawrence 2003; Shapiro 2005). During the mid 1980's, "techno" emerged in the city of Detroit, and the spanish holiday island of Ibiza played an important part as a dance scene with the new Balearic sounds (Graham 2009, 2). "Acid house" emerged during the late 1980's in the club scene of London (Bussman 1998; Garratt 1998). From there, an explosion of rave erupted in warehouses and in the countryside of England (Rietveld 2004). During the beginning of the 1990's raves traveled to other parts of Europe (Silcott 1999). By the mid of 1990's, the rave culture was global, developed into a variety of different scenes and genres such as "happy hardcore" to ambient, jungle/drum & bass, breakcore, dark-psy and Goa-trance (Belle-Fortune 2004). One important aspect of the rave culture at that time, and today, was the independence from the major music industry labels and studios, as well as its distinctions from legal night clubs and festivals. In this study, rave is therefore defined as electronic music, dance and art arrangements held at illegal clubs, festivals or other places such as at industrial premises or in nature (Thornton 1995, 14).

The Skateboarding Culture

Skateboarding culture developed from the surfing communities of the beach cities in California during the late 1950's. At the time, skateboarding was performed in the urban terrain, at streets and in abandoned pools. By the mid 1970s, commercialized skateboard parks had been created especially throughout the US and UK. At the beginning of 1980s, skateboarders went back to the roots of street skating (Borden 2004). Street skating spread to inner cities throughout the US and the world, making the urban practice of skateboarding a global phenomenon (Borden 2004, 292). Skateboarding became a well-established urban subculture, with its own graphic design, language, music, magazines and codes of behavior (Borden 2001). I define the skateboard culture as a commercialized urban activity industry and art culture, consisting of, for example, street, park, vert and bowl skating (Lombard 2016, 4). The culture consists of a

do-it-yourself tradition, which becomes clear when skateboarders explore and use urban spaces to create new skate opportunities (Borden 2015). Similarly, the creative work of skateboarding photography, fashion and lifestyle, makes it an 'influential' culture (Lasane 2015) which constantly challenges the social norms of cities (Borden 2001).

Outline

This thesis is divided into 7 chapters. In chapter 2, I present the definition of the subcultural which the study is operationalized around. Subcultural identity, authenticity and boundary work will also be operationalized. In chapter 3, I discuss previous subcultural studies on gender, and highlight the epistemological need for the perspective of this study. In chapter 4, I introduce the theoretical framework of this study. I show why the approach of cultural sociology is suitable when studying subcultural participation and structures of meanings. Furthermore, I argue for why this is fruitful when studying structures, social processes and categorizations within the subcultural. In chapter 5, I highlight the importance of the methodological strategies which I have employed for this study. In chapter 6, I analyze the meanings structures of my participants' subcultural participation, the construction of subcultural identity, authenticity and (gendered) boundary work. Finally, in chapter 7, I will state the conclusions of the study and provide recommendations for further research.

Defining the Subcultural

Nancy MacDonald argues that "subcultures are only subcultures if their own members recognize them as such, if they themselves draw boundaries and define themselves as members of a group which is seen as standing 'apart' from others" (MacDonald 2001, 152). Since the aim of my research is to explore the point of view of subcultural women, I will largely use MacDonald's definition, viewing subcultures as defined through their own participants. With this definition of subcultures, common stylistic traits might not be enough (Widdicombe & Wooffitt 1995, 21). The emphasis is not on differences from other groups and cultures, but their distinctions from these. How is the subculture constructing, perceiving and portraying itself in relation to the mainstream? (MacDonald 2001, 152-3). Ulf Hannerz argues that these lines of boundaries and distinction from the non-subcultural construct the subcultural identity (Hannerz 1992). Similarly, Erik Hannerz emphasizes that it is in these constructed boundaries that the systems of meanings for the subcultural participant appear (Hannerz 2016, 226).

This thesis will show the subcultural definitions of rave and skateboarding culture *from* and *through* its female participants. However, I also employ a broader understanding of the subcultural field, centering it around a cultural sociological and symbolic interactionist approach. Hence, I will emphasize the importance of collective identity, thereby defining subcultures as "culturally bounded, but not closed, networks of people who come to share the meaning of specific ideas, material objects and practices through interaction" (Williams 2011, 39) in combination with the approaches of MacDonald (2001) and Hannerz (2015), which focus on "subjective understanding of collective difference, boundaries and distinctiveness among subcultural participants themselves" (Hodkinson 2016, 634).

Although there seems to "very little consensus" on what the term 'subculture' actually means throughout the history of subcultural studies (MacDonald 2001, 151), the

definition presented here allows us to view subcultural participation and identity as consisting of multiple sets of meanings (MacDonald 2001, 184). Hannerz (2015) argues for a subcultural concept where meanings, authentications, identities and styles are tied to multiple performances. Adapting this perspective, it is not the subcultural or the mainstream that matters, rather the field of subcultural research should focus on the cultural structures within which both the subcultural and the mainstream are given their meaning and acted upon. This results in the exploration of different subcultural patterns of meanings which are related to different definitions of the mainstream and of authenticity (Hannerz 2015, 16). With this approach we can "stress the process of interpretation and negotiation... in relation to collective shared sets of meanings" (Hannerz 2015, 15) within the subcultural.

Defining Cultural Identity, Authenticity and Boundary Work

Authenticity is defined as something 'real' in contrast to 'inauthenticity' which is defined as something 'fake' (Thornton 1995) or 'fabricated'. What is constructed as 'authentic' changes depending on the cultural context and is in constant change due to boundary work within the subculture (Ferrell et al. 2004). This thesis will follow the notion of Hannerz (2015), where identities and authenticity are tied to multiple performances, rather than being tied to one specific set of meaning. This is of importance if we want to understand and explore the social processes regarding how women code and perform identity, authenticity, gender, boundary work, and the structures of meanings that lie within these processes.

However, subcultural authenticity and identity has been identified differently throughout the course of subcultural studies. According to the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), authenticity was class resistance by the working class towards the dominant culture and subcultural authenticity required a working class background (Clarke et al. 1976; Hall & Jefferson 1976, 47). Even though scholars such as John Clarke

(1976, 10, 13) tried to examine structures of meaning within subcultures, these meanings were limited to only working class boys and without exploring subcultures' internal meaning structures. Clarke's study is an example of how a narrow definition of subcultures, subcultural participation, identity and authenticity risks excluding certain activities, performances and groups and why it is therefore necessary to open up subcultural participation to a more pluralistic view.

Even though the research that would follow the CCCS partly abandoned the notion of class as the cohesive force behind subcultures, the focus around a stylistic resistance and separation from the constructed dominant culture has mainly remained (cf. Leblanc 1999). The postmodern perspective calls for a deconstruction of boundary lines between the mainstream and the subcultural, opening up for a heterogeneity in styles, but this perspective still "do[es] not stress the process of interpretation and negotiation enough in relation to collective shared sets of meanings" (Hannerz 2015, 15). Both the approach of the CCCS, as well as the theorists that would follow, view the subcultural as homogenous in terms of meaning and style (Hannerz 2015, 14). For the postmodern theorists, authenticity and identity is merely a result of previous subcultural theory which focused on resistance (Widdicombe & Wooffitt 1995).

However, subcultural authenticity and identity has also been explained as possibly containing different kinds of performances. For example, some scholars have portrayed originality and aura, or the ability to be natural to the "organic" of the subculture, as representing the ideal of the subculture (Thornton 1995, 55). This requires a collective understanding of the subcultural and its separation from the mainstream. It is in these subcultural representations the outlines between the authentic and inauthentic lie. In the process of constructing these lines of boundaries, the meanings of the subcultural appear (Fine 1998, 138). However, these boundary lines shift and depend upon situational factors, what works for one subcultural group may not work for another group (MacDonald 2001, 50). In this definition, subcultural authenticity and identity lie in the participant's ability to be genuine self, where any differences can be explained from the

notion of an individual strategy, and hence be marked as a reflection of the self (Widdicombe & Woofitt 1995; Muggleton 2000; Lewin & Williams 2009). These different interpretations of subcultural identity and authenticity are not necessarily wrong; rather, as Hannerz points out, "they all point to different aspects of a subcultural plurality in terms of meaning" (Hannerz 2015, 5). Through employing this epistemological approach, we can study subcultural authenticity and identity from a broader notion.

Due to previous subcultural theory focusing mainly on men's participation (Clarke 1976; Hall & Jefferson 1976), viewing masculinity as a necessity for subcultural authenticity, women's participation and subcultural identity has largely been overlooked (McRobbie 1991). Foremost, the epistemological limitations of viewing the subcultural from a singular notion, has led to an exclusion of women's subcultural identity and authenticity. Through departing from a broader, pluralistic notion of identities, authenticity and meanings it becomes possible to include subcultural women's view of the subcultural (Smith 1987, 109). Furthemore, we can enter the field more openly, with less preconceived notions of subcultural identity, authenticity, gender and boundary work.

Subcultural Studies on Gender

While subcultural theory has begun to incorporate pluralistic notions of identity, authenticity, and meanings in regards to men (Williams 2011, 6), explanations of female participation have not come as far. As Dorothy Smith claims, the field of sociology tends to depart from "the view of the top" (Smith 1974/2004, 22), promoting and focusing on men in power. While male subcultural participation is viewed from a cultural basis and from the notion of meanings structures within social relations (Gelder 2007, 4), female participation tends to be viewed from individual traits where gender becomes the only essence. When researchers enter the world of subcultures they tend to do so with a presumption that the state of nature for subcultures is masculine. This perspective comes from automatically viewing the man as the norm, thus always making the woman "the other" (de Beauvoir 1995, 24 – 25). Subcultural participation is automatically viewed in relation to the norm of men's participation thereby presuming that subcultural participation and authenticity should consist of masculine performances (de Beauvoir 1995, 88).

Throughout this chapter I will outline mainly three critiques against previous subcultural research regarding gender. First, subcultural research has often excluded women completely, only focusing on 'masculine' cultures. Second, the main focus of subcultural research has been on viewing women's participation as an act of resistance and has lacked the ability to explore their participation from other perspectives. When analysis of gender does appear, it appears to be superficially 'added odd' rather than having a central part of the studies (Naegler and Salman 2016). Third, I will address the phenomenon that subcultural participation in general tends to be explained through a coherent homogeneous perspective and how women's participation, in particular, tends to be viewed from a normative masculine perspective. Specifically, it is argued that subcultural authenticity and identity requires masculinity, and that women within subcultures therefore have to abandon traits of femininity. All of these points have

epistemological consequences leading to an exclusion of women's narratives, experiences and performances.

The Exclusion of Women

To be fair, women's participation was a part of the introductory work within subcultural studies. For example, Paul Cressey's study on women working at taxi-dance halls contains rich narratives from women's own experiences as dancers, and is of great value for subcultural theory on gender. Through ethnographic methods, Cressey's study is able to highlight that women, although being affected by social patriarchal structures, still are able to construct their own meanings and notion of participation in specific social groups (Cressey 1932, 11, 83). The study shows that the theoretical model of the Chicago School could also be used to study performances and structures of meaning among women. However, both the use of ethnography and the inclusion of women in subcultural studies would become less common as the subcultural field developed.

Albert K. Cohen's (1955) subcultural work is just one of many that would follow, leaving the Chicago School's tradition of ethnography behind (Hannerz 2013, 35). Instead of asking how the groups that were constructed and labeled as 'deviant', themselves perceived their participation, theorists simply made assumptions (Becker 1963, 7-8, 14). The functionalists' explanation of delinquency as individual nonconformity to socially accepted goals and values in society (MacDonald 2001, 33) can be disregarded if one views deviant behavior from a cultural basis. For example, Howard S. Becker emphasizes structures of political power in relation to these constructions of deviance and questions the notion of societal accepted goals of society (Becker 1963, 7). The meaning of subcultural participation is foremost social affiliation and not based upon individual traits (Gelder 2007, 4) and should therefore be viewed from a heterogenous perspective (Hannerz 2013). This is of course more important to emphasize when studying gender given that gender is socially constructed. As Becker points out:

"distinctions of age, sex, ethnicity, and class are all related to differences in power, which accounts for differences in the degree to which groups so distinguished can make rules for others" (Becker 1963, 17). Ignoring the voices of women within subcultures, or assuming their participation as containing specific traits due to their gender without departing from their own experiences and performances, makes it impossible to collect their point of view.

Similar to the functionalist approach, the notion of class, style and resistance would dominate subcultural research in general. At the same time, the notion of gender and masculinity within subcultural theory would be absent for many years to follow. Even though Walter B. Miller (1958) touched upon gender in explaining how central masculinity norms are within subcultures, this theme was disregarded as a class-oriented problem. Similarly, Cohen (1955) noted gender issues within the subcultures but concluded that these were significant to the middle class only. During this period no one seemed to ask the question as to why subcultures seemingly only consisted of men.

