"Heavy Transcripts: Exploring the Disobedient Practices of the D.I.Y. musicians in Western Belarus"

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ABSTRACT

In the past, there have been different approaches to researching manifestations of human agency in non-democratic political regimes. Contributing both to the development of the concept of infrapolitics and the insufficient qualitative data on contemporary Belarus, this Thesis intends to investigate how do the disobedient practices of the D.I.Y. music scene help to reveal the execution of agency in Western Belarus, in 2018. While the social and political sciences have often found the polarization between the domination and the resistance useful, this work is critical of the analytical value of these terms and proposes a practice theory-based methodology that helps to promote the idea of an agent-structure interdependency. Through the implementation of qualitative data collection techniques - in-depth interviews and participant observation - voice is given to the active agents themselves, providing an insight into the ways of life that are parallel to the hegemonic one. The acquired results speak against the perception of Belarus inhabitants as oppressed and points at the prerequisites and mechanisms of disobedient practice that can further help to advance the analytical tool-kit for contentious political spaces.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

D.I.Y. – *Do It Yourself,* a self-sufficient approach to getting things done

KGB (in Belarus) - The State Security Agency of the Republic of Belarus (Russian: КГБ - Комитет государственной безопасности Республики Беларусь)

OMON (in Belarus) - Special Purpose Police Unit (Russian: ОМОН — Отряд Мобильный Особого Назначения)

OCCUPATIONAL LEXICON USED IN THE TEXT

Gig - a D.I.Y. concert

Zine (also fanzine) - self-made magazines devoted to topics relevant within the D.I.Y. scene

Distro - a practice of distributing D.I.Y. band records, stickers and other related materials for the self-cost of it

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Introduction

If each academic work should find a box for itself, I intend this thesis to belong to an anthropology of politics. Yet, this fundamental constitution of humanities can always be challenged. Are our lives inherently political? Is is possible to refuse one political space and create another political space within? Who are you when you are not at the top of the political power pyramid of a state? While I would rather leave those questions to virtuosos of political philosophy to discuss, this work is based on an assumption that all citizens are practitioners of politics and that it is neither the influence over others, nor financial possibilities that indicate political success. Instead, it is the power that allows one to choose her own way.

The main intention of my work is to contribute to the academic discourse of human agency in Western Belarus. Moving from the idea of politics to the idea of infrapolitics and further, I wish to challenge the Western academia's perception of Belarus as unique because of the authoritarianism and instead focus the attention on the unique bundles of disobedient practices that can be found in such a seemingly uniform and controlling regime.

The case of Belarus D.I.Y. music scene provides a possibility to re-evaluate concepts of resistance, agency and infrapolitics. It is characterized by unpredictability, compromises between the hegemony (state) and the disobedient agent (practitioners of D.I.Y. scene), as well as continuous negotiations regarding appropriation of ideologies. In this work I attempt, firstly, to create a practice theory-themed description of the set-up of the scene; secondly, to address the execution and the nature of the compromises made by the practitioners in the D.I.Y. scene and, thirdly, to propose the concept of disobedient practice as an analytical sub-section of infrapolitics.

By implementing research tools of qualitative methodology - in-depth interviews and participant observation - I will seek an answer to the question of how do the disobedient practices of the D.I.Y. music scene help to reveal the execution of agency in Western Belarus, in 2018. I will approach the practice using two different focuses - thought and action - and finally see how they converge and impact the social dynamics between the practitioners and other agents (and how, conversely, the social environment fuels the practice).

In the first chapter I will provide the necessary context to locate the practice I'm focusing on within the spheres of influence. In the second chapter I will provide a theoretical overview that will reach back to the beginnings of practice theory, as well as discuss the analytical value of the notion of resistance and introduce the concept of disobedient practices. The methodology chapter unfolds the processes of data collection and analysis, while the fourth chapter presents the findings. I made a deliberate choice to devote most attention to the

descriptive details and voices of research participants, as the post-Soviet D.I.Y. musician practices have not been sufficiently regarded in the Western academia and it was important for me to remain context-sensitive. In the last chapter I summarize the findings, sketching out a circular mechanism of disobedient practice continuation.

1. Context

1.1. Political and Social Context

In-between European Poland and Russia lies the landlocked Belarus. Prior to 1991, the story of Belarus is similar to those of other states in Eastern Europe: frequent shifts of power in the 20th century, injured identities, and around ⅓ of the population lost in the battles of 2nd World War. Now Belarus has established itself as a territory of 207'595 m2 - home to a population of 9'504,700.

Since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Belarus has struggled to implement a human-rights-oriented political regime. A lot has been written about the man who politically leads the European country of "better communists than Russians" and the farce-like political manipulations that have enabled him to stay in the presidential position. After presidential elections in 1997, it became clear that the first (and so far, the last) president, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, would do what was necessary to establish himself as the only rule-setter in the country (Besemeres, 2016). A unitary presidential republic was born. By using what Luschenko calls the *egalitarian nationalist* ideology, Lukashenka has kept the economy in the hands of state, and has been able to exercise the ethnically inclusive shared value frame to delegitimize opposition movements (Luschenko, 2008:1420). Yet, his policies didn't prove to be efficient enough to obscure the deteriorating economic situation of the state in 2016 and 2017. This provided an opportunity for the opposition movements to step onto the national stage for the first time since the violent events of the presidential election of 2010 (Nice, 2011; Besemeres, 2016) and organize large-scale protests known as the "March of Angry Belarusians". In the UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, demonstrations of February and March 2017 were described as 'symptomatic of the disconnect between the claim by the authorities that the centralized economy is able to create well-being and the social reality of hundreds of thousands of people whose lives are affected by harsh economic policies' (Harastzi for UN, 2017). Despite these episodes of expressed grievance, no

further notable public action followed and the eyes of international organizations have since been looking elsewhere.

In political science and electoral studies, J. Besemeres has addressed A. Lukashenka's pre- and post-election strategies to balance impact coming from the East and the West (2016), and Crabtree et al. has analyzed the pseudo-democratic nature of elections (2015). N. Leshchenko has approached the Lukashenka's regime as one that can be explained through shortcomings related to national ideology (2008) and A. Nice has focused on the unsuccessful attempts of the opposition to overthrow the ruler (2011). As the political personality cult has eaten into the European academia, the rest of the population of Belarus has gained a rather dim representation. Ackermann et al. describes the current view of Belarus as one of "an object, its population cowed and passive – at best dominated, at worst slaughtered by a succession of brutal rulers, domestic and foreign" (2017:1), a defective state and a "failed nation" (Pershai, 2010 in Ackermann et al., 2017:4).

The *Journal of Soviet and post-Soviet Politics and Society* has devoted its recent (September, 2017) issue to the re-discovery of Belarusian agency, approaching the topic from a social, political and historical perspective. A comprehensive idea of the contrasting field might be acquired through Svetlana Poleshchuk's research on counter publics in authoritarian Minsk (2017). In her work she reveals the unprivileged position of any public that does not reflect the opinions proposed by the state. Poleshchuk describes the tactics used to maintain the chance to self-express – consisting from tip-toeing around the political topics in the posters of public lectures and not crossing the boundary of the hegemonic public space claimed by the state power. Earlier, in 2007, L. Levis and M. Medich published a report on music censorship in Belarus, which highlighted some of the survival tactics used by the D.I.Y. scene musicians – for example, announcing the place of the event at the last minute, so that it would make it hard for the KGB agents to arrive on time.

The previous findings indicate that there is a form of control and an element of risk that shapes the actions of the active agents in Belarus, revealing a dynamic and tensioned field. As the population of Belarus is rather under-researched, there is both a notable potential for misapprehension and a wide variety of trails to follow. In the next subchapter, I will introduce the one I chose for this piece of work.

1.2. D.I.Y. Music Scene in Belarus

D.I.Y. or *do-it-yourself* stands for self-sufficiency - D.I.Y. practitioners believe that professional services available for a cost can be easily substituted by having a strong motivation and willingness to continuously learn and implement new skills in order to gain the desired result. D.I.Y. principles have been closely tied to punk *subculture* and it is believed to be the key to the seemingly unlikely punk-related practice continuation (Moran, 2010:58). In the case of applying D.I.Y. ethics to music production, one usually refers to bands that have no intentions to work with record companies and that do not prioritize financial gains.

D.I.Y. punk culture originated in the United States in the 1970s and has spread all around the world ever since. While there were different interpretations of punk that were present during Soviet times, the D.I.Y. punk culture in the post-Soviet space first emerged in mid-90's in the Baltics and Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Irkutsk). Around 1998-1999, the ideology and practices associated with the scene reached Belarus, while the first punk gigs and fanzines appeared in Ukraine around 2005. A notable scene did not evolve in countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan due to the political situation. (Aksyutina, 2008:149).

Meanwhile, the D.I.Y. scene in Belarus has acquired recognition among the transnational D.I.Y. practitioners exactly because of its relative stability despite the restrictive political circumstances. (Aksyutina, 2008:150). When describing the situation in the Belarus scene, O. Aksyutina finds it important to mention that the Belarusian state undertakes repressive practices - such as confiscating fanzines and performing gig raids. She believes that these actions strongly contributed to the politicization of the scene. (*id.*). Over time, a wide variety of D.I.Y. music genres appeared in several Belarusian towns - from crust-punk to hardcore (including bands that support *straight edge[1]* ideology). At the beginning of the 2000's, several distributional labels appeared, furthering the circulation of records, stickers and other distributional materials, and new labels and bands have continued to appear ever since (Aksyutina, 2008:153).

The D.I.Y. scene has the potential to be characterized either as a subculture or a counter-public, yet in this work I will depart from the constructed social totalities, perceiving the set-up as a practice-arrangement bundle[2]. I do not see it in terms of *insiders* and *outsiders* - I simply recognize practitioners whose collective practices to a large extent overlay with those that are associated with the notion of the D.I.Y. scene. Additionally, while the D.I.Y. practices

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[1] Straight edge (sometimes abbreviated sXe or signified by XXX or X) is a subculture of hardcore punk whose adherents refrain from using alcohol, tobacco and other recreational drugs, in reaction to the excesses of punk subculture. (Sutherland, 2006)

[2] T. Schatzki develops the understanding of practice-arrangement bundles in "The site of the social: a philosophical account of the constitution of social life and change" (2002), describing it as a totality of material and structural arrangements and manifest of practice that require a certain set of skills.

have spread transnationally, they are always context-specific and never the same - a more elaborate insight in the perceptions of the Belarus D.I.Y. music scene will be revealed in the data analysis section.

2. Theoretical Overview

2.1. Introduction in the Practice Theory

When operating with analytical concepts that hold an extensive theoretical background, it is important to track back to the very fundamental presumptions present in the chosen social theory. In this way the risk of incorrect interpretation is reduced and cognitive continuity is ensured. Thus, in this chapter I will first address the practice theory and its main shifts, then I will compare the varied takes on agent-structure interaction within them and, finally, propose the notion of disobedient practices as a subsection of the concept of infrapolitics.

In the late 70's, marking the creation of practice approach, such leading works as Bourdieu's "*Outline of a Theory of Practice*" (1977) and Giddens's "*Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*" (1979) got published, both of them highlighting the idea that the agent and the structure have a dialectical interrelation (Ortner, 2006:2). Practice theory differs from the rest of the social theory by seeing "the social" as "a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings" (Schatzki, 2005:11), instead of seeing individuals, interactions, language, institutions, or signifying systems as a primary object of inquiry. Fundamentally, practice theory aims to perform the task of elucidating the relationship between practices of social actors on the ground and the established structure, but since the beginning there has been dissent regarding various profound details.

According to Schatzki, most academics using practice theory focus on the practice as an "array of human activity" (2005:11), and the practice approach implies that the researcher either develops an account of practices (in the field of practices of some subdomain) or treats the field of practices as the place to study the nature and transformation of their subject matter (Schatzki, 2005:11). The main object of dispute is the amount of impact different structural components (such as social institutions, science, language, non-humans) have on the practices carried out by agents, as well as the ways these mechanisms of influence work. Yet, the

alternative views are once again joint by regarding all of these structural phenomena as parts of the field of practices[3] (*id.*).

There are several reasons to choose practice theory not only over structuralist thought, but also over fellow social theories that see the agent and structure as mutually formatting each other by other means. For example, by focusing one's attention on shared beliefs, rules and norms, one has to enter the internal world of an individual and look for concealed entities that are later used in analysis which itself requires assumptions about the distinct and fixed indications of these shared codes (Barnes, 2005:26). Conversely, practice is public and visible, manifested in action that is bolder and less influenced by researchers subjectivity than a rhetoric. Thus, the practice approach is highly convenient in settings which otherwise obstruct social inquiry – such as spaces of censorship.

Sherry Ortner, who uses the concept of "projects" to describe what I see as similar to bundles of practice-arrangement and in her writings regards agents as "acting subjects", has promptly described the shift from focusing on the agent's social identity to putting emphasis on the doing and making:

> "the question of adequate representation of subjects in the attempt to understand resistance is not purely a matter of providing better portraits of subjects in and of themselves. The importance of subjects (whether individual actors or social entities) lies not so much in who they are and how they are put together as in the projects that they construct and enact. For it is in the formulation and enactment of those projects that they both become and transform who they are, and that they sustain or transform their social and cultural universe" (2006:58).

Yet, this must be regarded as a rather theoretical distinction, as in practice the issues of representationality remain crucial – even if the researcher does not speak of a group, but of a bundle of practice-arrangement, the category of "the doers" remains vivid in the head of the audience.

The differences in various methodologies within practice approach depend on the perception of individual agency. The majority of practice theorists do feature know-how and shared sets of skills over desires and emotions (Barnes, 2005), although the subject's ideas of the activity (goals and reasons) remain important – as emphasized by Schatzki, practice is both action and thought combined (2005:16). While Bourdieu's habitus[4] stands on the "structured, embodied practice" side, A. Giddens and B. Barnes pay notable attention to propositional knowledge and agent perception (Schatzki, 2005:17; Barnes, 2005). I am inclined to agree that the significance of practice cannot be understood without a thick description (Ortner, 2006:62), but one must remain mindful and prioritize the data that is collected by the observation method.

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[3] Field of practice - the total nexus of interconnected human practices (Schatzki, 2005:11)

[4] As in Bourdieu's legacy, 'the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them' (Wacquant 2005: 316)

While there are certain social agreements involved in making the practices collective, these shared know-hows can be seen as a pool of adaptable resources, used and appropriated by active agents (Barnes, 2003:26).

Practice theory has developed several thematic sub-branches – while Sherry Ortner distinguishes between *Power*, *Culture,* and *Historic* turns in practice theory (2006:4), Schatzki adds Science and Technology studies and even linguistics to the fields covered by the practice approach (2005:10). As my main concept of interest – infrapolitics – falls under the Power shift of the practice theory, I will now address the key points within it.

Power has been regarded to be an essential part of the agent-structure dialectic since the beginnings of practice theory. As promptly noted by Barnes, "to engage in a practice is to exercise a power" (2005:28). Bourdieu (1977) and Sahlins (1981) put the main emphasis on the power of the structure and the social hierarchy, shaping the practices of the on-ground actors. Alternatively, Giddens saw the institutional and cultural structure as a "domination", while "power" was used to refer to the agency of an individual (Ortner, 2006:5), thus putting the agent in the spotlight. However, I find the notion of domination as too categorical and prefer R. Williams' way of addressing a similar matter – he speaks of "hegemonies" that are not "structures external to individuals", but are instead "the whole lived social process" (1977:109), which is continually "renewed, recreated, defended" and continually "resisted, limited, altered, challenged" (1977:112). R. Williams is regarded as one of the main theorists that are exclusively focused on matters of power, together with Michel Foucault[5] and James Scott. S. Ortner matches the power theorists with the key practice works regarding on the amount of agency that they grant to an individual – while M. Foucault is considered the most similar to P. Bourdieu, R. Williams matches with M. Sahlins, but J. Scott, characterized by his fondness of matters of resistance and social change, sees the social world in accordance with A. Giddens "dialectic of control"[6] (2006:5).

