

## **Frame Analysis and the Rock Scenes**

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### **Abstract**

*Historically arts and politics stand in close relation as most of the revolutionary ideas were supported by artists. Throughout a Gramscian perspective art has been always politicized if we consider that reproduces or opposes hegemony. Framing art-worlds offers insights to explain the experiences of the participants in the art making processes. When Rock and roll made its appearance in the United States the early fifties it was rejected by the establishment. Nowadays Rock is being assimilated by the mainstream culture through a process that the 'Situationists' called 'recuperation'. This study aims to investigate the rock scenes as globalized networks of collective resistance that are cyclically reborn in close relation to social movements. Reflecting on Blumer, Goffman and Becker theories we will build a basis for our theoretical dialogue.*

**Keywords:** collective behaviour, frame analysis, art-worlds, rock scenes

### **1. Introduction**

Sometimes it seems that our understanding concerning social movements can be very complicated containing evidence from the past influenced by the reflections of contemporary world. Our perception occasionally may surpass standardized 'performed' actions of leisure such as ceremonials or celebrations. We often explain past events based on contemporary conventions; however some actions may have had different significance for the participants when they actually took place. In this sense interpretation of the past may be construed and re-construed according to the current social developments and worldviews. So perspectives may change post factum as our thoughts often follow the current mindsets. Here we must recall Slovenian philosopher's Žižek interpretation of the Lacanian 'effect of retroversion' concerning the 'ideological anamorphosis' when sometimes instead of a linear and immanent progression in which meaning unfolds itself from some initial kernel, we may have a 'radically contingent process of retroactive production of meaning' (Žižek, 2003: 351). In such situations frame analysis can be very helpful as it involves not only in previous interpretations but it can also explore areas which have hitherto been largely ignored.

### **2. Rock Youth Cultures and Scenes**

Most of the Rock and roll influences are rooted in traditional African-American genres such as Gospel, Rhythm and blues and Jazz.

These genres were based on the old slave-work songs which usually contained subversive messages against the masters. In the early fifties when Rock and roll made its first explosion<sup>1</sup> in the United States, the establishment that controlled the mainstream art-world was outraged and considered this sound vulgar and low-brow (Walser, 1998). No one could ever foresee the success that was to follow in the growth of Rock and roll. Our analysis is focused on the socio-political significance of the rock scenes and their interaction with society. Soon after the fifties, rock music started to act as a '*critical meaning resource*' not only for the young but also for the older generations. According to Kotarba (1984) the '*becoming-of-self*' is a life-long socialization process that appoints the self as a unique experience within the context of contemporary social conditions and as a continuing sense of becoming active member in social change. Accordingly, Rock never ends to move people that have once participated in the rock scene and consequently they still use it as a source of meaning to construct lifestyles and to envision political and ethical issues as citizens (Kotarba 2002, 2005). In any case the rock scenes should be considered in close connection to the study of youth cultures but also in relation to many other subjects such as economics, politics, mass media, globalization and so forth.

The '*Functionalists*' perceived youth cultures as the intermediates that bridge the gap between childhood and adulthood roles, in other words as agencies that enable young people to create their own social identities (Parsons, 1942; Eisenstadt, 1956). Therefore, behaviours, styles, artworks and interests of the young were believed to function as effective mechanisms for socialization. Rock scenes in this respect were seen as operational ceremonies or in other words as the '*rites of passage*' from puberty to adulthood. From a Marxist perspective using the term '*subcultures*' the '*Birmingham Centre for the Contemporary Cultural Studies*' examined youth cultures and interpreted them mostly as rigid, long-lasting and in close relation to social class. The term '*neo-tribes*' that has its origin in the theory of the French sociologist Maffesoli (1996) has been adapted by the '*post-subcultural*' theorists to express more ephemeral and fluid social groups that include people coming from various social classes (Bennett, 1999). Nonetheless Straw (2001) believed that the term '*scene*' which is quite older can be more convenient for any analysis. This term can be efficient as a label for cultural unities whose precise boundaries are invisible and elastic. Thus, '*scene*' is very practical, flexible and anti-conditional. It can be easily restricted, expanded and arranged by the scholar using the proper adjectives.

