The Canadian west coast punk subculture:
A field study*

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Abstract. This field study of the punk rock subculture is an exploratory examination in the much neglected area of Canadian adolescent subcultures. The data consist of transcribed unstructured interviews with subculture members and field notes gathered during the observation period. Functionalist and neo-Marxist theories of subculture were used as guides to inquiry. The results reveal that the punk subculture is a "classless" form of delinquent youth culture. Members were seen to be reacting to the age and generational effect of youth employment opportunities. They displayed varying levels of resistance to dominant cultural goals, school, and the family. Severity of the resistance was related to gender. Political attitudes were characterized by a "libertarian" consciousness that served to mute political resistance. While members could not address issues of unemployment, poverty, and alienating labour, they were able to achieve status through participation in the subculture and violence.

Résumé. Cette enquête sur place de la subculture punk rock est une étude d'exploration du domaine très négligé des subcultures d'adolescents canadiens. Les données sont composées de transcriptions d'entrevues non-structurées avec des membres de la subculture ainsi que de notes prises sur place pendant la période d'observation. Les théories fonctionaliste et néo-marxiste de subculture servirent de guide à l'enquête. Les résultats révélèrent que la subculture punk est une forme de la culture de la jeunesse délinquante qui est "sans classe". Les membres réagissaient aux influences d'âge at de génération sur les chances d'emplois de jeunes. Ils manifestèrent des niveaux variables de résistance à l'école, à la famille et aux buts de la culture dominante. L'intensité de la résistance était reliée au sexe. Les attitudes politiques furent caractérisées par conscience "libertaire" qui avait pour résultat d'atténuer la résistance politique. Sans pouvoir aborder leurs problèmes de chômage, de pauvreté, ou de l'aliénation de l'ouvrage, ces jeunes ont été capable de réaliser un statut en participant à la subculture et à la violence.

Research in the area of adolescent subcultures in Canada has been sparse. In one of the few discussions of the topic, Brake (1985) argues that Canadian youth subcultures have been overlooked because they do not take on the "dramatic, socially visible form" of the subcultures found in Britain and the United States (Brake, 1985: 152). He also observes that Canada lacks the class divisions that are linked to subcultures in those countries.[1] Moreover, the absence of a unique Canadian culture has led to derivative youth culture in Canada.[2] Yet both Brake (1985) and Shragge (1982) predict that relatively high youth unemployment and increased competition for jobs may lead to an increase in delinquent resistance. In short, high youth unemployment may lead to the development of a "significant" youth culture in Canada. More generally, McLaren (1980) points to the increasing similarities between the conditions in the large Canadian cities and their counterparts in the United States and Britain which will carry over into Canadian youth culture as problems of poverty and unemployment become more difficult.

In light of the literature above, certain questions arise concerning the punk subculture that emerged in Canada during the recent recession. It may be the classless derivative form of youth culture found in past studies, or the punks may represent the significant delinquent response predicted by McLaren (1980), Shragge (1982) and Brake (1985). Given the lack of Canadian literature on subcultural formations in Canada, it will be useful to review the theories that have been used to account for this phenomenon in the United States and Britain. The resulting insights will guide our analysis of the Canadian punk subculture.

Theoretical perspectives on youth subcultures

Subcultural theory has its basis in American functionalist sociology, which assumes the existence of a dominant ideology that stresses the achievement of mainly financial goals (A. Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). While these goals are seen to transcend class lines, functionalist theorists point out that those in the lower class are at a disadvantage. Their class location restricts their access to the means needed to achieve success. For lower-class youths, this first becomes apparent in the school system. Inadequately socialized

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1. The apparent classlessness of popular culture in Canada has been noted for quite some time (Alford, 1963; Porter, 1965). Recent discussions, more informed by survey data, continue to confirm this impression (see especially Goyder and Pineo, 1979). Data from the most recent national election survey in 1984 continue to confirm this trend (Lambert et al., 1986). In that survey, less than half the respondents responded that they were even aware of being a member of a social class. Furthermore, most of these people did not understand the word "class" in the sense the word is typically used by intellectuals. Other discussions of such issues in the Canadian case include Forcese (1980), Hunter (1986), and Curtis et al. (1988).
2. Brake suggests that the vast geographical area of the country inhibits the development of common, yet distinct themes that would allow for the indigenous forms of youth subculture. Since there is no local tradition of resistance, Canadian youth culture has little oppositional force.

to compete with middle-class youths, the lower-class child cannot meet the criteria for status in the school. Youths who fail to secure an education are likely to realize that chances of success in the social system are limited. Functionalist theorists believe that actors in this position evolve adaptations that will enable them to overcome the goal-means discrepancy. Youth subcultures represent the rebellion adaptation as the frustration over restricted opportunities leads lower-class youths to reject cultural goals and the legitimate means to achieve them. The cultural goals are replaced with those that can be more readily achieved. Subcultural formation takes place when there are a number of youths with similar problems of adjustment. The subculture addresses these problems of adjustment more effectively than any solutions offered by institutional means. It provides an environment where status can be achieved and, furthermore, through the development of group norms and boundaries supports the decision to reject the dominant ideology (A. Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960).

Miller (1958) has argued that this theory underestimates the connection between working-class culture and the subculture. He suggests that subcultural values are extensions of working-class culture. Matza and Sykes (1961), on the other hand, argue that the theory fails to recognize the continuities between working-class culture and the dominant culture. They suggest that the delinquent values of the subculture are shared with those of the dominant culture.

From these arguments British scholars began to reformulate subcultural theory in an attempt to explain British youth subcultures. Although British researchers felt American subcultural theory to be culturally specific (Downes, 1966; Brake, 1980, 1985; S. Cohen, 1980; Muncie, 1981; Downes and Rock, 1982), the lack of a British tradition led them to draw from American literature (Frith, 1985; Mungham and Pearson, 1976). The American literature demonstrated the need to study the effects of working-class culture, the dominant culture, and class inequalities in structuring the social situation of youths and their response to it (Mungham and Pearson, 1976). What the British theorists added was a Marxist argument.

Neo-Marxists emphasize culture, ideology, and hegemony. Culture is usually defined as the distinct patterns of life developed by social groups, the way in which these groups give expressive form to their "social and material life experiences" (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Brake 1980, 1985). Neo-Marxists reason that people are born into sets of meanings, institutions, and relations, which help to locate them in a culture. These structures and meanings tend to reflect the positions and interests of the most powerful class, which supports a dominant ideology. The dominant class attempts to exert authority over other groups through the organization of rules and meanings. When an alliance of groups can exert "total authority" over a group, it is referred to as hegemony (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). In some measure the subordinate classes resist and struggle against hegemony, thus "negotiating" a redefinition of cultural meanings.

