**Youth Clubs as Men/Women Caves:
Exploring an Emerging Muslim Youth Subculture
Creating a New Canadian Religious Identity**

by

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Abstract

Second-generation immigrants in Canada are torn between different identities. Young Canadian Muslims on the one hand need to deal with their Islamic culture and on the other hand they are in constant interaction with Canadian culture. My doctoral research focuses on religious identities of second-generation Muslim youth living in Canada. I explore the understudied issue of intergenerational divide within the Muslim community. The intergenerational divide becomes obvious in the recent development of Muslim Canadian youth clubs, which are founded, and run by youths themselves. I examine the cultural, social and religious characteristics or drivers that are creating these kinds of formal/informal institutions as well as the challenges that these youths face in running independent programs. I participated in the programs of three of these clubs, one in Montreal and two in Ottawa, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews. By using ethnographic research, I compare and contrast the various social, cultural, institutional and financial factors associated with the clubs. This thesis examines youth clubs based on youth subcultural theories. I employ Steve Redhead's post-subcultural theory that focuses on subcultures shifting from political dimensions towards leisure. I also draw on Birmingham school's concept of resistance. I argue that in many cases Islamic centers, which have been formed and are currently run by first-generation Muslim immigrants, are not well suited to address the needs of second-generation Muslims. My research has indicated that this is one of the primary reasons for the rise of Muslim youth clubs in Canadian cities. Religious activities in the youth clubs are

somehow different from the religious centers of their parents, exposing this divide in the Muslim community as never before. This dissertation examines how youth clubs are a major protective factor for youth and argues that a 'new religious youth subculture', which has its own type of style, resistance and religiosity, is emerging among second-generation Muslim youth. My ethnographic study provides insights on the subculture of these youth. Such an understanding is particularly necessary in current circumstances where intense debates concerning second-generation Muslims are arising in Canada, especially in the political sphere.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The majority of studies on the children of Muslim immigrants in the West have been conducted in Europe and the Middle East and there are only a few studies on second-generation Muslims in North America.¹ Second-generation immigrants in Canada are torn between different identities. Searching for identity is part of being young (Ericson (1965-1968)).² Physical and psychological changes as well as society's and parents' expectations create an identity crisis for young men and women.³ The availability of support outside of family, having role models and large social networks serve as protective factors for youth. Such protective factors help overcome the identity crisis for youth.⁴ Religious organizations and institutions create support and a sense of belonging and community. These organizations sometimes integrate youth in activities that make them happy as well as create feelings such as self-confidence and belonging.⁵ This dissertation will examine how youth clubs are a major protective factor for second-generation Muslim youth.

The term second-generation refers to people who were born in Canada and have at least one parent who was born outside of Canada (first-generation).⁶ I have used this definition for the base of my fieldwork and when I refer to a participant as a second-generation. Second-generation youth in my study are those who were both

¹ Shaban Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2014, 2.

² Ericson, E.H, (1965), *The challenge of youth*, New York: W.W.Norton

³ Sameera Ahmad, *Religiosity, Identity and Pro-social Values and Behavior*, Ph.D Dissertation, Fairleigh Dickinson University, 2003, 3.

⁴ Ibid, 7.

⁵ Ibid, 9.

⁶ https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011003_2-eng.cfm

born and raised in Canada or were born in another country but came to Canada in their early childhood and before going to school. Therefore, second-generation in my study are youth whose schooling was done in Canada. With the rise of extremism among second-generation Muslims in the West, it is very important to conduct research and studies related to this rising population.⁷

In order to understand some of the experiences of Muslims in Canada first we must look at the historical context of Muslims living in Canada. This is followed by the research questions of the study as well as the methodology used.

History of Muslims in Canada

Around three percent of Muslims in the world live in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.⁸ The Canadian Muslim diaspora is a complex issue that needs further research.⁹ The history of Muslims arriving in Canada started in the middle of the 19th century when a Muslim Scottish couple named James and Agnes Love arrived in Canada. The earliest record of Muslims in Canada dates back to 1858 and 1871 during which two other couples arrived in Canada.¹⁰ The first Arab immigrant arrived in Canada in approximately 1882.¹¹ The Canadian Census of 1871 recorded 13 males who self-identified as Muslim and by 1901 this number reached 300 and in 1911 the number of Muslims reached 1500 people.

⁷ Maha Azzam, 'The Radicalization of Muslim Communities in Europe: Local and Global Dimensions,' *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* (2007): 123.

⁸ <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>

⁹ Jasmine Zine, *Islam in the hinterlands: exploring Muslim cultural politics in Canada*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 2.

¹⁰ V.A Behiery, A.M. Guenther, *Islam, Its Roots and Wings: A Primer*, (Mississauga: Canadian Council of Muslim Women, 2000), 39.

¹¹ Zine, *Islam in the Hinterlands*, 4.

According to the census of 1991, the number of Muslims was 253,260.¹²

Canada's population has tripled in size since the nineteen forties, going from 11 million to over 35 million today. Yet this increase has been largely fueled by immigration. In fact natural population growth accounts for only around a tenth of Canada's overall population increase each year according to the World Population Review.¹³ This points to the increasing role of immigrants in the makeup of Canadian society. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, there were 1,053,945 Muslims living in Canada.¹⁴ In fact the Muslim population increased from 2% of the Canadian population in 2001 to 3.2% in 2011.¹⁵ Almost seven out of ten Muslims were born in another country.¹⁶ The growth of the Muslim population has especially been rapid from the 1970s until today, leading to the formation of various ethnic community centers as well as numerous Mosques in Canada.¹⁷ Moreover The National Household Survey indicates that Muslims' population is set to grow even further in the future. The Pew Research Center, which conducts surveys on religion and public life, has estimated that the Muslim population in Canada is going to triple by the next 20 years, going from 940,000 in 2010 to nearly 2.7 million in 2030.¹⁸ In fact Muslims are the fastest growing religious group in Canada and after Christians

¹² Behiery and Guenther, *Islam: its Roots and Wings*, 40.

¹³ World Population Review, 'Canada Population 2015,' accessed September 8, 2015, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/canada-population/>.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada, '2011 National Household Survey Profile - Province/Territory,' May 8, 2013, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=01&Data=Count&SearchText=Canada&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=01&A1=Religion&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>.

¹⁵ World Population Review, 'Canada Population 2015,' accessed September 8, 2015, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/canada-population/>.

¹⁶ Survey of Muslims in Canada, 2016, 13.

¹⁷ Rubina Ramji, 'Creating a Genuine Islam: Second Generation Muslims Growing up in Canada,' *Canadian Diversity / Diversité Canadienne* 6, no. 2 (2008), 104.