In this sense the rock scenes can be mainstream or non-mainstream, constituted by networks of artists, critics, theorists, distributors and fans that are not necessarily related to certain social class categorizations, thus sometimes politically active, following particular lifestyles and worldviews. Individuals easily can join rock scenes for long or short periods of time and there is always a great possibility to shift from one scene to another. Certainly, you can get common denominators among the rock scenes such as record companies, distributors, critics, record stores, concert clubs or radio stations. Additionally, most of the rock genres share music elements connecting them back to the old Rhythm and blues and the African-American music tradition. Investigating the lifestyles of the rock scenes participants we can also bring forward common behaviours. Rock fans usually behave in particular ways that are characterized by disobedience, negation and rebellion against authorities<sup>2</sup>. Concerning fashion they mostly wear unconventional clothes with particular or eccentric hairstyles and regarding leisure they socialize in certain cult clubs and appreciate live rock music performances. Obviously anti-establishment behaviour can be related to the study of social movements. In this sense rock scenes analysis can reveal the ways in which participants play part in social movements rejecting the dominant cultural, economic and political values as long as they are staying committed to '*rules of irrelevance*' of rock. Goffman asserted that when an individual becomes engaged in a social activity it is very possible to become caught and carried away by '*engrossments*' (Goffman, 1961). Consequently, individuals may as well be stuck on a set of counter values of '*typical*' unconventional behaviours specified by a certain type of rock '*meaningfulness*' that fulfils them. According to Bauman (2013) late capitalism and the condition of '*liquid modernity*' overturned the social values of western societies, hesitated the past organizations and brought up forms of social grouping akin to '*swarms*'. In this respect the rock scenes can be considered as possible braces that support the alienated, oppressed and disempowered fans to confront the frenzy everyday circumstances in which they find themselves.

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<sup>1</sup>Rock and roll as mode of music can be traced many years earlier in songs performed by Trixie Smith, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Ella Fitzgerald et al, (Friedlander, 1996).

<sup>2</sup>Often psychiatrists diagnose adolescent anti-authoritarian behaviour as the mental illness '*oppositional defiant disorder*' (Levine, 2008).

Additionally DeNora (2008) suggested that music is not just a device through which selves are managed, it can be also a template for ways of thinking and a catalyst for modes of motivation. Indeed, rock scenes can reinforce and sustain social movements. There is no doubt that music has been often used by social movements as the workshop for the formation of political action. Eyerman and Jamison (1998) have already considered music as an interrelated medium that links social movements and cognitive praxis.

Roy (2010) has concentrated on the relation of social movements and music in the United States reflecting that the old left and the civil rights movement have been always using music and that Folk music even when separated from activism still carried out '*leftist overtones*'. The purpose of our study is to investigate the rock scenes as globalized networks of collective resistance in relation to social movements and outline the potentialities that frame analysis offers for a methodical comprehension of the subject.

### **3. Art worlds, frame analysis and social movements**

The originality of art has always been a favorite subject for discussion among philosophers, art scholars and professionals that work in the culture industry. Becker (1974) did not address to this subject as an eternal transcendental philosophical question but as a practical problem. He emphasized that each work of art is the cooperate product of a group. The real difference that makes a material product a piece of art is nothing more than a social convention that is the outcome of a process similar to social labeling committed mostly by the '*art-worlds*' (Manfio, 2014). '*Art labeling*' depends usually on the determination and the power that certain social groups hold in specific time and place. The entire concept of the art-world is based on a tautology, therefore art-world is a network of people whose cooperative activities are organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things and producing the kind of artworks that art-world is noted for (Becker, 1982). Artistic work like most other human activities involves usually the interaction of a large number of people. This is very evident in the production of music because apart from the musicians there is a group of people '*behind-the-scenes*' such as impresarios, producers, technicians, photographers, video directors, marketing personnel, critics, deejays and many others that all contribute until the final products arrive to consumers. Actually art-worlds have no clear boundaries as it is very difficult to define precisely the exact number of people that contribute for the absolute perception of an artwork by the audience. However, for practical reasons when the involvement of certain individuals to the artistic process is insignificant or remote these individuals cannot be regarded as artists. Things can be much more complicated if we include opinion leaders or audiences perception in the process of art production as they definitely contribute for the evaluation of the artwork's value. More precisely Becker (1982) suggested that art-making can be studied easier if we take in to account two phases in this processes. The '*upstream*' phase when the artwork is inspired and materialized. Very often, during this phase the choices about materials, methods and forms are so conventional and codified that can be handled almost unconscious. Thus, people who cooperate in music-making usually rely on regular sets of instruments, techniques, tones, average song lengths and other familiar arrangements that have become part of the conventional way of doing things in music industry.

