

The Role of Subcultures in Latent Social Governance Mechanisms

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Abstract

Social management of the livelihoods of people, social groups, and nations has experienced dramatic changes in recent decades. In a number of countries, particularly in the post-Soviet republics, the habitual stable social order has been gradually replaced by social chaos, characterized by disintegration and conflicts. The nature of these social transformations was characterized by S. Huntington (1996) in his famous book 'The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.' The author of the study declares, the core idea is that in the post-Cold War world, culture and the recognition of different cultural identities (that in the broadest sense coincides with the identity of civilization) determine the patterns of cohesion, disintegration and conflict. The researcher argues that in the new world the most large-scale, important and dangerous conflicts are not to arise between social classes, the poor and the rich, but between nations of different cultural identities (Huntington, 1996). Comprehension of the distinctions existing in cultural identities as the primary source of future social conflicts actualizes the problem of the subcultures' role in the processes of social management. The mentioned problem is poorly studied in general, yet it attracts considerable attention to the possibility of the latent structures taking advantage of various subcultures to influence the processes of social management. The purpose of the article is to substantiate the role of subcultures in the processes of latent social management.

Keywords

subculture, social role, values, authority, collective culture, social technology, social trauma

Introduction

When delving into the study of subcultures and their societal roles, it is important to acknowledge the intrinsic correlation between subculture and culture itself — a relationship akin to a part and its whole. This forms the foundation for recognizing shared and distinctive attributes, properties, and functions within them. Within the current landscape of research narratives in the social and behavioral sciences, there is a notable gravitation

toward studies of cross-cultural interactions (Zárate et al., 2019; see also Jubran et al., 2020; Koburtay et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020; Van Der Werf et al., 2020). This reflects the integral role of culture in human life, as evidenced by various studies (Driouchi et al., 2020; Kim & Stavrositu, 2018; Motti-Stefanidi, 2018; Roy & Goll, 2014; Szkudlarek et al., 2020). Culturologists, who perceive culture as a collection of material and spiritual values shaped by humanity, frequently emphasize a core concern of culture — the reproduction of humanity itself, encompassing knowledge, competencies, material assets, and spiritual principles. In line with this comprehension of culture and its significance in the lives of societal entities, it is pertinent to acknowledge that subcultures also play a role in the continuation of human existence. However, this role is characterized by specific predetermined attributes that can be anticipated and designed. In this we find the necessary reasoning for the relevance of contemporary interdisciplinary research on existing subcultures (Lutzer, 2018; Montoya & Briggs, 2013; Shin, 2019; Ulusoy, 2016; Wang et al., 2020). Consequently, there exists a legitimate rationale to view the establishment of subcultures as a method of influencing covert processes of social governance.

Within the realm of academia, diverse approaches offer varying interpretations of the “subculture” concept, contributing to a deeper grasp of its essence. Subculture, deriving from Latin “sub” (under) and “cultura” (culture), is examined from these perspectives:

- A system of values, life ideologies, and behavioral norms shared by individuals associated with a particular, clearly defined daily life context (Münch & Smelser, 1993).
- Is the ideas, art, and way of life of a group of people within a society, which are different from the ideas, art, and way of life of the rest of the society (Collins Dictionary, n.d.).
- The culture of a specific social community (group, class, region, denomination, etc.) that deviates in certain aspects from the broader societal culture (based on the Concise Encyclopedic Dictionary edited by V.I. Volovich).
- The lifestyle of a particular social group, characterized by its own distinct model of individual conduct within the prevailing societal culture (Furman & Lytvyn, 2010).

Methods

The approach to studying the influence of subcultures in latent social governance processes involves various steps aimed at analyzing and comprehending the impact of subcultures on society. Here is a comprehensive methodology for your consideration:

1. **Objective:** Clearly outline the research’s purpose, focusing on investigating the impact of subcultures on latent social governance.
2. **Terminology Clarification:** Clearly define crucial terms including subculture and latent social governance, aiming to address potential ambiguities. Identify gaps in existing knowledge, elucidate relevant theories applicable to the study, and formulate hypotheses. These hypotheses should explore the potential correlations between subcultures and the shaping of social norms, values, and behavioral patterns.
3. **Methodology Overview:** This analysis employs diverse methods, including content analysis, surveys, interviews, and observation, to elucidate the influence of subcultures on latent social governance. Initial emphasis is placed on meticulous data collection, ensuring objectivity and sample representativeness.
4. **For data analysis,** a range of statistical methods, predominantly qualitative in nature, is employed to discern key trends and assess the impact of subcultures on various social processes.
5. **Methodological Framework:** This approach offers a broad framework for investigating the involvement of subcultures in latent social governance. However, it is essential to note

that additional adjustments and enhancements may be necessary based on the specific context and research inquiries.

