Soccer casuals: A slight return of youth culture

Steve Redhead

Abstract

This essay reports from a long-term research project, which interviewed participants in a post-war U.K. youth culture called “casuals” about all aspects of its history, especially the styles of music and fashion and its connection to British soccer spectatorship from the late 1970s to the present day. Original interview and ethnographic material from the project is presented and discussed, and situated within a context of the sociology of youth culture in general and soccer fandom in particular. The essay suggests some theoretical and methodological signposts for the future study of youth culture whilst outlining some specific aspects of the research conducted. This new work on youth culture also rethinks earlier work on rave culture and football hooligan subcultures in the light of appreciation and critique of such work in various recent youth subcultural theory debates. The research reported on here mapped the history of the “moments” of the birth of casual in the late 1970s and the coming together of the football hooligan and rave subcultures in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as well as the later remixing, recycling and “mash up” of these moments in a present in which “pop culture” is said by some to be “addicted to its own past” (Reynolds, 2011).

Keywords

casuals, soccer hooliganism, youth culture, youth subculture, fashion, music, hooligan memoirs, independent publishing

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Modern youth suffers, if you can call it that, from an excess of advantage. When I walk through my gentrified neighbourhood in East London, there are upscale shops like Labour and Wait that sell tools and household cleaning items presented like precious objects, and the streets are full of boys wearing slightly too artfully paint-splattered jeans and un-scuffed work boots holding iPhones in their soft, un-calloused hands. This new work on youth culture also rethinks earlier work on rave culture and football hooligan subcultures in the light of appreciation and critique of such work in various recent youth subcultural theory debates. The research reported on here mapped the history of the “moments” of the birth of casual in the late 1970s and the coming together of the football hooligan and rave subcultures in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as well as the later remixing, recycling and “mash up” of these moments in a present in which “pop culture” is said. Chapter 2 Firms, crews and soccer thugs: The slight return of football hooligan subcultures. Chapter. Jan 2008. music, the internet and other soccer casuals: a slight return of youth culture steve redhead - casual history, or history of the casual, in many ways, is a missing key to some of the persistent problems in the study of the international history and sociology of