"Look a skateboarder, but he is too old"

Subculture identity of a skateboarder and a reflection of its
changes

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Summary

Skateboarding and subcultures in general have usually been associated with youth, but with the changes in society comes also changes of the cultures within. People are getting married and have children later in life then the generations before. More people are getting education than before and the youth period is getting prolonged. These changes allow for a longer affiliation with subcultures and lifestyle sports. This means that for example twenty years ago it would be much more difficult to find participants for this research, because the phenomenon of ageing in skateboarding was not as frequently present in society as it is now. I did thirteen qualitative interviewees with older skateboarders and the created data show how they are ageing in the context of skateboarding.

The theoretical background in this thesis consists of different theories that are necessary to understand the reality of lifestyle sports and subcultures. Those are the theories about subculture identity, subculture career and authenticity. The results show that the subculture identity of my interviewees underwent significant change during their life course and subculture career. From understanding of skateboarding as something that is practiced daily, gives to its performer a certain social status, and allows for creation of a deeper social bonds, to something that gives a feeling of fulfilment, has a therapeutical effect or is a source of one's income.

Acknowledgement

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

I buy the little juice for kids, for twelve crowns - the biggest old school, and I sit down on my board on the curb on a bus station. You are drinking the juice and thinking: when I was sixteen then I would never imagine that I would be here thirty years later exactly in the same modus. Then you go to the bus, and they say: look, a skateboarder, but he is too old, but they can go fuck themselves, because they do not have the peace, they do not know how much it means for me and that everything is spinning around skateboarding. (Michael, 44 years old)

I have been a skateboarder for almost twenty one years now. I have been continuously skating since I was eleven years old. I got to know a lot of people like me, who never stopped, and I have also seen many people quitting. They either never came back to skateboarding or they started again after some time. The mentioned above makes me curious where this commitment comes from and also why some people stop and then come back to it (Beringer, 2022). Outside of the fact that I'm a skateboarder, I'm also interested in subcultures in general and particularly in the phenomenon of ageing in subcultures. In my bachelor thesis I did research on ageing in the punk subculture. I also briefly explored the phenomenon of ageing in skateboarding in a course assignment in the winter semester of 2022. I'm building upon these two projects in this thesis as I'm trying to expand and push forward the research on ageing in subcultures and lifestyle sports.

In the second decade of the 21st century skateboarding has seen a significant renaissance. This is connected to the fact that it became distinctly heterogenous when it comes to the age of its practitioners. Skateboarding became a global culture; an Olympic sport, and it has gained a powerful position as an influencer in pop-culture over the last twenty years. The understanding of skateboarding as something as a "youth culture" is out of line with the reality of skateboarding. Over the last decade the academic interest in skateboarding has grown and the reason is, its increased mainstream popularity and sporting legitimacy (O'Connor, 2021; O'Connor, 2017). There is a lack of studies researching how older participants remain involved in lifestyle sports which are typically associated with youth and risk. The examinations of ageing in action lifestyle sports and scenes and especially in skateboarding are scarce. Studies of some lifestyle sports such as surfing and rock climbing confirm this scarcity and argue that ageing is a socially significant aspect of those scenes, but it is usually overlooked in research (Willing, Bennet, Pisppa & Green, 2019). The mentioned above makes my research topic a relevant contribution to the sociology of lifestyle sports and especially to the theme of ageing in lifestyle sport scenes. I'm therefore researching how older skateboarders reflecti what skateboarding meant for them in adolescence and how this was

evolving and changing during their subculture career and life course. I'm particularly interested in how the aspects of adulthood which were defined by Davis (2012) affect the subculture identity (Beringer, 2022). I think that this research problem can shed light on how people are ageing in skateboarding as it follows the subcultural career in its entirety rather than just presenting the current state without the previous context as does the previous work in this field. To research this topic, I chose a qualitative research strategy in the form of a semi-structured interview. This thesis explores how work career, family and other factors that come to a life of an individual, affect the subcultural identity and subcultural career of my interviewees.

1.1. Previous research in the field

In the book *Lifestyle sports and identities: subcultural careers through the life course* had Dupont and Beal (2021) collected several essays to provide a deeper understanding of alternative sport, leisure, and subcultural identities across the life course. They are exploring the following questions: In what ways does one's lifestyle sport identity shift across time?, in what ways does one's involvement and practice of lifestyle sport change over the course of one's life? and what shifts are taking place within the lifestyle sports themselves as the participants age? (Dupont & Beal, 2021). They focus on understanding how midlife and older age affect an individual's participation and identity in lifestyle sports. They are also researching on why adults (re)enter subcultural sports and what does it mean to be an older adult engaged in a lifestyle sport activity at this specific moment in time. Their work examines how gender, sexuality, race and location in connection with age and stage in career affect lifestyle sport practices and meanings. The meaning of participation and its possibility may be changed by one's progress in the life course. The socio-demographic characteristics often either facilitate or impede the participation. This affect is even greater if normative structures of legitimacy are considered. One of the essays in this book edited by Dupont and Beal (2021) was done by O'Connor (2021), who did research about middle aged skateboarders and their wellbeing. The conclusion was that middle-aged skateboarders use their skateboarding identity as a coping mechanism. Either as an escape from daily stress or to overcome for example depression or heartbreak. For those who are parents became skateboarding and expression of love to share with their children. Last, but least, some of the middle-aged skateboarders used skateboarding as a way to connect with issues and concerns of a communal and cosmic scale.

In the article *Beyond the youth culture: Understanding middle-aged skateboarders through temporal capital* presents O'Connor (2017) an analysis of the experience of middle-aged skateboarders. Qualitative interviews, ethnographic observation and discourse analysis of skateboard media revealed skateboarding to be an integral part of the biographies and identities of middle-aged skateboarders. The findings show that the notion of skateboarding being a youth culture is being challenged and the important value of age and time for skateboarders. In order to make sense of the experience of middle-aged skateboarders O'Connor (2017) used the concept of temporal capital. This shows how time can be used to achieve or sustain subcultural authenticity. At the same time, it presents time as a resource that must be managed and scheduled to sustain engagement in skateboarding. Time has a different relevancy for the middle-aged skateboarders than for their younger counterparts. Middle aged skateboarders obtain temporal capital through their commitment to skateboarding, old-school skill and style, friendships, networks, and subcultural knowledge. The skateboarders in this research also express an emotional relationship with skateboarding which provides them an identity and meaning that gives them sense of how they spent their lives.

In the article *Skateboarding and the 'Tired Generation': Ageing in Youth Cultures and Lifestyle Sports* examine Willing, Bennet, Pisppa and Green (2019) continuing involvement of individuals that are no longer young adults in skateboarding. They are doing this by a qualitative examination of *The Tired Video*. This video features older and mostly middle-aged male skaters. Their findings reveal four processes that assist older skateboarders to sustain an ongoing sense of inclusion in skateboarding. Those four are modification, dedication, humor and homage. The themes from *The Tired Video* further establish skateboarding as a fluid and flexible identity and lifestyle that can be practiced well into middle age. The data from the research also show that lifestyle sports and scenes reached a point where they do not fit accurately do the description of youth scenes.

Those three texts are all focused on the current reflection of the meaning of skateboarding for older skateboarders. My research interest is also focused on older skateboarders, but it is not strictly conducted on middle aged skateboarders which are in the texts mentioned above categorized between the age 40 and 65. My threshold is 30 years old and up, because at this age someone already might have skated for twenty years and encountered what Davis (2012) explained as the aspects of adulthood.

1.2. The research problem and the research question

I have already mentioned my affiliation with the skateboarding subculture and my interest in subcultures in general. Based on those facts I'm interested in how older skateboarders reflect their subculture identity in the course of their subculture career and life course. It is common that people start to skate when they are children or adolescents. According to Dupont and Beal (2021) it cannot be assumed that subcultural sport participation has the same meanings, motivations and consequences across one's life course. People are ageing and so called "aspects of adulthood" come to life and this affects the subcultural identity and the subcultural career of the participants. I will try to answer this research problem with the following research questions:

How do older skateboarders reflect their subculture identity in the course of their subculture career (Beringer, 2020)?

How does the aspects of adulthood affect the subculture identity (Beringer, 2020)?

What role does authenticity play in changes of the subculture identity?

1.3. Reading guide

This thesis is divided into four chapters. After the introduction is the review of the previous research in the field, and the presentation of the research problem and the research questions. The second chapter presents relevant theories that should help with the analysis and interpretation of the created data. The third chapter is describing the methodology of the research. The fourth and final chapter is divided into two parts which are further divided into six subchapters. This is the analysis and interpretation of the created data. At the very end of the thesis is a conclusion that summarizes the findings and answers the research questions and the research problem. As I mentioned earlier there are two previous projects that led to the realization of this research. There is therefore an overlap to certain point of degree with the course assignment from 2022 and I also used some of the same theories that I'm using in my bachelor thesis since it also explores the phenomenon of ageing in a subculture. Those two projects are quite frequently referred to in this thesis, which might disturb the reader's experience. I'm aware of this fact, but I had to distinguish the new ideas and sources, from

those which were taken from the two other projects, and also from those which were inspired by the previous work.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. What is skateboarding?

According to O'Connor (2020) it is complicated to explain what skateboarding is. It is difficult to write about it, as it is not compliant to words (Borden, 2011; Gilligan, 2014 as cited in Connor, 2020). Those who were trying to define it acknowledged certain doubtfulness and uncertainty. O'Connor (2020) is asking himself whether it is a sport, a subculture, an art form, or a political act. Skateboarding could be described both as a mystery and a paradox (Glenney & Mull, 2018 as cited in O'Connor, 2020). In the last twenty years skateboarding has changed and become bigger. It became fragmented in a shocking number of ways. The business and industry connected to skateboarding is estimated to be worth five billion US dollars. At the same time, it determines the field of interest for a demography consisting of youth, that is worth hundreds of billions of dollars. This is happening through a market of sports drinks, computer games and fashion brands (Borden, 2019, as cited in O'Connor, 2020). Skateboarding is also responsible for transformation of our cities, and the reason for this is the construction of thousands of skateparks, which are changing the recreation for youth and families in the entire world (Atencio et al., 2018; Howell, 2008 as cited in O'Connor, 2020).

It seems that the simplicity of the wooden board with two metal axles and four small wheels translates into its versatility. You cannot play skateboarding; skateboarding must be done. It is not a game with a set of rules and a clear objective. On the other hand, it is becoming a more and more organized sport with a high level of international competition (O'Connor, 2020). While there is a lot of room for achievement and a lot to comply with, skateboarders privilege freedom, individuality, and creativity (Beal, 1995; Beal & Weidman, 2003; Wheaton & Beal as cited in O'Connor, 2020). Skateboarding emerged; as a democratic do-it-yourself (DIY) exercise in creativity. This experimental origin still resonates in its performance today, after sixty years of history (O'Connor, 2020).

Many expressed that the mentioned sportification and corporate involvement is not in line with the core of the skateboarding culture. However, for some the inclusion of skateboarding in the Olympics, symbolizes a next step in recognition of their sport. They think that it will mean more people skating and under better conditions. They also think that it

will increase the chances of having skateboarding as a source of income (Lombard, 2010 as cited in O'Connor, 2020).

Skateboarding is plural, shapable, and open-ended. The world of skateboarding includes all ages, different ethnicities, beliefs, classes, genders, sexualities, geographies, and disabilities (Borden, 2019 as cited in O'Connor, 2020). What was once researched as a subculture is now being understood by a lot of people as a family activity that is associated with positivity and health. It is being advertised and encouraged as such by parents, local governments, and corporations. Many activities, including skateboarding, were characterized as lifestyle sports in Belinda Wheaton's work. Lifestyle sports are a part of one's lifestyle and form one's identity. They are at the same time subcultural and focused on consume. Lifestyle sports are associated with white, male members of the middle-class. O'Connor (2020) is arguing that skateboarding and other lifestyle sports do not fit this description for different reasons. The first it is the rejection of the white middle-class dominance in skateboarding, as there was a lot of professional skateboarders with different ethnic backgrounds. The second is that skateboarding equipment is relatively cheap, and one does not need much more than concrete and tarmac. There are also examples that successful skateboarders come from different social classes. Wheaton and the other people who did research in the field of lifestyle sports were right when it comes to gender. Skateboarding have been dominated by males since the 1980s, and it is just in the last decade when it became more gender fluid. Skateboarding also became more historically recognized as exclusive, heteronormative, and having misogynistic norms. The state of skateboarding now is different. It is being promoted as inclusive to different genders, ethnicities, and sexual orientations. However, the picture of skateboarding as a politically correct activity might be deceiving. Skateboarding is still exclusive and an individual's pursuit of proving oneself is recognized as valuable. It is still popular among those whose mindset lies outside of the mainstream and their political conviction is irrelevant in this.

O'Connor's (2020) definition of skateboarding as a culture is inclusive towards the different views shared by skateboarders and academics alike, and he recognizes it as a sport, lifestyle, subculture, philosophy, and an art form. Doing skateboarding means to embody a certain point of view about the world and about the participation in it. The concept of subculture is not very useful in skateboarding anymore (O'Connor, 2020). The reason for this is that the dichotomy between mainstream and non-mainstream has been weakened in skateboarding (Butz, 2018 as cited in O'Connor, 2020). Skateboarding is starting to be recognized as a culture with its own historical context and with a certain way of doing things.

Skateboarding cultural rights are being recognized by preservation of places connected to skateboarding by official authorities. The social changes and evolution of skateboarding in the last twenty years caused skateboarding to be changed from a subculture to a culture. The increasing recognition of ethnic, religious, and social diversity in the Western multicultural nations has also contributed to the acknowledgement of skateboarding as a lifestyle. At the same time, this contributed to awareness of the cultural history of skateboarding by skateboarders, which are trying to preserve it (O'Connor, 2020). Skateboarders even have a saying "for the culture" (O'Connor, 2020, p. 11). It is used to motivate skateboarders to progress in skateboarding and to encourage them to arrange and participate in events. Skateboard culture is affected by the skateboarding industry. They are producing all the equipment, clothing, and media. The aesthetics of these products are made so that they resonate with skateboarders. Different brands have teams of skateboarders which are promoting those brands by making videos, photos and by competing in events. Skateboarders follow the activities of those professionals very closely. Skateboarding videos have the most importance as they represent progress and innovation. Skateboarders are critically reviewing the contribution of those videos (O'Connor, 2020). Those professional skateboarders often push themselves to their physical limits in order to perform in those videos (Snyder, 2017 as cited in O'Connor, 2020). The tricks in those videos, but also in photos are performed in the urban environment. Skateboarders use stairs, handrails, and other architectonical elements. It is ironic that even though skateboarding is an Olympic sport and the professionals, who are often millionaires, are still not legitimately allowed to use the public space in this way (O'Connor, 2020). Skateboarders are communicating in order to instruct each other about the core rules and values. Because of this they have as consumers a lot of power to determine the fate of the brands and the professionals. It could be argued that skateboarding is a corresponding culture, which is negotiated in a dialogue between the community and the media it produces. Skateboarding stands both inside and outside of mainstream society. Even though it is being recognized as an Olympic sport, skateboarders identify their practices as rebellious and marginal, and believe that they have an alternative lifestyle (Yochim, 2010 as cited in O'Connor, 2020). Skateboarding can be understood as a legitimate form of deviance. Its practices might be non-conventional, but at the same time subsumed in conventional ways of life (O'Connor, 2020). Based on the presented argumentation, I'm considering O'Connor's (2020) definition of skateboarding as a culture as the most fitting. However, for my research the description of skateboarding as a subculture or a lifestyle sport fits better. The reason for this is that the other theories I'm using are based on research in subcultures or in lifestyle

sports. I believe that researching skateboarding as a subculture or a lifestyle sport will contribute to more coherent research. After all, O'Connor (2020) says that his definition is inclusive towards other views of skateboarders and academics alike. The purpose of this subchapter is to give a better context of skateboarding to the reader.

2.2. History of skateboarding

According to Snyder (2017) skateboarding immersed in the early 1960s as a solution by the California surfers to the lack of waves. They attached roller skate wheels to wooden planks to imitate surfing on waves. The difference was that they used sidewalks instead. By 1964 skateboards were mass produced. The situation did not have any impactful development until 1972 when the urethane wheels were invented. The face of those times were the Z-boys. It was a crew of surfers which used the wave free moments to transfer their skills from surfing to skateboarding. Their efforts and progressiveness eventually established skateboarding as a professional pursuit. Tony Alva, Jay Adams and Stacy Peralta were those pioneers and became the first skating superstars (Snyder, 2017).

This first boom was also followed by attempts of outside parties to capitalize on skateboarding. When this was no longer profitable, skateboarders themselves started to invest in skateboarding and the *Thrasher* magazine was founded. From this moment on, skateboarders started to form and define their subculture for themselves (Snyder, 2017).

The 1980s were dominated by "half-pipe" wooden ramps. Names like Lance Mountain, Steve Caballero and Tony Hawk dominated the scene. There was also a secondary discipline called "freestyle". They used smaller boards, skated exclusively on flat ground, and were focused on board manipulation. The pioneer of this discipline was Rodney Mullen. Rodney Mullen formed the foundation of street skateboarding. Even though the "freestyle" was short lived, it had an undeniable impact on skateboarding (Snyder, 2017).

In the late 1980s there was a change in direction. Not everyone had access to vert ramps or skateparks, so people started to explore their cities and try to find obstacles that could be used to perform tricks. For this era typical names are Mark Gonzales and Natas Kaupas. Those two showed to the world of skateboarding how urban obstacles such as curbs, stairs, benches, and handrails could be used to perform skateboard tricks. Numerous tricks and techniques were invented by Mark Gonzales. It was now that street skateboarding was becoming more popular than vert ramp. It was also now there was a boom of skater owned brands as a counter power to the "big five" brands that controlled the marketplace. One of the

most influential skate videos were released in those times. The street skating was more focused on progression that would be recorded on video rather than competing in contests. This also gave an opportunity for new jobs in the industry as photographers and film makers (Snyder, 2017).