2.2. Infrapolitics and Further

James Scott views the agent as one that has both understanding and knowledge, and thus is always ready to resist the cumbersome oppression (Ortner, 2006:5). He is the founder of the concept of infrapolitics and first used the term in his study of peasant practices of resistance in Malaysia – "*Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Resistance*" (1985). His original notion of infrapolitics regarded "cultural & structural substratum of those more visible forms of action

[5] Focault first notably contemplated the power matter in his "History of Sexuality, part 1" (1978)
[6] Giddens refers to an agent engaging in a dialectic of control as exercising its ability to "intervene in the world or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs." (1984:14)

that attract most scholarly attention" (Marche, 2012:7). He compares the *infrapolitics – politics* link to one of *infrared – light*: "its domain encompasses the acts, gestures, and thoughts that are not quite political enough to be perceived as such" (Scott, 1990:183). Infrapolitics, according to Scott, is a resistance of the oppressed through 'hidden transcripts' - critiques of power that escape the notice of the dominant (exercising prescribed roles and language to resist the abuse of power – including things like 'rumor, gossip, disguises, linguistic tricks, metaphors, euphemisms, folktales, ritual gestures, anonymity' (1990:137)). Thus, the subtleness, the non-confrontation and the cultural inside-*ism* played a crucial role in the first applications of the infrapolitical filter.

Since then, infrapolitics have experienced the fate of becoming a mutable term that can be molded as one sees fit. While this has been the case for many terms and it has not made them un-operational or unusable, this aspect requires the researcher to define clearly what is meant by "infrapolitics" in her specific case.

It is necessary to note that Alberto Moreiras, a Spanish political philosopher, has played with the term and developed a slightly different understanding of it. He sees infrapolitics as "filling the empty space between a word and a thought." His description of infrapolitics as "unregulated practico-speculative 'third' space" makes one sense that the term is capable of providing the political thinkers with the ability to give recognition to the undefinable. Moreiras skillfully describes infrapolitical action as "the type of symbolic action in the real that refuses an identification with the political. That is, it refuses to understand itself as political action, as an action in the political sphere, which is the sphere of power relations between people" (2010:190-191). While Moreiras' work does provide a source of academic inspiration, he has distanced himself from the practice theory oriented debate of infrapolitics, philosophically exploring the validity of the category of Hispanism in Latin American studies (2010). I will from now on focus solely on the infrapolitics as in the field of practice theory.

Regarding the function of infrapolitical practices, several key works focus on the notion of agents "regaining dignity" in circumstances that limit their possibilities of self-realization. For example, Robin Kelley in his book *''Race Rebels: Culture Politics and the Black Working Class''* (1994) explores the cultural, social and spiritual practices of working-class African-Americans in 20th century US, conceptualizing these actions as means for asserting their existence as a distinct stratum that, despite economic discrimination, maintains certain knowledge and pride.

The dignity and legitimization aspect also proves itself crucial throughout the issue of *Revue Française d Etudes Américaines* (2012, vol.131), titled "Infrapolitics and Mobilization." The journal is devoted to empirical, qualitative research with infrapolitics at heart. It's an important marking point in the evolution of the concept, as the explored cases are of such striking difference that it leads J. Scott to re-define the concept in the afterword of the issue. The

journal's essays appropriate infrapolitics to the disciplines of political science, history, and sociology, regarding mobilization processes in different contexts in France and U.S., spreading out a palette of possibilities offered by the concept. One of the authors, Aline Macke, looks at American Muslim youths' take on punk culture that allows them to break free of the identity that is socially attributed to their religious group. By engaging in practices that are not necessarily political, but yet send a powerful and a defiant message, they exercise their agency to re-define their position within the society (2012). Infrapolitics are not restricted by the specificity of the cultural identity. For example, Sandrine Baudry examines infrapolitical urban gardening in the U.S. that fulfills the agents' need of collective economical affirmation in times when urban space gets highly privatized and is seen as a source of profit (2010). Thus, the concept proves itself elastic and allows the researcher to escape *a priori* assertions about the context – "dignity" can turn out to be one of economical nature, ethnic, cultural, or ascribed to a self-defined identity.

The main attempt to solidify the concept regards the subtleness of an infrapolitical practice – the editor of the aforementioned journal, Guillaume Marche, acknowledges the disparity of visibility of infrapolitical practice, comparing Scott's work with some of the most recent applications of the infrapolitics. Scott himself regards "disguise" as a feature that characterizes infrapolitics the most (2012:115) and temperately describes, for example, the aforementioned A. Macki's Taqwacore youth's case (2012) as an "in-your-face" cultural affront to conventional values.

In the afterword of *Revue Française d Etudes Américaines* (2012, vol.131) J. Scott expresses his approval of stretching of the concept of infrapolitics, as it has been done in the academic contributions in the same issue. He portrays the concept as one that gives insight into "the vast realm of consequential political life that lurks below the deceptive surface of "politics as usual" (Scott, 2012:117). Yet, he emphasizes the need to create sub-categories of the concept to order and distinguish between different kinds of infrapolitical practices, proposing classification that would take into account the degree of cultural opposition, forms of mobilization, clarity of goals, degree of politicization, and anonymity (*id*.).

I have indeed encountered a case that is unconventionally political, yet possesses easily recognizable elements – what I playfully call "heavy transcripts" instead of Scott's, "hidden transcripts." Thus, following J. Scotts inquiry that was made 5 years ago, I propose the analytical frame of the *disobedient practice*. It is noticeably inspired by the notion of infrapolitics, yet must be differentiated from subtle forms of what J. Scott calls, "resistance."

The term of infrapolitics has gone hand-in-hand with modernist resistance, earning a prominent spot in resistance studies. However, similar to Ortner (2006) and Cooper (1992), I approach the issue from a post-modernist viewpoint, where the category of resistance does not

seem well-grounded. As noted by Barnard, "Postmodernism adds 'disruptions' (Raby, 2005:116) to the almost comforting possibilities for powerful resistance offered by the modernist paradigm (2011:114). Postmodernists view power and resistance not necessarily as oppositional but, rather, as a complex of diverse, fragmented, and transitory relationships between individuals (Raby, 2005:154)". Ortner notes that, despite the possibly misleading nature of the concept, it is useful because of the intention to address play of power in most cases of relationship and activity (2006:44). Meanwhile, in the case of Belarus, where one can find textbook examples of oppression and opposition, a resistance studies approach might lead to disregarding the subtle dynamics between the agents. The simplest definition of resistance is Duncombe's, "resistance as simply acting against" (2007:490), which immediately creates uncertainties. Who decides on whether one is *acting against*? Is it the agent herself that declares the intention of an oppositional nature, or is it the oppressor that recognizes the practice as such? If we use the widely recognized "resistance as opposition" (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2014), we run into the same uncertainties. What is one in opposition to? Is it a certain person or an idea? Who can distinguish between the two? Who declares it?

To provide a solution for the resistance problem, I choose to approach the Belarus case by pinpointing the observable fact that musicians supposedly suffer from obstructed access to public cultural space and means of expression. Although this doesn't mean that they are intentionally in opposition, it implies that the state power sees them as potentially harmful to the maintenance of control. Taking the post-Soviet context into account, it is fairly possible that the musicians see the political arena as a lost cause (Yurchak, 2005 in Ackermann et. al. 2017) and have little interest in it, and end up disregarding the authoritative signifiers (Yurchak, 2005) instead of resisting. Ackermann et al. notes that these cultural practices can be found in a "hard-to-define gray zone of social activity" (2017:2). The context-sensitive notion of disobedient practice helps to re-define the bundle of practice-arrangement that in different cases might be included under the term of "resistance", stripping the agency of a clear-cut intention and resolving the who-defines conundrum.

Another aspect that has to be kept in mind, is that there is never a distinguishable subordinate – next to the resistance, there is a collaboration (Ortner, 2006:45). People do not operate within strict boundaries – as believed by Marx, the intentionalities of actors evolve through praxis and the meanings of acts change (Ortner, 2006:44). Additionally, Comaroff and Comaroff note that the relationship between intentions and outcomes is rarely predictable (1992:36). The continuous ambiguity works on several layers of what might seem as a resistance – Cooper notes that theorists in the past have often made the mistake of focusing exclusively on the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate agents (1992:4), while the tension is also present within the so-called subordinate group (Ortner, 2006:46). In

order to grasp the dynamics between the hegemony and the disobedient bundle of practice-arrangement, it is crucial to include the within-bundle contradictions. The current field of practices in Belarus, characterized by apparent polarities and a well-exercised discursive power of state, is in need of an approach which breaks down the easily perceivable categories (state-opposition), as they conceal more than they discover.

The present state's practice of watching, teaching and estimating interplays with the disobedient practices, mutually shaping each other. By examining the bundle of disobedient practice-arrangement among Belarus musicians, I will bridge the gap between the two, striving for an image of interwoven action and thought that falls in a holistic worldview as a piece of puzzle. As the concept of infrapolitics is experiencing an identity crisis, I seek to create a methodology that finds its basis within the fundamentals of the perception-sensitive branch of practice theory, to investigate **how do disobedient practices of the D.I.Y. music scene help to reveal the execution of agency in Western Belarus, in 2018.** Addressing the micro-level practices instead of well-exercised rhetorics of state and opposition, emphasis will be put on familiarizing the agency that disregards yet continues to be shaped by the practices of hegemony (and vice versa).

I wish to believe that the academics who see the concept of resistance as still prominent in the future of political anthropology will be easily able to recognize and attach it to the case of D.I.Y. musicians in Western Belarus and the notion of disobedient practice. Meanwhile, I will keep on refusing the term in further clarifications of the concept.

The "disobedience" that I'm looking for is a rather abstract aspect of a practice. I recognize its presence in the situations where acting subjects continuously carry out certain practices **that involve a recognized risk element, stemming from their relations with the hegemonic structure.** Practices are carried out because of the practitioners' understanding of particular dynamics within their relations with other agents and structures. In terms of my research, disobedience is only possible if it exists in a set-up of a compromise, where none of the involved sides are stripped of their ideological intentions and interests.

Neither one or another fully succeeds, despite the fact that one of the sides has greater material and human resources, as well as potential for interpreting the law of state as one finds fit. In the ideal set-up every practice would be submitting to the ideals of the hegemonic structure, yet here the agent finds, creates, and uses holes in the structure, making the space for disobedience and parallel thought. The risk element is studied by the disobedient agents, and strategies that help to avoid reaction from the state power are realized. The state agents recognize themselves as being largely in control. Occasional clashes re-confirm the conflict of interests present between both sides, fostering the continuation of the disobedient practices.

The question of whether ensuring full submission (which in any case is an ideal type) is crucial to the state agents, remains open and is of another debate. It is also crucial to analyze other cases to challenge my assumption that occasional clashes are needed in order to continue this kind of relationship between the sides.

It needs to be noted that "disobedient practices" here are something different than H. D. Thoreau's term "civil disobedience" that, similarly to infrapolitics, has experienced a certain extent of dissolution due to extensive use. Yet, the common aspect between civil disobedience and disobedient practices is the acting agent who strives to live in a way that she considers morally right. "Disobedient practices" also don't quite fit under C. Tilly's and S. Tarrow's contentious politics - while the notion of contention might come in handy when researching protest rallies, it seems inappropriate to use it for a scene in an authoritarian regime that has existed for 30 years. Disobedient practices are not a part of social movements, as they are simply not moving towards anything in the hegemonic social and political arena. I am sure that with some speculation the disobedient practices might stand next to the contentious politics, but, because of my focus on the action part of a practice, infrapolitics would seem a more suitable analytical god-father of the term.

3. Methodology

3.1. What is Practice Theory Methodology?

Practice theory seems to be a great fit when analyzing a community that is suspicious of a spoken word, and in which "being active" is itself seen as a valuable quality that a person can possess. Through carrying out a practice, they are empowered – including the on-stage presence, being listened to by others, having the ability to perform freedom (in several ways, such as simply stating that one is sad). Practicing something that the majority of the society sees as useless or some even as condemnable – it involves a message of the existing line between "them" - the passive citizens - and "us" – the ones that take charge of their reality.

However, the ways of researching practices have long been a topic of a discussion, and the propositions evolve into more and more disengaged forms. I must say that I strongly agree with the views of academics who look at the practice as primarily productive instead of routinized - for example, Franka Schäfer, who, in her research of protest culture, pays attention to the connection between the practices and the social dynamics (2013). She emphasizes that "not a singular object, not an isolated action, but a bundle of relations connecting different

times, places and entities needs to be taken into account," (Schäfer, 2017) opening a cognitive field of endless clues to follow.

Furthermore, Elizabeth Shove proposes an idea that in order to use practice theory in one's research, one is not obliged to apply certain methods (2017), but they should be instead tailored to the research question being asked. "There is no practice theory methodology" - she states (2017), yet it is possible to use "practice" as the central conceptual unit and depart from there.

Thus, it was necessary for me to define how practice theory inspired my research question and which of the many aspects of the practice would help me to answer it. When initially observing the potential field from afar, I was fascinated by the simple *what do they do and how do they do it*. Later, when reflecting about the trigger of my fascination, it became clear that it can be found in my perception of the social dynamic between the hegemonic and the disobedient agent in the field. Along these lines, I had to create a practice theory methodology that would help me to notice such aspects of this relationship that remain hidden in the spoken discourse*.*

A bundle of practice-arrangement is interwoven in both the social and the physical fabric of existence, and those two dimensions are not only shaping each other, but even appear inseparable at times. At the start I selected points of interest (possible targets of an impact) that would be relevant to most of the practices undertaken, such as time, space, and the social surroundings. Then I additionally picked out attributes and aspects that are characteristic to the main practice of focus (such as having bandmates, needing sound devices, etc.) and attempted to gather information about processes that revolve around them. I did develop a cognitive distinction between the "thought" part of the practice and the "action" part of the practice, as it proved to be helpful in seeing how the action part is acquiring its disobedient qualities, and how the discourse is being continued by carrying out performances in the physical time-space.

3.2. Data Collection Techniques

When researching practices, one has to attempt to draw a line (although, a porous one) around the bundle of practice of interest. As it is certainly not an epistemologically comfortable or realistic set-up, I chose to first pinpoint an event of performance that takes place in a certain time and in a certain space, and then move around it in a spiral, acknowledging the artifacts, thoughts and actions that compose the specific practices. While this spiral of analysis could go on endlessly, picking up new aspects and causes, I will stay within the space of interaction that is so saturated by the agent-structure interaction, that the agents themselves recognize it.

The reason for picking out exactly the event of performance is the element of observability of the practice that it provides. It allows the participant observation to become the primary data collection technique - and primary not in terms of the amount of data, but as anchoring down the analytical starting point. As one of the research participants put it, "*I feel the unity of the scene at gigs, when everyone is there, singing together, supporting each other. I don't feel it in the everyday life.*" The gig is the result of the input in the past, a way of presenting the work that is done in rehearsals - making the practice public, adding the important audience aspect to it. Further empirical proof and interpretation of the role of an event can be found in the "Event" section within the data analysis chapter.

The first data I collected was that of participant observation. After attending the first event, I re-evaluated my first draft of interview guidelines and added extra questions. It immediately gave me insight on the present human and non-human actors and the possible dynamics of the event. Further on I held interviews and attended events interchangeably - new details became relevant in every participant observation episode, and, in often the interviews helped me to look at the empirical reality through a different filter and achieve a more complete comprehension. Conveniently, there were no significant inconsistencies between the interview data and the observation episodes in regards to the events. I noticed some discrepancies in the matters of frequency of rehearsals and other minor aspects. In addition, I had the chance to have informal hangs with my informants and the possibility to access semi-public platforms of the D.I.Y. scene, anarchist distributional materials, and visual props - while carrying out the analysis, they assured me of the certain intention in promoting the disobedient thought.

In twelve interviews I was accompanied by a translator that I hired through a freelancer website. She performed the task of correctly translating my questions (from English to Russian) to the research participants, yet I was able to understand their answers without help (I had learned some Russian in preparation for the field work). In the first meeting it became clear that she is closely connected to the bundle of practices I intended to research. She also provided the access to many research participants that were active in the scene, as well as ascribed a certain legitimacy and trustworthiness to me as a researcher. On the negative side, some of the possible neutrality was lacking. However, it was notably overbalanced by the opportunities that were key to my research. At the start she also provided me with some of the inside knowledge that was necessary to feel and stay safe in the field.