According to Marxist researchers like Brake, Hall, Hebdige, Jefferson and Muncie, youth subcultures are an example of this negotiation and redefinition process as they engage in a "struggle over cultural space" (Brake, 1985: 4). Within subcultures the structural contradictions rooted in the wider societal context can be overcome. Thus, youth subcultures take problems that exist in their parent class and attempt to come to terms with them through redefinition of their own experience (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981).

In the school and the family youths resist the class-based ideological codes legitimizing subordinate/superordinate roles. The subculture becomes a positive reference group providing symbolic and social support that allows for the formulation of a counter-ideology (Frith 1978a, 1983; Brake, 1980, 1985; Leonard, 1985). Further evidence of resistance is found in the subcultural style (the appearance composed of costume, hairstyle, jewellery and other artifacts), and the way it is constructed and defined by members (Hall et al., 1976; Hall, 1980; Hebdige, 1979; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981; Streeter, 1984; Gottdeiner, 1985; Ramirez, 1986).

This form of resistance has inherent limitations because it takes place on the street, not in the institutions where change can be made. Therefore, youth subcultures can be said to offer only symbolic representations and critiques of structural contradictions. Members use the subculture as a vehicle to escape class and occupation in a symbolic manner. British theorists have chosen to refer to these symbolic solutions as "magical" (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). Furthermore, the oppositional nature of the subculture is diluted and neutralized by the media and the popular culture industries (Hall et al. 1976; Hebdige, 1979; S. Cohen, 1980; Munice, 1981).[3] However, neutralizing effects are never totally pervasive because many of the subcultural activities (eg., crime) are not commercially exploited but are dealt with by the police and the courts. Thus, deviance in this case is the "essence of political protest" (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1979; S. Cohen, 1980; Muncie, 1981).

Subcultural theories have tended to focus on males. Theorists argue that masculinity has a central focus in subcultures and can be seen as a solution to problems rooted in "structural features." The absence of females in subcultural studies reflects their relationship to production, a sphere where young women are also assumed to be peripheral (McRobbie et al., 1976; Brake, 1980, 1985).[4] Furthermore, the distinctive types of activities that females engage in, and their greater parental supervision, limits subcultural participation. When females do participate, their relations to the dominant order are reproduced. Within the

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3. This work, which draws on American labelling theory (Becker, 1963), also emphasizes that labelling can amplify deviance (see esp. S. Cohen, 1980).
4. This peripheral relationship to production can be explained by the stress placed on maleness and careerism. Benston (1982) argues that there are "strong and clearly articulated norms for men and women that are very different."

subculture they are still influenced by the ideology of male supremacy. Brake argues that this occurs because "working class girls are not exposed to any alternative concepts of femininity" (Brake, 1985: 174). For females the subculture is more likely to have a social focus. The subculture is something to dress for and which enables an escape from home, school, and work (McRobbie et al., 1976; Frith, 1978a, 1983; Brake, 1980, 1985).

The literature on the punk subculture is dominated by the above neo-Marxist position but contains little empirical research. There are differing views concerning the class content, the political significance, and the style of the subculture. Some scholars argue that the subculture was dominated by working-class youth (Hebdige, 1979; Marsh, 1977). Others believe that the subculture contains several strata including middle-class artists (Dancis, 1977; Frith, 1978a, 1978b, 1983; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981; Rothaus, 1984). Politically, these theorists argue that punk music, with its social and political comment raises the political consciousness of those involved in the subculture. However, the punk movement may have only succeeded at a symbolic or "magical" level (Hebdige, 1979). The form it took (unintelligible) may have doomed it to failure (Marsh, 1977), while its lack of political impact may be due to the middle-class involvement and libertarianism (Dancis, 1977; Frith, 1978a, 1978b, 1983; Brake, 1985). Some argue that the style of the subculture reflected its "working-classness" (Hebdige, 1979: 63), others argue it was an assertion of their bohemian lifestyle (Dancis, 1977; Frith, 1978a, 1978b, 1983; Hebdige, 1979; Muncie, 1981; Brake, 1985; Rothaus, 1984). Some suggest that the style reflected members' conditions and attitudes, amplifying everything feared in society (Hebdige, 1979; Muncie, 1981; Levine et al., 1983; Laing, 1985).

The above theoretical discussion offers useful analytic concepts that, in a manner reminiscent of the method adopted by British researchers in developing their theory, will be used to guide this study. Consistent with this approach, both the functionalist and neo-Marxist perspectives will be drawn from. This will help to shed light on one Canadian adolescent subculture.

Method

To make sense of the punk rock subculture, I adopted a participant observation approach to gathering data. This method, which has a distinguished history, (Whyte, 1943; Liebow, 1967; Humphreys, 1975) has been used in other youth culture studies in Britain with great success (Hall et al., 1976; Corrigan, 1979; S. Cohen, 1980; Willis, 1981).

An initial scouting of downtown Victoria (a mid-sized city on Canada's Pacific coast; population 250,000) preceded entry. It revealed that the downtown core was divided up into various subcultural territories. The present study began when I approached a group of punks on the street corner of the city well known to be punk "turf" (and, as I was later to find out, "skinhead" turf).[5] I introduced myself and explained the nature of the research to the group. No attempt was

made to mislead the prospective subjects. I explained that participation in the interviews was voluntary, and stressed that they could withdraw from the interview at any time or refuse to answer any questions. It was explained that the interviews were to be recorded with a microcassette recorder. I also explained that, due to ethical restrictions, I was not interested in any illegal activities. This assurance seemed to put members at ease and resulted in interviews being granted. Consent statements were repeated before each interview. I was permitted to spend time with the group and soon its members came to expect my presence at certain times.

Completed interviews were selectively transcribed within a twenty-four-hour period to ensure against ethical problems. To preserve anonymity subjects were given pseudonyms and identifying information was left out. A total of sixty days were spent in the field interviewing subjects. Time in the field ranged from five to fifteen hours a day, depending on the type of activity. I maintained subsequent contact by returning to the field one day a week for an additional two months, after which contact was then limited to attending the local punk "gigs" (concerts).

In addition to the "punks" street corner turf, data collection took place inside of a restaurant about two blocks away and about four blocks away in front of a fast-food restaurant which was also a gathering place for "skaters."[6] All three of the locations were on the periphery of a fourth subcultural group in the downtown core; the "rockers."[7]

The data were gathered through a combination of unstructured interviews with all thirty-five members of the subculture and field notes kept on members' activities, interactions, and physical appearance. Members were questioned concerning issues of theoretical interest; specifically, goals, school, family, political attitudes, style, music, and status. I also explored unanticipated topics that emerged during field work. There was no consistent sequence of questions in the interviews; I often had to adapt to the flow of the conversation by taking the liberty to explore other facets that the subjects seemed to believe were important. All the interviews were useable, although some subjects chose not to respond to specific questions and occasionally I was unable to ask certain questions.