'Conventions regulate the relations between artists and audience, specifying the rights and obligations of both. An attack on sacred aesthetic beliefs as embodied in particular conventions is, finally, an attack on an existing arrangement of ranked statuses' (Becker 1974, p.771). The second phase is called '*downstream*' and includes all social developments and changes that come about, in close relation to the artwork, after leaving the hands of the '*conventional creator*'. Thus, downstream contains all crucial events that historically arrive after the synthesis such as distribution, economic values, critiques, audience interpretations, ownerships, social influence and so forth. What is interesting analytically in downstream is that in this phase originates the comprehension of artworks through time and space like infinite processes in terms of ideology, morality, popularity, advertising, publicity, propaganda and so on and their relationships with politics and activism. According to Blumer (1969) when people get impulses, desires or emotions that cannot be fulfilled by the existing social context, they get anxious and fall into confusion. As a result they may experience strong sentiments of dissatisfaction, restlessness, insecurity, alienation and loneliness.

This 'state of unrest' that is created in conditions lacking the necessary regulatory social instruments for reinstatement may bring about collective turmoil and anger. The most extreme form of this turmoil situation is the collective neurotic behavior<sup>3</sup>. According to Blumer (1951), social movements have also their incentives to 'social unrest' just like the elementary collective behaviors. However a social movement as collective process that strives for the emersion of a new order of life finally gains an organization similar to a community. 'Specific' social movements have definite objectives and engage practical operations for social change. On the other hand the 'expressive' movements do not have often a direct effect on social change. Their expressive actions mostly aim to demonstrate impulses, social tendencies, sentiments and mental states of the participants. They constitute expressive forms of collective behavior that sometimes may have profound effects upon the social order.

Even 'Fashion movements' in the long run may contribute to the formation of the 'Zeitgeist' supporting the grounds of a new social structure. Individuals experience social reality from particular perspectives. These perspectives can be shaped by frames<sup>4</sup> that people use to organize their collective experiences. Goffman in his book 'Frame Analysis' (1974) was not focused on the description of a systematic structure concerning social life but mostly on the way people experience social activities. Goffman came across frames in order to answer the question: *what is really going on here?*

In brief, frame analysis can be considered as a method that reviews, in given terms of time and space, the layers of cognitive structures which guide reality perceptions and representations of the participants during a social activity. In this sense, a frame can be considered a particular set of conceptual cognitions, beliefs and theoretical perspectives that organize the experiences and guide the actions of individuals and groups in respect to a certain activity. On the other hand, Goffman clearly accepted that it would be unreasonable to say that reality is totally created by individuals: reality is also pre-given by environmental, historical and other factors. Regarding frame analysis, frames and keys organize experiences in a particular codified way<sup>5</sup>. Sometimes, social actions that are framed in terms of primary frames do not make a sense or at least they seem without a prospect to the viewer. Investigating another layer set up on the primary frame, a possible 'keying' may take place to those actions that will provide the viewer with the specific meanings and possible prospects of the participants. In this sense frame analysis is not the concentration and investigation of a defined enclosure like the examination of a picture, it is more like the study of succeeding additional layers that each of them gives light to different experiences and aspects of a certain social fact. Frame analysis can be a useful analytical tool examining mass media, culture and society. As a matter of fact, frame analysis of social events can be very convenient to understand in a multi-dimensional way the actions, the organization and socio-psychological complications concerning politics. Although a fully acceptable method of frame analysis has never been developed properly (Koenig 2004) many scholars utilized framing to investigate the social movements (Tarrow, 1983a; 1983b; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988). Frames are powerful rhetorical entities that can enrich our perceptions concerning the rock scenes in relation to socio-political aspects and more specifically in relation to social movements. Through different frames the various activities of participants in rock scenes can be understood as forms of teenage rebellion, political participation, commerce, entertainment and so forth, therefore frames enlighten different facets of social reality.

#### **4. Investigating the rock scenes**

We will present briefly some examples of frame analysis concerning the investigation of the rock scenes in relation to social movements from different periods of time and set the question: *what was really going on there?* In order to do this we will initially set the general primary frames of each period and by adding layers we will be focusing finally on specific events where actions and experiences will be inspected.

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<sup>3</sup> At this point it is very interesting to mention the 'dancing frenzies' of the middle ages, a mass psychogenic illness that took place in central Europe when periodically groups of neurotic people were dancing erratically sometimes thousands at a time, until they collapsed from exhaustion (Rosen, 1968).

<sup>4</sup>The term frame was first introduced by Bateson an English anthropologist and social scientist in 1955. (Tannen, 1993).

<sup>5</sup>Goffman annotates in a footnote of his book 'Frame Analysis' that linguists use the word 'code' to refer to what he calls primary framework (Goffman, 1974: 44).

