GRUPĖS IR APLINKOS

Tarpdisciplininis mokslo darbų leidinys

GROUPS AND ENVIRONMENTS

Interdisciplinary Research Studies

2

GRUPĖS IR APLINKOS

Tarpdisciplininis mokslo darbų leidinys

GROUPS AND ENVIRONMENTS

Interdisciplinary Research Studies

2

Society and Lifestyles: Towards Enhancing Social Harmonisation
through Knowledge of Subcultural Communities (SAL)
Academic Reports

CONTENTS / TURINYS

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick

Elena OMEL'CHENKO
Elvira SHARIFULLINA
Scientific Research Centre Region

Neo-Pagan Youth Groups in Saint Petersburg Russia

Abstract

Literature to date on the neo-Pagan movement in Russia has focused on understanding the movement as a form of "escape" and evaluating the relative "harm" posed to individuals and society by such organisations. This research focused on the everyday manifestation and reproduction of Slavic neo-Pagan groups in St. Petersburg. The research suggested that, as the Slavic neo-Pagan movement struggled to establish an agreed set of principles and practices, disagreements focused on the relative weight of its ideological and cultural components and that particular communities of neo-Pagans had become organised around their position in relation to these discourses.

Keywords: xenophobia, drug use, youth, subculture, neo-Paganism

Introduction

Current academic literature on the question of Paganism might be broadly defined as adopting one of two approaches. The first envisages Paganism as one tendency within a wider sphere of New religious movements by which it is meant that such religious or spiritual groups have emerged relatively recently or have not been recognised publicly as distinct denominations, churches or religions (Barker, 1997). The second approach interprets Paganism as a branch of the New-Age movement, where New-Age is understood as a particular constellation of various occult groups which emerged as a movement for the revival of spirituality, esoteric traditions and the revision of established views. Paganism, from this viewpoint, is characterised by syncretism and the belief in the unity of science, mysticism and religion (Kanterov, 2006). Common to both these approaches is the understanding of the attraction of Paganism as lying in the desire to escape the reality of the everyday contemporary world. Much of this literature consists of descriptions regarding reasons for such an "escape", various Pagan groups themselves, the form and depth of the "escape"

into groups, the relative potential harm to society such movements present and the acceptability of individual choices to join such groups.

In contrast to this emerging body of literature, the research conducted for SAL moved away from the centrality of the notion of "escape" to consider the mechanisms of the reproduction of the logic concerning the everyday lives of people identifying themselves as Pagans. This shift of focus allowed researchers to explore new questions in the field such as how and why particular elements of traditional and sacred knowledge (be they practices or speech forms) become normatively accepted while others are rendered unacceptable. The understanding of neo-Paganism adopted for this research was that it constitutes a form of polytheism by which, in part, various kinds of historical, traditional and cultural forms (knowledge, perceptions, practices, bodily forms) and images of the sacred are learned, re-thought, given new meaning and reproduced.

Methods

One six-week period of fieldwork was conducted in Spring 2008. Access to the group was gained through existing contacts in St. Petersburg and contacts provided by scene members in other cities. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, a survey of the media coverage and self-presentation of the groups (especially via the Internet) was conducted. This also facilitated initial contacts – for example in the case of the neo-Pagan case study – through chat forums. In all cases, snowballing was used to generate new respondents from contacts provided by key informants. The main methodological techniques employed for gathering data for these case studies were:

- web-site analysis
- ethnographic observation
- recorded interviews with respondents
- researcher diaries
- visual mappings of urban space used by the groups emploing still and video photography.

A total of 14 interviews and one fieldwork diary were analysed in this case study.

Results

Group-society relations

In Russian society, neo-Paganism is a marginal discourse in relation to monotheism. This is manifested in the fact that the Russian Orthodox Church treats neo-Pagans even more negatively than it does members of religious sects. Informants reported that they often concealed their views for fear of evoking a negative reaction, being ridiculed or simply not being understood appropriately. The prefix "neo" is thus adopted in this research to describe members of neo-Pagan communities in order to indicate linguistically the significance of the discursive construction of the movement in contemporary Russia. Talking about the direct reproduction of Paganism (in contrast to other contemporary religions like Judaism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Lamaism, Sintoism or Brahmanism) in contemporary Russia is impossible due to the dominant culture of monotheism whose hegemony is underpinned by the maintenance of a particular understanding and structuring of traditional and sacred knowledge.

Intra-group relations

Although neo-Paganism is very internally diverse, this research focused, from the outset, on Slavic neo-Pagans (see Gaidukov, n.d.). Thus the research related to Slavic and Scandinavian forms of neo-Paganism as well as to followers of Wicca.[1] This focus facilitated the understanding of how the different meanings attached to neo-Paganism had engendered a discursive confrontation over the establishment of the principles of normative neo-Paganism both in general as well as within particular branches of it (Slavic, Scandinavian and Wicca).

The analysis of Slavic neo-Pagan websites conducted for this research[2] suggests that Slavic neo-Paganism falls into two broad categories. The first – the cultural branch of the movement – is oriented towards the history of the Slavs of Ancient Rus', their culture, daily life, traditions and the reconstruction of Pagan rituals and holidays. The second group of websites, in addition to containing information on the history and rituals of neo-Paganism, also carry literature of a nationalist, revisionist and racially-oriented kind. This was particularly evident from the exploration of linked sites which almost always contained not only neo-Pagan references but also fascist and nationalist materials. Thus organisations and communities whose leaders and representatives openly demonstrated nationalist views were considered to constitute a second, ideological branch of Slavic neo-Paganism.

The results of the analysis of the informational space of Slavic neo-Paganism were confirmed by interviews with neo-Pagans and discussions within their groups.

---

[1] Wicca is derived from the "synthesis of eastern magical rituals and a series of books on European witchcraft. … At the heart of Wicca ethics is the principle, 'Do what you want as long as it harms no-one'. …The movement consists of small groups (covens) who gather twice per month (at new moon and half way through the lunar cycle). They also celebrate a series of ancient Celtic festivals (Halloween, Beltane etc.)" (Falikhov, 1999, p. 104).

[2] A total of 38 neo-Pagan sites were studied prior to commencing the fieldwork.

This suggested that, as the Slavic neo-Pagan movement struggled to establish an agreed set of principles and practices, disagreement focused around the relative weight of its ideological and cultural components. At the current point in time, it is the ideological branch of Slavic neo-Paganism which dominates. This is evident from the representation of neo-Paganism in the public sphere (media, Internet) and specifically its dominance in claims on the "true" understanding of historical, cultural and sacred knowledge.

On the level of everyday practice, this discursive struggle was an important element in the positioning of individual subjects within the group as this respondent makes clear:

> **Respondent:** Religion – as a way of life – was what interested me. I was more oriented towards the spiritual aspect. I bought the relevant literature and read it. I found people of a like mind to talk to via the Internet – met with them once or twice. We discussed common interests and after some time – 2 or 3 months – we set up our society, completely separate from politics, from everything. We discuss only issues relating to traditions. Not a whiff of nationalism. Far from it.
> **Interviewer:** Do you mean in your group or more generally?
> **Respondent:** We never cooperate with organisations which politicise it all – but there are many of those kinds of organisations, even in Petersburg. So we make a clear distinction. So that's how we formed basically – we determined our ideas and principles and the frameworks within which we wanted to work, made sure we were clear about them. In particular we don't want anything to do with politics and what I mentioned. That's it basically. The main members are all right here in front of you – bar five or six people who can't make it every day. (M., Scandinavian Pagan)

Thus the rupture between the ideological and cultural discourses of neo-Paganism means that particular communities of neo-Pagans become organised around their position in relation to these discourses.

Conclusions

At its current stage of development, Slavic neo-Paganism in St. Petersburg falls into two broad categories – a cultural branch of the movement oriented towards the history of the Slavs of Ancient Rus', their culture, daily life, traditions and the reconstruction of Pagan rituals and holidays and an ideological branch which propagates nationalist, revisionist and racially-oriented worldviews. This division is central to the self-identification of individual neo-Pagans and neo-Pagan groups and prevents any agreed set of principles and practices for the movement being established. It also makes the movement vulnerable to criticism from within the dominant culture.

Policy recommendations

There are several factors which differentiate neo-Pagan companies. The first are role games, reconstructionism. The second are different types of mystical practices, symbols and rhetoric. Among outside influences, the important one is the influence of the symbolic and historical heritage of the city. From the historical point of view, there is a wide field for role and reconstructionist movements. Images of St. Petersburg as a living entity are widespread in literature, and this fact shapes the mystical practices, symbols and rhetoric of the company's members.

There are two key places for the spatial localisation of a company – the *kapishche* (place for rituals and worships) in the city and temporary, tented stands organised for different events. Both can be replaced territorially but remain as important places. In both cases, the symbolic core of these places is the opportunity to communicate and exchange information, experiences and knowledge.

Private space is not only place of residence for the company's members but also the webpage on the site, vkontakte.ru. Everyone has more than 30 friends there. That means the numbers of friends are growing, especially after events.

Companies arise around the most active and experienced participants. A factor defining leadership is the so-called "uncivilised", meaning the rejection of norms and ethic rules of the wider society. The second key factor is the level of spiritual development or deepness of world understanding on positions of existing cult forms or on an individually-developed worldview.

Males are quite masculine. Females are defined according to their attractiveness. If a person is subscribed in the category of beauty, that person gets the most attention. A person gets the most protection if that person belongs to the group.

Young women are quite a specific combination of features. From one side, they are very independent. From another side, they become very feminine when taking on an old-fashioned role. But they still remain active.

From the point of role gamers and reconstructivists, a man is warrior, and a woman is a girlfriend of a warrior. The active position is ascribed to the warrior. From a mystical view, both a man and a woman are strong. Gender doesn't restrict the ability to understand life.

A unifying factor in the company is the reading of fantasy and historical literature. Alcohol is widespread in the company but it is not abused; many smoke.

In the context of tolerance towards various forms of difference in the youth sphere, it is important to note that neo-Paganism is considered by the authorities not as a subcultural identity but as a non-normative religious practice. Moreover practising neo-Paganism is not only labelled non-normative, but concrete actions are taken to destroy the places in which representatives of neo-Pagan communities

gather. Specifically, in the city of St. Petersburg, a temple (where people meet and pray) was cleared of sacred monuments (idols):

> Respondent: I remember it really well although I don't remember who did it. [They said] we cannot allow hostility between religions so, in place of this foul Pagan temple, we are going to construct a sacred Orthodox church. This will make sure there is no hostility. This, they said, is what we will build.
> Interviewer: And had this temple always been there?
> Respondent: How do you mean, 'always'? At first it was the Triglav, the Triglav Temple – [Triglav is] another of the deities, one of the gods of war really, of the military gods, Pagan ones. That's how it was. They were building a temple, some Tajiks came as construction workers, and the cops rounded up the Tajiks … and took them away on the orders of Mrs. Markova, or maybe not Markova. I don't remember; probably it was Mrs Markova. (M., neo-Pagan, 29-year old)

The official reasons given by the authorities for pulling down the temple and removing property registered as belonging to a voluntary organisation from the square were twofold:

1. The neo-Pagans had seized the land without permission.
2. The rituals conducted at the temple had raised questions; information had been received that they bore a nationalistic and extremist character.

The temple was transferred by the priest (*zhrets*) and Pagan followers to another place not far from the original one and it is now operational there. In this sense, the measures taken had no lasting effect. Moreover, it is important not to forget that Slavic Pagan communities are characterised by Russophile and xenophobic sentiments. In this particular case, this is evident from the fact that the leader of the Slavic Pagan community has xenophobic views and accepts skinheads into Paganism. This can be seen as providing support to the nationalistic skinhead movement. However, it would be a mistake to think that the eradication of places of meeting and prayer by the authorities will change this situation. On the basis of the research conducted, we can state that it would be more effective to offer discursive and socio-cultural support to groups and individuals who interpret and engage with Slavic Paganism such as:

1. A form of spiritual development

> Respondent: So it is all connected to the forest, to natural forces. The forests generally are really … the cult of trees is particularly well-developed. Of course then it all got tied up with power and so on. … But at the start, it was like that.
> Interviewer: And what is it for you?
> Respondent: For me it is inspiration. … I was at art school and, at some point, someone told me that there was a Celtic Festival called The May Tree in Vyborg. When you get to this May Tree, it turns out they have everything there. There's Ancient Rome and everything you could want. Teutonic knights in armour. And the only thing left of the Celts is the May Tree ritual and the ribbons. So not much really. But even so, it's like a core around which

this can grow. I really believe in natural forces. This is something really significant for me. [M., neo-Pagan, 29-year old]

2. The reconstruction of historic or ancient practices

There are individuals who come consciously. … Those who want to learn the culture join the folklorists. In the folk music clubs, the girls [learn] dancing and singing. And when we get together and get going, it's marvellous. They have their songs, and we have our games. They celebrate *Kupala* [summer solstice] beautifully – it's such a great event. (M., neo-Pagan, 30-year old)

In this vein, it is important to give those interested the opportunity to work in local history museums so that their practices and methods become not only an individual hobby but an important socio-cultural activity. Of course one problem here is that the subcultural status of neo-Pagans means that they often prefer their own spaces and places and try to avoid incorporation into existing cultural institutions. This might be addressed by seeking to create places where they can realise their interest in the past in new ways. Indeed there is some indication that the development of new forms and spaces for expression might meet approval from below. For example, currently, participation in large scale fight reconstructions is being challenged within the movement as a result of a number of serious injuries.