The strong rapport I developed with members far in advance of an interview facilitated data collection. However, interviewing street youth can be difficult. Subjects usually carried on their daily activities during interviews, resulting in

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5. The "skinheads" or "skins" are stylistically a copy of those in Britain. They wore "Doc Marten" work boots, rolled up jeans, suspenders, and flight jackets. Their heads were shaved and most had an array of tattoos.
6. The "skaters" wore long shorts (with long-johns underneath in the winter), high-top runners, wore their hair short with long bangs, and rode or carried skateboards wherever they were.
7. The "rockers" could be identified by their long hair, black t-shirts (emblazoned with pictures of their favorite bands), jeans, and black leather jackets.

interruptions from other members and panhandling. Subjects sometimes broke off the interview to pursue more exciting activities with other subculture members. The rapport I developed also hampered research in the last phases of the study. I was now considered a member of the subculture and my questions were dissonant with everyday subcultural activities. I therefore resorted to asking a member one or two questions during informal conversation and recording the responses at the earliest opportunity, a method that also provided a reliability check of the members' previous responses. The appearance that I had adopted for the field (long unkempt hair, black leather jacket, torn jeans, work shirts, T-shirts, and high-top runners) also created problems when local police officers assumed I was a member of the subculture. Fortunately, no complications occurred.

Consistent with the "grounded theory" approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), data analysis took place through the development of typologies that were divided by gender and social class. The results of this analysis follow a logical sequence: factors relating to entry, subcultural resistance, and apparent resolution of problems leading to entry. First I examine the variables identified above as theoretically relevant to subcultural participation: members' goals, attitudes towards school, and attitudes towards their family. The paper then explores three methods of resistance outlined in previous literature; political, stylistic, and creative. The last section of the paper investigates how the subculture enables members to achieve status in subcultural terms and overcome their problems of adjustment.

Findings
Background
The subculture contained thirty-five members at the time of the field study (twenty-one males, fourteen females) who ranged in age from fourteen to twenty-nine,[8] with a mean and median age of seventeen. Length of participation in the subculture ranged from four weeks to five years, with a mean of approximately two years.

Members' class of origin was determined through questions concerning

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8. The visibilty of the subculture far outweighs the number of members. It has been the focus of attention from a number of different groups. The subculture is a favorite topic of the local press who have given it coverage since its beginnings in 1981. Since then the local media image of the subculture has evolved from being portrayed as harmless, to being depicted as a group that is disturbing the public because of the unconventional lifestyle they have adopted. Merchants have complained that the congregation of the group and its members' behaviors (spitting, swearing, panhandling) frighten potential shoppers. Some members of the public have expressed similar views. Lastly, the subculture has drawn the attention of a number of groups expressing concern about the increasing number of youths living on the street (*Monday*, Vol.6 no.4, Vol.8 no.51, Vol.9 no.34, Vol.10 no.5, Vol.12 no.7, Vol.12 no.43, Vol.12 no.44, Vol.12 no.49, Vol.13 no.18, Vol.13 no.19, Vol.13 no.21; The *Victoria Downtowner*, Aug. 1985; *Times Colonist*, 30 Jan 1986; 24 Sept 1986;1 Oct. 1986).

parental occupations. I resorted to a simple blue-collar/white-collar dichotomy since the subjects did not have extensive knowledge of what their parents' occupations actually entailed. By these criteria, there were eighteen members from blue-collar backgrounds (eleven males, seven females) and fifteen members from white-collar backgrounds (eight males, seven females). Two members withheld this information. Thus, contrary to theoretical predictions, almost half of the members came from white-collar backgrounds. The types of occupations cited by those from white-collar backgrounds included four university professors, two top-level bureaucrats, two chartered accountants, a head of a large food firm, a shopping mall manager, a university instructor (without a PhD.), a school principal, and three owners of small businesses. In contrast, parental occupations reported by members from blue-collar backgrounds included mechanics (both car and boat), boat painter, dock worker, cement truck driver, policeman, two career soldiers, labourers, bartender, etc.

Table 1. Class of origin by sex.

Sex	Blue Collar	White Collar	Unknown	Total
Male	11	8	2	21
Female	7	7	0	14
Total	18	15	2	35

The majority of the members, however, had established independence from their parents. That is, only twelve members of the subculture resided in their parents' homes. Fourteen members of the subculture rented their own residences. Three of these were supported by their parents, three others supported themselves through low-wage employment and seven members relied on the state for support. One member who rented her own residence would not disclose how she supported herself. Nine members of the subculture lived on the street, did not work, and relied on various methods of survival including illegal activities.[9] The street experience was quite common. Nine of the thirteen members who were renting their own apartments had lived on the street, including four who moved off the street during the field study. Three others living at home at that time had also lived on the street previously. This brings the total to twenty-one members who had at some point in time lived on the street.[10]

Seventeen of the twenty-three members who did not live at home were males, as well the majority of those who had, or were presently, living on the street. In addition, those who received state support were male. In contrast, eight of the

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9. Members for the most part relied on panhandling to gain funds for food. However, they also begged for food and stole food. Other methods of gaining funds included scamming, theft, and "rolling" (mugging) people. When all else failed, they went to the soup kitchens.

10. Members for the most part squatted in small groups. Favorite targets were those buildings which were uninhabited or abandoned. Buildings under construction also provided shelter. Other shelter was to be found in parkades, in outdoor storage areas, in stairwells, and under stairs.

twelve members that lived "at home" were female. In sum, the subculture is male dominated both in terms of numbers and severity of resistance. That is, they adopt the full code of behaviors of the subcultural lifestyle.

These results also indicate that it is not only working-class youth who participate in youth subcultures. This contradicts the expectations of both the functionalist and neo-Marxist theories, but supports some of the British literature on punk subculture (Dancis, 1977; Frith, 1978a, 1978b, 1983; Muncie, 1981; Brake, 1985; Rothaus, 1985). Perhaps Brake's (1985) suggestion that the punk subculture is the sort of classless form of youth culture that one would expect in Canada is the more accurate interpretation of my findings. There is a diversity in socioeconomic backgrounds as opposed to a homogenity in socioeconomic status. However, the marginal class location adopted by members was not anticipated in previous literature. Therefore, the diversity of the members' class origins may not be a result of Canadian "classless" youth culture, but may be a result of the social problems of youth which cut across socioeconomic strata. Members may be rejecting dominant values and norms and as a result adopting a marginal socioeconomic position. On the other hand, membership pressures members to reject dominant norms and material comforts and adopt very poor socioeconomic conditions.

Goals

Both American and British theorists have focused on the manner in which youth react to dominant goals. Functionalists suggest that lower-class youth who experience frustration when the means to attain goals are blocked will dismiss dominant goals and replace them with goals that can be met through subcultural participation (A. Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957; Cloward et al., 1960). Neo-Marxists argue that working-class youths negotiate cultural space by refusing to adopt dominant cultural goals. These youths enter the subculture to attain status via subcultural criteria and escape their class and occupation symbolically (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). To examine this issue, respondents were questioned about occupational goals and about the perceptions of their future. Their answers were readily classified in terms of the classic typology of conformist, rebel/retreatist, ritualist, and innovator.