¹⁸ <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>

they are the second largest religious group of the country.¹⁹ In the US about two-thirds of Muslims are first generations and around one third of them are native born. This number is set to increase significantly. The Pew Research Center estimates that by 2030, 44.9 percent of Muslims in the United States will be native born.²⁰

The majority of Muslims in Canada identify themselves as South Asian, Middle Eastern, West Asian, or North African.²¹ Most of them live in Ontario; however, where they live in Canada is also based on their ethnic backgrounds. For example, most Muslims in Quebec are from Morocco, Algeria, and other African countries, while the ones living in Ontario are mainly from Pakistan, Somalia and Bangladesh.²² Nevertheless Muslims in Canada come from very diverse backgrounds. They originate from more than eighty-five nations, and comprise dozens of racial and linguistic groups.²³ The majority of Muslims in Canada are Sunni Muslims but there are Shia, Ismaili, Druze and Sufi communities across Canada as well.²⁴ The great diversity of Muslims in the West is perfectly summed up in the quote below:

Does a secular Ugandan man of Indian Muslim ancestry have commonality with a practicing Shia woman from Iraq or Pakistan, or a non-practicing Muslim woman coming from former-Soviet Azerbaijan with a Sufi Muslim

¹⁹ Ramji, *Creating a Genuine Islam*, 105.

²⁰ <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>

²¹ Daood Hamdani, *Muslim Women: Beyond Perceptions* (Toronto: Canadian Council of Muslim Women, 2004): 4.

²² Krista Melanie Riley, 'Violence in the Lives of Muslim Girls and Women,' Canadian Institute of Health Research, (2011): 3.

²³ Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema and Mark Goodman, *Diaspora by Design: Muslim Immigrants, Canada and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009): 84.

²⁴ Zine, *Islam in Hinterlands*, 6.

*female from rural Pakistan, or both of them with a secular Iranian woman, or the devout Wahhabi/Hanbali man from Saudi Arabia?*²⁵

The Muslim community, or the *Ummah*²⁶ as it is said in Arabic, is not based on a single belief or ideology; rather, its members vary greatly. Contrary to some myths about Muslims in the Western world, not all Muslims are Arabs. In fact, most of the world's Muslims are non-Arabs.²⁷ Not only do Muslims have very different cultures and backgrounds, but they also have multiple views on subjects such as secularization and westernization. That is why each Muslim community should be studied separately in its cultural environment. Thus for example, Muslim communities living in France will be different from those living in Quebec, Canada. Moreover, apart from their living environment, other important intersectional factors including ethnicity, gender, culture, class, disability, immigration status might also affect their identities.

A survey conducted in 2007 found that the mean age of Muslims in Canada is 36.8 years (compared to 46.9 years for the general population), and that Canadian Muslims, both male and female, are more likely than the overall population to have completed one or more university degrees.²⁸ In fact, Muslims are the second most well educated religious group in Canada. Thus, we are dealing with mostly a young and educated population. Studies have shown that this population is informally

²⁵ Moghissi, Rahnema and Goodman, *Diaspora By Design*, 11.

²⁶ The word *Ummah* in Arabic means 'nation' or 'community' which in the context of Pan-Islamism, the word *ummah* is used to mean the *diaspora or Commonwealth of the Believers (ummat al-mu'minin)*, and thus the whole Muslim world. (See: <http://translation.babylon.com/english/ummah/>)

²⁷ Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, (New York: Colombia University Press, 2004): 21.

²⁸ Riley, 'Violence in the Lives of Muslim Girls and Women,' 2.

active in the public sphere, and participates in social and political issues.²⁹

Muslims in Montreal and Ottawa

Most of the Muslim population in Canada lives in urban places. Over 95 percent of Muslims live in metropolitan cities such as Toronto and Montreal.³⁰ In 2011, The National Household Survey stated that 974,900 people who live in Quebec were born in a foreign country, which means that one in eight people in Quebec are foreign born.³¹ According to the NHS, 850,240 people identified themselves as visible minorities in Quebec. From these visible minorities 30.6% of them were born in Canada and 64.7% were immigrants. The Employment Equity Act explains that visible minorities are 'persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color.' The visible minority population mostly consists of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.³² Montreal city is the largest city in the province of Quebec and most of the province's immigrants and their children live there, including Muslims. According to the NHS of 2011, there were 243,430 Muslims in the province of Quebec, of which 65,975 are second and third-generations who were born in Canada, and 166,590 people who were born in another country and had immigrated to Quebec.³³ Statistics Canada estimated in 2015 that the population for the Montreal metropolitan area had reached 4.1 million

²⁹ Katherine Bullock and Paul Nesbitt-Larking, 'Canadian Muslim youth and political participation, A Willingness to Engage,' *The Tessellate Institute* (2011): 18.

³⁰ Survey of Muslims in Canada, 13.

³¹ Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Quebec, The National Household Survey, January 2014, 1.

³² Ibid., 3.

³³ Ibid., 4.

people and the city of Montreal has a population of 1,753,034. More than 31% of this city's population will belong to visible minorities in 2031, which is a significant increase since 1981 when this number was only 5%. By 2031, 46% of Canadians 15 and older will be foreign-born or at least have one foreign-born parent. West Asian and Arabs could triple their population by 2031.³⁴ The city of Montreal particularly attracts immigrants from former French colonies in the Middle East such as Lebanon and North Africa.³⁵

The increase in the population of Ottawa city is mainly due to immigration, although the number of people who have immigrated to Ottawa has decreased in recent years.³⁶ A significant number of youth and children in Ottawa are from the children of immigrants or second-generation (11%). In 2006, around 179,000 immigrants lived in Ottawa, which is a quarter of the city's population. A high percentage of visible minorities in Ottawa are not immigrants, rather they are second-generation who were born and raised in Canada. Many of the census's participants declared that although they were born and raised in Canada, but in many situations they were considered as immigrants and 'it feels like being an outsider in your home country.'³⁷ In conclusion, Montreal and Ottawa are two of the main cities in Canada with large Muslim populations. Studying the Muslim population, especially the

³⁴ Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, Population of census metropolitan areas, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo05a-eng.htm> (accessed May 2017) 9.

³⁵ Ibid., 10.

³⁶ Social Planning Council of Ottawa, Immigrants' economic integration, successes and challenges: a profile of immigrants in Ottawa based on the 2006 Census, June 2009, 7.

³⁷ Ibid., 15-17.

second-generation, helps us understand the lives of this rising minority group in Canada.