3.3. Data Overview

The data was gathered during the period of 22/02/2018 – 20/04/2018. The complete data set is a sum of (1) five participation observation episodes at gigs, (2) 20 semi-structured interviews (the average length being 1.5 h) with 21 research participants, (3) five informal gatherings, (4) two *extremist* brochures and (5) additional literature on the D.I.Y. topic recommended by research participants.

Three participant observation episodes took place in Minsk, but two of them happened in different towns in Western Belarus. In this research I choose not to reveal the exact towns apart from Minsk in order to protect the anonymity of research participants and the scene itself.

Twelve interviews were made with people active in the Minsk D.I.Y. music scene, five interviews with six people were made in A town in Western Belarus, two interviews were made in B town in Western Belarus, but in C town in Western Belarus there was one interview held. Twenty interviewees were permanent citizens of Belarus, while one was a citizen of Russia and resides in Belarus periodically. Overall, the numbers of participants interviewed were corresponding to the size of the town.

29 per cent of the interviewees represent the age group 18-25, 52 per cent belong to the age group 26 – 35, 14 per cent are aged 36-50, but one participant (5 per cent) belongs to the 51-65 age group. 71 per cent of the interviews were given by male research participants, but 29 per cent of the interviews were done with female informants.

3.4. Data Analysis Process

The first step of the data analysis process was to fully transcribe all the interviews and gather all the participant observation notes, online articles, and visual distributional materials I got ahold of during my fieldwork. The interviews that were held in Russian were translated to English. Afterwards, all of the aforementioned data was imported into the ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software.

Ten code families (Importance of Events, Ideologies, D.I.Y. Guidelines, General Resources, Acting Artifacts, Skilled Human Body, Improvement of the Practice, Relationality within the Scene, Member of Society, Citizen of the State) were created and more than 600 quotations from the interviews were sorted into the codes accordingly (on average, forty quotations per interview). Four code families were initially created to match the points of interest that were already stated in the interview questions and form the skeleton of the data analysis part of the Thesis. The codes emerged as open codes that filled the empty shells of the

code families and highlighted the relations between them. Additionally, six code families were created during the process of data analysis due to an incomplete initial comprehension of the complexity of the field. Thus, I worked primarily inductively, yet at the start there were initial points of reference.

Continuing the data triangulation process I started implementing at the stage of data collection, throughout the whole data analysis process I compared the different sources of data that mostly turned out to be complementary and consistent.

3.5. Ethics

The interviews held were anonymous and, in most cases, I did not find out the full names of the research participants. A rights disclaimer was presented to the research participants before every interview (see in *attachment 1*), informing them about data storage policy, interview process and my limitations as a researcher. As the activities of the scene take place in a rather narrow social space, it is impossible to ensure total anonymity - the practitioners can very likely recognize someone they know while reading the quotes in the data analysis section. At the beginning of interviews, I also discussed the question of the impact that the public access to this work might bring to the practitioners. My original intention was to postpone the publication for 3 years, yet only one of the research participants considered this choice of action well-grounded.

In order to ensure the data safety, I used the online cloud service provided by *disroot.org* and any communication during the fieldwork took place through the same communication provider or the mobile phone application *Telegram X*. At no point during my stay in Belarus did I have my interviews accessible offline (on my computer). All of the interview guidelines were held in password-protected folders, and anything I sent over disroot.org email was encrypted.

My choice of region was impacted both by the political peculiarities present and by the fact that Belarus, like my home-country Latvia, experienced Soviet occupation as an European state. As intended, the latter aspect minimized the possible culture shock during the fieldwork, allowing me to clearly focus on the specific bundle of practice I was interested in. An aspect that differed between my native context and Belarus was the state control and the language, but no significant cultural differences were felt.

I entered Belarus twice under a tourist visa without informing the Belarusian consulate about my research intentions. It might be interpreted as a disrespect for the Belarusian state, yet, after consultations with Belarusian academics, it became clear that there is a high chance of getting a visa refusal if I were to be open about my research plans. I did not gather any data on

the work of Belarusian institutions or the work of Belarusian officials (apart from the stories about irregular clashes told by the research participants) and neither did I violate the Belarusian law while being in the country. The whole research process took place between myself and individuals who were willing to talk to me and aid in my research - it would not be wrong to state that it took place outside of the political dimension.

Over time, I developed attachment towards my research participant ideologies and I felt great inspiration and respect towards them. This aspect made it emotionally hard for me to deconstruct their actions to the smallest detail and strip it from the romanticism that can be so vigorously felt on the ground. It is personally problematic for me to state, for example, that the D.I.Y. scene would be different and perhaps less efficient without the presence of the authoritarian power, yet an academic analysis performed based on the agent-structure paradigm of the social sciences indicates just that. It is important to remind oneself that the on-the-ground reality experienced by the agents is different from what it looks like in social and political science and neither one should be put forward as more truthful or valuable. One must remember that the analytical approach lacks the emotion and the passion that is believed to be one of the pillars of a human life experience.

It is a challenge in every social research to decide upon what should be presented and what should be hidden from the body of text that reflects the results of the field work. I did gather considerable amounts of data that illustrated the ways in which research participants start to undertake the practice, giving some hints at their inner motivations and in-depth personal attitudes towards the world and the state that they live in. Yet, the moment that I decided that I will focus on the practice part of the reality, I had no choice but to leave this piece of thought for an interpretation performed by another researcher. I do hope that my work of a descriptive nature inspires future social scientists to explore the active agents in Belarus.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Importance of the event

At the basis of my methodology is the assumption (stemming from the gathered data) that the event of a D.I.Y. music gig is the central part of the practice. The event is the peak in activity, a mutual achievement among the practitioners. It is an emotionally significant point that re-asserts the *realness* of the scene - both inside and outside the border of the state. On the

average, the gig organizers I spoke with (from three different towns, including Minsk) held gigs as often as eight times per year, while the musicians (sixteen, representing twelve bands) played six gigs per year on average in Belarus, not taking into account concerts outside of Belarus.

> *"But this kind of energy at punk-rock concerts and deep connection of the punk-rock scene and these political views that I have – it was important to spread it everywhere. It was important for me to have a punk-rock show where you can meet great musicians, great people, hear music." / 2*

> *"It is better not to go to a small city with a big scene in Germany, but to go to a big city with a small scene in Russia to show people that they are not alone - to play them a couple of songs. People understand that you need it and they need it as well." / 10*

> *"We liked the process of creating something. You are doing something, and this then flows into something: concerts…" / 6*

It can also reaffirm the identities of the practitioners - for example, in two cases the research participants reported situations in which they have refused playing in gigs for reasons connected with their ideologies - thus, when you are performing in the "corresponding" environment, you are re-establishing your belonging to the scene.

> *"For a few months we refused a couple of concerts not because we are cool, but because it did not quite match our ideas." / 4*

At the events, the practitioners experience unity on three levels: the band, the relationality between bands, and all the people physically showing up for a gig. As shown in the second quote, a lack of gigs equals the perishing of the scene.

> *"In DIY culture, everything is organized differently; there is no concept of solo concerts. I have never performed one project with my own project. I was either warming up punk bands, or participating in anarcho-rap concerts, where similar performers were going to perform."/ 13*

> *"In this town the cops completely cleaned the scene and now people only have a concert in the garage illegally, once in three months."/ 10*

> *"I know almost all the people in the audience. They are young people from seventeen to thirty. [..] Interesting people with burning eyes, united by culture. Someone comes, someone leaves; everything, as always, is natural." / 4*

Here, to escape possible confusion in the future, I should note that heavy music festivals supported by the state are fairly common in Belarus, yet they can easily be distinguishable by observing the consumption patterns and the size of the event.

> *"Mostly, people who like to drink beer go there. Most of those fests are strongly connected to companies that produce beer. They sell a lot of beer and try to invite big foreign bands. It has nothing to do with rock music at all. They just make a lot of money."*/ 1

My interview guidelines already included several questions about the venues and the frequency of gigs and rehearsals, and while the research participants willingly expanded discussions and shared stories when speaking about concerts, they did not consider the questions regarding rehearsals very interesting. There was also a positive correlation between how often a participant participates in these events and their perceptions of the strength/unity of the scene.

4.2. Thought

4.2.1. Appropriated ideologies

It is important to mention the learned ideological components of the practice of D.I.Y. musicians, as they notably affect the *agent - structure* interaction. The action part is accompanied by a strong sense of "in-whose-word" are the actions carried out - often the participants described common values, but sometimes they mentioned ready-made reference frames which have been used in different practices in the past, taking place elsewhere in the world. One can perform the same actions (that is - play the genre of punk rock), yet without a verbalized common thought the agent will be viewed suspiciously. In this section I will first glance over the more rehearsed reference frames, and then move toward rather transformable common ideas, addressed as D.I.Y. guidelines.

In ten interviews, participants mentioned fascist (a.k.a. *Nazi*) and anti-fascist movements. They viewed anti-fascist thought as a part of the dominant ideology in D.I.Y. punk scene. Anti-fascism is seen as a fight for equality, tolerance, and minority rights (or a fight against homophobia, racism, and hierarchy) - a discourse strongly present in the D.I.Y. scene. One of the participants openly announced himself to be a militant (ready to participate in street fights against fascist groups) antifascist, and three others mentioned participation in street fights in the past. Those street fights were often a cause of arrests that most frequently took place in the circumstances of a D.I.Y. concert.

> *"The first time I saw a distro at a concert in my town, in 2007, there were mostly CDs and badges. I, however, did not manage to buy anything, because a Nazi guy came, I punched him in the face, and I was taken away by cops for the first time in my life."* / 18

The most recents clashes that were described by the participants took place around five years ago, as noted by one of the participants:

> *"Belarusian secret services, which closely cooperate with the Russian [secret services], had an effect on the Belarusian scene. Primarily in Minsk, but also in other cities, many nazis were prosecuted for the purpose of isolating the football championship for several months. Terms that were given, were different - from 2.5 to seven years. The leaders of the anti fascist movement also got arrested, because often for the police units for combating organized crime, fascism and antifascism are the same - they are just radicals. So now the fascist scene is in decline."* / 10

and he then continues:

> *"As anti-fascists, we should not stop at what we have achieved; we need to conduct propaganda. We must counteract this at all levels, from the street to the Internet, music, creativity, clips, visual propaganda."* / 10

Anti-fascist artifacts were visible during my fieldwork - there was presence of the *Antifaschistische Aktion (*German movement, 1932*)* logo in the clothes of the participants, as well as *distro* materials, such as stickers. The same logo was visible in some of the concerts' live performance videos on Youtube (dating back to 2015). In the interviews, two participants noted the presence of red and black flags in the audience, towards which they felt positively*:*

> *"And when I was performing, I opened my eyes, and the guys organized a whole rally there, hung out black-and-red flags, went out in masks. It really touched me."* / 10

It is necessary to note here that both red (from the socialist roots) and especially black flags are also connected with anarchist movements that are ideologically supported by the D.I.Y. music scene as well. Thus, it is at times hard to make a distinction between them in participant narratives.

> *"Most people who come to the gig to listen to us - they may not even listen to this music on daily basis, but all of them share anti-fascist and, to varying degrees, anarchist beliefs."* / 18

However, although no one in the interviews expressed open rejection to anti-fascist values, two informants mentioned that the value system in the scene in now blurrier than in the past.

Although my intention was never to research anarchist movements in Belarus, the topic of anarchism was almost mundanely reflected in the gathered data. Thus, I will shortly describe the element of anarchism present in the D.I.Y. music scene, yet I must note that the active Belarus anarchist network is not even remotely covered in this description and I do not have any reliable data on their activities. There is a link between the D.I.Y. music scene and the anarchist movement, visible not only in the participant narratives, but also in the Anarchist Black Cross (an anarchist organization created in the very early 20th century, in Russia) Belarus website (abcbelarus.by). In this online platform, next to the information about political prisoner support campaigns and movement actualities, the most recent information about the gig raids and arrests of activists (amongst whom there are musicians) is available. For example, in April, an article was published about the detention of a person who was present in an informal hang that I hosted after a D.I.Y. concert in March.

In two participant observation cases (one in Minsk, one elsewhere) I noticed distributional materials that addressed the subject of anarchy - such as D. Graebers book "*Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*" (translated into Russian). Anarchist philosophy was mentioned in eleven of the held interviews. Several participants associated themselves with the ideology:

> "*But we stand and develop our positions from our personal standpoint – I'm vegan, DIY, anti fascist, anarchist. Stuff like that.*" / 7

Overall, on three occasions, the practitioners stressed that anarchism is a rather personal philosophy, stemming from learned ideologies:

> "*Despite the fact that anarchism has a powerful social program, it is still a personal philosophy. In this sense, I consider myself to be a nonclassical school of anarchism, postanarchism, which takes its origin from Bakunin's works and continues with Alexei Borovoy, the anarchism of a person who has nothing to do with Kropotkin's communism. For me it's personal freedom.*" / 13

Yet, a couple of participants expressed doubt about the "quality" of the anarchism present in the D.I.Y. music scene, as the anarchist ideology has its own checklist of conformity. Only three participants openly called themselves, "anarchists," while the rest stated that they are promoting anarchist ideas (which, supposedly, takes away some of the responsibility towards abiding the guidelines of anarchism). Another aspect of calling oneself an "anarchist" is that it might result in more strict state organ surveillance, as anarchy is a negative reference frame used by the state institutions:

"Though sometimes it happens, maybe police or KGB calls the club and says: you shouldn't hold this gig, because those bands are terrorists or anarchists." /7

Undeniably, next to the anti-fascist and anarchist values stands feminism. Feminist themes were observed in the distributional materials (stickers that say, "good night patriarchy pride") and participant interviews. There was not an equal gender representation visible in the D.I.Y. music scene - out of around twenty bands I saw over the course of five participant observations, I noted four female participants. In addition, in April I attended a gig that took place in my hometown in Latvia, where three of the female research participants came to perform.

Seven out of twenty-one informants were female, and in four interviews the feminist theme was stressed. One of the research participants has been one of the main organizers of a female punk camp, created to involve more women in the D.I.Y. music scene:

"We thought it was necessary to make such a camp, because usually in the punk rock and rock music there are only boys and, if there are any girls, they do the vocals, because they think that being a lead singer is very cool and stylish. Somehow, there are more women among those who sing and fewer who play the guitar and the drums." / 16.

While "feminism" as a term has been mentioned only in the interviews with female participants, on three occasions male research participants directly condemned sexism, machismo, and chauvinism. In other interviews the gender topic was invisible. Overall, gender equality was seen as a common value under anti-fascist and anarchist ideologies, which enforce horizontal organization of the society and stand for non-discrimination. However, on two occasions gender was seen as a potential basis for rejection within the scene (next to other potential aspects, such as age or the lack of recorded songs):

"I don't know why the situation is like this. Perhaps they don't really believe in us.. It's my personal opinion, but we don't participate in their tusovka [close circle, dir. transl. from Russian - "party"]. *Maybe because we're girls and we are around twenty years old."* / 9.

The same research participant reflected on the attitude of state institutions towards feminism:

"Our vocalist, she is an open feminist, she openly expresses her stance. When she went to apply for the job, the director asked her: 'Are you a feminist?'. Because it's visible – the way she looks, her style and everything. She said – yeah, I'm a feminist. The director said: 'Well, we don't like feminists here'. Just like that." / 9.

Thus, although not a criminalized ideology (such as anarchism), a feminist stance held by the participants of a band is often seen as undesirable by the society further from the D.I.Y. scene, creating a situation of contention.

4.2.2. D.I.Y. Guidelines

Firstly, I should emphasize that the notion of the D.I.Y. scene and practices were picked up from the research participants in the research process. The term "D.I.Y." - *Do It Yourself* - is a freely used reference frame that seems to include other ideological branches as an umbrella term.

It was visible in the interviews that in order to become a part of the D.I.Y. music practice, one has to abide to certain principles. Although, as expected, these rules weren't clear-cut and varied slightly from one practitioner to another. On two occasions I added an extra question on D.I.Y. (not punk, not anarchist) values, yet altogether eight research participants described the rules indirectly, referring to certain actions. On one occasion, a direct question lead to a negative answer:

> "*These are not rules, but certain principles have been worked out. There are no requirements to observe them. All this is free, as far as the person limits himself, how much he brings with himself into the scene. There are no such requirements as in some sects; everything is quite mobile, there is no dogma.*" / 3.