About one-third of the respondents could be placed within the "conformist" type. They had goals of attaining positions where there would be some legitimate monetary rewards (n=12). Typical examples of a conformist orientation are the following responses:

Go to Toronto to get a job. A friend of mine I was talking to a couple of nights ago and there's lots of money, a lot of money. Anything I can get right now and maybe save up for college or something.
Get a job, make lots of money, drive a Porsche, snort lots of Cocaine.

Some of these members planned to obtain post-secondary education, believing that education was a route that would enable them to reach these occupational

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goals. Their responses demonstrate the internalization of the dominant ideology described by functionalist theorists.

Their present school circumstances provide evidence that their expectations may be unrealistic. Half of the "conformists" attended non-diploma granting alternative schools, while the others did not attend school. Both of these situations would seem to disqualify members from attending postsecondary institutions and thus as Downes (1966) suggests, the most obvious means to reach their goals. This discrepancy between expectation and reality may reflect or cause their frustration leading to subcultural participation. However, contrary to theoretical predictions, these youth have not discarded their cultural goals upon subcultural entry.

Neither class of origin nor present class location was systematically related to the responses of those placed into the "conformist" type. Five members were from blue-collar backgrounds, seven from white-collar backgrounds. Their present class location spanned the spectrum from residing in white-collar homes to living on the street. Similarly, the sexes were equally represented in the "conformist" membership.

The second major type of response, "rebel/retreatist," revealed that an equal proportion of the subculture members, mainly male, were negative about their futures and lacked long-term occupational goals (n=12). Some reported that they were not interested in succeeding. Two members saw themselves as permanent street people. Others described an apocalyptic future. This group have no real cultural goals and no faith in institutional means to attain them. Within the subculture, there is social support for their attitudes and they are able to attain status via alternative subcultural criteria.

Nine of the twelve in this category were in marginal socioeconomic circum- stances; only three individuals attended school and resided in their parents' homes. The following are examples of responses made by those placed into this type:

I'm downwardly mobile and proud of it. Like I don't know about the way my parents live. Like get a job, work nine to five, do it for thirty odd years, then get shipped off to some lousy pension. I couldn't handle that. Like my dad worked thirty years to get a pension. You might as well live on welfare.

Panhandling for the dog, scamming a little bit here, scamming a little bit there. It's a living.

Generally I don't like to think about it. You walk down the street and you see old men crashed out and you just hope that's not you in a few years.

Few respondents could be placed into the "innovator" (n=2) or the "ritualist" (n=2) adaptations. The ritualists held down low-wage employment and did not desire advancement or felt it was unlikely. These members did not subscribe to the achievement ideology, but continued to work through institutional means. For example:

I've got a job. I make five bucks an hour. That's enough to live on. That's all I really need. I don't want an office job. So in ten years dying or doing the same thing I'm doing now.

The innovators saw difficulties with society's emphasis on education as the avenue to upward mobility. They held dominant goals but felt they could not achieve them through institutional means, as the following reveals:

Art if I could. It would take too many years of school but I like marine biology but I'm too lazy. Maybe I'll get my act together some day.

In sum, there is a diversity of future orientations among subculture members. Not all members wish to attain goals, but among those who do, there is evidence that class does not strongly influence the internalization of the success ideology. This applies not only to class of origin, but to present class circumstances as well. Furthermore, it appears that youths of all classes who experience goal blockage may seek a subcultural solution. There is also evidence that some members' expectations of achieving these goals are unrealistic due to their present class and educational circumstances. This discrepancy between reality and expectation may have led these members to seek a subcultural solution. If not, they may experience this strain in the future. These youths also continue to cling to the hopes of someday attaining goals. For them the subculture might be viewed as an avenue to temporary social and symbolic status with the realization that more permanent status through occupation must be gained as they pass into adulthood.

There is also evidence that a number of members (n=12) do not aspire to the success goals espoused in the dominant ideology or have become alienated from the dominant ideology and therefore reject conventional success goals. These members have adopted counter-norms of their own which lead to their marginal socioeconomic status. They use the subculture to negotiate cultural space within hegemony. The predominance of males in the "retreatist/rebel" category points to the gender differences cited by Benston (1982) concerning occupational success. For those males who perceive their opportunities blocked, the subculture may provide an alternative route to masculinity usually gained through occupation.

The above analysis reveals that members of the punk subculture are socially heterogenous, not homogenous. It is not only the "rebel" who inhabits the youth subculture. Rather, the subculture allows for a number of responses based on the diverse experiences, reactions, and goals of the members. This suggests different levels of resistance to the dominant order, something which theorists have failed to predict.

What the present study cannot tell us is whether individuals already exhibiting characteristics of these "types" are recruited into the subculture or if subcultural membership produces these orientations. Perhaps the process works in both directions depending on each particular case. Considering the number of adaptations I observed, there is room for all three causal interpretations.

School
The experience of youth in the school is cited by both the structural functionalist and neo-Marxist theorists as a contributing factor in the formation of adolescent

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subcultures. For functionalist theorists it is in school that youths recognize that the means to attain goals are blocked. Therefore, the opposition towards school demonstrates the strain deriving from ideological goals (A. Cohen 1955; Cloward et al. 1960). Alternatively, the neo-Marxists consider oppositional behavior as an attack on the dominant order and more specifically, resistance to the ideological nature of the school (Bowles et al., 1976; Hall et al., 1976; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981).

Only seven members of the subculture had school backgrounds that were not marked by expulsion, failure, or departure. Ten members had been expelled from school (eight males, two females), seventeen members had quit school (nine males, eight females) and one female member had failed. Usually expulsion resulted for disciplinary reasons, after a physical confrontation with a teacher or principal in three cases, rather than school performance. Class of origin was not a factor in predicting which members continued school. However, present class location was: during the course of the research, nineteen members of the subculture attended school (eight males, eleven females), most of whom lived with their parents or received parental support. In contrast, all sixteen of the nonstudents (thirteen males, three females) were in marginal socioeconomic locations.

Student members of the subculture were experiencing problems within the school system. Responses to questions concerning attitudes towards school were of three types. Some (n=12) believed the present curriculum was inadequate because it failed to provide them with job skills. Hence, school was seen as a waste of their time because it failed to provide anything marketable. This response was prominent among males, those with blue-collar backgrounds, those in present marginal economic circumstances, and among those who were not attending school. Typical responses included:

It teaches you to be an educated bum. Your chances are about 30 percent that you're just as much a bum now as you were then. No one needs school anyway. They just teach you how to read or write and if you want more you do more school.

I don't think there's enough kids interested in school. They don't offer what kids want. There is so many drop outs. There's nothing in school. . . . I know when I get out of school I won't have to know anything about dead pigs or anything like that. I don't understand why I have to learn it. The courses that they are coming out with now, like work experience courses are really good. You get work experience. They should offer more courses like that and maybe courses that allow kids to get into a field.

