DECONSTRUCTING THE BRAT PHENOMENON

Magister Thesis presented by
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Abstract:
The Swedish societal phenomenon called “Brats” is often described along with the concept of subculture, without a justification or problematization of such a relationship. Accordingly, this thesis examines the relationship between a specific societal phenomenon and the concept of subculture. Previous accounts on Brats have ascribed the phenomenon with other concepts that are in many ways similar to the concept subculture. The nature of a phenomenon is that it has occurred in a specific context – an era, society, or culture, and so should suggest that it is most advantageously looked at unaccompanied by stereotyping labels that come with concepts such as subculture. The investigation was commenced with a gathering of empirical material for a case study of the Brats, which were obtained from sources including the world wide web, the media, and popular culture. An interpretative approach was then used to analyse the findings of the case study and pose such findings against academic theories on Brats and subcultures. The results demonstrated that the Brat phenomenon might in some ways be labelled a subculture, however that would disregard several important variables of the phenomenon. The discourse on both Brats and subcultures as a concept should consequently be carried forward.

Key words: Brats, stekare, phenomenon, subcultures, consumption, appearance.
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Instead of resurrecting the social and attempting to include the emergent identities and differences, they are enabled to speak for themselves, without the constraints of collective inclusion, in the form of subcultures. Subcultures therefore emerge as the new times and places that people occupy, subcultures are the new sources of identity, subcultures are the new signifier of difference. [...] It sounds exciting and liberal to designate youth as the flagship of the new dawn, it does not sound quite so appealing to relegate all naughty, deviant behaviour to a stockade of pathology, distance and personal responsibility.

Chris Jenks (2005, 145)

As differentiated unities are replaced by a similarity of difference, 'appearance perception' becomes a hazardous undertaking, an ever-increasing number of interpretations being possible.

David Muggleton (2000, 42)
Most academic papers or articles do not generally start off with a personal or descriptive background story to its subject. The abstract usually informs the reader as to what the paper will address and what it has revealed, while the introduction provides a type of what, why and how description. These are all important features of a thesis and I shall return to these points momentarily. What was unearthed and discovered when, during the early stages of writing and a few people reviewed a draft of this paper, was that this subject (in this particular context) needed just that descriptive background story. Some stated that they felt that the paper was holding on to a secret, or that I was, that a big revelation was to come. Obviously I do not attempt to come to any sort of grand revelation (which would be somewhat preposterous and big-headed) and I suppose that these comments came from the fact that I simply did not explain my hypothesis well enough. I chose my topic little more than a year ago and have consequently conducted a great deal of research. The interpretation of the research material, including academic sources and sources from popular culture, could have been fairly straightforward as the subject can be linked to several academic theories, e.g. Thorstein Veblen's term “conspicuous consumption” (1899), or more contemporary CCT theories on consumer behaviours (cf. Holt 2002, Harold 2004, Kozinets and Handelman 2004). While such a reading would be a credible and reasonable understanding or viewpoint of the subject I find it somewhat narrow and simplistic to look at such a complex societal phenomenon from one angle only. What then is the chosen topic for this essay? The mentioned phenomenon are people called, or labelled, “Brats” in Sweden and the most noteworthy and coherent accounts that are available of such people state that they are: (1) wealthy consumers who dress in a specific manner, (2) lead a conspicuous lifestyle, (3) socialize in specific milieus and (4) maintain specific codes of “conduct” (concerning brands, connections, etc.) Earlier drafts of this thesis suggested that the aim was to propose a different reading of what Brats “are”, a thought that stemmed from the fact that I disagreed with what was said of Brats in the mentioned sources. Although that might be a rather naïve and childish point-of-view it did mean that I was genuinely forced to form my own perception of this phenomenon, including definitions of the terms and concepts I was going to use. Is that not what all students or scholars have to do? Yes, obviously, nonetheless the point is that the fact that I was so adamant concerning what I did not agree with meant that I had to be equally adamant as to what I actually do agree with, believe in, and propose. So what is it that I am trying to do here? The main point of my argument and reasoning lies with the fact that most sources (academic, media, popular culture, etc.) talk about Brats as being a subculture; it is almost assumed that they are, in fact, a subculture, without any sort of inherent analysis or justification of such a
relationship. That is where I started off and the point which brought on questions such as: can Brats really be labelled a subculture? What is the relationship between Brats and the concept of subculture? What is a subculture and what does the concept stand for in a 21st century context? What other explanations would be plausible for the Brats, other than the term subculture? These thoughts and questions led the way to theories on subcultures, theories that have addressed similar questions in the past, yet not the ones were the concept of subculture and Brats are related.

Evidently I will use this background research and empirical material as a founding base to where this thesis and its arguments take off. I aim to analyse the Brat phenomenon and hope to do so in a way that allows me to answer the previously mentioned questions on the relationship between the concept of subcultures and Brats. Another critique that the draft received was that it stated that the aim was to suggest an independent hypothesis of what the Brat phenomenon is, with the criticism suggesting that “whatever angle one take, it will have consequences” (Östberg 2011) and that it cannot, therefore, be independent. Considering that such a statement, that nothing is ever free of anything – would that not suggest that a phenomenon cannot be described within the boundaries of one, or a, singular unit – that a societal phenomenon is more complex than e.g. the concept of subculture? Chris Jenks states that that concept “never really had any mileage, in anybody's hands. In fact it might be suggested that the concept served merely as a distraction or a cul de sac in the development of sociological theory” (2005, 131). What would be revealed if we looked at the phenomenon and the context it came from?

[...] Increasingly it dawned on us that our simple model was unsupported by life itself. Society did not rest on an even base, there were folds and tendrils moving from part to part. The parts no long interrelated so easily, there was no obvious harmony or agreement, but instead competition, difference and divergence. For most of the time, we might suppose, most of the people think and believe and act in broadly complementary ways, but some of them do not. How do we explain those who do not? (Jenks 2005, 134)
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Stockholm, Sweden, 1990 - 2000
Some has described Sweden's capital Stockholm during the 1990's as a long, embarrassing, drunken memory. The capital city saw many different changes during this fast-paced decade; with a recession during the earlier years and the later '90's economic boom. Despite the implications a recession might bring to a city or society, Stockholm saw many small-scale inventions and industriousness during the early recession years, when the city went from “being a large small city to becoming a small big city” (Britton 2004, 12). One of the two main contributing factors to the recession was that private consumption decreased between 1990 and 1995, which in turn was a result of a deteriorating housing market. Swedish households showed a considerable change of household savings in relation to the disposable income, a turn that has been explained as a result of the capital losses households experienced when their assets, principally homes and/or houses, dropped in value (Perbo 2009). This epoch has also been described as “The new economy” that brought with it the IT boom and a series of new different businesses such as dotcom-companies, internet consultancy firms and other emerging high-tech businesses (Strannegård 2004). Another major advent in Sweden during this period was the governmental shift of 1994, when the Social Democrats (SAP) won the general election with 45.3% of the valid votes (SCB 2011, 6). The Conservative (Moderate) Party and the previous prime minister Carl Bildt left the parliament and the reigns of Sweden in favour of a promised focus on labour-market policy and the governmental finances (SND 2009). The year of 1995 saw the mark of Sweden's first reality show called The Real World Stockholm, a concept that was originally adopted from the American The Real World series (Stockholm filmfestival 2010), as well as the Swedish comedy TV-series NileCity 105,6 that grew hugely popular with the public during the late '90s (IMDb 2011, a). Other major social events in Sweden during this decade that are noteworthy includes the Men's World Ice Hockey Championship (from which Sweden won a silver medal), pop-artist Robyn's hit-single “Do you really want me?” and Charlotte Nilsson's song “Take me to your heaven” that won the Eurovision Song Contest in 1999 (Eurovision 2011). A few years earlier in Stockholm, the refurbishment of Stureplan and “Svampen” (the monument at the centre of Stureplan, which was demolished in 1988) in 1989 along with the opening of Sturegallerian (a mall) and Sturecompagniet came to introduce the Stureplan area and the establishments surrounding it as the centre of the Swedish entertainment life (Sjödin 2009). The opening success continued with a steady attendance and clientele of Sweden's
most famous celebrities such as Jannike Björling, Johannes Brost, Niclas Wahlgren and Princess Cristina. The whole of Stureplan was revamped during this period with newly opened open-air bars and restaurants and exclusive boutiques, when Stureplan came to be called “Stockholm's new centre” (Stureplan 2009). Some years later, in 1996, Stureplansgruppen AB was founded and now runs a number of different nightclubs and restaurants, primarily in the Stockholm area but also in cities such as Göteborg, Visby, Karlstad and Västerås. The most well-known and established entertainment establishments in Stockholm are Spy Bar, Sturecompagniet, Ambassadeur, restaurant 1900 with its nightclub and bar Kåken, restaurant Humlegården, Laroy and White Room. In addition to their restaurants and nightclubs the establishment also runs the website Stureplan.se, which during a week might attract around 175 000 unique readers (DN 2011). The website functions as a sort of magazine with articles on different subjects from Stockholm's nightlife as well as other articles on events related to the entertainment establishment. Furthermore there are also several blogs, written by people associated with Stureplansgruppen (who work for them in one way or another), however the main part of the site are their picture sections. These include images from the nightlife in Stockholm (and other cities) as well as other events. Today, in 2011, Stureplansgruppen is one of Sweden’s foremost actors within the entertainment establishment with a yearly turn-over of 650 million SEK (Ibid.).

