



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

Subcultures. State of the Art and Future Perspectives in Sociology

di Uliano Conti*

1. The origins of subcultures

According to a generally accepted definition of the term, some social groups define themselves as being “sub”cultures to differentiate themselves from a mainstream group. Although not all subcultures are deviant, the term *subculture* is mainly used in reference to deviant groups, especially youth deviant groups.

There are different sociological trends in the study of subcultures. The first current of studies we will consider falls under the label of a “socio-economic aspirations-opportunities” approach. There are different theoretical areas of interest such as the theories of *anomie*, of anomic strain, and the relative deprivation theory which are part of this approach. When people make a transition from a situation of strong cultural values to a situation in which they are less felt and in which economic ambitions are frustrated, they may feel drawn to join groups where deviancy is encouraged, particu-

* Sociology researcher, Faculty of Philosophy, Social Sciences and Formation, Università di Perugia. Double blind peer reviewed paper.



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

larly groups relating to migrants in their destination country (Park 1928). There is a clear link with the concept of anomie (Durkheim 1897; Thomas and Znaniecki 1818-1920). In this sense, Park (1921) refers to the sociological meaning of the stranger (Park 1921, 286), translating part of the work *Soziologie* by Simmel (1908). By “stranger” Simmel (1908) means someone with a life history marked by mobility. The characteristic of the stranger is his ambivalence: the stranger takes shape as a social figure on the outskirts of society, someone not quite belonging (Simmel 1908; Park 1921).

The concept of anomic strain may be viewed in a similar light with concept of *anomie*. In a capitalist society, the legitimate means (education and work) of attaining mainstream ambitions (mainly economic success) depend on socio-economic conditions of origin. People who do not possess legitimate means experience a gap between their ambitions and their available means, and feel themselves drawn towards deviant forms of adaptation (Merton 1938; 1949). The strain is thus first of all considered in relation to structural elements. According to the idea of relative deprivation, crimes of pure violence, such as those committed by gangs comprised of people of similar socio-economic background, are a reaction to the frustration deriving from the comparison with other social groups (Blau and Blau 1982).

A second study trend derives from the social disorganisation approach of the Chicago School. According to an ecological approach, the presence of ethnic-cultural groups in suddenly developing urban areas («zones in transition») and the associated urban dynamics are analysed (Park, Burgess and McKenzie 1925). In the zones in transition, the environment favourable for the proliferation of criminal gangs is characterised by weak social regulatory control; meaning, there is widespread indifference towards others, and minimal adult supervision over young males (Park, Burgess and McKenzie



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

1925; Shaw and McKay 1942). Thanks to statistical work, Shaw and McKay (1942) are the authors of a systematic formulation of the ecological dimension of deviancy and crime in a context of social disorganisation. Some field research on deviant groups and on gangs (Thresher 1927; Whyte 1943) has been carried out according to the social disorganization theory. In a critical perspective, one of Whyte's researches (1943) on a Boston (U.S.A.) neighbourhood of immigrants has provided outcomes that are not consistent with the theory of social disorganization. Actually, there is a significant level of interaction and assistance at the intra-ethnic level (Whyte 1943). Recent researches referring to the theory of social disorganization are labelled as *racial invariance*: according to some quantitative analyses, the isolation of American slums, low quality of generational ties and poor youth supervision favour the creation of subcultural values (Sampson and Wilson 1995).

The third trend we should consider is the theory of cultural conflict. This approach analyzes the existence of different cultural groups in society, groups which contribute to a conflict of conduct norms and cultural codes (Sellin 1938). Values of an ethnic-cultural group may conflict with those of the mainstream, as happens for example in the case of immigrants with values of the host society. Native groups may happen to have their own subcultural values (Sellin 1938). Culturally distinct groups (street-corner boys and college boys) may also exist within the same social group, for example the case of Italian immigrants in the U.S.A. (Whyte 1943).