Even though the documentation and marketing of skateboarding made a huge progress, the skateboard itself remained almost completely unchanged. It consists of a wooden deck which is made of seven plies of compressed maple and covered with grip tape. It has four urethane wheels which are attached to the board by metal trucks. The skater owned companies trend continues to this day, but there are some corporate players that are capitalizing on skateboarding. For example, Nike SB is one of them. Skateboarding currently generates five billion dollars in revenue worldwide. Even though, there are mainstream appealing things like the X Games mega ramp contests, street skateboarding remains the most popular form in the world. The reason might be that it can be done almost anywhere. It is important here not to confuse the people who use skateboards just as a way of transport. Street skating means to be on a look out for skate "spots,". This means architectural formations which are unintentionally made to fit to perform tricks on them. Street skateboarding uses "benches," "ledges," "stairs," "handrails," "gaps," "bumps," "banks," and "walls". There are very strict criteria that determinate if the spot is "skateable." For example, the height of the obstacle and the level of smoothness of the ground (Snyder, 2017). This subchapter explained history of skateboarding and provided a short explanation of what skateboarding means in praxis.

2.3. Lifestyle sports

The term "lifestyle sports" is one of many terms that scholars use to describe their activities and the culture that accompanies them. These sports and the value systems that are connected to them can also be described as subcultural, alternative, action, extreme or risk. It is an alternative and a sort of challenge to the traditional ways of perceiving, doing, and understanding sport. The dominant values and practices in lifestyle sports are often more akin to play, than traditional institutional sports. Lifestyle sports are participant driven and usually do not have an official set of rules. The institutional and bureaucratic factors are usually weak and poorly defined. Winning is not a priority here and the participants often define themselves in contrast with the traditional athletes. The number of these attributes vary in different lifestyle sports and Dupont and Beal (2021) contend that lifestyle sports include a

preponderance of these attributes. Some examples of lifestyle sports are skateboarding, surfing, break dancing, off-road driving and many other non-traditional performances of "sport". According to Willing, Bennet, Pisppa and Green (2019) lifestyle sports are in contrast with mainstream sports. This is due to their involving activity that goes beyond the physical, and also embodies social and cultural elements which makes new possibilities for how an individual can feel connected and construct identities. At the individual's micro-level, lifestyle sports provide new ways for thinking about what "active" and "successful" ageing means. The reason for this is that individuals construct lifestyle sports such as skateboarding as more than "just a sport", and approach it as an enduring part of their identity despite the change in the physical performance caused by ageing.

2.4. Subcultures

Subcultures are the manifestations of homogeneity of our society. On one hand they define themselves in contrast with mainstream society, and on the other hand they are a part of it. The broadest definition of subcultures in social science is that subcultures are groups with a specific set of norms, values, types of behavior and lifestyle. Its function is that they represent an important element of one's identity. In terms of a group, they allow sharing a certain system of values and fulfill the need to belong to some social group (Heřmanský & Novotná, 2011, as cited in Beringer, 2020). According to Dupont and Beal (2021) action sports researchers often think about core members as participants and creators of subcultures. Those subcultures reject the dominant competitive, aggressive, profit-driven ethos of many mainstream sports. Subcultures define the meaning of the sport; they define its norms of play and often the style. That includes everything from clothing to riding, everything that characterizes the members. It is often the core participants, which are most committed and skilled and are on top of the hierarchy of the sport and of the social group, who influence the values and attitudes of other participants. They essentially define the authentic participant (Dupont and Beal, 2021).

2.5. Subcultural identity

Identity can be defined as a set of meanings that are applied on ourselves in social roles or situations and that is defining what it means to be someone (Andes, 1998, as cited in Beringer, 2020). The negotiating of the subculture identity is constitutive in relation to the

construction of a subculture (Heřmanský and Novotná, 2019). Subcultural identity is a felt, proclaimed, and exercised affiliation to a group of wearers of the given subculture. This affiliation can also be to a set of meanings connected with the given subculture. The subculture identity is something that is being constructed and replayed with daily behavior, clothing articles and other behavioral patterns affiliated with the given subculture. Subcultural identity can be explained as something that is dependent on a situation, relation, context, and it is being negotiated. This negotiation is happening in matrixes of actors and relations (Heřmanský and Novotná 2019, as cited in Beringer, 2022). Actors relate to the mainstream society through their subcultural identity and at the same time they are negotiating it in terms of the given subculture (Novotná, 2013, as cited in Beringer, 2020). Development and performance of a subcultural identity allows youth to gain a certain status and respect within a self-contained alternative social world (Dupont, 2019). Social identities are not pertinent or have the same significancy in all contexts, but are dependent on many factors. Those factors are the instance, the salience of the identity and the amount of an individual's dedication to the identity. The salience means how often a person invokes an identity. There is a hierarchy of the salience, and the dedication to a specific identity determines the position of the identity in this hierarchy. The frequency of the invoking of the identity in certain situations is dependent on the position in this hierarchy. The social identity, or in other words the understanding of ourselves, is directly affected by the situation, the salience and by the dedication (Williams, 2011 as cited in Beringer, 2022). There are two key conceptions of construction of a lifestyle sport participant identity, the first one being lifestyle sport career stage, and the second being life course stage. The examination of subcultural identities requires accounting for the changes that are happening within a person over time (Dupont and Beal, 2021). Many skateboarders understand skateboarding as a key feature of their identity. This feature has not been eroded by the physical change in ability over time and by the notion of everyday adult life, growing responsibilities and ageing (O'Connor, 2019).

2.6. Authenticity

In terms of subcultures many individuals use a lot of time and effort to cultivate something that they understand as an authentic lifestyle outside of mainstream society. This authenticity that is experienced through the subculture has a key meaning in their lives. Authenticity can dwell in different types of requirements. They can be racial, gender wise, geographical, cultural, or political-economic. Authenticity has also a socio-psychological dimension. This

concerns the clash between the two dimensions. The first is the feeling of being yourself and the other one is the following of mass trends. People who are a part of a subculture say that their behavior is internally motivated and therefore it is authentic, and in the meantime the behavior of others is not. The reason why people are claiming authenticity is that it embeds them in the identities that have a meaning for them. (Williams, 2011 as cited in Beringer, 2020). It is the consistent commitment to subcultural norms, identified as a specific lifestyle that is the indication of authenticity for skateboarders. For authenticity of a skateboarder the participant's control, self-expression, de-emphasis on competition and nonconformity to mainstream standards is essential (Beal and Weidman, 2003). No person, performance, object, or habitus can have authenticity as an inherent attribute, it is rather an achieved, contestable, and revocable characteristic. It is not only up to the participant whether his or her membership is authentic or not. Just to claim a subcultural identity does not make the identity "real". In order words, to become "real" or "authentic", one must identify with and commit to the identity, perform within the boundaries prescribed by the subculture, and the group must confirm their identity (Dupont, 2019).

2.7. Subculture/lifestyle sport career

By a career is not meant strictly an economic career. At the same time an economic career can exist within the individual's subcultural career. There are four different stages of a subculture career. The first one is the decision to enter. The second one is the process of entering. The third one is the maintenance of a lifestyle sport identity and the fourth and last one is the (possible) maintenance of a professional identity within a lifestyle sport. The mentioned stages represent the general arc of a subculture career. The career may not progress linearly, and some members may never complete all the stages. The individual's progression through life course complicates these careers. Subcultural sport participation does not have the same motivations, meanings, and consequences across one's lifespan. In other words, finding and entering snowboarding when someone is fourteen is not the same as (re)finding the activity when someone is forty years old (Dupont and Beal, 2021). In many ways subcultural careers are similar to ordinary careers. At the same time, in an ordinary career, one is climbing the ladder and his or hers status is increasing in the course of time, while the subcultural careers are not as linear. The members are exiting a re-entering over the life course (Haenfler, 2014). I would like to mention that Dupont and Beal (2021) do not describe the different stages of the subculture career further than I do in this paragraph. They rather let the contributions of

different authors thematize these stages in their book. Usually, I'm identifying different moments in my interviewees' life course with these stages. However, that is not the core of my research. I'm rather doing it, because it allowed me to get a better grasp on what was happening in my interviewees' lives and subculture careers. Secondly, I think that it improves the reader's orientation and makes the data more transparent.

2.8. Aspects of adulthood

This theory comes from Davis (2012) who did research on ageing in the punk subculture. Even though punk is a music subculture and skateboarding is a lifestyle sport or a non-music based subculture I see a relevance in her research for my own, since her topic is in its nature similar to mine. My research is focused on how the subculture identity in the course of a subcultural career and life course is changing. The theory about the aspects of adulthood seems like a useful tool in researching this topic, because it gives me a more grounded definition of an otherwise fluid concept of becoming an adult. There are three aspects of adulthood: *growing up, career and money,* and *partners and children.* Older punkers adjust themselves to those "unavoidable" aspects of life in a way where punk is redefined, because as a political or ideological stance it can be implemented into the life of an adult (Davis, 2012 as cited in Beringer, 2020). I'm taking the encounter with those aspects and applying it in a different context and exploring what the outcome was for my interviewees.

3. Methodology of the research

3.1. The research strategy

Given my research problem I'm using the qualitative research strategy. Qualitative research is a set of methods and a technique, which are used to create knowledge about the human world (Higgs and Cherry, 2009). The qualitative research strategy has an inductive approach. This means that I was simultaneously doing the following processes: creation of the research sample, data creation and their analysis and interpretation. All of this was accompanied by a constant reflection of the entire research process. For qualitative research the emic perspective is characteristic. This means that I was trying to find out how the situation or phenomenon seems from the point of view of my interviewees (Novotná, 2019). My goal was to obtain exhausting data about my research problem. Qualitative research is trying to understand the behavior of the actors and the social structures in which this behavior is happening. I was studying what people are doing, how they are talking about it, how they are understanding it and how they are experiencing it. The key questions were who? what? where? how? and why?. Qualitative research is happening in the environment where the researched phenomena are and not in an artificial one. The nature of qualitative approach is to emphasize specificality/uniqueness. I was not just studying how the phenomenon appears usually, but I was also interested in plurality and diversity of its appearance (Novotná, 2019). When it comes to theory, it was for me a starting point, guide, and a tool of interpretation. It provided a conceptual and terminological apparatus which allowed me to operate with the research theme, analyze it and interpret it, or in other words formulate conclusions. I used the theories actively and flexibly. It was necessary to make a subjective and epistemological reflection of the process and the published findings had to be transparent. The generalizations in my research are situational generalizations. I was trying to assure the quality of the research project by constant reflection of its focus, consistency, and complexity. I also tried to plan the research project as well as I could, and I tried to make it extensive (Novotná, 2019).

3.2. Semi structured interview

I chose a semi structured interview as the method for the data creation. In comparison to structured interviews, the semi structured interview can better use the advantage of the knowledge producing potentials of dialogues. It provided me much more freedom for

following up on any angles which the interviewees deemed as important. The semi structured interview allowed me to be visible as a knowledge-producing participant in the research process. It could be defined as an interview where the goal is to obtain a description of the life world of the interviewee, so it could interpret the meaning of the described phenomena (Brinkmann, 2014). The name hints that this type of interview has a partly developed structure. In praxis it means that I prepared an interview guide which consisted of themes and broader questions which I wanted to ask during the interviews. I will present some examples of the questions here and the entire interview guide is attached in the appendix of this thesis. The first I asked the interviewees why and how they started to skate. Then I asked if they did any other sport in their adolescence and what impact skateboarding had on it. The questions continue and cover the rest of my interviewees' life course and subculture career. Even though I prepared this kind of outline, there was still a lot of room for the participant's own expression and own formulation. It also gave me a lot of freedom for improvisation and the interviewees had the chance to react to concrete situations, or to new and interesting themes that were appearing during the interviews (Zandlová, 2019). An interview conducted in this way allowed me to go in depth, and led me to questions that I did not expect before the interviews. I later included them in the outline which was being improved and was ever changing. The openness and flexibility of the semi structured interview gave both me and the interviewees an opportunity to better understand the exact meanings of the answers and questions. This decreased the chances of a mutual misunderstanding. This form of interview allowed me to follow the understanding of the researched topic from the actor's perspective, but at the same time to keep a certain structure and transparency. The individual interviews conducted in the research cover the same themes and partly have a similar structure, which made it easier to analyze them. With all the pros also comes some cons or challenges. Those challenges were basically a direct result of the pros (Zandlová, 2019). The need for preparation of the interview guide and contacting the interviewees took quite a lot of time and made it very demanding for realization. Finally, the transcription took a lot of time. The semi structured interview, same as every other qualitative interview, is dependent on the researcher's skills. It was demanding for me to ask questions, listen, establish trust, and persuade them of my own competence. I also had to be reflexive enough in order to avoid manipulation of the interviewees to give me certain answers or speak about certain themes. I had to detailedly think about all the phases of the interviews and plan them as well. The reason for this was that only then I was sure that I seemed trustworthy and transparent

towards the interviewees, and that the data they will create will be relevant for the research (Zandlová, 2019).

3.3. Research sample and recruiting

In order to answer the research problem, I had to decide what kind of data I needed and where I can obtain them. In terms of qualitative research, the creation of the research sample is not just one step in the beginning of the research, but it is a constant decision whether the nature of the data we have collected is in concordance with our research problem. I was also adjusting the research sample during the process based on what I was researching, how I was researching it, what I found out so far and to what questions these findings led to (Novotná, 2019). Given my research problem I decided that the purposeful sampling fits the best. The qualitative research usually has (not always) a purposeful selection, which is the opposite to a larger and more randomly selected sample in quantitative research. In order to do a purposive sampling, one must choose a set of criteria for the recruiting of the people or sites that will be studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, the criteria set by me was that the participants had to be older than 30 and they have to be skating. The last criterium was that they started to skate when they were in their adolescence or younger. The reason for these criteria was that in this way I could really explore how they are reflecting their subculture identity through their subculture career and their life course. My research sample has both homogeneous and heterogeneous sides to it. The homogeneity dwells in the set of criteria that I set, but the fact that socio-demographic characteristics were not important for me, makes it heterogeneous as well. I thought that the diversity of the sociodemographic attributes would contribute to the richness of the data. Another reason for this is that I did not want to narrow down an already narrow research sample (Beringer, 2022). The advantage of homogeneity is that there is a big chance that the data we create will be similar and it will be easier to analyze them (Novotná, 2019). Based on the scope of this research I decided that ten interviewees would be a sufficient amount. In the end I interviewed ten people, but with three of them I conducted two interviews. The first round of interviews with those three interviewees was in the course assignment in 2022. This means that in total I had thirteen interviews from ten interviewees. Six of them were from the Czech Republic, one was from Germany, one from Austria, one from Chile and one from Norway. The six interviewees from the Czech Republic made a homogeneous group that was useful to explore ageing in skateboarding in context of the Czech Republic. The other four nationalities brought a certain heterogeneity to the research

sample that enriched the data since it allowed for a comparison of the context of different countries, or even continents. The fact that six interviewees are from the Czech Republic and four are from different countries is partially a coincidence and partially intentional. Approximately halfway through conducting the interviews I randomly interviewed the German interviewee, and in similar fashion I interviewed the Austrian interviewee. It was random, because I was skating at a famous skate spot in Prague, Czech Republic, and I saw that there were those two older skateboarders, so I approached them and they were willing to do the interviews then and there. After that I told myself that since I already have two international interviewees, I could add some more to enrich the research sample. Then I intentionally interviewed the interviewees from Brazil and Norway. Even though the inclusion of the different nationalities allowed for a comparison between the Czech Interviewees and international interviewees, my research is not designed that way. Therefore, the findings based on this comparison in the first subchapter of the analysis are rather an interesting observation than something that would help to answer the research problem.

Table 1. The research sample and order of the interviews

Interviewees	Age	Interview 1	Interview 2
Michael	44	2023	
Hans	44	2022	2023
Lavar	42	2023	
Martin	42	2023	
Tobias	39	2023	
Chill	39	2023	
Friedrich	36	2023	
Joseph	34	2022	2023
Inge	34	2023	
Pier	33	2022	2023

3.4. Data creation

In the autumn semester of 2022, I wrote a course assignment about ageing in skateboarding. The reason for this was that I did research on ageing in the punk subculture in my bachelor thesis and since I'm a skateboarder I wanted to research ageing in skateboarding in my master thesis. At first, I was skeptical whether the phenomenon of ageing in skateboarding can be an academically relevant topic and if it would be a relevant contribution for sociology. The course assignment provided a useful testing ground for finding out more about the relevancy of this topic. After very positive feedback from the teachers, I decided that I would realize my idea for the master thesis. In that course assignment I already did three qualitative interviewees with older skateboarders, but then it was not allowed to use a dictaphone, so I just made notes. The data I created then were rich and useful, so I wanted to take them with me to the master thesis, so even though my research sample included ten interviewees I had a total of thirteen interviews. The reason for this is that even though I managed to make quite detailed notes in 2022, I wanted to ask new questions and discuss new topics. Therefore, I contacted those people again and conducted new interviews while using a dictaphone. I also went deeper in my questions and asked them new questions based on the data I created with the other interviews in the meantime. The three interviews from 2022 were very useful and provided a base for this research, so I'm using them as a source also in this thesis. There are a total of seven citations that are being reused in this thesis. I marked the citations from the interviewees that I conducted two interviews with. It either says interview 1 or interview 2 based on from which round the citation is. I'm also basing the new interpretations of the reused citations on their old interpretations from the course assignment. The interviewees from the course assignment were from the Czech Republic and the reason for this was pure pragmatism. I'm originally from the Czech Republic and in Norway I'm living in a small town called Arendal and do not know many skateboarders. Therefore, it would be very difficult to create the research sample in comparison to the Czech Republic where I'm familiar with the skateboarding environment. Those three interviews were conducted via FaceTime. I was making notes during those interviews and right after I tried to make them more detailed. I did two out of three interviews during the same day. This was not an ideal situation, but I had to adjust myself to the interviewees (Beringer, 2022). It was not ideal, because it would have been better to first reflect the first interview and transcribe it, so I would be better prepared for the next one. Nine interviews (three out of those are with the same interviewees from 2022) were conducted face to face with the usage of a dictaphone in

Prague, Czech Republic, during my two visits there in 2023. The reasons for this were the same as with the course assignment. It would be more difficult for me to create the research sample in Norway and I also wanted to conduct those interviews face to face, because I think that it is more valuable. It would mean to travel to bigger cities in Norway, which would be very time and money consuming. It was just more convincing to conduct the interviews in Prague. However, I got to know one older skateboarder from Norway, so the last interview was conducted face to face in Norway. The first step was contacting the potential interviewees. With the first three from 2022, I did it through the application Messenger, because I knew them from before. Since I'm an insider in the skateboarding subculture and my research sample corresponds with my social circle, I was trying to approach people that I have not as close a relationship with. The reason for this was that my close friends would maybe take some things for granted and would not talk about them or would maybe not be as open about certain themes, because they would not want me to know some things from their personal life. I'm aware that the mentioned above played a role to a certain point of degree either way. This can of course also happen with the people I do not know that well, but I think that the chances were higher with the ones close to me. Even though I tried to avoid the mentioned above I still had to interview some people that were closer to me, simply, because of the timeframe of the research and my visits in the Czech Republic. Even though that the mentioned above played a certain role, I do think that it was also beneficial, because it is possible that it created a more relaxed atmosphere and the interviewees opened more up about certain themes (Beringer, 2022). The nine interviewees who I conducted the interviews with in the Czech Republic were always approached personally at a very popular skate spot in Prague. We either conducted the interviews immediately then and there, or we agreed upon another time. Eight interviews were conducted on this skate spot, and one was conducted at the interviewee's house. I think the fact that the interviews were conducted in a place surrounded by skateboarders contributed to a good atmosphere during those interviews. The only downside of this place was that during the transcription, the sounds of skateboards in the background made it sometimes difficult to understand the recording. Often, I did not really have a choice, because the interviewees were either willing to do the interview then and there or not at all, but in general I would deem this environment beneficial. When the interviewees agreed on the interview I gave them the informative consent. With the ones from 2022 I sent it to them, they printed it and signed. With the rest of the interviewees, I presented it before the interviews, and they read it and signed it. Every time I thought that I could potentially conduct an interview that day, I took the interview guide and a bunch of copies of the

informative consent with me. Before they signed, I also explained the principle of anonymization, and explained that they can seize their participation whenever, and do not have to answer my questions if they do not want to (Beringer, 2022). Most of the interviewees knew me from before or at least had an idea about who I was, so I did not need to introduce myself, but I introduced the nature of the research when I contacted them or approached them. While conducting the interviews it was important to keep in mind that every interview happens in certain historical, social- economic and political context, and this affects it. What also had an effect is the characteristics of participants of the research. By this is meant both the inherent ones and the obtained ones. Those characteristics are gender, age, personal characteristics, prejudice, experiences, education, social and cultural status, religion etc. All of this must be reflected during the interviews and during the analysis. It was important not to take the interviewees' statements for granted and instead, I tried to find out what meaning the interviewees gives to those statements. It was important to avoid the "qualified naivety", which was in my position as an insider very strong. I had to be as open as possible, and I had to try to leave my prejudices, conclusions, and schemes behind. It was important not to follow the pre-made categories and I tried to reflect my own prejudices, and be curious and sensitive to what had been said. The advantage of the three first interviews from the course assignment was that I had some time to evaluate them before I started creating more data for the master thesis. This helped me to adjust my interview guide.