A few other international cultural references in popular and medial culture might additionally be fruitful to evoke or bring to mind when contextualising what the zeitgeist was during this particular time. The years of the 1980's are known to be associated with a focus on economy and earning money, a time when it was popular to be a stockbroker and own a Porsche car e.g. (Höglund 2011). 1987 was the year when the film Wall Street opened in American cinemas (January 1988 in Sweden) and tells the story of two stockbrokers played by Charlie Sheen and Michael Douglas. Douglas' character “Gordon Gekko” introduces “Bud Fox” (Sheen) to his world of “yuppies”, money, business deals and parties. The “Gordon Gekko” character won Michael Douglas an Oscar in 1988 and “Gekko” became widely cited for the phrase “Greed is good” (Ibid., IMDb 2011, c).

The American television series Beverly Hills 90210 premiered in 1990 and a year later (1991) in Sweden on channel TV4 (Lindblom 2008). The original storyline centred on a group of wealthy high-school students that lived in Beverly Hills in California and later followed the adolescents to college life (IMDb 2011, b). Beverly Hills 90210 became hugely popular both in America and in Sweden, with filming continuing for a decade from the years 1990 – 2000, and the series was still aired on a Swedish channel (TV400) until a few years ago (TV4 AB 2011).
1.1.2 The Brat phenomenon

This is the setting, milieu and context where the Brat group appears in Stockholm, Sweden. The Brat phenomenon originated and became publicly known in Stockholm during the late 1990’s and the early years of the 21st century. In 2001, Swedish TV-channel TV3 aired a documentary, called *Young and rich in Sweden*, which chronicled the lives of a selection of people in Stockholm that frequented the nightclubs around Stureplan. The opening vignette (and voice over) of the documentary informs the viewer that the topic in question deals with a secluded group in which it is important to socialize with the ‘right’ people. Images of the two Swedish princesses are simultaneously shown while they add “the closer to the Royal Family the better” (Messisweden 2009). We are then introduced to Johan Carlström, a nineteen-year-old who puts his nightlife, friends, and life on display for the cameras. Carlström, his friends, and the other people pictured in this opening segment, provides a good initial resource of information on this phenomenon. The people pictured are shown partying at a nightclub, some buying several bottles of champagne at once, and there are various style or clothes features that are clearly distinguishable among such people or in such a social context. Most men are seen with quite long hair pulled back with hair-gel and wearing either a suit with belongings or smart pants with a shirt and a jumper. A majority of the pictured women have long hair and wears high-heels, a shirt or a top, a large watch and a handbag (Messisweden 2009). What follows in the documentary are interviews and detailed descriptions of the lives that people lead around, on, and outside of Stureplan, recollections told by people such as Carlström, persons who work at Stureplan, or journalists that have written about it.

1.1.3 The Brat group in the 21st century

The notion of this phenomenon consisting of three different stages was briefly mentioned when depicting the people described as Brats during the early years of the 21st century. The material and research on the phenomenon has shown that there are some differences to the phenomenon as it originated and compared to what it is described as today. It is in this sense that the Brat phenomenon can be seen as being composed of three different stages, which is detailed on page 23. During recent years the Brat phenomenon have moved from being a small exclusive set of individuals to a much larger part of mainstream culture; early reports on the phenomenon talked about people and events in Stockholm, and more specifically, around Stureplan. However during the later part of the first decade of the 21st century a series of articles chronicling the same phenomenon but in other parts of Sweden started to occur in the Swedish press. Consequently it is important to make a distinction between the Brat phenomenon as it first originated and what it is or has become in today’s society. As described in the previous section, the Brat phenomenon was originally limited
to Stockholm and Stureplan with wealthy young people leading a somewhat overt and leisure-driven lifestyle. People in that early phase of the phenomenon are most often described as being young adults from wealthy families, who spent their inherited (or family's) money on expensive designer garments, and other costly accessories such as watches, and on partying and buying alcohol for an entire table of friends, with some accounts noting an expenditure of over 10 000 SEK on a table at a nightclub (Sköld 2010). Around the year of 2005 is where accounts of the Brat phenomenon in other parts of Sweden start to occur; this would be the so-called middle-stage of the phenomenon. Journalist and writer Björn Af Kleen, for instance, reports from the southern Swedish city Lund and describes how Lund could be seen as an affiliate to Stureplan in Stockholm. In the article, Af Kleen interviews a restaurant owner who is satisfied over the way in which his establishment has developed, and adds “there are a lot of people from Stockholm, a lot of brats if one may say so” (2005). Furthermore it is also noted that Lund University's degree course in economy have become highly ranked and that has meant that more and more career driven people have started to move to the southern city. Another interviewee further states that the attribute of having a “noble title or a castle” is no longer accepted as a way of gaining status (in Stockholm), while in Skåne (the region where Lund is situated) it is still a valid source of credibility and a way to make an impression (Ibid.). The interview subject is seemingly indicating that merely having or owning a castle or a noble title is not sufficient without “a name” that goes with it, i.e. a person have to be publicly known and so known in “the right” circles. However, as stated, such possessions or attributes are still valid markers of monetary and social status in Lund and the people that are described in this article can be seen as a “new version” of the Brats, for there are some clear differences between this stage (2) and stage 1. These people are described, to a large extent, in the same way as the “original” Brats are: young persons who spend large amounts of money on their appearance and lifestyle. However, while the “first” Brats are described as valuing education, cultivation, and a general wealth, the “new Brats”, in this article also called “the new school” (of Brats) and “stekare”, are pictured as having a slightly more relaxed stance towards education but with a significant focus on “soap-operas, sports, glamour-TV, fashion magazines, gossip magazines and movies” (Af Kleen 2005). The major difference between the Brats in the first stage and the Brats in the middle, or second, stage is that the element of exclusivity is less apparent, as well as a notable difference as to what demographic background one has and what a person does in order to earn, gain, or make money. To further explain and clarify what these stages actually entailed or meant, the phenomenon and the three stages can be described as:

(1) a small secluded group that was geographically specific, i.e. in Stockholm (Stureplan).
These three stages will all be further explained and more deeply contextualised and analysed further on in the paper, in chapters 4 – 6 (pp. 21 – 34).

1.2 Concept definitions
The foundation of this paper lies within the context of two different fields or concepts. The empirical study will focus on (1) Brats, a term and phenomenon that will be theorized with, among other theories, the concept of (2) subcultures. In order to establish a clear and logical sense of what these concepts entail and stand for within the pages of this paper, the definitions are as follows:

1.2.1 Subculture
Dick Hebdige suggests that subcultures (in Britain) use and appropriate common objects (by means of style) in order to separate themselves from the general whole. Hebdige also quotes Phil Cohen who defines “subculture as a ‘compromise solution between two contradictory needs: the need to create and express autonomy and difference from parents... and the need to maintain the parental identifications’” (Hebdige 1979, 77). Furthermore he states that the meaning of subculture is always under constant debate and that style is the field that causes the most disagreement (Hebdige 1979). According to Chris Jenks some scholars that have been associated with The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS, ca. 1980's) stimulated and incited the concept of subculture to “articulate the unspoken, or perhaps unheard, voices of a populist proletariat within a critical vision and still with an eye to radical social change” (Jenks 2004, 5). Most of the Birmingham CCCS institution appear to have limited the notion of subculture to stand for the leisure activities and belongings of youth, for instance Angela McRobbie who has stated that subcultures have largely been looked at from a male youth perspective through the focus on e.g. football, drinking, and the relationship between young delinquents and the law (Jenks 2004, 5, cf. McRobbie 1981). Paul Gilroy of the same centre further suggests that the concept have previously mostly been limited to discourses on white male youths and that the complicated relationship between “blacks and the cultural and political institutions of the white, urban working-class communities that are transformed and reoriented by their presence” (Jenks 2004, 5, cf. Gilroy 1987). Academic David Muggleton on the other hand suggests a distinction between “a modern and a post-modern subculture” and states that there have been two modern periods; “two very different modernities” (2000, 35). Moreover he also argues that while the post-modern might indicate a shift from the “tendencies in enlightenment modernity”, it could also be seen as a magnification such
characteristics (Ibid., 36). Subculture for Muggleton can consequently be understood as “collective expressions and celebrations of individualism [and] a combination of a modernist depth model of reality and a post-modern emphasis on hybridity and diversity” (Ibid., 79 and 158).

1.2.2 Brats

This paper will address the phenomenon as they have been labelled in the media, which is the term Brat that often denotes or come with demeaning characteristics such as spoilt or shallow. The term is also often used when talking about a person who lives on his/her parents money or fortune (Af Kleen 2005). The Brat name or label seem to be used mostly by other people than those who are described as Brats (Mellin 2010, Sköld 2010). The etymology of the word Brat indicates that it could be an abbreviated form of the Scottish word “bratchet”, which stems from the Old French word “brachet” that means “hound or bitch”. The word might also stem from the dialect word “brat” meaning “rough garment, rag”, which comes from the Old Irish word “bratt” meaning, “cloak” (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2011, a). The Swedish National Encyclopedia (NE) further state that Brat refers to a child that behaves badly as well that it is often used in a derogatory or humorous sense. A connection between the word Brat and the term “Brat Pack” can also be made and NE translates the term as adolescents from the upper classes (Nationalencyklopedin 2011). Furthermore the word also has a link to the “Brat Pack”, which is an appellation of a group of American teenage celebrities that took part in popular youth films during the 1980’s.