With regard to cultural approach, the most famous example is A. Cohen's work (1955). Thanks to statistical data, he focuses on the scholastic dynamics of those growing up in a class system. At school young people are judged according to mainstream middle class values. Also lower-class children – from minority groups in socio-economic terms, groups which



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

partly coincide with minorities such as the afro-American minority – are driven to respond positively to mainstream values, despite having a different culture. Not being able to respond positively, lower-class children experience an humiliation, which evolves into status frustration. Eventually they come to collectively react against this status frustration, rejecting or inverting middle class values and shaping the subculture. Lack of scholastic success and sense of failure favour reactive deviancy, as well as delinquency. Working class boys commit non-utilitarian, malicious and negativistic crimes (A. Cohen 1955, 25).

Cloward and Ohlin also consider, without references to quantitative data, the limited access to legitimate means to reach socio-economic objectives. They sustain, however, that for people in the same conditions the delinquency response depends on the «availability of various illegitimate means» (Cloward and Ohlin 1963, 152). One of Pryce's studies (1979) on Afro-Caribbean youth in the U.K. sustains that they respond to problems of unemployment and racism by developing a leisure culture.

According to detractors of culture conflict approach, the reference to cultural characteristics stigmatizes some social groups. The following studies by Banefield and Lagrange have been highly criticized. According to Banefield, a lower class style of life pertaining to Afro-Americans is characterized by lack of interest in education, lack of attention for the future, weak family ties (Banefield 1968). In Lagrange's studies, the cultural model (early marriages, families with many children) of young males immigrated from Sahel to France leads to higher crime rates (Lagrange 2010). Therefore, in the first period of the spread of the concept of subculture, socio-economic condition is the preferred explicatory factor. Deviant and criminal subcultures are the collective response of the working class to problems of adaptation



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

caused by structural inequalities (Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Miller 1958). In the United States, materialist interpretations have not been widely accepted and cultural hypotheses have prevailed.

The social control approach (Hirschi 1969) may be added to the studies already considered. The abandonment of conventional norms and subcultural membership derive from lack of social bonds.

The main challenge to the body of studies which has been considered consists in the criticism on studies of deviant subcultures because they emphasize determinism, instead of agency of the subculture members (Matza 1964). According to the labelling theory (Erikson 1962, Becker 1963, Lermert 1967), subcultural deviancy is an interactive process of definition of meanings of the behaviours of some individuals and the individuals themselves. In general, there is not a relevant cultural difference between normal and deviant (Matza and Sykes 1961). In this regard, a cultural work exists, constituted by neutralization techniques of conventional values, necessary for abandoning the mainstream culture, as well as for committing crimes (Matza and Sykes 1957). For example, «drug takers» pervert dominant values rather than create their own. Hedonism and disaffection for work, for example, are widespread social values even if «subterranean» (Young 1971).

2. British subcultural theory

The final approach to be examined is subcultural theory *stricto sensu*. It spreads throughout the United Kingdom with a criminological tone thanks to the National Deviancy Conference (NDC) of York (Taylor and Taylor



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

1972), and in cultural studies thanks to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS).

The subcultural theory is proposed as a sociological framework and the subcultural issue is developed holistically in the perspective of post-modernity (Brake 1980; P. Cohen 1972; 1997).

In the studies of the CCCS from the mid Sixties on, theories on subcultures refer to a Neo-Gramscian perspective, to a project of class analysis sympathetic with the symbolic resistance of working class youth (Hall and Jefferson 1976). In other words, the subcultural group, a counter response to mainstream culture, is organized around (but not totally determined by) age and social class, and expresses itself in the creation of styles (skinhead, punk, ecc.). Such styles are attempts to resist bourgeois hegemony. Resistance is made through the use of signs and their meaning (Hebdige 1979). The stylistic expressions of resistance are conceptualized as «bricolage», or namely, the way in which traditional meanings are radically subverted; and «homology», that is, the symbolic coherence among values, lifestyle, music and subjective experience. Some studies, for example, consider how the style of African migrant subcultures, of the rude boys and Rastafarians, influence native British subcultures. Other English studies focus on the role of school in contributing to label pupils (Willis 1977).

