Hipsters in their Natural Habitat

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What was I looking investigating?
• How this counterculture contributes to the ever changing modern world
• Hipsters in their ‘natural habitats’
• Determine different classifications of hipsters

Methods:
• Participant observation, cross referencing, and literature review
• Participant Observation Locations: Minneapolis, MN and Menomonie, WI

What is a hipster?:
• A postmodern subculture
• Young, urban, middle class adults and older teenagers
• First appeared in 1940 movement, particularly prominent beginning in 2010
• “Non-mainstream”
• Progressive or independent political views
• Alternate lifestyles

Theoretical Framework:
• Erving Goffman’s (1956) theory of dramaturgy
• All people are actors in their own life story, striving to convince the audience of their character or role
• The roles played in our everyday life gives a general idea of what’s expected from any given actor

“Props”:
• Through Goffman’s theory of dramaturgy, hipsters can define their differences in identity through the use of certain ‘props’
• Clothing, material objects and specific behaviors
• Specific to each individual identity
• Goffman calls this content

Previous Literature:
• Many elements of this counterculture coincide with other countercultures throughout the world
• Act of not being mainstream was a clear similarity between all peer reviewed literature pieces
• Hipsterism consists of stylistic innovations
• Hipster identities can cross, but those who associate with a certain group with crossing identities may be seen as a phony
• Classifications of hipsters: foodies, avant-garde (literary hipsters); post war subculture;
• Bohemian: Informal, ‘hippie’, outdoorsy
• The Clubber: Frequents the party scene (raves and nightclubs), wear ornate/loud clothing, branch of the “Club Kids” from the 80’s and 90’s
• The Loner: Prefers not to associate with others, introverted (horn rimmed glasses)

Results:
• Different classifications of hipsters were actually apparent in settings that those practicing hipsterism would occupy (locations previously stated)
• Those in the UW-Stout area that occupy the hipster status were seen with Mac computers, indicating perhaps some type of art major student
• Observations in Uptown Minneapolis resulted in quiet, ‘loner’ types to outspoken hipsters who seemed intense in conversation (about political beliefs, environmental causes, literature, etc.)
• Rare communication outside of their ‘hipster friends’
• Diverse crowds, ranging from ‘classy’, upscale hipsters to those who looked more ‘grunge’
• Frequency of male facial hair; mustaches, goatees, to full-fledge beards

Conclusion:
• Belonging to a subgroup, especially hipsters, prolongs their youth by socializing primarily within their selective group and using various designated props
• Gives a sense of prolonged adolescence
• Hipsters often forego the usual expected route of going to college, getting married, move to the suburbs and have the usual 2.5 children.
• Specific aspects of cultural capital are used to create their life’s drama
• We argue that neo-liberalism, considered in solely its economic dimension, is not only one of the structural causes responsible for the current financial crisis;
• Neo-liberalism in its cultural dimension have made being politically charged also ‘cool’ and consumable