A smaller group (n=5) felt that the school system attempts to form their opinions and behaviors. These views were usually held in conjunction with the above criticisms regarding the school's curriculum. The members of this second group saw the education system as preparing them for low-wage menial employment. Again the respondents who fell into this type tended to be males from blue-collar backgrounds and in marginal present class locations. The following are examples of their responses:

I hated it. Teaching you useless stuff. It sucks. You really don't learn anything, all you learn is to follow orders. They don't teach you how to think and survive. They just try to mold you into their little working part of society.

Basically I think the school system is just to teach the kids how to be good followers. Like you're taught all the stuff you're learning is what other people have to say and repeating it back. You're not supposed to think, you're supposed to say yes ma'am, yes sir. The law has been decreed by their standards.

A third group expressed the view that their school education would aid them in gaining employment (n=10). Therefore, continued attendance was important. While members placed into this type did have criticisms of the school system, they realized that their chances of gaining employment without education were slim. It is interesting to note that of these ten, eight attended school and, moreover, that seven had quit or been expelled from school at some time. Even though they support education, these students did indeed experience difficulties in the school system. Class of origin and present class location was not related to responses. Again these data tend to show that the achievement ideology had been internalized by some respondents from all economic strata as the following reveal:

Well I don't like it but I put up with it. If I want to be intelligent I go to school. There's no such things as iron workers. There's computers and stuff and you got to use your brain. Well the way I see it if we didn't go to school, no one could read or write. Nobody would know how to read or write. You wouldn't know mathematics. We need mathematics now, or we will.

In general I think it sucks shit because in the regular school I can't stand to be told what to do six hours a day; told what to do every single minute of it. But it'll help you get a job because you'll know stuff. You'll be able to prove you can do it.

As with goals, our examination of members' views on education show differing levels of resistance to the dominant order. It appears to be an antischool culture with two sub-groups. The first consists of those who criticize the school system but view education as a means to gain employment and continue to strive for goals while participating in the subculture. A number of the members in this group had histories of school problems suggesting that they experienced blockage and sought a subcultural solution where they could meet the criteria for status. The second group consists of those who dismiss the utility of school and display resistance through absence and rebellious behavior. Education was resisted because it only qualified them for menial low-wage employment or was viewed as an ideological tool to shape their consciousness. Participation offers an alternative route to status defined in subcultural terms. The formation of rebellious attitudes may precede or follow the entrance of youths into the subculture; however, once youths are part of the subculture its counter-ideology encourages, reinforces, and supports resistance towards school.

The rebellion seems to be more prevalent among those from blue-collar backgrounds, marginal present class locations, and males. The result of this rebellion is often the adoption of a low socioeconomic position. Members live

on the streets or survive through state income assistance. They have no skills to gain employment other than the low-wage alienating type they abhor, thus their alternatives are restricted.

The school attendance of females is characterized by less resistance. By remaining in school, females increase their chances of gaining access to nontraditional male-dominated occupations. Those who drop out of school adopt a similar resistance to their male counterparts and may meet with the same results.

The family

The neo-Marxist perspective focuses on resistance towards the family as an integral part of subcultural participation. These theorists outline the way in which the family relays ideological codes. They predict that youth come to question these codes because the codes contradict their own experience outside of the family. The result is friction between youths and parents (Frith, 1978a, 1983; Brake, 1980, 1985; Leonard, 1984). While the functionalists point out that the family is an important component in passing on dominant norms and that members may not be close to the family, these issues are downplayed (A. Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957).

Members' experiences in the family setting can be usefully organized in terms of these three categories: nonfriction, friction, and violence. The nine members in the nonfriction type were able to discuss their problems and their subcultural membership with parents who were apparently understanding. That the majority in this category were from blue-collar backgrounds suggests that blue-collar parents may be more sympathetic to a youthful deviance. Six of the nine reporting good parental relationships were still residing in their parents' homes. The following comments are representative of the nonfriction type:

If I didn't want to live at home, they go well we'd rather you didn't (leave) but we're not going to let you starve to death or nothing, or so you have no money. So they half support me. Not enough to make me comfortable, but enough. They think right on . . . and I'm happy. For some people I know it's caused problems. Problems like you don't fit into society so you're screwed so go away. Like I know a lot of people have been kicked out of the house because they wouldn't conform to what their parents wanted.

I get along with her quite well. I still do. It's not like some of these people, "oh my fuckin' parents kicked me out."

For the sixteen members in the "friction" category, relationships were characterized by "conflict" — i.e., parents questioning members about school work attitudes, friends, involvement in illegal activities, style, as well as other behaviors. These conflicts, in many cases, drove group members out of their parents' residences and onto the streets. Perhaps an indicator of the seriousness of the friction is that ten of the sixteen did not live at home. As two explained:

I just couldn't handle living with them. They're hard to live with. Bugging me about coming in late, about the way I look, 'get your hair cut, change your clothes.' Ragging at me because I don't get A's.

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I just didn't want to live with them any more. They were trying to lay down too many rules I thought were just bullshit. So I left.

The "violence" category contained seven males whose parents resorted to violence as a means of punishment or discipline. The incidence of violence may, however, be greater than these data indicate. Some of those reporting "friction" may have been involved in violence and not reported it.[11] Six of these members no longer lived in their parent's homes because of the violence. There was no clear trend in class backgrounds. Typical responses included the following:

Like you get busted and your dad is sitting there. You don't get charged or nothing, you just get tossed around the police station a bit. Then get belted around for humiliating your father. Other than that he was o.k..

My dad once hit me, broke my nose, and I fell into the closet and broke the door. So he beats me up for breaking the door and getting blood on the carpet. Once he beat me and took me to the hospital and told them I fell down the stairs. Meanwhile there's like knuckle prints on my face. He used to tell me never to hit girls, so when he'd get mad at my mom he'd hit me. Oh oh, dad's mad at mom better leave. So one night I locked myself in my room, came out at night with a baseball bat, beat him, stole his wallet and ran away.

Friction may arise from the youth's disagreement with parental views. As neo-Marxist theorists suggest, the youth questions these views because they contradict his/her experience (Frith 1978a, 1983; Brake, 1980, 1985; Leonard, 1985). These sources involve qualities that functionalist theorists describe as essential for success and in some cases reflecting success. Parents who have assimilated the dominant ideology and have spent time passing it on to their children react strongly to their children's disregard for these values and ideas. They view their appearance, types of friends, school grades, leisure pursuits, and illegal activities as preventing them from "getting ahead." My findings on goals and school show that a number of members are resisting dominant views concerning those two issues. The result of this friction is that many children feel they have no alternative but to leave home.