Also the French school of linguistic structuralism has an influence on subcultural analysis. In this perspective, subcultural styles can be decoded as texts, without having recourse to the subjective motivations of the group members. The structuralist perspective has been criticised since every phenomena is transformed into symbol: subculture becomes a matter of signifier and signified and loses sight of the real life of young people (P. Cohen 1986).



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

3. Subcultures from the Eighties on

From the Eighties on, the spread of dance music, rave, clubbers, and techno parties have stimulated the proliferation of subcultural studies. The extemporaneous quality of group membership should be underlined. Maffesoli (1988) elaborates the neo-tribal metaphor in order to analyze relationships between cultural homogenization and development of micro-groups, called "tribes". Membership is considered as a fluid succession of emotions (Bennet 1999). Thornton's (1996) concept of sub-cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) refers to the fact that some groups demonstrate an underground taste, with regard to mass culture, in order to increase their own status. Looking at the last cited authors (Maffesoli 1988; Bennet 1999; Bourdieu 1986; Thornton 1996), post-subculturalists sustain it is no longer possible to consider subculture as a reflection of class background. Youth subcultures are the product of a thoughtful individual choice (Redhead 1990; Muggleton 2000). Some use the term «lifestyle» to refer to subcultural groups (Miles 2000). Williams (2011), however, criticizes the term «post-subculture», maintaining that subculture members are always defined in contrast to a mainstream culture. In the last twenty years, the above illustrated debate has been considered in relationship to computer mediated communication (CMC) (Robards and Bennet 2011; Castells 1996).

The relationship between subcultures and CMC is deep, so much so that some speak of an online community as an electronic network of communication with a shared purpose (Jenkins 2006). Robards and Bennet (2011), in particular, study the post-subcultural direction which has involved subcultural studies with reference to Social Network Sites. In



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

this regard, considering the use of Web platforms, scholars speak of digital subcultures (McArthur 2009). On the one hand, Internet is considered a medium which keeps barriers between groups and reinforces subculture membership; and on the other, it provides platforms which allow crossover among styles. In this final sense, the interpretation of the subcultural issue comes close to a post-subcultural interpretation. In this regard, some studies emphasize characteristics of hybridization of sub-cultural groups (D'Andrea 2008; Torkelson 2010).

4. Future scenarios: subculture and European jihadist terrorism

It appears that the explanatory potential of the term subculture has not yet been fully explored. Subcultures should be placed in relation with the contemporary global context in which geopolitical, technological, and socio-economic dimensions interact complexly. In such a perspective, the concept of subculture is current and in the last years it has been applied to jihadist terrorism (Roy 2007, 2015a; PISOIU 2015a, 2015b; COTTEE 2011). Many arguments come to the support of this approach.

First of all, Roy (2015a), when he analyzes the individual stories of young Europeans or Americans involved in jihadist terrorist activities, observes that many of them had been involved in acts of petty delinquency and had committed petty crimes which often involved drug delinquency or had engaged in drug dealing before joining terrorist groups. These crimes are typical for gang members and people who belong to criminal subcultural groups (Roy 2015a, 3).



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

The cases considered by Roy (2015a) dealt with young people like Mohammed Merah, the Kouachi brothers or the members of the so-called Dutch Hofstad group. Before they converted or joined terrorist group, they shared a youth culture that had nothing to do with the Islamic religion. Also Michael Adebowale (a former member of the “Woolwich boys” gang), Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein (a former member of the “Brothas” gang) just to cite another two examples, are attackers who had formerly belonged to subcultural groups such as gangs.