> Respondent: … Two people ended up disabled after just 15 minutes of fighting, not even 15. But that's exceptional. Usually you get away with just broken bones and bruises. Getting the edge of a shield in your face is pretty normal. I have had teeth knocked out three times. And that happened last time even though at last I had a concealed mask on.
> Interviewer: What is a concealed mask?
> Respondent: Well you see Russian helmets are mainly not European. I mean they are not like [European ones]. The European type is a like a pot with slits for the eyes, whereas a Russian helmet is open. This is because the Russians usually fought with peoples from the Steppe. We fought Europeans less. When you fight with people from the Steppe, you need to see into the distance, the Steppe. If you are wearing a tin can like that, then you can't see anything; you have no peripheral vision. You'd be killed three times over before you located anybody. So for that reason, the helmets were kept as simple as possible. And since we are into reconstruction and not fantasy, we make real helmets but try to sneak into there as much mask as possible to keep as many teeth as possible whole. It's expensive to replace teeth. I found that out for myself. (M., neo-Pagan, 30-year old)

This growing disaffection with fighting as the main group activity might be used as a starting point for switching the main activity to mastering the art of fighting, by replacing actual fighting with an effective demonstration of fighting instruments and skills.

References

Barker, E. (1997). *Novie religioznie dvizheniia: Prakticheskoe vvedenie*. St. Petersburg: Izdateľstvo Russkogo Hristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta. Trans. of *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (1989): London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Falikhov, B. (1999). Novie religioznie dvizheniia khristianskogo i nekhristianskogo proiskhozhdeniia. *Khristianstvo i drugie religii*. Moscow: Svjato-Filaretovskij Pravoslavno-Hristianskij Institut.

Kanterov, I. I. (2006). *Novie religioznie dvizheniia v Rossii*. Moscow: MGU im. M. V. Lomonosova.

Gaidukov, A. (n.d). Molodezhnaia subkuľtura slavianskogo neoiazychestva v Peterburge. Retrieved February 15, 2009, from http://subculture.narod.ru/texts/book2/gaidukov.htm

Elena OMEĽCHENKO
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: omelchenkoe@mail.ru

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: H.Pilkington@warwick.ac.uk

Elvira SHARIFULLINA
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: ellain@yandex.ru

Hilary PILKINGTON
Elena OMELČENKO
Elvira ŠARIFULINA

Neopagonių jaunimo grupės Rusijoje (Sankt Peterburge)

Santrauka

Mokslinė literatūra, analizuojanti neopagonių judėjimą Rusijoje, iki šiol daugiausia dėmesio skyrė judėjimo, kaip socialinio eskapizmo (angl. *escape*), analizei ir santykinės tokių judėjimų keliamos „žalos" asmenims ir visuomenei įvertinimui. Šis tyrimas susitelkia į kasdienę slavų neopagonių grupių saviraišką ir jų „reprodukciją" Sankt Peterburge. Atvejo studija atlikta remiantis stebėjimu, grupių svetainių analize, 14 giluminių interviu ir vienu tyrėjo dienoraščiu. Tyrėjai nustatė, kad Sankt Peterburgo slavų neopagonių judėjimas turi dvi šakas. Kultūrinė šio judėjimo šaka nukreipta į senosios Rusios slavų istoriją, jų kultūrą, kasdienybės papročius, tradicijas, ritualų rekonstrukciją; ideologinė šaka propaguoja nacionalizmą, rasistinius požiūrius. Šios skirtingos vertybės yra atskirų slavų pagonių grupių tapatybės formavimo pagrindas. Toks judėjimo pasidalijimas sąlygoja visuomenės kritiką, kelia grupių tarpusavio nesutarimus.

Tyrėjai pateikia rekomendacijas valdymo sferoje dirbantiems visuomenės veikėjams, kuriose atskleidžia pagrindinius grupės narių elgesio bruožus, jų interesus bei siūlo grupių narių socialinės integracijos galimybes.

Raktažodžiai: ksenofobija, narkotikų vartojimas, jaunimas, subkultūra, neopagonybė.

Radoslav HLÚŠEK
Ethnology and World Studies Department, University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Nám. J. Herdu 2, 91701 Trnava, Slovakia. E-mail: radohlusek@hotmail.com

Radoslav HLÚŠEK

Euroindėnai Slovakijoje

Santrauka

Slovakijoje euroindėnų judėjimas susikūrė 1920 m. Jis grindžiamas Šiaurės Amerikos čiabuvių, ypač gyvenusių kultūrinėje zonoje, vadinamoje „didžiosiomis lygumomis", kultūra. Klausimai, nagrinėjami ataskaitoje, yra susiję su jų gyvenimo būdu, pasaulėžiūra ir iš dalies religija. Ši SAL projekto dalis nagrinėja Slovakijos euroindėnų kilmę, vystymąsi, dabartinę padėtį, jų gyvenimo būdą ir santykius su gyventojų dauguma. Tyrimas tęsėsi dvejus metus (2006 ir 2007 metais), taikytas stebėjimo metodas dalyvaujant Slovakijos euroindėnų stovyklose, bendraujant individualiai. Surinkti 35 giluminiai interviu ir klausimynai. Slovakijos euroindėnų judėjimas nėra labai gausus, jie yra visiškai apolitiški ir nesiekia iškilti viešumon ar įsitraukti į visuomeninę veiklą, nekelia pastebimų socialinių įtampų. Vienas pagrindinių grupės tikslų yra gyventi sutariant su gamta, todėl šiam judėjimui labai svarbi ekologija. Judėjimo organizacija ir struktūra grindžiamos nepriklausomybe, kuri yra esminis Šiaurės Amerikos indėnų kultūros bruožas.

Raktažodžiai: euroindėnai, dvasingumas, Šiaurės Amerikos čiabuviai, gyvenimo būdas, „didžiosios lygumos", stovyklavimas.

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick

Elena OMEL'CHENKO
Anton POPOV
Scientific Research Centre Region

Xenophobic Youth Groups in Krasnodar/Sochi Russia: Cossacks

Abstract

This case study considered the role of xenophobia within Cossack movements in the Krasnodar region of Southern Russia. In contrast to existing literature which primarily considers the institutional dimension of Cossack organisations and their impact on the political scene, this research focused on issues of grassroots support of the Cossack movement, especially among young people in regional urban centres. The research revealed the importance of Cossack movements as both a space for youth activism as well as a "resource" – economic, cultural and institutional – that young people in the region could draw upon in negotiating their transitions to adulthood.

Keywords: Cossack, xenophobia, drug use, youth, subculture

Introduction

The main body of literature on contemporary Cossacks and Cossack ethno-cultural revival in the Russian Federation focuses on the institutional level of this movement and the role it plays on the political scene of post-Soviet, provincial Russia (Boeck, 1998; Derluguian, 1996; Laba, 1998; Markedonov, 2003; Tutsenko, 2001). The issue of Cossack identity construction has been investigated in the context of identity politics in the Russian regions as a response and challenge to policies of regional citizenship regimes under conditions of social, economic and political transformations (Derluguian & Cipko, 1997; Skinner, 1994; Toje, 2006).

The discussion and critical analysis of "Cossack renaissance" have brought to light growing nationalism and xenophobia among Cossacks as well as their paramilitary activities in local conflicts in the post-Soviet space and former Yugoslavia. Human rights activists routinely list in their publications the different Cossack hosts and unions among radical nationalist organisations (Verkhovskii, Mikhailova & Pribylovskii, 1999, pp. 18-49). Research has been especially concerned with violence

against ethnic minorities perpetrated by Cossack organisations in southern Russia (Osipov & Cherepova, 1996; Osipov, 1999; Verkhovskii, Mikhailova & Pribylovskii, 1999, p. 54).

At the same time, apologists of the Cossack ethno-cultural revival tend to concentrate on historical and ethnographic evidence of the particularity of the Cossacks as a distinct (sub) ethnic group drawing heavily in their analyses upon folklore data and historical documents (Matveev, 2000). In these publications, Cossacks are represented as a core and consolidating element in establishing a "single ethno-cultural space" (*edinnoe etnokul'turnoe prostranstvo*) on the territory of such historically Cossack regions as Krasnodar Krai (Bondar', 1998, p. 38; Matveev, 2002, p. 4; Rakachev & Rakacheva, 2003, p. 94). The Krasnodar Krai administration stimulated the development of the Cossack movement and was able to influence its internal processes by establishing contact with the leaders of the Cossack organisations and offering them financial and administrative-legislative assistance in exchange for the Cossacks' support of the regional political regime. As per the Krasnodar Krai regional regime's ideology, Cossacks are allocated a role similar to that of "titular nationality" in national/autonomous republics of the former Soviet Union.

However, neither critics nor apologists of Cossack revivalism raise issues of grassroots support of the Cossack movement or the motivations bringing "ordinary citizens" to these organisations, especially young people in regional urban centres among whom Cossacks recruit their new members. This research has thus added a significant new dimension to the scholarly field.

Methods

Two six-week periods of fieldwork were conducted in 2007 studying Cossack groups as per:

- Ethnographic observations
- Interviews with respondents [recorded]
- Diary-keeping
- Photos including giving cameras to respondents to take photos of the group themselves
- Video recordings
- Researcher reflections on fieldwork
- Walking tours of the city with respondents

A total of 26 interviews and three fieldwork diaries were transcribed and analysed using Nvivo7 software.

Results

Intra-group relations

The Cossack informants in this study were not a coherent and united group but a network of acquaintances and friends who shared an interest in the Cossack cultural/ ethnic revival. These networks brought together young people who participated in official ("registered") Cossack organisations and those who were members of informal clubs which were often critical towards Cossack officialdom. The research in Krasnodar Krai was focused on young Cossacks (15-30 years old) although it also involved some people of older generations who participated in Cossack organisations and historical reconstruction movements in the region together with younger informants (one of the key Cossack informants was in his fifties). The network character of the researched group led to the extension of the initial focus of the study of Cossack youth through the inclusion of a historical reconstruction movement in the thematic scope of the research since, in Krasnodar and Sochi (the two main sites of the research), there was evidence of growing mutual interest and collaboration between the Cossack revivalist movement and historical re-enactment clubs. Several of the key informants in both settings were members of "registered" Cossack organisations and engaged in activities of different re-enactment clubs which focused on the medieval history of the Russian and Steppes regions.

Group-society relations

Many people in Russia, and in the region (Krasnodar Krai) in particular, are very sceptical about the authenticity of contemporary Cossacks especially when these "Cossacks" – as in the case of the majority of informants in this case study – were actually young city dwellers. The word *riazhennii* (masquerading) was often used by people to refer to contemporary Cossacks implying that these were people donning attire which did not belong to them. People were especially outraged by the fact that many contemporary Cossacks wear Russian pre-revolutionary medals as part of their Cossack costume. Moreover, by calling a modern Cossack *riazhennii*, people inferred that this person did not adhere to what the dress he wore actually represented. In this second sense, the Cossack costume again had a strong association with the memory of old Cossack communities.

Our participants were aware of this contradiction between memories of the past and the current revival of the movement and were conscious of sceptical and ironic attitudes towards them from the majority of the population. Thus Danil' (born 1984), who worked in the Cossack ceremonial guard (*pochetnii karaul*) and wore a Cossack uniform at "work", told us that he would not go around in his Cossack attire when he was off duty because he would not be treated normally by other people, even his

friends. Those informants who showed their Cossack identity "externally" (through their hairstyle, moustache or uniform) almost always faced negative attitudes or misunderstanding from the "general public" as in the case of Georgii, who was a Ph.D. student at the Kuban State University and an active member of the Cossack movement from 2004:

> [People have ironic attitudes] Well, how can I put it, because they don't see any practical reason for this [Cossack identity]. Traditionalism, which I perhaps promote by my appearance, although I am not a good proponent [because] I don't persuade anybody – I just choose certain principles for myself. [For me traditionalism] is non-pragmatic. [They] don't understand. Well, [if they] don't understand, I don't seek to persuade anybody. I know what is meaningful for me and try to live accordingly. (Georgii, born 1982, Krasnodar)

Cossackdom as activism

The ethnographic data from the case study suggest that young Cossacks are, in general, receptive to the ethnicist interpretation of Cossack identity. However, by reproducing ethnicist discourse in their interviews, they assume their active roles in choosing to "revitalise" their Cossack "roots" in order to achieve something and, in this way, change themselves. Thus Andrei, who is seventeen and an active member of the official Cossack organisation in one of Krasnodar's suburbs, stated this point very clearly in his answer to my question about his motivations for joining the Cossacks:

> Why? Well, because I am in general an impulsive person; if I didn't make myself busy, without some kind of activity, I wouldn't be myself. I try to find myself in something, find something for myself, some activity. But generally, [my] kin (*rod*) is a Cossack one. [...] So, traditions need to be revitalised; the Kuban is, at the end of the day, a Cossack territory [with a] rich history. Well, what else, [there is a desire] to revitalise traditions and unwillingness to follow the mainstream of our youth. At least we are doing something; we have physical training and military training, other things. There are many opportunities other than sitting in courtyards drinking beer by the fence like the majority of young people. We are more united albeit at the micro level of our *stanitsa*. [I want] young people to stick together so that there is always somebody to support you in difficult times. (Andrei, born 1990, Krasnodar)

Some of our informants think it is worth revitalising Cossackdom only if it could have some function in contemporary society. Thus, one of our Sochi participants, Comandor, despite his Cossack origins, was hesitant about joining the local Cossack organisation where his friend and fellow historical reconstruction enthusiast was an active member. At the time of our interview he was very enthusiastic about the Sochi Cossacks' plan to organise a Cossack volunteer patrol unit (*kazach'ia druzhina*) because it served an important function in the maintenance of social order.