First-Generation Centers

In 1938, the Al Rashid mosque was established in Edmonton, Alberta, and since then first-generation Muslims have founded many Islamic centers and schools in Canada. In 2002 there were between 150-200 mosques and Islamic centers across Canada and about 50 Islamic schools, according to one estimate.³⁸ In 2009 another study declared that there were over 250 active mosques and Islamic centers in Canada.³⁹

While there have been various studies on this rising minority community in the West including in Canada, few studies have specifically focused on second-generation Muslim immigrants. Second-generation in my study are people who were born and raised in Canada or were born in another country but came to Canada in their early childhood and before going to school. This study seeks to fill this important gap by examining the religious identity of second-generation Muslim immigrants in Canada. Few studies have been conducted on second-generation Muslims in North America compared to second-generation in Europe.⁴⁰ Also, little is known about the role of religion in constructing the identities of Muslim second-generation youth in North America.⁴¹ Therefore aside from academics, this thesis can also be used by policy makers, government organizations and NGOs working

³⁸ Sheila McDonough and Sajida Alvi, 'The Canadian Council of Muslim Women: A Chapter in the History of Muslim Women in Canada' *The Muslim World* 92, no. 2 (2002): 94.

³⁹ Moghissi, Rahnema and Goodman, *Diaspora By Design*, 108.

⁴⁰ Shabana Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity*, (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

with youth, to have a better understanding about second generation Muslim youth in Canada.

In the first months of starting my doctoral studies, I became acquainted with a Muslim youth club in Ottawa that operated independently from its parent organization, which was dominated by the first generation parents of the youth. What was strikingly surprising for me was that these youth had rented a facility entirely separate from the parent organization, even though that organization had ample space for the accommodation of 'youth activities', and also the fact that the youth club was managed and run entirely by the youths themselves. Needless to say the religious activities and the understanding of Islam preached and practiced in the two centers was vastly different and exposed the intergenerational divide in the Muslim community living in Canada. By conducting fieldwork in such independent Muslim youth clubs I intend to examine and explore the religious identity of these Muslim Canadians.

Research Questions:

The dissertation addresses the following issues:

- Main Question: Why are some Muslim youth in Canada establishing their own institutions independently from their first-generation immigrant parents? Is there a subculture emerging out of these youth clubs that are run by second-generation themselves?
- Sub Question 1: How are these religious youth institutions different from their

parent organization? What are the implicit power relationships between the two levels of religious institutions?

- Sub Question 2: How are Muslim Canadian youths defining/redefining their religious identities?

Research Context

I have conducted participant observation and interviews in several formats in the context of my study. I have identified two Muslim youth clubs in Ottawa and one in Montreal that operate independently from their parent organizations:

1- The Ottawa Men's Club: This club is an all men's club and holds programs every Saturday night and is located in a non-residential area in the city of Ottawa. The programs consist of a religious lecture given by a permanent sheikh and 'fun' activities, which are explained in details in different chapters of the thesis. This youth club stresses that they are completely financially independent from their parents and first-generation centers.

2- The Ottawa Women's Club: This club holds its programs in the same place as the men's club. Having a different name than the men's club and operating differently, the founders of this club insisted that they are distinct from the Ottawa men's club and they only rent their facility. This youth club holds irregular programs on Thursday nights, which is explained in detail in the settings chapter. The formation of the women's club was a few years before the men's club.

3- The Montreal Youth Club: This club was founded by a group of Iranian-Canadian youth with the aim of 'Creating a unified community to promote the Shiite identity while respecting each other's differences,' as explained by one of its founders. This club has two programs each month and they are not fixed on a specific day of the week. Their programs mostly consist of 'fun' activities around Montreal city and celebrating Iranian festivals and Eids. This club does not rent a permanent place unlike the other two clubs; rather it rents different community centers around the city. By using the word 'fun' I refer to a 'behavior or an activity that is intended purely for amusement and should not be interpreted as having any serious or malicious purpose.'⁴²

I participated in the three centers' programs and festivities as well as conducted semi-structured as well as informal interviews with their founders, executives and participants. My participant observation and firsthand experience helped me better understand the religious identities of these second-generation Muslim Canadians and how it has been expressed in these independent institutions. Also my case study helps strengthen youth subcultural theories and provides insight in regards to the Birmingham School of thought as well as Post-Subcultural theories.

Multiculturalism in Canada

The Canadian government in 1988 passed the Canadian Multiculturalism Act becoming the first country to adopt such a law on a national scale. This Act is

⁴² See: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fun>

‘affirming freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association, and guaranteeing those rights and freedoms equally to males and females.’⁴³ In 1991, the federal government founded the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. The Act needs more interpretation. Not all reactions to the act were positive. In 1994, Neil Bissoondath published a book named, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*.⁴⁴ He explains that, ‘Canada has sought to order its population into a cultural mosaic of diversity and tolerance.’ He further mentions that this Act creates more segregation among various communities instead of opening themselves to be active participants in society. Jasmine Zine, believes that celebrating multiculturalism puts a cover on all the cruelty that has been conducted towards Aboriginal communities in Canada.⁴⁵ Isajiw has argued that ‘Rigid policies are usually not very effective and maybe even counterproductive.’ An example that he mentions is the Multiculturalism Act. He says that when it is a law and is not well defined each group especially each ethnic group adds various and new demands to it.⁴⁶ John Biles argues that, ‘Promoting diversity while encouraging the integration of minorities into collective life can be problematic, which is why this effort generally targets immigrants but not necessarily their decedents.’ He declares that this Act is harder on immigrant parents than their second-generation children and has less connection to their

⁴³ John Biles and Meyer Burstein and James Frideres, *Immigration and Integration in Canada in the Twenty-first Century*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2008), 201.

⁴⁴ McDonough and Alvi, *The Canadian Council of Muslim Women*, 88.

⁴⁵ Zine, *Islam in the hinterlands*, 3.

⁴⁶ Isajiw, ‘Approaches to ethnic conflict resolution: paradigms and principles’ *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 24 (2000), 113.

parents' ethnic communities.⁴⁷ Some scholars such as Ritzer (1998 [1993]) explain the notion of 'McDonaldization' and say that the multiculturalism that is emphasized in today's world is an illusion and now more than ever we have an increase in cultural orthodoxy.⁴⁸ Paul Bramadat and David Seljak argue that in order to cultivate true multiculturalism in Canada, people who they name 'as a religiously illiterate' should be educated with regards to religious groups' history, beliefs and rituals.⁴⁹ Other scholars have argued the opposite and said that at least Canada has stepped up and created such an Act while other countries lack something similar.⁵⁰ That being said, many of this study's participants declared that they are proud to be Canadian because of the acceptance of multiculturalism in this country. It will be explained how living especially in Montreal made a great difference for these youth since as one participant declared, 'different religions and cultures are being celebrated in Canada.' The results of this study are similar to a survey that was conducted among 600 Muslims in Canada. Twenty two percent of them said that they are proud to live in Canada because of multiculturalism, making it the most cited reason of why they are proud to be Canadian.⁵¹ Although the problems with surveys are that each person has a different view on what multiculturalism means, while interviews allow the researcher to ask the participant to define multiculturalism himself/herself.

⁴⁷ Biles and Burstein, *Immigration and Integration in Canada*, 202.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 37.

⁴⁹ Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*, (Toronto ON: University of Toronto, 2005), 165.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 87.

⁵¹ Survey of Muslims in Canada, 2016, 7.