I did the first two interviews outside of the ones from the course assignment in June of 2023 in Prague. Then I transcribed them during the summer, which again gave me a better overview of the created data. I could see if I created the data I needed to answer my research problem. The rest of the interviews was done during my second visit in Prague in September of the same year. This period was very demanding, because I did eight interviews in a span of two weeks. Once I did two interviews during one day. This tight schedule did not allow me to transcribe the interviews in between. This did not give me much time for reflection and evaluation of the created data, but I tried at least after every interview to think whether I'm creating the data I need (Novotná, 2019). All the interviewees were very positive and open to the interviews. The interview guide helped me to remember to ask everything I wanted to ask, and helped to maintain a nice flow of the interviews. The order of the themes and questions was adjusted to the interviewees' answers, but the logic was to ask the general questions first, then the deepening questions and the argumentative at the end. The sociodemographic questions were spread throughout the interviews, because I did not want to ask about them in the beginning, because then the interview might have seemed too formal. In the end of every

interview, I thanked the interviewees for their time and repeated that they have the option of seizing their participation whenever they want and that I can send them the recording or the transcription if they want to. I also asked them if I could contact them in case I would have some additional questions and I also gave them my contact in case they would want to add something, clear something up or ask me about something. The length of the interviews varied between 35 and 110 minutes. Immediately after the interviews I wrote down the time and place of the interview, sociodemographic attributes of the interviewee and I also reflected the course of the interview in my field notes (Beringer, 2020).

3.5. Analysis

The qualitative analysis permeates the entire research process, from its very beginning to its very end (Heřmanský, 2019). In a way it begins even before you start creating the data. In designing a research project, one strategy is to consider what types of data one needs to answer the research problem. Interview transcripts, participants observation field notes, documents, photographs etc. represent not only different forms of data, but foundations for the planning of how we are going to analyze them (Saldaña, 2014). I chose a qualitative content analysis and a literal transcription. This approach allowed me to focus on the data creation and to get to the very roots of the research problem. The amount of time used in my research on analysis was less in the beginning, because I was focused on the data creation, but as I was creating more and more data, I was more focused on the analysis, to the point where I was only analyzing. Those two processes are related, but separated. Analysis is a tool that helps us to achieve interpretation and interpretation mediates understanding (Heřmanský, 2019). When I was analyzing the data, I was doing five different operations. The first was reading of the data itself. This was followed by making notes which helped me with thinking about the data. The third was reduction of the data. This organization of data helped me to see what was fundamental for understanding the research problem and what was just secondary support. The fourth process was comparison. I was comparing different units of the analysis that I chose during the segmentation. The last operation was naming the analytical units. Those names were given based on the characteristic of the units. By naming those operations I'm explaining what I was literally doing with the data in the process of the analysis. Those processes were happening simultaneously. I had an inductive approach, and that means that I used the theory as an interpretative tool in the analysis (Heřmanský, 2019). Through writing the field notes, transcribing the interviews, writing the analytic memos and other

documentation processes, one gains cognitive ownership of the data. The intuitive, tacit, and synthesizing capabilities of the brain start to see patterns, making connections, and seeing the bigger picture. The goal and outcome of the analysis is to show others what was observed and discovered about the human condition (Saldaña, 2014). My approach to the analysis was based on segmentation, coding and making notes. For coding and segmentation, I used the program Atlas.ti. I divided the created data into the analytical units (segments), and this allowed me comparison between the segments, which made it easier to find patterns in the data. My segments usually consisted of several sentences and in some cases, it was just one sentence (Beringer, 2020; 2022). The segmentation is based on the recognition of different themes in the data. My segments are therefore thematic segments. I combined segmentation with coding, and every segment was given a code based on the theme of the segment. Those codes served as a description of the segments. The codes usually had a form of noun(s) in connection with adjectives, and sometimes they were verbs. I was using descriptive codes for describing the segment theme and interpretative codes for describing the content of the segment. I also made more abstract categories to collect both types of codes. It was important to make the codes descriptive to know what the segments are about, but at the same time they could not be too detailed, because I wanted to use them repeatedly. The different segments were constantly compared with each other, in order to find out if I can use some of the existing codes or make new ones. The coding helped me to concentrate the different themes and abridge the data. I was coding both in a deductive and inductive way. Before the coding process, I prepared some basic codes based on the theory, and the rest of them I made based on the data. The concentrated phenomenon in this way allowed me to compare them with each other, find commonalities, differences, and structures (Heřmanský, 2019). Segmentation and coding showed a lot of patterns in the data. The segments at first seemed very similar to each other, but after a closer look it showed a lot of nuances, which made every segment unique. The generalization of those segments would sacrifice the richness of the data, and that would be against the logic of qualitative research. However, a certain amount of generalization was necessary to present the patterns. Therefore, I developed several, but minimum two categories in each chapter of the analysis and sorted the interviewees into those categories in order to illustrate the richness. An example of this is the chapter about the aspects of adulthood. It was possible to just divide the interviewees into two categories based on whether their subculture identity has been affected by the aspects of adulthood or not. However, the interviewees' subcultural identity was or was not affected based on a certain context, and I wanted to present that as well, so I made different new codes that would show

those nuances. Based on the codes I made categories in the thesis. A concrete example of this is the category *A break from skateboarding* and the one called *Other factors causing a decrease of dedication to subculture identity*. In the first category we find those interviewees who decreased their dedication to subculture identity, because of the aspects of adulthood. The aspects of adulthood also caused a decrease of dedication to subculture identity of the interviewees in the second category, but it was also a usage of addictive substances that caused it. I wanted to point that out and therefore I created the second category. My research notes included thoughts and pre-explanation about the data and commenting of the codes. They helped me with pre-interpretations and with understanding the data. I was making notes during the entire research process, and as I was better understanding the research problem I was adjusting, combining, and concretizing the notes. It was also important to find relationships between different codes, because it allowed me to analyze the appearing phenomenon and find common traits, differences and structures. This served as a base for the following interpretation. The last step and the most difficult one was to transfer all the segments and notes to a text that makes sense. My approach was from top to bottom. The categories of codes made a natural structure for different chapters and subchapters. The codes in those categories make the content of those chapters and thus a skeleton of the text. The notes I was making through the entire research process helped me to connect the codes with the categories and between each other. The coded segments serve as evidence of what I am saying about the data (Heřmanský, 2019). It is also important to say that nine out of the thirteen interviews were in Czech, so the translation to English happened after I was certain that I want to use the segments in the thesis. The translation also provided room for additional reflection of the data which I think helped with their explanation. However, the different structure of the languages might have caused some small nuances to be lost or slightly altered. I also chose not to edit the language of the interviewees, because I wanted to highlight their individuality. Therefore, I kept the swear words and slang, because I think it is appropriate given my research topic.

3.6. Quality of the research

There is a long and ongoing discussion in social sciences about the assurance of quality in qualitative research. This discussion varies across the different fields, which use qualitative strategies and also in the context of the epistemological background, which the different authors represent. The quality of the research is the researcher's responsibility. Therefore, it

was important that I was constantly reflecting the research process and making the next steps based on the reflection. Even though qualitative research is interactive, open, and flexible, it does not mean that it is a compilation of randomness. Every step I took was thought through and made intentionally, with the nature of the research and its goals in mind. Every action was reflected in the light of its effect on the continuous process of research and its relationship with the analysis and the interpretation of the data (Novotná, 2019). I was constantly checking if every step aims to a relevant answer of the research questions and thus of the research problem. I tried not to take anything for granted. Everything what was happening in the data (or not happening) was interesting and worthy of attention. The goal of qualitative research is to get to the core of the research problem. It was also important to devote a lot of time and energy to the research. When I was conducting the interviews, I was trying to evoke an atmosphere of a "dialogue", and not simply of me asking questions. The reason for this was to create as good data as possible. It was also important to reflect that the data I was working with were situated in a certain context. The interviews will not show what the people really think and what they are really doing. It was also important to make the research transparent and therefore I'm explaining the methodology in the context of my research (Novotná, 2019).

3.7. Ethics of the research

The awareness about ethical issues must be present in every stage of the research process (Silverman, 2017). There are several requirements that the researcher must fulfill in order to have an ethical approach to the research. It was important that I respected the privacy and autonomy of the participants. The key word here is respect. All the decisions regarding the interviews were completely up to the interviewees. I was constantly trying to keep in mind that the ethical approach to the participants is more important than the research itself. It was also important not to project my beliefs into the research process and to the presentation of the results. I was trying to be as neutral as possible. I was reflecting the potential impact of my research on the research field. I was treating the interviewees in a way that would not cause them to not want to participate in other research projects in the future. The research subjects need to be informed about the intentions, methods, and potential use of the research (Zandlová & Šťovíčková Jantulová, 2019). They must be explained what their participation includes in the research, and if and what potential risks there are (Silverman, 2017). The first step in making sure that the data creation will be ethical is to obtain the informative consent. To do that I always explained the nature of the research, its goal, conditions of the

participation, the potential risks and gains and the fact that they can seize their participation whenever. The next important step was the anonymization of the data. I changed the names of the participants and also any information that could lead to their identification, such as where they live, where they work and also names of other persons they mention. In terms of the protection of privacy of the participants the data were stored on a computer with a password and they were deleted after the research. I also tried not to take up more of the interviewees' time than I absolutely had to. It was also important to keep in mind that even though it is research, it is at the same time a type of human relationship, so I tried to be as considerate as possible (Zandlová & Šťovíčková Jantulová, 2019). Last, but not least it is important to mention that the ethicality of the research is also ensured by the approval from SIKT. The notification form and the assessment of processing of personal data is attached to this thesis in the appendix.

4. Skateboard beginnings, skateboarding versus other sport activities in adolescence and the meaning of skateboarding in adolescence

4.1. Skateboard beginnings

The first subchapter of the analysis of the empirical data is about how the interviewees started with skateboarding. This was sometimes as simple as seeing their neighbor skating and after that, to wish for a skateboard for Christmas. On the other hand, for some it was a journey that spanned over a few years, and which sometimes even required selling tennis rackets to a thrift store. The following citations and their analysis and interpretation explain different journeys to skateboarding. This subchapter is divided into two separate categories. It also shows how these moments in the lives of my interviewees can relate to the model of subculture career and the concept of subculture identity.

4.1.1. The soviet legacy

Until 1993 the territory that we today call the Czech Republic was a part of Czechoslovakia, which was until 1989 a part of The Soviet Union. The political regime was therefore socialism. The socialist regime affected all the levels of the state, and the market was not any exception. According to Krátká (2021), in Czechoslovakia people tried to obtain better or unavailable items like jeans, cosmetics, electronics or even small household equipment. The limited supply in the domestic market and the restrictions to travel abroad caused great effort to get such "extraordinary" goods. This situation is also reflected in the citations of some of my interviewees. The first one who is reflecting this situation is Michael (44):

> I only knew a bike. There was actually nothing else here in the Czech Republic. I actually saw the skate here for the first time in 1986, when my mother took me to Strahov (a part of town), there was a competition, there were three disciplines: high jump, ramp and slalom. I think that there were also some well-known Germans, whose names I can't remember now. It was just kind of like punk, but like how old was I in 1986? I was seven years old, so you don't know who you are and you're just at home and playing with Lego, so that's where I saw it for the first time. In 1988 I went to Canada, because I have relatives there. In Canada there I got to know it a little better, because I lived in a street where some guys had built a ramp, so I watched it and watched it and my cousin gave me a job to deliver newspapers here and there for about 25 cents. I always had to go around about twenty houses and he gave me a skateboard and I was just riding the skateboard on my knees and drove like this, not

even standing up and I was just throwing newspapers, and then, actually, when I came back from Canada, my grandmother worked in the House of sport, that was actually the only sport shop in Prague, and from there I got for Christmas or birthday the Flamengo. This was the only skate here. Anything else had to be send from abroad. The only trick I was able to do was a manual and I drove through puddles. Then happened that here I had a neighbor Lukas and his brother Jaroslav and he already had a normal skateboard and we skated here at our place here on the street. Then I had the commercial skate, the colorful one. I took only trucks and wheels from it and I bought a board for four hundred from someone here and then I had a real skateboard. All of this happened between my seventh and tenth year.

Michael mentions the socialist alternative of a skateboard called *Flamengo* and the role of the neighbors as the mediators of obtaining a real skateboard. It seems that those two factors were important, because Lavar (42) is explaining a similar situation as he is describing his journey to skateboarding:

I started in 1989 because I saw Euroskate on TV in 1988, when I was six and I wanted to skate, but there was communism, so a year later, for my seventh birthday, I got a Flamengo made of laminate with good rubber wheels. I saw on TV, how someone jumped over a trash can and as someone drove on the wall, and I thought to myself that I would also like to do that, but actually because I got the skate I got, which was probably for slalom, so it was not possible to jump. I actually just drove on and off a curb and that was like a trick. I had a neighbor right around the corner who was one year older, who also got a skateboard, which was a little bit better, because it was from his relatives in Switzerland. It had elevated nose and tail, so we even tried to ollie[1] on it, but really the first two, three years we just drove around our neighborhood and we only knew how to roll on it. I couldn't even jump on it, so I started because I wanted to jump over trash cans and ride on the wall, but I was just rolling around the neighborhood for three years. I begged my parents for three years to buy me a skateboard. I think they wanted to see if I will stick with it or not, because back then a skateboard cost half a salary, so finally after three years, we went to Prague and bought a skateboard. I got it for Christmas in 1993 and that was awesome.

Michael and Lavar are the oldest participants of this research. Their answers reflect the communist legacy of the Czech Republic. The socialist version of a skateboard played an important role in the construction of their subculture identities. It seems that the *Flamengo* was a first step on the way to a normal skateboard. It feels like the neighboring friend played a key role in this gradual development, who had a role of a middleman. This middleman was

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[1] "The ollie is a skateboard trick where the rider and board leap into the air without the use of the rider's hands. It is the combination of stomping, also known as popping, the tail of the skateboard off the ground to get the board mostly vertical, jumping, and sliding the front foot forward to level out the skateboard at the peak of the jump" (Wikipedia contributors, 2024).

either someone who borrows someone a skateboard or who helps someone to obtain it. The fact that the middleman was able to provide this mediation is possible to explain through the theory about subcultural capital. Subculture capital is knowledge and objects connected with a certain subculture (Heřmanský and Novotná, 2011 as cited in Beringer, 2020). Those middlemen shared their subculture capital with my interviewees. These moments in Michael's and Lavar's life can be viewed as the first stage of the subcultural career model by Dupont and Beal (2021). The first stage is called the decision to enter. Since the lifestyle sport career stage is one of the two key conceptions of construction of the lifestyle sport participant identity, those citations show how this construction started for Michael and Lavar. The next who is explaining his journey to skateboarding is Hans (44) (Interview 2):

> First meeting with skateboarding. There were a lot of influences. I had a neighbor and we went together to kindergarten, secondary school and elementary school. I don't know how old we were, we rode bicycles as normal kids do, but one day we found in the attic like a slalom skateboard. I do not even know how to describe it. It was just so bad. That was my first impulse. This was like three or four years after the revolution. I was like ten. Then a few years passed and then I started to see skateboards on the street etc. The neighbors had a fish skateboard. They were like older guys and I was still just watching them and drooling over it, but it was still unattainable and actually this friend here, got a Powell Peralta (a skate brand) fish board from his grandmother that emigrated to Germany. We started riding boardslides on the sidewalk. Then I could not wait anymore, so I took the tennis rackets to the thrift store and went to buy the first board. Then I just meshed it up somehow. I got trucks for Christmas and took some wheels from trekking roller skates. Everyone used those wheels back then. I was maybe twelve or thirteen then. We used to go to our first skate shop at Dejvicka (a part of town). The first board I bought was of a Czech production and it was just a normal board. The first real skateboard I had was a Powell Peralta from the Boarder King (a skateshop). The first skating was at Lenin (a monument), it was the closest here. Then I remember the year when I did my first visit to Stalin Plaza (a monument) and the first thing I saw was Tony ollieing over the white wall…

Hans citation does not show much variation from the first two interviewees. The socialistic heritage is still present here and he describes the same complicated journey to obtain a real skateboard as the others. There is also the middleman who mediates the skateboarding experience. At this point it can be safe to say that there is a clearly visible pattern, because there are similarities also in the citation from Martin (42):

> I saw it at home. My brother's old skateboard. I was very young, so it was just the Esarol and then I got the Flamengo. There was actually also another skateboard and I used to ride it just sitting down and, on my knees, and so on. Then I played football and in 1996 I bought my first real skateboard. Somehow my brother said that he found

an advertisement that someone was selling a skateboard, so he called there and that was it. I just probably saw it somewhere and I liked it, so somehow, I was aware of it, since I was young.