Enacting Cossack identity

Young people become Cossacks by acting as Cossacks including such bodily activities as martial arts, military training or mastering Cossack skills of horse riding and sword fencing. Even when young people talk about their Cossack heredity, they do not take their Cossack identity for granted but rather "do" it. Through their military and sporting activities in the Cossack organisations, they enact their Cossack identity:

> [My] great-grandfather... This is why I started to do fencing; he turned out to be very skilful with the sword. I even found proof of this. They lived then in the village (*stanitsa*) of Medvedovskaia. I asked relatives there, [they told me that] he apparently was very good at sword fencing. Therefore I decided to do [fencing]. (Sergei, born 1985, Krasnodar)

Cossackdom as a resource

Many informants spoke about their motivations for joining Cossack organisations as being a strategy for negotiating their conscription to the military service, since the military training of future conscripts was a key activity in many Cossack organisations in the region. Here the link between Cossack identity and territory was especially evident, since many young people believed that the Kuban University Cossack Host had an official agreement with the Ministry of Defence according to which conscripts from Cossack organisations would be sent to serve only in those military units which were based on the territory of Krasnodar Krai. In fact this was a myth; some Cossack organisations did have informal agreements with some regionally-based military units to which they might try to direct their young members but they were not able to provide any guarantee that a young soldier would not end up in a remote Siberian garrison. Nevertheless, young people found the military training provided by Cossacks free of charge a useful and valuable activity:

> ... I was studying in the vocational school when a head of staff from our *kuren'* (small Cossack organisation - AP) came and asked whether we wanted to join the official Cossacks. There they have sports trainings free of charge and other such things. And I went, [because I have] Cossack roots – my grandfather and great-grandfather were Cossacks. I went to the army, served for two years in the internal forces (police forces staffed by a conscript solders - AP). Of course [it helped me a lot] that we had military training before the army – we learned military marching and had tactics classes which were not bad. It helped later in the army. ... (Sergei, born 1985)

Conclusions

This research suggests that some young Cossacks are receptive to the ethnicist interpretation of Cossack identity. However, the reproduction of ethnicist discourse for its own sake was not appealing; rather young Cossacks saw the significance of the revival of Cossack "roots" in terms of the social role it could play especially, for example, though the role of Cossack organisations in maintaining social order. Members of some organisations also employed Cossack roots as a resource either in negotiating military conscription or through engagement in economic activities linked to the historical reconstruction movement. Thus young people's engagement with the Cossack revivalist movement should be understood first and foremost as a means of adopting an active social position and seeking control over their own lives rather than as a primarily ethnic movement.

References

Boeck, A. J. (1998). The Kuban Cossack Revival (1989-1993). The beginning of a Cossack national movement in the North Caucasus Region. *Nationalities Papers, 26* (4), 633 - 657.

Bondar', N. (1998). Sostav i spetsifika traditsionnoi kul'tury Kubani. *Problemy i Puti Razvitiia Narodnogo Khudozhestvennogo Tvorchestva Kubani. Kraevaia Nauchno-prakticheskaia Konferentsiia, Krasnodar, 9-10 Dekabria 1997 Goda. Tezisy Dokladov.* Krasnodar: Krasnodarskaia Akademia Kul'tury i Krasnodarskii Nauchno-Metodicheskii Tsentr, 37-38.

Derluguian, G. (1996). The neo-Cossacks of Kuban. Trajectory of a fundamentalist movement in a Russian province 1990-1995. *Advanced Study Centre 1995-1996, Ann Arbor: International Institute of Michigan Working Paper,* 23.

Derluguian, G., & Cipko, S. (1997). The politics of identity in a Russian borderland province: The Kuban neo-Cossack movement, 1989-1996. *Europe-Asia Studies, 49* (8), 1485-1500.

Laba, R. (1998). The Cossack Movement and the Russian State 1990-1996. In N. Kirei, N. Bondar', I. Kuznetsov, I Marchenko, & B. Vinogradov (Eds.), *Arkheologiya i etnografiya Severnogo Kavkaza. Sbornik nauchnikh trudov* (pp. 462-506). Krasnodar: Kuban State University.

Markedonov, S. (2003). Neokazachestvo na Yuge Rossii: Ideologiia, Tsenosti, Politicheskaia Praktika. *Central Asia and Caucasus, 5* (29), 161-174.

Matveev, O. (2002). *Etnicheskaia Migratsia na Kubani v Kontekste Regional'noi Bezopasnosti: Uroki Istorii i Sovremennosti,* Krasnodar: Kubanskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet.

Matveev, O. (2000). K Razrabotke kontseptsii Kazach'ego Obrazovania. *Pedagogika, 4,* 100-102.

Osipov, A. (1999). *Rossiiskii Opyt Etnicheskoi Diskriminatsii: Meskhetintsy v Krasnodarskom Krae.* Moskva: Pravozaschitnyi Centr "Memorial".

Osipov, A., & Cherepova, O. (1996). *Narushenie Prav Vynuzhdennyh Migrantov i Etnicheskaia Diskriminatsia v Krasnodarskom Krae (Polozhenie Meskhetinskih Turok).* Moskva: Pravozashchitnyi Centr "Memorial".

Rakachev, V., & Rakacheva, Y. (2003). *Krasnodarskii Krai: Etnosotsialnye i Etnodemograficheskie Protsessy (Vtoraia Polovina 1980-kh–Nachalo 2000-kh gg.).* Krasnodar: Kubanskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet.

Skinner, B. (1994). Identity formation in Russian Cossack revival. *Europe-Asia Studies, 46* (6), 1017-1037.

Toje, H. (2006). Cossack identity in the new Russia: Kuban Cossack revival and local politics. *Europe-Asia Studies, 58* (7), 1057-1077.

Tutsenko, N. (2001). Kazach'e Dvizhenie Kubani: na Puti k Grazhdanskomu Obshchestvu. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniia,* 2, 35-45.

Verkhovskii, A., Mikhailova, E., & Pribylovskii, V. (1999). *Politicheskaia ksenofobiia: radikal'nye gruppy, predstavleniia liderov, rol' tserkvi.* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo OOO 'Panorama'.

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: H.Pilkington@warwick.ac.uk

Elena OMEL'CHENKO
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: omelchenkoe@mail.ru

Anton POPOV
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: a.popov@warwick.ac.uk

Hilary PILKINGTON
Elena OMELČENKO
Anton POPOV

Ksenofobinės jaunimo grupės Krasnodaro regione, Sočyje (Rusijoje): kazokai

Santrauka

Šis tyrimas nagrinėja ksenofobijos reikšmę kazokų judėjimo dalyviams Krasnodaro regione, Pietų Rusijoje. Skirtingai negu dabartinėje mokslinėje literatūroje, kurioje daugiausia analizuojama kazokų organizacijų gausa ir jų įtaka politikai, šis darbas buvo sutelktas į problemas, kylančias dėl jaunimo susidomėjimo kazokų judėjimu pagrindiniuose regionų miestuose. Tyrimas pagrindė kazokų judėjimo svarbą jaunimui kaip veiklos erdvę bei ekonominius, kultūrinius, institucinius išteklius, kurie padeda jaunimui, artėjančiam prie pilnametystės, integruotis į socialines veiklas, spręsti užimtumo ir bendravimo problemas. Tyrimas pagrįstas integruoto 12-kos savaičių stebėjimo, atlikto 2007 m. Krasnodaro regione, ir 26 giluminių interviu duomenimis.

Raktažodžiai: kazokai, ksenofobija, narkotikų vartojimas, jaunimas, subkultūra.

Hilary **PILKINGTON**
University of Warwick

Elena **OMEL'CHENKO**
Yulia **ANDREEVA**
Scientific Research Centre Region

Anti-fa Youth Groups
in Saint Petersburg Russia

Abstract

The research enables a description of the (sub)cultural Anti-fa scene, an analysis of how participants enter and progress within the movement and the illumination of important aspects of interpersonal and group interactions. The research also reveals the emergence of new forms of Anti-fa solidarities and explains the meanings, logic and justification provided by members for radical Anti-fa actions. The further development of a youth Anti-fa movement is closely connected to the development of fascistic youth groups; it will continue to develop in parallel with them.

Keywords: Anti-fa, xenophobia, youth, subculture

Introduction

To date there is no academic literature on the Anti-fa movement in Russia; information in the public sphere is thus based on media reporting and commentaries in which the Anti-fascist movement is often portrayed as an extremist organisation. Sometimes the alternative media attempt to present the movement from within and outline a more or less "objective" interpretation of its members. Such attempts include an article in the newspaper, *Russkii Reporter* (see http://Anti-fa-news.ya.ru/replies.xml?item_no=46&ncrnd=2656) and a series of documentary television programmes. Nonetheless this material lacks any scientifically based conclusions regarding the spontaneous formation of youth Anti-fa groups.[1]

The Anti-fascist movement in Russia consists of informal youth groups calling themselves "Anti-fa" as well as organisations such as the Youth Human Rights Movement (abbreviated in Russia as MPD), the Network against Racism and

---

1 The first academic study of the anti-fascist movement in contemporary Russia has been completed recently by Mischa Gabowitsch (Princeton University) based on research in a number of Russian provincial cities. A book based on this research is in preparation but not yet published.

Intolerance and the international Memorial Society, which all share anti-fascist ideas. The findings of the research for this case study are based on extensive qualitative data including interviews with young participants in Anti-fa groups and field observations in St. Petersburg. The aim was not to map the whole anti-fascist movement in the city but to explore the specifics of youth protest as manifested by a particular network of anti-fascist activists. On the basis of the research for SAL, it has been possible to determine the political and cultural context and key characteristics in the development of the Anti-fa movement in St. Petersburg. The research facilitated the description of the (sub)cultural Anti-fa scene, an analysis of how participants enter and progress within the movement and the illumination of important aspects of interpersonal and group interactions. The research also reveals the emergence of new forms of Anti-fa solidarities and explains the meanings, logic and justification provided by members for radical Anti-fa actions.

Methods

One six-week period of fieldwork was conducted in Spring 2008. Access to the group was gained through existing contacts in St. Petersburg and contacts provided by scene members in other cities. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, a survey of the media coverage and self-presentation of the groups (especially via Internet) was conducted. This also facilitated initial contacts – for example, in the case of the neo-Pagan case study – through chat forums. In all cases, snowballing was used to generate new respondents from contacts provided by key informants. The main methodological techniques employed for gathering data for these case studies were:

- web-site analysis
- ethnographic observation
- recorded interviews with respondents
- researcher diaries
- visual mappings of urban space used by the groups using still and video photography

A total of 14 interviews and 1 fieldwork diary were analysed for this case study.

Results

Young people use a wide range of means to make public their Anti-fa identity. These actions include those with strong socially normative associations (e.g., provision of help to vulnerable groups and ecological protection) as well as more contentious actions such as pickets, direct action against ideological enemies and graffiti actions which are often interpreted as anti-social.

- The Internet is a very popular mode of activity as it provides the easiest way of opposing right-wing organisations; neo-fascist sites are hacked into and boneheads uncovered in forums and chats via provocative postings against fascists or, on the contrary, postings of a clearly fascist nature. The aim is to flush out Nazi-skins (either by penetrating the group or by challenging them to meet) and set them up for an Anti-fa attack.
- Also popular are Food Not Bombs actions as they are examples of direct action whose meaning is in the demonstration of the ineffectiveness of a state that prefers to spend money on arms rather than attending to social problems. Groups of young anti-fascists independently collect money to buy vegan foodstuffs and disposable crockery and utensils. Several people prepare the food at home and then take it to the place of the action – usually by train stations where the homeless often live. Leaflets are also handed out giving information about where the next action will be held.
- Graffiti actions usually consist of the painting over of fascist slogans and symbols in entrance ways, on walls and fences and along railway lines. Anti-fa symbols are also drawn, however, using their own, hand-made stencils or stencil templates found on the Internet. Graffiti actions are organised quite often as they are one of the simplest ways of getting involved in direct Anti-fa actions. Sticker actions take place in public places (metro, public transport) and have an informational character. The stickers can also be found in the Internet and virtually every Anti-fa activist has his/her own archive of sticker pictures and templates. In additional sticker pictures are drawn independently in the form of neo-Nazi caricatures. Sticker actions are undertaken by small groups of Anti-fa activists (3-4 people) who place the stickers on already existing advertising materials so as not to damage public transport carriages.
- Meetings and pickets are organised generally in squares or in places where large numbers of people gather. These meetings and pickets usually have an animalistic, ecological or anti-military character and some concrete event, incident or fact links them.
- Military actions are radical direct actions. The Anti-fa organises "patrols" that gather usually by the metro and follow the flows of people coming and going. Having picked out a bonehead or group of boneheads, they mount surprise attacks on them. Usually it is only Anti-fa skinheads and football hooligans who engage in these fights – ordinary young people are involved in such actions only in the role of scouts, looking out for victims or warning the Anti-fa of police presence.

Relations with law-enforcement organs are rather complicated and ambivalent. According to many informants, the Anti-fa is treated as a dangerous subculture,

and their appearance alone (baggy trousers, Anti-fa badges, rapper caps, yashmak scarves, nose piercings and such) is enough to get them stopped and their papers checked. Many key figures in the Anti-fa scene are convinced that many policemen are Nazi-skinhead sympathisers:

> … The police are cadets, and there is a section of cadets who fully approve of such things because after work they themselves mix with those people (Nazi-skinheads). Another section just don't want to create additional problems for themselves; it's easier to walk away, turn their backs, as they have done many times when I have been there. … (A., 22-year old)

In public discourse, the Anti-fa is almost always associated with acts of hooliganism. Informants stated that often no distinction was made between them and fascist youth groups:

> … In Petersburg there is a programme to promote tolerance and counter xenophobia and racism… Everyday tens of thousands of people see on the streets these posters like 'Petersburg – a city without racism' or 'the capital of the family of nations', but this doesn't concern anybody. But we were like doing a graffiti action… and it happened that in one archway I was writing, 'Skinheads against racism' in Russian, like, and this woman turns into the archway, about 40 years old, typical market dress, and starts squealing wildly at me that like I am worse than the skinheads, and I should get out of there before she called the police. So what can you do with these people? You could give these people 500 newspapers, 1000 leaflets, put the same speech on the television saying racism or fascism is bad 700 times – they wouldn't give a damn because they are only bothered about themselves. … (M., 21-year old)

Intragroup relations

The Anti-fa scene is extremely heterogeneous; people within it often have completely opposed political, subcultural, stylistic and other preferences and interests. It ranges from aggressive Anti-fa-crews to intellectual anarchists, from anti-military activists to aggressive hooligans. They range from 15 to 35 years of age and include those into music including punk rock, ska-punk and hard core. In terms of political preferences, the Anti-fa includes liberals, social democrats, communists, anarchists and even those who have no political conviction or consciously reject politics. All, however, are people who have a particular view of the world and who are, to some degree or other, ideologically grounded. Subculturally Anti-fa includes punks (anarcho-punks, "cultural" punks, Goth punks), skinheads ("Rash" [Red and anarchist] skins, Sharps [Skinheads against racial prejudice] and Trads [Traditional skinheads]), football hooligans, rappers and those who call themselves "civilians", i.e., ordinary people without any subcultural affiliation. In terms of lifestyles, among the Anti-fa one finds DIYers, straight-edgers and vegans.