Examining the influence of subcultures in latent social governance entails employing diverse methods and principles. The ensuing are the primary analytical methods and guiding principles applicable within this context:

- Content Analysis: Examining texts, images, and related content to discern key themes, patterns, and motivations within the realms of subcultures and social governance.
- Sociological Surveys and Interviews: Employing surveys and interviews with both subcultures and societal members to elucidate perspectives and influences on behavior.
- Ethnographic Research: Observing subcultures in their natural environments to comprehend behavioral patterns and influences.
- Network Analysis: Investigating social networks and connections among subculture members to comprehend the structure and distribution of influence.
- Cultural Analysis: Scrutinizing symbols, language, customs, and other cultural facets linked to subcultures.

Analysis Principles are:

- Evaluate the contextual factors influencing interactions within subcultures and broader society.
- Employ methodologies from diverse fields like sociology, anthropology, psychology, and cultural studies.
- Contrast various subcultures and their societal impact to underscore shared trends and characteristics.
- Acknowledge temporal changes to unveil the progression of subcultures and their societal influence over time.
- Embrace a critical analytical approach, considering potential distortions and biases inherent in the data.
- Integrate expert opinions and perspectives of subculture members to achieve a comprehensive understanding.

Adopting a systemic view, subculture is perceived as an integral component of the social system rather than an isolated phenomenon. The ten primary parameters of subcultures, as formulated by O. Maltsev (2021), significantly contribute to a comprehensive understanding of subcultures. They Include:

1. Presence of an Idea or Legend.
2. Lack of priests, but maintenance of an internal hierarchy of authorities.
3. Absence of Selective Membership.
4. The absence of temple structures, but the existence of subcultures is marked by specific places.
5. Presence of Symbols and Attributes.
6. References to trends or movements.
7. The majority of subcultures (92%) are products of synthesis.
8. Presence of the Idea of Death.
9. The correlational principle of concepts such as “edges” and “pump.”
10. Subcultures follow an Inverted Tree Model, where the subculture forms the crown, its origins constitute the roots, and the individuals connecting them create a certain trunk.

Among the parameters highlighted by Maltsev, several determine the potential of subcultures as tools for social governance: the presence of a unifying Idea which brings people together; formation via authority hierarchy; interconnection with other subcultures; “pumps” for rapid financial gain. If influential groups or entities identify an appealing opportunity in a subculture’s idea to direct societal and cultural changes through its carriers, they can readily execute this strategy. Subculture authorities can achieve this by disseminating ideas