In the first stage of Hans' and Martin's subculture career the echo of socialism is still present. As they were entering the lifestyle sport career stage and started constructing their subculture identity, they are explaining similar experiences as the previous interviewees. From a skateboard sent by an emigrated relative, to the use of the socialistic alternative of a skateboard. The pattern again shows the factor that I call the middleman, whether it is a neighboring friend who borrows a skateboard or an older brother which obtains it for you. It was again a gradual process, which most likely took a few years. The next subchapter shows the journey to skateboarding of interviewees who either come from outside of the Czech Republic or are younger than this first category.

4.1.2. International and post-soviet beginners

The next category in this subchapter are the interviewees who are either from outside of the Czech Republic or started skating after the year 2000, when there had already been a democracy for eleven years. The first one who is describing his skateboarding beginning outside of the Czech Republic is Tobias (39):

> I started to skate in 1995, actually my first pro board I got in 1995 and I started to try ollies, but before that I saw it in school and before that from the neighbors at my parents' place and they were like older guys, that had the old shaped boards, the eighties boards, so that's how I started. Born in 1984, I was eleven yea. Actually, I never thought about how old I was, but I know that I started in 1995.

Tobias explains that the first encounter with skateboarding was with a different version of skateboard, than he got later. This is similar to the journeys from the first category. However, he does not report any struggles with obtaining a skateboard. Another interviewee who does not report any struggle is Chill (42):

> First, I started skating like when I was four or something like that. There was some board at home, like old school fish board, but you know, when you are a kid you do not care too much, it is like an another toy, so I skated a little bit at that age, then I played soccer, stopped caring about it, then in 1998 for Christmas I asked for a skateboard, because I remembered, how much fun I had with it as a kid and I got it in 1998 and did not stop since then.

Chill also explains another common thing with some of the interviewees from the first category and that is the ownership of an alternative to a skateboard, but similarly to Tobias he does not report any struggle with obtaining a skateboard which is in contrast with the previous category. Chill and the next international interviewee Friedrich (36) have in common that they both chose skateboarding over football:

> Ok I started in 2001, you know, because a lot of friends and my school mates also started skating and I had no other occupation for myself and did not know what to do with my free time. I played soccer, but I was not very good, so I felt I wanted to try something new, and I saw other friends skating and one day I joined. I was thirteen.

The citations from Tobias, Chill and Friedrich represent a different category than the first one, because all the first four interviewees are from the Czech Republic. These interviewees represent respectively Germany, Brazil and Austria. The enter on lifestyle sport career stage of those interviewees and the consequent beginning of the construction of their subculture identity happened in different context than with the first category. The reason for this is that they do not report the middleman factor and also do not describe any struggle with obtaining a skateboard. This could be due to the fact that some of them started later on, and their countries had not been socialistic recently. What this category also has in common is that the interviewees are under forty years old. There is also a repeating theme of the journey to skateboarding through different sports, as with one of the interviewees from the first category. Some of them explain the first encounter with skateboard through an older version of skateboard, which is similar to the ones from the first category. The next interviewee outside of the Czech Republic is Inge (34):

> I started skating in the year 2000 I think, when I was ten or eleven and it was in my hometown, so I started because of one of my best friends. He was nine, but he was skating since he was three and he had like four older brothers who were skaters, so that is why I started to skate. He had some wheels and some trucks laying around and we just put together a skateboard and we went skating and I was hooked. I got three wheels that were the same and the fourth wheel was different and a blank deck, which was already worn out. That was my first skateboard.

It is interesting that even though Inge is not from a country with a socialistic past he explains the factor of the middleman, and also his first skateboard is reminiscing the ones from the first

category. The next interviewee Pier (33) is from the Czech Republic, and he also describes the mediation by a middleman, but also explains mediation by another person (Interview 2):

> I rode a bike when I was nine, the bmx, with the other boys and we rode around the village, we did tricks and we just rode like that, and then we actually went to the skatepark here and there. There I got to know the guys who were riding skateboards and no one was riding a bike, and that's how I got to know skateboarding. I started riding when I started going to the eighth class of the gymnasium. There I had a classmate, and we were best friends, and he was skating. I started to skate because of him, but actually I never went to skate with him because I was with those guys in Ricany (a part of town) and I was just skating there. The first four years I rode only with a guy called Daniel. He did switch crooked, frontside flips, skated very well and knew absolutely everything. He had all the VHS, he downloaded all the skate videos, he knew everything about skateboarding, things you can't get to know on your own. Someone has to show it to you. At this time, I was ten or eleven.

Pier does not explain any struggle with obtaining a skateboard as the other Czechs. However, what he has in common with the other Czech interviewees is the factor of the middleman that got him into skateboarding. Pier is even explaining another middleman in the first stage of his subculture career. The next interviewee from Czech Republic who does not report any middleman in his skateboarding beginning nor any substantial struggle with obtaining a first skateboard is Joseph (34) (Interview 2):

> I don't remember exactly when I started, if I was thirteen or fourteen, but when I was like nine or ten, I used to cycle with the boys and then I bought these roller skates. The freestyle ones, so I went on the skates, and then somehow, at thirteen, the skates stopped being fun for me, so I thought about trying bmx or skate. Bmx cost about ten thousand or more, the skate was cheaper, so I just bought a completely shitty second-hand skate for seven hundred. I destroyed my trucks in just a month, and then my parents simply bought me a full setup for like four and a half thousand. This was a lot back then. I don't know any more if I was in the seventh or eighth grade. but then I just started riding only on the skateboard and since then I'm basically skating every day and I don't do any other sport anymore. I haven't even been on a bike since I was fourteen years old or something.

Inge, Pier and Joseph also represent the second category in this subchapter. It is interesting that even though Inge is not from Czech Republic he explains the role of the middleman in the first stage of his subcultural sport career. In addition, his first skateboard was reminiscing the skateboards of the interviewees from the first category. Pier's story has a common trajectory with the ones from the first category in the sense that there was the middleman that got him into it. What is different from all the others is that Pier describes a person he skated

with in the first years. Pier gives him the status of a mentor that had a lot of subcultural capital, which was passed on to him. This person was essentially another middleman, same as with some of the others, but the way Pier is describing him, hints towards a deeper mediation of the construction of his subculture identity in comparison with the other middlemen. It was dissatisfaction with the previous sport activity that led Joseph to the first stage of the subculture career. As he was entering the lifestyle sport career stage, he did not report any substantial struggle with obtaining a skateboard as the older Czechs did.

4.1.3. Discussion of the different beginnings

The citations show different kinds of ways how to get to skateboarding. This subchapter is divided into two categories. It is important to remember that those categories are ideal types and not every interviewee in those categories shows exactly the same traits, there are a lot of nuances, and every interviewee has a unique perspective. Some of the common traits might be shared just to a certain point of degree. However, a certain degree of generalization is necessary to present the patterns. This applies to all the categories in the entire thesis. The first are the interviewees who are from the Czech Republic, and their journey to skateboarding was affected by its socialistic past. The other interviewees are either from outside of the Czech Republic or their journeys were not affected by the socialistic heritage. If this is tied to the four-stage model of subculture career by Dupont and Beal (2021) these moments in the lives of my interviewees would be the first stage, which is the decision to enter. As they are setting themselves on the lifestyle sport career stage their subculture identity is starting to be constructed. The most obvious difference between the two categories is that those affected by the socialist past had more difficulties with obtaining a skateboard, whereas the ones outside of Czech Republic or the younger ones from the Czech Republic did not. The ones affected by the socialistic heritage of the Czech Republic first owned a socialistic alternative to a real skateboard. In the first category are the interviewees that are over forty years old, and the other category includes interviewees that are under this age threshold. This coincidental age division is a byproduct of the sorting of the interviewees based on other criteria. There are a lot of repeating themes across both categories. Half of the interviewees explained that they were first exposed to skateboarding, and then it took some time before they first obtained it. This exposure happened between the fourth and twelfth year of age. Some of the interviewees from both categories share the fact that their start with skateboarding was mediated through another person, which I call the middleman. This mediation was one of the following: affect someone in a way that they would want to skate,

borrow them a skateboard before they can get their own or help them assemble a skateboard. The physical objects and the knowledge that those middlemen were able to provide are types of subculture capital. Six of the interviewees had this mediator. This mediator is typical for the first category, but there are also two cases in the second category. Some of the interviewees from both categories did a sport activity before they got to know skateboarding, or before the time they got their own skateboard. Some did a sport activity and their dissatisfaction led to getting their own skateboard. The age range of getting the first skateboard varies from tenth and sixteenth year of age. Perhaps what most stands out from these patterns is the middleman, which does not just borrow or help obtain a skateboard, but who is in one case viewed as a sort of mentor who accumulated a lot of subcultural capital and passed it on to the other person.

4.2. Skateboarding versus other sport activities in adolescence

This next subchapter shows the impact of skateboarding on other sport activities. The citations show what happens when skateboarding is introduced to someone who has been only used to a collective and regulated sport such as football. This chapter demonstrates the pursuit of authenticity and how this process is a sign of an increasing salience of the subculture identity. Interviewees are again divided into two categories.

4.2.1. Anti structuralists and fun seekers

The first category in this subchapter are interviewees who did some kind of collective sport, but when they started with skateboarding, they stopped liking the institutionalized nature of those sports and did not find them entertaining anymore. The first who is sharing his experience about the impact of skateboarding on other sport activities is Michael:

> I played football because I enjoyed football, my father played football here for the TJ Uhelne Sklady Praha and there, they just sat me down, because it was some preparation for B team, that's the younger one, and then there's preparation for A team, those are the older ones and I know that they pushed me from B to A and suddenly I was just sitting on the bench and I didn't play at all and it just really pissed me off and all of a sudden everything got connected and suddenly you are doing what you enjoy [skateboarding] and there is something else that says that you have to be at training at four o'clock , you have to be there for a match and you have to do this and that and my life is actually about the fact that I don't want to do what you have to do, but that what I want to do and then life is happier, so I quit football and have been just skating instead.

Michael explains that he quit football, because he did not like the treatment by his club and he also did not like its rigid rules, and he rather did only skateboarding instead. He is not the only one who explains this anti-structuralist nature, because Tobias describes a similar situation:

> Yea I used to go to basketball, when I was four or five, like really small. I saw basketball at the neighbor's place too and it was actually my first love and then I was there for maybe two years and then I was going to karate. I was doing karate until the brown belt and until I was eleven, because at that time my parents said to me that they can't pay for skateboarding and the karate at the same time, so I had to decide and I decided for skateboarding for sure. The difference is like that I could do it when I wanted and did not have to go on a specific day in a specific time as with the karate and same with the basketball and I could do it alone you know, karate you are not doing alone. With skateboarding you are doing it with your crew and that was actually the thing that I liked so much and there are no rules in comparison to basketball. Basketball has specific rules how to play, but skateboarding is up to you.

Tobias sets the institutional sport that he did in contrast to skateboarding as he explains how he chose the participant's control over the institutionalism. As the next interviewee Hans reports a similar experience, a pattern is starting to be visible (interview 1):

> "I got to know a lot of people, and I had freedom, in comparison to collective sports which I did before" (Beringer, 2022. P. 9).

These three interviewees have in common that they did not like the rigid structure of collective sports such as football or basketball. Even though Michael and Chill were quite successful in those activities, their beginning with skateboarding meant a very quick abandonment of the other activity. It seems that those interviewees had a more anti rules mentality, and skateboarding as a lifestyle sport became more attractive for them. Lifestyle sports are known to be participant driven and usually do not have an official set of rules (Dupont and Beal, 2021). I'm identifying this moment in the subculture career of my interviewees as the second stage – a process of entering (Dupont and Beal, 2021). Another interviewee that shares his experience with the effect of skateboarding on other sport activities is Inge:

> Yes, I was playing soccer and I started skating and started handball and gymnastics all at once, I think and then I quit all of them and focused hundred percent on skating within like I think it was three years maybe. When I was thirteen maybe fourteen, I stopped all the other things, and I was just skating all day every day. I think that the

first reason was that I had more fun with skating and also, I think the other activities started to be more serious, so soccer became more serious, there was more training, and the training was maybe harder and also with the gymnastics. In the beginning we were just having fun, just doing whatever we wanted and then all of a sudden it was like, this is fun, but remember to put your arms like this, when you land and we said no, fuck this and everyone quit like the same day, I think. Yea basically I had more fun just skating and I think that the friends I was skating with started doing the same. They also played soccer and other stuff, but quit everything and were just skating. We had a group like of five maybe six people who did just skating like me, all the time.

Inge also explains that he did not like the lack of the participants control, but he also did not find the institutional sports entertaining. Chill is explaining a similar situation as he also emphasizes the notion of fun:

No, actually before I was super serious about football and I was going to drop out of the school, because of football and family was like ok, they were cool with it and then it happened. I got the board for Christmas and skateboarding took over and I never played football again. I don't know, at that time I found out that it was more fun to skate than to play football and then every time when I did something that was not skateboarding I would get injured and I would not be able to skate, so it was not worth it to for example to play football, because I would get injured and could not skate.

Inge and Chill have in common that they both participated in one or more sports activities before they started skateboarding. They complement each other and describe that when they started with skateboarding, the other sport activities suddenly become this sort of contrast of what skateboarding represented for them. The most important for those two interviewees is the notion of fun. The contrast dwells in the fact that skateboarding provided them with fun while the other activities did not. This might be, because lifestyle sports are often more akin to play than traditional institutional sports (Dupont and Beal, 2021). Chill also adds that it was not worth it to do other activities, because of a potential injury that would cause his inability to skate.

4.2.2. Not a team player

The second category in this subchapter consists of interviewees who, except one person, also did some kind of collective sport. The scenario was very similar as with the previous category. This means that they quickly abandoned the other activity. The difference here is that the interviewees in this category struggle with different aspects of those sports. The first one in this other category of interviewees is Friedrich:

It was tough times, I was bad in school, there was always trouble in school. I was not a good pupil. I did not have any real hobbies, only soccer, but I was not synchronized with my teammates, so I need to find something new and I randomly came to skateboarding.

Friedrich explains that the collective nature of football and his skills were not a good match. This caused dissatisfaction with football and lead him to skateboarding. He is not the only one who reported this as Martin explains that his struggle was similar in nature:

I don't know, I played football for about five years, then somehow came skateboarding and then I stopped caring about the football. For a while I did it at the same time, but I started to enjoy that it doesn't have to be exactly like that you have to go somewhere for a training and if you messed something up in football then everyone was pissed with you, you fucked it up for everyone. It was not like this with the skateboard. It is just you. Ideal for an autist haha.

The citations from Friedrich and Martin show a pattern of dissatisfaction with the collective nature of football. Martin is also hinting about what the interviewees from the first category reported about the training sessions in exact times. What Friedrich still reports feels like the first stage of subculture career – decision to enter, but what Martin is describing feels like the second stage – process of entering. Friedrich realized in this process that skateboarding offers him what football cannot, and the outcome was that he abandoned football. According to Beal and Weidman (2003) for the authenticity of a skateboarder is vital the participant's control. It seems that Martin was pursuing authenticity in order to solidify the importance of his subcultural identity. The assertion of authenticity serves to root people in the identities that are important for them (Williams, 2011). The next interviewee who reports a similar situation is Lavar:

Yes, I tried to play hockey, football, with the football, I could clearly feel that I'm not gifted, so that got over me quickly, I enjoyed hockey as much as I could, and I would play it even now, if there would be someone to play with and a place for it, but otherwise nothing. Well, after a while, after I have begun with skateboarding, I think I wanted to leave everything, because I was only interested in that one thing and so everything ended quickly after that, and all the attention was only on skateboarding.

According to Lavar, he did not excel in football and therefore he chose skateboarding instead. Another interviewee who also reports that it was the dissatisfaction with another sport activity that made him to step up on the lifestyle sport career stage, is Joseph (Interview 2):

> When I went roller skating, I had two other friends which did it also, but we were such a small group and it seemed like that not that many people roller skated. When you went to Zizkov (a part of town), there were just two people on roller skates and then ten others on a skateboard. There was a ramp, and I just did some tricks on that, but on those roller skates there are limitations. You have your legs in it and you can't do so many tricks. When I learned some of those tricks, some on the rail and some grinds or whatever it's called, it seemed to me that it's so severely limited that you just put your feet like this and that and that you're somehow spinning and that's all you can to do. With the skateboard all you need is just flat ground, and you can do so many things. You can't do much on roller skates with just a flat ground.

Lavar and Joseph share the fact that they were both doing a different sport activity before they started with skateboarding. It was either lack of talent or a dissatisfaction with the previous activity that led to skateboarding. Both Lavar and Joseph are conforming the pattern of leaving the previous sport activity in favor of skateboarding. However, Joseph is different from all the other interviewees, because roller skating is according to Dupont and Beal (2021) a lifestyle sport. It is interesting that even though Joseph did another lifestyle sport, he still rather chose skateboarding over it. It was the limitation of the roller skating and smaller social circle that made Joseph commit to this decision.

4.2.3. Discussion – skateboarding versus other sport activities in adolescence

The citations show that skateboarding had a substantial impact on the understanding of the other sport activities for my interviewees. The interviewees in this subchapter are divided into two categories based on the reason why they left the other sport activity and started with skateboarding. The first category is based on the interviewees that seem to be anti-structuralist in nature and the rigid rules of collective sports made them abandon it in favor of skateboarding. This category also contains interviewees that found skateboarding more entertaining than the institutionalized sport activities. The reason for this might be that lifestyle sports are defined as alternative and a sort of challenge to the traditional ways of perceiving, doing, and understanding sport (Dupont and Beal, 2021). The second category are the interviewees which also did another collective sport, but did not thrive with it because of its collective nature, or they did not feel good at them. This behavior can be tied to the issues of authenticity. For authenticity of a skateboarder the participant's control, self-expression, de-emphasis on competition and nonconformity to mainstream standards is essential (Beal and Weidman, 2003). By leaving the collective sports and starting with skateboarding my interviewees seize the control and pursue authenticity through skateboarding. The fact that the

interviewees are pursuing the authenticity and by that trying to embed themselves in the identity of a skateboarder hints towards their subculture identity becoming more prominent in the hierarchy of identities.