Thus Anti-fascism is best understood as a set of ideas around which young people, often with relatively different views, unite at least temporarily:

> … Anti-fascism incorporates all kinds of different ideas, that is someone may be an anarchist, someone else a patriot, someone else a vegan… or vegetarian, someone else simply has musical interests, someone else is into communism or Trotskyism; there could even be Hare Krishnas. … (M., 21-year old)

For most youthful Anti-fa groups, the meaning of their activism is not only in wining space (real and virtual) but in active cultural opposition:

> … The rivalry between the Fa [fascists] and the Anti-fa is like the rivalry between two football teams. Whichever team wins over a certain period of time then that team will get more and more fans. … (M., 21-year old)

> Nobody came and said they would teach us how to be anti-fascists, nothing like that. It was just that mixing in punk rock circles led to us notice the behaviour of the extreme right at all kinds of concerts. It became clearer and clearer that those people were actively … damaging the punk movement, and nobody was doing anything. So we wanted to do something to stop these people being at the concerts, on the streets. … (M., 21-year old)

The question of the use of force remains the most contentious question in relations between the various strands of young people within Anti-fa groups. Justification for the use of violence towards Nazi-skinheads rests on arguments that "otherwise they don't understand" or as a counter demonstration of force:

> If we kick somebody, then, first of all, he will get back into the swing, to put it crudely, only after some time and, in the meantime, he won't be doing anything to anybody. Secondly he might get frightened off and, the next time they go somewhere, he'll say, 'I've got to pick up my mum from the station' or something and simply won't go. That's what we count on. (V., 24-year old)

Views, beliefs and ideology

Notwithstanding the actively declared "political" context, therefore, it is actually cultural opposition which is the key factor in the development of the Petersburg anti-fascist scene since it began to form in response to the cultural activity of fascist groups. In this sense, the Anti-fa groups are unique since, as a rule, "traditional" subcultural movements are specific projects in the sense that their formation does not require a counterculture against which the movement develops. But for the Anti-fa movement, the opposition is self-evident – you are either "Fa" or "Anti-fa". For this reason, at least a section of the youth Anti-fa groups can be considered a kind of collective resistance to the "boneheads" who are, according to many informants, just former local thugs (gopniki):

The majority of them [Nazi-skinheads] were local thugs; they had no great ideology, and what they had was enough for them. Their whole ideology was 'I hate those who are not like me' starting with foreigners with a different skin colour and shape of eye, and ending with friends who just dressed differently, like punks. (A., 22-year old)

Currently Anti-fa groups are in a state of transformation and this is reflected first and foremost in their attempts to think through their own understanding of anti-fascist ideas. In some cases, their reinterpretations lead to a broadening of the philosophy to mean opposition to all kinds of discriminatory practices including racism, Nazism, anti-Semitism, capitalism and all forms of discrimination (and not only against people but also against animals). And, in these groups, no initial subcultural solidarity is necessary; one can be an anti-fascist and nothing else. Nevertheless, the further development of a youth Anti-fa movement closely connects to the development of fascistic youth groups; it will continue to develop in parallel with them.

Conclusions

The Anti-fa scene is an unusual subcultural grouping in that its formation was largely a response – a cultural opposition – to the cultural activity of fascist groups. Perhaps, for this reason, it is an extremely heterogeneous scene which includes individuals with often completely opposed political, subcultural, stylistic and other preferences and interests ranging from aggressive Anti-fa crews to intellectual anarchists, from anti-military activists to aggressive hooligans. The preference for different kinds of action is a particular source of tension within the scene. Thus Anti-fascism is best understood as a set of ideas around which young people, often with relatively different views, unite at least temporarily, and whose future development will run very much in parallel to the development of the extreme right-wing (fascist) youth movement.

References

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2005). Subcultures, scenes or tribes? None of the above. *Journal of Youth Studies 8* (1), 21-40.

Moscow Bureau for Human Rights (n.d.). *Kratkii obzor proivlenii agressivnoi ksenofobii na territorii Rossiiskoi Federatsii v 2007*. Retrieved November 4, 2008, from http://www.antirasizm.ru/publ.php

Hilary PILKINGTON,
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: H.Pilkington@warwick.ac.uk

Elena OMEĽCHENKO
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: omelchenkoe@mail.ru

Yulia ANDREEVA
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: uliandreeva@mail.ruc

Hilary PILKINGTON
Elena OMELČENKO
Yulia ANDREEVA

„Anti-fa" jaunimo grupės Sankt Peterburge (Rusijoje)

Santrauka

Tyrimas pateikia subkultūrinės „Anti-fa" (subkultūrinė sąvoka, reiškianti antifašistus) veiklos apibūdinimą, analizuoja, kaip dalyviai į ją įsijungia ir įgyja subkultūrinės patirties. Tyrėjai analizuoja svarbius tarpasmeninių ir grupinių santykių aspektus. Tyrimas taip pat atskleidžia naujas „Anti-fa" dalyvių solidarumo formas ir paaiškina radikalių šio judėjimo veiksmų reikšmes, jų logiką. Tyrėjai išsako nuomonę, jog tolimesnė jaunimo „Anti-fa" judėjimo plėtra yra glaudžiai susijusi su fašistinių jaunimo grupių vystymusi; teigiama, kad šios dvi kryptys ir toliau plėtosis paraleliai.

Tyrimas vyko 2008 m. Sankt Peterburge, tęsėsi 6 savaites. Analizė atlikta remiantis stebėjimų, 14 giluminių interviu, tyrėjo dienoraščio ir interneto svetainių duomenimis. Tyrėjai pateikia rekomendacijas institucijoms, dirbančioms su jaunimu, apibūdina šios grupės pagrindinius elgesio bruožus, jai būdingas vertybes, veiklas ir jų reikšmes. Taip pat jie nurodo, jog „Anti-fa" (kaip ir kitų Rusijoje veikiančių antifašistinio judėjimo grupių, pvz., Judėjimas už jaunimo teises, Judėjimas prieš rasizmą ir netolerancija ir kt.) filosofija susieta su opozicija visoms diskriminacinės praktikos rūšims, tokioms kaip rasizmas, nacizmas, antisemitizmas, kapitalizmas.

Raktažodžiai: „Anti-fa", ksenofobija, jaunimas, subkultūra.

Hilary **PILKINGTON**
University of Warwick

Elena **OMEL'CHENKO**
Irina **KOSTERINA**
Scientific Research Centre Region

DIY Youth Groups
in Saint Petersburg Russia

Abstract

This research considers the key actors and principles constituting the DIY scene in St. Petersburg. It traces the importance of independent music production, anti-commercialisation, anti-consumerism and creative self-realisation to the scene. It pays particular attention to the exploration of the diversity of young people involved in DIY scenes in the city and the evidence of differing narratives of DIY culture between musicians and activists within it.

Keywords: DIY, xenophobia, youth, subculture

Introduction

In a series of publications, Ol'ga Aksiutina (2005b) considers, "DIY-culture projects and DIY-cultures themselves … as free zones for everyday alternative life." She argues that "DIY punk culture is not a mass culture; it does not use means of *mass* information to disseminate itself and does not seek to win a '*mass*' *audience* but directly relates to punks and hard-core kids in small venues (not stadia). Punk resists the massive transnational companies preferring small independent labels, avoids buying in expensive supermarkets by accessing products via post or at concerts (via direct contact between bands and the audience), replaces glossy music magazines with self-produced fanzines and replaces music as a commodity with music as protest and self-expression, ignoring the media with its system of 'hits' and 'charts'" (Aksiutina, 2004). In a similar vein, Zaitseva (2004) argues that "every DIY enterprise is vulnerable but the lack of interest in profit continues to be reproduced as a result of the whole system of collective action which has a central position in the musical world in which DIY labels often become 'laboratories' of style and movements as well as starting points for groups onto a path to wider recognition. And despite frequent claims that 'any music can become commercial',

it is precisely the productive illusion of a 'pure' and non-profit-oriented musical process that ensures both artistic innovation and an alternative to the capitalist mode of production and consumption." Without wishing to deny the roots of DIY culture in resistance, nonetheless, the material from St. Petersburg gathered under the auspices of the SAL project allows a more balanced insight into such scenes than hitherto captured in published literature. In particular the research allowed an exploration of the diversity of young people involved in DIY scenes in the city and thus also the discovery of differing narratives of DIY culture between musicians and activists within it.

Methods

One six-week period of fieldwork was conducted in Spring 2008. Access to the group was gained through existing contacts in St. Petersburg and contacts provided by scene members in other cities. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, a survey of the media coverage and self-presentation of the groups (especially via Internet) was conducted. This also facilitated initial contacts – for example, in the case of the neo-Pagan case study – through chat forums. In all cases, snowballing was used to generate new respondents from contacts provided by key informants. The main methodological techniques employed for gathering data for these case studies were:

- web-site analysis
- ethnographic observation
- recorded interviews with respondents
- researcher diaries
- visual mappings of urban space used by the groups using still and video photography.

A total of 9 interviews and 1 fieldwork diary were analysed for this case study.

Results

Within the punk community, there is an image of "authentic" and "inauthentic" punks. "Inauthentic" punks include those associated with the 1980s and 1990s who are often referred to as "dirty punks" and seen as adopting only the external attributes of punk and realising the idea of protest through anti-social demonstrative behaviour, alcoholism etc. From around 2000, there appeared a new generation of punks who can be seen as more politicised and for whom external appearance is of relatively minor importance. They consider views and behaviour – the real protest against social injustice and capitalist values – to be the most important thing. This leads to conflict between punks of the old and new type:

Interviewer: Are there no conflicts between punks like you and those [who were around] before? …

Respondent: Well there are. … They make out that I, my friends – are not punks, but rather they are the real punks because they are dirty, drunk etc. And that we are like some show-off rich kids, as they see it. They are known as 'decorative' punks. … But even so, they are not punk. They don't do anything. … They buy all kinds of things, go to shops where they sell Nazi paraphernalia and so on, all kinds of cheap T-shirts and so on and think they are punks, get drunk, and that's it. (Punk musician, 22-year old)

At the same time, people sharing the same values and views and communicating on one wavelength can quickly find a common language. The practice of "signing in", i.e., getting in to concerts free (by being on a list of invitees) or staying overnight at somebody's, helps them travel and attend concerts. These principles of mutual support and assistance are a kind of social and economic resource ensuring the stability and viability of the punk community.

Important also is the use of informational resources about which only people incorporated into punk practice know. This is information about closed Internet portals, forums, specialised shops and trading points where it is possible to buy music and subcultural products and obtain information about actions (events, meetings, protests) and future concerts. Access to such resources saves time and money.

Group-society relations

The ideas of equality and non-discrimination in the sphere of culture, music and information are extrapolated by informants into an ideology of anti-discrimination action and views such as the protest against racism, xenophobia and homophobia and the protection of animals:

If you extend the idea of equality, then naturally, equality means opposition to all kinds of discrimination, oppression and so on. It is against prejudices related to race or nationality, against racism, homophobia and everything connected to it. The support of animal rights also, naturally, the equality of rights between people and animal, and the support of all liberationary discourses. (Punk, fanzine producer, 29-year old)

In some cases, this expresses itself in veganism, straight-edge culture, the organisation of participation in various actions such as the defence of human rights, environmental protection and anti-fascist and anti-globalisation (Food Not Bombs) actions when vegetarian food is distributed free of charge to the needy.

In the case study undertaken in this research, the ideas of the DIY-punk movement and the anti-fascist movement were closely interwoven since non-discrimination assumes an anti-fascist position. For this reason, some informants identified as anti-fascists participated in related protest and violent actions.

Attending DIY and hard core concerts and the use of DIY symbols places a certain responsibility on young people, since these signs can be interpreted by hostile Nazi-skinheads as a sign of anti-fascist views:

> If they see some badge being worn by someone, they go, 'Aha, so you're Anti-fa.' And that's it, they jump on you. They can kill you without blinking. They don't bother to find out what or who you are. The most dangerous thing is all these [cloth] DIY badges – I mean you might not be an anti-fascist at all but simply somebody who has bought a badge and worn it. I mean you just liked this group and you went to a hardcore concert. But you could get yourself killed just for that. They won't bother to find out. (Punk musician, 23-year old)

Views, beliefs and ideology

DIY stands for Do It Yourself and it is part of the ideology and practice of many youth cultures. It is one of the main principles within punk culture since it is linked to the idea of social protest against globalisation and mass culture. For example, there is a widespread practice of creating independent music labels and distribution companies and producing newspapers and specialised journals (fanzines). Of all the manifestations of punk DIY, the production of fanzines has become the most widespread in the post-Soviet space (especially at the end of the 1990s, beginning of the 21st century). To create a fanzine, one does not need a huge sum of money; instead of publishing a huge run, one original can be printed and then photocopied as orders come in. Usually fanzines are produced at the creator's own expense and sold for cost-price. The average price of a fanzine is 50 roubles. There are also individuals who make and sell music-related and subcultural paraphernalia: T-shirts, cloth and metal badges and banners. But such DIY-products are produced not in millions but in tens or hundreds, which indicates the "non-mass" nature of this phenomenon.