Interestingly, the patterns of judgements and attitudes expressed in the interviews did shape certain ideas of what is wrong and what is right. Fundamentally, D.I.Y. practices are seen to be in opposition to consumerist culture and capitalist ideas:

> "*I'm interested in everything that has to do with punk culture and rap culture related to D.I.Y., that is - non-commercial music, the one that is produced and distributed directly by the performer himself, without the goal of making money.*" / 13.

Most of the interviews revealed that D.I.Y. ethics reach much further, addressing the *problem* of hegemonic structures of thought and conventional views:

> "*If the group records, publishes, and distributes its own music, it is already D.I.Y.. But this is a non-reflexible D.I.Y., actually, there is no ideological component, they do not try to identify themselves that way. But it is the D.I.Y. culture that includes the groups that put their principles at the center of the matter. Nationalist D.I.Y. groups can only nominally exist, but they should not be included there.*" / 13.

One can sense that the D.I.Y. ethics are somewhat similar to antifascist and anarchist values - nationalism was condemned directly in seven interviews, while none of the research participants expressed support for nationalist ideas. Reflections of anti-fascist and D.I.Y. ethics in the interviews were often tangled:

> "*In the D.I.Y. culture, which clearly adheres to anti-fascist views, there is a very serious approach to whether you are communicating with the Nazis or not. There used to be a lot of clashes, and it would be unpleasant to see your friend, who communicates with people who beat you yesterday.*" / 17

Three participants stated that they are straight-edge and this is a part of their D.I.Y. attitude and moral stand. One of the participants gave an insight that, in one of the towns, straight-edge position came as a response to a period when the lives many people from the D.I.Y. scene were ruined by drugs and alcohol. Two other participants expressed an opinion that straight-edge ideology causes schisms in the community, due to the fact that it is too principal.

> "*All of us are straight edge, many vegans and vegetarians, which in itself is not so much internal, as outwardly directed to the world around us. In general - on people, on society, on animals.*" / 4

In four cases, participants expressed their disappointment about the inactivity and insufficient political stand of the D.I.Y. scene itself, stating its difference from the more active situation a couple of decades ago. In two cases it was the thought part of the practice that was seen as ''missing'', but in the other two participants stated that the verbalized attitude surpasses the actual actions.

> "*I was forced to write more depressive texts, and it continues to this day. I often criticized the D.I.Y. scene from inside the lyrics.*" /13

Four informants mentioned that in the beginning they were greatly inspired by the process of cooperation between the practitioners in order to hold an event, finding a romanticized viewpoint. The, "doing it for the sake of fun, not money," aspect was emphasized and presented as desired.

> "*When people make a gig, anyone is ready to help to move the equipment or something else. I remember that when we had the first punk concerts, someone jumped off the stage - he himself was drunk and everyone else as well. He was caught, helped. We feel the community. Together having fun and helping with the organization.*" / 16

One research participant stated that she had left the, "punk rock scene," but has remained in the D.I.Y. scene, clarifying the difference between them. It is the D.I.Y. element that

ascribes the general value system of the punk rock scene. In other interviews these notions were either used interchangeably or only one of the ''scenes'' was mentioned.

> "D.I.Y. is a broader concept, it is the independence of any form of activity. I can be a D.I.Y. neoliberal dude who made a great startup. I will also do this if I apply as little as possible to the state system,do not take permission to do anything. And punk rock is punk rock. These are people dressed in black, who know where to buy or print on a shirt, know the names of the bands and all the attributes of this reference group. No more." / 17

A very important part of not only the D.I.Y. ideology, but also of the logic behind my research methodology, is the accent on the parallel practices that should optimally be carried out by the musicians of the D.I.Y. scene. Participants note that the punk gigs receive the attention of the state authorities exactly because these musicians are a part of the D.I.Y. scene, that implies their possible involvement in parallel prohibited practices. The research participants in the interviews were vague about these actions and I did not attempt to investigate further in order not to intervene.

> "-Do you think if they [state services] actually knew 100% of what they say they know, the gigs would stop happening? - I think that a lot of people would be arrested because of the activity only because it intersects with playing in a band." / 1

One of the research participants was involved in social work for people with mental disabilities, and I noticed that some members of the audience were volunteering in similar activities as well. It can be interpreted as taking care of those social groups in society who do not receive the necessary attention from state institutions (thus, changing the social reality promoted by the state). Another parallel charity practice mentioned by six research participants in Minsk is the *Food Not Bombs* movement - it entails an ideological stand and its roots can be found several decades and thousands of kilometers away from Belarus.

> "I started to involve myself in the punk-rock movement, independent movement, and anarchist movement. I started with Food Not Bombs – it's a very old initiative, emerged in the 80's, in Los Angeles. This movement is against spending money on military, and against the poverty of society. Every Sunday in Minsk we go to squares, we have a lot of food and we just give it to poor people. It started in Minsk around 2008, and I'm still a part of this movement. [..] For me, I've never played in a band, so I can't divide these things – political matters and music. It's the same flow." / 2

It is commonly assumed that if a person is involved in the practices of the D.I.Y. music scene, one is also educated in the aforementioned ideological ideas and supports them actively. There are different events held in Minsk that attract the same audience - such as educational movie evenings, vegan buffets, freemarkets, conversations with former political prisoners from

Russia, etc. It is also common to participate in the protests that take place in the city - four research participants recalled getting arrested after such events. There are similarly themed events taking place elsewhere in Belarus, too - I gained knowledge of one collective of D.I.Y. practitioners that has received the status of an NGO. In a couple of cases in different towns, musicians and organizers are also involved in distribution of records, literature, and other artifacts carrying the messages of the D.I.Y. thought. In this regard, a small town in the Western part was especially active.

> *"Earlier we did concerts as parties, now they involve speeches from the stage, educationals materials. [..] Before it was normal just to hang out at gigs and many did not understand why we did it at all. Now one of the reasons for organizing concerts is that through these concerts we can influence the world outlook of the youth."* / 18

Sixteen research participants stressed the importance of an action - here I will clarify what I meant with the previous description of "should optimally be carried out". While the practitioners in the D.I.Y. scene mostly deny the existence of a hierarchy, an eye of a researcher still finds it in the social recognition that is given to such practitioners that participate in as much D.I.Y. activities as possible. The practitioners themselves do not view verbal support for the D.I.Y. ideas as valuable, focusing only on actual actions carried out.

> *"- What do you mean, 'I'm in punk rock for many years?' - This means that I am in a certain community where I interact - not only go to concerts, shout under the stage, but I take an active direct part."* / 16

> *"What I have planned, what I want to do, I will do. It's just necessary to somehow adjust this interaction and the way of self-realization. A person who is in this culture, I think he understands all the risks and responsibilities, he understands why he is here."* / 4

> *"You know, I'm an anarchist and two years ago I understood that it's much more important to be an example than to be just a guy with a ticket. When you just say – I'm an anarchist, but you do nothing.. I'm really tired of it. I see situations where people say that they're anarchists, but all they do is just visit some conversations (*lectures and round tables about political and social issues*) and that's all."* / 2

One practitioner who no longer performs musical practices, names the inactivity of the music scene as one of the main reasons for leaving. She now invests all of her time in other D.I.Y. activities.

> *"Punk-rock in Belarus, as elsewhere, gives very little results. There is a big pile of shit, and you shout: 'Look, look!' somewhere aside. It is worth shutting up and taking a shovel. Solve the problem, because anyone can scream a lot."* / 17

Practitioners also expressed the wish for other society members to be more active. This is viewed as a prerequisite in order to change the current political system. The number of activists is thought to be equal to the success of the desired change.

> *"Twenty-five activists and human rights defenders were detained. The next day there was a trial. I arrived there, and there were thirty people in the court, supporting the detainees. I thought: 'But if at least 500 people of those who were at the rally yesterday came to the court, they would all be speechless, all these judges and cops, they would be thinking: 'This is a resonance, this is support!'.' [..] I would like more people to be active and go out rioting. [..] I wish for Belarusian people to make Lukashenka disappear. In short, I wish everyone to become activists." / 14*

> *"Be more active, be more positive. Don't be afraid to take your lives in your hands." / 8*

From the viewpoint of the practitioners, these are not so much the ideas that separate the D.I.Y. practitioners from the rest of the society, but instead the actions carried out.

> *"- What is a civilian? - In the punk community of the 90's it meant to be a conformist, a person whose values are foreseen: to learn, work, family, children, pension. Absolutely no ideas, values, creative plans. My sister works as an accountant, sits in the office. She has a boyfriend who will become her husband, she will sit watching TV. No goals to improve society." / 13*

A polarization of "us" - the active - and "the society" - the submissive agents - is created. In several cases the research participants spoke about their family members as the closest examples of "being a civilian."

Regarding the thought of D.I.Y. music practitioners, it can be observed how ideologies and ideas, that have emerged someplace else under the same name, gain a new meaning in the given context. The thought part of the practice provides an order of things - common rules, space for improvement, sense of preserving dignity and the ability to reflect about the processes within the D.I.Y. scene. Shared ideas greatly contribute to the trust among the practitioners, which is an important asset when undertaking disobedient practices in Belarus.

4.3. Action

When we at least attempt to separate the action from the thought of the practice, we become more perceptive towards the simple physical obstacles that stand in the way of practitioners. We become able to see more clearly the ways of resource control as an indirect attempt by the representatives of the hegemonic structure to restrict certain practices. While in

other settings, holding a simple gig might be perceived as a quite elementary task, the given context educates us about the realities of a post-Soviet presidential republic. The totality of the organizational details reveal the sense of determination more convincingly than simply an act of speech.

In this section I overview the main resources necessary in carrying out the practice, such as money, space, time, and skilled humans. In addition, I will address the active role of the artifacts that are created (and the act of creation) within the scene which contribute to the circulation of the ideological thought. I will not attempt to analyze the global structures, as in terms of this research I focus on on-the-ground practices, yet it is important to recognize the different flows of impact shaping the reality.

4.3.1. General Resources

Money plays a role both in survival and in access to necessary artifacts - for example, a sound device needed for holding an event. However, although the lack of financial means can encumber the practices and force practitioners to lose their motivation, it is also one of the aspects that characterizes the scene itself, and brings out both the creativity and the risk element. While a group of Minsk D.I.Y. practitioners manages to divert money from gig tickets to Food Not Bombs movements or create a relative financial security for the next gig, it only takes one or two fees, imposed by state institutions, for the balance to go negative.

In one of the gigs I attended in Minsk, someone was raising money for a practitioner in another town that had received a 1000 EUR fee because the police found traces of tetrahydrocannabinol in his blood. In the interviews, practitioners revealed similar situations - when someone is in need (even outside of Belarus), the participants of the D.I.Y. scene gather together in support. Another, rather anecdotal occurrence took place in a gig after-party organized by me. A slightly intoxicated person accidently set an electric kettle on fire (by putting it on a gas stove). Afterwards, without me expressing any demand for compensation, all of the participants literally gave me their last cash to compensate for the inconvenience caused by their peer.

Regarding the rehearsal space, money was not mentioned as a problem, and 5 practitioners called rehearsal spaces "cheap." The opposite thing was said about venues.

> "*It depends on what you're looking for. If you're fine with just a garage, it's easy. If you want something that is in-between of a garage and a club, like if you also want to hold gigs for approximately 50 people and have a bar, then it becomes a huge problem.*" / 7

At the same time, the tense economical situation in the country in some cases helped to overcome the suspicion that club owners often have towards the D.I.Y. musicians:

> "*We have a permanent club where we make concerts, everything is very easy, we just call them, they say: 'Yes, please, just give us a lot of money'*". /18

Several practitioners, mostly organizers, highlighted other expenses that are a part of organizing a gig. One needs to cover the road expenses of bands that come from abroad (as noted in the "Within the Scene" section, this happens quite often). The cost of an entrance ticket varies from 3 - 10 Belarus rubles (1 - 3 euros), while the average rent of a club for the evening varies between 70 - 150 $. Organizing a gig is always a financial risk for the group of organizers. On some occasions, the practitioners try to evade cooperation with clubs, yet one of the participants noted that holding a gig outside of a club (e.g. forest, garage) heightens the risk of a gig raid.

> "*It's really important to find a good support for the bands that come from elsewhere to play, because it influences the outcome of a concert. They need to pay the foreign musicians and for the rent. We're playing to support other musicians and the gig organizers. For some reason, many people come to the gigs of our band, so it's a really good instrument that helps the organizers not to pay from their own pocket.*" / 7

> "*I'm against playing in clubs. There are a number of certain difficulties and large amounts of money that come from your own pocket.*" / 4

> "*We make the entrance ticket prices as low as possible. I understand what kind of people come there - just like me, they have no money.*" / 19

One organizer, who is parallelly carrying out distributional practices, stated that this occupation is not financially rewarding either.

> "*I would gladly publish post-punk, but so far there is no money for anything. Distro is a loss rather than a profit. It's maybe possible to exchange with foreign labels. At best I could sell records so I would earn back the cost of my old releases.*" / 18

The musicians themselves usually perform for free, only requesting payment for travel expenses. This exchange is taken as entirely natural, and neither the musicians nor organizers stressed the unpaid performances unless prompted. One of the research participants highlighted a similar financial pattern in the D.I.Y. scenes of other post-USSR states. The situation in the EU states paints a different picture - the only research participant who admitted that he can provide for himself through performances, mostly performs with his band in the countries to the West from Belarus.

"The only condition is payment of the road, I do not get any money for the performance. In the city it happens for free. I have performed in Ukraine, Russia and Georgia. I went to Georgia myself, for the idea, where my friend organized a D.I.Y. festival. It was risky, he borrowed a lot of money, rented equipment. The festival did not pay off and then he was paying off debt for three years." / 13

"Now I can make money with the band, doing tours around Western Europe. I do not see anything shameful in this - if I manage to make a living with music, why not?" / 10

The low potential of the D.I.Y. practice to bring around financial gain is often the reason why people turn away from the scene once they have had children - on these occasions, their time is more likely to be divided between paid work and family life. Yet, if a person truly believes in the values of the D.I.Y. scene, they rather choose to subordinate their other practices to the D.I.Y. practice, and are not interested in financial success and security, finding their values within the scene. Personal financial ambitions are seen as not coinciding with the common D.I.Y. values, and the constant shortage of money performs a function similar to natural selection.

"And then a new band mate shows up and it is clear that he has a consumer approach towards the band. We see that there are some discrepancies, and the person himself leaves, because he understands that he won't find what he's looking for." / 3

"And these dudes who make these concerts, they have tickets starting from ten dollars and many punks go to them. Many do not go principally because they are dissatisfied with such a price policy. They just realized that they can earn with this and now it's their ideology, they do paid advertising and so on. I do not like them." / 14

One participant noted that the lack of money limits the choices she can make regarding her study schedule - it is possible to describe it as a form of control from the hegemonic structure. Another participant emphasized that his attempts to further financial gain leads to a submission to the system, yet it is simply crucial for survival (more on the paid work debate in the "Within the society" section).

"We had two gigs – in Poland and Germany, and I had to take two days off from university. I wrote a letter – please, allow me not to attend lectures for two days - because if I wouldn't do it and would just not show up, I would have to pay 45 euros per day. [..] Thus, when I feel the control of the state, I usually feel it through the university headquarters. If they wouldn't let me go, there would be no gigs for us. I simply don't have that kind of money to pay." / 9

"Therefore, I work. There is a peculiar desire to provide myself and my D.I.Y. activities. It indirectly supports the system, but it is necessary for the individual" / 13

In the last quote the individual admits to participating in the system the scene is condemning, re-formulating the D.I.Y. scene to such that pays less attention to financial resources, yet still aims to get ahold of enough money to maintain their practice.

In a close connection to financial resources, one also has take into account the time dimension of the practice. As creation of the performance and the performance itself requires notable time resources, it can only be possible if these activities are intentionally scheduled. For example, one has to take into account rehearsals that, on average, take place 4 times a month. A very notable majority of the research participants do see the D.I.Y. music scene activities as their number one occupation. For example, many judged the adequacy of their workplace by whether it takes up a lot of time or not.