The Celebration of Masculine Values

Although the CCCS emphasized class as an important factor for subcultural participation among "working-class youth (mainly boys)" (Hall & Jefferson 1976,47), scholars Jenny Garber and Angela McRobbie (1976) began to study female participation during the mid 1970s. For McRobbie, the answer to the absence of women's participation within the field, was to view their participation from a feminist perspective. She concluded that girls may not be a part of some subcultures because women are marginalized in society due to patriarchal structures (McRobbie 1991, 3). McRobbie argues that subcultural researchers tend to celebrate deviance rather than analyzing it, which leads to some, often violent, subcultures, becoming the privileged image of what a subculture is. In this process, researchers celebrate male membership, male concerns and masculine values. This critique still has value today and has been raised within cultural criminology. Scholars such as Laura Naelger and Sara Salman emphasize that women

are only included when participating in "masculinized" activities that are viewed as "male-dominated". They question the assumption that women "simply [can] resemble or mimic the kinds of activities engaged in and studied by men" (Naegler & Salman 2016, 357). According to McRobbie, this results in making women's subcultural participation invisible or described as a result of "declining moral values" (McRobbie 1991, 4). McRobbie argues that one has to move away from the classic subcultural terrain made out as oppositional and instead acknowledge that girls negotiate a different leisure space than boys, which offers them different possibilities for 'resistance' (McRobbie 1991, 14). McRobbie's statement becomes a contradiction in itself given that she still continues to draw from the classical CCCS perspective where class and style is viewed as the unifying force. For McRobbie, women's subcultural participation is still viewed as an act of resistance, as a result of the class society they operate within. She continues to view women's subcultural participation differently than men's, even though she claims that "the sub-cultural patterns are, roughly, the same for boys and girls, only girls are necessarily more marginal on every dimension..." (McRobbie & Garber 1976, 211). According to McRobbie, the lure for female participation becomes different due to structural differences in society (McRobbie & Garber 1976, 211-212).

The Homogenous Resistance

Researchers that followed McRobie's notion of including women's participation, have mainly done so ethnographically. Among these studies we find the work of Sarah Thornton (1995) and Lauraine Leblanc (1999).

Thornton's study on raves examines the construction of boundaries between the subcultural and the mainstream, and how participants distinguish themselves from the mainstream. Thornton develops the concept of subcultural capital (Thornton 1995, 164), a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986), which she argues is the key to the socially constructed hierarchy in which the axes of age, gender, sexuality and race are all

employed in order to keep determinations of class, income and occupation at bay. In Thornton's study, the mainstream is constructed into being feminine, while authenticity is marked as masculine (Thornton 1995, 29, 156). According to Thornton, subcultural capital and authenticity consists of a "masculine bias" (Thornton 1995, 161). To avoid being subjected to sexism, Thornton describes how both genders take the position of representing 'hipness' through distancing themselves from "girls who are not culturally 'one of the boys'" (Thornton 1995, 163), while at the same time constructing rave culture as a place where sexualization is absent (Thornton 1995, 164).

On a similar note to Thornton, Leblanc also argues that masculinity is required for subcultural authenticity among female punk participants, stating that they have to put their femininity behind the day they enter the subculture (Leblanc 1999, 120). For Leblanc, this is an act of resistance, arguing "[that] the key to girls subcultural participation…is resistance" (Leblanc 1999, 226). According to Leblanc, girls enter the subculture constantly negotiating and resisting hegemonic notions of femininity since the culture is predominantly male. She concludes that girls become involved in punk because they want to avoid playing the "femininity game", a term which describes stereotypical feminine gender roles inclining girls to act docile, passive and compliant within the gendered status quo (Leblanc 1999, 135ff). Leblanc states that the subculture offers girls the ability to express and affirm their masculine sides. The conclusion is that girls are willing to enter a masculine subculture and endure many of the same oppressions that can be found in mainstream society in exchange for some degree of freedom through their resistance. According to Leblanc this results in a subculture which both liberates and confines the girls (Leblanc 1999, 6, 139, 161, 164).

Although both Thornton and Leblanc include female participants into their ethnographic work, they do so with the presumption that their participation requires masculinity or de-sexualization. For Thornton, inauthenticity within the rave is marked

as feminine, while authenticity is marked as masculine or as de-sexualization. For Leblanc, it is necessary for female participants to abandon traits of femininity to be a part of the subculture, making it hard for them to construct authenticity. Nonetheless, both the perspectives of Thornton and Leblanc depart from the notion that subcultures are masculine in nature. And even though their work highlights explorations of different gender performances, they still view female participants as a homogenous group. Moving on, I shall present approaches and developments within feminist theory and subcultural studies where this approach towards women's participation has been questioned.

Researching With a Lens of Masculinity

Within feminist theory the ways in which gender and gender divisions are theorized have undergone substantial changes over the past twenty years. Earlier assumptions of a shared oppression uniting women in their struggle for liberation have been questioned and replaced with the recognition of differences and diversity (Disch & Hawkesworth 2016, 251). This intersectional development seems not to have had the same breakthrough within subcultural theory (Naegler & Salman 2016, 357). Within subcultural theory it is still common for scholars to view women as a homogenous group, which is not surprising since all participation tends to be viewed from this singular perspective (Hannerz 2015, 15). This alleged 'sisterhood' where women, just on the basis of being oppressed, share interests and identities has been discarded within feminist theory. Instead, feminist theory recognizes the 'uncomfortable' acknowledgment that women are not a homogenous group but rather have their own agency, thus making the meaning of 'being a woman' dependent on cultural context (Spelman, 1990).

As previously presented, subcultural researchers tend to enter the field presuming that the nature of subcultures is masculine. The participation of women becomes

automatically viewed and compared in relation to the norm of men's, presuming that participation and authenticity should consist of "masculine" performances (de Beauvoir 1995, 88). Within criminology, this issue has been raised by scholars such as James Messerschmidt (2004). Messerschmidt argues that the foundation of criminology is based upon dichotomous thinking about gender as consisting of opposites: male and female. The assumed gender differences between men and women have been used to explain different types of deviant behaviors. Research on women engaging in deviant acts has tended to focus on the type of actions that are consistent with our cultural notions of what women are capable of doing (Messerschmidt 2004, 23). Utilizing a cultural approach, where the norm is that of masculinity, researchers are contributing to viewing women's subcultural participation as undiverse and singular, and thus promoting gender-based stereotypes (Messerschmidt 2004, 23). This becomes evident not only when researchers exclude women and their narratives completely, but also in how researchers tend to study women and portray them when they are finally included. Mostly, the stereotypes of what 'female traits' are versus what 'male traits' are is evident in these studies. For example in Leblanc's study the coining of the term "femininity game" for describing stereotypically feminine gender roles (Leblanc 1999, 135ff), or when MacDonald assumes that female graffiti writers have to put their "female traits" behind in favor of "male traits" (MacDonald 2001, 130). Similarly, Rie Alkemade's (2014) study of women in the Japanese Yakuza departs from a "hegemonic masculine lens" (Nagler & Salman 2016, 360). Alkemade argues that the women adopt masculine behavior in an attempt to gain a sense of control and excitement (Alkemade 2014, 84).

These researchers describe women's stories and performances as merely reactions to the masculinity norm. The women respond reactively and adapt to masculinity within the subcultures, rather than viewing their behaviors as a proactive response. Peter St. Jean (2007) argues that deviant behavior often is proactive, rather than reactive, which is shown in his ethnographic work on street life (St. Jean 2007, 32). While his work is not

directly on gender, it presents interesting thoughts on deviant behavior which can be translated into studying subcultural women. Foremost, previous research on female participation, utilizing the lens of masculinity, leaves little space for "exploring women's activities, rituals and subcultural expressions or for investigating emotional experiences possibly independent of, and different from, those felt by men" (Naegler & Salman 2016, 360). At the same time, the use of an hegemonic masculine lens, tends to reinforce that 'traditionally female' activities are subordinated to 'masculine activities'.

However, there are some exceptions such as Jodie Taylor's (2012) ethnographic study on queers. According to Taylor, queer perfomances are a kind of "genderfuck" which play with and mock stereotypical and normative ideals of gender, thereby reconstructing and overturning the logic of sex and gender paradigms (Taylor 2012, 99-100). Taylor critiques previous research in claiming it to be singularly focused on styles, public and spectacular acts, and thus excluding the complexity of queer lives (Taylor 2012, 41-50). Taylor claims that the "excluded subjects" confront the "tyrann of the homonormative" (Taylor 2012, 213) thereby restricting queers to an oppositional resistance identity position. Taylor's critique towards this singular and homogenous perspective within research can of course also be translated to studying women's participation. Through viewing subcultural participation as containing multiple sets of meanings (Hannerz 2013/2015) it becomes clear that women's participation should not necessarily be viewed as being oppositional or as an act of resistance (cf. Leblanc 1999). Instead, their participation could be studied, not from a normative perspective (Taylor 2012, 213-214), but rather from a 'open' perspective making the complexity (Taylor 2012, 41) and heterogeneity of subcultural participation possible to study (Hannerz 2015, 15).

Similarly, Naegler and Salman (2016) argue that the main issue with the incorporation of gender into subcultural studies is a perspective that still departs from a norm of masculinity. Gender tends to be superficially "added on" rather than holding a

central place in studies, which leads to a lack of gender awareness that mimics sexism by incorporating a hegemonic masculine analytic lens. They argue that the attractions of deviance "cannot be fully explained without accounting for hegemonic codes of femininity and masculinity, and for societal repression of desires and emotions" (Naegler & Salman 2016, 371). In that equation, the need for a pluralistic perspective on subcultural participation, authenticity and meanings is necessary.

Jeannine Gailey's (2009) study on women within the pro-ana subculture exemplifies the use of a more pluralistic perspective. Gailey contends that the women in virtual communities where anorexia and bulimia are promoted are performing a kind of "female edgework". Gailey argues that the pro-ana women construct a narrative built on choices, which challenges gendered stereotypes of feminine passivity (Gailey 2009, 106). Gailey questions that edgework is a male-dominated behavior and shows that women's edgework is similar to men in the regard of taking life-risking action. However, she emphasizes that there still is a difference: women risk being more stigmatized by their actions than men simply due to their gender. Even more so, Gailey argues that the pro-ana women live out their actions as a way of gaining control and independence (from men) over their bodies and sexualities (Gailey 2009, 104). This suggests that men and women are not ontologically different, but their experiences and motivations might be different since they are subjected to different cultural and social realities (Naegler & Salman 2016, 366-367).

As presented in this chapter, women's subcultural participation tends to either be excluded, ignored or homogeneously viewed as an act of resistance. Furthermore, it tends to be viewed in relation to men's participation, rather than being studied from the perspective of women, and where their feminine features have to be undermined to obtain subcultural identity and authenticity. As Naegler and Salman (2016) exemplify, this norm of masculinity makes it impossible to explore their participation fully. However, it

is possible to move away from these epistemological assumptions. Gailey (2009), Taylor (2012) and Messerschmidt (2004) demonstrate that we can then unfold and explore the meanings behind women's participation in the same way as studies which have explored men's participation. To be able to do so, proper epistemological, methodological and theoretical tools are required. Moving on, I shall present the theoretical framework of this thesis in which the social processes and performances of the subcultural can be studied and understood.

Theoretical Framework of Cultural Sociology

Departing from the aim of my thesis, exploring the meanings and constructions of subcultural participation amongst women, I will center this thesis around a cultural sociological perspective. The work of Erik Hannerz (2013/2015) exemplifies how fruitful such a perspective is when studying subcultures. Foremost, Hannerz's work demonstrates the strength of combining different theories when analyzing "internal cultural structures rather than merely contrasting cases and groups of participants on the basis of a priori definitions of what constitutes the subcultural authentic" (Hannerz 2015, 191). Cultural sociology is interested in investigating the "meanings people attach to their groups and interactions" (Spillman 2020, 1). In this thesis, this means that I am investigating what the subcultural groups mean to female participants, where these meanings come from, how they are constructed, and how these meanings influence what they do. In particular, I am interested in interactions, symbols, values, and categorizations of gender that the subcultural consists of.

To explore this, I am departing from a Durkheimian perspective since Émile Durkheim provides a foundation of cultural analysis (Spillman 2020, 10; see also: Durkheim 1912; Alexander & Smith 2005). While Durkheim is useful in understanding the systems of classifications of the subcultural and the non-subcultural, Mary Douglas (1966) adds a more comprehensive and adaptable demonstration of how a Durkheimian approach can be used while studying processes of categorizations, lines of boundaries and the meanings that lie within these processes for the subcultures I have studied.

However, while this Durkheimian perspective becomes the foundation of my theoretical framework, I am also interested in analyzing the social interactions among women who participate in subcultures. To explore these interactions, I will combine the structuralist approach of Durkheim and Douglas with the symbolic interactionist approach of George Herbert Mead (1934) and Herbert Blumer (1969). I will also use Jeffrey C. Alexander's (2004) approach of combining social psychology with

neo-functionalism while exploring how subcultural women perform and construct authenticity. Specifically, Alexander helps us to explore meaning-making through performances on a larger scale, as well as more personal interactions (Alexander 2004, 547). Through utilizing the theories of Mead, Blumer and Alexander, I am able to analyze the subcultural participants' performances in depth through exploring whether and how they generate understanding and emotional connections both internally and externally. As Alexander notes, I have been able to study "the conditions for projecting cultural meaning from performance to audience" (Alexander 2004, 529) among my participants.