The DIY "ethic" assumes that the income from the sale of punk or hardcore production is put towards the development of the local scene and not personal enrichment. Thus the money generated by cultural production, as a rule, goes towards production and distribution of labels; the money is used, for example, for the next releases. Punk production is distributed primarily through exchange. Exchanges take place between labels in different cities and countries. The main forms of distribution of punk artefacts are mail order or purchase at concerts. In both cases, this assumes not only consumption but also communication and moves relations between "buyer" and "seller" onto a personal level. At the same time, the notion that "you can't buy punk recordings at the nearest rock shop" creates an important sense of exclusivity about this production.

Apart from its consumption function, these practices also carry the meanings of protest within punk; representatives of the punk-DIY culture believe that the ability to do everything yourself, and thus bypass consumer society, has a subversive function.

Thus DIY-culture embodies the following qualities: independent production, independence, anti-commercialisation and anti-consumerism, creativity, self-realisation, the creation of one's own culture, communication, enthusiasm, mutual support, joy of creativity, honesty and interest/engagement.

The main political ideas of the group are equality and non-discrimination, the recognition of freedom of expression and the rejection of hierarchy and control:

> To my mind, punk is a youth – and now not even that youthful – culture based on ideas of equality. The idea is that, in relation to music for example, the boundary between the listener and those on stage is blurred. If three people are playing on the stage, then [when they finish] they come down into the room and listen to the next group. It's the same with fanzines – there again the boundary between those who make [fanzines] and those who read them is erased; yeah, so that today you read a zine, tomorrow you make your own one. You see. And… that, in my opinion, is the punk idea. And when there are concerts, not in clubs, not in some… but in places like clubs or bars but independent, then often they organise them in sports halls or cafeterias – in places where there are no stages. And so the listeners and the musicians are all on the same level. That's like, the punk idea, that's an important part of what it's all about. (Punk fanzine producer, 29-year old)

Many punks also share anarchist ideas and are members of political communities. A separate practice is squatting, that is the occupation of empty buildings in the city where life is constructed according to the principle of a commune.

Intra-group relations

Within the punk community, there is an image of "authentic" and "inauthentic" punks. "Inauthentic" punks include those associated with the 1980s and 1990s who are often referred to as "dirty punks" and seen as adopting only the external attributes of punk and realising the idea of protest through anti-social demonstrative behaviour, alcoholism etc. From around 2000, there appeared a new generation of punks who can be seen as more politicised and for whom external appearance is of relatively minor importance. They consider views and behaviour – the real protest against social injustice and capitalist values – to be the most important thing. This leads to conflict between punks of the old and new type:

> Interviewer: Are there no conflicts between punks like you and those who [were around] before? …
> Respondent: Well there are. … They make out that I, my friends – are not punks, but rather they are the real punks because they are dirty, drunk etc. And that we are like some show-off rich kids, as they see it. They are known as 'decorative' punks. … But even so, they are not punk. They don't do anything. … They buy all kinds of things, go to shops where they sell Nazi paraphernalia and so on, all kinds of cheap T-shirts and so on and think they are punks, get drunk, and that's it. (Punk musician, 22-year old)

At the same time, people sharing the same values and views and communicating on one wavelength can quickly find a common language. The practice of "signing in", i.e., getting in to concerts free (by being on a list of invitees) or staying overnight at somebody's, helps them travel and attend concerts. These principles of mutual support and assistance are a kind of social and economic resource ensuring the stability and viability of the punk community.

Important also is the use of informational resources about which only people incorporated into punk practice know. This is information about closed Internet portals, forums, specialised shops and trading points where it is possible to buy music and subcultural products and obtain information about actions (events, meetings, protests) and future concerts. Access to such resources saves time and money.

Conclusions

DIY-culture in Russia has been studied to date primarily through "insider" accounts of the movement. This material provides an interesting insight into the self-presentation of the movement as a form of resistance to the institutions of commercial music and culture. The research conducted here, in contrast, explores the engagement with the DIY scene by a broader range of individuals and groups and thus allows a more balanced insight into the solidarities – and ruptures – that govern the scene.

References

Aksiutina, O. (2004). DIY-protest protiv kommercheskoi kul'tury v postsovetskom prostranstve: massovaia muzyka i andergraund. In A. P. Logunov, L. G. Berezova, N. V. Illeritskaia, & E. V. Baryshnikova (Eds.), *Massovoe soznanie i massovaia kul'tura v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'* (pp. 230-254). Moscow: RGGU.

Aksiutina, O. (2005a). DIY pank-kul'tura kak fenomen molodezhnoi kontrkul'tury v postsovetskom postranstve. In I. V. Kondakov (Ed.), *Sovremennie transformatsii rossiiskoi kul'tury* (pp. 564-603). Moscow: Nauka.

Aksiutina, O. (2005b). Kul'tura povsednevnosti sovremennikh protestnikh dvizhenii v Evrope. In G. Iu. Sterin, N. O. Osipova, & N. I. Pospelova (Eds.), *Povsednevnost' kak tekst kul'tury. Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii* (pp. 45-56). Kirov: ViatGGU.

Aksiutina, O. (2006). Politika povsednevnoi zhizni DIY-kul'tur. In E. Omel'chenko, & N. Goncharova (Eds.), *Meniaiushchaisia molodezh' v meniaiushchemsia mire: nevidimaiai povsedenevnost* (pp. 13-17). Ul'ianovsk: Ido UGU.

Zaitseva, A. (2004). (Anti)ekonomika rok-andergraunda: dobrodeteli 'sdelai sam' i mekhanika vytesneniia deneg. *Neprikosnovennii zapas, 1*(33), 57-71.

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: H.Pilkington@warwick.ac.uk

Elena OMEL'CHENKO
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: omelchenkoe@mail.ru

Irina KOSTERINA
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: kosterina@yandex.ru

Hilary PILKINGTON
Elena OMELČENKO
Irina KOSTERINA

DIY jaunimo grupės Sankt Peterburge (Rusijoje)

Santrauka

Šio tyrimo autorės analizuoja pagrindinius Sankt Peterburgo DIY (angl. *Do It Yourself*) kultūros dalyvius ir jos veikimo principus. Akcentuojama jų veiklos sritims būdinga nepriklausomos muzikos gamybos svarba, antikomerciškumas, vartotojų teisių gynimas ir kūrybingas savęs realizavimas gyvenamoje vietoje. Atskleidžiama jaunimo, įsitraukusio į miesto DIY kultūrą, veiklų įvairovė ir skirtingi šios kultūros naratyvai, kuriuos pateikia jos aktyvistai ir muzikantai. Judėjimo saviraiška mokslinėje literatūroje įprastai interpretuojama kaip rezistencijos prieš komercinės muzikos ir kultūros institucijas forma. Šis tyrimas atskleidžia plataus jaunimo rato dalyvavimą DIY veiklose, todėl leidžia geriau suprasti jiems būdingą solidarumą ir iššūkius.

Tyrimas atliktas 2008 m., tęsėsi 6 savaites, naudoti stebėjimų, 9 giluminių interviu, tyrimų dienoraščio, taip pat interneto svetainių duomenys.

Tyrėjos pateikia rekomendacijas institucijoms, atskleidžiančias tarpgrupinius miesto jaunimo ryšius, bendravimo su visuomene ypatumus, požiūrius, tikėjimus ir ideologiją.

Raktažodžiai: DIY, ksenofobija, jaunimas, subkultūra.

Airi-Alina ALLASTE
Vaike VÕÕBUS
Peeter VIHMA
Maarja KOBIN
Irina KOSTERINA

„Rekreaciniai" kanapių vartotojai Estijoje ir Rusijoje

Santrauka

Šio tyrimo tikslas buvo atkreipti dėmesį į du aspektus, susijusius su kanapių vartojimu Estijoje: a) sveikatos ir kiti pavojai, su kuriais susiduria jauni narkotikų vartotojai; b) lyties ir narkotikų vartojimo sąsajos.

Kanapės Estijoje pasklido iš sostinės ir tapo jaunimo populiariosios kultūros dalimi. Narkotikų prekybai kuriami neformalūs socialiniai tinklai. Kanapių rūkymas ir platinimas yra įprastas jauniems žmonėms ir netgi priimtinas nerūkantiems. Kanapių vartojimas yra traktuojamas kaip laisvas kiekvieno žmogaus pasirinkimas. Kanapės laikomos natūraliu narkotiku, kuris nėra toks kenksmingas kaip sintetiniai.

Tyrimo tikslas buvo ištirti, kokie egzistuoja socialiniai draudimai ir kiti kontrolės mechanizmai (išoriniai ir vidiniai), reguliuojantys kanapių vartojimą, taip pat išsiaiškinti susilpnėjusios kanapes vartojančio jaunimo sveikatos požymius – tiek ilgalaikius, tiek trumpalaikius.

Nagrinėdami abiejų lyčių atstovų narkotikų vartojimą, tyrėjai pritaikė lyginamąją analizę, kuria atskleidė abiejų lyčių narkotikų vartojimo skirtumus dviejose šalyse – Estijoje ir Rusijoje. Pastebėti skirtingi vyrų ir moterų vaidmenys, jų įsipareigojimai, aktyvumas ir indėliai, kurie yra leidžiami ir skatinami skirtingose šalyse. Tyrėjai analizavo daugelį aspektų, susijusių su abiejų lyčių atstovų narkotikų vartojimu, pvz., narkotikų vartotojų iniciacijos, hierarchija, normos, vartojimo dažnumas bei narkotikų kiekiai ir tipai.

Analizė yra pagrįsta 30-čia giluminių interviu su kanapių vartotojais nuo 16 iki 20 metų amžiaus, atliktų 2006 m. rudenį, dalyvaujant SAL projekte. Informantai buvo surinkti naudojant „sniego kamuolio" metodą. Lyginamojo tyrimo su Rusijos narkotikų vartotojais analizei buvo panaudoti 11 interviu ir Rusijos tyrėjos Irinos Kosterinos pastabos apie Rusijos narkotikų vartotojus, pateiktos dalyvaujant SAL projekte.

Raktažodžiai: „rekreacinis" narkotikų vartojimas, normavimas, lytis, rizika, kanapių vartojimas, jaunimas.

Hilary **PILKINGTON**
University of Warwick

Irina **KOSTERINA**
Elena **OMEL'CHENKO**
Scientific Research Centre Region

Drug Using Youth Groups in Sochi Russia

Abstract

In Russian academic literature, drug use is generally approached as a "social problem" that can be "resolved" through the curbing of the supply of drugs and the punishment of drug users and traders. This approach is rooted in understandings drug use as an "escape" from harsh social reality (often linked to economic transformation and moral confusion following the collapse of the Soviet Union). The research from this case study in Sochi – a city in which young people have relatively good economic and cultural opportunities – undermines a key argument underpinning this problematising discourse. The material suggests, on the contrary, that drugs – especially "recreational drugs" – are becoming an increasingly routine ("normal") part of the youth cultural environment.

Keywords: xenophobia, drug use, youth, subculture

Introduction

In Russian academic literature, drug use is generally approached as a "social problem". Thus Zvonovskii and Romanovich (2004) explain the use of narcotic substances by reference to, among other things, a "tough daily life". Bykov (2000) puts drug addiction down to "dissatisfaction with life in relation to a wide variety of circumstances including: personal difficulties; inadequate socio-cultural provision providing no opportunities for spending free time, which is particularly important to young people; social injustice; disorganisation of everyday life; disappointment in people and the lack of opportunity in these conditions to fulfil oneself (lack of success in work, study, the creative sphere or personal life)". Zhuravleva (2000) concludes that, at a general level, "sociological research shows deviant behaviour to be compensatory."

The material gathered in the course of research for the SAL project in Sochi, however, has allowed the development of a critique of the key argument underpinning this problematising discourse. This is, firstly, because of the specific status of the city of Sochi in the Russian Federation. Not only is the city the most popular resort

in the country, attracting thousands of tourists from Russia and abroad annually, but the decision to award the city the 2014 Winter Olympic Games has provided a huge additional impulse for economic, social and cultural development and inward investment. For young people in the city, the tourists – from Moscow and abroad – are points of reference and imitation; they are perceived as a kind of symbol of style, innovation and "progressiveness". Local young people actively assimilate this important cultural channel and devour information about new and fashionable brands, trends, books and music, modes of moving and dressing, slang and new ideas. Secondly the research offers the opportunity to rethink existing approaches because it was conducted among young people with relatively good levels of material and social capital and thus access to a wide spectrum of socio-cultural practices. Thus the new empirical research conducted for this case study suggests that approaching the issue of the rise of drug use among young people as, first and foremost, a social problem – of "disadapted" or asocial youth – is far from a sufficient approach to the issues involved.

Methods

Two six-week periods of fieldwork were conducted in 2006 and 2007. Access to the groups was gained through existing contacts from earlier research conducted by the research team and snowballing. The following methods of research were employed:

- Ethnographic observation
- Interviews with respondents [recorded]
- Diary-keeping
- Photos including giving cameras to respondents to take photos of the group themselves
- Video recordings
- Researcher reflections on fieldwork
- Walking tours of the city with respondents

A total of 26 interviews and two fieldwork diaries were transcribed and analysed using Nvivo7 software.

Results

From this case study, the following tendencies were discerned:

- There has been a decline in public discourse about the problem of drug use in Russia. This problem is considered to be one related primarily to the "past". The strengthening of legislation on the sale and possession of drugs, treatment of drug abuse and anti-drugs information has produced the intended results.

At the same time, however, the research indicated that, within the youth sphere, there has been no eradication but, on the contrary, a "normalisation" of drugs. Cannabis has been completely removed from the space of myth and fear in young people's minds. Intravenous drug use continues to be viewed negatively primarily for fear of HIV infection and because of the generally negative image of these substances which are associated with marginalised representatives of the underclass. However, alongside this negativity about "hard drugs", other drug practices have become widespread. In particular, thanks to the subtropical climate in Sochi, the cultivation of cannabis has become large-scale; there are whole villages that specialise in the cultivation and sale of cannabis.