Literature Review

One of the most prominent ethnographic works on Muslim communities in the West is Emma Tarlo's *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics and Faith*, which focuses on Muslims' dress codes in Britain. Tarlo, a professor of anthropology at the University of London, seeks to examine the social, political and personal reasons behind the diversity of Muslim women's clothing in UK cities. After conducting a wide range of interviews, she rejects the common assumption that either see these women as passive victims of patriarchal oppression or portray their veils as a form of rejection of Western liberalism and democratic values. Tarlo's rich ethnography, particularly her study on Islamic fashion designers, provides a fascinating and detailed account of the diversity of Muslim women and their clothing. Her work also provides insights on the difficulties and challenges of living as a minority in multicultural societies.

For all its strengths, Tarlo's work also has its weaknesses, the most important being that her study makes no connection between her findings and theoretical approaches to religious identities and multiculturalism. In fact, aside from a few references to Erving Goffman's theory of Stigmatization, the book makes no mention of any theoretical framework what so ever. Also Tarlo does not examine any possible difference between the clothing of different generations of Muslims living in the UK. The only intergenerational difference Tarlo points to is the young generation's desire to clothe fashionably, particularly among second-generation Muslims with migrant backgrounds. She asserts: 'If there is one factor that the first

generation of British Islamic fashion designers share in common it is an understanding of the clothing dilemmas of young Muslims living in the West who wish to dress in ways that are fashionable and modern on the one hand and faithful and modest on the other.⁵² However, Tarlo does not examine this mentioned difference in an in-depth manner. The author's observation begs the question: What are the reasons behind the desire to dress fashionably by the young? Why is such an attitude lacking in the older generation? Does this point to an important evolution in how Muslims living in the West dress? And more fundamentally does this signal a change in the religious identities of the new generation of Muslims? An answer to these questions is not provided.

Another important study on Muslims living in the West is Kambiz GhaneaBassiri's *Competing Visions of Islam in the United States*. His study focuses on the Islamic community living in the Los Angeles area. During his study GhaneaBassiri conducted 22 interviews, a questionnaire of 143 participants as well as participant observation in the public events and meetings of Islamic institutions in Los Angeles. The research's main concern is how Muslims defined their role as American citizens, nevertheless using such an umbrella the book addresses a very wide array of issue. The author's primary finding is that there is little in common between the various Muslim communities living in the city, either in regard to their religious identities or their views about how they should conduct the affairs of their communities within the American system. This is a result of varied understandings and interpretations

⁵² Emma Tarlo, *Visibly Muslim, Fashion, Politics, Faith*, (New York: Berg Publishers, 2010), 52.

of Islam, which the author argues might be due to the absence or decline of overarching Islamic institutions within the West.⁵³

GhaneaBassiri provides some important insights into the concerns of Muslims living in the United States, such as their feeling of threat from the American secular culture to their efforts of raising their children as Muslims. Another important contribution of the book is its discussion of the Muslim Students Association (M.S.A.) and the Islamic Society of North America (I.S.N.A.) organizations, since the two are rising and popular institutions in the Muslim community in North America, particularly among students and youngsters. The book's main weakness, however, is its overly wide scope of study. By focusing on all the Muslim communities living in the Los Angeles area as well as examining a very wide range of issues, from gender issues, religious rituals and practice, Sunni- Shia relations to dealing with mainstream American culture, GhaneaBassiri is unable to study any one issue in an in-depth manner and as a result many of the research's findings are under-examined and unexplained. For example, while the book does a good job of discounting monolithic portrayals of American Muslims, it does not explain the reasons behind the differences in the religious behavior and attitude of the said population. Moreover, the lack of a theoretical framework prevents the author from developing a theoretical argument about why interpretations of Islam are so diverse within the increasing population of American Muslims.

⁵³ Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *Competing Visions of Islam in the United States: A Study of Los Angeles* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 1997), XX.

In contrast to GhaneaBassiri, Reem A. Meshal argues that most Muslim immigrants in Canada cast aside their original culture and adopt a uniform identity, seeing themselves as Muslim-Canadians. They distinguish Islamic tenets from their ethnic cultural practices.⁵⁴ Her 1997-1998 survey of 129 Muslim women living in different Canadian cities showed that the majority of them identified themselves as Muslim-Canadians. More significantly, the results show that the percentage of veiled Muslim women who identified themselves as Muslim-Canadian is greater than the number of women who didn't wear hijab and identified themselves as Canadian. In fact, the latter group (unveiled) identified more with their ethnic backgrounds. Thus diverse groups of people are increasingly identifying themselves as members of a single community of Muslims (Muslim-Canadian) and second generation Egyptians, Pakistanis, Lebanese, and other origins are less identifying themselves with their cultural and ethnic backgrounds.⁵⁵

This growing community of Muslim-Canadians is part of what Olivier Roy, a Professor at the European University Institute in Florence, names a 'new Ummah' or Muslim community.⁵⁶ He argues that Islamic revival or what he calls 're-Islamization' continues to shape Muslim communities living in the West. Roy asserts that this Islamic revival is due to the effort that these Muslim communities and their leaders have put towards keeping their original identity in which they are living. He contends that Muslims in Western societies have learned to be 'true believers' in the

⁵⁴ Reem A. Meshal, 'Banners of Faith and Identities in Construct: The Hijab in Canada,' in *The Muslim Veil in North America: Issues and Debates*, ed. Sajda Sultana Alvi et al. (Toronto: Women's Press, 2003), 94.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 95.

⁵⁶ Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, (New York: Colombia University Press, 2004), 21.

context of secular societies. Re-Islamization is part of acculturation and not against it. This means that a new identity is shaped for Muslims living as a minority that is influenced by the construction of a 'deculturalised' Islam, which expresses a religious identity that is not linked to an inherited culture and is able to fit within every culture.⁵⁷ Meshal reaches a similar conclusion to that of Roy by arguing that Muslim women 'are no longer identifying with their country of origin, but are indistinguishable from their co-religionists under the common label of Muslim,' implying that assimilation has already occurred, in that ethnic identity is not as important to Canadian Muslim women as their religious identities.⁵⁸

According to the doctrine of re-Islamization, the Islamic *Ummah* in Western societies is not attached to a specific territory or culture. This leads to the notion of a 'universal Islam' that is valid in any cultural context. This is why the racial backgrounds of Muslims living as minorities, whether one is from Egypt or Indonesia, are fading while at the same time their Islamic identity is becoming stronger. Samira Ahmad suggests an important reason for this argument. She argues that youth go through identity crisis and these crisis are created because of 'physical and psychological changes as well as society's and parents' expectations.'⁵⁹ As a result youth search for 'protective factors' and one of these strong factors is religion, which is used to overcome the identity crisis. She further explains, 'identifying and connecting with one's own religious community can decrease the stress and a sense of lost that many youth especially the ones whose religion is a minority

⁵⁷ Ibid, 23.