A number of the points of friction concern, as neo-Marxists believe, the subordinate position of an adolescent in the family (Frith, 1978a, 1983; Brake, 1980, 1985; Leonard, 1984). Adolescents challenge parental authority in an attempt to assert their own identity and in the process produce friction. This friction may be a factor in entering the subculture. Alternatively, subcultural participation may itself be a source of friction. The subculture provides an environment in which the youth does have status. Furthermore, it allows members to develop, assert and test their own identities.

Members may be encouraged to leave home by other subcultural members or

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11. When questions concerning the family were posed to members, many reacted with a sense of uneasiness. A number were reluctant to talk about their family problems. The members relayed information in short, sometimes hostile answers. Some of the information was gathered through conversations between members rather than actual interviews. Therefore, it is believed that a number of members withheld the information for various reasons.

their leaving home may result in participation in the subculture. The twenty-three members who did not live with their parents tended to adopt a marginal socioeconomic status. This marginal existence may be seen as a conscious attempt to retreat and resist. For some, especially males involved in violence at home, there was little choice. This is further evidence of the male domination of the subculture. They engage in the most extreme resistance and enter the subculture because it offers them an environment to discuss problems and a route to status via alternative criteria defined by members. The street is viable because of the knowledge gained vicariously through the experiences of subculture members.

In contrast, while females did experience friction within the family they did not adopt, for the most part, the street option. The subculture did not provide support for females living on the street. The males in the subculture may discourage this option, or make it difficult. Another possible reason that females may engage in a less severe resistance is their use of the subculture as a social vehicle. As a result they may be less likely to be expelled from parents' homes.

There is less resistance among those members living at home, with half of this group experiencing friction with their parents. Those members who did have good relationships with their parents generally had their parents' support and understanding.

Political attitudes

The literature suggests that youths encountering problems (be they in the school, family, or social structure) may enter a subculture to address these problems (Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Hall et al., 1976; Brake 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). The evidence presented above is consistent with this view: young people were drawn into the punk subculture because of their attitudes and experience in the school and the family. In a number of cases these youth were resisting the ideological nature of these institutions, which raises the neo-Marxist point that subcultures may also contain the potential for political resistance (Hall et al., 1976; Brake 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981; Frith, 1985).

Indeed, the political element of the punk subculture has been debated in the literature. Some researchers argue that, on the one hand, punk serves to raise the consciousness of its members, but on the other hand, that the political element of punk fails to confront the individual problems of its members (Marsh 1977; Frith 1978a, 1978b, 1983; Muncie 1981; Brake 1985; Laing 1985). Questions concerning the members' political attitudes revealed that the "political element" of the subculture was not pervasive. Only some members voiced political opinions and beliefs, but even then not in great detail. At a mimimum, the members were very critical of the present federal and provincial governments, but most were unable to articulate their reasons. An explanation for this type of criticism may lie in the limited political knowledge of these youth. The trend appears to be for them to use their available knowledge, based in everyday

experience, to form criticisms against targets they believe to be the source of their problems. Hence their responses fail to address the complexity of the problems.

Anti-government attitudes tended to vary, judging from responses to an open-ended question. Opinions were often contradictory, suggesting a fragmentary social consciousness. Political issues mentioned included anarchy, anti-statism, nationalism, endorsement of reform parties, socialism, bureaucracy, and mis-management of the economy. Fourteen of the twenty-two members who gave this "critical" type of response were living on their own. Fifteen of the twenty-two were males, again pointing to the male domination of the subculture. Typical comments from members included:

Politically I'm an anarchist because I believe that the government that governs the best, doesn't govern at all. Socialism is a good idea but you have to go through a dictatorship of the proletarian. You get that and the group in power aren't going to give that up. Like look at Russia. Its been 70 odd years. I mean I'm sure capitalism has been abolished in Russia by now.

I hate the Canadian politics. They are wimps. They suck Reagan's dick. Vander Zalm would too if he thought he could get two by four's out of it. And Reagan is a senile retardo. I think the Canadian government is an embarrassment. They do whatever the Americans tell them to do. The things they do are ridiculous.

Generally, little sympathy was expressed for politicians and the tasks they faced. However, three members felt that others should not be so quick to judge politicians because the job was difficult:

I think its hard for any politician to do a good job no matter what country unless they're really savvy and there's not many normal people out there like that so there's not much hope.

A number of the members were politically apathetic (n=10). They took no interest in political affairs, although it later became apparent that some of these respondents expressed opinions during informal discussions. These members who mainly were in a marginal class location, did not want to involve themselves in politics, perhaps feeling that there was little they could do to foster change. Their experiences at home and school may have taught them that resisting authority is futile. In any case, they made no attempt to change anything:

I really don't get involved in politics. I try to stay away from it. I figure if you get tied into it . . . I don't like to preach to people.

I don't know. It doesn't matter. I don't pay much attention, I haven't got a t.v.

In short, there is no coherent ideology in the punk subculture that would facilitate organized political resistance. Rather political opinions are diverse. The subculture seems to encourage members to be critical of governments, as well as to formulate their own criticisms of which may be influenced by their own backgrounds, experiences, and depth of knowledge. Furthermore, those views expressed rest on a limited knowledge and the criticisms do not provide possible avenues for solution. Thus, political resistance by the subculture is muted. The inability of members to act upon their critiques may reflect their exclusion from, alienation from, and lack of participation in, the major institutions through which political mobilization and change can take place.

If anything, punk ideology is libertarian. The types of resistance engaged in reflect this libertarianism. The members are into "doing their own thing" which means no restrictions. Those most critical withdraw from the institutions that attempt to restrict behavior and attitudes, especially the family and school. There is also an avoidance of and cynicism towards other state institutions that members encounter (eg., the police, various government ministries).

The degree of depth and sophistication of the responses to my question on politics seemed to correlate negatively with socioeconomic status: those less well off were more expressive. Perhaps they have more to criticize because of personal experience. Alternatively, their resistance may have led to their current circumstances. Those members who expressed "apathetic" responses were also socioeconomically disadvantaged, although this attitude may result from the realization that change is futile. Those members whose responses were not as strong were economically dependent on their parents and thus had not experienced conditions which had led other members to develop political critiques or apathy.

These results help explain the lack of politicization among punks. The significant degree of middle-class participation and libertarian politics are cited by Brake (1985) as possible reasons for this disappointment. This explanation may also apply to the subculture under study. It may be that the classless ideology of Canada encourages all members to adopt a "middle class" resistance. Marchak (1975) notes that "radicals" in a liberal society tend to become more liberal — i.e., libertarian or anarchist. This aptly characterizes the members' responses documented above. Subcultural resistance is further limited by a fragmented political consciousness. However, while members are not part of a struggle for power, their resistance in the home and school indicates their dissatisfaction with the dominant order and desire to negotiate more space in it. This negotiation allows members to leave behind their problems but not eliminate them. Thus subcultural membership is a symbolic "magical" solution (Hall et. al., 1976; Hebdige, 1978; Brake 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). For a small number of adolescents the punk subculture allows them to temporarily escape concerns about their future adult roles.