- Young people consider some forms of narcotic substances not to constitute "drugs". For example, cannabis is widely referred to as "grass" (*travka*), making it appear a "natural" and harmless substance. Moreover the use of cannabis by others is generally tolerated even by those who do not use it themselves. In this case study, various groups practised the use of drugs such as cannabis, nutmeg (around 5 at a time), magic mushrooms and so-called "pharmaceuticals" – substances containing codeine and other narcotic substances. These medicinal products (mainly cough syrups and tablets) can be bought without a prescription and thus their affordability and accessibility make them extremely popular among local youth.
- Drug use practices are almost always connected with group solidarity and group practices. If some members of a group begin to experiment with drugs then, with time, almost all in the group assimilate this practice. In one of the groups studied, for example, there were regular "drug-days" when almost the whole group bought and used drugs together. However, abstention from drugs also worked in this way. If a number of people (or a particular group authority) stopped using then, with time, this practice also disappeared from the group as a whole. This mechanism is useful to note in the context of implementing effective anti-drugs campaigns.
- In subcultural and street youth groups, the use of drugs is more widespread than it is in student groups. Space free from the control of adults provides a good deal of freedom for experimentation, and the informational flow about drugs is itself much more intensive. Moreover, in some groups, drug use is legitimated for the purposes of experiencing new sensations, considered necessary for creative people including musicians, artists, graffiti artists and others. In particular, in one of the groups studied consisting primarily of rappers, skateboarders and roller-skaters, almost all the members use drugs. This appears almost as a kind of subcultural prerequisite:

It was the hippies that drew all this before. There were little flowers everywhere, these little hearts, all that kind of stuff. Everything was kind of floating… like when you are smoking [dope], to put it crudely. This was the Old School style of the 60s-70s. (Musician and graffiti artist, 16-year old)

- The use of drugs and the use of alcohol are often considered inextricably intertwined. In all the groups researched, there had been a gradual progression from alcohol to cannabis use and then to other drugs. Some informants even talked about the advantages of cannabis over alcohol since the latter was considered to have greater physical and psychological effects:

Those who like to smoke [cannabis], there are loads of such people now; probably everybody likes to smoke, to be frank. [Then there are] those who down barbiturates and go off to the clubs. They go to the chemist, down some like, and then go [to the club] and they are in this kind of state. … [Well] alcohol makes you feel sick, but this doesn't make you feel sick and so you just have your own highs. You're on your own wave; you don't heave. … (Musician and graffiti artist, 16-year old)

- Drugs, their use and the practices linked to their commercial sale are one reason for cultural and even ethnic conflicts. For example, the members of one group were negatively disposed towards Abkhaz and Armenians living in some villages in the far south of Krasnodar Territory, near to Abkhazia, because, in their opinion, these people were producing cannabis and other natural narcotic substances on an industrial scale. Often ethnic labels are attached in this way to drug dealers. At the same time, nationalistically-oriented youth groups attribute what they consider to a negative predisposition towards the use of cannabis among skaters and rappers to the influence of African cultures such as Rasta and Afro-American rap. Another example of cultural conflict is the image among some groups who used "natural" drugs such as cannabis, mushrooms and nutmeg that it was unacceptable to use synthetic or chemically produced drugs, including "pharmaceuticals":

Mainly everyone is downing pills. A really big problem in the city is the use of Terpenkod. I have never touched it though. I might have a smoke, have some mushrooms. But I don't mess about with… I am in favour of natural products. But all these barbs, especially the pharmaceuticals – it's just, it's a problem at the Fun-Box [name of place where hang out], because even if you walk around the area, you find these packets [lying around]. There are a lot of them. … Many people do up to 10 packets of Terpenkod and then end up on "black" [heroin]. (Rapper, 22-year old)

- One of the channels encouraging a high level of tolerance towards the distribution and use of drugs is the Internet and the mass media as a whole.

In particular books, films and Internet sites that have gained cult status and that contain drugs-tolerant discourse facilitate the manifestation of interest and even sympathy towards some drug use practices.

Conclusions

This research suggests that starting from a study of the youth cultural scene – including the drug using aspects of it – provides a very different understanding of drug use among young people than mainstream approaches which envisage drug use as always "problematic". It suggests that drug use is related to specific forms of youth cultural solidarities but may be built into a rich and varied cultural repertoire rather than providing an "escape" for troubled young people and always leading to isolated, problem drug use. The understanding of drug use in its wider youth cultural context is vital to developing effective drugs education materials that provide young people with the information they need to minimise the harm that drugs can do.

References

Bykov, S. (2000). Narkomaniia sredi molodezhi kak pokazatel' dezaptirovannosti. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia, 4,* 48-52.
Zvonovskii, V. B., & Romanovich, N. A. (2004). Obshchestvennoe mnenie o narkotizme: opyt regional'nikh issledovanii. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia, 6,* 54-61.
Zhuravleva, L. A. (2000). Faktori i usloviia narkotizatsii molodezhi. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia, 6,* 43-48.

Elena OMEL'CHENKO
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: omelchenkoe@mail.ru

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: H.Pilkington@warwick.ac.uk

Irina KOSTERINA
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: kosterina@yandex.ru

Elena OMELČENKO
Hilary PILKINGTON
Irina KOSTERINA

Narkotikus vartojančios jaunimo grupės Sočyje (Rusijoje)

Santrauka

Rusijos mokslinėje literatūroje narkotikų vartojimas paprastai traktuojamas kaip „socialinė problema", kuri gali būti „išspręsta", pažabojus narkotikų pasiūlą ir taikant bausmes narkotikų vartotojams bei prekiautojams. Šis požiūris grindžiamas narkotikų vartojimo, kaip pabėgimo nuo atšiaurios socialinės tikrovės, aiškinimu (dažnai susijęs su ekonomine pertvarka ir moraline sumaištimi, kilusia po Sovietų Sąjungos žlugimo).

Šio atvejo tyrimas Sočyje – mieste, kuriame jaunimas turi palyginti geras ekonomines ir kultūrines galimybes – sugriauna pagrindinį argumentą, grindžiantį minėtus aiškinimus. Tyrimas pateikia priešingus argumentus: narkotikai – ypač „pramoginiai" – tampa vis įprastesne („normalia") jaunimo kultūros dalimi.

Tyrime naudoti 26 giluminiai interviu su narkotikų vartotojais ir du lauko tyrimų dienoraščiai, taip pat tiesiogiai bendrauta laisvalaikiu.

Raktažodžiai: ksenofobija, narkotikų vartojimas, jaunimas, subkultūra.

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick

Elvira SHARIFULLINA
Elena OMEL'CHENKO
Scientific Research Centre Region

Drug Using Youth Groups in Vorkuta Russia

Abstract

Drug use within the youth cultural environment is widespread and unremarkable; this means that drug users can rarely be considered to constitute distinct "subcultures". In the context of processes of de-industrialisation and marketisation, drugs are a key commodity for sale and exchange. In the tough economic climate of the Russian far north – where geographical location means that hemp and opium based drugs cannot be locally grown, and supply routes are truncated by poor transportation links – they may become a key component of the informal economy. A key finding of this research was that the sale of drugs was one of a range of "hustling" practices – including trade in "acquired" goods and drugs, money-lending and "sorting" disputes – that were widespread among young people, whether or not they used drugs themselves.

Keywords: xenophobia, drug use, youth, subculture

Introduction

- Although drug use is often portrayed as located in a secluded, semi-criminal, separate world, in practice drug users cannot be considered a "subculture" as such. Drug use – at least at the recreational level – is almost never the sole purpose for gathering, and people using drugs together do not define themselves, or their groups of friends, by their drug use. The consequences of this are that research that hopes to reveal something about the cultural practices, norms, values and attitudes of young people to drug use cannot start out by identifying "drug users" as a specific group; those who are accessed via, for example, medical or police institutions are usually a narrow group of problem users or dealers who provide an unrepresentative picture of drug use across the youth population. However, as was found in this study, accessing young people who are drug users but not drug-dependent and who use drugs as part of a wider repertoire of cultural practices can be time-consuming and frustrating. Since young people rarely think their drug use is interesting in and of itself, they are unlikely to want to talk extensively about it (Bourdois, 2003, p. 2).

- Further evidence of the non-subcultural nature of drug use is the fact that, during this research, it became apparent that drug use and drug dealing were practices that crossed over the two originally distinct case studies in Vorkuta. Thus, over the course of the research, while a number of respondents originally involved in the drug-use case study actually gave up or decreased their drug use (for health and other reasons), a number of respondents from the skinhead case study started using and/or selling drugs (cannabis and amphetamines) extensively. Indeed the two respondents who were samples in these case studies that were actually prosecuted for drug dealing during the course of the research were both from the skinhead case study.

Methods

Two six-week periods of fieldwork were conducted in 2006 and 2007. Access to the groups was gained through existing contacts from earlier research conducted by the research team and snowballing. The following methods of research were employed:

- Ethnographic observation
- Interviews with respondents [recorded]
- Diary-keeping
- Photos including giving cameras to respondents to take photos of the group themselves
- Video recordings
- Researcher reflections on fieldwork
- Walking tours of the city with respondents

A total of 16 interviews and four fieldwork diaries were transcribed and analysed using Nvivo7 software.

Results

- Earlier research carried out in the region by the same team of researchers, had shown that, despite the remoteness of Komi Republic, the rate of life-time reported illicit substance use among young people was higher in Komi Republic (29.2%) than it was in the comparative regions, Samara oblast' (16.5%) and Krasnodar krai (15.9%) where, in both areas, cannabis was grown domestically and other drugs were well supplied through established drug trafficking routes (Pilkington, 2007). Since that research (2002-03), the range of drugs available in Vorkuta has significantly expanded; particularly noticeable was the extension of "recreational" drug use from cannabis ("grass" and resin) to amphetamines including a wide range of "Ecstasy-style" tablets collectively referred to as "*tabli*"

or individually by more specific brand-names (e.g., "Swallows", "Mitsubishi", "Love") or, when in powdered form, "spidy". The use of vint (a methamphetamine that is injected) also appeared as more routine. Polydrug use is common with cannabis, amphetamines and alcohol being used as a "cocktail" especially on weekends or holidays. This is captured in the following quotation from a male respondent (2007):

Interviewer: And what's been the most interesting thing you've tried?
Respondent: I liked the mushrooms.
Interviewer: And when was the first time you tried speed or tablets [amphetamines]?
Respondent: At New Year, three years ago.
Interviewer: Did somebody just have some or did you decide to go and buy them?
Respondent: No, I just went to somebody's I knew and bought them from him.
Interviewer: Were you thinking that you'd like to do something new at New Year or something?
Respondent: Well, maybe, I wanted something new, to celebrate it completely differently.
Interviewer: And how did it turn out?
Respondent: It was brilliant.
Interviewer: Yeah? Go on, go on. ...
Respondent: I was celebrating New Year for three whole days. ... I just kept moving from one state to another.
Interviewer: You mean from amphetamines to dope, from dope to amphetamines, then back to dope? Like that?
Respondent: You forgot the alcohol. ...
Interviewer: Alcohol?
Respondent: Yeah, basically, everything at once.

Many examples of polydrug use were evident from ethnographic observation and from conversations during which, for example, respondents complained that a pill they had taken at the club had not had the desired effect because they had already drunk too much.

- Another key finding was a greater propensity for informants to be involved in the sale and supply of drugs. While this cannot be measured accurately from purely ethnographic research, observation strongly suggested the embedding of drugs within wider informal practices of money-making or "hustling" (*dvizhukha*). This is described by a male respondent thus:

Respondent: Well, yeah. First, you have a smoke with someone who has some, then you get some via someone else, then you do it directly yourself or sometimes you are phoned. ... when it's a sound lad – like my classmate for example, phoned me himself and asked if I knew anyone who wanted something or whether I wanted something. I took some myself.
Interviewer: Oh, I see. Had he bought more than he could use or something?
Respondent: Who, my classmate? Yeah, he works it as well.
Interviewer: You mean he sells on?

Respondent: Well, yeah.

Interviewer: And those who sell on, do they make good money?

Respondent: Pretty good. Well, if you buy wholesale for 350 [pauses, sighs], then you are likely to come out with 400 [roubles] profit.

Interviewer: That's if you sell on the whole box, yeah? I see, and where do they get the boxes?

Respondent: Well they work directly with the gangsters.

Interviewer: And does everything to do with grass have to go through the gangsters?

Respondent: Who else? If I import [some cannabis], who the hell else am I going to sell the bulk of it to? ... It's easier and simpler to go to the gangsters. Otherwise you might get cheated or something.

Social relations of drug use: asocial capital?

- A key finding of the research was that the sale of drugs was one component of a much wider range of "hustling" practices – the key ones being trade in "acquired" goods and drugs, money-lending and "sorting" disputes that were widespread among young people. These practices require extensive networks of friends and acquaintances to enable the circulation of resources and the extraction of profit from them, as the following male respondent (2007) describes:

Respondent: It's like if you have some capital – say 500 roubles – you buy [something] from some idiot whose robbed something. He simply nicks a phone let's say from a girl. And you buy the phone from him for 500 roubles. It's clearly worth a lot more, naturally. You know how to value it, so you know your target profit. You want to get let's say, I don't know about 20%. And you sell it to somebody who needs a phone like that right now. A telephone's just an example, it could be...

Interviewer: And how do you know where to find such a person?

Respondent: A good way is through the local network, the Internet. I dunno, you can always think of something. Friends of friends – those kinds of networks. You develop your own small network.