#### 4.1 The rock n roll scene

In the beginning of the twentieth century in the United States certain factors such as the sound technology, the growth of the record companies and the appearance of independent labels together with the expansion of radio and television culture set about a potent ground for the advance of the music industry. Further the interactions within a growing urban population that included Afro-Americans and folkloric artists initialized to install gradually a network of people that shared a common knowledge of music-making operating on the basis of new artistic conventions. In 1951 Alan Freed a deejay from Cleveland was the first that played a Blues-like music to white audience and called it '*Rock and roll*'. This music typically involved steel-string acoustic guitars amplified through loudspeakers, overwhelming upright bass, drums and a vocalist. In 1953 Elvis Presley, the person that was meant to be one of the most significant cultural symbols of the twentieth century met Sam Phillips a progressive music businessman. Together they started recording songs in the Sun Studios of Memphis. Other developments occurring at that time such as the rise of the suburban nuclear family and the increase of the average household income changed everyday life. Cinema and teenage television programs on the other hand formed the '*schemes of conduct*' that teenagers willingly imitated and followed. Beyond doubt during the fifties Rock and roll became a symbol for the agitated teenagers. In the first place we will discuss about experiences of the people that worked in the music industry and the consumers of the music products in a frame that freezes hypothetically the late fifties. The examination of this frame reveals that Rock and roll scene professionals together with the fans experienced generally a sense of '*what is going*' in the context of labour and market affairs. Thus the organizational grounds of this frame belong to the rational and utilitarian realm and can be explained extensively throughout the prism of economics. However from a sociological point of view the exchange theories made by Homans (1961) and Blau (1970) can be also useful. Participants based their contacts by conducting mostly economic transactions, aiming for the best rewards with less expense and acting according their past market experiences. This general frame includes people that take part in the '*upstream*' and the '*downstream*' phases of the artistic production such as musicians, fans and all the people that work in the music industry (impresarios, producers, technicians, marketing assistants, deejays, et al.). Thereafter, the participants here are engaged in exchanging services, products and money. Rock-stars, records, accessories, concert tickets, salary rates, marketing strategies and billboards are factors that gave meaning for this frame's actions. In effect, Rock and roll music was selling more than seventy five million dollars in records each year (Bertrand, 2000: 20) so certainly this fact affected experiences, performances and the reasoning of many participants in the rock scene.

Attaching another broad layer to the first frame we can illustrate how actions of particular groups influenced and shaped specific political and social developments in the United States. The examination of what is going on at this layer is closely related to politics and more specifically to the growing African-American Civil Rights Movement<sup>6</sup>. The American society in those days was indeed racially divided and segmented. Rock and roll which already conveyed the racial stigma of Rhythm and blues was simply described by the traditional press as '*suggestive and vulgar*' (Miller, 1999:133) and it was seen negatively by most of the social institutions. Congressman Emanuel Celler, journalist Vance Packard, the '*American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers*' or even priests like Cardinal John Stritch and Reverend Jimmy Snow were actively involved against Rock and roll as they were afraid that this kind of music could cause population mixing, something that according to their mentality was against the socio-political values of the American society<sup>7</sup>. Hence, in many cities integrated concerts of coloured and white audiences were illegal. Progressive people that participated to the core processes of the artistic creation begun to break down the long standing prejudices of racial segregation. Those '*mavericks*' were no longer willing to follow the conventions of the established music world and presented rebellious behaviours<sup>8</sup>. Performers like Presley had no doubts that the sound which made them famous had roots in the African-American music and were positive concerning the equalitarian movement for a more integrated society<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>Obviously the layer of economic sphere that we have already mentioned was closely related to race discriminations as the labour market in the American society was racially segmented (Freeman, R. et al. 1973).

<sup>7</sup>For more information concerning the rejection of the Rock and roll see Szatmary, 2007: 23 and Bertrand, 2000: 161.

<sup>8</sup>Becker (1976: 708) categorized artists with reference to the degree to which they follow collective actions of the art-worlds. '*Mavericks*' are the artists who take part in the conventional art-world but find it unacceptably constraining to the point where they no longer want to conform to its conventions.

<sup>9</sup>Elvis Presley in a 1956 interview explained that the African-American musicians had been playing this music for many years and that he got this sound from them (Miller, 1999: 136). Many other musicians supported equalitarian socio-political lines such Buddy Holly, Carl Perkins et al. (Coleman, 2006: 169).