4.3. Meaning of skateboarding in adolescence

This subchapter of the thesis sheds light on what skateboarding meant for my interviewees in the first years of their subculture career, or in other words how they are reflecting their subculture identity in that period. Skateboarding meant for my interviewees many different things, but some of the themes are more frequent than others and the following citations picture a quite nice spectrum of different meanings with clearly visible patterns. The interviewees are sorted into three different categories based on how they reflect what skateboarding meant for them then.

4.3.1. Social bonders

The first category in this segment are those interviewees who emphasize the social aspect of skateboarding. The interviewees also mention other things, but the notion of social bonding stands out the most in the citations. The first one who explains what skateboarding meant for him in his adolescence is Hans:

> "It was everything to me back then, it meant a lot. I got to know a lot of people, and I had freedom, in comparison to collective sports which I did before. The best was to come home from school, throw my backpack into a corner and then go skating and come home after dark. So, what else can one wish for? And so many new experiences! So, on one side a kind of sport… I don't know how to say it… sport sounds bad… a kind of punk, cultural family" (Beringer, 2022. pp. 9-10). I wasn't as stiff, and we were not just at Stalin Plaza as today. We were discovering a lot, we thought that we would discover something better and then over time you realized that there is nothing better than going there. You cannot call it a sport or maybe it is a sport club, but a different one, one with freedom and in a park (Stalin plaza is in a city park) (Interview 2).

Hans is describing new experiences and urban exploring as what skateboarding meant for him in his adolescence, but perhaps what stands out the most is the use of different words that emphasize the importance of socials bonds (Beringer, 2022). Hans is not the only one who emphasizes the social aspect of skateboarding, since Pier's citation is similar (Interview 1):

"It was filling all my free time. There was school and there was skateboarding and that was it. It's about going to eat croquettes, talking with friends, what kind of new videos there are, girls… I don't know… everything. It was friendship with everyone. It is like being in some team, but you are not in any. It is like going to play basketball and hanging out with people from there, but you play basketball once a week and you skate every day. Everything is deeper, you spend much more time with these people than you would do in an after-school activity" (Beringer, 2022. p. 9).

Pier is emphasizing the depth of social bonds that he felt with other skateboarders through skateboarding. The next interviewee Chill also points out the social factor of skateboarding:

Yea, it is the thing, you have your crew, you make some homie videos, shoot photos, the usual.

All the citations from Hans, Pier and Chill emphasize the social aspects of skateboarding. The use of words like *crew, family, club* and *friendship,* or even *family* in one case, signifies the deeper level of social bond that skateboarding represented for them. Two out of four of the interviewees give skateboarding second place on an imaginary importance scale of life aspects. The only thing they give more importance is school. This demonstrates the high degree of dedication to their subculture identity back then. Pier is pointing out the contrast between an institutional sport and skateboarding (Beringer, 2022). Two of the interviewees describe talking to others or sharing a meal, as what skateboarding meant for them. What is being described here transcends the physical activity and implies a deeper meaning for the interviewees. The involvement in lifestyle sports goes beyond the physical, and embodies social and cultural elements which make new possibilities as to how an individual can feel connected and construct identities (Willing, Bennet, Pisppa and Green, 2019). Identity can be defined as a set of meanings that are applied on ourselves in social roles or situations, and that is defining what it means to be someone (Andes, 1998 as cited in Beringer, 2020). They were applying those different meanings on themselves and by this constructing their subculture identity.

4.3.2. The "new cool"

The next category in this subchapter are the interviewees who emphasize that skateboarding was something new and gave those who practiced it a certain social status. This category touches on the issue of authenticity. This category shows how some of my interviewees were

achieving authenticity through skateboarding. When Martin asked what skateboarding meant for him in his adolescence he answers:

> Something interesting, new, cool, a thing that girls really liked back then. Here it it was so new. We are talking about the year 1996 a few years before that skateboarding was complete old school. Just a few years back it looked completely different and it is the today's form that came around that time.

Martin associates the notion of "new" and "cool" with skateboarding back then. He is not the only one who explains skateboarding as something new and attractive, because Lavar gives a similar answer:

> Well, probably freedom, because I was wandering somewhere all the time. I think that playing football somewhere would not give you the same feeling of freedom or at least it would not give it to me. Then it was a sort of physical exhaustion that a child needs and I also enjoyed moving and exercising. The first three or four years I have not seen many people with it besides the Euro Skate in the TV. I think that was in 1989 and in 1992 it was this kind of an exotic thing. In a city with a hundred thousand people there were six skateboarders. You got a lot of attention, because of it, both the good and the bad kind. The good one from the girls and the bad one, for example from the neighbors that threw stuff at you or they have been shooting at you from an air gun, so you would not skate at a specific spot. Everyone knew everyone and it was generally much smaller. The other kids called me a showman, just, because I was rolling on it, not doing any tricks. Today it is completely normal for everyone.

When Martin and Lavar reflect their subculture identity they both explain that skateboarding was for them something new and even the word "exotic" is used. What Martin and Lavar are explaining is an issue of authenticity. They were achieving authenticity through skateboarding, and that rooted them in their subcultural identities. Lavar has a more elaborated answer, and he mentions the notion of freedom, as one of the other interviewees from the previous category. Even though he primarily mentions freedom while reflecting his subculture identity, I understand the notion of freedom as a secondary theme connecting some of the interviewees in this category, rather than something that would be a base for a category of its own. Both interviewees share the fact that their answers also describe skateboarding back then in a general sense, and from their point of view. Lavar is also demonstrating what skateboarding meant for him, elaborating on the contrast between skateboarding and football. The next interviewee who shares what skateboarding meant for him in his adolescence is Michael:

Then I got from my street to the other side of the hill, to Vysehrad (a part of town) and there were some older boys, one was skating incredibly well. When you see this type of guy, who can do all the stuff, then it is suddenly even more fun. It's fun to just skate with your friends and try the tricks and especially when you see that it can be done, then it is even more fun. I don't know, it is like watching Jagr (a hockey player) on TV and then seeing him live on a stadium practicing, then it would give you suddenly the feeling. With that I got into it even more. In those days, of course, skate videos came to the Czech Republic, with them it was completely new information. There were no social networks. Those videos were just something different from just watching Beverly Hills or the Duck Tales. Suddenly you had all of it on VHS and then all the other films go aside, and you just live in the video world and on the street. I enjoyed so much to be in the streets.

The notion of something "new" has a different context in Michael's citations. He speaks about the new audiovisual stimulation he got from skate videos. However, it can also be interpreted in a way that he surrounded himself with a lifestyle outside of mainstream society. Another interviewee who emphasizes the notion of "new" is Tobias:

Skateboarding meant everything to me in the early years. Especially in the 90s, European skateboard culture was on fire. This new freedom I was given through skateboarding had become irreplaceable for me. Traveling to new cities, meeting new friends, finding new spots and learning new tricks was my first priority. This love for skateboarding that developed back then still exists today.

Michael and Tobias reflect their subcultural identity as something that they got fully emerged in to. Subcultural identity is a felt, proclaimed, and exercised affiliation to a group of wearers of the given subculture. This affiliation can also be to a set of meanings connected with the given subculture. The subculture identity is something that is being constructed and replayed with daily behavior, clothing articles and other behavioral patterns affiliated with the given subculture (Heřmanský and Novotná 2019, as cited in Beringer, 2022). Michael and Tobias are describing what skateboarding meant for them in their adolescence. Their behavior is shaped by this set of meanings and through it, they are constructing and performing their subculture identity. As the other two interviewees in this category, Tobias is also mentioning the notion of freedom and explaining the general state of skateboarding back then. They are both explaining that their lives were surrounded by skateboarding. It became a lifestyle for them.

4.3.3. Dedication

The last category in this subchapter consists of those interviewees who show a very high degree of dedication to their subculture identity. The other two categories also show a high degree of dedication, but the interviewees in this category explicitly state how much time they used performing their subculture identity. In this third category is Inge the first one who shares what skateboarding meant for him in his adolescence:

> Yes, basically, it was school and then home from school to get some food and then I took my bike and went to the skatepark and basically every day I think, so that was it and during the weekends.

Inge is reflecting that his subculture identity was very significant for him, and he was very dedicated to it. The next interviewee Friedrich is as some of the other interviewees, describing a general state of skateboarding back then, but also expresses a high level of dedication to his subculture identity:

> Well now I got older, skateboarding was easier back then because of the gravity of my body and my fear level was much lower. There were more active skaters back then, so I had more friends. I was also hungrier for skating; I was skating every day at this age.

The last one who is reflecting what skateboarding meant for him is Joseph (Interview 1):

> "I was always going outside. Either I was going on the bicycle or on the roller skates and in the same way I was going to skate with friends. There weren't even any good pc games, there was Doom 3, etc., but I was rather outside because it's fun. I did not want to sit at home" (Beringer, 2022. p. 10).

There are three interviewees in this category. The first two reflect that their subculture identity was very significant for them, and they had a high degree of dedication to it. It might seem that the last interviewee Joseph started to skate, because of the lack of good pc games. However, it could be interpreted rather as a potential alternative to skateboarding (Beringer, 2022). In comparison to some of the interviewees in both previous categories, no one in this category is using the contrast between an institutional sport and skateboarding to reflect their subculture identity.

4.3.4. Discussion on the meaning of skateboarding in adolescence

This chapter shows what skateboarding meant for my interviewees in the first two stages of their subculture career. In all cases this was their adolescence. The interviewees in this chapter are divided into three categories. The first ones emphasize the social aspect of skateboarding. The usage of words like *crew, family, club* and *friendship,* or even *family* in one case, all point towards this conclusion. The second category are those who are reflecting their subculture identity with the usage of words like *new*, *cool* and even *exotic*. The third category reflects the meaning of skateboarding from their point of view as something they have been very dedicated to. There is also a theme of freedom across two of the categories. Some of the interviewees across all categories are using the contrast between institutional sports and skateboarding to express what skateboarding meant for them (Beringer, 2022). All these reflected meanings have something to do with the subcultural identity of my interviewees. My interviewees were applying those meanings on themselves in order to construct and sustain their subcultural identity. Subculture identity is being performed (Dupont, 2020). The performance of the subculture identity by my interviewees caused their lives to be surrounded by skateboarding. In other words, skateboarding became a lifestyle for them. In subcultures individuals spend a lot of time and effort on developing something that they understand as an authentic lifestyle outside of the mainstream society This authenticity that is experienced through the subculture has a key meaning in their lives (Williams, 2011 as cited in Beringer, 2020).

4.4. Effect of the Aspects of adulthood on subculture identity, return after the break and the meaning of skateboarding today

4.5. Effect of the aspects of adulthood on subculture identity

This subchapter is about what happens when a skateboarder encounters the aspects of adulthood. There are three aspects of adulthood: *Growing up, Career and money* and the third one is *partners and children* (Davis, 2012, as cited in Beringer, 2022). The citations show a broad variety of different outcomes of this encounter. Interviewees are sorted into four categories based on the impact of the aspects of adulthood on their subculture identity. Some of the interviewees developed different strategies how to deal with those aspects and

sustained a high degree of dedication to their identity of a skateboarder. The others did not sustain a high degree of dedication and stopped skating for some time.

4.5.1. Break from skateboarding

The encounter with the aspects of adulthood meant for this category of interviewees a decrease of dedication to their subculture identity, or in other words, they stopped skating for a certain period of time. The first one who is explaining the impact of the aspects of adulthood on his subcultural identity is Pier (Interview 1):

> "I was working in a casino, and I was also playing a little bit (poker). When I had my first job, I was for example starting at six p.m. and when it was good, I was finished at one p.m., but when it was bad, I was finished at six a.m. Then you sleep 6-7 hours and then you have four hours before you go again to work and when is it like this then there is no time to skate. I remember that in the beginning when I was starting to work that I was going to skate and then straight to work, but it was not doable" (Beringer, 2022. pp. 10-11).

With Pier we can see that the choice of his job affected his subcultural identity. The job he was doing did not have more traditional working hours, as for example nine to five. It seems that it was rather the job choice than the job itself that caused the break from skateboarding, because it seems that the option of working in the casino outweighed the possibility of skating (Beringer, 2022). This can be interpreted through the Williams' (2011) theory about identity. Social identities are not pertinent or have the same significancy in all contexts, but are dependent on many factors. Those factors are the instance, the salience of the identity and the amount of dedication to the identity by the individual. The salience means how often a person invokes an identity. There is a hierarchy of the salience, and the dedication to a specific identity determines the position of the identity in this hierarchy. The frequency of the invoking of the identity in certain situations is dependent on the positions in the hierarchy. The social identity or in other words the understanding of ourselves is directly affected by the situation, salience and by the dedication (Williams, 2011 as cited in Beringer, 2022). Pier's situation could be interpreted in a way that his subcultural identity decreased in the hierarchy of salience of his identities, and therefore he became less dedicated to it. He could have, for example find another job that would be easier to combine with skateboarding. To provide more context, I will present another citation from Pier (Interview 1):

"Yea of course, it was kind of a realization that I will not be getting something out of it and then you start doing something else where there could be something out of it" (Beringer, 2022. pp. 11).

Around the time when Pier started to work in the casino, he realized that skateboarding would probably not become his economic career. I understand this realization as the *growing up* aspect of adulthood. I'm interpreting it as his new hobby poker was more economically beneficial than skateboarding and therefore the job in the casino, which was related to it, felt like a natural choice (Beringer, 2022). This choice could be identified with the aspect of *career and money*. Pier was the not the only one who's subcultural identity was affected by the aspects of adulthood, as Inge is describing a similar situation:

I think the change happened maybe when I was nineteen or something, like high school. I skated, if not every day, then several times a week, but then I got my driver's license and suddenly other things came in. I had friends that wanted to do other things, partying, and stuff and then I moved to Lillehammer and went to the university and then I started to skate less, so it was suddenly not every day, but it was at least once a week or maybe once every two weeks. I think, maybe the main reason would be, because I had a girlfriend at that time and when we moved to Lillehammer together, she did not have that many friends here either, so we were both kind of new, so instead of going out to skate and leaving her alone I was with her. I just did other stuff with her and was more at home and we had a baby as well, when I was nineteen, right before I turned twenty, so that took some time. It took up a lot of time, so I think that is the main reason yeah. It is about the crew as well, so when you do not have the guys, asking you to go skate every day, you might not go on your own initiative. I did the studies and had the baby and I had three jobs at the same time, so I had all those going on, yea.

Inge is describing a gradual decrease of dedication to his subcultural identity. It seems like an important point here is becoming an adult in the legal sense. The reaching of a certain age threshold opens new aspects of life, such as legally driving or being able to enter a pub or a bar. Another mentioned cause was a move to another city in order to get an education. This decision could be interpreted as the first aspect of adulthood – *growing up.* Inge mentions a relationship, family and work as the main factors that affected his subculture identity. It seems like all the aspects of adulthood are in work here. Those aspects caused Inge's subcultural identity to be decreased in the hierarchy of salience of identities and Inge became less dedicated to it. However, Inge also mentioned the loss of the social aspect of skateboarding by the move. It is possible that without the loss of the social aspect of skateboarding, Inge

would skate more frequently. The next interviewee who had been also affected by the aspects of adulthood as well as other factors is Michael:

> We had the Slam skateboards (a skateboard brand). At that time, I stopped going to Stalin Plaza and started to go to Stvanice (a skatepark) instead. Everyone knows, that there is so much weed there. I came there when I was twenty and left when I was thirty and I cannot remember anything. I was not drinking till I was thirty-three, so I was high as fuck all the time instead. There was not much skateboarding then. My skateboarding was from 1992 till 2003, till the last Praha video (a Czech skate video). And then came the girl that I fell for. I quit it [skateboarding] for a little while, because I met a girl. It is the classic story, you fall in love and you will spend all the free time with her. It is interesting when you meet an old friend, which you haven't seen in a long time, the first question is always: you got yourself a girlfriend right? It is always like this. People were just disappearing for a while for this reason. Love is almighty and it does not matter if it is love for someone or to skateboarding, you just follow it.

Both Stalin Plaza and Stvanice are places used by skateboarders to perform the activity of skateboarding. It seems that the move from one place to the other combined with the characteristics of the new place led to a high consumption of weed, which might have led to the decrease in skateboarding activity. This is interesting, because even though Michael skated less, he was still surrounded by skaters on Stvanice. The question is if we then can talk about the decrease of the dedication to his subcultural identity. This leads to the question: what establishes the identity of a skateboarder?. I do not think that he became less dedicated to his subculture identity, but rather that this dedication took a different form. What can be interpreted as a decrease in dedication to subculture identity, is the aspect of adulthood called *partners and family* coming to Michael's life. It is also interesting that he is describing the outcome of the encounter with this aspect of adulthood with examples from his social network. It could be assumed that some of the people which he is describing are also skateboarders.

4.5.2. Other factors causing a decrease of dedication to subculture identity

The next category in this subchapter are also the interviewees which decreased their dedication to their subculture identity after the encounter with the aspects of adulthood. However, it was not only the aspects of adulthood that caused it, but also consumption of addictive substances. The first interviewee who shares his reflection in this category is Hans (Interview 1):

"Work? With that, I abandoned it completely. Because of work and other entertainments… (laughing). I was spending time on other things than sport. That was approximately when I was 25. I thought that it was very entertaining back then (laughing). There were several factors. It was alcohol. It was slow, it started innocently, and there was a job and money also. I also hurt my ankle snowboarding and it is still not a hundred percent up to this day. I also went on a gallbladder operation. And the pub, partying… (laughing) classic. And, when you are living with a woman then you go with her to walk dogs and then you are an x number of hours in work" (Beringer, 2022. p. 12).

This citation is interesting, because it contains a combination of several aspects of adulthood, but also a factor that seems to have a similar effect on Hans' subcultural identity. There is also the mention of an injury and an operation in connection with the decrease in his skateboarding activity. It is clear that in Hans' case it was the combination of the aspects of adulthood with consumption of alcohol and health problems that led to a decrease of dedication to his subculture identity (Beringer, 2022). Hans is not the only who reports that, as we can see with Lavar:

The university was difficult. I studied English and we had morphology. You analyze everything to the last word and sound. When I started going to school, I already had a girlfriend with whom I lived for five years, in fact, the whole studies. Of course, when a person has a relationship, then there is less time for skateboarding, especially when you go to school, but I was still skating, but in the last year of the university I started to take drugs, so it decreased even more. Then I was skating less and less and, in the end, I was not riding my skateboard, but just driving a car to buy more drugs. The real drop came after like five or four years on the drugs, because I tore my ACL[2] and that caused a drop for some time.