Male Brats wear their hair quite long and pulled back using a lot of hair products, a style that mark ones belonging to the group (Östberg 2009). They also wear specific brands and garments such as suit jackets, pants or jeans and shirts. One common denominator for most garments is that they are of a high-end brand, i.e. fairly expensive. Brats have a very distinct look, are often area specific, as well as being frequently stereotyped as rich adolescents or young jet setters. The female Brat ‘look’ is more difficult to describe; media coverage and stereotypical prejudices usually only address the male version, most likely mentioning the hairstyle and the shirt. However, when looking at the females from “Young and rich in Sweden”, a few elements becomes prominent: an expensive watch, long hair, large details such as a big belt buckle, and designer bags (Messisweden 2009). Furthermore, as stated previously, it is also important to make a distinction, or at least to acknowledge a potential difference, between the Brats as “they were” or were seen when the phenomenon first occurred and what “Brat people” are thought of or seen as today, in 2011. The definition of the Brats becomes difficult due to the fact that this phenomenon, or cultural segment, have dispersed into the general society (been adopted by the masses). The definition of a Brat/Brats is consequently multifaceted and proposes possible problems with an analysis of the phenomenon.
This would also suggest that it is difficult to discuss Brats as a “group”, i.e. to label or call them a group, which would indicate that generalizing comments can only be made through a clear definition of what that “group” is or is not. When, in this thesis, referring to a Brat, the Brats, or the Brat phenomenon, I am making a reference to the early stage of the phenomenon, for the reason that it is important to discern the differences between an early version of the Brat and a later one. Inevitably, the justification behind this distinction lies with the fact that the phenomenon is multifaceted and has developed and progressed over the years. Such an evolution should mean that the distinction and definition of the phenomenon should be made of what it first was in order to analyse it further. This distinction also enables this thesis to address Brats as a “them”, which would then refer to the Brat phenomenon at an early stage. Section 3.1.3 (page 18), in the methodological chapter, also suggests another justification as to why it is necessary and important to look at the early version of the phenomenon. Through R. Murray Thomas, the section proposes that an interpretative contextual analysis is fruitful only if one looks at “(a) […] evidence about word meanings and social/political conditions at the time and place of event that is being explained, (b) showing how those conditions were similar to and different from conditions today […] (2003, 95).

1.3 Previous Research
The concept of subcultures have been widely discussed and analysed by a number of prominent scholars for numerous decades; the late 1920's for example saw the rise of a series of renowned publications from a group of academics that have come to be called the Chicago School (Jenks 2004, 6). This group, which included people such as George Herbert Mead (philosopher and social theorist) and Everett C. Hughes (sociologist), “employed the concept of subculture to highlight the symbolic normative structure of groups smaller than the society as a whole” (Ibid., 6). Other, even earlier, accounts of similar ideas include the works of Georg Simmel and Thorstein Veblen. Georg Simmel’s sociological works (The Metropolis and Mental life 1903, Sociology 1908) for instance focuses on the relationship between the individual and social groups (Kaern et al. 1990). Fashion, or clothes rather, is a way for us as individuals to feel good about ourselves. Furthermore fashion becomes a way of asserting oneself before a group, while at the same time one draws inspiration from someone else (within a group). Thus meaning that people imitate others simultaneously as they try to assert their own individuality. This imitation, concerning fashion, marks that one belongs to a group while at the same time declaring one’s own individuality within the group (Ibid.). Another renowned theory in this field is “conspicuous consumption” that was coined by Thorstein Veblen in his famous book Theory of the Leisure class (1899), which examines the consumer culture of that era. The theory suggests that consumption is/was a way for people (then aristocrats,
royals and upper classes) to show their status, wealth and class through different types of commodities. According to Veblen, women have a special role in the term “conspicuous consumption”, inasmuch as, what the women wear, eat, where they live, etc. manifests a man's wealth, be it the woman’s father, husband or brother (1899). However these theories are rather old and perhaps somewhat outdated, nevertheless there are some academics that have attempted to update these hypotheses. Michael S. Carolan, for instance, has developed Veblen’s theory further and states that the term “conspicuous consumption” now has a different meaning. It is no longer enough for our modern awareness to surround oneself with “nice things” in our attempt to display power and status. “Rather, we are progressively striving to become the ‘nice thing’ itself—to literally embody conspicuous consumption” (2005).

Additionally some theories within the fields of sociology and consumer culture theory might be useful to provide a summary of, for the reason that they are more contemporary than the theories initially mentioned and also more specific in their contextualisation. Bauman, Beck and Giddens (in Warde 1994) claim that the human life course is a “reflexive project” and that a chosen way of life (“life-styles”) and consumption are crucial elements in the process of both making and adapting an identity. Bauman asserts that this is where, if present, anxiety would originate, and that the multitude of choice consumers have means “freedom” (to choose what ever one would want) thus implying an equal degree of “personal responsibility”. Bauman further states that one role of advertising could be that it helps to relieve a sense of self-doubt that comes with multiple choice. However, Alan Warde claims that while consumption and multiple (I do not use the word free choice here because, is there really something such as a “free” choice?) choices might cause a certain level of anxiety among some individuals, there are other systems or processes “that serve to compensate” the idea of choosing unsuitably. In “Consumption, identity-formation and uncertainty” Warde sets out to analyse what those systems or processes are, arguing that processes such as group identification and social regulation can be a way to evade that anxiety (Warde 1994). He also states that while consumption might be a matter of selection it should not be identified with choice when talking about the general public/population. Further, “we should be wary of perpetuating a politico-ideological sense of the consumption process which imputes freedom to an activity that is not in any important sense free” (Ibid., 22).

The discussion of subculture as a concept might further be problematized and analysed if looking at scholars Atle Hauge's and Dominic Power's discussion of a brand as a part of a dialectical meaning process. This might also be fruitful to link to the Brats' usage of different brands to communicate different ideals or notions both within the group as well as outside. Hauge and Power suggest that
the process and construction of branding could be seen as a type of institution and that the processes of building a brand are most advantageously understood in a systematic sense. Consequently meaning that the institution is a context where processes are established in different systems with interrelated actors (Power and Hauge 2008, 124). As per indicated in the title of the article (“No man's brand) Power and Hauge argue that the business owners are ascribed too much emphasis in the creation of the brand, which means that other important economical subjects are overlooked. A brand is in that sense a “No man’s brand”, as it is an institution in which several actors interact and communicate to build up the brand image. Furthermore, when discussing Brats' consumption patterns and their choices in e.g. brands, or logos, a study of the changing meaning of taste could be fruitful. Richard Peterson and Roger Kern suggests a shift in “taste” and what people value when they consume. They suggest that fine arts became a marker of high status (in the late nineteenth century), as a way of making a distinction between “highbrowed Anglo Saxons” and “lowl browed” immigrants. These immigrants’ popular pastimes were considered to cause and promote unethical and immoral thinking, “corrupt morals” and thus were to be evaded. However, they claim that there has been a shift in this highbrow status and that those persons are now more unselective in their tastes, i.e. using whatever is available. Further they also state that “this shift from snob to omnivore relates to status-group politics influenced by changes in social structure, values, art-world dynamics, and generational conflict” (Kern and Peterson 1996, 901).

Another more contemporary discussion on the concept of subculture is to be found in Dannie Kjeldgaard's article “The meaning of style? Style reflexivity among Danish high school youths”, which analyses the way in which young Danish consumers use style as a tool in the creation of their identities. It is further suggested that “[style] has also been seen as a way that individual consumers relate to the group dynamics of consumption.” However Kjeldgaard argues that “while individual relation to the group is important in the construction of self-narratives, style consumption is a practice of reflexive relation to self-identity. […] Consumers reflexively manage style consumption through a folk theory of style consumption” (2009, 71 – 72).

1.4 Purpose and Research Questions
The inherent psychological, socio-cultural, and socio-economic motivations behind, or beneath if you will, the surface of Brats' lavish leisure activities, excessive consumption patterns and specific style “codes” are the main instigators of this paper. It is a fact (which we will discuss later on) that the concept of subculture is widely adopted in terms of the Brat culture, however, there has not been any sort of substantiation at all as to whether or not the group actually can be said to be a subculture. The concept is often used when discussing Brats and such a terminology prompt the
question of whether or not the Brat group can be said to be labelled a subculture? While there are several accounts available on what subcultures mean or entail, I here argue that the concept has inadequate bearings and that it could be useful to rid the group of such restrictive boundaries. The inadequacies of the concept lies with its pigeonholing or typecasting properties that force the characteristics of the concept onto the group. I am not trying to suggest that such terms are not useful ways of explaining Brats e.g. consumption, but merely stating that it is important to look beyond such boundaries.

[...] Moreover [...] the categories and definitions of sociologists must be derived from, rather than imposed upon, the sensibilities of the people under study. To claim, from the outside as it were, that people's indigenous meanings are contradictory is to ignore how such apparent contradictions can make perfect, logical sense to those involved given their own definitions of the situation (Muggleton 2000, 59).

Hence the purpose of this study is to investigate and deconstruct the Swedish Brat phenomenon by looking at the concept of subculture. The thesis aims to to add to the existing knowledge about the Swedish Brat phenomenon by testing Östberg's and Jenks's theories with (1) a different set of academic theories and fields of knowledge (2) and a different method of analysis than what have previously been used studying the Brat phenomenon. By analysing and examining this particular phenomenon, the paper will deepen the knowledge of fashion and consumption in relation to a societal phenomenon, as well as adding further viewpoints on the discourse of subcultures.