Apart from the musicians many other people of the music industry can be framed experiencing the Rock and roll scene as a battlefield for the African-American Civil Rights Movement such as certain producers like Sam Phillips or deejays like Alan Freed. But most of all the development of the Rock and roll scene advanced and reshaped the attitudes of numerous young fans towards a more democratic and integrated society<sup>10</sup>. Reshaped viewpoints concerning the value system of the young people can be traced in the realization of 'integrated' Rock and roll concerts where people were interacting regardless their race. Still, the political establishment did not approve and tried to control the situation. Nonetheless, regulations, imposing restrictions had negative effects on the youth and motivated tensions that often led to riots. One of the most noteworthy youth riot occurred during a concert in Boston on May 1958. The concert was called the 'Big Beat Show' and it was organised by Alan Freed, starring Buddy Holly & the Crickets, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis and many others. The concert audience was mixed concerning class, gender, religion and race. Participants experienced the riot not just as a teenage rumble but they actually saw it as a struggle for liberty underlining the importance of civil rights regarding race discrimination. After that concert Mayor John Hines banned Rock and roll in Boston (Jackson, 1991). Frame alignment can reveal that some groups demonstrate a 'resonance of experience' as they realize their individual utilitarian interests, however they were no longer willing to follow traditional conventions and got involved into specific actions supporting the civil rights movement. Participants in this concert came to terms with an unpleasant external social reality and used music to react.

In this sense Rock and roll can be considered as an 'expressive social movement', an agency that inspired people to realize issues such as racism, social segregation and discrimination. Framing other events we can enrich our understanding concerning the significance of the fifties rock scene. Accordingly, working on layers illustrating aspects on youth cultures, class, status, gender, sexuality, age or globalization we can unlock coded complexions where specific definitions of situations and their explanations can be added to the total context of the analysis. For example, examining an event through a layer that introduces divisions of the fifties youth cultures such as hepcats, hipsters, teenyboppers, greasers, rockabillys, ivy leagues, squares, pink ladies, motorcycle outlaws and beatniks can give access to valuable information concerning their ideologies and their involvement to social movements. Certainly, aligning frames could lead us to conclusions concerning social homologies but we must be careful as Middleton (1990) argues that theories like these usually end up in sociological reductionism.

#### 4.2 The sixties scene

Next, we will investigate the grounds of the agitated sixties when a great number of events took place and shook American society, to name a few the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, the Cuban missile crisis or the Vietnam War. In the same context significant social movements related to political issues raised a series of demonstrations in many cities (Tilly & Wood, 2015). After the mid-sixties Rock has been transformed and developed into many different genres such as hard rock, psychedelic rock, garage, southern rock, folk rock et al. The music sets usually included electric guitars, electric bass, drums, vocals and keyboards. While Rock and roll in the fifties was supposed to be a teenage music, the rock scene of the sixties had a wider appeal. The acceptance of Rock as a substantial music category eventually begun with discussions in dozens of magazines, journals and newspapers. Hence as Rock was becoming globally more popular, the major record companies such as RCA, Decca, Capitol and a few others saw the rock scene as a treasure trove. The rapid development of music technologies, the spreading of beatnik literature and philosophy together with certain political arguments that were taking place in the public sphere due to the military intervention in south-east Asia originated a new type of politically charged rock music. Apart from American musicians such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Jimi Hendrix or the Doors many British groups such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Kinks and the Animals which initiated the commonly known 'British Invasion' set off a great rock wave that boosted the record sales.

All those groups generally supported the anti-establishment phenomenon that was called the 'sixties counterculture'. This period most of the rock scenes came to hesitate the establishment norms and proposed alternative ways of action. Rock songs and folk ballads including pro-civil rights and anti-war lyrics influenced politically the western youth culture and inspired people to get involved actively in social movements. Listening to rock music actually became a conscious political expression and a way of supporting rebellion, freedom, peace and social equality.