Durkheim and Systems of Classifications

According to Durkheim, the social world can be divided into the two categories of the sacred and profane, or the ordinary and the holy. He argues that "sacred things are things protected and isolated by prohibitions; profane things are those things to which the prohibitions are applied and that must be kept at a distance from what is sacred" (Durkheim 1995, 34-35). For Durkheim, religion is interpreted as the rules of conduct between the sacred, the profane and humans, and also becomes an expression of the collective's power over the individual. This is something that is visible through different kinds of rituals (Durkheim 1995, 35). Religion, according to Durkheim, is therefore not only interpreted as the relation to gods, but rather something broader that intervenes in everyday life and which is generated and emphasized through the collective. By this extension, this means that religion is not something that will disappear, rather it will be transformed into different shapes where new symbols of the sacredness will be constructed (Durkheim 1995, 44). Hannerz (2015) extends the Durkheimian division of the sacred and profane to that of the subcultural and mainstream, arguing that the sacred object is not the collective in itself, but rather that it comes to be representation of the subcultural through constructions of meaning (cf. Durkheim 1915, 228). In the

context of subcultures, this means that the subcultural represents the sacred, while the non-subcultural is constructed as the profane.

Durkheim argues that ceremonies and rituals are strengthening and healing both at an individual level as well for the collective as a whole (Boglind et al 2009, 259). During a ceremony or ritual, the sacred for the collective is displayed and does not have to be directed towards a God, but can instead be directed towards something desirable (Durkheim 1995, 33). According to Durkheim, rituals and ceremonies contain words, phrases, movements and gestures which cannot be said or performed by whomever, the participants need to be initiated (Durkheim 1995, 35). Within subcultures, this becomes clear when distances and boundaries are constructed towards the non-subcultural through behaviors. In relation to this, I am exploring how women within subcultures view gender and if and how this is used while constructing subcultural identity and boundaries.

Durkheim argues that it is necessary for individuals to identify themselves with their social group, in order to participate and belong within that group (Durkheim 1995, 123). These processes occur everywhere in society and within all social groups, and are possibly even more clear in subcultures due to their ability to create a distinct social world (Cressey 1932, 31). This relationship between the individual and the collective means that the subcultural participation is simultaneously constrained and enabled in the equation between personal and collective consciousness (Durkheim 1955, 105). The ideals of the subcultural group are constantly penetrating the consciousness of the individual and therefore the ideals become individualized (Durkheim 1973, 161). According to Durkheim, society is therefore both inner and outer for us, stating that the: "social pressure makes itself felt through mental channels" (Durkheim 1995, 211).

Douglas and Ordered Relations

Following the Durkheimian tradition of the categorization system of the sacred and profane, Douglas explores the relationship between dirt and purity. According to

Douglas, dirt is not viewed as dirt in an absolute sense, rather it is viewed as such through a construction when it is seen as being out of place (Douglas 1966, 2, 37, 44). This implies two important conditions: "a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order" (Douglas 1966, 44). Hence, dirt is only dirt because it is classified and categorized as such. It needs to be constructed as something that does not belong in the constructed order (Douglas 1966, vii). Given this, Douglas emphasizes that "where there is dirt there is system" (Douglas 1966, 44). Dirt is not an independent category or an objective attribute of something, but rather a "residual category [of things] rejected from our normal scheme of classifications" (Douglas 1966, 45). Dirt is a label for "all events which blur, smudge, contradict or otherwise confuse accepted classifications" (Douglas 1968, 50) and foremost it is a relative term: "what is clean in relation to one thing may be unclean in relation to another" (Douglas 1966, 10). Within subcultures, this is displayed through how distances and boundaries towards the non-subcultural are constructed situationally. What is viewed as subcultural ideals in some cases, might be constructed differently in other cases. In relation to this, I am using Douglas's system of orders to investigate and understand the boundary work of subcultural women. I am also exploring how they perceive gender and if this becomes a part of their boundary work, and how it then becomes manifested and in which situations this might occur.

Behaviors or objects might be classified as "out of place" when they are anomalous or ambiguous. According to Douglas, an anomaly is defined as any "element which does not fit a given set or series" (Douglas 1966, 47). These systems of classifications act as a form of sense-making. She suggests that life is "inherently untidy" (Douglas 1966, 5), stating that the separations and demarcations of experiences into categories is an effort to "impose systems" and make sense of the world (Douglas 1966, 5). Objects, behaviors or people that are anomalous or ambiguous are seen as dirty because they resist classification, and do not fit into any of the established categories. Since this threatens the system of social structures, they can be viewed as, for example,

disgusting, disruptive or dangerous (Douglas 1966, 47), depending on the type of transgression. However, the consistency is that anomalies always are faced with some kind of boundary work, which results in some kind of reaction since "a system of values […] has been violated" (Douglas 1968, 50).

When transgressions of the system occur, these are met with limitations. The "dirt" is tidied up in an attempt to reduce the dissonance. These processes are referred to as "pollution behaviour" (Douglas 1966, 37), and are deliberate, creative acts. The process of eliminating dirt "is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to reorganize the environment" (Douglas 1966, 2) with the aim to ensure "that the order in external physical events conforms to the structure of ideas" (Douglas 1968, 53). Commonly, this is achieved through exaggerating the differences between "within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against" (Douglas 1966, 4). These exaggerations sharpen the boundaries between different categories, which otherwise could be hard to identify. For the subcultural, these processes mark out the profane and the sacred.

Consequently, what is constructed as dirt, or the profane, differs between different groups and cultures. Douglas states that dirt only exists "in the eye of the beholder" (Douglas 1966, 2) although dirt consistently can be defined as "that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained" (Douglas 1968, 50). What a pattern consists of, or what is considered as the desirable pattern has, however, no such consistency. The boundaries are entirely a matter of culture and due to their importance of reinforcing and maintaining the social order (i.e. outlining what is and is not acceptable behavior), the rules of pollution play a deeply symbolic role. For Douglas, dirt carries a "symbolic load" (Douglas 1966, 4) and the beliefs of pollution are used "in a dialogue of claims and counter-claims to status" (Douglas 1966, 3). Hence, to be "clean" is equivalent to being good, and means that you have assented to the classifications which uphold the social order. In contrast, to be dirty is equivalent to being bad, disregarding conventions and

thereby confusing or ignoring the constructed classifications in place. Within the subcultural I am investigating what these symbols of pollution are, if they are gendered, how they are manifested and used and how it becomes a part of the women's subcultural identity.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is commonly described as a distinct interpretivist approach which highlights how structures of meaning are constructed during interplay between individuals and their social context (Prasad 2005). The interpretivist theory played a significant role within the tradition of American sociology during the 1920's, especially at the Chicago School. The Chicago School's symbolic interactionism is heavily based on the thought of George Herbert Mead (1934). Mead emphasized that individuals' self, inner experiences and performances could only be understood and studied in relation, and as a consequence, of collective social processes (Mead 1934, 7). To understand human performances and the formation of the self, Mead argued that sociology had to study what social interactions symbolize. He viewed people as reflective beings and therefore argued that they have the capacity to engage in symbolic communications by utilizing and understanding 'significant gestures' (Mead 1934). He claimed that these gestures could not only be distinctly interpreted and used, but also had the ability to express an idea (Mead 1934, 45). Mead argued that this ability to take "the attitude of the other" (Mead 1934, 47), in relation to certain gestures, is distinct for humans. In short individuals can understand the symbolic meanings of a gesture through adopting the attitudes of the one they are interacting with. This process happens through the production of values, feelings and thoughts towards their interaction partner. In this study, I am analyzing how this process appears for female participants, how they construct and perceive symbolic meanings of the subcultural and which meanings this provides for their participation.

According to Mead, individuals are not only capable of interpretatively objectifying the world around them (i.e., assigning meaning towards objects, or making sense of them), but also of objectifying themselves (Mead 1934, 136). He argues that this is possible since people are able to direct symbolic gestures, or meaningful communications, inwards. For example, while interacting with others we also hear ourselves, and individuals are thereby always addressing themselves during social interactions (Mead 1943, 138). This inward communication creates a sense of selfhood, for example allowing us to view ourselves through established social categories such as gender, parenthood or subcultural identity. It also allows us to develop emotions towards specific categories or the social world we encounter, such as hate, love or rejection of self. I am analyzing these processes within the subcultural, how women perceive themselves as well as the subcultural and how they, in relation to this, construct social categories of for example gender within the subcultures.

The term and concepts of symbolic interactionism were coined and further developed by Mead's student Herbert Blumer (1969) who identified three basic principles of the theory. According to Blumer, people act on the basis of meanings. These meanings emerge through interactions with others, and they are always interpreted by the individuals concerned. Given this, Blumer argued that the outcome of a social situation is dependent upon the way in which each person perceives and responds to it. This outcome is affected by all participants due to their perceptions and performances (Scott 2009, 24). Thus, "symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact" (Blumer 1969, 5). I am specifically using Blumer's development of symbolic interactionism in understanding how subcultural women construct patterns of meanings through their performances and interactions.

Jeffrey C. Alexander and Performance of Authenticity

Adopting a symbolic interactionist approach it becomes obvious that performances should be studied from the notion of meaning since "human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them" (Blumer 1969, 2). But the performances and objects of subcultures are not meaningful in themselves, rather they have to be presented, interpreted and classified through actors (Alexander 2003, 31). In relation to this, it becomes necessary to discuss authenticity and what the term actually means. Jeffrey Alexander views authenticity and identity as something, similar to culture, that is constantly negotiated and constructed, rather than substantial and factual. According to Alexander, performance is a process of obtaining meanings and convincing others, while authenticity is a matter of how successful the performance was.

For a performance to be successful, it does not only need to relate to how well the actor complies to the subcultural structures surrounding the performance. The interaction between the actor, the script and the audience needs to be constructed into a "convincing whole" (Alexander 2004, 548), in which the background factors of both the script, the actor and the audience are decisive. Given that the audience consists of different individuals with different background factors, a special bond between actor and audience is required to catch the audience's attention (Alexander 2004, 529). One of the tools used to catch the attention of the audience is cathexis, sculpting the strength and intensity of the performance. If the actor performs with the right amount of cathexis, good conditions arise for a fusion between the surrounding culture, the audience and the actor (Alexander 2011, 171). In this equation the audience needs to experience the script and the performance as real and natural (Alexander 2004, 529-530). If the subcultural meanings are communicated in a trustworthy way, the culture passess from the actor to the audience in the sense that the audience identifies with the actor (Alexander 2004, 531). In other words, "the attribution of authenticity...depends on an actor's ability to sew

the disparate elements of performance back into a seamless and convincing whole" (Alexander 2004, 548).

Hence, authenticity is not only a matter of the cultural meaning that is being performed, and the performances in itself, rather it is about whether these performances are validated or refuted by the audience. Similar to the Durkheimian notion, authentic objects are those which have been validated through performances of affiliation and commitment to the subcultural, and that show the unity of the group and their system of ordering. Therefore, authenticity within the subcultural becomes the validation and the representation of sacred objects, which are used for making subcultural distinctions as well as constructing boundaries towards the non-subcultural (Alexander 2004, 533, 537).

In this chapter, I have outlined the perspective I will use to explore and analyze the subcultural participation of women. Next, I will present how this will be executed, and specifically how we can research without the lens of masculinity to further explore subcultural participation.

Methodological Strategies

Many valuable studies on subcultures have been conducted through ethnography (see for example: Cressey 1932, Becker 1963, McRobbie 1978, Thornton 1995, Leblanc 1999, MacDonald 2001, Hodkinson 2005, Williams 2011, Taylor 2012, Hannerz 2013, Fransberg 2021). Ethnography has the advantage of allowing us to study the performances of participants and to study individual performances from the notion of the subcultures' collective meanings since "the destinies of human beings are always bound up with the fate of the groups which they are members" (Parker 1921, 197).

However, although previous subcultural studies have employed the fruitful approach of ethnography, they tend not to depart from subcultural women's experiences, narratives and performances. As I have pointed out, previous research focusing on women's participation still tends to depart from the notion that subcultures are masculine at their core, that subcultural authenticity requires masculinity and that female participation and subcultural identity therefore need to adapt to this norm of masculinity (cf. Leblanc 1999, 120). Naegler and Salman point out that even though many studies try to incorporate gender, they still depart from epistemological assumptions that subcultures consist of a masculinity norm. These assumptions lead to gender being superficially added on, rather than holding a central place within the studies. The researchers are departing from a hegemonic masculine analytic lens, which often results in studies which mimic sexist structures (Naegler & Salman 2016, 371).

