

**BACHELOR THESIS REVIEW**

**Type of review:** *thesis supervisor*

**Author:** *Alexandra Lebriez*

**Title:** *Environments of DIY Spirituality*

**Supervisor:** *Bohuslav Kuřík*

**Reviewer:** *Michaela Pixová*

Please explain the reasons for your evaluation (especially reservations and criticisms) according to the criteria listed below.

**1. Is the aim of the thesis (research question) clearly stated and do the conclusions correspond to it? Is the thesis appropriately structured?**

Comments:

The aim is clearly stated several times in the thesis – in the very introduction (10) and above all in the methodological section where a cluster of research questions is posed: *“In terms of spiritual beliefs and practices, how are the scenes of Vsetínsko and Ostravsko different from each other? How are they similar? What is the role of environmental factors in these developments? Is it possible to explain the common traits through their common DIY punk participation? How can we describe the spiritualities in both scenes?”* (22)

The thesis does tackle these questions throughout the whole text. Some questions are targeted with more details, others with less, but from an overall perspective the conclusions do correspond to the aims. What is more, the text is structured in a classic way (1.Theory, 2. Methodology, 3. Data Analysis, 4. Discussion, 5. Conclusion) which suits well in reaching the aims of the thesis.

The only minor reservation I have in regard to the thesis structure is about two case studies (20, 21). I don't understand why they form part of the theoretical section and Ecological approaches subsection.

**2. Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?**

Comments:

Yes, the thesis is based on relevant research as well as literature. The literature is discussed extensively and in a compact way. There is no redundancy of concepts – meaning, the author does not shoot one concept after another just to fill up pages. To the contrary, the author proves she does understand the concepts and manage to integrate them well. I especially appreciate her conceptual shift from the concept of a subculture to the concept of a scene which is very appropriate for her research design of comparing two regions. Last but not least, the author not only present crucial concepts accurately, but she summarizes as well relevant criticism of them.

On the other hand, I do have some reservations. What I do miss in the thesis is more literature in the

Ecological approaches section. The author does outline what she means by environmental factors (24), but it is a pity that except the literature on urbanism (19), she does not summarize studies taking such factors in account while analysing subcultures and above all DIY punk scenes. Does this mean that there is no such literature?

Apart from this reservation, I do have as well some very minor ones – from time to time, there is a conceptual mess and some unification of scientific vocabulary could be helpful. Sometimes, the author uses the term identity, other times subjectivity and one can only guess what is the relation between them, if they are synonyms etc.

### **3. What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?**

Comments:

The author chooses proper methodological set grounded in a qualitative research strategy, comparison and semi-structured interviews (not questionnaires as she one time mistyped, 24) and proves she can work with such methods. Besides, she does integrate statistical information and desk research when necessary. What I especially appreciate is a pre-research which helps her to intergrate photo elicitation into interviews, reflection of the limits of chosen methods as well as ethics. Lebriez proves she has good observation, analytical as well comparative skills. Lastly, she conducted and analyzed 8 interviews which I consider sufficient for this kind of work – especially when she intentionally narrowed down the sample to older punkrockers and thus avoids questions of shifting understanding of spirituality in different subcultural generations.

I do have only minor reservations here. I do miss an integration of photos in the text which would help when comparing different scene environments. Besides, I do not exactly know what Lebriez meant by “the multidisciplinary approach” (46). And lastly, although her data analysis processes such as coding are appropriate, she could backed them up in at least some literature.

### **4. Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?**

Comments:

Yes, the findings are relevant to the research question. What is more, they are not trivial: “*The main characteristics of Czech DIY punk spirituality are eclecticism, openness, and uniqueness of beliefs and practices. While the Ostravsko scene has been found to be more secular and humanistic in spirituality, Vsetínsko appeared closer to nature and put more emphasis on creativity.*” (5). Lebriez does keep in compact relation research questions and answers as well as she proves to be able to compare and outline out of it differences as well as similarities. Lastly, the author manages to return to theoretical concepts in the final discussion and connect them to the empirical material.

Nevertheless, I do have some criticism as well. Some partial findings are not evidenced properly – especially those from the observation – sentences like “*it looks less maintained than the nature one finds inside of the Ostravan city.*” (29). Such preliminary observation should be either backed up by some information from relevant documents (like official documents of environmental management) or left behind. Besides, I would appreciate more inductive advancement when presenting quotations from interviews – that is first these quotations and only then her analysis and not the other way round. Apart from that, her conclusions are distributed all over the text and it is a bit pity that they are not properly condensed in the Conclusion section itself. Lebriez only exceptionally derails from rather high standart conceptual compactness – when she introduces a heavy caliber concept of “prefigurative politics” (48) only in the Discussion after the empirical section without debating it before and after.

## 5. Are the author's thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?

Comments:

Yes, the author's thoughts are clearly distinguished from the borrowed ideas. Lebriez does manage to combine concepts from studies of spirituality with concepts from subcultural studies as well as debate empirical material through them.

## 6. What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?

Comments:

The quality of style is high with only few typos or mistakes when quoting from interviews (missing colon etc.). In one case, the content vocabulary differs from the text vocabulary: the author uses Ecological approaches in the former case and Environmental approaches in the latter case. I especially appreciate quotations in English together with originals in Czech as well as lyrics in Czech and English in the appendix.

## 7. Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.

I do highlight one strength of the thesis. Lebriez justifies well why it is relevant to do such research and to do it in Czechia. The author points out that due to its high rate of atheists it does make sense to consider Czechia *“an interesting laboratory for the study of religious and spiritual phenomena.”* (10). What is more, she does an important step in subcultural studies of Czechia. Comparing two regional scenes, she manages to move beyond too general statements about “Czech punk” which usually is grounded on research of a Prague scene. Such a move beyond methodological nationalism I believe is a future of the subcultural studies in Central and Eastern Europe and Lebriez does provide an important contribution in this regard. On the other hand, it is a pity that Lebriez does not state this innovation more clearly and explicitly in her work.

## 8. What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?

I suggest two topics to be discussed:

1. Lebriez comes up with the concept of DIY punk spirituality to help in understanding spiritual practices, selves and discourses of punkers. Is such DIY punk spirituality according to her and her research an issue of individual self-cultivation or is it more an issue of intersubjectivity, that is of cultivating DIY punk collectives rather than individuals? What does it tell about relations of DIY punk to late liberal, capitalist and individualized society?
2. Her research is grounded in a presupposition that nature and city (or culture or society) stand against each other as binary opposition and mutual exclusivity – to go to nature means to leave a city. What is a role of nature *inside* cities for punkers, if any?

## 9. I declare that I have checked the result of the originality check of the thesis:

Theses  Turnitin  Ouriginal (Urkund)

Comment on the result of the check:

Overall similarity: 0%

**Overall evaluation of the thesis:**

*(Please, state clearly whether the thesis is or is not recommended for a defence and write the main reasons for the recommendation).*

Alexandra Lebriez submits a thesis of a high quality in regard to all the important criterias – from conceptual work, empirical research, to methodological and ethical issues. Besides, it was a pleasure to work with her as she did consult regularly and was enthusiast about her research. I do only have minor reservations and criticisms. Thus I do fully recommend her thesis for a defence.

Proposed grade: *B*

Date:  
August 29, 2023

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kříž', is written on a light blue horizontal line.