Roy (2015a) therefore maintains that radicalization – or we might better say, and this is a term which we will use later on, the islamization of radicalism – has the characteristics of a youth movement. It is a peer phenomenon. Young people turned to radicalism within a framework of a small network of friends. This happened in their daily activities in urban suburbs, in jails, or on the Web.

Secondly, as a further support of subcultural interpretation, Roy (2007; 2015a) claims that the ties with the Middle East of young Europeans or Americans involved in jihadist terrorist activities are modest when compared to their life experiences in American or European metropolises. Considering the lives of Western individuals involved in jihadist terrorist activities – such as the lives of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, Nidal Malik Hasan, Daniel Patrick Boyd, Bryant Neal Vinas – Roy et al. (2010) note that their ties with the Middle East are less relevant in comparison to their ties with the European or American metropolises where they lived, studied or worked.

Thirdly, the above mentioned individuals were not devout Muslims. Quite the contrary, they showed a knowledge of the religion which was



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

rather limited. These people were young and had few ties with the Muslim community, but they experienced a teenage fascination for a distant and exotic context and used the Web to become a part of a *virtual ummah* (Roy et al. 2010; Roy 2015a; Pisiou 2015a).

For example, when considering the case of the foreign fighters, the majority of European foreign fighters who went to Syria did not show signs of having a relevant knowledge of the religion or of having a past history of political militancy (Roy 2015a), which should not be surprising, given their young age. Then they were not people who belonged to a frustrated Muslim community, as the high rate of religious converts among the foreign fighters demonstrates (Roy 2015a). The radicalized youth do not represent Islamic tradition; but, quite the opposite, they break with their fathers' religion (Roy 2007, 53). The breaking point comes when they suddenly join a terrorist group or when they have a conversion. In the majority of cases considered by Roy (2015a), the radicalization of the young people occurs amid the dismay and desperation of their parents and relatives.

Supporting the subcultural interpretation is the fact that, when the cases of groups of young occidental jihadist terrorists are analyzed, it is difficult to find homogeneity in ethnic terms. For example, the Dutch terrorist group Hofstad included people from many backgrounds, like Bouyeri, who was second generation European of Moroccan ancestry, Martine van der Oeven, who was native European, and the brothers Jason and Jermaine Walters of African American origin (Roy 2007).

In other words, the decision of young Europeans to join terrorist groups derives from generational conflict and from nihilism embroiling native Europeans, especially those of non-European family origin. Gen-



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

erational conflict between fathers and sons and nihilism are the elements that drive some young people to join the most radical extremist group among those present in the European context (Roy 2015b; Maniscalco 2012). The jihadist terrorist ideas guarantee the highest level of refusal of *mainstream* culture, the most radical and total refusal. The two factors of identity strain just mentioned, generational conflict and nihilism, find only one extreme radical ensign on the market, the jihadist terrorist one.

Roy (2007, 2015b) concludes by noting that the young Europeans or Americans involved in jihadist terrorist activities have been commonly presented as cases of Islamic radicalization. Actually these are cases of Islamization of radicalism, or Islamization of young radicals who were former gang members or who belonged to subcultural groups: «They are a lost generations, unmoored from traditional societies and cultures, frustrated by Western society that does not meet their expectations. And their version of a global umma is both a mirror of and a form of revenge against the globalisation that has made them what they are» (Roy 2007,55-56).

In our opinion, Roy (2007; 2015a; 2015b) provides analytical motivations supporting the relevancy of the role subcultures play in jihadist terrorist affiliation. Also other scholars (Pisoiu 2015a; 2015b; Cotte 2011) have provided arguments supporting the role of subcultures in the study of why Western youths join jihadist terrorism. According to us, these arguments enrich and reinforce the importance of understanding subcultures.