Researching Without the Lens of Masculinity

Since I wanted to avoid the pitfalls of entering the field with a masculine lens, I entered the field with few assumptions about what subcultural women's identity and view on subcultural authenticity, gender, meanings and boundary work consisted of. Throughout the study I have remained open and let the narratives and performances of my participants construct the field. This is in definite contrast to many subcultural

researchers who rather explicitly have entered the field with presumptions about the field, specifically in relation to gender. As an example, Leblanc states in her introduction that her own experiences as a punk girl made her enter the field asking punk girls how they negotiated the paradox of being in a subculture which was dominated by masculinity norms at the same time as it gave her, and therefore them, "the instruments of... liberation and self-empowerment" (Leblanc 1999, 6). Foremost, Leblanc entered the field with the presumption "[that] the key to girls subcultural participation...is resistance" (Leblanc 1999, 226).

Leblanc is not alone in viewing women's subcultural participation, and subcultural participation and authenticity in general, from this perspective. Oftentimes, researchers enter the field with pre-made ideas about what subcultural identity and authenticity should consist of. Foremost, these ideas of authenticity are based on their own proximity to the field, and their own experiences as subcultural participants (cf. Hodkinson 2002, 1; Muggleton 2000, 1; Fox 1987, 346; Haenfler 2006, 1) They, therefore, argue that they know exactly who to talk to based on either subcultural style, group or activity. For example in Leblanc's study, she argues that authentic punk girls have specific hairstyles and clothes, a style marked by its rebellious trait which were "mocking female sexuality" (Leblanc 1999, 3) and rejecting "social norms" (Leblanc 1999, 4).

Having proximity to the field is common among subcultural scholars, and is not necessarily problematic in itself. However, it becomes problematic when this proximity leads to assumptions which risk excluding specific participants, because they are supposedly not 'authentic' enough, or when the researcher does not let the participants' stories and performances direct the research. In short, if we enter the field asking subcultural women how it feels to be a woman among men, we will certainly collect a specific kind of data. Foremost, we are then departing from a perspective which views masculinity as dominant and viewing the female participants in relation to the masculine, rather than viewing the women as having their own agency (Naegler & Salman 2016, 356-7). Therefore, I did not ask these kinds of questions because, obviously,

such an approach risks affecting participants' responses and would risk implying that I am assuming their participation to be different from men's.

Heterogeneous Sampling Strategy

I wanted to follow different kinds of participants. I did not want the sampling of field sites nor participants to be "self-evident", or based on proximity to the field, since I believed that this could lead to a sampling based heavily on 'authentic' participants (Hammersley 2008, 5-7; Narayan 1993, 679). Because I wanted to understand the systems of classifications within subcultures, it was important to also include participants that might be constructed as anomalies by other participants (Douglas 1966). This is the main reason I have not opted for the classic 'snowball' sampling strategy, which is common within subcultural research (cf. Leblanc 1999; MacDonald 2001). Rather, I have used the sampling strategy of 'member validity' where I have relied on indirect references (Douglas 1976, 54). For instance, during fieldwork it happened regularly that one subcultural group identified another group as 'inauthentic'. As I wished to depart from a plural and heterogenous perspective towards subcultural groups and settings, I would then make contact with these participants which has resulted in greater variety amongst participants and field sites. Hannerz claims that this strategy makes the researcher constantly critically assess their own prejudices and those of the subculture (Hannerz 2015, 9-10), which I also have experienced. My sampling strategy also contains purposeful sampling (Patton 2002, 230), where I have actively sought participants of different ages, with different levels of subcultural establishment and within different subcultural groups. During the study, I have observed and had conversations with participants between the ages of 18 to 55[1]. They all self-identify as women and as subcultural (Hannerz 2015, 7). I looked "for groups of people who cooperate to produce things" (Becker 1976, 704) that they construct as the subcultural. Obviously, participants who participate in the same

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[1] All participants gave informed consent prior to interviews.

social world, do not necessarily belong to the same subcultural grouping. Therefore it was important to include different subcultural groups.

Similarly, I have let the field direct me to different field settings while exploring different subcultural groups. I have been told stories about specific raves and skateboard spots, and have therefore taken the initiative to visit specific countries and cities which seem to have an importance in the stories of my participants. I have conducted fieldwork in Sweden, Norway (which has interesting historical importance to the skateboarding culture since skateboarding was illegal in the country until 1989 (Hjelseth et al. 2019)), Denmark, Germany (where specifically Berlin plays an important part for the history of raves and is known for its rich cultural and urban life), and Spain (which oftentimes is viewed as the skate capital of Europe)[2].

This variation of both the participants and field settings has given me the ability to investigate if differences in the participants' performances and stories existed. In return, I have been able to more thoroughly examine and understand the cultures. Foremost, these strategies of sampling have broadened my research data and I have therefore avoided homogeneous definitions of the subcultural. However, although I have collected broader data, my data contains of course limitations. For example, I have only included participants who are currently active within the cultures. While this limits the sample, it does not limit the data regarding the social processes within the field I have studied. Rather, this sampling strategy has defined the cultures which has enabled me to produce relevant data in relation to the aim of the study.

Accessing the Field

In my attempt to explore the standpoint and embodied experiences of women within subcultures, I have observed and followed female skateboarders and ravers and

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[2] I have not counted the number of hours I have done fieldwork, but a rough estimation is about 650 hours. Out of these, most of my fieldwork has been conducted in Sweden (200 hours), followed by Spain (160 hours), Denmark (130 hours), Norway (90 hours) and Germany (70 hours).

conducted interviews with 73 of them[3]. Since I had conducted fieldwork within the rave culture during my bachelor thesis, I already had some contacts in place, and I also have friends who skateboard, which in some regards have made access easier. However, even though I have had pre-knowledge and contacts, I have not let these direct my decisions in the field, and gaining access to different field settings has in some instances felt almost impossible. Changing field settings has of course had its challenges. I needed, in many regards, to obtain access to new subcultural groups constantly. Sometimes when I have tried to gain access in a new city, without the help of gatekeepers, I have almost given up.

Since I was no stranger to the culture's social world, I had some kind of position within the field and was classified by its participants (Hodkinson 2005, 134). For example, I share an interest in art which is common within the rave community. But there were also situations when this was not positive, when I was classified as someone that a specific subcultural group disliked. For example, this happened when I witnessed individuals who committed acts, foremost morally questionable actions, which I personally had no sympathy for (Fine 1993, 270-72). In some situations I have chosen between the research and my own personal beliefs. Although I have never been a "hostile researcher" (Fine 1993, 271), I have spoken out against actions I had a personal moral and ethical probelm with, such as sexual violence, instead of being neutral. In some cases this has led me to being excluded and banned from specific subcultural groups and I have even received threats.

Accessing skateboarders has in many regards been easier. When I arrived in a new city, I looked for skate spots and started my observations there. I then approached skateboarders and explained what I was doing. Sometimes I also searched for "girls only" skate sessions and organizations and made contact through these. Generally, the skaters were very positive and it was never hard to get interviews. Within the rave culture,

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[3] The interviews are conducted with 38 skateboarders and 35 ravers. 23 interviews with participants living in Sweden, 16 interviews in Spain, 14 interviews in Denmark, 10 interviews in Norway, 10 interviews in Germany.

however, it was sometimes harder since I did not want to conduct interviews with people at raves due to the risk of them being intoxicated. When I made contact with someone at a rave, I would ask them if it was okay if I contacted them later on for an interview, which sometimes worked out and sometimes did not. Regardless, it is impossible to conduct fieldwork at a rave without observing participants who are intoxicated. Similarly, it is impossible to obtain consent for observations from everyone at a rave or skatepark. My main interest was, however, to study collective social interactions and patterns, which obviously contain individual ones, but which might be viewed as less problematic from an ethical perspective since these are places of publicness (Atkinson & Hammersley 2007, 210). My main subject of interest has not been the individuals as such, but rather the social phenomena of subcultures that they present (Wästerfors 2019, 183-187).

As a woman, studying specifically subcultural women, I also experienced that I capitalized on my gender. Getting access was in many regards easier due to my gender, and I experienced that the participants often "opened up" to me, and shared their experiences (Westmarland 2000). Similarly, being in a similar age as many of the participants also made access easier. I also benefited from not being a skateboarder since I then could enter into the position of "an outsider", making it possible for me to ask curious questions that might stand out as idiotic for an insider. Likewise, when entering a rave in a new city, and meeting new participants, I could also go into the role as "an outsider". I argue that this role helped me to obtain richer data since people more often explained things to me and were more willing to talk to me.

Observing and Interviewing

Doing fieldwork for almost three years at this point, I have gotten quite close with some of my participants. With many of them, I have spent a considerable amount of time, and they have invited me into their lives and shared some of their most personal experiences. I argue that such closeness to their lives has led me to understanding their experiences

and perspectives better, and I have been able to document their subcultural participation in a deeper way (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 225).

Combining ethnographic fieldwork and ethnographic conversations with interviews has been very helpful since the methods have given me different kinds of data. During the fieldwork, I have observed social interactions and how subcultural authenticity and gender is performed. For example I saw participants at skateparks receive applause after nailing skateboard tricks, receive similar admiration due to them skating specific skate spots, or having a specific style of skating, wearing specific shoes, clothes, or receiving questions asking for advice on skateboard equipment or how to do a specific trick. Similarly at a rave, participants received positive feedback for a well organized rave, a well played DJ-part, or for their dancing style. Performances of authenticity or gender could also be how skateboarders and ravers looked, some of them were skating and raving in dresses, while others would wear 'gender neutral' clothes. I would also listen to how they interacted with each other talking about authenticity and gender, who was pointed out as authentic and on which basis they were perceived that way. 'Gendered' talk could also be them talking about for example having their period, love partners or make remarks about their friend's bodies such as commenting how good their boobs or ass looked skating, or how "sexy" they looked while dancing.

During the interviews, I have collected data on for example participants' narratives on subcultural boundary work, their experiences and their view on subcultural participation. The ethnographic conversations have often unfolded as a kind of "go-along" conversation. According to Kusenbach the advantages of this method is that it allows the researcher "to observe their informants' spatial practices in situations while accessing their experiences and interpretations at the same time" (Kusenbach 2003, 463). When I follow ravers around at an open-air[4], or skateboarders skating the city, I have not only been able to observe their performance, but I have also been able to ask them questions about how they perceive situations and why. Gubrium (1997, 36) points out

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[4] "Open-air" is a rave event held outside, usually in nature, under a bare sky.

that the main advantage of combining fieldwork, ethnographic conversations and interviews is that it allows us to study a larger amount of participants over time. I have often talked again to my participants after I have conducted an interview, which has enabled me to return to specific themes or ask new questions. The interviews lasted from between 50 minutes to 130 minutes and were conducted in a variety of different environments. I have always let the participant choose the location for the interview in order to make them comfortable. The interviews were always voluntary, and I also informed the participant that they could skip answering specific questions or end the interview at any time if they wished to.

The issue of consent is however something I have been working constantly with during my fieldwork, reminding participants about my role. Going back to the discussion on friendships developing during fieldwork, I have been careful with negotiating, reminding and being explicit about my role as an ethnographer. As Hammersley and Atkinson point out, "it is not uncommon for participants quickly to forget this once they come to know the ethnographer as a person" (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 210). Situations have occurred where I have asked my participants if they are telling things to me, viewing me as a friend or as an ethnographer. In some cases they have asked me not to include some of our conversations into the research, explaining that the conversation we are about to have is between two friends. Although the lines between my role as a friend and an ethnographer oftentimes have been blurred, I have experienced that this sincere approach has eased some of the possible ethical difficulties (Scheper-Hughes 2000, 128). As Goffman points out, I have tried avoiding being the "fink" who deceives the groups (Goffman 1989, 125), and I have therefore excluded some stories from the research data completely where, for example, participants could easily be identified, or changed details as a means of protecting participants' and field sites' confidentiality. All names in this study are fictitious in an attempt to provide anonymity for the participants. Negotiating the ethical dilemmas during this study, I have concluded that my main considerations are based on protecting my participants, and conducting this study while

not harming the collective interest of the groups I have followed (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 213). However, even though I have taken these precautions, it is still possible that other subcultural participants will recognize some stories and events if they read this thesis. Given this, I cannot guarantee my participants full anonymity (Hammersley & Traianou 2012, 126-128) which is something I have discussed with them. Receiving data in a friend role could of course influence my perspective, however, since I have actively sought a variety of different participants and field settings, I have constantly been challenging my own thoughts of the cultures. I argue that this strategy has kept me from going native.

I did not have determined interview questions, but rather I had specific themes covering everything from how their subcultural participation started to authenticity and boundary work (Holstein & Gubrium 1995, 70). Many of the interview questions I had were themes which came up during fieldwork. The interviews became an opportunity to more thoroughly address certain themes. The interviews were carried out in Swedish, English and Norweigan and recorded with the permission of the participants. Each recording was transcribed in close proximity to the interview since I wanted to have the interactions fresh in mind.