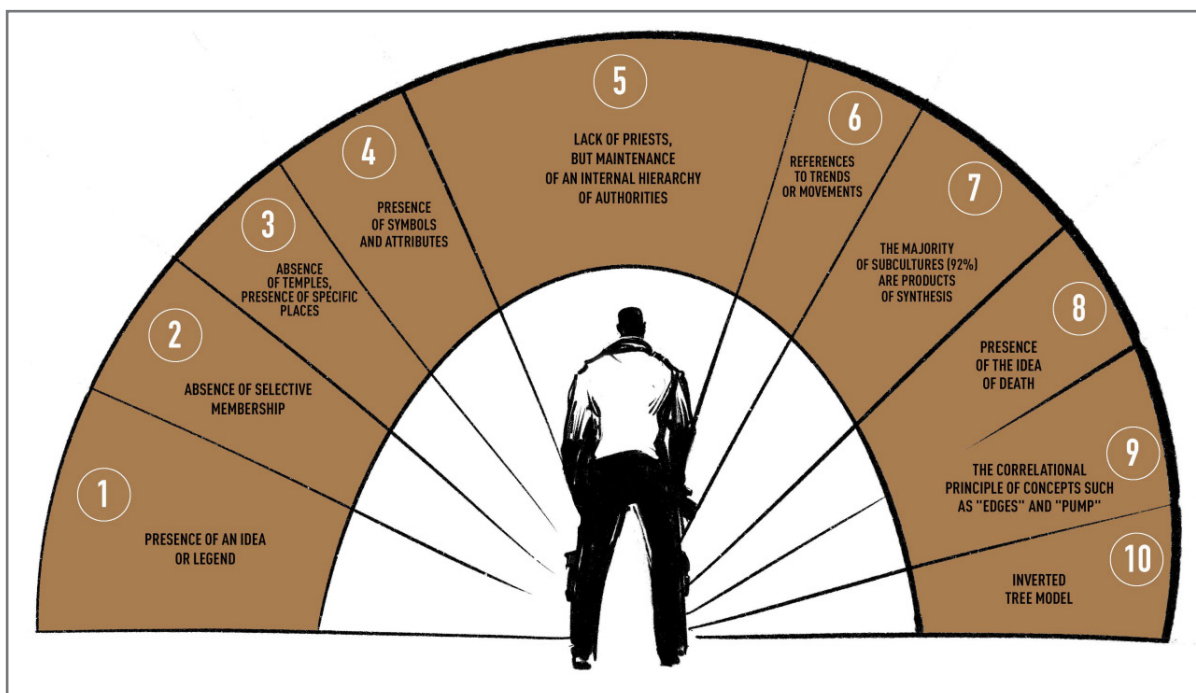


Figure 1. Scheme for a Subculture Study

and obtaining financial resources through “pumps,” ensuring swift expansion of carriers and the proliferation of ideas.

Results

Researchers identify primary perspectives that unveil the core and distinctive attributes of the subculture phenomenon. From a system-dynamic angle, subcultures are perceived as intricate systems undergoing transformations. The synergetic approach acknowledges chaotic interactions among diverse subcultures. In such interactions, some subcultures gain recognition and reinforcement, fostering cooperative effects, while others diminish. The genetic perspective links an individual’s spiritual values with genetic makeup. The informational approach defines subculture as a fusion of social and informational elements, with social consciousness emerging through the transmission of experience. A hierarchical viewpoint discerns cultural existence levels within an organized system, with variations across higher and lower tiers. The trophic approach identifies a hierarchical structure, where upper levels develop from lower ones in a chain, initiated by the transformation of emotions into thought images. The ecological approach considers the sociocultural milieu and a subcultural community’s place within it. Each subculture interacts as a system element with others. The epidemiological stance likens subculture spread to infectious disease transmission, with a social myth acting as the causative agent, transmitted among individuals, impacting the vulnerable masses. The cognitive approach reflects in the understanding of subculture as a framework of cognitive theoretical constructs that shape perceptions of surrounding reality (Bojok, 2009). These main approaches, unveiling the essence and unique traits of subculture, underscore the potential use of subcultures’ signs, properties, and functions in social and humanitarian technologies to address specific social management issues.

A succinct overview of the investigation into the role of subcultures as constituents of latent social management processes leads to the following conclusions:

1. Subcultures, as an integral facet of culture, possess not only a dialectical connection but

- also serve as factors contributing to the functioning of the social and cultural framework.
2. The attributes, qualities, and functions of subcultures offer avenues for their utilization in social technologies aimed at addressing specific issues within social management.
 3. A number of attributes inherent to subcultures (e.g., the presence of a unifying idea, emergence of a community under hierarchical influence, connections with other subcultures, avenues for obtaining “fast money”) establish the groundwork for their use as potent instruments of social management.
 4. Given that substantial societal transformations are consistently heralded by cultural shifts, subcultures, distinguished by their characteristic embrace of specific ideas, become a practical instrument for latent structures to navigate cultural and social evolution.
 5. The advent of social trauma results in the dismantling of the social and cultural fabric, contributing to societal disintegration, and fostering the emergence of a multitude of fresh subcultures.
 6. Zhan Toschenko’s (2016) concept of phantoms introduces the notion of phantom personality types (“demons,” “adventurers,” “mutants,” “narcissists,” “xenophobes,” “gerastrats,” and “looters”), which can be convincingly linked to particular sociocultural types associated with specific subcultures. These subcultures’ genesis is nurtured by latent structures.
 7. In the past decade, Ukrainian society has seen a pronounced manifestation of phantom characters representing distinct sociocultural types — tied to specific subcultures — whose ascent can solely be attributed to the influence of latent structures.