⁵⁸ Meshal, 'Banners of Faith and Identities in Construct,' 96.

⁵⁹ Ahmad, *Religiosity, identity and pro-social values*, 3-6.

experience.’⁶⁰ Also Sikata Banerjee and Harold Coward argue that identifying with ones religion ‘creates a familiar space’ especially in identity crises.⁶¹

While the arguments of Meshal and Roy provide interesting insights, their frameworks are unable to account for the diversity of identities and behaviors within the Muslim communities that are shown in the studies of Tarlo, GhaneaBassiri and others. My own Master’s thesis project, which focused on Muslim students in the Ottawa area who had recently adopted the hijab, found that the reasons for such behavior was very diverse even among this group of students who had many similar characteristics and lived in a small geographical area. As such any simplification of their motives would provide a very partial understanding of a complex behavior. Thus it seems that perhaps Roy and Meshal are overgeneralizing about the uniform identity formation of Muslims living in Western societies, and that the process of ‘deculturalisation’ is far from complete. One reason for this might be what Wsevolod W. Isajiw has argued. He declares that ‘unlike what people think that ethnicity is something in the past and is doomed of extinction with the rise of technology and modernity, ethnicity is pretty much present in today’s world.’⁶² Social constructivists argue that ethnicity is constantly constructed or reconstructed

⁶⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁶¹ Sikata Banerjee and Harold Coward. ‘Hindus in Canada: Negotiating Identity in a “Different” Homeland’ in *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* by Paul Baramadat and David Seljak, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 30.

⁶² Wsevolod W. Isajiw, ‘Approaches to ethnic conflict resolution: paradigms and principles,’ *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 24 (2000), 107.

and this argument as Isajiw mentions provides some room for understanding the concept of intergroup relations.⁶³

Most of the studies mentioned thus far have a common weakness and that is the lack of differentiation between the different generations of Muslims living in the West. This has prevented these scholars from examining the intergenerational difference in the religious identities of Muslims living in the West. In fact, very few studies have focused on second-generation Muslims, specifically youths who are raised and educated in the West but whose parents are Muslim immigrants. The grand majority of studies on Muslims in the West examines the group as a whole and assumes that it is homogeneous and uniform in its identity and behavior.

One particular exception to this approach is the recent book by Hisham Aidi titled *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture*, which examines the music culture of young European and American Muslims. Aidi examines how these youth have used music to fight against war and prejudice and how hip hop and jazz are used as a form of resistance against being marginalized in society, as well as against Western imperialism such as the American 'War on Terror.'⁶⁴ The book's scope is quite ambitious as its study area spans the entire globe, from Tunis and Morocco to the Bronx, and Aidi interviews a wide range of musicians from DJs and rappers to Sufis who practice 'divine' trance. The book argues that Muslim youth are using music to rebel politically and culturally. The author asserts that since 9/11

⁶³ Ibid., 110.

⁶⁴ Hisham Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2014), XI.

'Muslims have launched a range of social movements- integrationist, separatist, utopian, dystopian, secular and Islamist- to challenge the myriad policies, narratives and frontiers of the American imperium.'⁶⁵ Aidi's book is a fascinating read on the distinctiveness and diversity of Muslim youth cultures. Nevertheless, since the study only focuses on Music culture, it only examines a part of Muslim youth identities. As such my research project, which focuses on religious identities, would help supplement studies such as that of Aidi's and would help the process of achieving a more comprehensive understanding of second generation Muslims.

Another scholar, who has studied second-generation Muslims in Canada, albeit from a different perspective, is Peter Beyer who has examined the role of religious identity in regard to the level of educational attainment among first and second-generation immigrants to Canada. Beyer uses Canadian decennial census to study such a relationship among post-1970 immigrants to the country. His study concludes that while Muslim men are better educated than the average Canadian as well as Muslim women among first generation immigrants, among the second-generation the difference in the level of education, compared to the general public, as well as the differences between the sexes fades off. This is why Beyer argues that although immigrant Muslim men are more educated than immigrant Muslim women, in second-generation women are as educated as men and gender is no longer a valid variable when discussing the level of education in second-generation

⁶⁵ Ibid, prologue: xv.

Muslims.⁶⁶

What is significant in the above two studies is the realization of the inter-generational differences among the Muslim population living in the West and a special focus on Muslim youth. This welcome change addresses a significant gap within the literature and allows us to better understand how a new generation of Muslims differs from their parents in terms of religious identity and behavior. This study also seeks to address this important issue, although in a different fashion. What is lacking in Beyer's work, which this study seeks to fill, is an in-depth examination of the reasons behind such intergenerational differences. Beyer's research relies on statistics to reach conclusions, this approach limits the scope of issues that can be studied and also restricts efforts to explain the religious identities and behaviors of Muslim youths. In contrast, this research studies such an inter-generational religious gap using ethnographic work, which involves participating in the activities of Muslim youth centers. Recently a few anthropologists have sought to approach the subject using new tools. One of these scholars is Saba Mahmood and her approach is well documented in the *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*.

Saba Mahmood conducted fieldwork in six different mosques in Egypt for a two-year period. These mosques held Dawa, an Islamic advocacy movement aimed at

⁶⁶ Peter Beyer, 'Religious identity and educational attainment among recent immigrants to Canada: Gender, age, and 2nd generation,' *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Volume 6, Issue 2, (Spring 2005): 177-199.

making Muslims more pious, classes for women. She explains the location of these mosques; the types of participants that take part in them, their type of covering and dress code as well as their variety of ages and their social status (jobs). A woman named Zeynab Al Ghazali was the first woman who organized this movement in the 1930s. Mahmood explains that the current women's movement in mosques is still so much influenced by Al Ghazali such as claiming that women should give the Friday sermons and be an Imam of the mosque. Al Ghazali's movement and also the current women movements in mosques differentiated themselves from secular organizations and ideologies, instead claiming that they focused on Islamic values. As Saba Mahmood explains, 'Women's mosque groups and Islamic non-profit organizations (such as al-Jameiyya alShareiyya) believe that the formation of a virtuous society is critically dependent upon the regulation of everyday conduct in keeping with Islamic principles and values.'⁶⁷

Saba Mahmood argues that the main goal of Mosque classes was to reduce the influence of secularization in Egyptian society. The author explains that there are two aspects of secularism. The first aspect is the separation of religion from issues of the state, and the increasing differentiation of society into discrete spheres (economic, legal, educational, familial, and so on) of which religion is one part. The participants of these mosques are critical of the increasing secularization of Egyptian society. These women are not against civil laws in their country but their definition of religion is different from the second aspect of secularism that they

⁶⁷ Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005): 73.