This is an interesting finding, because it is frequently argued in sociological drug research that high levels of social capital (through social connectivity) is a protective factor against drug use as well as the harm accruing from it (see, for example, Lovell, 2002; Latkin, Forman, Knowlton & Sherman, 2003). Moreover, sociological studies of "transition" societies portray post-socialist societies – especially those in heavily de-industrialising cities like Vorkuta – as severely lacking in social capital (Rose, 1995; Halpern, 2005; Kertman, 2006). In contrast to both these bodies of work, this research study found young people in Vorkuta to be socially connected to a high degree. However, their networks do not generate "protective" social capital but, on the contrary, they are used for the mutual extraction of profit. One male respondent (2007) outlines how an acquaintance generates knowledge of an individual's weaknesses, and how the recognition of someone else's need for a resource (money, contacts, protection) can be exploited for one's own profit:

Respondent: Serpent, for instance, has a lot of things which Danil' [left] because, for example, he needed some cash or something quickly. And Serpent is a right crafty bugger. He gives Danil' money, a loan basically, on that basis. He [Danil'] leaves something – a television or something – with him. Of course Danil' then goes and blows all the money in the slot machines and gives him nothing back. Serpent has plenty of things that Danil' has given him.

Interviewer: But Danil's completely skint isn't he?

Respondent: That's why he's skint, because he plays the slot machines. If you only knew how much he loses.

The findings of the research have been written up in an article that challenges existing understandings of the role of social capital in drug using circles and published in a leading international drug policy journal (see Pilkington & Sharifullina, 2009).

Conclusions

The sale and use of drugs is not limited to a small section of the youth community with drug addiction problems. On the contrary, illicit substances – especially cannabis and amphetamines – are bought, sold and used by large sections of the youth population, even in remote geographical areas where supply routes do not normally reach. In order to capture the extent and significance of these practices it is important that ethnographic research starts out with the "normal" population rather than focusing on "problem drug users".

References

Bourgois, P. (2003). *In search of respect: Selling crack in El Barrio* (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Halpern, D. (2005). *Social capital.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Kertman, G. (2006). Mezhlichnostnoe doverie v Rossii. *Sotsial'naia Real'nost'*, 4, 7-24.

Latkin, C., Forman, V., Knowlton, A., & Sherman, S. (2003). Norms, social networks, and HIV-related risk behaviours among urban disadvantaged drug users. *Social Science & Medicine*, 56, 465-476.

Lovell, A. (2002, September). Risking risk: The influence of types of capital and social networks. *Social Science and Medicine*, 55(5), 803-821(19).

McKee, M. (2002). Substance use and social and economic transition: The need for evidence. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 13, 453-459.

Pilkington, H. (2007). Beyond "peer pressure": Rethinking drug use and "youth culture". *International Journal of Drug Policy 18*, 213-224.

Pilkington, H., & Sharifullina, E. (2009). The mutual extraction industry: Drug use and the normative structure of social capital in the Russian far north. *International Journal of Drug Policy, 20*, 251-260.

Rose, R. (1995, Summer). Russia as an hour-glass society: A constitution without citizens. *East European Constitutional Review*, 34-42.

Elena OMEĽCHENKO
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: omelchenkoe@mail.ru

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: H.Pilkington@warwick.ac.uk

Elvira SHARIFULLINA
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Ul`ianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: ellain@yandex.ru

Elena OMELČENKO
Hilary PILKINGTON
Elvira ŠARIFULINA

Narkotikus vartojančios jaunimo grupės Vorkutoje (Rusijoje)

Santrauka

Narkotikų vartojimas tarp jaunimo yra labai paplitęs, tačiau retai kada pastebima, kad jaunuoliai laikosi kitokios nei įprasta gyvensenos. Šiaurės Rusijoje dėl sunkios ekonominės situacijos narkotikai gali tapti pagrindine šešėlinės ekonomikos dalimi. Tai lemia Šiaurės Rusijos geografinė padėtis, netinkama auginti kanapes ir kitus narkotikus. Prekės pirkėjų tiesiogiai nepasiekia dėl sunkių pervežimo sąlygų, dėl to klesti perpardavinėtojai. Pagrindinė šio tyrimo išvada tokia: narkotikų prekyba yra viena iš sukčiavimo veiklų, įskaitant prekybą neteisėtai įgytais daiktais ir vaistais, pinigų skolinimą ir kitas veiklas, kurios plačiai paplitusios tarp jaunų žmonių, nepriklausomai nuo to, ar jie patys vartoja narkotikus.

Tyrimas vyko 6 savaites 2006 ir 2007 m. Taikytas stebėjimo metodas, naudoti 16 giluminių interviu, 4 tyrėjų dienoraščiai, vaizdo įrašai.

Raktažodžiai: ksenofobija, narkotikų vartojimas, jaunimas, subkultūra.

Alexander L. SALAGAEV
Alexander S. MAKAROV
Rustem R. SAFIN
Center for Analytic Studies & Development, Kazan

Violent Youth Groups in the Tatarstan Republic of Russia

Abstract

The article presents the main findings of research on violent youth groups conducted in the Tatarstan Republic of Russia as part of the international EU FP6 project, *Society and Lifestyles* (2006-2008). It is argued that youth criminal gangs are gradually losing their "place" in the arena of non-institutional activities and they are being replaced by skinhead groups which have become more and more active during past years.

Keywords: criminal gangs, nationalist groups, skinheads

Introduction

Violent youth groups have long been the subject of social research in the western world, unlike in the former USSR, where issues related to youth violence, especially violent and criminal youth groups, were tabooed. It had been proclaimed that such activities can only be witnessed in Western Capitalist societies but not in Socialist ones; thus organised youth groups were not mentioned in Russian literature on juvenile delinquency before 1980 or were considered "informal groups". Few studies on gangs that appeared in the late 1980s-early 1990s were mainly focused on legal and criminological aspects of gangs (see, for instance, Prozumentov, 1993; Bulatov & Shesler, 1994 and others). The first ethnographic study was started in 1989 by Alexander Salagaev and a group of sociologists working in the Laboratory of Sociology at Kazan State University. This research is still on-going, and a great amount of ethnographic material on Russian gangs operating in the Volga area was collected during its 15 year-duration (see Salagaev, 2001; Salagaev & Shashkin, 2001 and 2002; Shashkin & Salagaev, 2002 and 2003). Several ethnographies were done later in Lyubertsy, a Moscow region (Ovchinskiy, 1990), Ulyanovsk (Omeľchenko, 1996; Pilkington & Omeľchenko, 2002), Ulan-Ude (see Badmaev, 2002) and some other cities. Recent studies that include ethnographic data are mostly focused on topics adjacent to gangs, for example, prison culture in Russia (Oleynik, 2001) or organised crime and violent entrepreneurship (Volkov, 2002).

Hilary **PILKINGTON**
University of Warwick

Elena **OMEL'CHENKO**
Al'bina **GARIFZIANOVA**
Scientific Research Centre Region

Xenophobic Youth Groups in Vorkuta Russia: Skinheads

Abstract

Skinhead groups are not ascetic formations withdrawn from the "real", mainstream world but groups of young people who are profoundly conscious of the world in which they live and are motivated by the need to change it. This desire to interact with and change the world leads to violent street action (in particular attacks on members of ethnic minorities and others who they feel "disgrace" Russia, e.g., homeless people). However, it also means that such groups are responsive to changes in the external environment, and this case study suggested clearly that the increased threat of arrest and imprisonment for both race-related crimes and incitement to racial and ethnic hatred has had a major impact on the performance of skinheads.

Keywords: xenophobia, skinhead, youth, subculture

Introduction

Although there are an estimated 70,000 skinheads active in Russia currently and more than 70 deaths were attributed to xenophobic attacks in 2007 alone (Moscow Bureau of Human Rights), there is to date no sociological study of the skinhead subculture in Russia. Academic discussion of the issue is thus constrained by approaches that posit the movement as the "lumpen" end of the extreme nationalist ideological spectrum (Likhachev, 2002; Umland, 2005) and understand its subcultural form as "copied straight from the Western skinhead movement" (Shenfield, 2001, p. 82; see also Tarasov, 2004, p. 12). Thus this research fills a significant empirical gap by providing the first empirical study of skinheads in Russia. It is based on unique research conducted by an international collaborative team over an extended period of time.

Theoretically the research makes an important contribution to debates on the topic, what comes after "subculture"? Sociological critique on theories of youth subculture (see, for example, Bennett, 1999) has been making an important intervention in youth cultural studies at a particular moment in time. However, it is currently in danger

of slipping into a ritualistic critique of the Marxist over-determination of theories emanating from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s and early 1980s (see contributions to this and around this debate by Bennett, Hesmondhalgh, Blackman, Shildrick & MacDonald in *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2005-2006, Vol. 8 (1, 2) and Vol. 9 (2)). Serious intervention into this debate still needs to be sustained by extensive empirical evidence; the research conducted for this project allows this since it offers unique insight into one of the classic "subcultures" upon which the CCCS theory of youth subculture was constructed and, more importantly, allows the exploration of the changing role that skinhead style and values have in young people's lives as they navigate through the great historical processes playing out around them. On the basis of the research, an approach to the study of youth subcultures has been developed which neither imputes meaning from style practices in the absence of evidence for this (as, it is suggested, did the CCCS accounts of subculture) nor reduces youth cultural practices to expressions of consumer choice (as some post-subcultural theorising is in danger of doing). Rather it takes style practices as external markers of group solidarity and affiliation and explores, in the context of whole lives, what the substance of that affiliation is (see, for example, Pilkington, 2009).

Finally the research contributes to the growing discussion on the importance of reflexive engagement with the research process and raises a number of important questions (epistemological, ethical, emotional) about the design and conducting of research with marginal youth cultural groups (see Garifzianova, 2008; Omel'chenko, 2008; Pilkington, 2008). A book proposal based on this case study was submitted to Cambridge University Press in January 2009.

Methods

Two periods of six-weeks of fieldwork were conducted in 2006 and 2007. Access to the groups was gained through existing contacts from earlier research conducted by the research team and snowballing. The following methods of research were employed:

- Ethnographic observation
- Interviews with respondents [recorded]
- Diary-keeping
- Photos including cameras given to respondents to photograph the group themselves
- Video recordings
- Researcher reflections on fieldwork
- Walking tours of the city with respondents

A total of 24 interviews and four fieldwork diaries were transcribed and analysed using Nvivo7 software.

Results

- In contradistinction to many stereotypes about skinheads – associations with military and fascist organisations – skinhead groups often like the idea of "order" and "subordination" but struggle to maintain such a group structure since they are, by nature, anti-authoritarian. This is particularly true of those who come into the movement via other subcultural routes (often punk or heavy metal scenes). Moreover there is often a struggle for authority and control between those of this persuasion and those who enter the scene for more pre-conceived political reasons. These internal struggles can be key moments in the trajectories of particular skinhead groups and, in the case study developed during this project, the struggle over authority within the group finally led to its disintegration (see Omel'chenko & Garifzianova, 2009).

- Skinheads are often strongly associated with a particular "style" of dress. This is certainly an attractive element of the subculture for many participants. However, as skinheads grow older, they become more aware and afraid of the sanctions meted out for the public display of skinhead affiliation thus they are increasingly likely to downplay the stylistic element of their activity. The absence of visible signs of skinheads on urban streets, therefore, does not mean that skinheads have "gone away" (Pilkington, 2009). This is illustrated by the following female skinhead during our research (2006):

> Now it's not essential to dress in a way that shows clearly that you're a skinhead. Skinhead, you see again, it's what you feel here [points to heart]. If you want to dress like that – fine, it's appreciated. If you don't want to? It's no big deal. … In any case, there are holidays and things when you just want to dress up. You dress up – and – Wow! Brilliant! But, if you don't want to, then …

- Skinhead groups are portrayed in existing literature as exclusively male, violent subcultural formations. While these groups tend to be male dominated, it should be noted that women exist both within the core group (in the group studied here, there were at least two young women who had strong claims to be core members of the group) and certainly as part of the wider social grouping (as friends, girlfriends and wives). Indeed the gender codes governing these groupings are more complex than often portrayed, and the male solidarity central to the groups is rooted as much (if not more) in practices of homosociality as hierarchy, aggression and subordination.

Group-society relations

- Skinhead groups are not ascetic formations withdrawn from the "real", mainstream world but groups who are profoundly conscious of the world in

which they live and the need to change it. This desire to interact with and change the world leads to violent street actions (in particular, attacks on members of ethnic minorities and others they feel "disgrace" Russia, e.g., homeless people). At the same time, it means that their behaviour is open to manipulation by the external environment. This citation from an interview with a female skinhead (2006) from the research expresses the way in which skinheads think about tailoring their actions to what is expected by mainstream society:

> … How can I put it? They are watching. The main thing is not to act like a thug. That is, they [the police] know we are here. But what's the point, to put it crudely, if we are just hanging out. They are somehow more humane. By law you are allowed to have your point of view, your own ideology, as long as you don't break any law. So that's the correct position. They don't beat you up for the sake of it. Everything's fine in that regard. At least that's what I think, how I see it. [But] if you get caught, then sometimes pretty bad things can happen. There was an incident when they beat evidence out of a lad. I remember that he was in hospital for some time afterwards. …

- Another strong influence on the group is a growing awareness of negative public attitudes to skinheadism. One male respondent, for example, stated, "the generally accepted opinion is that skinheads are drunken alcoholics who beat up people", while another summed up media representations as being, "Skinheads are drunken PTUshniki [vocational college kids]". One male respondent acknowledged that this changed environment had impacted even on his willingness to acknowledge his affiliation verbally. Meanwhile another pointed out that it might even represent a direct threat to personal safety:

> I called in on a friend and he goes, 'So you've decided to become a skinhead have you?' I said, 'Yeah.' And he goes, 'Clever thinking – when the whole city here is against the skinheads. You might get away with it in the daytime but, at night, you can guarantee that you'll get one in the head somewhere.'