> *"Yes, the priorities are quite definite in my head. If I have to go to a rehearsal, I will leave work at the designated time, I won't stay longer."* / 1

> *"I'm totally okay with this work, because I have a lot of free time and they are not forcing me to be something that I don't want to be."* / 7

A few participants, especially those who are still studying, positioned the lack of time as a problem - finding a balance between the disobedient practices, a job, and university is notably harder. Some participants noted that the people who contribute to the scene more actively experience more stress than the "regular" part-time practitioners.

> *"I can not afford to live on the scholarship that I get paid. I have to work in a humiliating job that does not correspond to my specialty, I can not find anything in my specialty, I can not engage only in studies. I'm very tired, there is not much time for self-realization.   [..] . Sometimes it is necessary to sit awake late at night, damage my health, damage my nervous system in order to meet the deadlines."* / 13

> *"I saw the guy who is making gigs a week ago. He was very burnt out and tired, but he does not admit it. He doesn't even look as he usually does, he used to look much more cheerful."* / 14

One of the participants openly admitted the hardships that relatively well-known and active musicians encounter - this might be similar in other contexts, but here it demonstrates the sense of responsibility the musicians have towards their practice.

> *"- Was it easy for you to combine the career of a musician with work? - Not really. I have not been on vacation for ten years. Because if I have a vacation, I go on a tour, and this is not a vacation. Everything was subjected to my profession and music. Either I'm going to rehab camps or to training programs. I had to give up the rest - I want to go to the Urals, but I'm going to Amsterdam to play a concert."* / 17

Several participants noted that it is especially hard to undertake D.I.Y. practices due to a lack of money, which further determines a lack of time. Time is the other limited resource (next to money) in the "fighting for survival" scenario in which the practitioners are involved on daily basis.

> "In Belarus it is more difficult for many people to remain a part of the scene, because when you have to fight for survival, you no longer have time to go to concerts, listen to music." / 18

If we recall the definition of a D.I.Y. event as something that takes place in a certain time and space, it becomes apparent that the vague notion of "space" is worthy of a more specific description. The rehearsal spaces never proved to be a problem - the practitioners rehearsed at relatively cheap (around $10 a month per person) or costless rehearsal places in town, and a couple of bands used the local ''palace of culture'' (because one of the participants in the D.I.Y. scene worked as a teacher there, thus had an access to some rooms). These spots were safe and no disturbances were reported.

When asked about the settings in which gigs take place, five people mentioned factories (all in Minsk), four mentioned garages (in various towns), two mentioned appropriated canteens, and three mentioned festivals that take place in the forest (only during the warm season). The majority - twenty participants - noted that in optimal circumstances, gigs take place in clubs. On two occasions the research participants mentioned gigs that took place in a state-owned "palace of culture," yet they declared it to be an unfavorable setting because of the increased control. One of the informants, an organizer, recalled an occasion when she managed to hold a gig in a photography studio.

> "We even had to do a concert in the palace of culture in the autumn, but due to some problems connected with the police and repression, we were politely rejected. All communication with the authorities rests on bureaucracy, and we decided that we would be better off playing in some basements." / 18

> "I once found a place that was just a photo studio and a small bar. I went to see the size of the place and I saw that fifty to sixty people would fit. They agreed to host a gig, but asked me to remove all the props, because we could break everything." / 14

One participant stated that holding gigs in a club is safer than doing it elsewhere, they other locations are more likely to attract the attention of state authorities.

> "If you make a concert in a completely DIY way, i.e. in the forest or in a garage, then you have to be prepared for the fact that someone will come and screw it all up." / 17

In the participant observation episodes, I visited an appropriated factory space, an appropriated stage in the basement of a canteen, two clubs (a smaller one in Minsk and a bigger one elsewhere), and an Irish pub. Three of the venues were located within a 2km radius from the city center, while two were located within 6km of the center (both in Minsk).

> *"There are some festivals that take place in the woods. The place is kept very secret, you invite only people you trust and it lasts for several days, and there are a lot of bands. Mostly from Belarus, but some come from Russia or Poland. There is at least one festival that takes place annually, and also some spontaneous festivals."* / 3

> *"Some cafes, garages.. Places where people just go to eat, canteens. Then we just do it like this – we push all the tables next to the walls, we put on our drum set and other gear, and then we have a place to play."* / 9

The venues have to meet certain parameters - There should be plenty of space, and, optimally, the acoustics should be good. While, as I noted beforehand, clubs are considered to be a safer option, the organizers have to find common ground with the club owners - very few of whom are ready to accept the risks that accompany the D.I.Y. music scene. Usually, once a congruent relationship between the organizer of D.I.Y. events and a club owner is established, future gigs tend to take place in these accessible premises.

> *"There are several clubs - and you've been to one on Saturday - that are willing to cooperate. After that previous place got shut down, this is the only option to set up a gig in the city centre. It is not very convenient to make a gig in a garage, because the space is quite small and you can't bring a lot of people."* / 1

> *"Some places have had problems after a show, because someone just said called them and asked: 'What kind of show did you have last night?' And the business is more important. You can have bad relationships either with the police, or with us, and they usually choose us."* / 2

There are club owners that are motivated by the potential alcohol sales that result from agreeing to host a gig, and most club owners do take significant financial resources for rent.

> *"Concerts take place either in clubs or in more alternative rooms. Basically, all the familiar clubs with an expensive bar and a cheap entrance."* / 6

In one of the towns there is a club established by the participants of the D.I.Y. scene, which is seen as a very benevolent situation. D.I.Y. musicians and organizers from other places in the Belarus also continuously consider attempting to follow their example, although there are hurdles I will return to in the rest of the data analysis chapter.

4.3.2. Acting artifacts

Once a venue is found, the next step is to provide the necessary sound equipment. Three of the research participants who have organized gigs mentioned this as the hardest task. In this regard one can see the cooperation between the practitioners, sometimes creating a network between the towns of Belarus:

> "*The device, which we have now, we took it from friends from another town, in installments. They understand everything perfectly, that's why the installments will be prolonged for us, until we have money. They offered it themselves.*" / 18

However, one town in Belarus stood further from the others, creating a feeling of "theirs" and "ours" between the D.I.Y. scenes, and requiring cooperation with touring bands. This aspect is reflected in other situations described by the practitioners of the aforementioned town. Other organizers mentioned the option of renting a device.

> "*If the group goes on tour, we can ask them to bring along some kind of devices, if I know that it is problematic for me to find something. In terms of money, we always counted on ourselves - if we needed money, we always asked the guys from our DIY-scene to support us. If there was an opportunity, the guys responded and helped.*" / 16

Two participants mentioned an occasion where the police confiscated sound devices during a gig raid, stressing the effect this had financially.

> "*Well, they took the equipment once in the forest and haven't gave it back. It cost about 2000 dollars. Also at concerts, if something breaks, it is always a big trouble.*" /14

Instruments are much easier to get ahold of, and their availability was seen as a given. Two of the practitioners mentioned that their guitars were bought by their parents. One recommended for new practitioners to borrow an instrument from their friends for the first rehearsals; another participant tinkers with guitars for survival. Yet, the moving of drums for each gig was seen as equally burdensome as moving the sound devices.

> "*Then we just do it like this – we push all the tables next to the walls, we put on our drum set and other gear, sound devices, and then we have a place to play.*" / 9

The artifacts present within the scene performed not only "allowing" functions, but also "promotional" ones. During the participant observations, on four occasions I noticed a *distro* table - a couple of tables pushed together and someone in charge behind them. Usually one of the tables was occupied by some of the performing bands, selling their records, stickers, t-shirts,

and other merchandise with the logo of their band, and the other one was covered by ideological (mostly anarchist) literature - brochures and books. On one occasion, an audience member approached the *distro* table and asked whether he can sell candles (made by the people from a mental institution where he worked) next to the anarchist literature, and the people in charge easily agreed. Most of the artifacts sold or distributed for free at the gigs carried out the function to keep up the circulation of the information characteristic to the present audience. The audience members who were approaching the tables seemed to know what they will find, and a stable interest toward the materials was expressed. An organizer noted that often the distributors (usually personal acquaintances) simply call the organizer before a gig and asks whether they can bring their materials to the gig. From there, the process is easy - all they need is a spare table, a human presence, and the literature which, on this occasion, they brought in their backpacks.

At the biggest event I attended, there was some merchandise representing the regional D.I.Y. scenes - t-shirts with signs of belonging on them: containing the name of the town and the name of the local "crew." Free brochures about political topics were distributed, and I managed to get ahold of two of them. Only later did I found out from my translator that these materials are classified as extremist literature, which one must not possess.

Zines (or fanzines) - homemade magazines, like the songs of the practitioners, are carriers of information. Creating zines was mentioned as a parallel practice performed (in the past) by two of the research participants.

> "*I grew up on the old Belarusian and Russian politicized hardcore, and the bands said that you need to create the scene yourself. It was written in the zines, sang in the recordings.*" / 18

> "*I used to make a zine, but now it's a little frozen, because people are not enough interested in it.*" / 5

One practitioner, actively involved in *distro* practices, stressed that, mostly due to financial constraint, the zine culture is on a decline. It is in a slight dissonance with the statement from another research participant, who considered the creation of zines an important part of preserving the D.I.Y. culture, next to activities that have to do with music.

> "*Zines in Belarus have died. The last printed zine was ours and not so long ago. There are zines in Poland, however, I do not know who reads them, except their creators, there are three distros. Something is developing, but not as we would like, and compared to the level of 2006-2007, it is now not good at all.*" / 18

> *"It is necessary to engage in some sort of creative activity. It is necessary to present a legacy in this genre for posterity. Accordingly, you need to create bands, make zines, organize concerts." / 4*

From the viewpoint provided by participant observation, zines are a part of the D.I.Y. scene's ideal type and the concept of a zine is meaningful in the practitioner's consciousness. However, they do not play a significant role in the present. The function of sharing written and visual information is instead carried out by books, badges and stickers.

An organizer in Minsk, looking back at a case where they had to leave a rented premises, points at the fact that distribution of such ideological materials notably adds an element of risk to the gigs, the same as an illegal bar.

> *"Well, we had a lot of books there – we tried to sell them – anarchist literature – about prisons, etc. There was a lot of alcohol. Completely illegal. Maybe he [the director] didn't notice that much bad things, it was a rather calm show – just pop punk, the audience was good." / 2*

During my fieldwork, I did notice the circulation of self-made stickers containing ideas common in the D.I.Y. scene - for example, anti-homophobia, anti-fascist and anti-patriarchy. Someone brought them to the aforementioned informal hang I hosted and distributed them to those who were present. This action evoked a joyous response and the stickers were announced to be *cool*.

4.3.3. Skilled human body

In order to perform the action part of a certain practice, a skilled human body is required. Once we depart from the endless depths of the ideological and motivational properties of a thought, it gets easier to see a relatively simple and practical know-how. In the context of D.I.Y. music scene, I distinguish some of the most apparent skills - not only in order to identify this particular practice among others, but also to recognize the time and effort that is invested into the scene by the participants.

On twelve occasions, participants mentioned the learning process and the necessity to have a certain skill. For example, one of the informants who organized a female punk camp (the concept involved learning to perform punk music from a scratch) highlighted an occasion when help was needed in order to grasp the whole music-making process. It is necessary to have the knowledge of the relationship between artifacts, the properties of the artifacts, and the skill to use them.

"We did not really understand what sort of sound devices, instruments, and other tools we need, and Polish women knew everything. They came and they were like superstars, because we did not even know what the difference between a bass guitar and a guitar was." / 14

Another research participant recalled how he began the practice - at first, pretending to have the necessary skill, but then, by investing effort, transforming a similar know-how to the desired one, in order to carry out the action part of the practice.

"When I was studying, probably in the 7th grade, the guys made the band and they needed a bass player. I just really wanted to play in the band, so I said that I know how to play the bass guitar, although at that time did not even imagine what it was. I just played the guitar, I realized that it's easy to re-learn, and went to the bass guitar to be in a band." / 3

Two of the research participants, although expressing a similar message and considering them a part of the D.I.Y. music practice, have at some point carried out a notably different action part than the other practitioners. By performing in a hip-hop genre, they overcame obstacles - either social ones or ones that regard the know-how. However, although hip-hop limits the necessity to learn music instruments, it requires slightly different know-hows - such as knowing how to make the instrumental track by using electronic devices.

"I sat down and thought, because I was the only one in the city, I started to perform in the genre of rap, because this sort of music can be made alone. I downloaded the necessary programs and began to make tracks." / 12

"It's just a very easy way, I advise everyone, who does not know how to convey his thoughts, to do hip-hop." / 18

When looking at the D.I.Y. scene, it is important to recognize the "other" skilled bodies necessary for holding an event. On three occasions the research participants spoke about the role of the sound engineer at the gigs, and in two - about the lack of them. While they do not figure in the rehearsal part of the practice and their role does not seem expressive either, they are a crucial part of a satisfactory performance.

"I think it's wrong that out of 100 punks only two people know how to adjust the sound for an event, and when these people leave, nobody knows how to do it. We even did a couple of workshops on how to properly adjust the sound." / 14

One of the musicians noted that the band participants only have a certain set of skills, which do not involve organizational skills. Thus, in order to improve the social recognizability of a band, a manager is needed. However, in the experience of other bands, the participants seemed to be satisfied with their own know-how of how to improve the practice.

"Again, in order to speak somewhere, you need a group manager, a person who understands what to do and how to move further. Because musicians are musicians, it is important to have a person who sets the direction." / 15

Hereby, I will re-emphasize the role that the organizers have in the life of the D.I.Y. music scene: these individuals, though they do not perform music, have substantial know-how that allows events to take place at all. It is very often them who invite bands to play, take financial risks, settle matters with club owners, find a sound engineer, bring the sound devices, etc. During the time of the gig, there is a need for other human bodies as well - the seller of the tickets, the "secret security guards," the seller of the merchandise, and others depending on the event. All these skills are considered to be easy and can be undertaken by almost any willing participant, and can either all be performed by a one agent or divided between several attendants.

4.3.4. Improvement of the practice

As my interview guidelines did not include a direct question about the future or the success of the scene, all the references to "goals" or "success" were made with intention by the research participants. Overall, five people referred to success (four indirectly, one directly) and three stated their goals (two clearly, the other one - vaguely, and within the context). It seemed that the goal was often simply a continuation of the practice - a goal that is not pinpointed in an exact time in the future, but one that can be realized in different ways over time. This aspect is one of the main pillars which supports my inquiry for something that is not a resistance in the analytical sense. While "enlightening some more people" and touring abroad more often are some of the desired future scenarios, their apparent intention is to keep the disobedient practice alive.

At the time of my stay in Belarus and also during the Thesis writing stage, several research participants (both the organizer working on the venue and some musicians) were paying their attention to the potential new venue in progress that would notably ease the organization of concerts. The informant in the middle of this process emphasized that he wants to provide means for holding a quality event (in regards to the sound system, for example) and also to attract new audiences and both foreign and local bands.

Regarding exclusively band practices, one of the participants noted that the existence of an audio recording is an indicator of success for a band. In some other occasions it was also

perceived either as a success or as "one of the goals." On one occasion records were mentioned as something which encourages respect from the other practitioners within the scene.

> *"We managed to make some records, so I think we succeeded at some point." / 1*

Another research participant emphasized the amount of gigs played as the most important part of the practice. He then specified that it is never done for the sake of money, but, instead, simply for the sake of performing.

> *"We played 100 concerts a year. Some groups need six to seven years to play 100 concerts. I think that this is a serious indicator. I declare with all responsibility that in Belarus no one is better than us." /10*

The notions of goals and success seem to be easier understandable, yet they make it hard to be analytically precise. In the context of the Belarus D.I.Y. scene, a notion of "an improvement of practice" seems to cover almost all of the straightforward and subtle goals mentioned. In conclusion, even if there was an underlying common goal of the practitioners, as we know, personal intentions often change over time, making it especially hard for the resistance to find its way towards analytical significance.

4.4. Citizen punk: within the social

In order to locate the D.I.Y. music practices within the world of complex social networks, in this section of data analysis I will briefly describe the relations inside the scene (including the scene that stretches over physical borders), and then address the complexities present and the support that practitioners receive from non-practitioners. In the end, a notable part of this section will be paid to the practitioners' relations with agents representing the Belarusian state institutions. As we have reached this section, the boundaries that at first separated the musician practices from the other D.I.Y. practices have become significantly porous - we no longer look simply at the actions carried out by the practitioners, but also to their daily lives and cases that create potential for disobedience.