Analyzing and Coding

According to Atkinson, analysis cannot be viewed as a distinct stage in an ethnographic study (Atkinson 2007, 158). Rather, the analysis is a constant process, which I argue, from the notion of Goffman, goes back to the initial ethnographic question of "what is going on here?" (Goffman 1986, 85). Coding the empirical material for the study, I have tried to interpret what is going on, what is being said, in what context and by whom. Of course, as Atkinson (2015, 3) points out, the analysis of the empirical material depends on the aims of the study, the underlying epistemological assumptions and the research

questions. During the fieldwork, I have taken a considerable amount of fieldnotes[5], where the aim has been to describe the field and uncover "what is going on", but primarily I have aimed to explore the field from my research questions. I did not take field notes during the fieldwork, but rather in close proximity to each of them, since I did not want to become distracted during my observations.

I have departed from the model of narrative criminology when analyzing the narratives of the participants. Lois Presser (2018) argues that narrative criminology views narratives as something that guides people's actions. Action is viewed as performances of particular self-narratives. Stories consist of meanings and influence our behavior (Presser 2018, 10). I have recognized that narratives are, like other cultural forms, "a product of social processes" (Presser 2018, 8). Foremost, I have been interested in investigating which meanings their narratives contain and provide their subcultural identity. According to Berger and Luckman (1966) an individual's identity and role is maintained through language and narratives, it was therefore of importance to analyse the subcultural language, narratives and stories of the participants. Since subcultural actions and symbolic objects can not speak for themselves, but rather have to be represented, interpreted and communicated by actors to become meaningful (Alexander 2003, 31), these patterns of meanings are the internal structures of the cultural (Smith 2008, 28). The narratives of the subcultural are a product of the participants' desired identity (Presser 2009). For example, it was common that participants referred and compared themselves to specific skaters, DJs, raves or skate spots, since these were representations of what were perceived as 'authentic' performances or sites. Hence, they tried to tie various subcultural traditions to themselves to establish authenticity. Similarly, participants distanced themselves from behaviors, styles, sites or tastes that were constructed as inauthentic (Kraus 2017, 137; Thornton 1995). The aim, analyzing these narratives, was to find the connections between different courses of events and contexts

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[5] In total I have about 150 pages of fieldnotes and research diaries.

(Presser 2009, 179), specify the structures of the subcultural and identify the logics behind their narratives (Smith 2008, 207).

During the analysis process I have been able to specify these structures, identifying recurring binary codes that were visible in the participants performances and narratives (Smith 2008). As an example, I identified specific themes based on these codes, such as "gender" versus "de-gendered", "authenticity" versus "fake", "commercialized" versus "creativity", or the "subcultural" versus the "non-subcultural". Tying back to the use of Durkheim's theory on the sacred and profane, I was able to identify the structures of categorizations within the subcultural through these codes (Durkheim 1995; Douglas 1966). The process of constructing the codes and themes has been a process in which I have been going back and forth, analysing the research material, theories, and revisiting the field in an abductive approach. The tools of my analytic concepts have offered me clues and suggestions on how to understand the empirical world of subcultures. As Blumer argues, this procedure will lead to an interpretation which can be "validated" (1954, 8-9). Therefore, during the study, I have many times tried to test if my codes are stable, which in many instances has forced me to deconstruct the codes (Charmaz & Mitchell 2001, 168). Finally, I have identified "established codes" and "frames of interpretations" (Geertz 1973, 7-9), through which I could identify how patterns of meanings, authenticity, gender and identities were constructed among subcultural women and analyze them.

Analysis

My analysis consists of three sections. In the first section I will show the similarities between this study and previous research. Specifically, I will demonstrate how subcultural women distinguish the subcultural from the mainstream and that this process of ordering contains the same elements exemplified in previous subcultural studies. Foremost, I will discuss how participants emphasize aspects of freedom as an important distinction between them and the non-subcultural and how they highlight creativity and independence. I will present how they build their subcultural identity around these narratives and how and why it becomes meaningful. In the second part, I will present the differences between the participants of this study and previous research. Specifically, I will present how and why the participants question the notion of 'masculine' subcultures, and construct rather subcultures with possibilities for different performances. I will show how subcultural authenticity is pluralistic rather than singular and how it is constructed in a dialectical relationship between the subcultural and the mainstream, and within the subcultural, making authenticity both internal and external. In the final section, I present what happens when subcultural order comes under threat and how subcultural women handle sexism and misogyny. During this part of the analysis, I will show that the participants perform boundary work towards such behavior in an attempt to retain subcultural order and identity.

Distinguishing the Subcultural From the Mainstream

> When I looked at the skaters in my neighborhood they just looked like they had their own way...so that was really cool to me. I just tried skating and liked it for the first time...It wasn't like the other stuff my friends did...play football or whatever...it was more like you did it in your own way. And I really liked that. So I never stopped.
>
> Spanish skater Serenity, 32

When I first went [to a rave], I just right away got hit by how different it was from the legal clubs. The atmosphere, it's just so completely different. I felt at home right away, I really like the art of it. There's just so much to it.

<div align="right">Danish raver Rebecca, 26</div>

Patrick Williams (2011) emphasizes that a recurring trait among subcultural participants is an emphasis on what distinguishes the subcultural from the non-subcultural. In line with this, the rave participants of this study describe the rave culture as something "different" in contrast to "legal clubs". Skateboarders also make this subcultural pattern visible. The skateboarders describe that "they have their own way", as Serenity puts it above. They present the notion of doing things "your own way" as an ideal of the subcultural, while the mainstream example in the accounts becomes that of playing "football or whatever" and thus following the crowd. Hannerz describes how such narratives of the subcultural consist of taking a position against what is not the subcultural, and drawing boundary lines (Hannerz 1992, 78).

This kind of boundary work is widely presented in previous subcultural research. Becker, for example, demonstrates how jazz musicians and marijuana smokers distanced themselves from the 'conventional' society of 'squares' through narratives and performances (Becker 1963, 85). While the jazz musicians were described as 'authentic', talented, gifted, independent and tolerant artists, the 'squares' were presented as 'inauthentic', ignorant, normal, insensitive, intolerant, and ungifted performers (Becker 1963, 85f). Similarly, Thornton shows how a construction and distinction of taste is used within the rave culture to distance themselves from the mainstream (Thornton 1995, 5). MacDonald (2001) also describes a distance between the graffiti writers and mainstream society, as Leblanc (1999) in her work on punk girls or Hodkinson (2002) in his work on goths. For the rave participants I have followed, the legal clubs are defined as the profane, the boundary work of authenticity is constructed around how they portray and perceive what are not viewed as 'authentic' raves. This means, on the other hand, that what is to be constructed as the sacred — the subcultural — has an authenticity which "is

claimed, assigned and established" (Hannerz 2013, 61). It is through this distinction of the subculture and the mainstream, and through its dynamic relationship, that the subcultures' collective meanings and beliefs are constructed (Douglas 1966, 57).

Similar to Becker's claim, authenticity in the performances of the skateboarders and ravers I have followed, is constructed through a narrative of distance established through an opposition to the inauthentic and non-subcultural. Communicating these differences between the subcultural and the non-subcultural has a definite purpose. First of all, it serves a meaning in constructing the culture of the subculture and the identity of the subcultural (Durkheim 1915, 299), but it also plays the important role of negotiating, deciding and specifying who and what is to be viewed as belonging to the subculture, and who and what is not to be viewed as the subcultural (Alexander 2006, 569). The "others" and the "mainstream" are however not written in stone but are rather constantly negotiated and under construction (Douglas 1966, 3). How the subculture is constructed depends solely on how the mainstream is constructed and therefore the mainstream is not self-identified but rather used as a concept of relativity in its relationship to the subcultural (Hannerz 2013, 62). Through analyzing these codes of patterns, I could identify and explain the internal structures of the cultural (Smith 2008, 28), specify these structures and logic of the subcultural (Smith 2008, 207), and the participants' desirable identities (Presser 2004).

The Essence of Freedom

The narratives of distances and difference above are typical of how the participants pursued their identities and how they constructed their participation around something that is "cool" and "different", automatically positioning it against the defined 'other', in this case "football" and "legal clubs". Scholars such as Thornton (1995), Leblanc (1999), MacDonald (2001), Hodkinson (2002) and Hannerz (2013) also emphasize this constructed distance and difference between the subcultural and non-subcultural. In this study, ravers describe their subcultural participation as something they immediately "felt at home" in,

a sensation of freedom similar to a skater's remark of a culture where one can do "it in your own way". Both dictums depend upon oppositional poles and presume that the "mainstream" is not a place where you can be yourself or do things in your own way, thereby claiming the subcultural ideals (Cressey 1932, 83; Douglas 1966,4- 3). This kind of freedom is limited to the participants of the subcultures and becomes a central subcultural object. Freedom as an object is central for the subcultural constructions of meaning given that it becomes a symbolic representation of the sacred (Alexander & Mast 2006, 2). The mainstream, on the other hand, is marked by its inability to consist of the same object of freedom:

> Sometimes they [her non-subcultural friends] drag me out to these clubs, and I mean it's just dreadful. You basically have people hanging over your shoulder all the time, you know how it is, they are kind of inspecting you, you are monitored. I just hate the atmosphere, you can't do what you want to do because there's so many rules. Well, now I rarely attend legal clubs, but when I do....I mean, WOW! The difference is just so fucking big, it just hits me every time! Zero fucking freedom you know!
>
> German raver Ronya, 21

> Skating is more about doing what you feel you want to do, that's the beauty of skating, you can just do what you want. You can skate for five minutes, chill the rest and just talk and hang with friends, or you can skate the whole day, just that kind of brutal skating. And that's all fine, because no one tells you what to do, it's not like you're playing hockey or doing gymnastics or something, then you have people telling you what to do. Skating is not like that, we really like that...it's freedom.
>
> Spanish skater Siri, 23

The excerpts above are typical of how the narrative of distance is intimately related to the narrative of freedom. That freedom can only be established through the distance from the mainstream. Thereby, the participants are constructing a difference of classification in which the subcultural freedom becomes visible. It is through their interpretations, actions and their assessment of the subcultural object, versus the non-subcultural, that their subcultural performances become constructed (Douglas 1966, 53; Hannerz 2013, 65). Siri explains how skateboarding consists of freedom, while hockey

or gymnastics is driven by rules and authorities "telling you what to do". Similarly, Ronya describes legal clubs as places consisting of "so many rules", where you constantly "feel monitored". Even though the binary distinction that Ronya enacts does not contain any direct description of the rave culture, she continuously makes indirect referrals, stating that the difference between legal clubs and raves "is just so fucking big". The underlining is evident, subcultural freedom connects to differences from the non-subcultural. This difference is necessary as a means to the construction of being free. Hence, to be free is to be different. The rave culture consists of a freedom from rules where, in contrast, the legal clubs only contain rules. But obviously these constructions do not necessarily correspond with every experience. During raves there are certainly also "many rules":

> When we finally arrived at the entrance there were a lot of people being denied access. They even seemed to have paid for their tickets! When we finally got inside, after a thorough inspection of me and my company, there were obviously people watching us and I did not experience it to be relaxed. At one point, a woman (I later found out she was a DJ) approached us and stated: "First time here, right? Well, play by the rules and it will be fine". I was gonna ask which rules she meant, but she disappeared faster than she arrived.

> Field notes, Sweden

The rave culture, the skateboarding culture, and probably every cultural system "is actually tightly regulated" (MacDonald 2001, 184). Access to a rave can be very restricted and if you do not comply with the rules of the culture you will be denied access, as exemplified in the field notes above. You are expected to act and look in a specific way. You are expected to comply with the unwritten rules of the subcultures, which can be difficult for new visitors to know at first. Therefore, the notion of the constructed difference from the 'legal' clubs, where complete freedom exists, may seem invisible at a first glance. Rather, as the field notes above exemplify, certain situations can be interpreted as very limited and unfree. However, it does not matter if subcultural descriptions align with everyone's experience. Rather, what matters for my participants

is that they, through displaying and exaggerating these differences, make the boundaries between the subcultural and the non-subcultural more visible and identifiable (Hodkinson 2002, 30; Douglas 1966, 4), giving their participation meaning. Difference is validated through freedom and freedom is validated through difference. This distinction between internal and external rules has been discussed in previous research. For example, in MacDonald's study, the differences between the restricted rules of mainstream society and the subcultural are explained as follows: the rules of the subculture are self-made and self-generated, therefore the participants can easily identify with them and view them as more relevant (MacDonald 2001, 184). This distinction, between the subcultural and the mainstream, or between freedom and lack of freedom, becomes a central part of the subcultural construction of identity where the notion of freedom plays the lead role for the subcultures' symbolic capital (Thornton 1955). The narratives of differences show a clear subcultural elitism (Thornton 1995, 5) displaying the sacred element of the subculture and why this is superior to mainstream.

The Creative Free Versus the Uncreative Commercial

Along with the narratives of freedom, distance and difference, we find a narrative of creativity and a do-it-yourself (DIY) spirit. As previous research shows, DIY elements within subcultures play an important role for the construction of subcultural identities (McRobbie 1989; Hodkinson 2002; Hannerz 2013/2015). For the participants I have followed, creativity and the DIY-spirit is linked to the notions of difference and freedom and it constitutes a practical means to establish distance to the mainstream. The distinction between the commercialized uncreative mainstream and the creative free subculture is often highlighted through participants' boundary work:

> The music is central, I mean you don't really go there if you don't like electronica and so on, I mean that's kind of the thing…we all have something in common, we are all interested and we appreciate the music, the art, the sound, the lighting and everything the DJs are doing and all the work you know are behind it all…the quality with the sound and the lighting, the art installations,

the whole arrangement…there's a lot of creativity going on and people do it themselves, I mean you don't find that at legal clubs.