The primary research questions that has served as basis throughout this paper are as follows:

1. What characterizes a Brat and what shapes a Brat identity?
2. Is there a relationship between the characteristics of the Brat phenomenon and the criteria of a subculture?
2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The Brat phenomenon will here be deconstructed with the use of theories within two different academic strands, namely sociology and consumer culture theory. Rather than solely focusing on one specific field of theories, an interdisciplinary approach has been adopted in order to be able to analyse the Brat group in a wider spectrum. The validation and reasoning behind this approach will be addressed further on under the methodology (3) sections.

2.1 Subculture

Chris Jenks (2004) states that while Hebdige’s book is an excellent study of subcultures, it is outdated and old-fashioned (with the book being written in the late 1970s) to look at subcultures as merely something that is disconnected from the whole. He also suggests that “the new subcultures are the new sources of identity, subcultures are the new signifier or difference” (2004, 145). Furthermore, with his work Subculture: The Fragmentation of the social, Jenks also developed a theory that could explain the predicament with the word subculture and why it is a dangerous terminology to use. In this sense, the concept of subculture can be utilized to “valorize the underdog, radicalize the disposed, give voice to the inarticulate but equally to marginalize and contain the deviant or non-mainstream” (2004, 129). The terminology and concept of subculture has consequently come to be used to describe a range of different social groups or cultures, thus implying that scholars have “fail to or simply avoid explaining the social in terms of the social” (2004, 131).

2.2 Brats

The Stockholm Brat Enclave is a new type of consumption community that has occurred within the marketplace according to Swedish marketing scholar Jacob Östberg. This particular community is an exclusive group of young and wealthy consumers that “[live] their lives in the fast lane” and attend the trendiest nightclubs in Stockholm (2007, 93). Consumption for the Brats deals with being up-to-date through the means of putting different objects together and showing them off, in order to create the right type of attitude; “being cool”. Östberg suggests that the term “style” is what describes the logic that the Brat group operates through and said term is what holds “the linking value” that the group assembles around (Ibid., 94). He further states that previous studies concerning communities and consumption have focused on one brand, one product or one activity, despite that it was suggested that a focus should be put on the combination of commodities more than 20 years ago (Ibid.). Which, presumably, is one reason as to why there is a focus on style as a
concept throughout Östberg's chapter. Furthermore, he states that the notion of what style actually means or stand for, is something that changes with time, and that the group gathers around what they believe to be in fashion or fashionable “at each given point in time” (Östberg 2007, 94 – 95). This notion is what creates or enhances the bond between the members of the Brat group; to consume in a “stylish manner” is accordingly what holds the precondition to be able to connect to the group (Ibid.). The concept of subcultural capital (Thornton 1996, 1997) is further used to explain how the Brat group use style in a discussion with different parts of the surrounding world. The concept is Sarah Thornton’s reworking of Pierre Bourdieu's renowned book Distinction in which Bourdieu discuss his ideas or thoughts on what he calls “economic capital” and “cultural capital” (cf. Bourdieu 1984). Östberg states that the strength of Bourdieu's theory lies with the fact that it moves away from the strict perpendicular models of social structures (e.g. sole focus on income) and alternatively looks at social groups as a part of a multi-dimensional space (2007, 95).

In different club cultures, having fashionable hairstyles and/or specified record collections give or displays subcultural capital, in much the same way as a book or a painting might give or display a sense of cultural capital in the home. Subcultural capital is thus used both as objectification, that something is owned, and as embodiment, as in expressing a certain/particular style; it is this capital that confer the owner status through the “relevant” eyes of the beholder. Consequently meaning that the beholder needs to have some sort of general idea of what the subculture is in order to be able to understand "the codes” that come with it. Thornton, as well as Östberg through the usage of her theories, state that the media is one of the foremost constituents that produce that subcultural capital. Thornton further suggests that it is important to analyse the media consumption of any given youth subculture in order to be able to understand the contrasts and/or differences between the subcultural groups (Östberg 2007, 95 – 96). Östberg defines the Brats as a group of consumers that are called "Brats" both by themselves and by external sources, which is one the reasons Östberg claims to be using such a terminology throughout his chapter. Through the use of Muniz and O'Guinn's definition of what characteristics a group need to have in common in order to "be" a community, Östberg suggests the Brats to be classified as such a community (Östberg 2007, 99). Scholars Muniz and O'Guinn argue that a community of brands, a “brand community”, are usually formed around a brand “with a strong image, a rich and lengthy history, and threatening competition”, although adding that any brand could in fact form a “brand community” (2001, 415).

They further state that commodities that are privately consumed are less likely to produce a community than commodities that are consumed publicly. These communities are also said to, “[...] due to the ubiquitous nature of brands, [...] transcend geography and include a multitude of consumer members. These social groups may be fairly stable and committed to both the brand and
the group. They would be explicitly commercial and possess a mass-media sensibility” (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001, 415).

Furthermore Östberg also adds that the Brat group can be seen as a form of "enclave [or] an ad hoc community with fluid boundaries […]”, and that the Brat consumers are occasionally called “post-modern consumers”, a term through which they are proposed to be typical “über-consumers” that "live a shallow and artificial life" (2007, 99). In discussing his disposition and approach, Östberg states that it would be faulty to only look at the Brats' focus on different styles and outfits and proposes that Brats are to viewed "as the latest variation of an old theme of young, rich urbanites consuming in a conspicuous manner" (Ibid.). Moreover, he argues that the Brats are participating in a sort of potlatch-practice, which is a tradition or ritual when you give away over-abundant commodities or articles in a presumably status-giving way (Ibid.). The Brats' mutual consumption character as a group is in this sense (according to Östberg) seen as a vigilant process of “assembling, displaying, and using various consumption objects to create just the right ambience of being ‘in the know’ […]” (Östberg 2007, 94).
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 An interpretative method

A qualitative research method has been chosen for this study with the validation of R. Murray Thomas' outline of what such a research method entails: “gathering and interpreting information from the viewpoint of kinds of objects, ideas, or events” (2003, 225). The subject and topics addressed in this thesis is a fairly recent societal and social phenomenon and so it is therefore suitable to describe the “kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurements or amounts” (Ibid., 1). Three types of approaches are adopted within this research method that can be seen as the three different steps used within this particular methodology. A case study (3.1.1) is actualized through the study of the unit of analysis of this thesis, i.e. Brats, a content analysis (3.1.2) is carried out as the second step, which means that I have gathered data from different sources for usage in the analytical sections (and as empirical facts) and, finally, the hermeneutic approach of a contextual interpretation (3.1.3) is adopted in order to interpret the collected data and the case study in the earlier sections. During the sub-sections below, a more detailed description of what the selected approaches involves and stand for is provided.

3.1.1 Present-status Perspective – Case Study

As suggested by Thomas a case study usually includes a “description of an entity and it's actions. Frequently, case studies also offer explanations of why the entity acts as it does” (2003, 33). A present-status perspective will hence be used in order to suggest or bring forward possible descriptions or explanations of the characteristics of the Brat group and their combined actions. The case study is carried out with two research questions (see section 1.3 for purpose and research questions) that functions as a way of identifying what issues or problems the case study is expected to answer. The advantages of using this particular perspective and case study approach is that it will allow me to “reveal the way a multiplicity of factors have interacted to produce the unique character of the entity that is the subject of the research” (Ibid., 35).

3.1.2 Data collection – Content Analysis

The aforementioned research questions is what will guide the case study and the use of a content analysis is adopted as a way of collecting and analysing data. This process “entails searching through one or more communications to answer questions that the investigator brings to the search” (Ibid., 57). The collected data and what type of material and communications that are used in this
study will be further addressed under section 3.2, in which a detailed description of the chosen material is explained. Thomas states that the benefit and advantage of a content analysis is that it is the only “technique suitable for gathering information about what communications contain” and that it therefore is the most appropriate method “for answering a great host of research questions” (2003, 59).

3.1.3 Hermeneutics – Contextual interpretation

The last part of the methodological process of this study is that of hermeneutics, which Thomas describes as a way of interpreting:

a) how the context in which a communication originated influenced the communication's meaning at that time and place

b) how that same communication should be understood today (Thomas 2003, 94).

In order to create a valid and strong contextual interpretation I will also need to indicate how potential resemblances and dissimilarities might influence the extent of which people will be able to understand such earlier periods distant places (Thomas 2003, 95).

3.2 Material

The previous sections in this methodological chapter has informed the reader of what methods has been adopted in conducting this study. However, even tough the empirical material used here has thus far been described in the preface and introduction, a more concrete outline is necessary for the paper's readers to be able to follow in its footsteps (Thomas 2003, 148 - 157). The lineage of the thesis stem from the two founding subject matters that I have contextualized and outlined up to this point; Brats and subcultures. Empirical material for the case study on Brats has been drawn from the world wide web, the media and popular culture. The search for material has been achieved through the usage of online search engines, in which the key words of the paper have been utilized and searched for. From there on the material was validated and chosen in terms of what type of source the information came from, with the result of a mixed list of empirical material: (1) articles from Swedish daily and evening press, (2) blogs, and (3) audio and visual interviews or programs. The sources that I have gathered material from are from different people and different standpoints on the Brat phenomenon. Some work as nightclub managers at “a Brat venue” and write about his/her life on the “Brat-website” Stureplan.se, thus possibly indicating a biased account, while others are “observers” and write about this phenomenon from an outsiders (or possibly insider as well?) point-of-view. These opposing opinions or strands were chosen in order to enable a multi-
dimensional reading and analysis of the Brat phenomenon. I have attempted to remain unbiased and objective throughout this paper and so wanted to choose the paper's empirical material accordingly. In the same sense that written accounts have been interpreted and analysed yet not accounted for in e.g. an appendix, so too have images been interpreted and depicted, which is why they have been left out. Furthermore, the world wide web and online databases, such as Libris.kb.se (that is a Swedish national search engine of libraries), were used to find both academic theories and books on the related subjects, but also books of fiction and history.