4.4.1. Within the scene

The practices of the D.I.Y. music scene are primarily collective. In some cases, research participants even noted that other D.I.Y. practitioners create the only social capital an individual

has. The social dynamics of playing in a band are rather unique, as it involves collective responsibility for upholding the practice and, optimally, support when needed. The within-the-scene support is considered to be one of the reasons maintaining the resilience of the scene.

> *"Anyone who is engaged in concerts in Belarus faces a burnout at some point: 'Oh well, nobody fucking needs this, none of these bastards, no one understands or supports.' Then some time passes, friends come and after the second bottle sincere conversations begin: 'Let's do it! We will support, we will help!' Thus, with the support of the guys, I thought: 'Okay, let's see, let's try.' / 16*

In two cases, the bands were established by using public advertisement, but in all of the other cases participants found each other through their friends and friends of friends (and in one case, through relatives).

> *"When it all began, the second cousin contacted me through my grandmother and said that he has a group and they needed another bandmate. Grandmother called me into punk rock and it began." / 15*

Most participants emphasized that the band practice can be the most successful if it is undertaken together with other individuals that are affiliated apart from "sharing the same practice" aspect. In one case a member of a well-known band in the scene stated that the relationship in the band is kept professional and "*good*" and no outside of band practices are performed, but in another, well-known band the relationship between the bandmates was described as "toxic" and the band broke up after several years of existence.

> *"I played maybe in eight bands, changed a lot of times... I have played in different bands with people that I didn't know very well, who invited me to play some music I liked. It was not what I felt when I played with my friends." / 1*

> *"We had a bandmate - an alcoholic and a psychopath, he scared all the bassists away from us, because he needed to dominate, he was our male. When someone tried to talk about it with him, his decision was always very simple - I'm leaving." / 17*

Bands, especially in Minsk, often split up and new bands are created (usually a simple re-grouping of the practitioners that have played in other bands in the past). In these cases bands stay in the same scene, but often slightly change the genre they play in. Usually the reasons for leaving a band were incompatible ideologies, different motivations, changing family statuses, and resentments of a personal nature.

> *"So we went on a tour, and on the tour there you need to literally live together all the time, eat together, sleep together, ride in the bus.. Then you begin nagging at each other - someone said something wrong, people quarreled, then they left."* / 3

Good relations between bands were reflected in the interviews with only a couple of exceptions. In four cases research participants stated that they will not perform together with bands of slightly different ideologies (yet, still in the same scene) and any financial ambitions were directly condemned by three research participants.

> *"-Do you often communicate with other bands?   - Yes, I always go to the local bar, guys from all the bands hang out there. I talk to other bands during gigs, some of them are my friends, there is no dislike towards anyone."* / 13

In the narratives of research participants, often such phrases as "working together" and "supporting each other" appeared, when referencing to the scene itself. Notably (and contrary to what one might expect), when research participants were talking about certain cases, the unity and support factor appeared more boldly than when they were directly asked about the unity of the scene (in those cases, the participants tried to perform a more in-depth analysis of the network, focusing on the gaps and schisms).

> *"So the guy asked who was interested, and everyone was helping with decoration in the building, it was not a garage, it was a building. It was located at a factory. Everyone tried to take part in the decoration or help somehow else. The people who are in need group together in order to achieve something."* / 1

> *"Some people are united by friendship, part of people goes there for the music. Some people have been in the tusovka for a long time, they are thirty-five to forty years old, and they go just because it's their soul. Some people do not have anything in common."* / 14

Seven research participants emphasized the possibility to go on tours as one of the main personal gains of the D.I.Y. music practice, as circumstances of a structural character do not provide this chance to many people in Belarus. A term "*anarcho-tourism*" was coined in one of the interviews. On average, the bands went on tours one to two times per year. However, there were two exceptions: two of the bands that were located closer to the Polish border played in Poland and Germany more frequently than in Belarus (one of them was constantly touring, the other one had ten gigs abroad last year). The most frequent destinations were Russia, several countries in Central Europe (dominantly Germany), Ukraine, and the Baltic States. When asked about whether they prefer performing in Belarus or abroad, almost all of the participants responded that there is not a notable difference - D.I.Y. is D.I.Y.. One person stated that he

prefers Europe because of the political situation, but three others felt like their ideological message could only be fully understood in Belarus.

> *"But I always have this argument, I say: 'Mum, I can travel with my band, see the world. You have never been abroad, only to Moscow and Poland. Because of my music I have the ability to go to Germany, the Baltic States, even further.. A lot of perspective to go elsewhere.'"* / 9

> *"In fact, I envy the white people who travel, so this Eurotour is everything to me. To show yourself and feel the contrast between the countries on your own skin."* / 4

There is a constant movement of musicians over borders (mostly Russian, Polish and Ukrainian), connecting the scenes (or the same scene). While, perhaps, because of my focus, the participants mainly spoke of the scene within territories of Belarus, it was observable that in most of the cases concerts were held when bands from abroad arrived to Belarus - Belarus is in a rather strategic position for Russian bands who go on eurotours. In two cases reported by the respondents, gigs of bands from the West of Belarus were stopped.

> *"We have a group in Facebook – often people find me there. People in punk-rock – in Minsk and Russia – have shows together with other DIY band from other countries. I'm still in good relations with guys from Germany, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain.. When bands of my friends want to do a tour, I have someone to ask about it abroad. In Minsk, this organizer guy is me."* /2

> *"Last year a band from USA came. I organized the concert, everything was legal and formal, but the KGB intervened, and due to the fact that our relations with USA are bad, they did everything to disrupt the concert and in the end it did not happen."* / 10

Thus, by making the practice international, the practitioners overcome limitations that would be present in a rather more convenient lifestyle. None of the bands reported encountering serious problems at the borders, though in three cases the practitioners considered the movement regime to be semi-free.

> *"Organizers always asked before the tour: 'Are you going on tour?' and I always said: 'Yes, probably we're going.' There is always a chance that when you cross the border you can be detained for some time or you will be stupidly denied visas. But so far we haven't had such problems."* /5

However, two informants noted that there are occasions when foreign bands are held on the border for hours or denied the visa, which results in missing the gig - thus, it can be stated that crossing the border is less problematic for Belarusian artists.

4.4.2. Within the society

In all of the interviews, I included questions of the practitioners paid work affairs, studies, and family support in order to locate the practice socially. It was important for me to gain an insight into the support or condemnation received from the practitioners' social circles, as it determines the favorability of the environment for performing the practice. Together with the levels of social support (or capital, if one may), the difficulty of the agency work fluctuates.

Four of my research participants were doing full-time studies - in one case unrelated to D.I.Y. music scene activities, in one case related to D.I.Y. thought, and in two cases related to the musical practices. Six people have at some point left university, while the rest have graduated in the past. Overall, an elastic approach towards education existed - people who had left their studies expressed no regret in doing so, while one of the current students (one that has a practice-unrelated programme) contemplated the possibility of leaving university and devoting more time to music.

> *"One of the reasons why I dropped my university and moved to Minsk is because I discovered a wonderful world of punk parties, infernal words and ultra - violence. There was no time for studying. [..] I did not like the system of Belarusian education. I don't fucking need it, it is not interesting, and often blatantly lies, as in the classes 'Fundamentals of ideology' and history."* / 18

> *"I really want to spend all my time playing music, but as I study as well, I have to somehow manage both things. More and more I pay attention to music and less and less – to studies. It's really hard to do both things. Now I feel that my calling is being a musician."* / 9

The same participant recalled a situation when the university authorities performed some security measures. In other cases there were no direct actions from authorities of the universities regarding a practitioner's musical career. One person noted that people can be expelled from the university due to their political activism, but not from simply playing in a band.

> *"I wrote a letter – please, allow me not to attend lectures for two days. [..] The rector looked at this letter and he asked me to come for a conversation the next day. Then one girl I know, who works at the university wrote me: 'Hey, they are asking me about your band from the rectorat. They are asking me whether you are political and whether they should let you go to play the gig.' I was thinking – hmm, why are they asking her that? [..] Thus, if I feel the state control, I usually feel it through the university headquarters."* / 9

Another research participant expressed a stable interest in his studies, however, noted that the education system is Belarus is disappointing. He was one of the three people (the other two

have already graduated) who ascribed the same amount of importance to his studies as he does to music practices.

> *"I was inspired by the scientific style of presenting the questions I was thinking about. I decided that I want to do the same: study anarchism and punk rock at the scientific level."* / 13

In the university environment, just as in the workplace, research participants mostly were not vocal about their D.I.Y. music activities. An impression of two different worlds was created. None of the participants said that music practices have affected their reputation negatively and, in some cases, the opposite happened.

> *"They 100% think that I'm a fool who works as a courier without an education. Don't I want anything else in life? They will never understand me. I have already decided by myself and I will not explain anything to anyone. In general, I do not want to talk to anyone at work about it, because they are not ready for this."* / 19

> *"I don't brag on every corner about the fact that I play in a band. Only a small amount of people know that I can actually play an instrument. I don't like to talk about music with people I don't know. Maybe I'm a little shy. I have no trouble because nobody knows."* / 7

Few participants noted that the workplace has a liberal attitude toward employee practices outside of work and it is directly connected to the personal positions of the employers.

> *"My workplace supports me – they say, okay, you were two weeks in prison, we will write that off as a vacation. I was arrested last spring, in the protest actions. We were retained for two weeks. My employer said, 'it's okay, it's your civil position.'"* / 14

In Belarus, a system of distribution still exists - after graduation, if one has received a grant from the state, the alumni has to work for two years in a workplace indicated by the state. Two of the research participants work in a social sector, but the rest can be equally divided into freelance employees (either in connection to activities in the creative field or construction work), ones that do work from distance for companies located outside of Belarus, and ones that have a stable job in Belarus, such as working with electronics, engineering, or furniture. Three of the practitioners did not currently have a job, yet they were increasingly active in the D.I.Y. practices.

> *"At the moment I am preparing to work as a loader, I have not worked for almost a year and a half, because I have always devoted my time to the projects. The projects have been extorting money, but have not brought any profits, and now there is no money, and the debt for the sound device is enormous, and I don't really like the fact that my friends pay for the device, but I do not."* / 18

Referring back to the topic of time, very often the chosen occupation is subordinated to the activities in the D.I.Y. music scene - the participants mostly felt at ease with their work affairs if there was enough time left for the other practices.

"It is thanks to this kind of work that I can devote so much time to what I like. I just imagine that if I had an 8-hour working day I would be fucked up and would not want to do anything at all. I would not even want to take this guitar in my hands." / 19

While the practitioners were able to successfully divide work life from the D.I.Y. practices if necessary, my intentional assumption was that these activities would perhaps turn out to be more intervened with their family lives. When speaking about family, most people usually mentioned the attitude of their parents (varied), but a minority also spoke about the reactions from their spouses (all of them positive). Not-so-clearly-cut attitudes were less common than strong support or pronounced condemnation.

" - Does anyone support your career? - Yes, my mom. She came to my gig a year ago for the first time and she liked it." / 8

"I interrupted my relationship with my father only a year ago, because he criticized me too fiercely." / 10

Some parents saw the practice as simply unfavorable for the life possibilities of their children. In a few cases it was possible to note a connection between the attitude of the family and their financial issues.

"I think my parents feel quite negative about me being a musician. They think I'm just wasting money. My family was visiting me and saw my new guitar and they felt very disappointed that I had wasted a lot of money for such a thing. They felt like I'd better bought a car." /1

"When my mother says: 'Find a regular job,', my aunt disagrees: "Do not touch your son, he knows what he's doing, everything will be fine with him!' Moreover, when some concerts in Minsk started to bring in money, even my mother began to say: 'Okay, damn it, do your concerts.'" / 18

In several cases, family members expressed their attitudes about certain (assumed) aspects of the practice, but not about the practice as a whole. Similarly to the trend of behaviors within their work environments, practitioners often revealed that they do not have detailed conversations about their practices within their families.

"Mom is pretty calm, she is happy that I'm going somewhere. I'm telling her that I'm famous in certain circles. However, she always told me - when you will grow up, you will refuse this youthful bullshit." / 3

"She perceives this as a young rebel, and she would like me to not do this at all. Even if she knows that I went to a meeting, she prefers it, first, do not know, and secondly, that I did not go there." / 14

There was one occasion where family matters were brought to the wider attention of other people in the scene, painting a picture of support among practitioners and the willingness to stand in for each other.

"On the Internet her mum commented on her post that she looks like a bum. Openly, just like that, everyone saw it. Everyone started replying to her mum, saying: 'Why do you say that, she is your child after all! Why do you say that publicly? She didn't do anything bad to anyone. After all, it's her hair, she can do what she wants with them!'" / 9

On some occasions in the interviews the research participants referred to society as a relative whole - the people who are outside the scene, that are not familiar with the D.I.Y. guidelines. These people were seen as ones having just a fragmetary knowledge of the practice that would not allow them to *fully understand*.

4.4.3. Within a state

I had the intention to have already presented some of the difficulties of structural nature experienced by the practitioners before starting this section of data analysis. It still remains unclear, whether one can really separate the institutional power of the state from the structural powers that know no official borders. I will attempt to describe the actions undertaken by such state services as the police, KGB, and OMON, as well as restrictive policies of other state institutions that were mentioned by the participants and form their attitude towards the system within which their own system is located. When analysing the data, I separated the state agent actions from their supposed ideologies (in this research ascribed by the D.I.Y. music practitioners), the same as I did with the disobedient practice. In the particular methodology, attention was paid to the cases of contact between the disobedient agent and the representatives of the hegemonic state.

Now that we are aware of the physical and ideological components of the D.I.Y. music scene practices, the aim of this section is to put the quality of disobedience in the spotlight. As the interviews reveal, often the disobedience is assigned by the result of state agent interpretation or inquiry into the intentions and goals of the practitioners.

"They walk around and gather information, so that they can get to something. Apparently, no matter how they tried to convince the young activists (whom they are calling for conversations) that they have all the information, they do not have it. For them we are the mysterious people - they can't understand what we are doing, who is paying us, who is in charge of us. The very communication with them showed that in the minds of many employees the scheme that someone can do something himself - without orders, without money, voluntarily - is impossible." / 18

There is a limited number of rehearsed practices that the representatives of the hegemonic structure carry out in order to stabilize the system they are a part of. It is important to note that the practitioners of the state practices are performing their actions as a part of their paid work duties. The research participants readily stressed this aspect and the condemnable, obedient (non pro-active) life philosophies of these individuals.

The research participants often referred to the same cases of gigs raids, arrests or clashes of a similar nature, which encourages us to think that the communication in the scene is rather comprehensive. Five of the practitioners had not experienced any gig raids or detentions, recalling the experiences of other people in the D.I.Y. scene.

Although in the 2018 there have not been any gig raids that anyone knew of, the research participants emphasized the constant possibility of such happenings. An image of "living on the edge" was painted in the narratives of the practitioners.

"The riot police raids a concert and then the political tension is reduced - again, for a month or two, or six months, everything is calm. Until the next time. This is unpredictable, except for representatives of the authorities and special services." / 10

I experienced a similar feeling in one of the participant observation episodes in a rather small town of Belarus. When I arrived at the venue, there were already several police cars covering the perimeter. Some people were standing around 100 meters away from the club, seemingly waiting for something, so I approached them and asked about the reasons for the police presence. "I don't know," said one of the guys, "but I will rather stay here for a while, until they leave." I waited with the others for ten minutes, later deciding to try to go into the club. A lot of people were smoking outside of the club, several brawls were taking place, and the owner of the club was constantly monitoring the situation from the entrance area. The police soon left, but returned in an hour and stayed outside of the venue, never entering the club. I heard several theories of why the police was there - perhaps, because of the brawls; perhaps, because they wanted to simply observe; or maybe because *"they don't have anything to do anyway."* I found it odd how they did not enter the premises, as, if they did, they would have found reasons for

detention of some individuals (in connection to extremist literature or related things). When I asked around for the reason they did not enter, one of the audience members gave me a memorable answer: *"If I knew why they do or do not do things, life would be much easier."* Later on, some potential reasons for this kind of police behavior appeared in the interviews. One of the organizers noted that back in the day police raids had a more unique function - nowadays, there are security cameras in many of the clubs, so it is easier for the police officers to demand the files of camera recordings instead of entering the venue with all of the audience being present. Then again, a raid might still provide more basis for the detention of someone than video files. A couple of the research participants noted that the policemen used to attend gigs while being unsuccessfully disguised as regular audience members. In a conversation with the organizer of the aforementioned gig, he highlighted some D.I.Y. scene - police relationship dynamics in a small town setting.