<div align="right">Swedish raver Rose, 25</div>

So, say for example how I have learned to make things myself, we have built parks and there's a lot of work going into doing that kind of thing. But I've learned to be creative and that will give you so much more than just buying something pre-done, so for me….even though that is totally fine, skateboarding is about being creative and I have been forced to be like that because there wasn't any parks or anything like that when I grew up. Some kids today kind of lack that, they can just buy stuff and skate, but it's still creative, it's just in other ways.

<div align="right">Norwegian skater Skyler, 36</div>

As Hannerz (1992, 78) points out, these narratives play an important role in negotiating, deciding and specifying who and what is to be viewed as subcultural sacred objects and constructing the subcultural identity. Similar to the accounts of Rose above, participants describe the commercialized legal clubs as places where no creativity and DIY-elements exist, in contrast to raves that seemingly consist of an abundance of these elements. The subcultural is described as consisting of dedicated people who "have something in common" and who are "all interested" and "appreciate the music, the art, the sound…" This devoted interest and understanding for the subcultural is exemplified through the statement that "there's a lot of creativity going on and people do it themselves" which is something "you don't find…at the legal clubs". In this case, the mainstream negatively represents the subcultural ideals and the commercialized, uncreative mainstream is made through these subcultural patterns of meanings (Douglas 1966, 35).

Similar to the quote from Rose, participants claim that the subcultural individual contains a strength which is built up through their social affiliation with the subculture. Skateboarder Skyler argues that the commercialization of the skateboarding culture has led to younger generations lacking her experiences of being "forced to" be creative "because there weren't any parks or anything like that when I grew up". Kids starting to skateboard today "just can buy stuff and skate". Skyler's claim is common among

participants, claiming that the commercialization of the culture has changed the culture and the DIY-spirit it consists of. Yet, they argue that the culture is "still creative, it's just in other ways", and that the commercialized developments are "totally fine" explaining that you can buy "something pre-done" in contrast to creating it yourself. The narrative of creativity consists of a combination of both creativity, individual strength as well as collective strength, and a DIY-spirit. As previous research shows (Hannerz 2015, 71), subcultural boundary work in the participant's stories regards the commercialized as a threat, on one hand, but on the other, argues that this development is acceptable, as the culture remains creative. On one hand, the participants create internal boundary work between how it used to be in the past versus how it is today. On the other hand, lines towards the mainstream are constructed, stating that even though the commercialization is a threat, it has not succeeded since the culture is still creative "it's just in other ways". Through these negotiations and distinctions between the ideals of the subculture and the mainstream, the subcultural identity remains intact even though the subculture has moved towards more commercialization. The main strategy is to define the ever shifting mainstream as the profane, retaining and containing the sacredness of the subculture through new categorizations (Douglas 1966, 2). Most effectively, this is done through highlighting what the subcultures provide, and how this is something the mainstream is unable to provide.

The Free Independence Versus the Unfree Dependence

> I really think that skateboarding gives you another perspective on stuff...like for my girlfriends...they turn to us for advice... it's like they are super strong girls in everyday life, but when it comes to that [romantic partners] they are sort of just giving up... they're not as free. And I think that is because we [skaters] learn how to be creative, meeting other people, culture, enjoy yourself and just like doing things in your own way...I really think about that when hanging with them [her girlfriends] like they don't have that mindset. They just try to fit in.
>
> Norwegian skater Sally, 38

> A lot of them [her non-raver friends] just have a really high level of insecurity, I think it comes down to that I've learned how to walk my own path, I'm doing stuff in my way. There's a freedom in raves, and that freedom affects you.
>
> Swedish raver Riley, 31

Through the participants' performances the mainstream is defined as something limiting which requires obedience, in contrast to the subcultural which is constructed as free, independent, confident, fun and creative. There is also an individual aspect visible, where confident participants are contrasted against unsecure flock members of the non-subcultural. In line with previous research, a part of this boundary work against the non-subcultural is emphasized through how the participants subcultural participation provides them with another "mindset" than their friends from outside the culture (Becker 1963, 85; MacDonald 2001; Leblanc 1999; Thornton 1995). Similar to Sally's description, the skateboarders I have followed often describe skateboarding as providing them with a mindset which they suggest their non-skater friends lack. The description of how the culture gives them individual traits such as creativity and independence, in contrast to their girlfriends who "are not as free" and "just try to fit in", is common. Participants believe that their mindset and abilities lead their friends to turn to them for advice. Many ravers describe how their subcultural participation has given them confidence, independence and freedom, which they argue many of their friends lack. Riley's description of her non-raver friends as having a "high level of insecurity" often recurs and is usually explained from the notion of them lacking freedom. Such narratives are a part of the subcultural identity, and participants often state that they "learned how to walk [their] own path" through their participation. Oftentimes, the notion of freedom is emphasized as something which "affects you", and they claim that their participation made them free, independent and secure. Even though this might be the experienced case, these stories and performances foremost define the system of categorization within the subcultures. Subcultural participants highlight their differences from the

mainstream, and, in doing so, protect and empower the social structures within the culture (Douglas 1966, 5).

So far I have shown how the subcultural participants I have studied perform their identities through enacting subcultural narratives of difference, distance, freedom and creativity. I have also pointed to how this is in line with the findings of previous research. The data shows how culture is not a dependent variable, but rather how the sacred subculture and the outer profane non-subcultural have a dialectical relationship (Alexander 1990, 3). For any subcultural participant this means that their participation is simultaneously constrained and enabled in the equation between their personal and collective consciousness (Durkheim 1955, 105). In that regard, my research on women's subcultural participation concurs with the previous research accounts of men's participation.

While previous subcultural research such as McRobbie and Garber (1976) or Leblanc (1999) argued that women's participation is due to gender resistance, the analysis above, and the overlap of subcultural women's narratives with previous research, shows that subcultural participation focuses on establishing a distance towards the non-subcultural through emphasizing differences. This difference consists of being yourself and doing things in your way. A resistance and questioning of gendered structures can surely be a part of this, but my analysis shows a broader and less reactive relationship where gender resistance is not the central aspect. Rather, the central is the proactive establishment of an arena (St. Jean 2007), where participants regardless of gender, talent, age and sexuality can become free. Reducing women's participation to gender resistance is to neglect the similarities between female and male participation. Rather, as I have shown above, just as men's participation has moved on from the classical definitions where class, resistance and homogeneous explanations were central

(Muggleton & Weinzierl 2003; Williams 2011, 6), so should also the view on women's participation move in that direction.

Subcultural participation is based on choice and freedom, subcultures are not systems in which people are forcibly placed (Williams 2011, 6). While this perspective is widely accepted when it comes to men's participation, studies are still reluctant to view women's participation in the same way. In the first part of this analysis I have demonstrated why this is faulty. Moving on, I shall further explore this, and present how women's participation can be explored while not utilizing the lens of masculinity (Naegler & Salman 2016). While I have demonstrated the similarities between my participants and previous subcultural studies, I shall further present what has gone unnoticed in previous research when subcultures are assumed as masculine (Cohen 1955; Miller 1958; Hall & Jefferson 1976; MacDonald 2001; Leblanc 1999; Thornton 1995). In doing so, the analysis will move on to examining the differences between my study and previous research.

The Questioning of 'Gendered' Cultures

> I went to the skate-spot today...when she saw me she jumped up and started to run towards me. "[Filippa]Maria, I'm so fucking happy to see you again, I was thinking about when we talked the other day... I just want to tell you something. I'm so fucking tired at being asked how it is to be the only one without a cock around here... So thank you for not asking that."
>
> Field notes, Spain

Narratives of a distance through differences are also visible in how the participants of this study negotiated gender. The field notes above demonstrate how the participants have a tendency of trying to distance themselves from masculine assumptions which they argue the non-subcultural consists of. The participants wanted to be viewed as skaters or ravers, rather than *female* skaters or *female* ravers. Many of them expressed how tired they were of the mainstream asking them about how it was to be a woman among men. This assumption of viewing the men as the norm, making the women "the

other" (de Beauvoir 1995, 24-25), bothered many of the participants. Scholars such as Taylor (2012), Hannerz (2015) and Naegler and Salman (2016) highlight how subcultural research tends to have a singular approach towards subcultural participation. Specifically, this affects the epistemological view on women's subcultural participation. Since the beginning of subcultural research, researchers have assumed that there is a core of masculinity within subcultures and in the performances of its participants. This lens of hegemonic masculinity has limited the data and the possibilities to create knowledge on women's subcultural participation, and it has also limited the view of subcultural participation, identity, meanings and authenticity in general (Naegler & Salman 2016, 371; Hannerz 2015, 16). In studies on female participation, the lens of hegemonic masculinity has led to a lack of women's narratives and experiences. Women have mostly been described in relation to men (de Beauvoir 1995, 88). Conversely, the stories of my participants show how subcultural women construct a subcultural identity which is not based on a normative singular masculinity, rather they question the notion of 'masculine' and 'feminine' cultures, bodies and activities:

> [My family] wanted me to dance or whatever, they just wanted me to be like a girl is 'supposed' to be like, whatever that is, I mean skating is what I'm 'supposed' to be like. And to be honest, no one ever asked me anything about that...I mean skaters never ask that. They don't care, I'm just one of them, they don't look at me that way. The only one who brings that up is like family and friends who are not skating...Skating is not about being a dude or whatever, it's about skating....being a skater.
>
> Spanish skater Scarlett, 26

For the participants, skating is not a 'gendered' subculture and they question the notion of masculinity within the culture stating that "skating is not about being a dude or whatever, it's about skating....being a skater". While doing so, the participants construct boundaries between the ideals of the subculture, which the non-subcultural is unable to understand. Scarlett's story shows how the mainstream is identified as an intolerant and sexist culture while the subculture is described as a tolerant place where "no one ever" makes remarks about her gender. She argues that gender does not really matter since she

is "just one of them". Through making this distinct difference between the subculture and the mainstream, a system of classifications is constructed. This system in itself becomes meaningful, but primarily it is an attempt to make sense of the world (Douglas 1966, 5). Similar extensions of the narrative of distance so as to exclude a focus on gender was central in the system of classifications amongst the ravers:

> You know, for someone who never went to a rave, they look at you and think that you are crazy, going to a party dancing dressed like that. They might think of legal clubs, thinking that I'm super oppressed or sexualized 'cause I'm dressed like this. Like I'm dancing for the guys, you know? [laughing]. But that is never the case, no one ever thinks of us like that at a rave, only people from the outside. They don't understand.

> Swedish raver Rachel, 24

In Rachel's story the mainstream is coded as sexist, where individuals think that she is "dancing for the guys". In contrast, the subculture is constructed as a place where "that is never the case", and where gender objectification is absent because "no one ever thinks of us like that at a rave". The subculture is constructed, through the participants' performances (Alexander 2003, 31), as an ideal place edged by tolerance and freedom where conventional gender norms are kept at bay.

I have so far shown that through extending the narrative of distance to also include gender, the participants can make sense of gender and construct it as unimportant within the subcultural. Moving on, I shall present how this works in relation to authenticity.

Pluralistic Authenticities

> Some girls were dancing almost completely naked, still there seemed to be nothing sexual over it. Rather it just felt totally liberating. A female raver I talked to explained it pretty well. She gazed admiring at the dancing girl group for quite a while, then she turned around towards me and said: "These girls just have a big fucking 'fuck you guys' written all over them. Their aura just consists of 'fuck you'"

> Field notes, Germany

As previously presented, the sacred object for the subcultural is a freedom which can only retain its status through marking out a distance towards the non-subcultural. Similarly, gender is also negotiated in relation to the narrative of distance, in which the difference between the subcultural and the non-subcultural is constructed and highlighted. The cultural setting of rave is built around the notion of freedom, and although not every raver would dance close to naked, the cultural setting grants them the possibility to do so. The notion of nudity as being 'non sexual' in a club setting might seem unlikely, however, the narrative of freedom from sexual objectification within the rave culture (Thornton 1995, 164) allows the participants to perform gender in this way. In that sense, the participants are enacting the ideal of not being viewed as either a female or male, but merely as ravers. This leads to subcultural identities which are constructed as free, and it is in this act of freedom that the subcultural construction of meaning lies (Blumer 1969). The culture facilitates a scene for participants were they can perform an act of "fuck you guys", directed towards a mainstream which is considered as limiting and unfree. This act turns the setting into an arena where an attempt to keep conventional gender norms at bay is performed (Taylor 2012, 100). Instead of viewing resistance as the driving force behind their participation as Leblanc (1999) argues, I argue that it is only through establishing the mainstream as the conventional and excluding, and the subcultural as the liberating, that this resistance can be articulated as meaningful. Gender is negotiated not through multiple ideals but rather within the existing ideal of the subcultural, following the existing narratives of the subcultural.