Pisoiu (2015a) clearly and explicitly states that «contemporary European jihadism abroad is first and foremost a subculture. It is about lifestyle, experience and self-performance, and less about politics and reli-



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

gion» (Pisoiu 2015a, 167). In the studies on European jihadist terrorism, Pisoiu (2015b) feels that the terms «bricolage» and «homology» can be used. The meaning of traditional cultural elements is subverted into an extremist jihadist sense. For example: «A central role within “Pop Jihad” is played by “battle-Nasheeds” with highly militant lyrics. These Nasheeds are traditional chants focusing on the lyrics and thus providing the possibility to connect with the youth Rap and Hip-Hop cultures of the 1990s and early 2001» (Danschke 2013, 15).

Pisoiu (2015a) has identified multiple elements from subcultures in contemporary jihadist terrorism: «The subcultural side of it is very prominent though, with selfies, and a mix of mainstream and traditional symbols and style. This also explains why the majority of recruits tend to be male, rather young, and quite eager to show and prove themselves, while maintaining a distinct allure of cool» (Pisoiu 2015a, 168). In order to maintain a distinct allure of cool many make use of selfies, for example: «Selfies depict poses with guns and weaponry and Hollywood style professional pictures with anti-Western and jihadi slogans» (Pisoiu 2015a, 169).

The difference between the American approach and that adopted by the CCCS can also be found in the studies which have just been mentioned. Pisoiu (2015b) considers the case of four German foreign fighters and wonders if the traditional factors which try to explain subcultural affiliation are valid. In none of the cases do obstacles due to socio-economic conditions emerge. There is no evidence of limited access to education and training. Quite the contrary, Pisoiu (2015b) states that «it can most certainly be argued that class background is not a determinant of the motivation to get involved (in a terrorist group)» (Pisoiu 2015b,



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

21). Re-orientation towards alternative values does not happen because individuals failed to reach mainstream objectives, but because they feel unhappy, lost, frustrated, or they do not adapt to Western society.

Cottee (2011) also takes an interest in subcultures, although he arrives at different conclusions from Pisoiu (2015b). Cottee (2011), considering the case of English jihadist terrorists, favours socio-economic conditions as an explanatory factor. He adds to status frustration only a single element of strain: identity confusion due to the fact that second generation youth find themselves caught between two cultures and risk failing to adapt to the mainstream culture. These studies provide additional support to the validity and relevance of theorisation about subcultures. To conclude, in 2011, Chicoine affirmed at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association that: «The application of subculture theory to terrorist groups has not yet been accomplished, however it was earlier proposed by Ferracuti (1982), [...] at the conclusion of his work on terrorism in Italy [...]. Throughout the writings on terrorism, observations are made that are consistent with a subcultural explanation, however they are rarely the central subject of inquiry» (Chicoine 2011, 1). In the case of Occidental jihadist terrorism, the subcultural theory may become a relevant subject of inquiry in our opinion, and for the study of jihadist terrorism, it is necessary to privilege the subcultural perspective.



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

References

Aydemir, E., O. Roy and J.L. Brungière (2010), *Afghanistan and the Underwear Bomber*, in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, pp. 42-70.

Banfield, E.C. (1968), *The Unheavenly City: The Nature and the Future of Our Urban Crisis*, Boston: Little.

Becker, H.S. (1963), *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York: Free Press.

Bennet A. (1999), *Subcultures or Neo-tribes? Rethinking the Relationship between Youth, Style and Musical Taste*, in *Sociology*, 33(3), pp. 599-617.

Besnard, P. (1987), *L'anomie. Ses usages et ses fonctions dans la discipline sociologique depuis Durkheim*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Blau, J.R. and P.M. Blau (1982), *The Cost of Inequality: Metropolitan Structure and Violent Crime*, in *American Sociological Review*, 47, pp. 114-129.

Bourdieu, P. (1986), *The forms of capital*, in J. Richardson (ed.) (1986), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York: Greenwood, pp. 241-258.

Castells, M. (1996), *The Rise of the Network Society. The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, I, Malden, MA; Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Chicoine, S. (2011), *Explaining Terrorism: The Contribution of Subculture Theory*, Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas.