> *"There were cases when after the concerts policemen called the club and asked about what was taking place there. We, of course, lied. [..] There was a case when we were called before the concert and we said that we have a corporate event and we do not know anything. [..] I think all city cops already know that it is better not to come here. [..] Once they tried to detain one person. There were five of them and they were all very young. There was probably ninety people in the hall. The whole hall surrounded them, they were encircled and filmed. One employee even in a hurry lost his cap; we then returned it, of course. As a result, the person was released. Of course, we were threatened by the riot police. But it was very funny to see the frightened eyes of the police officers. They apparently got so used to their impunity, that when they were given a collective response, they were shocked and they did not know what to do with us. [..] We asked them: 'Why did you come to us? Those you were supposed to catch* [nazis],' *they ran away."* / 18

On two occasions the research participants noted an overlay of the polarized "D.I.Y. music practitioner" and "police officer" identities: once, in a case where a police officer *almost became* a member of the audience, and on the other occasion, when an individual was at the same time both a representative of a state institution and a participant in a punk band. In the latter case, however, the research participant recalling the situation noted that he openly denounced the individual's choice of parallel practices and stated that they are straightforwardly conflicting. The other punk bands of the D.I.Y. scene refused to perform at the same gigs with as police officer.

> *"One of the police officers have played in a metal band in the past, and there was a metal band performing there and he stood and shook his bald head to the rhythm."* / 18

However, it is not simply an imagined clash: in some informal hangs people were talking about interrogations recently experienced by their friends (not in connection to music practices,

but in connection to parallel practices). A concert (in Minsk) of one research participant was cancelled without an apparent reason; another practitioner experienced a search of his car, resulting in a fine of 1000 euros for traces of an illegal substance in his blood (an example of the police *finding* a legal reason to punish a recognized practitioner); and one of the organizers in Minsk had to pay a 500 euro fee, as it was revealed that his acquaintance was temporarily spending nights on the premises of a rented factory space.

There is a certain inevitability of illegality when holding gigs in the D.I.Y. scene - even if the participants would submit all the necessary documents (such as the statement of the organizer and the lyrics of the songs that will be performed) to the event committee of the state, the chances of getting an approval are low. Furthermore, it would only attract future attention not only to the organizers, but also to the potential venues, bands, etc. For example one of the research participant is currently in a situation where he is recognized as a potential threat and no events with his participation could gain official permission (at least in terms of his hometown). However, a few of the research participants mundanely recalled finding holes in this system of official approvals.

> *"I had to write down the names of the bands and what they will be singing about. Naturally, I could not put the lyrics of the songs on the paper, if I wanted the concert to take place. Therefore, I myself had to write some nonsense instead of real texts and thus they approved us."* / 6

Even if an official permission is gained, the police has other legal reasons for performing a gig raid.

> *"Sometimes they say that they are searching for drugs in someone's coat, that someone is taking drugs in this party - they hold up everyone and search their pockets. It's a legal excuse and it's very easy to come up with one. You can get a fine if you are not obeying their demands, if you are very defensive or don't want to do things they ask you to do. But if you try to be very calm, most of the times you don't face any consequences."* / 1

Another well-rehearsed way used by the state security institution to influence the activities of the D.I.Y. music practitioners is attempts to put pressure on the people who cooperate with the scene, such as amicable club owners. Six participants stated that the police repeatedly calls the club owners, warning them about the possible consequences of holding a gig. Similarly to finding a legal reason for raiding a gig or detaining an individual, state institutions are able to find a legal reason for closing a business.

> *" - Do club owners care about what the police or KGB say? - Definitely. Because in this country it's really easy to stop some business. Just burden them with paperwork, sanitary*

checks and any kind of this stuff. It's not a problem for the authorities to influence the club owners. - So they can just close a club because they hold DIY gigs? - If you go from the point A to the point B, it seems like this, but actually they're not shutting down the club, they're simply making it impossible to work. They immediately start checking this club, give them fines for everything. Everything seems to be legal, but they can find a hundred legal reasons to shut down any club. Punk gig isn't a legal reason, but they can find any other that would seem legitimate." / 7

A similar approach was also used to throttle the research participant who was trying to open up a D.I.Y. venue - he admitted having no support from the bureaucratic institutions when dealing with the necessary documents. Moreover, it was never explained exactly what was wrong, although an impression that something is wrong was constantly presented. The obsession with legality, as one participant notes, might be connected with the attempt to avoid any attention from over the border, thus it reaches as far as Belarus' international relations and foreign policies.

"After all, some rules of international law have to be observed. Otherwise Europe won't give Belarus any money." / 18

One research participant recalled occasions where gig raids were avoided by performing very simple actions that were possible due to the premises where the gig took place.

"There was a garage cooperative far away from the town – you could just open the door and you're welcome – here's a place for DIY shows. In this place we had cops coming, but it was settled pretty easily. We just said to the audience: Okay, cops are on their way, thank you for coming! We just closed the door of the garage and nobody found out about us." / 7

The last gig raid the research participants referred to took place in October of 2017. It was a textbook example of the raids performed by the police, thus I will include a rather lengthy quote from the interview with one of the organizers of the event that sheds light on the practice repertoires used by the representatives of the state.

"I prepared that concert for a long time, for nine months. Groups were to come from Ukraine, two groups from Russia. Two months before the concert I created a group / meeting in VKontakte. It was filled with all relevant content: which groups will perform, our partners. We also created a poster with a badge of an interrupted swastika. Perhaps, this was the reason of drawing some conclusions. In a country that has defeated fascism, the authorities are fighting anti-fascists, a very paradoxical situation. They have people who scan social networks. So it happened that in a few days we had an anarcho lecture in another city and when we were driving in the police car, the commander of the detachment asked me whether we were preparing for a rally. I did not understand at all - what's the matter? Turned out that a week or several days after our concert there was an initiated protest - the March of angry Belarusians. All these events were identified by the police, and

to avoid problems, they tried to cover all these activities in a preventive manner. When they took the people away from the gig, they were announcing on their police radios: 'We have captured the anarchists, we will take them to the ROVD.' They knew in advance that there would be many people there. They need to do something, somehow show that they are doing something. The legal reason for stopping the concert was that it was taking place illegally, and we did not have a tour certificate and permission. [..] They broke the doors of the emergency exit, damaged the property that was there, damaged the sound equipment a little, tore out the sockets with extension cords. Treated all the people in the best traditions: there was a lot of rudeness on their part, sexism against the girls who were there. A lot of negativity, insults, and light beatings. For several hours people stood with their hands on the wall, while the cops wrote down everything. All of the merchandise was confiscated, which I again did at my own expense - stickers and various posters were taken to the ROVD. They also confiscated the box with the entrance ticket money and also the second box, which was in the hall, where people donated money to support of our comrades who are now in prison. I did not receive anything back. I was also fined for illegal commercial activities. In the cars everyone was still interrogated and asked absolutely stupid questions." / 4

Judging from a human rights perspective, in this example one can sense the imbalance between the seriousness of the "crime" and the actions taken by the police forces without having a sufficient proof of guilt. Some video materials (captured by the phone cameras of the audience members) of this raid are also available on such internet platforms as YouTube. As partly noted in the previous quote, it is believed that the police find out about upcoming events through the internet. Other research participants noted different methods as well.

"Perhaps they see the text messages people send to each other, or there was a version that someone from inside was reporting on concerts, but that was not confirmed. Maybe they find some flyers on the street - there used to be such a thing. Now event groups are created in the social networks, so the police just find it and come to the gigs." / 5

These assumptions influence the strategies of imperceptibility used by the D.I.Y. music practitioners - several informants noted that it is simply secure to "stay silent," to create closed events on social platforms, to use Telegram (which was commonly used as the primary means of communication), and to promote events only in circles of well-trusted individuals. While the majority of practitioners expressed the wish to promote the disobedient practice, in some cases it was also noted that it has to be achieved while being as invisible as possible.

"- Have you ever had your concerts raided? -   Not recently. But this is due to the fact that we are performing in closed concerts - illegally, without advertising, so it is hard for the authorities to learn about it." / 10

> *"I think, the culture of self-security, or not talking much, or keeping it secret is quite good here. That's why there are still some bands in some places and some initiatives that are still unknown to the authority. Because people can keep secrets."* / 1

Similar considerations were in one case mentioned in connection to the venue accessibility, however, as noted in the "Space" section, the current venues are not located rather far from the city centre.

> *"The cops are quite aware of such places, and it's easy to shut them down. If you set up a place somewhere in a popular area, it's very easy to find and shut you down. And if you find a place that is located somewhere in the outskirts and no one knows about it, it feels more secure."* / 1

On two occasions research participants noted that there are cases when the disobedient character of the practice gets lost in the translation - the knowledge pools of the practitioners and the state institution can happen to be separated to a large extent, averting direct clashes.

> *"The two most amusing cases were, firstly, when the police officers came and saw the banner of anarchist organizations and red-black banners and they could not understand what it was. Then they decided that they were football fans from Ivatsevich, and left. There was a similar experience in the same club when a punk band played with the song about the lawlessness of the cops and two police officers entered the hall and they did not understand what was the text about* [due to the insufficient articulation of lyrics characteristic to some of the punk bands]." / 18

Six research participants mentioned a simple human factor that in their opinion downplays the peril stemming from state institutions - there was a common understanding of the police as "lazy." Thus, it was recognized that the state agents would be able to do more if there were higher levels of motivation. Speaking of the motivations of the police and KGB to perform the practices currently performed, research participants on four occasions noted that there is no crime to fight against, hence it is important for state workers to "keep busy" in order not to lose their work positions. It was possible to see how in the respondent narratives the identities of the policemen were created to be submissive and puny.

> *"I think cops in this country are very lazy, they get an order from time to time. Like 'guys, you should do something.' Then they go to a show and arrest everyone. But most of the time they do nothing. You have to be very active to draw their attention."* / 1

However, the police were still referred to as a threat regularly in cases where research participants were not analysing their inner motivations, but speaking of their experiences during raids and detentions.

> *"- Have cops ever been a threat to the gigs? -   In our country, the police is generally a threat to society.   - You listed the problems concerning the organization, and the police were not listed. Is it because they are in last place?   - Actually, they are in the first place. Simply it is so ordinary that it is implied by itself, it does not occur to you to immediately say so. [..] But this is a primary threat for the punk scene and for the society as a whole."* / 16

Both analysing the reports about gig raids from Anarchist Black Cross Belarus[7] and the opinions of my research participants, it became clear that the activity of the KGB and the police increases during an election period.

> *" - Is it better now? - I think it is better. After the elections. - Why do you think the cops come to the gigs at all? - I think it's a part of the programme. Someone just asks them to do it."* / 8

> *"Elections are an active stage of the system - it starts to move, and it moves aggressively. Everyone falls under this machine before the election - punks, any activists. Punks will not be unique; pensioners, homeless people...the craziest grandmothers with dementia, too, are raked before the election. Everything is normal!"* / 17

The agency of the policemen was seen as something that is constantly able to affect the practices of the D.I.Y. scene, which again creates the risk factor in the participant's understanding of their practice. Notably, there were varying responses to, "how much do the state institutions know." Around half of the respondents thought that "they know everything" yet the other half thought that "they think they know everything, but they don't actually know everything."

> *" I understand that KGB knows almost everything about me and I'm not afraid of it."* / 2

On two occasions, the practitioners tried to stabilize the basis for undertaking the practice of making events - in one case, a practitioner succeeded in opening and sustaining a bar/venue (however, because of it he still receives an amplified attention from the police), and another practitioner was in the process of establishing such premises. In both cases it might be seen as compromising with the state structure (in terms of joining the "business" field), yet the practitioners tried to distance themselves from such a view. In the already opened bar they had a phrase, "Still Not Loving Police," on the wall, but in the other case the practitioner stated that even when one is trying to live outside the system, sometimes it might prove to be strategically more beneficial to submit to parts of the rule of law.

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[7] Information is present regarding three raids in 2013, zero raids in 2014, seven raids in 2015, two raids in 2016, two raids in 2017

" - Did the jail experience change your strategies? - Yeah, I think so. I started to think about security more, I understood that there are some things that you can't do when your level of responsibility improves. If I'm just a rebellious 18-year-old, I don't care that much, but now a lot of people depend on me. My family. I know that the government is a big machine that can crush your bones. So now that we do everything according to government rules in opening this new place, we do it just so we can live a little bit longer. For our ideas, our things. We could just rent a garage somewhere in the outskirts, but it would work only for a couple of months. It's important to have a foundation for something, you can't always run. You should stay, you should think a lot. You should weight your dreams and morals. You should be more rational in relationships with government. When I spent two weeks in jail, I understood that there would be no difference for the government or for the society, if I'd be there for two years. Nobody would protest. You'll be alone, wasting your time. It's maybe easier to play by the rules of the government in a couple of things, than play by them all the time, as you do when you're in prison." / 2

Another participant, present in the scene for ten years already, was optimistic about the sustainability of the scene, highlighting its flexible character and ability to adapt to any circumstances.

"It's totally impossible to forbid concerts, because you can rethink your concept of a concert and just do it in another way. Some people try to organize a concert in a garage, and even if only ten to fifteen people come, they say, 'it's okay, it's a concert!' [..] People interested in photography have their own place called photosquat [..]. They can organize an event called, 'A Day of Photography,' and then hold a concert at the end. So it's not a problem to walk around these restrictions. You just give it a different name and try to be more silent. Everything can be held." / 7

While the aim of this research was never to explore the motivations of the research participants, but the strategies of implementing the disobedient practice, I must shed light on the "creating the parallel reality" aspect of the D.I.Y. music scene that the research participants themselves noted without being asked about it directly. Furthermore, I included a question of whether the practitioners have ever experienced feeling of exhaustion and hopelessness after some clashes with the representatives of state institutions, and in eighteen cases out of twenty-one, the participants noted that the clashes or arrests of their peers only make them feel more motivated. It is also very important to note the fact that the three individuals who stated that the state practices make the activities into a rather backbreaking thing, have all experienced notable share of obstruction from the police or the KGB.

"I've never come across such a person that was once beaten by the riot police and then said: 'No, I will not go to such concerts anymore, I'll go home to glue the wallpaper with my wife.' Not among my friends. Even the people who were stabbed by neo-Nazis still go to gigs - in a company, but they don't give up." / 5

The aspects that were seen as more dangerous to the existence of the scene was disrespect among the practitioners (such as overtly drunk individuals during gigs), transpiring common ideas, and emigration.

> *"Half of the 2000's scene moved either to Poland or further. Even half of the original team of the local bar has already moved away from here. But somebody should stay here, too. [..] In Belarus it's hard to fight, there isn't a lot of punks, the protest is more symbolic - to make a concert, [..] to wear a fig in our pocket." / 13*

> *"We want to say that punk-rock is united, but in fact, what is an independent scene? This is just a bunch of individuals who have ego, ambition, desire to challenge themselves to society, to prove to everyone that I am better or at least not worse. [..] And between such people then conflicts begin because of ambition and non-conformism." / 10*

> *"It seems to me, at least for now, those groups that could say something important about social problems, they hardly act. So it happened: one is sitting, the second is under arrest, the third is gone. For some reason young groups are afraid to talk. I thought that if I had a band, I probably would also be afraid to say something, but I would probably force myself." / 14*

In the last quote one can also observe the way of stressing the importance of the ideological aspect of the practice. In regards to the potential connection with other official or semi-official structures (such as moving to the European Union or joining the political opposition in Belarus) apart from the structure of the Belarus state, five research participants expressed some particular aspirations.

> *"We have such a plan: we want to save money and go live in Leipzig to our friends. We want to buy a truck there and live there. We want to do music there as well." / 19*

> *"If you would ask me - what is better - EU or modern Russia, I will answer that the EU is better. Everything is relative. In order to criticize the European Union, at first I would like to be a part of it." / 10*

In other cases the "unknown" was perceived with a notable level of doubt, yet only in six cases did the participants articulate a clear and motivated intention to stay in Belarus. Notably, four participants emphasized their decision to stay as a consequence of participating in the scene.