While previous research almost exclusively codes subcultural authenticity as masculine (MacDonald 2001, 130), the data of this study shows, similarly to scholars such as Taylor (2012, 50), that subcultural participation is much more complex, containing plurality. For my participants, subcultural authenticity is open for interpretation and can become coded into feminine, masculine or neither, due to social constructions within and outside of the culture. There are multiple possibilities of performances within the

pluralistic identities and ideals of the subcultural. I argue that the participants negotiate these plurality of authenticity and gender only through the existing narratives of the subculture. For the dancing participants in the field notes above, this becomes evident through their ability to create a more individual notion of what it means to be a woman within the cultural context of rave (Disch & Hawkesworth 2016; Jeppesen 2010, 475).

In the field notes above, authenticity is performed through 'femininity' but is still viewed with admiration from other participants. It is not the 'feminine' performance that matters, rather the central aspect is the narrative of freedom. It is the freedom to perform as they wish, with a freedom from conventional gender norms and objectification. The subcultural coding of authenticity is bound to situational structures in each setting and is coded through performances. Just as the boundary work towards the non-subcultural is not necessarily viewed as either masculine or feminine, but rather coded through social constructions and performances, the construction of meaning and authenticity is pluralistic. This clearly demonstrates that authenticity for the participants is possible through multiple performances. Authenticity is not necessarily coded as masculine. Rather it becomes evident that authenticity should be viewed from a pluralistic standpoint since it has the possibility to be constructed in a variety of ways in the dialectical relationship between the internal and external, and the individual and the collective social process (Alexander & Smith 2005, 550; Mead 1934, 7).

> Yeah, I mean I would post pictures of myself skating in like dresses and heavy make-up and stuff. I didn't want to look like that classic hyper masculine skater boy [laughing] I tried to imitate before, I just want to be myself. So I just felt how I in that way could control how others would look at me, like I'm really proud of being girly and all that, but I also skate. Because when it comes down to it, who says that skating is not girly? Fuck that, I'm controlling this, skating is whatever I want it to be. And people agree with me, I have like a ton of followers [on Instagram] and people take my skating seriously.
>
> Swedish skater Sadie, 18

Sadie previously "assumed" that the subculture consisted of "that classic hyper masculine skater boy". However, she realized that she just wanted to be herself, thus leaving the masculine performance behind. While "being herself" she questions what she perceives as a normative masculine definition of skateboarding coming from the mainstream, and states that authenticity within skateboarding might as well be "girly". Sadie's story and experience are recurrent among the participants and they often argue that the mainstream is to blame for normative masculine authenticity. Hence, they end up in the same kind of boundary work as presented in previous sections. Most of all, they emphasize that while being themselves and dissociating themselves from a previous 'inauthentic self', they have provided themselves with control (Thorpe 2016, 137).

Authenticity as Dialectically Internal & External

When Sadie states that skating is "whatever I want it to be", she claims authenticity as internal while she fuses the narrative of creativity. While previous research unclearly focused on both a resistance against traditional gender structures (McRobbie 1976, 1991) and a resistance against masculine coded patterns within subcultures (Leblanc 1999; Mullaney 2007), both perspectives viewed the conventional mainstream as constant. Instead, the mainstream should be viewed as something which is constructed simultaneously with the subcultural, thereby making it less about gender resistance and more about opportunities to explore different performances. There is a possibility of a freedom for multiple performances which is implied by the participants through their stories and how they interpret subcultural meanings around the distinctions between the profanity of the mainstream and the sacred of the subcultural (Alexander 2005, 550). Sadie's account is a good example of this, for her the culture can be both masculine and feminine, but that is not the essence of the culture. Rather, the essence lies in the possibilities and freedom to self expression in a sincere and authentic way, which fuses the narratives of freedom and distance. Hence, the culture is open for pluralistic interpretations and performances. This means, in contrast to MacDonald's study, that it

is not necessary for Sadie to replace all signs of 'femininity' for 'masculinity' (MacDonald 2001, 130), rather, the subculture is open for different interpretations, exertions and performances. It is not a matter of resistance, but rather insistence.

While insisting on one's own expression, this entails connection to the collective given that the subcultural identity and authenticity is constructed through a dialectical relationship between the involved actors (Alexander 2006). Mead explains how humans have the possibility to understand the symbolic meanings of certain gestures (Mead 1934, 47). We are capable of interpretatively objectifying the world around them as they objectify themselves (Mead 1934, 136). For the participants, it is in this inward communication the construction of a subcultural selfhood is created, giving them the ability and allowance to develop emotions towards specific categories. This is why the girl dancing naked in the field notes above becomes a symbol for the subcultural ideals, evoking emotions of admiration among other participants. Authenticity is therefore not only internal for the participants, but is rather constructed in a dialectical relationship between the individual and the collective.

Performances of Empowerment

Fusing the narratives of creativity and freedom, subcultural participants such as Sadie above, highlighted a notion of 'being yourself'. Widely noted in previous studies as well, participants of this study claimed that they gained control through their participation. Both MacDonald and Hodkinson argue that subcultures provide participants control over their identity which, again, represents the notion of freedom (MacDonald 2001, 188; Hodkinson 2002, 197). Participants of this study often describe their subcultural participation as empowering, emphasizing how their participation and social affiliation to the culture has emancipated them from oppressive structures, providing them with a sense of control:

It was late and dark and I was walking while Sophie was skating beside me. "How does it feel" I asked, "skating here...I would be afraid if I was walking here alone". Sophie looked at me, did a ollie up the curbstone, and then responded: "I was taught to sort of fear the street, to keep my keys between my knuckles. But today, with my skateboard I feel like I own the street... I'm a part of it. The skateboard, I consider it to be my weapon."

<div align="right">Field Notes, Germany</div>

The notion of gaining control through their participation is emphasized through the meanings they ascribe to the subcultural. For the participants of this study, having the experience of a female body and everything that entails, this subcultural control can be used as means of establishing gendered or 'de-gendered' identities. Nonetheless this was shown in the variety of different expressions the participants had in terms of clothes and styles. In that regard, gender resistance can become meaningful just as much else within the subcultural as long as it fuses the central narratives and codes of the subcultural (Alexander 2004, 548). While previous research recognizes how subcultural identities can provide a constructed sense of empowerment (Hodkinson 2002; MacDonald 2001; Leblanc 1999; Thornton 1995), this aspect of gender is often overseen. When gender is included in subcultural analysis of empowerment it is oftentimes done from the notion of gender resistance. For scholars such as Leblanc (1999) or Thorpe (2016) the empowerment of punk girls and skateboarding girls is directly linked to how their participation challenges gender norms and is described as a means for gender resistance. Mostly, it becomes a discussion about disregarding the norm of 'emphasized femininity' (Thorpe 2016, 6; Pomerantz, Dawn & Kelly 2004, 547, 549). Looking at the discussion above, authenticity is achieved through the enactment of the central narratives of the subcultural, and therefore it is not necessary to disregard femininity to externally and internally obtain subcultural authenticity. Rather, the participants of this study, claiming that subcultural authenticity is not necessarily masculine, use multiple negotiations, narratives and performances to construct their subcultural identity and authenticity.

Similar to the field notes above, participants often claim that their participation contains a strength that is accomplished through their social affiliation with the subculture (Gelder 2007, 4) leading them to a state where they become a part of the street or the public environment, rather than fearing it. The skateboard becomes a symbol for this control and is even referred to as a weapon. However, this does not mean that subcultures are the solution against sexism and misogyny since it is apparent that subcultures also are characterized by such structures (Leblanc 1999; Thornton 1995; MacDonald 2001; McRobbie 1992). Rather, the problem lies in that when you separate female participation from male participation, a difference is maintained which can be exploited and used for sexism.

This difference has been exemplified in previous studies. The work of Leblanc (1999), MacDonald (2001) and Thornton (1995) amongst others, shows how internal boundary work is manifested towards female participants constructing them as less 'authentic'. Internally, the woman becomes "the other" which is both emphasized and strengthened through the epistemological assumptions and research methods the subcultural research field uses. Assuming that authenticity is marked as masculine makes it impossible to study female participation from the same notion as male participation. Naegler and Salman point out that this leads to a lens of masculinity which reinforces a masculine norm (Naegler & Salman 2016, 356) and marks out the women as "the other". To avoid this pitfall, authenticity should rather be viewed as being able to be constructed pluralistically.

Until now, I have shown the similarities between women's subcultural participation and that of men. I have shown that participants are able to construct subcultures as feminine, masculine or neither through fusing the central narratives of the subcultural. The analysis shows how subcultural women do not construct authenticity from the premise that subcultures are coded as masculine in nature, rather

the subcultural is constructed as being 'open', where all that matters is if you are a skater or raver and if you fit into to the culture's systems of categorizations (Douglas 1966, 44). This construction is based upon freedom and the constructed distance and differences between the subcultural and the mainstream. Again, the same narratives of differences and freedom are also used when constructing gender. Subcultural authenticity is constructed through establishing differences and freedoms through a distance towards the non-subcultural. Subcultural bodies are objects that become symbolic representations through these establishments (Durkheim 1915, 228). The bodies are open to interpretation and can be filled as long as a counter narrative which is gendering them is lacking. In line with Sadie's narrative above, where she tries to "fit in" into the skateboarding culture through adapting a 'masculine' style, the performances of the participants are constructions at the same time as they are constructing. At the same time as they are ordering the order, they represent an order. The female body is not different, rather it becomes different since the narrative gives little space for a resort to authenticity. This is not necessarily oppositional, rather the ways in which gender performances can be viewed are more pluralistic (Messerschmidt 2004, 23; Taylor 2012). This approach is possible through the freedom of multiple performances and pluralistic authenticity the participants act upon via the narratives and the distinction between the ideals of the subculture and the mainstream. This provides space and opportunities for different experiences, explorations and appearances, which leads to the subculture becoming a place for freedom. Moving on, however, I shall present how subcultural women construct both the subculture and their identity when this constructed freedom is threatened.

The Subcultural Under Threat: Renegotiating and Reconstructing

> She turned around towards me, I could see that she's been crying. I asked what happened and she waved her hand against the skate park stating: "you know fucking dicks, they claimed I'm a poser

[someone who pretends being a skater for the looks], they were joking about it…I don't want them to think I care, but I do…"

Me and Rihanna stood outside for a while, waiting. When Richard and Ralph finally arrived, they started to laugh and tell a story of a girl they met inside. "You know, she was so fucking stupid so we took her to the back room behind the DJ booth, pretty funny I mean she just was so high and really into it", said Richard. Ralph continued stating that she "basically was a high hippie but really fascinated by the DJ-thing" and then erupted: "What a whore, she just appeared so desperate, but I'm not gonna complain." Ralph looked at Richard and they both started laughing. "Might actually be the craziest sex I've ever had, could I call this my first groupie?" asked Richard while they both laughed.

Until now I have shown how women negotiate and construct similar subcultural objects, narratives, and systems of categorizations towards the non-subcultural as subcultural men. I have shown how subcultural women question the notion of subcultural authenticity as masculine or feminine, but rather argue that this is open for interpretation. I have presented how the subcultural is constructed as a place edged by freedom, where misogynistic tendencies and sexism are absent since this is rather something the non-subcultural consists of. However, the traits the mainstream is constructed as containing can naturally also arise within the subcultures. In this part of the analysis I shall demonstrate what happens when performances become questioned by other participants and what happens when, for example, sexism and misogyny become visible within the subcultures. I discuss the strategies the participants use to maintain the sacred objects and order of the subcultural in an attempt to keep their identity intact. Similarly to how authenticity becomes validated through the central narratives of the subcultural (Alexander 2004, 548), I will demonstrate how questioning of authenticity also happens through these narratives.

Boundary Work Towards Inauthentic Masculinity

The field notes presented above exemplify what previous subcultural studies have noted: subcultures are not free havens from sexism, misogyny and patriarchal structures

(McRobbie 1991; Leblanc 1999; MacDonald 2001; Thornton 1995; Hannerz 2013). Leblanc (1999) argues that this is something women within punk constantly have to negotiate around. In her study, participants explained explicit sexist behavior among the male participants as something that "only some male punks" (Leblanc 1999, 199) would do, thus making it into a question of only a 'few bad seeds'. As a means to combat and deal with sexism, Leblanc describes how female participants get "masculinized" by the norms of the dominating males and how they are encouraged "to become virtual boys" (Leblanc 1999, 120). The data of this study shows however how women rather negotiate such situations and behaviors in a similar way as they would negotiate other aspects of the subculture — through boundary work:

> Sarah: When you're skating it is not important who you are, where you're from or if you have a dick or pussy. All that matters is skateboarding and for me, it's like, who the fuck cares if you're a girl or not. I mean, people have been asking me "hey, how's it going skating with the boys?" and I be like: "it's like skating" because for me, you see, it doesn't matter whoever you are, that is not what skating is about.
>
> Filippa Maria: So what is skating about?
>
> Sarah: Being a skater, having fun together, it's all about the community, and like pushing yourself...being creative, like the progress you make that is really fun. And if you're black, white, green, red, girl, boy, trans....yeah, that really doesn't matter 'cause like skating is for everyone, that's what makes it so special.
>
> Filippa Maria: How is it for everyone? Can you explain?
>
> Sarah: Everyone's welcome as long as you're doing your thing. Then there might be people who think that skating belongs to them, but that's not skating for real.
>
> Filippa Maria: What kind of people might that be?
>
> Sarah: Could be whoever, could be guys who tries to occupy the whole thing, but that's not what skating is about, that's just wrong, you see, skateboarding is not only for men, that's not the nature of it, it's not how it works.
>
> Spanish skater Sarah, 18

The quotes above are in line with the central narratives while questioning sexism. The participants are questioning the questioning on their own performances as authentic.