3.3 Methodological problems

One of the main limitations with the case study approach is that there is a possible risk of generalization, meaning that outcomes or principles from this study might be employed or ”applied” to other different cases (Thomas 2003, 35). Thomas further suggests that one issue with a content analysis might be that compared to the knowledge one acquires it is much more laborious and lengthy, and, additionally, “the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the results of an analysis are dependent on how well the analysed documents represent the researcher's field of interest” (2003, 60).

3.4 Disposition

Hitherto I started out with a preface that serves as a genealogical background story to this thesis. From there on chapter 1 (pp. 4 – 13) have outlined the background (contextualisation, occurrence of the phenomenon, present day/future) and the three different stages of the phenomenon, definitions of the concepts that I am using (subculture and Brats), previous research on the subjects, and lastly a statement on the purpose and justification of the study. The theoretical framework that will be have been used here is explained and accounted for in chapter 2 (pp. 14 – 16), starting with Chris Jenks's (2004) theory on subculture and moving on to Jacob Östberg's theory on Brats (2007). The methodological aspects of the paper is what this current chapter (3, pp. 17 – 20) is, or will, describe; the chosen method of research was explained in the introduction, followed by an explanation of the selected material, and, a brief statement on what possible methodological problems there might with the adopted research method. This point leads up to where the paper is now about to continue, i.e. with a delimitation of the study where a description is provided concerning the contextualisation of the subject, i.e. what specific objects, time frames, geographical settings and other demographical background data that have been adopted. Chapter 4 (pp. 21 – 26) will look at the empirical material and conduct a case study of the Brat phenomenon, under the sub-headings of “brands and
consumption” and “leisure activities and life-styles”. The result of the gathered information will then be interpreted and analysed in chapter 5 (pp. 27 – 31), where Östberg's theory will be juxtaposed to the findings on Brats and Jenks's theory tested on the relationship between the concept of subculture and the Brat phenomenon. A discussion follows in chapter 6 (pp. 32 – 34) where I address issues such as style, image, archetypes, and social events, and, to summarize, a chapter (7, p. 35) with concluding remarks and some general points that the study has proposed.

3.5 Delimitations
The framework and limits of this thesis might have been mentioned throughout the chapters so far, however to make a clear statement on what the delimitations of the paper actually are, here are as follows. The chosen object of study is evidently “the Brats”, a phenomenon that has been noted in Stockholm, Sweden. Both females and males in any given age have been considered, while the phenomenon itself have been situated between the years of 1990 – 2011. The factors that have served as variables of interest for the study are: brands, consumption, leisure activities, lifestyles, and social groups. Additionally, alternative theoretical perspectives that could have been adopted or considered are theories on identity in relation to consumption (cf. Belk 1988, Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998, Ahuvia 2005, Shankar, Elliott, and Fitchett 2009), on fashion and clothes as means of communication (cf. Campbell 2007, Barnard 2007, Eco 2007), on fashion in relation to the body (cf. Calefato 2004, Entwistle 2000), as well as theories on fashion and gender (cf. Butler 2006). While these theories might have sufficed in producing valid understandings of the studied phenomena, such discourses have here been disregarded for the reason that the topic deals with fashion in relation to consumption, and, more generally, subcultures. The (to be/have been) proposed critique of the Brat phenomenon as a subculture would possibly in this context have been constrained with the use of theories that, in one sense, also try to produce new labels or concepts.
4. A CASE STUDY OF THE BRAT PHENOMENON

It was briefly mentioned in the section of concept definitions what the Brat term will stand for in this context and more specifically, in this case study. In short reiteration, the term Brat will here refer to the first stage of the phenomenon, i.e. a small secluded group that was geographically specific to Stockholm in Sweden (p. 8) and defined as accounted for in section 1.2.2 (p. 9). However the nature of the subject that is being studied demands for a further elaboration on the inherent development and progress that this phenomenon has seen. Therefore the first two sub-headings of this chapter will present the information gathered on Brats in relation to brands and consumption, as well as Brats in relation to leisure activities and lifestyles. The last sub-heading, 4.3 that is entitled “the second stage of the Brat phenomenon” (p. 25), will demonstrate and account for the differences between the first two stages of the Brat phenomenon.

4.1 Brands and consumption

As stated earlier Brats are known to consume high-end and luxurious brands. A few commodities that recur frequently in articles on Brats are “big expensive watches” and Canada Goose jackets (Skarin 2005). The price of these products range from 5000 SEK up to 10,000 SEK (for the jacket) and circa 50,000 SEK for a Breitling watch that seem to be favourable among male brats. Other commodities that seem popular amongst Brats are objects with visible and large logos. One example of such an example is 24 year-old Anna Hibbs who works as a manager at the White Room nightclub (in Stockholm) and as a writer of a blog on Stureplan.se (Hibbs 2011). Hibbs frequently feature images of herself and her friends wearing objects with noticeable logos or trademark styles, for example a photo were she is wearing a bracelet with the trademark logo “H” as in the brand Hermès and a typical “it-bag” (i.e. usually an expensive designer bag) with easily recognizable features such as studs by the brand Balenciaga. Both brands Hermès and Balenciaga are high-end and a Hermès bag can for example cost somewhere between 45,000 SEK (“The Kelly Bag”) and 200,000 SEK (“The Birkin Bag”) for the most expensive versions. One image from the nightclub Ambassadeur shows two young men posing in front of the camera. The man to the right with the back-slick hair is wearing an up-market shirt of the brand Polo Ralph Lauren, which has the brand’s logo of a polo player printed on the front-left chest. Furthermore the shirt is also of the colour pink, a colour that has been mentioned by a few writers as being prevalent among male Brats (Eriksson 2007, Lapidus 2010). While the Canada Goose jackets might be a commodity and brand that is mentioned frequently in these accounts, there are instances were it is suggested that such a brand is
“too inexpensive”. It is rather preferred to consume brands such as Dior, Armani or YSL, for the reason that “an elementary school student can afford the Goose jackets” (Over N’ Out 2008). However this account and quote might be considerably biased and perhaps gives off a somewhat condescending or mocking impression. The majority of the accounts on Brats and the Canada Goose jackets does, irrespectively, mention the brand as a crucial element in the Brat look, for instance one blog that argues that both male and female Brats are in possession of the brand (TBIRD 2007). A daily newspaper reporter lists, in “Youth styles we remember” (Åkesson 2009), the most memorable youth styles in a chronological order, dating from the 1940’s through to the present date. Brats appear at the beginning of the 21st century on the list, more precisely during the years of 2001 – 2007, and are illustrated as guys with heavily greasy hair and their fathers’ Amex cards, whilst the women are said to wear Henri Lloyd jackets during the summer and, as previously stated, Canada Goose down jackets during the winter. The journalist of the article, Johan Åkesson, also states, somewhat condescendingly, that the men and women “play” together in the area around Stureplan in Stockholm. One of the most important elements of the male Brat look is their hairstyle, which, according to several accounts (Åkesson, 2009, Halleröd 2007, Petersson 2005), have several appellations. The names that are mentioned most frequently are “backslick”, “pork chop”, and “waxed lion's mane”, all of which refer to a mid-long hairstyle that have been pulled backwards away from the face using a large amount of styling products, such as hair-wax. The hairstyle has also been claimed to be a firm staple within the financial world and that it is still popular for the reason that it is associated with “status […], expensive habits and Stureplan” (Halleröd 2007). One article features an interview with a woman called Mikaela Ragnarson, an economist who has previously written a Master thesis on the topic of “myths and realities in the culture of Stureplan” (Halleröd 2007). In the interview, it is suggested that the typical male Brat hairstyle will become less popular, if this has not already happened, in the event of “regular”, or the masses of society, people adopting the style (Ibid.). Despite the fact that there are numerous accounts, both written and visual, that demonstrate that the hairstyle actually have been adopted by wider group of the public, the article maintains that this has yet not happened but that it is still popular in its “traditional stratum” (Ibid.). Another common recurrence in accounts where Brats are mentioned, more specifically on Stureplan.se, is the weekly feature “Stureplan's 10 best-looking” that, needless to say, is a series of 10 photographs depicting five women and five men that are assigned the titles of best-looking. A larger part of the men that are pictured under this section of the website have or possess the characteristics or objects that have been described as being critical elements of what a Brat should have. The male Brat hairstyle can provide a good case in point; all five men that are on the list have their hair pulled back in one way or the other, all with half-long hair that has been
styled with hair-wax (Stureplan 2011). Journalist and copywriter Marcus Dunberg states that everything involved with the Brat phenomenon is predetermined and that it is simply about “living the myth”. On that account Dunberg thus suggest that the Brat look is a sort of uniform, adding that, “individualism is an unknown notion for (the Brats). It is rather about praising anti-individualism” (Dunberg 2008).