Cloward, R. and L. Ohlin (1960), *Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs*, New York: Free Press.

Cohen, A.K. (1955), *Delinquent Boys*, New York: Free Press.

Cohen, P. (1972), *Subcultural Conflict and Working Class Community*, *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 2, Birmingham: University of Birmingham.



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

Cohen, P. (1986), *Rethinking The Youth Question*, London: Institute of Education (Post Sixteen Education Centre Working Paper 3).

Cohen, P. (1997), *Subcultural Conflict and Working-Class Community*, in K. Gelder and S. Thornton (eds.) (1997), *The Subcultures Reader*, London-New York: Routledge, pp. 90-99.

Cohen, S. (1972), *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, London: MacGibbon&Kee.

Cottee, S. (2010), *Mind Slaughter: The Neutralizations of Jihadi Salafism*, in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33, pp. 330-352.

Cottee, S. (2011), *Jihadism as a Subcultural Response to Social Strain: Extending Marc Sageman's 'Bunch of Guys' Thesis*, in *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23(5), pp. 730-751.

Danschke, C. (2013), *"Pop Jihad": History and Structure of Salafism and Jihadism in Germany*, ISRM Working Paper Series, 2.

D'Andrea, F. (2008), *Il corpo in gioco. La sfida di un sapere interdisciplinare*, Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Durkheim, È. (1897), *Le Suicide. Étude de sociologie*, Paris: Alcan.

Erikson, K. (1962), *Notes on the Sociology of Deviance*, in *Social Problems*, 9, pp. 307-314.

Ferracuti, F. (1982), *A sociopsychiatric interpretation of terrorism*, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 463, pp. 129-140.

Foucault, M. (1975), *Surveiller et punir, naissance de la prison*, Paris: Gallimard.

Hall, S. and T. Jefferson (1976) (eds.), *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subculture in Post-War Britain*, London: Routledge.

Hirschi, T. (1969), *Causes of Delinquency*, Berkeley: University of California Press.



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

Hebdige, D. (1979), *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*, London: Methuen & Company.

Hebdige, D. (1988), *Hiding in the Light*, London: Comedia.

Horsburgh, N. and J. Javier (2004), *Jihadist Subculture of Terrorism in Spain*, Paper of 5th Global Conference Interdisciplinary.net.

Jenkins, H. (2006), *Fans, bloggers, and gamers*, New York: New York University Press.

Lagrange, H. (2010), *Le déni des cultures*, Paris: Seuil.

Lemert, E. (1967), *Human Deviance, Social problems, Social Control*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Maffesoli, M. (1988), *Le temps des tribus*, Paris: MeridiensKlincksieck.

Maniscalco, M.L. (2012), *Islam europeo. Sociologia di un incontro*, Milano: Franco Angeli.

Matza, D. and G. Sykes (1957), *Techniques of neutralization: A theory of delinquency* in *American Sociological Review*, 22, pp. 664-670.

Matza, D. and G. Sykes (1961), *Juvenile delinquency and subterranean values*, in *American Sociological Review*, 26, pp. 712-19.

Matza, D. (1964), *Delinquency and Drift*, New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.

McArthur, J.A. (2009), *Digital Subculture: A Geek Meaning of Style*, in *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 33 (1), pp. 58-70.

Merton, R.K. (1938), *Social Structure and Anomie*, in *American Sociological Review*, 3(5), pp. 672-682.

Merton, R.K. (1949), *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Glencoe: The Free Press.

Miles, S. (2000), *Youth lifestyles in a changing world*, Buckingham UK: Open University Press.



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

Miller, W.B. (1958), *Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency*, in *Journal of Social Issues*, 14(3), pp. 5-19.

Muggleton, D. (2000), *Inside Subculture. The Postmodern Meaning of Style*, Oxford: Berg.