Lavar is also describing several factors as the cause of the decrease of his dedication to his subculture identity. It was the *growing up* aspect of adulthood for the choice of studies and the *partners and family* aspect of adulthood for having a relationship and cohabiting. The consumptions of drugs led to an even bigger decrease of his dedication to his subculture identity. The final factor had been an injury, and it looks like that it has been a complete stop of skateboarding for a period of time. It is also possible that the drugs had a negative effect on

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[2] "An anterior cruciate ligament injury occurs when the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is either stretched, partially torn, or completely torn. The most common injury is a complete tear. Symptoms include pain, an audible cracking sound during injury, instability of the knee, and joint swelling" (Wikipedia contributors, 2024b).

Lavar's body and he was therefore more exposed to have an injury. To illustrate that the decrease of dedication to identity of a skateboarder is a process that is affected by many factors, rather than by one life situation, I'm including another citation from Lavar:

> When you saw the business side, it made an impression on me that those who are doing it for skateboarding do not have a profit and those who are doing it for the profit are successful. This evoked a very unpleasant feeling in me. Before I worked at the skate distribution, I thought that the business was based on selling skateboard hardware and then I found out that 80% is clothing and shoes, and that you are a textile merchant. This also created a distance for me.

The first interviewee in the previous category, Pier, also had a similar realization about skateboarding. However, with Lavar it is difficult to determine to what degree this insight into the business part of skateboarding affected his dedication to his subculture identity. As the next chapter is about breaks from skateboarding that are out of the participant's control, Lavar's citation feels like a bridge between those two categories as his story could fit to both categories.

4.5.3. Uncontrolled break

The interviewees in this category had to take a break from skateboarding, but the reason for it was not the aspects of adulthood or addictive substances, but injuries. This means that those people sustained a high degree of dedication to their subculture identity through their subculture career and life course, but had to face an involuntary break from skateboarding. The first one who is sharing his experience about an involuntary break from skateboarding is Friedrich:

> Unfortunately, yes, I was also a soccer player and from 2001 to 2009, I was out of soccer, but I was an idiot and decided to player soccer in 2013 again. Not on a professional level, but on an amateur level, so I was skating every day and I played soccer three times a week and in 2018, we had a soccer match, and I tore my ACL and that took me out of skateboarding for one year or something, because in 2019 I had to take an ACL surgery recovery. It was emotionally hard, it was fucking emotionally hard for me, to lose everything, to lose all the tricks, because of the fucking soccer and I did not even like to play soccer that much, but I was addicted to soccer in my life unfortunately. I hate myself for this to this day. I'm not playing soccer anymore, I cannot skate and play soccer at the same time. Before I could, nowadays I ask myself how it was possible. Now I try to cycle every day to stay healthy and fit, it is not possible to do something more, I wish I never had that break.

The ACL injury had a big emotional impact on Friedrich. The feelings that he is describing demonstrate the level of dedication to his subcultural identity. Another interviewee who is describing the same injury is Tobias:

> Yea, I ruptured my ACL completely and then my knee was fucked up for three years. For one year I could not skate, but the second and third years were a little bit better, but not that good either, so I was skating only nollie[3] and switch[4] at that time, but it is better now, because I'm actually training a lot of my muscles around that. It is better, sometimes I have a little bit pain, but it is not that bad, but I started to have pain here, next to the hip, the groin and for that I was going for physiotherapy, so I have to take care of these things, these parts of my body. My back is actually good, I have not that big problems with my back, sometimes with my shoulders, but sure when I was younger I could skate all day, you know how it is when you are younger.

Friedrich and Tobias have in common that they both experienced an ACL injury and that caused an involuntary break from skateboarding for them. The difference is, that Friedrich was injured while doing some other activity than skateboarding. It is interesting that he mentions addiction to something as a cause of his break from skateboarding. In a sense this is similar to the case of Lavar from the previous category, where an addiction also caused a break from skateboarding. Both interviewees show a high level of dedication to their subculture identity since they both implemented strategies how to skate as long as possible.

4.5.4. Combining aspects of adulthood with subcultural identity

This category only has one interviewee in it, but his citation justifies its own category, because he is the only one who seems to be affected by the aspects of adulthood, but at the same time dealt with that situation in a way that allowed him to sustain a high degree of dedication to his subculture identity. Here follows the citation from Martin:

> It was when I tried the school again and we were starting the skate shop already. You will reach an age when you simply have to do something, you can't just skate, you're not a student anymore, I was already twenty six, I was prolonging it as much as I could haha. Well, I stopped going to the school somehow, and the skate shop actually

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[3] "In skateboarding, a nollie, short for "nose ollie", is an ollie executed at the front of the board while the rider is positioned in their natural stance" (Wikipedia contributors, 2023).

[4] "Switch means that the skateboarder is riding his/her board in his/her unnatural stance. Skateboarders normally have a preferred way of standing on their board. Left foot front, right foot back is called regular, while the opposite is called goofy. When a skate boarder switches stance they are riding switch. This is the skateboarding equivalent of handedness—writing with your left hand when you are right-handed. Switch should not be confused with riding backwards, which is called fakie" (Snyder, 2017, p. 55).

got going in the meantime. I wanted to build a business, and there were already younger skaters, and we made a team from the younger people. I felt that I had to set it [skateboarding] aside to some degree. I had to do the business. Before that, when I went to the school and exceptionally did some part time jobs, it was still time for it. It [skate shop] was a first real commitment. It was around 2006 or 2007. I enjoyed it quite a bit, that we were doing our own thing, and it was quite successful. It was quite a good time for it also. Other people joined us, and we made the team and it worked out. I did not even feel sorry about the skating. I just enjoyed running the shop and I skated anyway. You can't skate anymore the same way as you get older. I didn't need to skate for six hours a day anymore. It was enough for me to go in the evening. I was saturated with it, and I was often going to film someone from the team, so I was still surrounded by it.

Martin is describing a decrease in the frequency of his skating. It seems that the impulse that led to this decrease came from within, in the form of a need to fulfill a certain social norm. This could be interpreted as the encounter with the *growing up* aspect of adulthood. Taking up on education can also be interpreted as a result of the encounter with the same thing, but this was outweighed by the *career and money* aspect. Martin's case is interesting, because for some other interviewees the encounter with the aspect of *career and money* meant a decrease of dedication to their subculture identity. Martin's behavior could be interpreted in a way that he started his own skate shop, because that allowed him to maintain a high degree of dedication to his subculture identity. Martin developed an economic career within his subculture career, and those can, according to Dupont and Beal (2021), coexist. The end of citation and the sentence "*I was still surrounded by it*" points to a conclusion that he managed to maintain a high degree of dedication to his subculture identity, but that the form of his dedication took a different form. This sentence also shows that skateboarding was still a lifestyle for Martin at that time. I'm presenting another citation from Martin that is tied to the theme of this chapter:

Maybe it already left me even more before. I had a relationship with a girl like in a serious way. I almost completely abandoned it [skateboarding], because it looked like to her that I liked it more than her. She just had it this way. You must prove it all the time.

The other citation shows the effect of the encounter with the *partners and family* aspect of adulthood. Martin explains that the encounter with this aspect caused an almost complete decrease of his dedication to his subculture identity. The reason why this did not happen is unknown to me, because it did not seem appropriate to ask about it during the interview.

4.5.5. Skateboarding first

The last category in this subchapter are interviewees with a high degree of dedication to their subculture identity and this is reflected in the result of their encounter with the aspects of adulthood. It seems that for them skateboarding is priority number one and the aspects of adulthood had to be adjusted accordingly. From the first look, the previous category might seem the same as this one, but the difference is that in the previous one, the aspects of adulthood are being prioritized and skateboarding adjusted accordingly. Here it is the other way around. The first interviewee in this category is Tobias:

> It affected me, but I always tried to skate as much as I could, after school I moved to Barcelona and lived there for one and a half year. I was just skating and then I came back and I was going to Berlin and I started to go to the art university. I work at the university, as a kind of an assistant in design. You have like more freedom, you have to do your work, you have to do your things, but you don't have to be there at a specific time and you don't have to start at eight in the morning, of course you have to be there if you are supposed to work with a student and to talk about something and when you have an appointment with them, but it's more free. I just have to do my work and then I can skate. You are paid from the state and it's safe, and you need to you have your free time, for me this is ok, and it allows me to skate a lot in Berlin. It is also much more than I skated in Rome, when I was working in the office there.

Because there is also the *partners and family* aspect I'm including another citation from Tobias:

> No, I'm actually alone and I had a long-time relationship with a girl from Prague, but now I'm alone and I actually like it this way. I'm open to having a relationship too, but I'm not that guy, I have to skate, I cannot have a wife, but what will happen will happen and for now it fits perfect for me, to stay alone and skate.

It looks like Tobias adapted different strategies how to deal with the aspects of adulthood. The move abroad allowed him to sustain a high degree of dedication to his subculture identity. The career choice also seems to be affected by the desire to sustain this level of dedication. The second citation explains his attitude towards the *partners and children* aspect, rather than the outcome of the encounter with it. The next interviewee in this category is Joseph (Interview 1):

> "Then I started to go to a higher vocational school and that was chill. It was just one day with school in the afternoon, so I was basically skating every day. I started to

work when I was quite old… 25 and in the beginning, it was just some part time jobs, but if I can remember wherever I was working I was usually done at three o'clock p.m., so I always went to skate" (Beringer, 2022. p. 11)

It looks like Joseph also implemented a strategy how to encounter the aspects of adulthood. Joseph chose to attend a higher vocational school. The reasoning here could be that he chose to do so, because higher education might lead to a better job. This could be interpreted as the aspect of *growing up*. It could also be interpreted as a decision taken to sustain a high degree of dedication to his subculture identity, because higher vocational school might be less time demanding than a full-time job. Part time jobs and a work schedule that allows you to be finished early could be interpreted as a choice for the same reason (Beringer, 2022). The next interviewee who expresses a very high degree of dedication to his subculture identity is Friedrich:

Mostly I start work from seven in the morning and I'm finished at five in the afternoon, but I force myself every day to go skate after. I have the motivation to go skate after, because I want to do something that makes me happy.

Here is another citation from Friedrich for the aspects of *partners and money:*

Luckily not. It would be a limitation for me. Honestly, I can't even imagine myself to live in a relationship. Maybe it does sound strange, but I can't imagine sharing my life with another person like this, I do not know, if I will regret it one day or not. Honestly, it is even more worth for me to skate here [on Stalin Plaza], than for example to go on a date. I tried to explain it to a normal mainstream guy. It sounds strange, maybe even to you, if I say it to you: "*for example today you can skate the whole day on Stalin Plaza or you can date a nice girl*". Ninety nine percent of guys would immediately go to the date. Unfortunately, or luckily, I'm in the one percent. I do not know if I should be ashamed about it or not. I do not know why the skating is worth more for me. I would appreciate the skating even more. Ninety nine percent of the normal society would laugh at me, but I have the confidence to say it and I did not regret it yet.

Friedrich's citation is different from the others, because he does not use retrospective when speaking about this theme. He presents the current state to demonstrate that the aspects of adulthood never affected his dedication to his subculture identity. Since he works until five pm, which is a quite standard job schedule, it does not seem that the choice of job was made with skateboarding in mind, as it might have been with Joseph. Friedrich accompanies this with another citation about relationships. In this citation he then explains his attitude towards

the aspect of adulthood – *partners and family* rather than an encounter with it. It is difficult to determine what is the reason behind this attitude. If the reason behind it would have been an experience that caused a decrease of dedication to his subculture identity, then he would maybe say it. What can be read from the citation is that his degree of dedication is very high. Another interviewee who expresses a similar attitude to the *partners and family* aspect is Chill:

> Actually not, because before, the first thing was skating and everything else came after that. When I was like a teenager and was having a girlfriend, it was like no, first is the skate and then it is the girl. In the high school it was the same, I did not care much about studies. I cared more about skating and then when I went to university, I had a bunch of free hours between the classes, so I could skate then. As an adult maybe a little bit, because sometimes you are not that motivated, or something hurts or something like that, so you cannot. Before that it was much like an obsession that you have to do it every day and then as an adult you will learn to try to do other stuff. I do not know, like reading a book or having coffee with friends, so I feel like if you drift a little bit from skating and then you do it again, than you enjoy it even more.

I'm including another citation from Chill about the *partners and family* aspect:

> I have a girlfriend, we have been living together for almost six months. She fucking likes it [skateboarding], for a change, she likes it, she also has like a cruise board, like Polar nine inch board, with big Ace trucks, because she used to have a long board and I was like no, that is a wrong board, so I got her a proper cruiser with soft wheels and she enjoys it and she is like ok, go do your thing.

The fact that Chill does not mention the *career and money* aspect, when discussing this topic might indicate that his subculture identity has never been affected by this aspect. Chill even mentions that in the adult age his dedication decreased, but this was not caused by the aspects of adulthood, but rather by other factors. He explains this decrease with the usage of the word "*obsession*" as a demonstration of the level of dedication he had before. The second citation from Chill comments on the aspect of *partners and family*. He does not report an effect on his identity of a skateboarder by this aspect, however, there is an implication that at some point in his skateboarding career that might have been an issue. This subchapter showed that the aspect of *partners and family* usually causes a decrease of dedication to subculture identity. It is interesting that Chills' current relationship works in an opposite way and creates a condition that allows him to sustain a high degree of dedication. The next interviewee who reflects his subculture identity is Michael:

Since I have the relatives in Canada I was told that if I graduate I will go to Canada for half a year as a reward. So, I went there for half a year with a thousand dollars, that I used within the first two months. The Canada trip was just about skating, smoking weed and hanging out with the people I met. When I came back, I felt like an American, I even spoke Czech with the American accent, but this passed very quickly and I realized the reality and got my first job. I quit it after a year. It was a long and short week shifts. By that time, I was already filming skate videos and I had some deals through Václav Valenta and Jakub Novotný. Then I had around me already a lot of friends and I knew I lot of people from the skate community, so we were talking with Vaclav that we could just start a skateboard company and the Slam skateboards came to be. So, I quit the sport shop and then I could do what I wanted: skate, make skate videos, sent skate decks via post. I made a kind of primitive e-shop, I drove skate decks to skate shops for a commission. I was also doing some simple accounting. I was surrounded only with skateboarding.

Michael's trip abroad had as a side effect a delay of the encounter with the aspects of adulthood. The return to the Czech Republic and his realization about his life situation nicely illustrates the *growing up* aspect of adulthood, which led to the *career and money* aspect. The result of this was that Michael found himself a job, but for an unspecified reason left after a short time. His following behavior nicely illustrates the degree of dedication to his subculture identity. The development of an economic career within his subculture career allowed him to sustain a high degree of dedication. This citation also shows how skateboarding was a lifestyle for Michael.

4.5.6. Discussion on the effect of the aspects of adulthood on subcultural identity

This subchapter is focused on how subculture identity for my interviewees was affected by what Davis (2012) is defining as the aspects of adulthood. There are three aspects of adulthood: *growing up*, *career and money*, and the third one is *partners and children*. Citations show that my interviewees encountered one or more of those aspects. I'm identifying those moments in the subculture career of my interviewees with the third stage of the lifestyle sport career – the maintaining of a lifestyle sport career (Dupont and Beal 2021). In many cases my interviewees did not manage to maintain their lifestyle sport careers. I decided to divide the interviewees into five categories, based on to what degree their subculture identity had been affected. The first category are those who did not maintain a high degree of dedication to their subculture identity and took a break from skateboarding. The reason for this was the encounter with the aspects of adulthood. The second category are those interviewees who also had been affected by the aspects of adulthood, but it was not the only reason why their degree of dedication decreased. Those other reasons were addictive

substances. The third category are people who show a high degree of dedication, but injuries - a factor out of their control, caused an involuntary break from skateboarding. There is also a person that managed to combine the aspects of adulthood with his subculture identity by developing an economic career within a subcultural career and thus never interrupted it. That person has its own category. The last category are those interviewees who show a high degree of dedication to their subculture identity, and they adjusted the aspects of adulthood accordingly. In one case the aspect of *partners and family* allowed sustaining a high degree of dedication, which is in contrast with the other interviewees who encountered this aspect. Some of the interviewees are featured in two categories, because according to Dupont and Beal (2021) one of the key conceptions for construction of a lifestyle sport participant identity is the life course stage. The different aspects of adulthood enter their lives in different points, and this must be reflected. This multiple featuring does not consider a chronological occurrence of the explained events in one's life course, because I wanted to present the categories in a certain order. For examination of subcultural identities, it is necessary to take into consideration the changes that are happening with an individual over time (Dupont and Beal, 2021). Citations show that there is a certain time frame in which the interviewees encountered one or several of those aspects. This time frame is between the eighteenth and twenty sixth year of age. There are many different outcomes of this encounter, and the outcomes also depend on the number of encountered aspects. It is also interesting that some of the interviewees dealt with the aspect of *career and money* by developing an economic career within their subculture career. According to them, they have been surrounded by skateboarding. This illustrates that skateboarding was a lifestyle for them. It was usually the combination of the aspects of *career and money* and *partners and family* that caused a decrease of their dedication to their subculture identity. Finally, some citations show that some interviewees had a realization about certain aspects of skateboarding, which might have had to a certain degree negatively impacted their dedication.

4.6. Return after the break

The previous subchapter shed light on what happened with the subcultural identity of my interviewees when they encountered the aspects of adulthood. The citations also revealed the impact of other factors such as addictive substances or injuries. Different realizations about skateboarding also had an effect. This chapter shows that the increase of dedication to subculture identity was not a permanent state for my interviewees. The interviewees in this

chapter are divided into two categories based on how they have been increasing dedication to their subculture identity at different points in their lives.

4.6.1. The road is bumpy

The two interviewees in this category have in common that they both had a substantial decrease of dedication to their subculture identity for a certain period of time. They also share the fact that their dedication had been increasing and decreasing as they have been progressing on the life course stage and on the lifestyle sport career stage. The first interviewee in this category is Inge:

> When I was finished studying, I got my full time job at the Mystic skate shop, so then all the other things stopped, because I did not need the other three jobs, so then I was just hundred percent focused on that one job and that made basically more time for skating again, so I had some busy years with the studies and then came more time for skating. Then I had a good streak of skating for a couple of years. It was at least once a week with the Old boys skate. At the skatepark, they had the Old boys skating and I have some old boys friends, so it was skating at least once a week. Then there was a kind of change with the Old boys, because I had some family things going on, so all of a sudden, I did not have time to go skate, because, I was alone with my kid. It was from going once a week to not going at all, so this Old boys thing just stopped. Then, there was some skating now and then, when the opportunity arose, but then it was like once a month. This period was from 2016 to 2018 or 2019 and then it has been less since then. It has been less over the years, but in like bulks. It could be once a month, then it could go like three or four months without it, but with being more active during the summer of course. At some point I stopped using my spare time on going skating and I started to prioritize other stuff.