4.2 Leisure activities and life-styles
Brats are adolescents born with a pre-eminent background and social circumstances; parents with extensive connections and high positions within society, limitless debit on their credit cards and places reserved at the best private schools (Zsiga 2003). The Brat phenomenon is more or less exclusively about a luxury lifestyle. During the winter months of the year the Brats normally socialise around Stureplan, an area that is situated in central Stockholm close to the wealthier addresses such as Birger Jarlsgatan and Strandvägen, at nightclubs like Sturecompagniet, Ambassadeur, and Laroy, which are all part of the aforementioned conglomerate Stureplansgruppen. It is also popular among Brats to travel to well-known party resorts such as Båstad and Sandhamn in Sweden or to Saint-Tropez in France. A common occurrence at the parties in the mentioned cities is that it has become popular to buy bottles of champagne, sometimes costing as much as 75,000 SEK per bottle for an entire company and then spraying the champagne over the people (El Mahdi 2008). Previously mentioned nightclubs are usually quite hard to get into, for the reason that the bouncers have been given the authority to point out who is allowed inside and who is not, i.e. the bouncer points out people in the queue who they consider worthy of entering the nightclub (Hultgren 2005, Persson 2003). Another phenomenon that is becoming more frequent is what is called “vaska” in Swedish and could be translated as “to sink”, meaning that when buying a bottle of alcohol at the nightclub, you buy two or several bottles and ask the bartender to pour one of them straight into the sink. Cultural anthropologist Sten Hagberg draws a parallel between champagne spraying and the aboriginal people of North America and the South Pacific, who show their status by throwing away valuable possessions in a fire. “Whoever burns the most, wins the social game” (El Mahdi 2008). Some people goes as far as to say that Brats are lazy and that their way of living seem ostentatious to the average middle-class person. In addition to this there is now also a new type of lifestyle coming out of the Brat culture. This occurrence began when nightclubs and other special events started websites such as Finest.se and Stureplan.se, and both sites features blogs, chronicles and picture galleries from selected nightclubs. These event organizations and nightclubs now employ people who regularly attend that particular scene to blog about their lives and it has also become quite common that “the regulars” work with clubs, i.e. play records, host events,
organize special theme clubs etc. These activities which were previously carried out as leisure activity has now become high-paid jobs and several Brats, who attend aforementioned nightclubs and are regularly seen in pictures on above stated websites, are now working with their former pastime, for example Carl M. Sundevall who is in charge and legally responsible of Stureplan.se. Stureplan and its nightclubs are a popular meeting place for famous people such as the Swedish princesses, reality tv-stars and children of Sweden's foremost trade and industry owners and members, such as Adam Treschow, son of Michael Treschow who is chairman of LM Ericsson (telecommunications) and Unilever (convenience goods) (Skarin 2005). Newspapers and magazines, as well as TV and the Internet, are now frequently reporting on famous people and their habits and lives. Large parts of the Brat culture now also have this type of coverage, making the lifestyle and their commodities more public and available to most people. Famous people, and wealthy should be added, often consume what the lower- and middle classes can not afford and lead a luxurious lifestyle, as do Brats. Numerous articles mention luxury brand commodities when describing the Brat appearance and their favourite brands. Journalist Daniel Nyhlén describes the Brat's 'world' as shallow and superficial, that who you are, what you look like and what you do is very important. Nyhlén is asked, “What should one have?” and the reply is, “Money, looks, connections, a profession and a social group (Persson 2003). The novel Snabba Cash by Jens Lapidus deals with three different people and their destinies, one of them being the main character “Johan Westlund”, also called “JW”. JW comes from a traditional middle class background in Robertsfors but lives in Stockholm and disguises himself as being one of the Brats that he socialises with. These friends are all Brats who have the right connections, background and income, and, inasmuch, wear expensive brands and lead a luxurious lifestyle. Consequently JW begins to imitate his friends by studying their behaviour and jargon, the etiquettes and rules, as well as the unwritten rules (Lapidus 2006). Jens Lapidus' description of JW's constant quest to fit into the “Brat culture” provides an excellent example of how important it is 'to fit the mould' in this culture, and that, what is considered 'the right things' are needed in order to be a part of the group. Furthermore Nyhlén also suggests that the celebrity reporting in Sweden, which during the last 10 years (ca. 2000 - 2011) have rapidly increased, have become more and more important due to the fact that the royal children (the prince and two princesses) have grown up (meaning that it is now possible to follow their choices and life-styles) (Persson 2003). The mentioning of the royal family and, mostly, their children is something of a frequent and popular connection that most accounts on Brats seem to substantiate. It is also noted that the Brat phenomenon has developed along with the princesses, due to the fact that Brats are described as being from Östermalm (a part in Stockholm), having famous or wealthy parents, and some connection to the royal house (Ibid.). Another suggestion is that
“when the Brats can no longer be linked to the royal children, the newspapers will cease reporting on the Brats and the whole phenomenon will fizzle out” (Af Kleen 2005).

Being acquainted with the “right” people and “having it” are factors of this lifestyle that a Brat “should have” and as stated earlier there are people who decide who is allowed in to the nightclubs were the Brats socialize. One discussion on this topic seem to create a tension between the interviewer and the interviewee, the former who ask the latter why this has to happen and why it is so important: “what is the “chosen” people supposed to achieve when they are in the club?” (Persson 2003). The so-called pointer (nightclub bouncer), who is also apart of the discussion, forcefully emphasises what he believes to be the main cause of this occurrence, namely “ecstasy”.

To this the interviewee, journalist Daniel Nyhlén, responds with a reference to certain codes of conduct in this particular culture: “there are special rules [...] unwritten rules that one adheres to. You follow a strange behavioural pattern when you are in this world, in order to be “right” (Ibid.).

4.3 The second stage of the Brat phenomenon

If we go back to the main character JW in the book “Snabba Cash” and look at JW's life and the way he struggles to compose or produce his persona, we might make a connection with the different stages of the Brat phenomenon. If there are/were three stages of this phenomenon as suggested then JW would suitably fit into the later part of that development. He is one of the people who wish and strive to lead a Brat life-style, i.e. JW is consequently one of the people who has adopted the Brat culture. In the book, he is ashamed of his working class background, being from a small rural town, and so moves to the Swedish capital were he takes up a course at Stockholm School of Economics.

These observations suggests that the difference between JW as a part of the later stage of the phenomenon and a Brat during the initial phase is inherent in such demographic background data that were just mentioned. The points below demonstrates these differences and demonstrates that the second stage is/was when the phenomenon was adopted by the masses and a time when the initial characteristics (demographics) were appropriated by a larger part of society.

The Brat phenomenon:

1. **Stages of the Brat phenomenon:** (1) 1989 – 2005, (2) 2005 – 2010, (3) Brats v.2?

2. **Characteristics of a Brat (stage 1):** (1) connections, (2) specific brands, (3) hairstyle, (4) same social circle, and (5) money (by inheritance or background).

3. **Characteristics of a Stekare (stage 2):** (1) specific garments or colours, (2) hairstyles, (3) money (through employment or loan), and (4) specific social circles.
If the first and middle stages of this phenomenon are “easy” to decipher and define then the final stage, and this moment in time, is decidedly more difficult to grasp and demarcate. This period succeeded a phase when “suddenly everyone had Louis Vuitton bags, vacationed in St. Tropez and drank Champagne straight from the bottle, without one thought of … the bills […]” (Dunberg 2008). Needless to say the sudden events just described references the middle stage of the phenomenon when the Brat culture became “mass-popular”. These persons are sometimes referred to as “stekare”, however it is difficult and problematic to assert whether or not such a term is appropriate to use in this context only. While the term Brat is used more often the term “stekare” is also frequent in accounts on the phenomenon from the early part of the 21st century. Nevertheless “stekare” seem to have come to stand for, after the emergence of a “mass-culture” of Brats, the people who strive, or strived, to be a Brat or aspire to be in possession of the same or similar consumption objects and lead the same lifestyle. One account defines the word “stekare” as a male person that “cares about his appearance, dress in exclusive brands, regularly attends nightclubs, possibly good-looking, and have success in socialising with women” (Slangopedia 2009). Another source also suggests that the term is a slang word that is used to describe guys who are “tanned with a steady income, a rich social circle, and a dazzlingly white smile” (TBIRD 2007). One suggestion as to what the differences are between a Brat and a “stekare” indicates that the most significant variations or dissimilarities between the two stages of the phenomenon are the element of money. The first stage of the phenomenon included people from a wealthy background, most often being from an (upper class) affluent family, and so consequently such people always have/had “easy” access to good financial position. “Stekare” on the other hand are described as people who come from a middle class background, i.e. from a family with an “ordinary” background and an average household income or asset. It is also further suggested that a Brat can be a “stekare” but the latter can never be a Brat, which seem to have roots in the fact that the word “stekare” can be used as an adjective that would describe certain attributes in a person (Mellin 2010, Slangopedia 2009).
The research questions that were put forward in chapter 1 (p. 4 – 13) dealt with two different themes or topics: a/the Brat identity and the Brat phenomenon vs. subculture, and the questions were posed as follows: (1) what characterizes a Brat and what shapes a Brat identity? (2) Is there a relationship between the characteristics of the Brat phenomenon and the criteria of a subculture? This analytical chapter has been divided into two parts, following the nature of the posed research questions. Section 5.1 will accordingly analyse the Brat phenomenon in terms of its specific characteristics and pose such findings against Östberg’s theory on the phenomenon. The crucial question of whether or not the Brat phenomenon can be said to be a subculture will be analysed and discussed further under section 5.2. Furthermore, the previous research on these topics that where accounted for in section 1.3 (p. 10 – 12) might also be used here in order to create a more multi-dimensional analysis of the phenomenon, which in turn will enable a more autonomous and broad discussion.