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<sup>10</sup>This is reflected mostly in the succeeding changes of the American value system in the sixties when variant policies supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Next, we will describe the domain of rational economic actions that took place within the rock scene of the sixties and try to evaluate people's experiences. For a better understanding of this broad frame we must take into account developments that had been unfolded through time concerning the particular domain of everyday life. Normally individuals had no difficulty to grasp the current organization of labour and market relations in the mainstream rock scenes. People that interacted everyday within those sectors were experiencing social relations by taking into account their self-interests and the new economic developments. However new arrangements that were brought up by the rapid advance of marketing strategies targeted to the massive commercialization of the youth lifestyles. Again the key concepts that were recognized consciously or unconsciously as meaningful and could motivate individuals included rock stars, concerts, albums, accessories and so on. All these implements were perceived by the employers of the music industry as products manufactured for the mass market while the fans saw them as goods for private consumption, entertainment and self-expression. If we compare this frame with its equivalent from the fifties on the basis of rational economic action the participants' experiences were more or less the same. Next we can examine another layer that gives light to the experiences of participants associated to altruistic values and the formation of emblematic communities. In order to examine 'what is going on here' we must go through the theoretical perspectives of political contention. Investigating an event such as the 'Woodstock Festival' which took place in the summer of 1969 and was one of the largest music gatherings of the era can be a good example. The audience was mixed concerning class, gender, religion and race. The festival was granted by the promoters as 'an Aquarian Exposition: 3 Days of Peace and Music' and performed bands such as the Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, the Grateful Dead, Country Joe and the Fish, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and many others. The concert was designed as a profit-making project by four entertainment businessman (Lang, Roberts, Rosenman and Kornfeld) based on a business plan but finally became a free concert. Although what was practically happening in Woodstock was a rock concert, in terms of this layer, lyrics such as 'got to revolution' can reveal 'what was really going on there'. Participation was experienced not as entertainment but as an effort to achieve political demands. A great part of the art-world and mostly the singers with their acts and their songs provided particular emblems calling for collective identity formation processes in relation to the anti-establishment movement. Actually most of the anti-war protests emerged in that period was using emblems, narratives and codes of the rock culture. People have already developed a 'we consciousness' and were able to recognize their struggle for social change. Apparently, there have been numerous intersections between an expressive and a specific social movement clarifying that the rock scenes often merge with politics.

#### 4.3 The punk scene

Punk rock emerged in the beginnings of the seventies and its origins are traced back in the American garage punk scene of the late sixties. Punk songs tended to be short and intense at fast-tempo with hard-edged melodies, played by fuzzy distorted electric guitars, bass, drums and cynically dissonant vocals. Malcolm McLaren together with a young fashion designer Vivienne Westwood opened a punk fashion shop in London, originally called 'Let It Rock', for the sole purpose of 'smashing the English culture of deception' (McLaren, 2007). However some years later McLaren by managing the group Sex Pistols introduced the particular style that characterized the punk rock scene globally. Punk rock has been many times connected with postmodern relativism, fragmentation, superficiality and vanity. Although the mainstream punk was characterized as a confrontational, anti-establishment *détournement*<sup>11</sup> ('hijacking') it was in fact politically and ideologically fragmented in a great number of social groups that all of them, more or less reflected positions of negation, disapproval, subversion, conflict and irony against the establishment. At that time in Great Britain there were high rates of inflation and unemployment setting an overall atmosphere of social discontent. All these brought about many strikes and demonstrations across the public and private sectors and other kinds of manifestations against the government policies<sup>12</sup>. Although punk was semi-commercialized since the beginning, considering some shops of Kings Road and Carnaby Street, at the same time it expressed antithesis towards capitalism and consumerism. Strangely, punk rock associated youth fashion with ideas and symbolism from extreme and oppositional socio-political views and attitudes including anarchy, far-left politics, green radicalism, situationism, auto-destructionism, nihilism, atheism, neo-fascism, hooliganism, feminism, vegetarianism, gay rights, animal rights and many others.

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<sup>11</sup>The term 'détournement' refers to all artistic representations and techniques that turn the expressions of capitalism and its culture against itself (Douglas 2010).

<sup>12</sup>The winter of 1978–79 was actually named the 'winter of discontent' in Great Britain as a widespread strike movement took place which was the largest strike wave since 1926.

Thus the punk scene was always providing space for antithesis and expression to the oppressed and underprivileged social groups, minorities or marginal voices such as women, gays, lesbians, anti-racists, racists, immigrants et al. Nearly any social group had the potential to be engaged with the punk scene as long as it was extreme oppositional, radical or against the status quo.

Following, we will briefly discuss the interactions within the commercial environment in which the British punk rock scene took place during the seventies and the early eighties. Although initially most of the first generation punk groups such as the Clash, the Sex Pistols, the Buzzcocks<sup>13</sup>, Siouxsie and the Banshees and many others acted using alternative modes of making art, after the explosion of punk and despite the fact that they were all against consumerism rejecting the art establishment, finally they got integrated into the conventional networks of music industry. They were promoted by major record labels such as CBS, EMI, A&M or Virgin Records with great success in the charts like the usual pop stars. Most of the participants framed here shared common perspectives in the way in which the art industry and the market economies were working. Individuals experienced what was happening as employees interacting in diverse working groups that coordinate the music industry. Initially musicians perceived reality as *'mavericks'* refusing the standards of the art-world but finally oriented themselves in the conventional market rules. The fans on the other side were experiencing the punk scene as common consumers paying to buy music products and fashion accessories. *'Trash fashion'* and *'do it yourself style'* was very important for punk rock scene participants, however in contemporary societies fashion gets always commercialized and controlled by the marketing strategies of the fashion industry. Yet by consuming punk products the audience was expressing symbolically rebellion, nonconformity and resistance. Participants experienced all these performances as real within the context of rational economic sphere in the same way things had happened in the past. However at the same time there were groups that never been affected by commercialization and remained engaged to independent labels such as Small Wonder Records, Beggars Banquet Records or Rough Trade Records, working just in the limits of the system. Others made their own labels operating out of the conventional modes of production and distribution like Crass records, Spiderleg records, Blurgh records and Corpus Christi Records.