Discussion

Sociologist John J. Macionis (2002) underscores the role of subcultures in societies. The term “subculture” signifies cultural patterns segregating segments of society. Most individuals engage in multiple subcultures without full commitment to any. Yet, in some cases, ethnic and religious differences cause division, occasionally leading to tragic outcomes. The fate of the former Yugoslavia was sealed by warfare, which represented merely the most recent episode in an extensive chronicle of animosity grounded in cultural disparities. Before its fragmentation, this compact nation harbored two alphabets, three religions, four languages, five prominent nationalities, six political republics, and the cultural imprint of seven neighboring states. Evidently, subcultures do not just bring about enriching variety; they also generate strain and, in some instances, direct conflict (Macionis, 2002; see also Scott, 2019). It is important to acknowledge that these socio-cultural distinctions persisted throughout Yugoslavia’s history, yet the dissolution of this entity unfolded solely under specific historical circumstances, subsequent to particular information and psychological manipulation of the populace and its diverse components, coupled with the implementation of a novel “controlled chaos” technique crafted by Stephen Mann (1992). The disintegration of Yugoslavia is not solely attributed to internal contradictions, but also to the veiled influence exerted on the society’s developed subcultures by certain external actors. These actors pursued a “Divide and Conquer!” strategy in relation to all the people of Yugoslavia.

By the close of the twentieth century, Ukrainian society had evolved into a complex socio-historical entity, embodying attributes of multi-ethnic, multicultural, multi-confessional, and bilingual character, alongside regional mentality nuances. In the Ukrainian independence referendum on December 1, 1991, citizens across Ukraine’s regions voted in favor of state independence, signifying both backing for the notion of autonomy and the cohesiveness of society on this matter.

II. Piotr Sztompka (2001) delves into social trauma as a collective occurrence, marked by specific shared experiences within a group, community, or society, arising from culturally

perceived destructive events. The scholar observes that trauma surfaces when the ordered world undergoes fragmentation, displacement, and disarray. The condition of trauma is perpetually marked by a disruption of the ordinary. Three collective indicators manifest trauma:

- demographic shifts within collectivity;
- influences on social structure;
- impacts on culture.

Sztompka's methodological approaches are particularly pertinent for comprehending cultural trauma's societal role (Sztompka, 2001, see also Björnsson et al., 2020). He contends that collective culture serves as the principal framework for collective identity's self-definition, delineating boundaries between "Us" and "Them". The rupture of cultural order disrupts collective identity. A crisis of identity thus reflects a crisis of cultural trauma (Sztompka, 2001). Hence, social trauma's outcome is the destabilization of the accustomed social and cultural order.

Analyzing social processes within Ukrainian society in the initial decade of the post-Soviet era reveals a complete manifestation of the aforementioned symptoms of social trauma. The 2001 population census spurred demographic analysts to conclude that Ukraine's populace had transformed into a "dying nation" within a decade. Over a span of twenty-five years, Ukraine's population plummeted by ten million individuals — from 52.243 million as of January 1, 1993, to 42.233 million as of January 1, 2018. This demographic loss exceeded that of World War II. While the late 1980s' social structure in the Ukrainian SSR primarily consisted of middle strata (around 75%), post-Soviet Ukraine in 2001 was predominantly characterized by impoverished strata (over 80%). By 2014, Ukrainian society's socio-economic structure consisted of 1-2% affluent, 15-18% conditionally middle class, and 75-80% impoverished. Wealth concentration materialized as follows: 1-2% of the affluent held 65-70% of wealth, while the impoverished 75-80% possessed a mere 5% of wealth (Soskin, 2014). Consequently, within two decades, the shift from one social order (Soviet model), grounded in middle strata, transitioned to a new order (post-Soviet model), characterized by an abundance of impoverished strata, thus eroding dependable state social support. This instability lies at the core of post-Soviet Ukrainian society.

Sociologist Mykola Shulha (2011) provides an insightful portrayal of socio-cultural shifts in Ukrainian society brought about by neoliberal market reforms. Foremost among these changes was the widespread process of population marginalization. Countless individuals were displaced from their societal roles, rendering yesterday's skilled workers and specialists obsolete. Their expertise and knowledge found no demand, leaving them devoid of prospects, confidence in their future, and hope for their children's prospects. This group faced humiliation and suppression. This marginalization extended to encompass entire social strata, where members were relegated to the periphery. Despite their high education, qualifications, and broad perspectives, they found themselves in beggarly positions. This new context compelled them to recalibrate their life orientations, norms, and values — those that had guided them no longer functioned in the new landscape (Shulha, 2018). The phenomenon of mass marginalization denotes a disruption not only of the social order but also of the cultural fabric in society (Pohlan, 2019; see also Anyiwo et al., 2020; Park & Yang, 2017).