5.1 The creation of a Brat identity and lifestyle

As demonstrated previously the Brats consumption, according to Östberg, is all about having the 'right' things at the 'right' time that is necessary in order to maintain (or put off) the 'right' kind of attitude, which he called “being cool”. He also suggested that the Brats are linked together through the “linking value” of style and that style as a concept continually changes and that the group “follow” these changes (to know what is “in fashion” at the time). Furthermore it was additionally stated that the relationship between the people in this “group” is strengthened through that “linking value” and that such a value is a prerequisite in the process of connecting to the group (2007, 94 – 95). According to the findings of the case study in chapter 4, the Brat phenomenon do consist of some of the elements that Östberg puts forward as being prevalent to the Brats/a Brat. Several accounts mentioned the importance of being in the “right” social circles, to have the “right” connections and to have a close relationship to well-known families such as the Swedish royal family. It was also described in what way and what importance specific clothes, garments or commodities has to Brats, such as the fact that certain brands are favourable within the “group” or the significance of having the “right” hairstyle for the male Brats. The specific hairstyle that has been previously discussed is one of the many similarities that most male brats have. Furthermore, as noted elsewhere, Brats are prone to wear the same type of brands and colours, as well as often using the same type of commodities. These facts could possibly demonstrate that the Brat appearance is uniform, and that has been advocated by the Brats as a sort of unwritten rule. These findings can be
said to corroborate with Östberg’s rendition of what the crucial factors of belonging is to the Brats. The importance of having the right type of knowledge to be able to socialise with equal or similar people seem to be of utmost importance to the Brats people. If we consider Östberg’s implementation of Sarah Thornton’s suggestion that relevant aspects of popular culture are important for the subcultural capital (Ibid., 95) we might also note that the media are now frequently reporting on famous people and their habits and lives. This type of coverage of this particular lifestyle creates something of a phantasmagoria for people who look at and read such reporting, as well as contributing in the building of a perception or idea of what type of look, objects etc. that is “needed” to achieve the Brat's kind of lifestyle. Furthermore, it could be suggested that the subcultural capital implies a notion of ‘possessing the right stuff’ and so from that viewpoint the Brats can be seen as using external sources to organize their social group. It could be suggested that while the term subcultural capital is appropriately applied to the Brat “group” when looked at from a consumption theory angle (i.e. consumer images, patterns, or stereotypes and the inherent relationship with the media and the market), however, it does not suffice to explain how this capital is obtained. Furthermore, the significance that is put on the concept of style in this (Östberg's) account of the phenomenon appears to be somewhat problematic. By looking at the Brat phenomenon and observing the way in which Brats consume or put together their appearance, it becomes apparent that whereas the Brat “look” can be said to be “a style” that many people “follow”, it becomes equally apparent that the concept of such a “specific style” can change at any given point. What would happen to that concept (or such a theory/reasoning) should a Brat person, or perhaps “all” Brats, choose to wear or buy commodities that are associated with another social group? An event that is in no sense impossible seeing that the Brats are all individual persons that might choose to buy something due to personal preference or likewise. David Muggleton has suggested that the advent of mass-produced fashion has fragmented in to a “post-Fordist stylistic pluralism” in the post-modern world and that similar events are happening in the area of “subcultural style” (2000, 55). These instances could imply:

[...] That group identifications (such as, I'm a punk; I'm a mod) would be problematized, and that subculturalists would not regard themselves in such specific terms. Second, that the fragmentation of both conventional and subcultural style has led to a de-differentiation (Lash 1990) of the subcultural-conventional divide, meaning that subculturalists would be unable to maintain this boundary through comparisons with conventional style” (Ibid., 55, cf. Lash 1990).
Östberg also argues that the Brat community is under constant “media scrutiny” and so they are therefore forced to “take action and change the internal codes depending on the type of media coverage they receive” (2006, 36). Could this be a plausible assertion, that the Brats indeed change or modify their internal language because of what the media say about them? If so, how do this occur and does it happen in a positive or negative way? For the purpose of this analysis, suppose that the media were to claim that the Brats are international jet seters who go to Saint Tropez (which, as demonstrated, they actually do), does that entail that they actually change their codes of conduct and means of performativity? While the media and other parts of popular culture are very much important for the dialectical relationship between the Brat group and their “style” and image, I find it somewhat premature to only perceive this “symbiotic relationship” as something that profoundly causes such people to change their means of conduct or behaviour. This viewpoint might certainly be advantageous when looking at the group as a consumption community, or as Östberg does, as a “consumption tribe” that uses outer sources in their meaning creation or building process. There is a notable ambivalence and stigma around the word Brat and the meanings and connotations it comes with. This notion seem to stem from the fact that a lot of articles, blogs, and other records on Brats take a negative stance toward the Brat phenomenon and the people, places, and other objects that are related to it. This might also be one aspect in which the Brats communicate with the market and “negotiate” on the meanings of their appearance. If we were, however, to apply a post-modern reading to this argument we might further substantiate the discussion of style as a insufficient concept, seeing that “postmodernity [...] entails the fragmentation of mass identities, even to the extent that the boundaries between established groups are breaking down. [...] A surfeit of signs and a breaking down of boundaries might problematize the way in which social groups use style as a means of classification and demarcation” (Muggleton 2000, 41, cf. Featherstone 1991). When looking at the Brat phenomenon from this angle, in terms of post-modernity, it is also interesting to reminisce what was said about Brats as “post-modern consumers”, which Östberg discussed when discussing their consumption activities and what type of consumers they are. He states that the Brat consumer can in one way be seen as a “typical über-consumer [...] living a shallow and superficial life” but that it would be more appropriate to regard them “as the latest variation of an old theme of young, rich urbanites consuming in a conspicuous manner”, instead of seeing them as “a new phenomena of supposedly post-modern consumers” (2007, 99). Is it better to view “them”, not as a contemporary phenomenon that have occurred within its specific time, but rather as new version of a phenomenon that was documented more than a hundred years ago (Veblen's “conspicuous consumption”)? That the Brats can be called “über-consumers” that consume conspicuously would, however, affirm the relationship between the
phenomenon and Veblen's theory, nevertheless this discussion rests on the argument of the concept of style. The aforementioned "linking value" was claimed to be "style" and what linked the group together. The importance of looking at the Brats from a non-linear angle was asserted, and it was also stated that previous research has mainly focused on one specific object and that it would be more beneficial to put an emphasis on the combination of things. This reading might be plausible when considering the Brats way of putting together their appearance, however such a statement becomes quite problematic considering style as single entity. Would there be any differences in looking at the first and the second stages of the phenomenon and juxtaposing them to the notion of style as the factor that links the group together? The specific style was said to be changing with time and that the Brats changed with it, but what happens when regarding the fact that the Brat characteristics have/might be adopted by a larger segment of the public? How do the different stages then demarcate between each other? It was noted that there is a significant difference between stage 1 and stage 2 of the phenomenon which would indicate a multitude of different 'styles' as it were. It has further been stated that "subcultural group identities would be fragmented rather than holistic and that boundaries would not be maintained with conventional style" (Muggleton 2000, 158). Style is, as stated, what creates a bond between the Brat people as well as a practice of using commodities to "be in the know" according to Östberg (2007, 104). Furthermore, Kjeldgaard stated that style is used as a tool in the creation of an identity and that it (style) can be seen as way in which consumers relate “to the group dynamics of consumption” (2009, 71 – 72). Kjeldgaard also suggested that “[…] consumers reflexively manage style consumption through a folk theory of style consumption” (Ibid.). Nevertheless, what is style in this context? Can style as a concept be said to be the marker of difference for the Brats? I shall returns to these questions and arguments in the discussion, in chapter 6 (pp. 29 – 31).

5.2 Brats and the concept of subculture
The Brat group have been called an enclave (Östberg 2007) but what is the terminology and etymology of the word? What does it entail or mean? Is the definition of the word compatible with the Brats (the phenomenon)? A dictionary defines enclave as “[1] a portion of territory within or surrounded by a larger territory whose inhabitants are culturally or ethnically distinct; [2] a place or group that is different in character from those surrounding it” (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2011, b). Oxford Dictionaries Online further state that the word enclave derives from the Old French word “enclaver” that means “enclose” or “dovetail” (Ibid. 2011). A reference point that is of great interest if looking at the meaning of dovetail, which is “fit or cause to fit together easily and conveniently” or “a joint formed by one or more tapered projections on one piece that interlock with
corresponding notches or recesses in another (Ibid. 2011, c). The two different words subsequently
denotes something that is different from a bigger whole and so in these contexts the Brats can
indeed be labelled an “enclave”; the Brats might be seen as a symbolic group with different
characteristics than the surrounding sphere, as well as something that easily relates to another. The
concept of subculture was said to be a new source of identities as well as being “the new signifier of
of difference” (Jenks 2004, 145). Christopher Jenks argued that the concept has come to be used to
on the one hand provide a voice to weaker “parts” of the population, or the person that has a
problem with expressing oneself, or the “disposed”, but that it also tries to control or comprise what
is different from the conventional (Ibid., 129). These two opposing viewpoints might both be
possible explanations of the Brat phenomenon. It might have been ascribed the concept of
subculture in order to be able to explain the differing characteristics of the Brats and the mass-
public. The same reasoning might be applied to the word enclave that might also have been utilized
to try to explain complex social/psychological differences, but it might also have been applied to
this phenomenon as a label (for the sake of having /putting a label on the group; to be able to call
them something). Furthermore the concept can also be seen as something “that tries to marginalize
or contain the deviant or the mainstream” (Ibid.).