The actors of this particular art-world together with their fans interacted within genuine, participatory and non-commercial networks. Thus, some groups in this frame were acting arbitrarily out of the established modes of labour and market organization<sup>14</sup>. In terms of a second broad layer what was happening was practically an expressive movement of discontent against economic government policies carrying exaggerated eccentric outlooks, radical lyrics and aggressive behaviour of the participants. Indeed, since the Sex Pistols released the song *'Anarchy in the UK'* the punk music and anarchy became closely related. This rhetorical connection, as well as the swastika and the SS symbols that punks sometimes used to tag on, emphasized a post-modernist vanity character or maybe the triviality, sarcasm, anger and fluidity that labelled the expressions of the mainstream punk rock scene. At the same time for some social groups that were also on the core of the punk scene the connection between punk and anarchy held a stronger political engagement and projected a utopian promise.

As we have already noted when we investigated the punk scene in terms of the economic actions, there were some radical changes occurring in the way certain groups organized and experienced their coordinated networks. Those bands rejected exclusively the conventional art-world, art-marketing and the prevalent star-system. They built networks for alternative and participatory modes of music-making that included homemade labels, unconventional artistic formats, bootleg recordings, tape exchanges, non-profit underground distribution channels and so on. Apparently they had initialized a utopian art-world beyond the limits of the capitalistic system. Their networks had no central administration and no hierarchical organization providing subsidy and sponsorship to artworks and recordings for many other performers and social groups<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup>The Buzzcocks made the first British punk homemade record with their *EP 'Spiral Scratch'* that was released by their own label 'New Hormones records' in 1977 (Dunn, 2016).

<sup>14</sup>At this point we would like to note that there had always been musicians since the birth of Rock and roll acting through non-commercial networks. Obviously people trying simply to record their own music with their own equipment. Establishing small independent record labels existed since the invention of the vinyl but they were still commercial in the sense they aimed to make profit and functioned within the conventional sphere of the economy. The underground punk rock scene networks worked outside and against the sphere of conventional production and commerce yet they had a global diffusion in a world that internet did not exist.

<sup>15</sup>The Crass was formed in 1977 around the Dial House community which was established by Penny Rimbaud and played a central role in the anarcho-punk scene. They followed a disorganized and unconditional open door policy, supporting



In order to enhance our understanding apropos how people experienced what was going, we may frame the 'Zig Zag Club Squat Festival' a twenty-four-hour event coordinated by the Crass that took place in 1982 at Westbourne Park in West London. Here we actually get hundreds of people participating in a free non-violent event with live groups, free beer and soup. Some of the groups that played that day were *Poison Girls*, *Conflict*, *Flux of Pink Indians*, *Crass and Dirt* and many others. The participants were mixed concerning class, gender, religion and race. There were no vandalism although there was no security in the festival. The people symbolically perceived and experienced the events as a protest and a rejection against the establishment. Lyrics and meanings of songs such as 'Do They Owe Us A Living' or 'So What' can express that 'what was going on there' was not just a twenty-four-hour concert but an act of rebellion. The investigation of the 'Zig Zag Club Squat Festival' points out that the participants expressive behaviours can be perceived as conscious efforts for certain political objectives. Most participants of this core punk scene had already developed socio-political group identities and were able to recognize and organize their struggle for social change. Obviously, there was an overlap between an expressive and specific social movement as a particular branch of the punk rock scene had practically fused with the anti-authoritarian movement. In this sense the punk scene can be seen as a platform or an experimental and radical laboratory for social critique and protest. Framing many other events coordinated by social groups from inside the punk scenes such as the first gig of *Sex Pistols* in *Saint Martin's School of Art* in 1975, the *Middlesbrough Rock Garden Punk Concert* smashed by neo-Nazi skinheads in 1980 or the *Stop the City* demonstration in 1983, we may end up to many other aspects such as the extreme and oppositional political identities that were included in the punk scene.