> *"I see the flags of some political opposition parties, but I do not know who they are or what they lead to. I have no confidence in them, because I understand that they are the same people as those who are now." / 15*

"Some countries – Poland, Czechoslovakia – are becoming more and more conservative. You know that after ten or fifteen years it may become the same as here. Here you feel like it can't be worse, it can only get better." / 7

"I do not see a future for myself in any country. With the existing system of the World, I have no future anywhere. If only go to the Zapatistas or to Kurdistan." / 18

In this chapter, the disobedience aspect gained its relevance: strong attitudes, strategies and even violence appears in the stories of practitioners. The hegemony appears not only through a shortage of resources, but as embodied in human beings that are representing the repressive institutions of the state – giving a chance to *interact* with the state, declare ones position as being against their actions. Ambiguity in relations with family and collegues appeared, shedding the light on the parallelity and conformation. Finally, the idea of the practice being parallel was re-affirmed by the illustrations of how there is no necessity for the practitioners to move abroad while it is possible to live according to one's moral principles.

5. Conclusions

The human agency in Belarus is present and it can be read in the heavy transcripts of the D.I.Y. music practitioners. With its ups and downs, the disobedient scene has shown its tenaciousness and new people keep finding shelter in its different view of morality.

In this work I have demonstrated the interaction between the disobedient agent - the D.I.Y. music practitioners - and the hegemonic order - the representatives of Belarus state institutions. It is clear that a contention between the practitioners and the hegemonic structure is present, yet the *front line* is rather blurry, and I once again propose to think about parallelity instead of opposition.

My findings have highlighted a power-relations based cycle that I believe to be the basic social mechanism present throughout the thirty year long period of disobedient practice. Firstly, the actions carried out by the practitioners strengthen the disobedient discourse, which continues to demand a physically performed proof of the disobedience. Furthermore, it is the disobedient discourse connected to the actions which contribute to the frequency of clashes with state representatives and create the risk factor as such. The knowledge of the chance of clashes curbs the form of action and strengthens the disobedient discourse, as well as affirming the legitimacy of the perception of risk.

Additionally, there are several important aspects that substantiate the presence of the disobedient practice. It is important that the varied attitudes from the social environment give

the practitioners an existence against which to define themselves. The inner (and, to a much lesser extent, external) support system amongst practitioners encourages the practitioners to repeatedly agree to the risks - a sense of a parallel existence setting appears. The limited resources affirm both the sense of one's agency and the sense of inequality. As hegemony can not be total, it never fully succeeds in completely eliminating the necessary means to continue the practice. Finally, the disobedient practices allow the practitioner to cognitively delineate oneself from the hegemonic structures (here I mean not only the state, but also the other structures condemned in D.I.Y. ideology), and to live according to a different moral, preserving their dignity. Significant, but not mentioned as a primary gain, is the aspect that the undertaken practices can create opportunities which are inaccessible otherwise, such as traveling.

The main aspect of the practice which made me think of it as different from opposition or resistance, was that its existence was seen as a success by its own means. There were no goals to overthrow the ruler and no strategies of active distribution of the infomation outside the scene, but the disobedience was rather a *start-with-yourself* personal revolution with a pragmatic approach towards large scale social changes.

One can see similarities with the examples of infrapolitics (preserves dignity, actions are not considered as ''doing politics''), yet the implementation part of the practice is notably different - quite easy to notice and regarded as a threat by the representatives of hegemony. This reaffirms the need for subsections of the infrapolitics and I do hope that the notion of disobedient practices will perhaps prove to be helpful when researching other practitioners that encounter clashes with the hegemonic structures and perceive themselves as ideologically against the dominant thought.

As the D.I.Y. music scene can be viewed as a social body instead of a bundle of practice-arrangement, I encourage future researchers to return to Belarus in order to work on a more elaborate insight into the social capital of the people in the scene - both the ones concerned with creating music and the ones that undertake different D.I.Y. practices (for example, distributional practices). In this work I have focused on the setup through the practitioners' eyes (in terms of addressing their thoughts on the clashes). It would be insightful to address the same practice, paying attention to the perception of the state representatives, as it would help to reduce the amount of unintentional uncritical assumptions. Moreover, as the implementation of the D.I.Y. music practice is now to a certain extent analytically covered, a discourse analysis would allow us to perform explorations of a more philosophical disposition. In addition, the D.I.Y. scene can also be perceived as a transnational phenomenon, providing a rich international network to explore.

I wish to conclude by reminding once again that all our notions about the social world are constructed by our own minds and they gain their realness with every time when we are

making decisions and behaving according to these reified categories. While discourses might be as precisely relative as every thing in this world, our actions strip us from the boldness present in our words, giving us a chance to self-reflect.

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Attachments

ATTACHMENT 1: informed consent form

RUSSIAN VERSION

информированное согласие

1. Мне не нужно ни ваше имя, ни фамилия, поскольку это не влияет на данные исследования
2. Если вы считаете, что какой-то вопрос слишком личный, вы, конечно, можете отказаться ответить
3. Чтобы точно интерпретировать сказанное, я использую записывающее устройство. Я записываю интервью и расшифровываю его. В процессе транскрипции я удаляю все ссылки на людей (например, имена или псевдонимы) или на места (например, города или кварталы).
4. все интервью будут храниться в Интернете, в папке, защищенной паролем
5. после собеседования я немедленно передам интервью с рекордера в онлайн-папку и удалю его (Это означает, что у меня не будет доступных данных со мной при пересечении границы)
6. Я буду рисковать собственной безопасностью, чтобы защитить записи и транскрипции, и я сделаю все, что в моих силах, для создания важного исследования, не создавая проблем для кого-либо
7. Я мог бы иногда казаться слишком навязчивым, но каждый вопрос связан с описанием некоторых точек социальной теории, которые описаны в исследовательском предложении
8. Если вы заметили или почувствовали, что я делаю то, что не соответствует этим правилам, вы можете связаться со своим научным супервизором в Университете Утрехта Dr. Christ Klep, c.p.m.klep@uu.nl

ENGLISH VERSION

informed consent

1. I don't need you name or surname, as it is not relevant in the research process.
2. If you consider some question to be too personal, you can, of course, refuse to answer.
3. In order to precisely perceive your story, I am using a recording device. I am going to record the interview and transcribe it. In the transcription process, all names or nicknames, as well as precise locations appearing in the interview will be deleted.
4. I will keep all of my interviews on a cloud server, protected by a password.
5. After the conversation, I will immediately move the audio file from the recording device to the online folder (which means that I will not have the interviews with me, for example, while crossing the border).
6. I will put my own safety under risk in order to protect the recordings and transcripts and I will do anything in my power to solve any problems, if they arise.

7. It is possible that I might at some points seem too intrusive, but every question in the interview is related to the social theory I am using for this research.
8. If you think that I am violating any ethical considerations or your rights, please contact my supervisor in Utrecht University: Dr. Christ Klep, c.p.m.klep@uu.nl

ATTACHMENT 2: The interview guidelines

RUSSIAN VERSION

1) Если у тебя есть какие-то вопросы ко мне, сейчас самое время их задать.

2) Поскольку в своей магистерской я буду указывать, что эти интервью касаются панк/хк сцены в Беларуси, я бы хотела спросить, как ты думаешь, лучше отложить публикацию научной работы на три года, или ты бы хотел(а), чтобы мир сейчас узнал о том, что происходит в вашей сцене.

3) Пожалуйста, представься в двух словах – не обязательно называть свое имя, вместо этого остановись на ваших занятиях и интересах. К какому жанру относится музыка, которую ты играешь?

РАЗДЕЛ 1. Отправная точка

1. Когда ты начал(а) свою карьеру как музыкант(ка)? Почему ты решил(а) этим заниматься?

 a. У тебя были друзья-музыканты? Ты вдохновился(лась) музыкой определенных групп? Что в их музыке было такого, что тебя вдохновило?

2. Были ли в твоей жизни какие-нибудь пограничные ситуации с тех пор, как ты начал(а) заниматься музыкой, которые изменили то, как ты создаешь или исполняешь музыку?

 a. Ты когда-нибудь переходил(а) в другие группы? Почему?

РАЗДЕЛ 2. Практика (концерты и репетиции)

1. Как часто вы репетируете? Где проходят репетиции (адрес не нужен ;)?

2. Были ли какие-то проблемы с поиском места для репетиций? Расскажи о них.

3. Попадал(а) ли ты в такие ситуации, когда было необходимо было совместно искать или делить рептичку?

4. Как обычно организована ваша репетиция? У вас есть какой-то порядок или правила?

5. У тебя есть какие-нибудь веселые или необычные истории из жизни, связанные с репетициями?

6. Как часто ваша группа выступает? В каких условиях обычно происходят концерты?

 a. Концерты чаще проходят в Беларуси или за границей? В каких городах в Беларуси? Почему именно в этих городах – это как-то связано с тем, что местные власти позволяют там их делать? В каких городах за границей?

 б. Проще организовать концерт в Беларуси или за границей? Где тебе больше нравится выступать и почему?

 в. У вас были какие-то проблемы с организацией концертов за границей? Какие? Как вы их решили?

 г. У вас были какие-то проблемы с организацией концертов в Беларуси? Какие? Как вы их решили?

7. У тебя были в жизни такие моменты, когда мотивация и душевные силы упали ниже плинтуса, и хотелось просто бросить занятие музыкой? Какие на это были причины, как получилось, что ты решил(а) продолжить?

8. Есть ли какие-то забавные истории с концертов? Было бы интересно их послушать.

РАЗДЕЛ 3. Публика

1. Что представляет собой ваша публика? Она постоянная и одинаковая или очень часто меняется? Как бы ты сказал(а), что объединяет этих людей?

2. Ты лично знаешь людей, которые посещают концерты?

РАЗДЕЛ 4. Отношения в группе и с другими группами

1. Вопрос может показаться банальным, но имеешь ли ты близкие отношения со своими "одногруппниками"? Простираются ли эти отношения дальше, чем просто участие в одной группе?

2. Как вы все познакомились?

3. У вас когда-нибудь были конфликты за все время существования группы? Чем они обычно вызваны и как ты вы их решаете? А в целом, легко ли найти компромисс?

4. Кто-то из членов когда-то уходил из этой группы? Что вас удерживает вместе?

5. Как бы ты описал(а) панк/хк сцену в Беларуси? Ты ощущаешь чувство принадлежности и единства со сценой? Ты часто общаешься с другими группами?

6. Были ли когда-либо конфликты между двумя или большим количеством групп?

7. Сотрудничаете ли вы при организации концертов с другими группами? Какие в этом преимущества?

РАЗДЕЛ 5. Другие стороны жизни

1. Давай теперь немного отвлечемся от музыки. Ты учишься или работаешь? В какой сфере/какая специализация? Давно ты этим занимаешься? Почему ты решил(а) делать эту карьеру?

2. Ты доволен(а) текущим положением вещей в своей рабочей/учебной жизни?

3. Легко ли совмещать карьеру музыканта с работой/учебой? Тебе когда-нибудь приходилось отказываться от чего-то в одной сфере жизни, чтобы достигнуть чего-либо в другой? Например, пропустить занятия, чтобы поиграть на концерте?

4. Можешь ли сказать, что участие в группе в какой-то момент негативно отразилось на твоей работе или учебе? Например, относительно времени или твоей репутации.

5. Что тебе больше по сердцу – развитие группы или работа/учеба?

6. У тебя есть родственники, которые следят за твоей музыкальной карьерой? Какова их реакция, поддерживают ли они тебя? Почему именно такая реакция?

7. Был ли в твоей жизни близкий человек, который пытался убедить тебя бросить музыку? Какие были его доводы? Как ты ответил(а)?

8. Может быть, у тебя есть родственники, которые тоже являются музыкантами?

РАЗДЕЛ 6. Ты и Беларусь

1. Ты хочешь устроить свою жизнь в Беларуси?

2. Ты когда-нибудь размышлял(а) о переезде за границу? Что тебя удерживает? Какие преимущества переезда?

3. У тебя есть друзья, которые переехали за границу? Как у них дела сейчас?

4. Давай закончим на слащавой нотке. Что бы ты пожелал(а) Беларуси на столетие провозглашения Независимости?

Если ты считаешь, что я упустила какие-то важные моменты, скажи мне о них, можно поговорить о них сейчас.

ENGLISH VERSION

1) If you have any initial questions, this is the time for them.
2) As in my Thesis I will mention that the conversations regard the punk/hc scene in Belarus, I would like to ask, whether you think it would be better to post-pone the publication of the work for three years, or would you like the world to know about what is happening in the scene now.

3) Please, introduce yourself in a few sentences – it is not necessary to mention your name, but instead address your occupations and interests. To what genre belongs the music that you are playing?

SECTION 1. Starting point.

1. When did you start your career as a musician? How did you decide to pursue it?
    a. Did you have friends who were musicians? Did you gain inspiration from certain bands? What was it about their music that inspired you?
2. Have there been any sharp turning points since you've practiced music that have changed the way you create or perform music?
    a. Have you ever changed bands? Why?

SECTION 2. Practices (Gigs & rehearsals).
1. How often do your rehearsals take place? Where do they take place (no need for an address ☺).
2. Have there been any issues with finding a place for rehearsing? What kind of issues were those?
3. Have you ever had a situation where you collaborate with other bands to find/keep a rehearsal room?
4. How is your rehearsal usually organized? Do you have a certain routine?
5. Do you have any fun or unusual stories from life regarding rehearsals?
6. How often do yor gigs take place? In what kind of environments do they happen?
    a. Are they more often organized in Belarus or abroad? Which cities in Belarus? Why those cities – is it something about the local governing that allows it? Which cities abroad?
    b. Is it easier to organize gigs in Belarus or abroad? Which one do you prefer and why?
    c. Have you ever encountered any issues while organizing gigs abroad? What kind of issues? How did you solve them?
    d. Have you ever encountered any issues while organizing gigs in Belarus? What kind of issues? How did you solve them?
7. Have you ever had a point in your life when your spirits and motivation are so down that you just want to drop the whole music practicing thing? What were the reasons, how did you decide not to?
8. Do you have any fun stories about certain gigs? I'd love to hear them.

SECTION 3. The Audience.
1. What is your audience like? Is it consistent or does it change a lot? What would you say, what is it that unites these people?
2. Do you personally know the people who attend your gigs?

SECTION 4. Relationships within the band and within the bands.
1. It's rather obvious, but do you have close relations with your band mates? Does your relationship reach further than just being in one band?
2. How did you all get to know each other?
3. Have you ever had any conflicts regarding the trajectory of your band? What are they usually like and how did you solve them? Overall, is it easy to find compromise?
4. Has anyone ever left this particular band? What is it that holds you together?
5. How would you describe the punk/hc scene in Belarus? Do you have a sense of belonging or unification within the scene? Do you talk much to other bands?
6. Have there ever been any conflicts between two or more bands?

7. Do you do collaborations on organizing gigs with other bands? What are the benefits of it?

SECTION 5. Other aspects of one's life.
1. Now let's depart a little bit from the music. Do you study or work? Which subject/sphere? Have you been doing it for a long time now? Why did you decide to pursue that?
2. Are you happy about your current state of affairs in your work/study life?
3. Is it easy to adjust the musician's career with work/studies? Have you ever had to cancel anything in one sphere of life to be able to do something in the other? E.G. missed lectures to go play a gig?
4. Would you say that playing in a band has ever negatively affected work/study life? For example, in matters of time or your reputation.
5. What stands closer to you heart - band progress or work/studies?
6. Do you have any relatives that follow your music career? What are they reactions, do they support you? Why such a reaction?
7. Have you ever had anyone close to you that tried to convince you to drop the music thing? What were their arguments? How did you respond?
8. Do you, perhaps, have any relatives who are musicians too?

SECTION 6. You and Belarus.
1. Do you want to build your life in Belarus?
2. Have you ever considered moving abroad? What kept you back? What were the benefits of moving abroad?
3. Do you have any friends that have moved abroad? How are they doing now?
4. Let's end on a cheesy note. What would you wish for Belarus on its 100th anniversary?

If there are any important things I haven't asked about, please do notice me and we'll address them now.