As seen in the previous chapter, Inge's subculture identity had been affected by the aspects of adulthood. This led to a rapid decrease of the dedication to his subculture identity. It seems that when things settled down, he started to skate more. The Old boys skate activity worked as a new catalyst of his subculture identity. This correlates with the previous chapter where Inge says the following: it is about the crew as well, so when you do not have the guys asking you to go skate every day, you might not go on your own initiative. It is unclear whether Inge would have skated more back then, if he had not lost the social aspect of it, but it nicely illustrates the importance of the social sphere when constructing and performing the subculture identity. The citation from Inge shows that the dedication to subculture identity was increasing and decreasing as he was progressing on the life course stage. The next interviewee who experienced similar decreases and increases of dedication is Lavar:

Well then, the last year, there was no skate. To say that I tried to ollie up a sidewalk once out of the ten times I was skating to the convenient store, would be an over exaggeration. I knew that the knee was fucked up and that the situation needed a solution and that I will not get out of it [addiction] without skateboarding, so I went to Czechia for a rehab, because in Spain there was only nonsmoking rehab and I do not think I would manage that, because I'm still smoking and it has been ten years already. After the rehab I started working in the skateboarding again, in a pseudo skate shop, and half a year later, I went for the surgery, so I had that leg repaired in 2014. After the operation, I sold shoes in some shop for a while, but the return to skateboarding was not so fast, but I think that half a year after the surgery, it somehow started to work again and actually after many years I started to enjoy it again. Then I moved to Prague where I got a good job, but it took me a while to build a client network and when I finally did it, I have been relocated to Germany, so I had to start from scratch and it just did not work out, so I quit and returned to drugs, so 2017, 2018 and 2019 were drugs. I stopped working, so I had a lot of free time again, but I did not use it on skating, but on consumption and I also had a girlfriend. Then I went to a second rehab, so I was busy till the half of 2020, but since then I started to skate a lot.

In Lavar's case it is unclear if he completely stopped skating or not, but the severity of the decrease he explains could be interpreted as a complete stop. It might be useful to remind the reader, that Lavar suffered an ACL injury and was a drug addict. In the previous chapter he explained that the drug addiction caused a decrease of dedication to his subculture identity and that the injury caused an involuntarily break. The increase of dedication to his subculture identity was fueled by the desire to stop being an addict. It seems that it was the aspects of adulthood that created conditions for him that allowed him to increase the dedication to his subculture identity. Particularly the aspect of *career and money*. This is interesting, because up till now the aspects of adulthood functioned as something that causes a decrease of the dedication to the subculture identity. That is if we do not count those who developed an economic career within a subculture career and the interviewee whose current relationship plays a part in sustaining a high degree of dedication. Lavar's strategy was successful, but it was unfortunately short lived since he started to use again, and his subculture identity dropped in the hierarchy of salience of identities again. After some more years of addiction and struggles connected to it, his dedication increased again, and it has been stable since.

4.6.2. There where I left of

This category consists of three interviewees, which all have in common that their dedication to their subculture identity substantially decreased at some point during their life course. When they increased their dedication again, it has been stable since. The first interviewee in this category who explains his return to skateboarding is Pier (Interview 2):

I started skating again a month or two before I went to New Zealand. I do not know if I had suddenly more time or someone texted me, but I just skated now and then and I had to learn everything again and was not able to land anything, but I was still enjoying it. When I went to New Zealand the skateboarding was the easiest way how to meet someone. Because I didn't know anyone there and I didn't have much to do, so I just skated or worked. So, I was not able to do any tricks before I went to New Zealand, and the whole time I was there I was like restoring tricks and learning new tricks. You do a crooked grind, then you remember that before you could do a half cab crooked grind, so you do that etc. The nice weather caused me to skate all the time with the people I met there. I also used to skate alone, because right in front of the apartment I lived in, was this perfect spot. You could just go there and skate a little bit. I even skated there alone on Christmas Eve, since my family was not there.

I'm including another citation from Pier to provide a better context for the first one (Interview 2):

I had a better job there, I worked in a hotel from eight pm to one am, and that was fine. You wake up in the morning at eight or nine am and the money was completely different and I could skate there during the day.

According to the previous subchapter Pier had a complete break from skateboarding for almost three years. He cannot recall why his dedication to his subculture identity increased again, but he explains that the social aspect played a role in it. Pier used skateboarding as a tool to create a social network abroad. The middle section of the citation is contradictory, as it explains that he skated, because of the lack of social contact, but then at the same time he says that he shared skateboarding with his new social network. It looks like the lack of social contact acted as a catalyst of the increase of his dedication. The previous subchapter showed that Pier's decrease of dedication was caused by his career choice, but also by a realization that skateboarding will not become an economically beneficial activity. The second citation shows that the aspect of adulthood *career and money* can be combined with the subculture identity. It is difficult to say if the job choice was intentional with skateboarding in mind or if the spare time that he used on skateboarding was a byproduct of the job choice. The next interviewee who returned to skateboarding after a break is Hans (Interview 2):

A strange thing is that it was the partying that got me back to it, because I do not party anymore haha. You meet the people that you skated with before at the party and then you meet some others, and then it gradually leads to it. When I stopped partying then I told myself that skateboarding would be the thing that I could do again. After several years of just drinking and working and no sport activities, your body is quite destroyed and I find out that you need to do something, to have movement. I still had the

skateboard at home. That simplified it too. So, you just take it, and you say to yourself: *I will not be ashamed because of it*, and you skate a sidewalk a little bit. I have been kind of determined and I remembered that I could still do something and that makes you happy. It was difficult, but the basic tricks were still there. I have this kind of fear that if you do not skate for a couple of days, you will forget how to do some tricks. This fear caused back then that I grinded some tricks and that paid off when I started again. It was some basics like a kickflip and fifty-fifty grind, so the only things I can do now anyways haha. The tricks started to slowly develop. I always had it this way, no sudden progress, but I could do something and that was good. It was awesome that some of the original people were still skating.

Hans explains a paradoxical situation where the cause of the decrease of dedication to his subculture identity was also the catalyst that helped to increase it again. This process of increase happened gradually. At first there was an impulse by his social network. Here is a similarity with the previous interviewees in this subchapter, where the social aspect also played a role. The impulse by his social network led to another impulse, and that was the desire for a healthier lifestyle. The notion of shame might be caused by the fact that skateboarding is something that is associated with youth. Another potential explanation could be that Hans did not feel comfortable with his potential lack of skateboarding skills after the break. This citation is similar to Pier's one, in the sense that they both explain relearning the skateboarding tricks. The last interviewee in this category is Michael:

And then I returned to it, but not tricks wise. Skateboarding was always for me the feeling of standing on it. To just be on it. For me skateboarding is not about tricks and maybe it never was, but it is about being outside with the board, the sound, the feeling that you are suddenly rolling. Now I'm just doing downhills.

Michael is the first interviewee whose return also meant a change in the type of skateboarding he was doing. This is in contrast with the other two interviewees which explain that they had been relearning tricks after their return to skateboarding. I'm interpreting it as a change of his subculture identity. The interpretation here is difficult, because Michael explains that before, skateboarding possibly meant for him doing tricks, and now it means to ride down from a hill. He is at the same time saying that the feeling of standing on the board was what skateboarding meant for him all along. I think it could still be interpreted in a way that he is applying the current meaning of skateboarding on himself, and this is defining his subculture identity. Based on the interview I did with Michael I know that he skates regularly and has a high degree of dedication to his identity of a skateboarder.

4.6.3. Discussion on the return to skateboarding after a break

This chapter shows how and why some of my interviewees started to skate again after a break from skateboarding, or after a considerable decrease of active skating. I divided the interviewees into two categories based on how they returned to skateboarding. Every return to skateboarding or increase in skateboarding activity was unique, and in some cases dependent on the situations that caused the decrease in the first place. The first category consists of two interviewees, where the first one had repeated decreases and increases of dedication to his subculture identity throughout his life course. The reason for this were the aspects of adulthood and perhaps to some degree the loss of social contact connected to skateboarding. The cause of the break from skateboarding and decrease of dedication to subculture identity with the second interviewee was caused by a drug addiction and an injury. What those interviewees have in common is that their dedication was repeatedly increasing and decreasing throughout their life course. What is perhaps the most interesting, is that for the first interviewee the aspects of adulthood acted as something that caused an increase in his dedication, whereas with the other one, the aspects created a condition which allowed him at some point in his life course to increase the dedication to his subculture identity. The second category consists of three interviewees. The first one started to skate again after a three year break and the reason for this is unknown, but his move abroad and the usage of skateboarding as a mediator for social networking contributed to an increase of dedication to his subculture identity. The fact that he had more spare time abroad also contributed to the increase of dedication. The social contacts also played a role in the return for the second interviewee. Finally, it was also a desire to have a healthier lifestyle. The citation from the last interviewee in this category shows that his subculture identity took a different form after the break.

4.7. Meaning of skateboarding today

This chapter is about how my interviewees reflect their subculture identity today, or in other words what skateboarding means for them now. The point of this chapter is to see how they are constructing and performing their identity of a skateboarder today. The third subchapter in the first chapter of the analysis, was about how my interviewees reflected their subculture identity in their adolescence. This subchapter shows how they are reflecting their subculture identity today as they advanced on the life course stage and the subculture career stage. The interviewees are divided into three categories based on what skateboarding means for them.

4.7.1. Meaningful struggle and the feeling of fulfilment

This first category in this chapter contains five interviewees. This is half of the research sample. The name of this category hints about how these interviewees reflect their identity of a skateboarder in the present day. It is interesting that a lot of them connects skateboarding with a notion of struggle and one could almost ask them "*why are you doing it then?*", but it almost seems it is this feeling of struggle and reward, that allows them to maintain a high degree of dedication to their subculture identity. The first interviewee in this category is Lavar:

> Look, it is like the same, I still probably loved it the same way, maybe. Just today, as you have seen, I didn't have a very good day, but that will absorb eventually, that's unfortunately a part of it, or thank God, or if every day would be a good day, you would not value your good days. The older I get, the fewer good days. I would like to add that it is a love-hate relationship, as it goes to extremes on both sides, and I'm actually living proof of that. On one hand, dude, after a heavy drug addiction, I was able to stop because of skateboarding, and now, on the other hand, because I did not land one single trick I want to stop too, I don't know what to think about myself and skateboarding.

Lavar uses very strong words when he describes what skateboarding means for him. He does this in an almost paradoxical way while the notion of a struggle is clear. Another interviewee who emphasizes the struggle connected to skateboarding is Hans (Interview 1):

> "A lot of fun and a lot of struggles. It is like this never-ending quest or homework that you give yourself. Always something… either the weather or too many people, but sometimes happiness, but overall, a lot of fun" (Beringer, 2022. p. 14.).

The next interviewee who also mentions struggle among other things is Martin:

> A sort of entertainment, which is satisfying me. When I land some trick or something, then I feel satisfied and at the same time I'm glad that I have movement, so when I do not have a good day, then I still tell myself, at least I had movement. Because before I was often so angry when I was not able to do some trick, that it was a waste of time, but now I tell myself at least I had movement, I'm sweaty.

Lavar, Hans and Martin all have in common that they thematize a struggle when they are reflecting their subculture identity. It seems that the struggle comes down to whether one lands a trick or not. Hans and Martin also emphasize the notion of fun. The third subchapter

in the first part of the analysis was about how my interviewees reflect what skateboarding meant for them in their adolescence. The interviewees in that chapter were divided into three categories. It is interesting that both Lavar and Martin were in the same category then, as they are now. Before they were in the category called *The new cool* which characterized skateboarding as something new or even exotic. Last but importantly, Martin is talking about physical movement connected to skateboarding. He is not the only one who does that as Joseph emphasizes it in his citation too (Interview 1):

> "The reason I'm skating is that I want to have movement, to be outside with friends, to have a good life. A new trick makes you happy and that's the main goal. Yesterday I did nollie noseslide on the four block and that made me happy. Wherever you take a trick to the next level, it makes you happy and that is the goal for me. Ever since I began that was the goal for me and that is not going to change" (Beringer, 2022. p. 14).

Next to the physical movement Joseph also emphasizes the notion of happiness. The feeling that Joseph gets from skateboarding is similar in nature to what Friedrich is describing:

> I guess skateboarding always brought me good faith in life, and football bad things really. The ACL injury and always contact with stupid people and mostly fools. It has been over twenty years and I'm still going. I would hate myself if I would stop. Last week I was not skating, and it was frustrating. Every day after skating, I have a feeling like I did something meaningful. Really when I do not skate, I feel uncomfortable. It is also about the relationships with other skaters. I met so many skaters in my life, you meet new people all the time. It is a long story. If you go to Barcelona and you do not skate, then you do not meet the locals, you are just a tourist. There is nothing in the world like skateboarding.

Joseph and Friedrich both explain the positive feeling they get from skateboarding. In comparison to the other interviewees in this category they do not mention the struggle in connection to skateboarding. Joseph thematizes, as the previous interviewees, that skateboarding comes down to landing tricks. Friedrich once again compares skateboarding with one of the collective sports, to demonstrate how he understands his subculture identity. Finally, the social factor of skateboarding is highlighted. When the chapter about meaning of skateboarding in adolescence is considered, both Joseph and Friedrich were in the category called *Dedication*. For the interviewees in that category, it was typical to be very dedicated to their identity of a skateboarder and they have been performing it pretty much daily.

4.7.2. Therapy

This category consists of the interviewees which describe that for them, skateboarding means something that gives them a feeling that is therapeutical in nature. The interviewees explain that while performing their subculture identity, they are in a certain state of mind that has a positive effect on them. The first one who is describing this state is Michael:

> So, I was skating, I was filming skate videos, and I had a company. On top of it all, I have a niece who is a skateboarder and I helped him to set a skateboard together and I'm teaching him how to do a kickflip at Eden (a part of town). Basically, my entire life is skateboarding. I still live it, but you do not have the crew that has been around it before. You do not see them so often. But for me, it is that I go to the little convenient store we have here, and I buy the little juice for kids, for twelve crowns - the biggest old school, and sit I down on my board on the curb on a bus station. You are drinking the juice and thinking: *when I was sixteen I would never imagine that I would be here thirty years later exactly in the same modus*. Then you go on the bus, and they say: look a skateboarder, but he is too old, but they can go fuck themselves, because they do not have the chill, they do not know how much it means for me and that everything is spinning around skateboarding. So, I never dropped out from it, and I do not want that, because all my main friends are from that environment.

Michael is explaining that skateboarding permeates his entire life and that truly is a lifestyle for him. What is perhaps the most interesting is the word *modus* he uses when he talks about his subculture identity. He is not the only who explain his subculture identity in this way, as Chill uses an explanation that is similar:

> Yea, and probably as an adult, it is more like a therapy thing, because when you see like regular adults, they work a regular nine to five job and after work what they do? I have no idea what people do. For me it is like, when the weather is good, and I do not have any other commitment from before I will go skate and will just enjoy myself. Sometimes I come here [to Stalin Plaza], and I do not even skate, because I meet friends which I have not seen in a while, so we talk and stuff like that. This shit keeps us young, people my age look like way worse, fat, fucking shirt tucked in their pants. It keeps you young, that is the thing.

Chill uses the word *therapy* when he explains what skateboarding means for him. The rest of the citation is about authenticity claims through skateboarding. This shows that it is an ongoing process which spans throughout the entire subculture career. The last interviewee in this category is Tobias, who also describes a certain state of mind when skateboarding:

It means for me, that after work I'm going to skate and that means for me that I stay completely in the present and this is the best feeling, because you do not have any worries, you are not worried about anything. Like some stress in work and other things, that for me is skateboarding, the feeling of staying in the present. Like now, we are talking about back in the days, but normally I would skate and then I would be now and here in the present.

Michael, Chill and Tobias give interesting answers when they reflect their current subculture identity. Those interviewees are together in this category because I see patterns in their citations. The usage of words like *modus, therapy* and explaining skateboarding as something like *a feeling of staying in present* shows that performing their subculture identity induces a certain state of mind. Michael is constructing and performing his identity of a skateboarder by projecting his youth through his present behavior. I'm interpreting his behavior and the response to other people's reaction, as a claim of authenticity. The second interviewee in this category is Chill, and he accompanies the notion of therapy, with a comparison of his position as a skateboarder with the mainstream society, which does not skate. Chill is delineating himself from mainstream society and the issue of authenticity claims is even clearer in his case. Chill is proclaiming himself authentic because he skates, and mainstream society does not. At the same time by saying this, he is constructing his subculture identity. Michael is essentially doing the same thing. These two citations show that the assertion of authenticity is a constant process that is happening throughout the entire subcultural career. If we take a look at how those three interviewees in the chapter *The meaning of skateboarding in adolescence* has been categorized, there is a partial pattern, because both Michael and Tobias were before categorized as *The new cool*. This means that two out of three interviewees have been categorized in the same way in both sub chapters.

4.7.3. Economic career within a subculture career

The last category in this subchapter are people who developed an economic career within their subcultural career. This means that their main source of income comes from an activity that is connected to skateboarding. This category has only two interviewees. The first one who explains this situation is Pier (Interview 1):

"For me it is a job and entertainment at the same time. It's just… I can just go skate for fun and from that it changes to work in an instant or the other way. Its intermingling, sometimes you cannot distinguish between work or if you are just skating. You skate and suddenly you see some design [that someone he knows is using a product from the company he works for], so you take a photo, you upload it somewhere, you put a link there… When I know I need a photo like this for the next

week I will just take it even though I was just going to skate. It is entertainment and work and both at the same time, sometimes more of that and sometimes of the other" (Beringer, 2022. p. 14.).