The Brat phenomenon might be labelled a subculture if regarding subculture in terms of the
Chicago School scholars' definition of the concept. Mead and Hughes, among others, used
subculture as a concept “to highlight the symbolic normative structure of groups smaller than the
society as a whole” (Ibid., 6). Moreover, the Birmingham CCCS scholars (Hebdige 1979,
McRobbie 1981, Gilroy 1987) definition of subculture as an explanation of rebelling youth groups,
and in most instances white male adolescents. These arguments are interesting considering that
almost all accounts on Brats, both academic and in popular culture, address the phenomenon as a
subculture and mostly reports on the male Brats (while also adding that no accounts has been found
on a non-white/black Brat). Also, the Brat phenomenon as a subculture becomes insufficient when
noting that there are three entirely different stages of the phenomenon. While stage 1 might in some
ways be labelled a subculture, it would be impossible to label an appearance, that a large part of the
public has adopted, a subculture (i.e. stage 2). Why then is the Brat phenomenon ascribed these
labels without any sort of justification or explanation of how such a relationship is suitable?
6. DISCUSSION

The previous chapter aimed to analyse and juxtapose Christopher Jenks and Jacob Östbergs theories on the Brat phenomenon. The findings of that discussion suggest that the Brats can be seen as a subculture but that that would mean an overlooking of this phenomenon and that it has developed in society. The characteristics of a Brat are consistent with the theory of Brats as an enclave, however it was also demonstrated that such a concept, as well as the concept of subculture, might have both positive and negative properties. This chapter will aim to discuss and problematize the findings of the analysis further.

6.1 A , or the, marker of difference

It was earlier suggested that a concept (subculture) was enabled to speak for something (Jenks 2004, 145), rather than allowing that something to be analysed and investigated for what it actually is. Style can be said to have been utilized in much the same way. The concept (style) has been the source of a large debate within the subject of subcultures; a problem or dilemma that might be suggested to have stemmed from the fact that the topic itself is too problematic. I do not believe that style is what defines the Brats but rather that the concept is used to explain this particular group's choice in clothes. For what is style really? Is there a style to speak of? Style is too closely linked to the concept of subculture and both concepts are often used without any definition of what they are. I would argue that term style can be viewed in a double sense; the manner in which something is done and as a way of arranging one's appearance. However, in order to speak of a style there would have to be some general consensus as to what that style is. Indeed, style can serve as a concept to describe an appearance or manner, yet “a style”, or “the style” can always considering that there are individuals that choose or decide said appearance or manner, despite the fact that such an individual might be part of a group. In much the same way as subculture, style is used in order to explain something that is visually coherent, yet such an interpretation does not account for the capricious and unstable nature of fashion, clothes and society.

So if Brats are not about style, nor that style never was a “marker of difference” for the Brats, then what is? In what ways is it necessary to look at the Brats from what makes “them” different from something bigger (the mass)? Style indicates a composition of different specific objects, which would suggest that when a Brat choose differently, an object that does not adhere with their “style” makes the whole concept of style fall apart? Visualize, for instance, a cross as a part of a piece of jewellery or as a print on a t-shirt. Such a sign could stand for anything but does not necessarily
indicate that the wearer is religious or a theological person. Equally, a Brat with “the Brat style” can/could wear a t-shirt that denotes rock n' roll and “such” a culture. That “the style” (Brat) is down to what is fashionable at a specific time is also a problematic notion. What is “fashionable” would suggest that something is popular with the larger public; the findings of the characteristics of the Brats suggests that there is not anything mainstream in their appearance (or the strived appearance) but a vast focus on exclusivity and luxury (stage 1). It is not style that keeps this group together but rather their shared language and understanding of what specific objects, places, peoples, etc., mean in specific contexts. The importance is put on an object not because it is “their style” but because it is in accordance with their appearance, i.e. their image. I would argue that what we are dealing with here is not a sense of style per se, indeed the Brats do have a “certain dress code” that one must adhere to and inasmuch there must be “a style”, however that style would be the appropriate terminology is questionable. Style is a term that have been adopted by scholars and other “gatekeepers” of fashion to describe why people choose to dress in one specific way. The etymology of the word (style) points to no interpretations of a style, but rather a “a particular procedure by which something is done” (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2011, d). However the word could also mean “a distinctive appearance, typically determined by the principles according to which something is designed” (Ibid.) and in such an instance style could be said to a term of how the Brats dress or put their appearance together. Style was also said to be a sort of reference point for the Brats, which they constantly change in relation to their milieu. Do not all people, groups, or institutions have reference points? Even though someone might be reported on and several people can follow their behaviour and lifestyle, that does not necessarily mean that there is a substantial change involved. Is this really a matter of cause and effect as suggested? The Brats can, in one sense, be seen as “cultural fragments”; the phenomenon have become fragmented as everything else, or most, things in our post-modern world. The phenomenon started out as a “group” that could be discerned and noticed but its characteristics was later adopted by the mass and so dispersed into society. This could be one possible answer to the question of the relation between Brats and the concept of subculture; that such a relationship is difficult to validate. Phenomenon is synonymous with experience, circumstance, episode, and event; all of these words are suitable and advantageous to use when describing the Brats. For these words indicates something that is a part of something larger, with causes and effects, not something such as subculture that is supposed to “stand on its own legs” outside of a society, a culture, or a city. Perhaps the concept of subculture can be seen as a phenomenon in itself; was it a fad that was spurred on by the likes of Dick Hebdige and the Birmingham Centre of Cultural Studies?
6.2 The phenomenon

The advents of the late 1990's provide a few suggestions as to why this particular phenomenon did occur during this decade. Sweden (and also other countries) experienced an economic boom that brought with it fast money, IT, and new media (etc.). More and more people increased their salaries and inasmuch their consumption activities, which could suggest that the Brat persons used their backgrounds and inherited wealth as a means of maintaining and supporting their (believed?) status within society. Likewise, the societal and cultural events during the years of 2000 – 2005 might provide a good case in point on the development of the phenomenon, as well as adding further elements to the discussion on style and image. The celebrity culture of the early 21st century is still very much common and predominant in today's society. The “stekare” of the second stage of the phenomenon might have regarded the Brats appearance as something that is valuable, and in one sense seen the Brats as celebrities that are idolized. Also, it was earlier suggested that the Brat lifestyle is about “living the myth”; what would the myth mean in this context? “The myth” in the Brat culture would denote to notions of royals, celebrities, high-flyers, millionaires, etc., for instance they would strive to lead a life such as “Gordon Gekko” (character of the movie Wall Street). Does these suggestions or findings not advocate that what distinguishes the Brat phenomenon is that it is about an image of something? Why is there a focus on how they differ from the general public? The book Nought nought: the decade that changed the world (my translation) addresses a multitude of different objects, events and areas during the first ten years of the 21st century. Journalist Björn Af Kleen discusses the area “Stureplan” (as aforementioned) in one chapter of the book, in which he describes different personalities and what he calls “archetypes” that were prevalent around that area. One account of such an archetype is the pork chop haired “stekare”, which I have previously described, while the others are said to be “hedge fund brokers, suburban criminals, and uneconomical fashion bloggers” (Af Kleen 2010, 210). The Brat could be seen in the same way; as an archetype, “a very typical example of something [and as] an original which has been imitated” (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2011, e). Furthermore, the discussion of several archetypes being prevalent might also add to my suggestion of the Brat appearance as a sort of image that a person tries to adhere to or obtain. The Brat appearance in this sense is only one of several other different images or appearances that are to be found in the Brat context; hence the notion of “one” or “a” style becomes insufficient in order to describe the Brats. Considering Af Kleen's account of “Stureplan” and its people, could the other mentioned archetypes also be said to be subcultures in the same way that Brats were labelled one? Perhaps the Brat terminology itself was only a concept that was used in order to describe a societal phenomenon and that there never was such a thing as a “Brat subculture”. 

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7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this thesis I have argued that the Brat phenomenon should not be analysed in terms of being a subculture, which is here seen as a concept with pigeonholing characteristics, but rather looked at in the contextual setting from where the phenomenon actually occurred. It was suggested that the Brat phenomenon consists of three different stages that spanned between the years of 1990 – 2011. The Brat phenomenon could in some ways be called a subculture, yet several characteristics of the concept also proved that such a relationship is faulty, and that is made without explanation. The word Brat comes with an aura of ambivalence and is often stigmatized, which is due to the fact that a lot of the written accounts on Brats use a mocking language and so a negative stance when describing “them”. In this way Brats could be said to use outer sources in their appearance-making process, however these notions rested on style that have been argued to be an insufficient concept. Style cannot function as one single entity and in the same way as subculture, be enabled to speak for a multitude of different elements. The Brat appearance can be seen as an unwritten rule that is, or should be, followed, which relates to what has been said to be crucial belongings to the Brats. The right knowledge and social circle is of utmost importance in the Brat appearance, which could be linked to the theory of subcultural capital. However, such capital would imply that “one has it”, a notion that proved to be problematic considering that that would entail a common or understanding of it. Which was further proved to disregard the fact that the phenomenon involves individual persons that might buy or consume something that is not synonymous with “it”. The concept of style that has been heavily linked to both Brats and subcultures could be understood in much the same way. In order to speak of of “style” there would have to be a general opinion as to what that style is; which in itself indicates that the capricious and unstable nature of fashion and society has been overlooked. Style was here demonstrated to suggest a manner of doing something or dressing, however it was also suggested that image might be a more appropriate term to use when talking about Brats. In conclusion, the concept of subcultures was found to be difficult to validate and that the concept might itself be, or have been, a phenomenon. These arguments and findings indicates that the theories on Brats need to be expanded and that the discourse on subcultures need to be carried forward. Lastly, it could also be suggested that the conclusions would demonstrate that a new “Brat” might arise imminently, but whether or not that new phenomenon might actually be called a “Brat” or not is something that will be revealed.
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