

Blitzkrieg Pop: A study into the evolution of society's perception of punk culture

BLITZKRIEG POP

**A STUDY INTO THE EVOLUTION OF
SOCIETY'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE
PUNK CULTURE**

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Introduction

This project is a study of the evolution of society's perceptions of the punk culture and the mainstream impact on the subculture as it is seemingly becoming absorbed into the mainstream culture. As a fan of punk music, I have witnessed fans of mainstream music aligning themselves with the seemingly "indie" label of punk, wearing Ramones t-shirts merely because their teen pop idols wore them and proclaiming that they themselves were "punk rock". I hypothesise that because society's social and political views have gradually become more liberal, they will reflect the values of the punk culture, therefore rendering the subculture irrelevant and forcing it to either succumb to the transition into the mainstream, or redefine itself as an alternative culture. Thus, perceptions of what it is to be punk will change and no longer reflect the subculture's status as a counterculture in the 1970s.

To explore my hypothesis, I have chosen to undertake three primary methodologies: questionnaires, content analysis, and a case study. To ensure that this study is comprehensive, I have made sure that my research focuses on both those of the punk culture and those not. My questionnaire was devised to obtain an insight into the perspective of modern day teenagers who had little to no interaction with the punk culture, with most of the respondents falling under the category of mainstream society and so allowing me to gain an understanding of their perspective on the punk culture. In order to research the punk culture today, I decided on content analysis of magazines and zines, the latter being smaller versions of the former which were a well-known platform for the punk culture during its beginnings. It was also interesting to find out that some of these early publications now had official websites, in the vein of more modern magazines, and so I included these websites into my research as well. For comparison, I used the modern, alternative music magazine *Blunt* and zine, *Punk*. This methodology allowed me to study the values and aesthetics of the culture, both early and modern punk culture, and assisted me in understanding the representation of punk in today's society.

I also carried out a case study into *5 Seconds of Summer*, an Australia band who have been rejected by most people in the punk culture. My in-depth study focused on their reception from the general public, including the punk sphere. This present-day case

allowed me to actively witness their involvement with the punk culture and success in the mainstream as they brought 'punk' to the radio. None of these methodologies posed any immediate ethical concerns that I needed to address.

This investigation has allowed me to broaden my knowledge of the punk culture and, by extension, pop culture, the nature of countercultures and their relationship with society. To a smaller extent, my research has also displayed how the progression of secularism in society has played a major role in the degenerating of the punk culture.