- This can lead to a sense of persecution. One female respondent complained that the police would move her on or stop her and ask for her passport, then demand money for its return. Another female respondent complained that people with skinhead views were not given the same human rights as others (in particular "minorities"). As evidence of this view, she cited a case she had read about when special forces (OMON) had shot dead a skinhead:

> He was just sitting there with his girlfriend in the yard. A Special Forces (OMON) unit, without explaining anything, just took him and shot him. … That was it. Even though it is even set down in the constitution that every individual has the right to his/her opinion, own opinion as it were…. It's your opinion. You have the right to express it.

> [But] if we do, then it is understood immediately as incitement to ethnic conflict. … But, when we are killed in Russia, it doesn't matter; that's not incitement of ethnic conflict. But when we [do/say something] that's it – it's all over.

A male respondent also complained that, while skinhead pogroms were bemoaned widely in the national press, nothing was said about what he called "the genocide against Russians" in a number of former Soviet republics and that "no Muslim has ever been prosecuted under that article [Article 282 of the Russian Criminal Code on 'Incitement of religious or ethnic conflict'], only Russians, even though Russians are discriminated against in very many regions of Russia."

- This strong engagement with the outside world means that legislation – and, more importantly, the implementation of legislation – does impact on behaviour. This case study suggested clearly that the increased threat of arrest and imprisonment for both race-related crimes and incitement to racial and ethnic hatred has had a major impact on the performance of skinheads. Over the period of the research with the group, the abstract possibility of imprisonment had become an increasingly tangible experience. Three male members of the group were all on record with the police; one was being actively investigated in relation to a racist attack, while another reported being regularly called in to the police and pumped for information about others. One of the member's friends had been imprisoned for two years for "incitement" (having taken the blame for a group act). In 2002 a number of friends of two other group members had been imprisoned for three years. Another core member had served 18 months of a three-year sentence and had been released just a couple of weeks prior to our visit in 2006. Although this member had been prosecuted for drug dealing rather than skinhead-related activities, nonetheless, his experiences in jail were very painful and served as a serious disincentive to maintain an open, public display of skinheadism.

Views, beliefs, ideology

- Two contrasting schools of thought represent skinheads either as ideologically committed and militarily highly trained fascist forces threatening to sweep the country or, alternatively, as Tarasov puts it, "virtually uneducated. … wretched, highly primitive and therefore dangerously brutal" (Dolgopolova, 2004). Our research suggests that – at least in small provincial cities – in fact skinhead groups are extremely diverse in terms of their political and ideological commitment. They were bound together by a core set of beliefs that shouted rather than whispered everyday xenophobias and racisms that are commonly encountered in contemporary Russia (anti-Semitism, anti-Caucasian and anti-"immigrant"

sentiments) accompanied by motifs drawn from "global" (especially UK and American) skinhead movements such as white supremacism.

- There was an almost universal dislike of formal political organisation and disinclination to get involved in party politics, even of the extreme fringe. This group of young people largely ignored party politics, although a number of the group had joined the Rodina Party – one member had become a "youth representative" for the party. This was explained by the group as being done for purely utilitarian reasons, i.e., to try to gain access to people in power so that they could extract favours in return (specifically they wanted to gain access to a gym for training).
- Interestingly, and in sharp contrast to the strong connections often made between ultra-right politics and the Orthodox Church, the group showed a strong dislike of organised religion and of Christianity in particular. This was driven largely by a strong anti-authoritarianism and is summed up well by this male respondent (2007):

> Respondent: I hate the Orthodox Church.
> Interviewer: Why?
> Respondent: Because it stupefies the people. It drives it into slavery. It turns us into morons who troop off to pray.

Two respondents expressed sympathies for (neo)Paganism (one had been de-baptised at a Pagan ceremony). However, this was itself attractive, at least partially, because of the lack of organisation and ritual commitment required of followers and it was not a driving force in their lives (see Pilkington & Popov, 2009).

- Deciphering a coherent ideological line even within one person's discourse, let alone across the whole group, is difficult. The Russian government, for example, is dubbed "Zionist occupied", yet it was, at that time, led by Vladimir Putin whom the rest of the world considered a strong Russian authoritarian out to reassert Russia's power. Another deep ambiguity lies in the respondents' attitudes to Nazi Germany; Adolf Hitler – who was responsible for the death of over 20 million Soviet citizens – is idolised, for example, yet Iosif Stalin is vilified for "killing his own people". If an overarching ideological strand in the very diverse levels of commitment and articulation of views about society and politics was to be delineated among informants, it is probably the classic palingenetic fascist myth that sees current society as being "degraded" or in fatal decline and the desire to pursue revolutionary change that will overthrow this regime and allow the rebirth of a purer nation. However, in contrast to many iterations of fascist ideology, there is a strong sense of the new, revived Russia as being part of the "modern" world as opposed to retreating to a conservative, pre-modern era.

Conclusions

Ethnographic research with xenophobic youth groups turn existing academic literature "inside out". It allows the surface manifestation of skinhead style and racist narratives – upon which research focuses to date – to be displaced temporarily by deeper questions about why skinheads remain an attractive cultural strategy for young people. Such research is vital to understanding the motives for joining and for leaving such groups. It reveals that young Russians adopt skinheads today as a means of generating meaningful solidarities which help them navigate their lives on the margins of Russian society – literally in the case of Vorkuta. The research also revealed that skinhead cultural strategies are not inward looking. Skinhead respondents were, on the contrary, profoundly conscious of the world around them and motivated by a desire to change the world which they articulate verbally through ideological statements and physically through street violence. This engagement with the environment also means, however, that they are responsive to changes in it; in particular the increased threat of arrest and imprisonment (due to legislative changes) and growing hostility to their actions on the part of the public were shown to have had a major impact on the performance of skinheads.

References

Bennett, A. (1999). Subcultures or neo-tribes? Rethinking the relationship between youth, style and musical taste. *Sociology, 33*(3), 599-617.

Bennett, A. (2005). In defence of neo-tribes: A response to Blackman and Hesmondhalgh. *Journal of Youth Studies, 8*(2), 255-9.

Blackman, S. (2005). Youth subcultural theory: A critical engagement with the concept, its origins and politics, from the Chicago School to postmodernism. *Journal of Youth Studies, 8* (1), 1-20.

Garifzianova, A. (2008). Pozitsiia antropologa pri issledovanii problem ksenofobii. *Antropologicheskii Forum, 8*, 36-42.

Likhachev, V. (2002). *Natsizm v Rossii.* Moscow: Panorama Centre.

Omel'chenko, E. (2008). Pozitsiia antropologa pri issledovanii problem ksenofobii. *Antropologicheskii Forum, 8*, 82-91.

Pilkington, H. (2008). Pozitsiia antropologa pri issledovanii problem ksenofobii. *Antropologicheskii Forum, 8*, 97-106.

Pilkington, H. (2009). No longer "on parade": Style and the performance of skinhead in the Russian far north [article submitted to peer-reviewed journal]. *Russian Review.*

Shenfield, S. (2001). *Russian Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements.* New York, London: M.E. Sharpe.

Tarasov, A. (2004, June 18). Britogolovie idut. *Russkii Kur'er, 1* (124), 12-13.

Umland, A. (2005). Concepts of Fascism in Contemporary Russia and the West. *Political Studies Review, 3* (1), 34-49.

Hilary PILKINGTON
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: H.Pilkington@warwick.ac.uk

Elena OMEĽCHENKO
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Uľianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: omelchenkoe@mail.ru

Aľbina GARIFZIANOVA
Scientific Research Centre Region, Pushkinskaya 4a, 118, Uľianovsk, Russia.
E-mail: aistenok@bk.ru

Hilary PILKINGTON
Elena OMELČENKO
Albina GARIFZIANOVA

Ksenofobinės jaunimo grupės Vorkutoje (Rusijoje): skinhedai

Santrauka

Straipsnis grindžiamas Vorkutoje (Rusijoje) atlikto tyrimo duomenų analize. Lauko tyrimas buvo atliktas 2006 ir 2007 m., dalyvaujant SAL projekte. Naudoti 24 interviu ir 4 lauko tyrimų dienoraščių duomenys.

Autorės pažymi, kad skinhedų (angl. *skinheads*) grupės nėra izoliuotos grupuotės, atskilusios nuo „tikro" dominuojančio pasaulio, o atvirkščiai – šios jaunų žmonių grupės nepaprastai gerai suvokia pasaulį, kuriame gyvena, ir yra motyvuojamos poreikio jį pakeisti. Šis troškimas paveikti ir pakeisti pasaulį sąlygoja smurtinius gatvės veiksmus (ypač etninių mažumų atstovų bei tų, kurie, jų manymu, yra Rusijos „gėda", pvz., benamiai, užpuolimus). Tokios grupės reaguoja į išorinės aplinkos pokyčius, ir šio atvejo tyrimas įrodė, kad padidėjusi arešto ir įkalinimo grėsmė tiek už rasistinius nusikaltimus, tiek už rasistinės ir etninės neapykantos kurstymą turėjo didelį poveikį skinhedų veiklai.

Analizėje akcentuoti SAL projekto probleminiai klausimai (žr. priedą, p. 276), tokie kaip grupės ir visuomenės sąveika, grupės narių poveikio visuomenei poreikis, narių prisijungimo prie grupės motyvai ir kt.

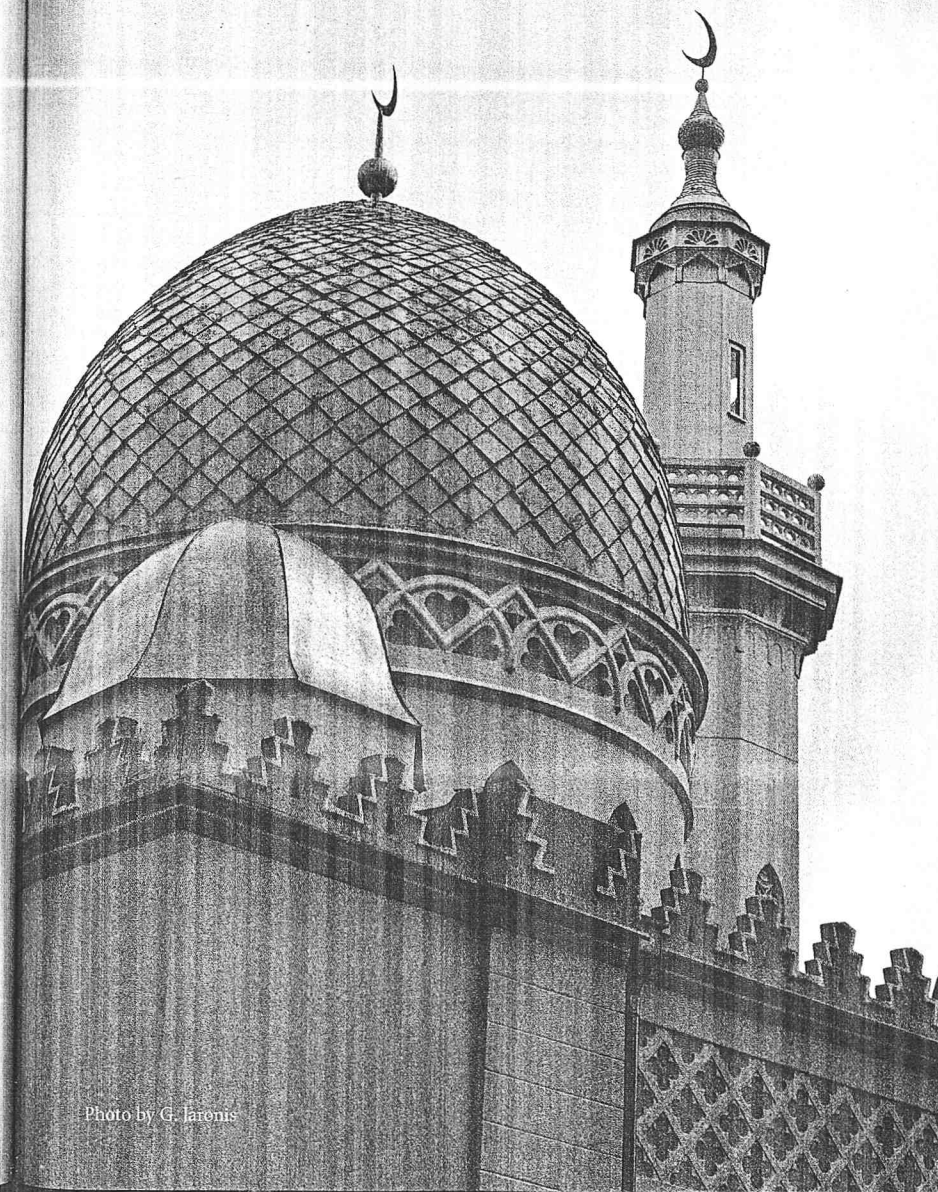**Raktažodžiai:** ksenofobija, skinhedai, jaunimas, subkultūra.

Ethnic Minorities

Photo by G. Jaronis

Groups and Environments, a series of academic works, is designated for investigations of subcultural groups. The objective for this series is to activate joint work by researchers who are studying the behaviours of different groups in different social environments as well as interdisciplinary studies that integrate methods used in the social sciences, humanities and the hard sciences.

This volume includes the results of the EU FP6 research project, *Society and Lifestyles: Towards Enhancing Social Harmonisation through Knowledge of Subcultural Communities/ SAL*. This project was designed to extend knowledge about values and religions in Europe by investigating groups representing various beliefs on values and religions in post-Soviet countries. Three main research fields have been established: 'Taste' subcultures, New religious movements and different ethnic/religious groups, such as drug users, skinheads, Euro-Indians, neo-punks, hip-hop enthusiasts, hippies, members of Anastasia and Vissarion, neo-Pagans, Hare Krishna members and national minorities such as Afghans, Muslims and Gypsies as well as others. It is expected that these project outcomes will be useful in the development of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Additionally it is presumed that the SAL project will result in greater tolerance towards different attitudes and lifestyles and enhance social harmonisation.

UDK 316.6

GROUPS AND ENVIRONMENTS (2)

Prepared for publication during the implementation of the SAL project 2008.