challenge. The definition of religion in the second aspect is that religion is considered 'private' and 'moral' while these women's definition covers the social aspect of a person's life too. As one woman said 'religion should be in all aspects of one's life' or another said, 'all life is worship.' As one participant put it nicely, 'the aim of these classes is to be aware that 'the state and society want to reduce Islam to folklore as if Islam is just a collection of ceremonies and customs, such as hanging lanterns from doorways or baking cookies during Ramadan.'⁶⁸

Throughout the book Mahmood wants to show via her field work that these Muslim women's advocacy for more rights is not because they were positively influenced by secularism or modernity, which some feminists might argue, but rather these piety movements aim to resist secularism through Muslim education. Mahmood's main objective is to examine the women movement's sense of agency in contrast to how they are characterized by the secular liberal feminist discourse of the West. The book also questions the liberal assumption that 'all human beings have an innate desire for freedom'⁶⁹, since the members of the movement under study wished to subordinate themselves to God's will. After explaining the non-liberal characteristics of the piety movement Mahmood's main concern is regarding the meaning of 'agency' in such a context. She asks what agency means in a 'social imaginary' where the subject is not resisting 'the subordinating function of power' (as a liberal feminist would argue).⁷⁰ The author aims to examine the multiple and various forms of agencies present in such movements that are often overlooked. For example the

⁶⁸ Ibid, 49.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 5.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 153-154.

book's case study shows how women's agency can be performed outside the 'usual forms and institutions of politics' such as the state and the judicial system.⁷¹

The most important aspect of Mahmood's research is that it exposes how the secular liberal feminist discourse of the West misrepresents and downplays the agency and identity present in non-liberal women movements. By trying to understand the Dawa Islamist women's 'architecture of the self' through ethnographic study the author reveals the patronizing and dominant characteristics of the Western liberal approach to such movements. Various scholars however have argued that Mahmood's definition of liberal feminism is too broad and unrealistic, since the Western liberal feminist movement is much more diverse and multifaceted than the 'caricature' that the book paints.⁷² This is a particularly potent criticism since Mahmood strongly emphasizes the need for specificity of analysis regarding the Dawa movement in Egypt by understanding it within its own internal framework, however she is accused of not allowing for such specificity regarding liberal feminism.

I believe that while Mahmood could have been more acknowledging of the diversity present in Western liberal feminism, such movements have indeed been guilty of misunderstanding and misrepresenting the plight of Muslim women to some degree, an issue that has been well documented by postcolonial feminist scholars.⁷³ By

⁷¹ Ibid, 152.

⁷² David Hollenberg and Naghmeh Sohrabi, review of *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and The Feminist Subject* by Saba Mahmood, *Journal of Religion* 37, no. 4 (2007) 344-347.

⁷³ Amalia Sa'ar, 'Postcolonial Feminism, the Politics of Identification, and the Liberal Bargain,' *Gender and Society*, 19, No. 5, (2005), 680-700.

going beyond existing scholarship on Muslim women and interrogating our investigation tools and exposing their shortcomings, the 'politics of piety' presents us with a more nuanced and complex approach to studying concepts such as 'Religious freedom,' 'agency' and 'ethics' in the context of these misunderstood groups. Mahmood is able to achieve this through her fieldwork and participant observation, rather than mere statistical analysis or structured interviews.

One of the insights I took away from Mahmood's research is her theoretical approach in which she does not impose a rigid predetermined theory on her study subject. This approach empowers her to expose how the secular liberal feminist discourse of the West misrepresents and downplays the agency and identity present in non-liberal women movements. By trying to understand the Dawa Islamist women's 'architecture of the self' through ethnographic study the author reveals the patronizing and dominant characteristics of the Western liberal approach to such movements.

I also seek to approach my research project using an approach similar to that of Mahmood and her detailed ethnography and in-depth interviews. Although my aim is to allow my research subject to form the findings of the project, rather than shape them in order to fit theories that may not be entirely suitable for a recent and evolving issue such as the increasing independence of second-generation Muslim youths in Canada. Also another important contribution of the 'politics of piety' is the author's courage in suspending and even problematizing her own biases and assumptions during her ethnographic work. I think Mahmood was open and

forthright about her own background as a feminist leftist born in Pakistan. This allowed her to better achieve her stated objective of analyzing 'the specific practices of subjectivation that make the subjects of a particular social imaginary possible.'⁷⁴

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed in this study is youth subcultural theories. Youth subcultural study is still a popular subject in academia. Subcultures neglect some parts or all of their parents' cultures and the dominant culture.⁷⁵ Brake argues many youth subcultures emerge in response to the contradictions that they see in their parents' cultures.⁷⁶ There are three main subcultural theoretical schools of thought: The Chicago school, the Birmingham school and the Post-Subcultural school. Migrations, economic change, industrialization and other rapid changes that create instability, unemployment and poverty, originally led to the creation of subcultures. Therefore, the Chicago School believes that social disorganization and urbanization creates subcultures.⁷⁷ After the Second World War, youth cultures shifted due to a variety of reasons since youth had more leisure and free time. The word leisure refers to 'time when one is not working or occupied' and specifically the 'use of free time for enjoyment.'⁷⁸ The working class had shrunk and the number of middle class youth increased compared to the years before the war. In the U.K, scholars at the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) studied

⁷⁴ Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 154.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁷⁷ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, (New York: Routledge, 2014) 4.

⁷⁸ See: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/leisure>

youth cultures after World War II. The core concepts in CCCS are resistance and style. In contrast to the Chicago school, which says that youth are under society's pressures to conform to the norm, the Birmingham school argues that youth resist these pressures and create their own voice. This resistance can be seen in their styles, cloths, and types of music and other aspects of their lives.

One of the aspects of CCCS theory that is very relevant to this study is that it argues that there is a generational gap between parents and children and that is why children resist their parents' culture.⁷⁹ More recently post subcultural theory has helped shift the focus from the political dimension and class of subcultures, to young people constructing their identity through fun and leisure.⁸⁰ Post-subcultural theory was first introduced by Steve Redhead (1990) at Manchester University and then later on developed by Muggleton (1997 and 2000). Redhead looked at subcultures from a postmodernist lens. Redhead argues that in the modern world compared to the era after WWII, youth have more free time and this is the main reason that a new 'clubbing culture' has emerged.⁸¹ Unlike CCCS theory, post Subculture scholars declare that goods and items that youth use are more related to consumerism rather than pure acts of resistance. This dissertation employs insights from the CCCS School and Post-Subcultural theories, specifically Steve Redhead's concept of club culture, for its theoretical framework. This framework is explained in chapter three.

⁷⁹ Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2004), 6.

⁸⁰ Tammy Anderson, *Rave Culture: The Alteration and Decline of a Music Scene*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 13.

⁸¹ Bennett, *After Subculture*, 13.