Park, R.E. and E.W. Burgess (1921), *Introduction to the science of sociology*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Park, R.E. (1928), *Human Migration and the Marginal Man in American Journal of Sociology*, 33, pp. 881-893.

Park, R.E., E. Burgess, and R. McKenzie (1925), *The City*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pisoiu, D. (2015a), *Subculture: The third wave of European jihad*, in *Journal for Deradicalization*, pp. 163-170.

Pisoiu, D. (2015b), *Subcultural Theory Applied to Jihadi and Right-Wing Radicalization in Germany*, in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, pp. 9-28.

Redhead, S. (1990), *The End-of-the-Century Party: Youth and Pop Towards 2000*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Robards, B. and A. Bennet (2011), *MyTribe: Post-subcultural Manifestations of Belonging on Social Network Sites*, in *Sociology*, 45(2), pp. 303-307.

Roy, O. (2007), *Islamic Terrorist Radicalisation in Europe*, in S. Amghar, A. Boubekeur, M. Emerson (eds.) *European Islam - Challenges for Society and Public Policy*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, pp. 52-60.

Roy, O. (2015a), *What is the driving force behind jihadist terrorism? A scientific perspective on the causes/circumstances of joining the scene*, paper presented at BKA BundeskriminalamtHerbst-Tagung Autumn Conference 2015, 18-19 November 2015, "International Terrorism: How Can Prevention and Repression Keep Peace?"



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

Roy, O. (2015b), *La peur de l'islam. Dialogue avec Nicolas Truong*, La Tour-d'Aigues: Edition de l'Aube.

Sageman, M. (2004), *Understanding Terror Networks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sampson, R.J. and W.J. Wilson (1995), *Toward a Theory of Race, Crime and Urban Inequality*, in J. Hagan and R.D. Peterson (eds.), *Crime and Inequality*, Cal.: Stanford University Press, pp. 37-54.

Sellin, T. (1938), *Culture conflict and crime*, New York: Social Science Research Council.

Shaw, C.R. and H.D. McKay (1942), *Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Simmel, G. (1908), *Soziologie*, Leipzig: Verlag von Dunker & Humboldt.

Solivetti, L.M. (2013), *Immigrazione, società e crimine. Dati e considerazioni sul caso Italia*, Bologna: il Mulino.

Sykes, G. and D. Matza (1957), *Techniques of neutralization: a theory of deviance*, in *American Sociological Review*, 22, pp. 664-670.

Taylor, I. and L. Taylor (eds.) (1972), *Politics and Deviance: Papers from the National Deviancy Conference*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Thomas, W.I. and F. Znaniecki (1918-20) *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, Boston: Richard G. Badger.

Thrasher, F.M. (1927), *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thornton, S. (1995), *Club cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Torkelson, J. (2010), *Life After (Straightedge) Subculture*, in *Qualitative Sociology*, 33, pp. 257-274.

Whyte, W.F. (1943), *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.



anno VI, n. 2, 2016

data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

Williams, J.P. (2011), *Subcultural Theory: Traditions and Concepts*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Willis, P.E. (1977), *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Young, J. (1971), *The Drugtakers: The Social Meaning of Drug Use*, London: MacGibbon and Kee.



anno VI, n. 2, 2016
data di pubblicazione: 20 luglio 2016

Saggi

Abstract

Subcultures. State of the Art and Future Perspectives in Sociology

The article considers if the concept of subculture can still be used in sociology. This paper shows that subcultural perspective constitutes a recent point of view for the analysis of the phenomenon of jihadist terrorism involving native Europeans. A history of the concept will be considered along with theoretical perspectives with reference to explanatory factors of subcultural membership. Socioeconomic condition, cultural identity, housing placement and social control are explanatory factors of classical studies on subcultures. Issues of post-modernity and the evolution of ICT will also be considered. The aim is to consider the complex social framework and to define the sometimes dangerous contemporary role of subcultural membership.

Keywords: subculture; sociological theory; terrorism; youth studies; methodology.