

An equally important criticism of the CCCS's work is its failure to consider local variations in youth's responses to music and style. As Waters (1981) notes, 'geographical specificity is a factor in subcultural studies that cannot be overlooked (and consequently works need to tone down their stress on the universality of subcultures, and make a concerted effort to focus on ...regional subcultures' (p. 32). Related to this is the problem that the subcultural theory developed by the CCCS is an essentially British concept, formulated with a view to studying a specific section of British youth – white, working-class males – at a particular point in post-Second World War British history. As such, it is very difficult to transpose the CCCS's subcultural theory to other national contexts. This point is illustrated effectively by Brake (1985), in relation to the Canadian youth cultural experience:

If there is a tradition of resistance in Canadian youth culture, it is at an individualistic rather than a collective level. The vast size of the country acts against any distinct yet common themes... Further, at a more banal level, the long and severe winter which covers most of Canada localises youth cultures to the cities, and even there public spaces tend to be shopping malls, which do little to generate collective gatherings and are easy to control. (p. 145)

A similar example is offered by Pilkington in considering the disjuncture between Hebdige's (1979) reading of UK punk's subversion of consumerist lifestyles and the articulation of the punk style in Russian cities. Thus, as Pilkington (1994) explains, there can... be no social base for a movement subverting consumerist lifestyles in a society where a safety pin or a dustbin bag is an article of deficit, not abundance' (p. 228). Further problems arise in attempting to apply the CCCS's work to other academic environments whose scholars do not share the structuralist concerns of the CCCS theorists. Reflecting on the limitations of the CCCS work from a Scandinavian perspective, Fornäs (1995) notes how:

Stronger ties with continental hermeneutics, psychoanalysis and critical theory hindered the total dominance of structuralism, thereby also avoiding the fetishism and reification of subcultural styles which characterized parts of the British 1970s tradition.  
(p. 6)