Subcultural "style"
Neo-Marxists suggest that adolescent subcultures demonstrate their resistance to the dominant order through style or physical appearance. Accordingly, style allows members to "display" their opposition in "visual" terms for the general public to witness (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). My respondents felt that their style was an individual creation, a representation of their feelings and attitudes. There was no admission of imitation.

These punks were very serious about the lifestyle they adopted. Style was not something to be embraced and discarded at certain times of the day, but

represented an extension of the member. It became clear from the observation of members discussing new objects of style they would like to obtain and the excitement members displayed as they showed off new objects, that considerable thought was put into the constructing of style. For example:

It's the only fucking thing that I can identify with. I fucking hate people. I don't like people so I segregate myself as much as I can. The only way I feel comfortable about myself is the way that I dress. If I dressed like a preppie I'd feel like a goof because I wouldn't be dressing the way that I believe.

The most creative and intellectual people I've found, and artsy people, are the people that dress differently. Like it reflects their personality. . . . I've found there's more expression in the friends I've chosen around here.

These responses reflect the libertarian "do your own thing"outlook noted above regarding political attitudes. This sense of individuality discourages any group action. However, by refusing to dress in a certain manner, members criticized the dominant order. Punk style is the antithesis of "dressing for success." In fact, their style disqualifies them from even the low wage, menial labour for which most are qualified. They refuse to fulfill the requirements of conventional society. In doing so they resist the dominant order, but in a way that does not depend upon collective solidarity.

The homologous nature of the subculture discussed by neo-Marxists also reflects resistance. "Homology" refers to the adoption of objects that correspond, reflect, or "possess" the values of the members (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1978; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). The members were very conscious of style as a kind of self-representation, particularly as expression of attitudes and feelings regarding school, the family, and politics. Clear evidence of this is found in the slogans that the members decorated their clothes with, the rips and tears that depicted the poverty that many members were experiencing, the dark colors and work shirts that displayed their despair. "Bricolage" was also seen to be taking place. Bricolage refers to the transference of meaning that must occur before an object can be assimilated into the style (Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1978; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). Members took objects available in mainstream culture and altered their definitions to suit subcultural style. For example, male members took jean jackets and tore and decorated them with slogans. This process altered the definition of the jacket as a mere clothing item sold for profit to a personal expression of attitudes that at the same time represented the poverty and violence of the subculture. However, the style could only offer symbolic resistance to the dominant order and, further offered no solutions to the problems which members encountered outside the subculture. Like the subcultural participation itself, the solution was, as British theorists argue, "magical." That is, punk style allowed members to escape their structural locations for a period, but offered no real solution to structural problems.

The importance of style to members was revealed through their descriptions of subcultural change. Members characterized the subculture as becoming

"trendy" through the fashion industry. However, when questioned if they were "trendy," the response was always negative. There was much criticism from members about "outsiders," referred to as "poseurs," who had adopted the punk style. Poseurs were criticized for adopting the punk style without adopting the accompanying attitudes and lifestyle. The poseurs were seen as adopting the style for reasons of social status rather than commitment to being a "real" punk:

The poseurs and stuff like that kind of bother me. They go yeah, like I'm a punk rocker, go home to mommy and daddy and have dinner, come downtown, change my clothes and be a punk rocker until 9:30 until I have to catch my bus right. I don't know, they miss the whole point of what it's supposed to be.

Then there's the people out here on the street who sit around today, with a haircare. They're there for attention. Oh that's real cool man. They cause shit for everyone else . . . I mean nobody knows them . . . on the whole they don't have any idea what they're doing.

Poseurs embody the sanitization and attempted neutralization of the subculture through popular culture (see Muncie, 1981; Gottdeiner, 1985; Ramirez, 1986). The products enable youth to adopt the style without actually participating in the subcultural lifestyle. The sanitized style leads them to be labelled poseurs, to be denied membership and to be made targets for abuse. Thus, the potential dilution of punk by popular culture industries is resisted by subculture members.

A central aspect of the punk style is punk music. Lyrically, punk rock or "hard core" describes the problems and expresses the anger of youth while at the same time offering a critique of the dominant order. The music itself appears to represent the anger and frustration of its listeners. Neo-Marxists point to punk music as an important element in raising the political consciousness of youth (Marsh, 1977; Frith, 1978a, 1978b, 1983; Dancis, 1978; Levine and Stumpf, 1983; Laing, 1985). Members of the local subculture also listen to speed metal (sometimes referred to as thrash or speed core) and death rock. The former can be described as a hybrid between punk and heavy metal. Like punk it is loud and fast, although it dwells on satanic themes as well as social issues. These themes, as with those in punk, can be seen as an attempt to offend, shock, and attack the mainstream. Death rock, sometimes called funeral music, is slower and dwells on more melancholy themes. Every member of the subculture responded that they had a great interest in music. They also felt that music was a central aspect of the subculture. The following are examples of members' responses:

Well it's really powerful and straight forward. It's got something to say, most of it. I mean if it doesn't have something to say then it's humourous or stupid. I'm pissed off everyone listens to hardcore now. They don't know what its about.

I like hard core a lot . . . I don't like idiotic stuff though, like Venom and stuff. I like lyrics that actually say something and music that makes you want to beat up somebody.

The responses indicate that the music was homologous with members' attitudes. However, given the previous discussion of political views, the channelling of dissent through music may be able to raise or reflect political consciousness, but cannot precipitate political action.

Also part of subcultural style is a creative element. Most members were involved in some sort of creative activity, such as music, art, poetry, and short stories. Members developed individuality and expressed feelings through this nonalienating creativity. Creative expression was also another form of resistance, allowing members to display their displeasure with the dominant order. Again this mode of resistance is individualized and libertarian, each member tackles his/her experience his/her own way, and thus does not encourage collective politics. This results in a muted resistance expressed almost exclusively to other members:

I think a lot of it comes out more. I figure a lot of the people that hang out here have problems in their life or you know. Or they feel they have problems and it's a way of getting rid of them or explaining them by drawing or writing music or whatever.

They have an outlet I can relate to. I may not be able to do it, like art, but I can relate to it because its an outlet of what someone is trying to say and that's why people are so tight. We do have a family because everyone is showing what they're feeling inside by their art work or their music or whatever, right.

On the face of it, these "creative" aspects would seem to support the notion that the punk phenomenon is partly "bohemian" in nature as has been suggested by some British researchers. Frith (1978a, 1978b, 1983) argues that punk is the first post-WW II working-class bohemianism. Brake (1985) and Muncie (1981) argue that part of the punk subculture is made up of middle-class art students. These students' leisure is lower class (the leisure of the streets), not their class location. For Brake this artist membership explains the presence of a libertarian resistance. He argues that a cultural rebellion by artists cannot be seen as political because artists have always been considered rebellious. Furthermore, artists are seldom organized and are libertarian rather than socialist or communist (Dancis, 1977; Frith, 1978a, 1978b, 1983; Brake, 1985).