Dissertation Plan:

The introduction chapter of the dissertation explained the importance of the subject under study and provided a literature review and a short discussion of the theory and methodology used. The next chapter discusses in detail the settings and methods of the research project. The chapter explains how I gained access to each club, detailed description of the buildings and their neighborhoods, the years they were founded as well as the participants' ethnic backgrounds. Also in order to have a better understanding of the activities that these youths have in their clubs, I take the reader into one of their programs by describing it in detail. Chapters three to five of the thesis are the three themes (Style, Religiosity and Resistance) present in the three clubs. Style and resistance are the two main concepts that are present in CCCS and Post-Subcultural theories although their approach varies. The religiosity chapter begins with the main and prominent theorists in regards to the anthropology of religion and continues to discuss in detail the concepts of 'religion', 'being religious' and religious identities of the participants of the clubs. Religiosity is one of the core elements in these three clubs and their religious identities varies among the participants of the three clubs and even among the participants within one club. Finally, the dissertation ends with a concluding chapter.

Chapter 2: Setting and Method

The chapter begins by discussing the study's methodology and its limits. Subsequently the city of Montreal and Ottawa are briefly discussed. Then each club is examined in detail separately. The first club that I attended was the Montreal youth club. The second club was the Ottawa men's club and the last one was the Ottawa women's club. For each club, according to that order, information on how I gained access, detailed description of the building and its neighborhood, especially the Ottawa men's club, the year it was founded as well as the participants' ethnic backgrounds is provided. Also in order to have a better understanding of the activities that these youths carry out in the clubs, I describe one or two programs of each club.

Methodology:

The methodology used for this research project is participant observation alongside in-depth interviews. Participant observation produces rich qualitative data, which the researcher can see, experience and participate. This methodology helped me gain empathy through shared experience with the participants. Also in order to conduct research among youth, participant observation methodology eases the process of gaining their trust. Subsequently, in-depth and semi-structured interviews with open-ended and follow up questions generates a better understanding of the motivations, attitudes and perceptions of the participants. This is why in order to conduct research that is more accurate in its understanding of the

lives of the participants, participant observation should be intertwined with semi-structured interviews.

I began my fieldwork in May 2016 and finished in April of 2017. As a whole I conducted fieldwork in Montreal city for four months and participated in their events eight times. I conducted fieldwork in Ottawa city for around seven months and attended fifteen programs of the Ottawa men's club and six programs of the Ottawa women's club. The Ottawa men's club compared to the other clubs had regular programs every week on Saturday nights.

The interviews were semi-structured and their time durations were between 60 to 75 minutes. Each participant was only interviewed once except three participants; one of the executives of the Ottawa men's club, one of the founders of the women's club and the president of the Montreal club, each of whom were interviewed twice. One of the founders of the women's club and one of the executives of the Ottawa men's club were both interviewed once alone with me and another time in a discussion group. Also two of the executives of the men's club were interviewed at the same time and in the club's place itself. They both requested to be interviewed at the same time for the sake of not having time. As a whole I interviewed 26 people. From the Montreal youth club, I interviewed 12 youths, 8 of whom were female and 4 were male. From the Ottawa men's club, I interviewed 10 young men and from the Ottawa women's club I interviewed 4 young women. The age range of the participants were all between 19 to 26 years old except the president of the Ottawa men's club that was 28 years old and the sheikh of the Ottawa men's club that was in his mid-thirties. Also the participants of the two Ottawa clubs were mostly on the

lower end of the above age range while the participants of the Montreal club were on the higher end of the range. The themes of the interviews were mostly based on questions related to their understandings of religion and 'being religious', their purposes of attending the clubs and the activities that they participated in, and also some questions in regards to the ups and downs of being a second-generation in Canada among the Muslim community as well as the general Canadian public.

My Positionality:

I am a Muslim woman in my early thirties who was born in Iran and immigrated to Canada in 2011. It is explained throughout this chapter how my ethnic and religious background eased my access to these clubs especially the Ottawa men's and women club and somehow my Iranian background caused a challenge for my fieldwork in the Montreal youth club. My role in this research project is somewhat fluid. I am both an insider and an outsider to this project. I am a Muslim woman and as such the participants recognize me as someone from their community and therefore they trust me in some ways and they were enthusiastic to share their personal stories with me. I am also an outsider researcher and I gained access to participate in their clubs as well as the interviews.

I am a mother of a two-year-old daughter named Zainab. As it is explained in this chapter only one of the participants in the Ottawa women's club and the president of the Ottawa men's club had children. The role of motherhood helped me in different ways throughout my fieldwork. Taking my daughter to the Ottawa women's club as well as the Montreal youth club was an icebreaker. The experience

of parenthood made conversations easier everywhere. It helped me start conversations and through those small chitchats I gained their trust and they came to me to be interviewed for this project. Taking Zainab to the Ottawa men's club, which was a club only for men and the majority of its participants were single, helped much more. The main reason was that most single Muslim men act and talk cautiously with a young Muslim women and it is usually in a formal manner, which is based on the Islamic concept of modesty and respect. For my project I needed this ice to break so that they would feel comfortable with me in order to act and talk informally in their club and trust me enough to volunteer for an interview. Taking Zainab to the club on the one hand helped me gain access and break the ice before the conversation and on the other hand her presence caused interruptions in their programs. For example, Zainab interrupted the lecture in the Ottawa men's club many times. The first time that she giggled, the sheikh smiled back at her and most of the young men turned towards us. Her giggling caused pauses in the middle of their heated discussions.

Taking Zainab to the Ottawa women's club was slightly different since the participants of the women's club started to ask questions about myself when they finished asking questions about the name and age of Zainab, unlike the Ottawa men's club whose participants did not ask questions about myself and my life due to the concept of modesty. Young Muslim women knowing about my life eased the process of gaining their trust and they concluded that I was one of them and it reinforced my insider positionality. This helped me participate in their programs and even play Ping-Pong with them and participate in their discussions on religion.

The participants of the Ottawa men's club did not ask about my personal life because of the concept of modesty in Islam. Before going to the Ottawa men's club I assumed that it would be very hard to gain the young men's trust, but taking my daughter to the club very much eased the process.

Another instance that happened both in the Ottawa men and women clubs was me talking to the only mother and only father of the clubs about raising children. In the Ottawa women's club there was a young woman named Noor who was the only mother in the club. In the Ottawa men's club the president of the club had a daughter, which created conversations about our daughters and raising them in Canada. Therefore, being a mother is a conversation starter among mothers and fathers based on the shared experience of raising a child. Also taking my daughter to the clubs helped me in set convenient times for the interviews. The participants were flexible on setting a time for the interviews. This was accurate in regards to all the three clubs. For the Ottawa men's club alone taking my daughter among unmarried young men very much helped me connect with them and created informal conversations. The ups and downs of taking a child to the fieldwork, young men and women's clubs, are further explained in this chapter.

Before looking at the three youth clubs studied in this dissertation we should bear in mind that although these youth clubs have some similarities such as having a young Muslim population, they have major differences in how they run the clubs, how they address gender segregation and the ethnic background of their participants alongside many other detailed differences which shows that each youth club operates differently. Also individuals in one club have differences with other

individuals in the same club and these diversities however do not undermine the groups' boundaries.