The dismantling of Ukraine's social and cultural order laid the groundwork for the emergence of numerous new subcultures, driven by the novel stratification of society. The cultures of specific strata, formerly socially isolated, began to proliferate: the culture of the impoverished, the homeless, the unemployed, and more. Simultaneously, the affluent strata witnessed the propagation of morally dubious, anti-human, and even social Darwinist ideologies.

A fundamental distinction between subculture and culture lies in the voluntariness of choice. Culture is inculcated without explicit consent, often from an early age, while engaging with a subculture always involves a conscious decision or a series of decisions. This atypical

juncture allows individuals the freedom to choose the lens through which they perceive the world — whether to embrace unfamiliar value systems. Consequently, every person belongs to some subculture, even though most lack a distinct name or set of symbols demarcating its boundaries. Self-identification and symbolism typically arise alongside the need to differentiate between group actions of “us” versus “them” (Furman & Lytvyn, 2010). As evident, subcultures inherently shape their participants’ worldview, attitudes, and potential behavior models.

In his book “Psychology of Crowds,” Gustave Le Bon (1898) highlighted the pivotal role of shifting ideas for societal change on a civilizational level. He noted that the real cause of the great upheavals which precede the change of civilizations — for example, the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of the Arabs — is a radical renewal of the direction of thought... All important historical events are visible results of invisible shifts in people’s thinking... The present time is one of the critical moments when people’s thought undergoes a transformation (Le Bon, 1898).

Given that the transition of civilizations is heralded by a shift in thought direction, the emergence of subcultures, characterized by distinct ideas or legends, must be considered a pivotal factor influencing the trajectory of thought. The examination of sociocultural changes in the period preceding a civilization’s shift suggests that the creation of subcultures serves the explicit purpose of steering society’s direction.

Phenomena that contribute to subculture formation include what sociologist Zhan Toshchenko (2016) terms as “phantoms,” as described in his work “Phantoms of Russian society.” The term “phantoms” refers to “phenomena and processes that embody specific, sometimes aberrant, extravagant forms of public activity with profound implications for political, economic, and social processes. Individuals embodying these activities possess exaggerated social traits (a strong hunger for power, an insatiable desire for wealth, an unhealthy yearning for fame)... Phantom phenomena, latent throughout history (across eras and states), tend to manifest as a significant social phenomenon during times of upheaval, exerting tangible influence on societal processes (Toshchenko, 2016).

Phantom characters typically arise amidst unstable social contexts, within crises, and exhibit these traits: (a) distinctive positions regarding significant political matters; (b) an urge to amass capital (financial resources); (c) a thirst for power, a drive to impose their perspective on social issues, and even attempt implementation; and (d) a pursuit of recognition, whether actual or perceived, tangible or accidental (Toshchenko, 2016). These qualities found in phantom characters can be effectively harnessed to propel large-scale projects aimed at societal transformation. Although subcultures themselves do not involve a selection process, latent control structures determine the choice, seeking among authorities someone capable of leading both subculture adherents and broader social groups.

Sociology is particularly intrigued by the socially impactful characteristics of both the formal and personal activities undertaken by phantoms, which have wielded a destructive impact on the trajectory of state and public life. To categorize these phantoms within public consciousness and their behaviors, the scholar employs a framework founded on key attributes: power, fame, and wealth. These elements, when combined in various ways, give rise to distinct phantom personality types like “demons,” “adventurers,” “mutants,” “narcissists,” “xenophobes,” “gerastrats,” and “looters” (Toshchenko, 2016). This selection of sociocultural personality types offers a basis for considering them as bearers of specific subcultures.

In the contemporary world, numerous influential individuals have traversed the realm of subcultures, internalizing their ideologies, ascending to positions of authority, and often garnering tacit backing from latent patrons, subsequently emerging as phantoms above society. While not all endure at the pinnacle of public attention for extended durations, some manage to establish themselves over substantial periods. The well-known saying, “When the stars are lit, someone benefits,” finds affirmation.

Conclusion

A concise exploration of subcultures reveals their integral connection to culture, acting as influential elements within the social and cultural framework. These subcultures, characterized by unifying ideas, hierarchical influence, connections with others, and opportunities for "fast money," serve as potent instruments for addressing social issues. As cultural shifts often precede significant societal transformations, subcultures, with their specific ideas, become practical tools for navigating cultural evolution. Social trauma contributes to the disintegration of societal fabric, giving rise to new subcultures.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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