Pier explains that his subcultural sport career and economic career are intermingling (Beringer, 2022). I will just remind the reader that at some point in his subcultural career, his dedication to his subculture identity decreased and he stopped skating for three years. One possible explanation for this break was that he realized that he is not going to financially benefit from skateboarding. For the purpose of anonymization, I will not go into specifics about Pier's job. The development of an economic career within his subcultural career could be a factor that contributes to sustaining a high degree of dedication to his identity of a skateboarder (Beringer, 2022). The next interviewee who also developed an economic career with his subculture career is Inge:

> It is from being just a hobby to being something you work with, so even though I like it and I think that it is still fun, it also became kind of something you have to do, because of work. You have to pay attention to what is happening, and you need to pay attention to who is the up and coming skater and who is doing what and what is happening in the culture and what is new and everything, so it is kind of forced. It is not because I want to, but it is because I have to or maybe both, I want to, I think it is fun, but also, it is something I cannot decide not to do, to pay attention to, not to care about skating, I guess. I would want to go more, maybe I would even go more, if I did not work at the skate shop, or less. I do not know.

The development of an economic career within a subculture career had a different impact on Inge's subculture identity than it had on Pier's. Inge's economic career caused skateboarding to become something that he is surrounded by. The citation also shows that Inge is constructing his subculture identity not only based on whether he is skating or not, but for him skateboarding also means working in a skate shop. Nowadays Inge does not perform his subculture identity as often, as for example in his adolescence. He said that in 2023 he skated once or twice. He is saying that he is not sure if his economic career causes a decrease of dedication to his subculture identity or not, but since he is explaining skateboarding as something that he has to do, then it seems that way. This reminds me of the chapter about skateboarding versus other sport activities. Nine out of ten of my interviewees abandoned all the other sport activities when they started with skateboarding, and the tenth one did not do any sport activity before he started skating. The reason for this is that the other activities did not provide them with the same amount of freedom and fun and some of them struggled with

their collective nature. What I see here is that once the participants control is taken away, and skateboarding becomes something that one has to do, the attractiveness might fade. When this is compared with Pier's case, there is a difference, because Pier's economic career is intermingling with his subculture career. He explains that this intermingling is happening in a literal sense. Meanwhile, Inge simply cannot skate while he is in the skate shop. The conclusion is that an economic career within a subculture career might lead to a decrease or increase of dedication to one's subculture identity and it is dependent on a broader context. With the two previous categories in this sub chapter, I checked if there was a pattern based on how the interviewees have been categorized in the subchapter *Meaning of skateboarding in adolescence* and how they have been categorized in this one. This category does not show any pattern with the previous categorization.

4.7.4. Discussion on the meaning of skateboarding today

This chapter is about what skateboarding means for my interviewees in the present time, or in other words how they are reflecting their subculture identity today. I divided the interviewees into three categories based on how they understand their identity of a skateboarder. For the first category it is typical that skateboarding means a sort of meaningful struggle and gives the interviewees a feeling of satisfaction or fulfillment. This struggle comes down to the attempts to land a trick and the satisfaction that comes from landing it. The interviewees in this category also mention physical movement that is beneficial for health, and the notion of fun, when they are describing what skateboarding means for them (Beringer, 2022). The interviewees in the second category explain that skateboarding allows them to achieve a certain state of mind. Perhaps the word meditation would be closest to this state. This category also shows that to claim authenticity in order to be embedded in the subcultural identity is a process that is ongoing, and it is happening through the entire subculture career. The third and the last category, consists of two interviewees and it is those who developed an economic career within their subcultural career. This process had a different outcome for both interviewees. It seems that for one of them it helps with sustaining a high degree of dedication to his identity of a skateboarder (Beringer, 2022). Whereas, with the other interviewee it might have had the opposite effect. As I said before I understand these different meanings of skateboarding for my interviewees as their subculture identity. I'm interpreting it in a way that their behavior while skateboarding and their understanding of skateboarding is happening simultaneously, and that this process is establishing their subculture identity. This interpretation was achieved through the theory about subculture identity from Andes (1998). I

was also comparing if there was some pattern between how I categorize the interviewees in the subchapter *The meaning of skateboarding in the adolescence* and how I categorized them in this one. In that subchapter I sorted the interviewees into three categories: *Social bonders, The new "cool"* and *Dedication*. In this chapter I also divided the interviewees into three categories. Those categories were the following: *The meaningful struggle and feeling of fulfillment, Therapy* and *Economic career within a subculture career.* The most notable observations were that the interviewees from *The new "cool"* were now categorized either as *The meaningful struggle and feeling of fulfillment* or *Therapy,* and two out of three interviewees from *Dedication* as *The meaningful struggle and a feeling of fulfillment.* The rest of the advancements were random and did not have any pattern.

5. Conclusion

This thesis is about ageing in the skateboarding subculture. It is a relevant research topic, because in the last decade there has been a growth in academic interest in skateboarding, because it is increasing in popularity and sporting legitimacy. The understanding of skateboarding as something as a "youth culture" does not match the reality of skateboarding anymore (O'Connor, 2021; O'Connor, 2017). There has also been a general scarcity of studies about how older participants remain involved in lifestyle sports which are usually associated with risk and youth. Skateboarding is a typical example of this lack of research (Willing, Bennet, Pisppa and Green, 2019). The lack of research in this field, as well as my personal motivation as a skateboarder, made me formulate my research problem: How older skateboarders reflect changes of their subculture identity from when they started to the present. To answer this research problem, I'm using three research questions: *How do older skateboarders reflect their subculture identity in the course of their subculture career? How do they combine their subculture identity with the aspects of adulthood? What role does authenticity play in changes of the subculture identity?*

The base for this research is one book and three articles about ageing in lifestyle sports and skateboarding. Those four texts serve as a theoretical anchor of the research, and gave me a starting point for the research. I'm also using my bachelor thesis and one course assignment about ageing in skateboarding, as an inspiration and as a source for this thesis. The book *Lifestyle sports and identities: subcultural careers through the life course* from Dupont and Beal (2021) gave me a nice theoretical background on the research problem. Perhaps the article *Over 40 and Still Skateboarding: Identity and wellbeing in the older skater* from O'Connor (2021) was the most useful. In this article O'Connor (2021) presents the different meanings of skateboarding for middle aged skateboarders. The other two texts were *Beyond the youth culture: Understanding middle-aged skateboarders through temporal capital* from O'Connor (2017) and *Skateboarding and the 'Tired Generation': Ageing in Youth Cultures and Lifestyle Sports* from Willing, Bennet, Pisppa and Green (2019). I'm also using different subculture theories from Heřmanský and Novotná (2011; 2019) and the theory about identity from Williams (2011). Finally, I'm borrowing the theory about the aspects of adulthood from Davis (2012), which was developed based on her research on ageing in the punk subculture.

This thesis follows the interviewees' subculture career through their life course and focuses on how progression through it affects the subculture identity. The first I'm explaining

how and why my interviewees started to skate. The sociodemographic attributes of the interviewees provided a natural categorization. The conclusion was that those who are from the Czech Republic and are at the same time older than forty, struggled with obtaining the skateboard equipment and the reason for this was the socialistic heritage of the Czech Republic. The ones from outside of the Czech Republic or younger than forty, did not report any struggle. The common aspect for everyone was some sort of mediator, with a certain amount of subculture capital, who helped to obtain the skateboarding equipment or passed on knowledge about skateboarding.

The result of the impact of skateboarding on other sport activities in adolescence was that all the interviewees quickly abandoned them, because of it. There were three causes of this result. The first one is that some of my interviewees did not like the rules and the structures of institutional sports. The second one is that they simply did not find them entertaining, and the last one is that they for different reasons struggled with their collective nature.

The reflection of the subculture identity of my interviewees in their adolescence shows three different meanings. The first category emphasizes the social aspect of skateboarding. The second one reflects their subculture identity back then as something new or even exotic. For the third category, their subculture identity was something which they were very dedicated to. These findings are important because they illustrate how my interviewees constructed and sustained their subculture identity. By performing their subculture identity, skateboarding became a lifestyle for them. By developing this lifestyle and differentiating themselves from mainstream society, they were claiming authenticity. The assertion of authenticity is important, because it roots people in the identities that have meaning for them (Williams, 2011).

I'm also showing what happens with the subculture identity when its wearers encounter the "unavoidable" aspects of adulthood. There are three aspects of adulthood: *Growing up, Career and money* and *Partners and children* (Davis, 2012 as cited in Beringer, 2022). The data showed three possible outcomes of this encounter. The first one is a decrease of dedication to subculture identity, or in other words stopping skateboarding. The second one is an adjustment of the aspects of adulthood to the subculture identity, and the third one is the development of an economic career within the subculture career. I also found out that addictive substances in combination with the aspects of adulthood, can also cause a decrease of dedication to the subculture identity (Beringer, 2022). This chapter illustrates what happens to the subculture identity as a skateboarder progresses on the life course stage and subculture

career stage. This finding gives answers to the first two research questions and sheds light on my research problem. However, my research did not stop at this point in the life course of my interviewees, and I was also trying to find out in what ways the subculture identity changes beyond this point.

As the dedication to subculture identity of some interviewees decreased, it increased again after a certain amount of time. Once there was an increase, it can either be decreasing and increasing again or the dedication can remain stable.

The reflection of the current subculture identity by the interviewees shows that skateboarding has three different meanings for them. The first category emphasizes that skateboarding is something that is very demanding for them both physically and mentally, but it is also very rewarding at the same time. For the second category, skateboarding induces a certain state of mind that has a therapeutical effect. In the last category are those who developed an economic career within their subculture career. The development of an economic career within a subculture career can either help to maintain dedication to subculture identity or it can contribute to its decrease. The reflection of the subculture identity in adolescence and in the present shows that the pursuit of authenticity is a process that is happening through the entire subculture career. It shows that the young skateboarders, as well as the older skateboarders, are claiming authenticity and by that embedding themselves in their subculture identity. Their authenticity is based on differentiating themselves from mainstream society. This observation was possible through the theory about identity from Williams (2011). It also provides an answer to my third research question.

To transparently answer the research problem, I will conclude the results in this paragraph. It seems that in adolescence subcultural identity of my interviewees represented something that allowed them to develop strong social bonds and something that was new, attractive, and "cool". Secondly, it represented something that they have been really dedicated to. As they have been progressing on the life course stage their subculture identity has been affected (or not) by the aspects of adulthood as well as by other factors. For those who did not develop an economic career within their subculture career their subculture identity means something that is challenging and rewarding at the same time. For some it has a therapeutical effect. These findings allowed for the creation of two types of skateboarders: The Youth Type and the Adult Type. For the Youth Type it is typical that skateboarding is first mediated through another skateboarder, as a social activity that bestows a certain status on its practitioner. Performing of skateboarding functions as pursuit of authenticity, which is based on subversion against structures and collectivism. The Youth Type evolves into the Adult

Type. The context of the transformation varies between different individuals. For the Adult Type it is typical that skateboarding is understood as something that is challenging, but therapeutical at the same time. For the Adult Type skateboarding can also become an occupation and a source of income. The Adult Type, same as at The Youth Type, pursues and claims authenticity and have the mainstream society as a reference group.

The presented data made me think about a proposal for future research. The analysis showed that the older interviewees from Czech Republic struggled with obtaining skateboard equipment, and the reason for this is the socialistic heritage of Czech Republic. It would be interesting to explore in more depth the phenomenon of ageing in skateboarding, in the context of post-soviet countries. My data are tied to this potential research problem to a certain degree, but I feel like it would be necessary to have more data from several more interviewees, to explore this phenomenon in depth. It would be a really narrow and specific group of people, but I think it could be an interesting research project.

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Appendix

Attachment A: Interview guide

Interview guide

Research problem:

How older skateboarders reflect their subculture identity in the course of their subculture career and life course?

Research questions:

How do older skateboarders reflect their subculture identity in the course of their subculture career?

How does the aspects of adulthood affect the subculture identity?

What role does authenticity play in changes of the subculture identity?

In the beginning:

- Thank for their time

- Explain the reason for the interview and its outcome

- Explain the principle of anonymization

- Tell them that they can seize their participation whenever

Questions:

Beginning

- When did you start to skate (Beringer, 2022)?

- Why and how?

- Did you have any other hobbies?

- What happened with those hobbies when you started to skate?

- Could you try to describe what skateboarding meant for you in the first years?

Aspects of adulthood

- Did things like job, school and partners affect your skateboarding (Beringer, 2022)

Return – in case they stopped skateboarding

- Why did you start to skate again (Beringer, 2022)?

- Was something different after the break?

Skateboarding today

- Could you try to explain what skateboarding means for you today (Beringer, 2022)?

In the end:

- Thank for their time and participation

- Give them your contact information in case they would want to ask about something or add something (Beringer, 2022)

- Ask if it is ok that you would contact them in case you would need to clear something up

Attachment B: Informative letter and informative consent

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

Ageing in the skateboard subculture?

Purpose of the project
You are invited to participate in a research project where the main purpose is to research what means skateboarding for older skateboarders.
How skateboarders live skateboarding now when they are older versus how it was when were younger- kids, teenagers.
It is a master's thesis.

Which institution is responsible for the research project?
University of Agder is responsible for the project (data controller).

Why are you being asked to participate?
The sample is chosen from my social network, the main criterium is that their thirty years old or older and that they skate. Ten people will be asked.

What does participation involve for you?

It is a semi structured qualitative interview which takes between one and two hours. I am interested in history of skateboarding career of the interviewee. The sound will be recorded.

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that you fill in an online survey. It will take approx. 90 minutes. The survey includes questions about when and how you started to skate, how did you combined skateboarding with factors like job, studies, family etc. What skateboarding means for you today? Your answers will be recorded electronically via a dictaphone.

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data
We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified here and we will process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation (the GDPR).

My supervisor Ove Skarpenes will have access to the data.

Your name and contact details will be replaced with a code.
The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.
The data will be stored and a laptop with a password and the list of names will be stored on a separate device which is also under a password.
I will be using the data program Atlas.ti for work with the data.

The data will be anonymized and stored indefinitely in case of follow up research. (deleting or rewriting identifiable data). They will be stored in a laptop under a password.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with University of Agder. The Data Protection Services of Sikt – Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- University of Agder via Ove Skarpenes
- Our Data Protection Officer: Ina Danielsen
-

If you have questions about how data protection has been assessed in this project by Sikt, contact:
- email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 73 98 40 40.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader   Student (if applicable)
(Researcher/supervisor)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project Ageing in the skateboard subculture and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

☐ to participate in the qualitative interview

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end of the project.

(Signed by participant, date)

Attachment C: Notification form from SIKT

◆ Sikt

Notification Form

Reference number
134362

Which personal data will be processed?

- Name
- Background information that, when combined, can be used to identify an individual
- Other personal information
- Health data

Describe the background information
Names of brands or companies that the people are associated with.

Describe the other types of personal data
Names, nick names, names of brands or companies that the people are associated with.

Project information

Title
Ageing in the skateboard subculture

Summary
I will make a qualitative interviews with older skateboarders in order to find more about the phenomenon of ageing in the skateboard subculture.

What is the purpose for processing personal data?
Socio-demographic information can be important for explaining the research question.

External funding
Ikke utfyllt
Type of project
Master's

Contact information, student
Dan Beringer, dan.beringer@seznam.cz, tlf: 97330281

Data controller

Institution responsible for the project
Universitetet i Agder / Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap / Institutt for sosiologi og sosialt arbeid

Project leader
Ove Skarpenes, ove.skarpenes@uia.no, tlf: +4738141174

Do multiple institutions share responsibility (joint data controllers)?
No

Sample 1

Describe the sample
Adult skateboarders

Describe how you will identify or contact the sample
I will recruit the people from my own field

Age group
30 - 50

Which data relating to sample {{i}} will be processed? 1
- Name
- Background information that, when combined, can be used to identify an individual

86

- Other personal information
- Health data

How will data relating to sample 1 be collected?

Personal interview

Attachment

Interview guide.docx

Legal basis for processing general personal data
Consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 6 nr. 1 a)

Legal basis for processing special personal data
Explicit consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 9 nr. 2 a)

Justify the choice of legal basis for processing

Information for sample 1

Will the sample receive information about the processing of personal data?
Yes

How does the sample receive information about the processing?
Written (on paper or electronically)

Information letter
Information letter and informative consent.docx

Third persons

Will the project collect information about third persons?
No

Documentation

How will consent be documented?
- Manually (on paper)

How can consent be withdrawn?
They can contact me about this, because they will have my number.

How can data subjects get access to their personal data or have their personal data corrected or deleted?
I can give them the data. I can either send them the dictaphone recording or send them the transcription.

Total number of data subjects in the project
1-99

Approvals

Will any of the following approvals or permits be obtained?
Ikke utfyllt

Security measures

Will the personal data be stored separately from other data?
Yes

Which technical and practical measures will be used to secure the personal data?
- Continuous anonymisation

Where will the personal data be processed
- Hardware

Who has access to the personal data?
- Student (student project)

Will personal data be transferred to a third country?

87

No

Closure

Project period
01.06.2023 - 30.06.2024

What happens to the data at the end of the project?
Personal data will be anonymised (deleting or rewriting identifiable data)

Which anonymisation measures will be taken?
- The identification key will be deleted
- Personally identifiable information will be removed, re-written or categorized
- Any sound or video recordings will be deleted

Will the data subjects be identifiable in publications?
No

Additional information

88

Attachment D: Assessment of processing of personal data with the registered change about what type data will be processed

◆❯ Sikt

Assessment of processing of personal data

Reference number	Assessment type	Date
134362	Standard	13.05.2024

Title
Ageing in the skateboard subculture

Institution responsible for the project
Universitetet i Agder / Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap / Institutt for sosiologi og sosialt arbeid

Project leader
Ove Skarpenes

Student
Dan Beringer

Project period
01.06.2023 - 30.06.2024

Categories of personal data
General
Special

Legal basis
Consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 6 nr. 1 a)
Explicit consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 9 nr. 2 a)

The processing of personal data is lawful, so long as it is carried out as stated in the notification form. The legal basis is valid until 30.06.2024.

Notification Form 🔗

Comment
Data Protection Services has assessed the change registered in the Notification Form.

We find that the processing of personal data in this project is lawful and complies with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out as described in the Notification Form with dialogue and attachments.

REGISTERED CHANGES
During the interviews it was collected personal data about the adult skateboarders injuries. This is data that the student will like to process and will ask each person that was interviewed to explicitly consent that these data can be processed.

TYPE OF DATA AND LEGAL BASIS
The project will process special categories of personal data about health.

The legal basis for processing personal data will be consent from the data subject, as stated in Article 6(1)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The data subject will give explicit consent to the processing of special categories of personal data. The conditions in Article 9(2)(a) of the GDPR will therefore be met, and the prohibition on processing special categories will not apply.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT
We will follow up at the planned end date to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded. In long duration projects, we will follow up the progress of the project every other year.

Good luck with the project!