## **5. Conclusions**

Frame analysis can help us to organize our understanding concerning the experiences of the people involved in certain situations in terms of their behavioural routines, values and norm systems. A boxing game if framed without reference may be modelled by a remote observer as a fight, but certainly its purpose is quite different. Framing the same act by taking into account different 'keyings' the observer can conclude that the participants may experience boxing as a fight, as a sport or as a profitable show business. Likewise, framing the same art-worlds by taking into account each time different codes reveals diverse perceptions of reality by the participants. We investigated particular events related to the rock scene by linking different frames of observation and came to the conclusion that participants were experiencing 'what was happening' as cultural producers or consumers and as followers of certain social movements. There is no doubt that music has the power to synchronize and mobilize the kinetic functions of the bodies but could we suppose that the same can happen for social activism? The works of Goffman, Becker and Blumer can provide the appropriate tools of analysis in order to puzzle out some of the aspects concerning the question of how music influences social behaviour. The observation of certain celebrations that came across with social movements revealed that music in fact has the power to synchronize and mobilize social motivation. Therefore, there is a relation between music scenes and politics. Finally every form of artistic practice contributes or not to the reproduction of the establishment and in this sense art always has a political dimension.

A great part of the art-world regularly considers art as a part of the economic system. However the framing of the particular scenes gave a clear picture that a great part of the rock musicians and their fans experienced actions also as forms of political antithesis. Yet some radical social groups consider the rock music scene as a community, as a way of life and a medium for social change. World representations and collective identities that are developed through the rock scenes can facilitate the evolution of alternative and progressive social movements based on advanced solidarity bonds. A social practice such as a rock concert today may recall a typical arrangement of events that are almost programmed within the limits of entertainment. Although rock concerts can be considered as usual profitable music ceremonials that follow pre-established patterns they are also social processes that have been changing through time. As we have noted, back in the fifties in the United States the situation was different. The social conventions concerning this type of entertainment were quite diverse in many ways. Initially such celebrations were racially segmented and controlled, reflecting the social values of the epoch.

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actions against any authority and resistance to the mass-capitalist modes of cultural production. Their approach to music-making was spontaneously innovative, establishing participatory complexes for performing, recording, distribution, publishing and many other functions. The Crass inspired the creation of a new generation artists and similar networks worldwide.

Rock music serves as a catalyst for modes of social action and motivation like the legendary bird 'Phoenix' that renews itself in fire. Rock scenes have been repeatedly used by social movements as workshops for the formation of social activism towards particular goals<sup>16</sup>. Frame analysis helps us to realize the various modes in which people experience social life and attempt to influence other people and situations by communicating messages about the individual, the social groups and the social context. In our study we did not develop a discourse trying to figure out if the rebellious senses that rock music raises are endemic, immanent, arbitrary or consciously constructed. Maybe, similarly to the Pavlovian theory of classical conditioning music cognition has been cultured by rock music to associate subconsciously some particular music elements with subversion and revolution in connection to their roots of the traditional slave-work songs. Maybe there is a component that always remains and constitutes the identity of rock music, even if all other properties have degraded; an element that stresses specific emotional evocation, common in all rock genres and rock scenes; an element that denotes restlessness, disobedience and revolt in all social arrangements and in all possible worlds. Maybe is the 'surplus' in the object that Žižek(1989: 252) has noted which has something more than itself, that is to say the Lacanian object 'petit a' that we search in vain for it in positive reality because it has no positive consistency, because it is just an objectification of a void. Yet, restlessness, disobedience and revolt have become rooted as a major feature of the rock culture.

Despite the fact that social movements presuppose distinctive collective identities this does not mean that their participants share coinciding and matching identities. Expressive movements such as the rock scenes can be very close to the social movements and can share common features. Rock scenes can be open, fluid, fragmented and spontaneous celebrations with no strict rules. They can participate, coordinate and support social movements and sometimes can be transformed to social movements. Rock scenes actually can be considered as intermediate laboratories that have the potentiality to modify the elementary forms of collective action into specific social movements. On the other hand, historically different rock scenes have supported a great range of ideological positions. Rock music has always been the medium of expression for many different political settings and directions. In this sense we believe that all rock scenes without any exception provide to their audiences the senses of individual freedom and social antithesis to status quo, supporting and incorporating as catalysts specific social movements.

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<sup>16</sup>Some possible correlations can be mentioned in Folk music and the American left, peace movement with the hippies, Red Wedge and the Labour Party, anarcho-punk and the Black Bloc, and so on. Also there is no doubt that neo-nazi oi skinheads were related and mobilized by far right political parties all around Europe in the eighties.

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