Through placing others questioning of their authenticity as in conflict with the central narratives, they are handling the anomalies. For the participants the subculture is about "being a skater" which means that determinations of gender, ethnicity "or whoever you are" are held at bay. The essence of the subcultural participation is that "you're doing your thing" and people who try to intrude on this and "occupy the whole thing", are constructed as not belonging to the culture since "that's not skating for real". The concept that skateboarding would be "only for men" is strongly disregarded because "that's not the nature of it, that's not how it works". While the subcultural itself is defined as 'open' to interpretations, the boundary work towards people who wrongly try to "occupy" the whole culture is coded as masculine and in that sense it is the man who becomes "the other" (de Beauvoir, 1995, 24-25), thus overturning the existing gender norms of masculinity (Taylor 2012, 99-100).

Similar boundary work to that of Sarah's, could be found throughout participants' accounts and performances. After Richard's and Ralph's conversation, described in the field notes during the introduction of this analysis part, I had a conversation with Rihanna asking her about what she thought of their statements:

> It's not good. I don't like it all, they shouldn't use words like that, you know, calling her a 'whore' that's just not OK. But I'm actually more irritated at them doing that there [at the rave], I mean have some class. Take her home or whatever, doing it next to your DJ booth, that's just really classless. That pretty much proved what we talked about earlier, they're pretty new…if you've been around for a while, you would never act like that. It's not really a part of the culture.

> Danish raver Rihanna, 31

While Rihanna explains that she does not like the behavior of Richard and Ralph, specifically stating that she does not like the words they used to describe the woman, she emphasizes that she is "more irritated at them" for doing it at the rave. According to Rihanna, having a sexual act at a rave represents "classlessness" and that she would prefer if Richard and Ralph took the woman "home or whatever". While doing so, she

follows the narratives of the subcultural. The subculture is not a place where sexual acts happen, and Rihanna explains that "it's not really a part of the culture". In this case, sex symbolizes 'dirt', it does not belong at a rave (Douglas 1966, 37, 44). In that way, Rihanna constructs another difference between the subcultural hierarchy and certain behavior from previous subcultural studies such as Thornton's (1995). In Thornton's study it is the women who are marked out as lacking the symbolic capital of the subculture, placing them lower in the subcultural hierarchy (Thornton 1995, 29, 156). However, for the participants of this study, this is not how subcultural authenticity necessarily is constructed. Rihanna constructs both Richard's and Ralph's behavior as inauthentic and, while stating their "classlessness", she classifies herself and constructs her own subcultural identity and subcultural capital (Thornton 1995). Behaviors that transgress and threaten the system of values within the subculture must be handled (Douglas 1968, 50). Rihanna's "pollution behavior" (Douglas 1966, 37) is done through exaggerating the differences between herself and Richard and Ralph, clarifying the boundaries between "within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against" (Douglas 1966, 4). While doing so, she objectifies the woman, arguing that she is being 'consumed' in the wrong way. However, it is the behavior of Richard and Ralph that irritates her the most since their behavior has profaned the sacred by breaking the narratives. People who behave like them are pointed out as "new" to the subculture, explaining why they could behave wrongly. People who on the other hand have "been around for a while...would never act like that". In Rihanna's narrative the sexist behavior of Richard and Ralph is explained as something that is not a part of the culture, and boundaries are constructed towards them. She argues that they are not authentic enough. Utilizing these boundaries, the ideals of the subculture as a place free from sexualization remain intact. Similarly, the skaters I have followed describe actions, which go against their notion of freedom, as inauthentic:

> Samira: If there is anyone having problems with me skating...

Suri: Yeah some can be like 'oh so you're a girl, and you're skating, well good for you, are you sure you can take that rail? It's pretty high for a girl' I'm like say what, idiot. We have the fucking Yoni [Sanskrit word meaning the vomb, symbolising the female vagina] power here.

Samira: [Laughing] I know, so what I mean is like people acting like that, come on, get real...stop being a fucking square.

Suri: ...Stop being a poser! [Laughing]

Samira: [Laughing] Yes exactly! Because it's always like the ones that are not really skating who make remarks like that. If they make it in that way, I mean. I mean you could ask, because you care, 'oh have you thought about this and this' before someone is doing a trick

Filippa Maria: But that is more about caring, rather than being condescending?

Samira: Yes, precisely because... when people act like that I can be like 'well do it yourself' and then they get silent, because they're not really skaters, I mean a real skater kind of just minds their own business, you care about other skaters and so on...but you don't really care about making comments like that when someone is trying to nail a trick, then you're basically just an asshole, and that has nothing to do with skateboarding.

<div align="right">Danish skaters Samira, 26 and Suri, 21</div>

According to these skateboarders the men are breaking the narratives of freedom, creativity, difference and distance. Samira and Suri are using the activity as a way of fusing the background of the subcultural, and the central narratives of which it consists of, to obtain their identity (Alexander 2004, 529-530). People making remarks about them being unable to perform tricks due to their gender are not authentic skaters. Rather, the behavior is constructed as behaviors of a "poser", "fucking square" and of people who "are not really skating". In contrast, the typical behavior of a skateboarder is described as someone who "just minds their own business" but who still "cares about other skaters and so on...". If individuals make remarks, they are identified as "basically just an asshole" who has "nothing to do with skateboarding", coding and characterizing such behavior as non-subcultural and inauthentic. Meanwhile, the women describe themselves as authentic, and make the claim that they have power in this context, stating that they "have the fucking Yoni power", and even making a reference to their female sexual organs to establish a distance towards the inauthentic.

As presented in the first part of the analysis, this kind of boundary work, where one distinguishes between the ideals of the subculture and the lack of these within the non-subcultural (Hannerz 1992, 78), is essential for participants' narratives and construction of identity. Similar to Becker's claims about authenticity, where jazz musicians distanced themselves from others through their narratives and performances (Becker 1963, 85), the women within rave and skateboarding also use the same strategies for coping with the constructions of lines between the ideals of the subcultures and the conflicting ideals of everything that symbolizes the opposite (Douglas 1968, 53). When they encounter sexism and misogyny, these are coded as inauthentic and not belonging to the cultures as a means to keep the subcultultural order intact. When the constructed narrative of the subcultural as a place filled with freedom from gender structures and oppression is threatened, so is the order of the subcultural and its whole identity. As a way of systemizing and ordering this dis-ordered situation, the participants negotiate new boundary lines. As Douglas states, it is through emphasizing what the culture is not, and thereby constructing a distance from that disorder, that the (sub)cultural logic and order appear (Douglas 1966, 6). To strengthen their performances, and make the boundaries even more clear, their gender is even constructed into a subcultural object of authenticity (Alexander 2004, 533, 537). It becomes a representation of the subcultural distinction against the non-subcultural (in this case the "fucking square").

Given this, marking out specific behavior which targets the gendered aspects of female participants as inauthentic and not a part of the subculture, is no different from subcultural boundary work in general. This shows that women's participation also should be viewed from a cultural basis and from the notion of meanings structures (Gelder 2007, 4) rather than from their individual traits and gender. However, the power structures of the subcultural and society as a whole forces women to also include gender-specific boundary work due to what they become exposed to as women.

Conclusions

Within this thesis I have demonstrated how we can understand gender (in relation to participation, identity and authenticity) within subcultures, and I have done so through analyzing how women construct, negotiate and perform subcultural authenticity, meanings and identity, and how they construct subcultural boundaries, as well as gender boundaries, between the non-subcultural and the subcultural. During the analysis I have suggested that the mainstream, similar to the subcultural, is an empty signifier which can be constructed as masculine, feminine, or neither depending on the situation. In cases where the subcultural is under threat, and when subcultural identity is subjected to limitations, the mainstream is marked out as profane. The collective representation is a freedom from differences and differences through freedom. These representations can be presented through different bodies and objects giving them a symbolic power which can be either positive or negative. The sacred object represents the collective (Durkheim 1915, 228). When the subcultural logic comes under threat from within the subculture, the participants are forced into positions where specific actions become coded. While previous subcultural studies such as those of MacDonald (2001), Leblanc (1999) and Thornton (1995) argue that subcultural authenticity is coded as masculine, this study shows that female participants negotiate other boundary lines and are no strangers to classifying either men or their 'masculine behavior' as inauthentic if this becomes necessary as a means to maintain the ideals of the subculture and keep their subcultural identities intact. What matters is not as much who you are in the sense of what gender you identify as, but rather what you do. Given this, the "masculine bias" in subcultural capital as explained by Thornton (1995, 161) is simply not as clear amongst participants of this study.

Similar to previous research on men's subcultural participation, it is reasonable to argue that women's participation contains the same processes to categorize the order,

and rearrange the disorder when such occurs. This study shows that the performances of freedom within the subcultural, and the construction of lacking freedom within the non-subcultural, and hence constructing a distance between them, are central narratives of the subcultural identity. Likewise, the narratives of subcultural creativity and difference are built around the constructed mainstream's inability to be creative and free. These systems of classifications of performances, identities and subcultural authenticity simply show their own position. As Bourdieu states: "nothing classifies somebody more than the way he or she classifies" (Bourdieu 1990, 132). It is in these processes and performances that the identity is constructed and subcultural meanings are created.

I argue that women within subcultures are likely to act on a proactive basis (Jean 2007) as means to keep the order within the subculture (Douglas 1966) and not necessarily leave their 'traits of femininity' behind. While previous research argues that subcultural women are forced into leaving their femininity behind for masculinity as a reactive response to the subcultural categorizations (cf. Leblanc 1999, MacDonald 2001, Thornton 1995), I argue this is not the case. Rather, the analysis of this study shows that women's participation is not merely an act of gender resistance, but rather it contains the same sets of meanings that previous research on men has exemplified.

Although it might be argued that subcultural participation is an act of (gender) resistance, stating that their focus on 'freedom', 'independence' 'creativity', and 'control' symbolizes a political resistance, one has to recognize that subcultures have a fondness for such terms and that these are merely appropriations of political rhetorics rather than actual political acts (Thornton 1995). I do acknowledge that these kinds of stories, such as referring to your skateboard as a weapon on a dark street during the middle of the night, can situate their participation within a discourse of 'independence', putting it in relation to social circumstances in their life. I do recognize that their participation can provide them with a sense of control, and that going against conventional norms can provide them with a sensation of empowerment. Foremost, these narratives can make

their culture and participation more meaningful. However, it does not necessarily make their participation political and it does not make women's participation a result of solely gender resistance.

When gender resistance does occur, it is rather a small part of their subcultural participation. Rather, gender resistance is constructed around the central narratives of their participation, and it is only through enacting these narratives of difference, distance, freedom and creativity that resistance can also become meaningful. Through viewing women's participation from this notion, and not from a notion based on masculinity where women's accounts and performances are merely seen as a result of a reactive response to gender norms, I argue we can explore women's subcultural participation through a new lens. Previous research's epistemological and methodological pre-assumptions and strategies has made it impossible to study women's participation from this notion and consequently women's participation has therefore not been fully explored and explained as shown in this study. Given the results of this study, we can question if subcultures are coded as masculine and if previous research therefore also is faulty when it comes to how subcultural men construct the subcultural.

Bourdieu states that "subcultural practices produce paradoxical effects which cannot be understood if one tries to force them into a dichotomy of resistance or submission" (Bourdieu 1991, 94). I agree with this statement, and throughout the thesis I have tried to show why women's subcultural participation should be viewed from this notion. Foremost, I argue that subcultural participation should be acknowledged as containing different forms of interpretations of identity, authenticity and meanings. Consequently, it then becomes evident that a sociological redefinition of women's subcultural participation is necessary. The conclusion of this thesis is in line with many findings of previous research. The difference lies rather in epistemological and methodological approaches. Even though this study focused on women specifically within the rave and skateboarding culture, I argue that the epistemological perspective

which I have employed also should be utilized studying men's and women's participation in other subcultures, deviant activities, such as members of criminal networks, and other sociological studies on everyday life. The results of this study further the claim that the way in which we tend to view deviant behavior and gender needs to be reconsidered.

Exploring subcultural participation further, and in order to give a more comprehensive account of it, future studies would do well to investigate the aspects of aging, familyhood and specifically motherhood in relation to subcultural participation. Future studies should also further explore how women use urban spaces and how gendered performances are negotiated and constructed in relation to this.

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