Certainly the members of the local subculture display a libertarian resistance. However, the delinquent behaviors of some members (including theft, scams, violent crimes, and violence against other subcultures) makes the bohemian label inappropriate. The fact that for many of the members, the street is, or has been, their home again suggests that the bohemian interpretation is flawed.

Since punk appears to contain both delinquent and bohemian elements, it seems more accurate to interpret it as a hybrid of "bohemian youth culture" and "delinquent youth culture." Scholars have tended to make clear distinctions between these two types of culture. "Delinquent youth culture" focuses on leisure because the members are marginal to the labour market (Young 1971: 144). "Bohemian youth culture" is focused on leisure because its members reject the labour market (Young, 1971: 147). Certainly the members of the punk subculture refuse the opportunities available, but many have restricted opportunities. Further, those members whose opportunities do not appear restricted in real terms have adopted delinquent patterns in their resistance that go well beyond "artistic" rebellion. In sum, although members resort to a libertarian

resistance, and display this resistance through creative means, the delinquent aspects point to a cross between delinquent and bohemian cultures.

Alternative status
I have demonstrated that the members' problems, objectively rooted at a macro level, cannot be solved because of subculture's individual, often idiosyncratic, methods of resistance. The problems are addressed only at the "magical" level. That is, members do not attempt to address their problems in a manner in which change could be fostered but rather through symbolic resistance. However, the importance of status through membership, and the support for resistance within the subculture cannot be underestimated.

Both the functionalist and neo-Marxist theorists believe that the counter-norms developed in subcultures, and the criteria for status that emerge from these, enable members to gain a positive self-image (A. Cohen, 1955; Cloward et al. 1960; Hall et al., 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981). My findings show that the achievement of status and support for resistance occurs in a variety of ways. Members' attitudes towards other subcultural groups displayed their feelings of superiority, reflecting a positive collective sense of identity. Similarly, the selective initiation that the subculture used to control membership implied that membership was something to be achieved. Not everyone could be a punk. The members also believed that participation was personally beneficial because other members understood their problems. This support allowed members to develop and test identities without fear of rejection, in the process providing them with status via membership. It allowed members to reject the dominant ideology and formulate their own counter-ideology at a personal level.

This is further reinforced by discussions among members about daily survival. The problems that tend to be dealt with inside of the subculture are those concerned with school, relationships with parents and others, housing, and financing. Members could count on others for shelter and money. They realized that it was easier to live in groups than to survive alone. It was not uncommon for those members who received money to use it to feed others. When members moved into residences of their own, this usually meant a number of guests (members) sleeping on their floor when other places to sleep could not be found. The members also provided physical protection for each other.

Participation in violence (and the threat of it) was also a source of status, strengthening members' allegiance for the subculture. It made being a punk even more prestigous and added another requirement for membership. Further, fighting may be seen as a display of masculinity in the male-dominated subculture. Violence may confer status on members that they cannot get through occupational success (A. Cohen, 1955; Cloward et al., 1960; Hall et al., 1976; Brake, 1980, 1985; Muncie, 1981).

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Discussion

The results of this study provide insights into neglected aspects of Canadian adolescent subcultures. As some scholars have speculated, the Canadian punk subculture appears to be a "classless" form of youth subculture. However, it is also a significant delinquent youth culture. Some observers have speculated that Canadian youth subcultures would develop this tendency as economic conditions worsened. While British Columbia has suffered through a severe recession, Frith (1985) argues that youth unemployment cannot be understood only in economic terms. Frith suggests that youth unemployment is an age or generational problem. He notes that employers do not want young workers because they lack the personal qualities (responsibility, self discipline, flexibility, and punctuality) that adult workers have learned through experience. The result is that there is a growing differentiation between adult and young workers. Youths become a cheap labour source with low status. Data on work opportunities in Canada indicate that youths are heavily concentrated in low wage, service sector job ghettos (Myles et al., 1988). Furthermore, the wages for workers aged 15-24 decreased during the recession and the period of recovery. This occurred across industrial sectors, occupational groups, regions, and levels of education (Myles et al., 1988). This age and generational effect of youth employment opportunities provides some explanation for the classless delinquent youth culture that we have studied. It is youths who do not have the experience for better jobs and who do not wish to take the low status, low wage employment that participate in the punk subculture.

These youths are reacting to their structural location based on age and generation. Their attitudes reflect "levels of resistance" to the dominant order. Some members are totally committed to a lifestyle of resistance. They are alienated from dominant goals, rebel at home and school, and live on the streets engaging in illegal activities to survive. At the other end of the spectrum are those who display resistance in only one of these areas, (eg., school) or whose resistance is muted (eg., live at home).

While the members share common problems that emanate from their location in the labour market, the manner in which they carry out resistance provides few prospects for change. The style of the subculture only displays members' dissatisfaction with their position. The "libertarian consciousness" that fuels resistance is self-muting. Furthermore, the members do not participate in political institutions where change can be fostered. What the subculture does offer is an environment where youths experiencing similar problems can interact. The subculture offers them status where school and employment does not. It allows them to escape their low status location for a period of time in what neo-Marxist theorists have termed a "magical" manner.

Subcultural resistance is not without consequences. For many members it means the adoption of marginal socioeconomic locations. Members were forced into squatting, scamming, rolling (i.e., mugging), panhandling, and violence.

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The harshness of these consequences demonstrate the depth of commitment to the subculture. It also brings to light problems associated with high levels of youth unemployment.

Males tend to adopt the more severe forms of resistance. They have little work experience and few skills, and face a labour market where there is a declining demand for manual labour. At the same time, they do not desire the employment that is available since the pay is poor, provides little status, and is alienating. For the male, the subculture is an alternative source of status. The others share his problems and by dismissing the dominant ideology he can attain status via subcultural criteria.

Female participation was less severe perhaps because the service sector areas where they are most likely to be employed are still in need of cheap labour. Furthermore, they are still likely to be subject to parental supervision and view the subculture as a social vehicle.

This paper shows that historical conditions have produced significant delin-quent subcultures in Canada. However, the membership in these subcultures is still relatively small in comparison to the number of youths who are exposed to the same problems. If the trend in youth unemployment continues, one would expect that the number of youths participating in delinquent subcultures would increase. Not only should there be more youths who exhibit the severe forms of resistance but an even greater number who exhibit the less extreme forms. However, it is likely that even when conditions worsen, the majority of youth will not enter a delinquent subculture. What may begin to happen is that the young might start to reinterpret their situation. As Frith (1985) notes, one effect of unemployment is that more people than ever are returning to school. This "student" experience allows for the possibility of organization. The alternative to the delinquent subculture may be groups of youths organizing themselves in political interest groups. It may be in this manner that youth realize the political potential that the new subcultural theorists had predicted for delinquent youth subcultures.

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