The Montreal youth club

This club, which was located in the city of Montreal, was established in 2012. The founders of the club named it, 'the society.'

Access:

My husband had a friend in Montreal who participated in the youth club. He contacted his friend and his friend told the president and the executives about my project and they gave me official permission to observe, participate and conduct interviews with the participants.

Composed of second-generation youth as well as immigrants with an Iranian background, most of their events were in Farsi. Most of the participants spoke Farsi to each other with a mixture of English words in between. Most of the participants as well as the founders were university or college students, studying different majors at McGill and Concordia University. Being a university student is not mandatory for participating, but most of them were students.

They did not have a fixed space for the club and kept renting different cultural centers in the city, as well as university campus facilities such as that of McGill's as well as using their own houses to hold programs. I participated in their programs both on campuses and cultural centers and with the contacts that I made; I was invited and able to go their houses as well. Their programs in their houses were

more private and had more religious themes such as religious lectures as well as praying together compared to their public events, which usually had a fun atmosphere or were academic events. It should be mentioned that an imam or a sheikh figure did not give the lectures, but rather the lectures were given by a different participant who had especially prepared a presentation on a specific topic for that week.

The club had eight founders, all of whom were Iranian students; three young Iranian immigrants and the rest were second-generation Iranians. Among the eight founders, three founders were young women and the other five were young men. 'The society', is run democratically. They hold elections once a year in order to choose 5 board members and 2 reserves. In the current board three out of seven are young women. Also they don't have a specific task for each board member such as finance or communications, rather they all decide on every issue and divide tasks accordingly. Therefore, it can be categorized as semi-organized. Ali, one of the founders explained:

There is no specific task for each person and just a pool of roles and bunch of them. We have 5 board members and 2 reserves and then those 5 elected youth would distribute tasks among themselves. Other centers were on the shoulders of few families but it is different for our society. We don't have a leader in our society.

He continued:

The Society's mandate was not the same as the other Muslim centers in Montreal. A family or a group of families governed all the other centers. They are not democratic. We needed a center for scholars while the other centers were for families and children and not for student youth.

One of its executives explained to me that ‘anyone who is Iranian and has attended at least one of our events can be elected to the executive positions, regardless of sex or sect (Sunni/ Shia). The participants of this youth club were mostly second-generation although there were some immigrants among the executives.

It was interesting that one of my own friends in Montreal, Nina, was one of the female executives of the club, which I didn’t know before participating in their programs. The first time that I went to the ‘society’ I saw my friend there and she said that she was one of the executives. I was surprised why she hadn’t told me before. She replied, ‘we don’t want people outside of the club to know who has roles or even what roles! I don’t want to say it is a secret but we try to keep it to ourselves. Throughout the years different people have created tensions among us.’ I was a bit shocked because at that time I didn’t know the challenges as well as the tensions that existed among Iranian first-generation parent organizations and this youth club. Moreover, this sensitivity was not only because of tensions in the Iranian community, but later on through my fieldwork I understood that occasionally some of the executives were called upon by Canadian intelligence services such as CSIS, which caused the executives as well as the participants to panic and get frustrated. Nevertheless, it should also be pointed out that such questioning had not hampered or prevented the continuation of the club’s activities.

I rented an apartment near the apartments of many of the participants and founders, most of whom lived in the same block in the central part of Montreal. As many studies show unlike what is assumed the majority of immigrants and as a

result the children of immigrants do not live in the suburban parts of Montreal city but rather in more central parts such as Parc-Extension, Saint-Leonard and Cote-des-Neiges neighborhoods.⁸² I rented an apartment from a young Iranian woman who was one of the founders of the club and had went back to Iran to see her relatives for a couple of months. Renting an apartment in the same neighborhood made it easier for me to interact with these youths outside of their club.

Programs and Activities of the club:

The 'Society' had various fun activities for youth such as paintball, skiing and movie nights, FIFA watching and a small music and theatre class. As it was mentioned earlier since they didn't have a permanent place for themselves, they rented different places in the town and therefore their fun and leisure activities were also held around the city.

The first program that I attended was a program related to students who had newly arrived in Canada. There had a friendly atmosphere. Second-generation youths helped and gave tips in regards to how to integrate in Canadian society to the newcomers. The discussions were about how to find a job, finding an apartment, what to do and who to get help from in case of emergencies. The program was held on McGill's campus. This group did not use any specific items or objects for their group, other than some women wearing a headscarf. This is the opposite of the

82 Daniel Hiebert, *Multiculturalism 'on the ground': the social geography of immigrant and visible minority populations in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver*, projected to 2017, Center of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity, No. 07 - 12 April 2007.

Ottawa men's and women's club, which will be explained in the theme chapter on style. In all of their events that I attended everyone had an Iranian background, with men and women sitting together. For example, there were around 14 women and 17 men present in one of their assemblies. I sat down at the end of the room on a chair next to a young man and a young woman. They smiled at me and understood that I was new to the 'Society.' A young man, Navid, who spoke both Farsi and English, was presenting on how and where to find jobs related to different university programs. Then he gave some addresses on where is the best place to learn French. Navid was a participant and a second-generation himself but because of his extensive experience, he was teaching others. One of the executives told me that sometimes the participants give lectures on various topics even presenting parts of their unfinished thesis in different BAs and sometimes they have guest lectures who are not religious figures or leaders, but are rather university professors. In one of the programs that I went to, which was in the month of Ramadan, they had a religious lecture, which was prepared by one of the participants who had read some books about 'the real meaning of fasting and how that should affect our moral lives.' The detailed description of this religious lecture as well as the after Q&A period will be discussed in chapter 6, the theme chapter on religiosity.

Aside from having fun and holding religious ceremonies their club was also highly geared towards forming relationships and a community.

Fatemeh, one of the founders and one of this year's executives explained:

The types of events that we had was inviting scholars and profs and the second type was for training issues like job sessions since some the members just got out of high school and they want to know how they can find jobs and the third type was just fun events such as playing soccer or going on trips together.

Non-religious programs were events such as celebrating Iranian festivals like Eid Nowrouz and Yalda Night.⁸³ This club had programs around three times a month but they were not on fixed days unlike the Ottawa men's and women's clubs.

The following paragraphs briefly explain two of the fun activities that I attended with these youths. The first fun event that I participated was a ski trip. I attended the ski trip with 9 men and 13 women attending that unlike in the other two clubs, there was no gender segregation during this activity, and most of the women didn't wear the hijab. The following description of one activity (Paintball) I participated in demonstrates both the nature of their leisure activities, and some of the challenges of fieldwork among this group.

Paintball:

I picked up one of the participants, Maryam, and I drove to the paintball place in Montreal. It was 9:30 am. I figured that if I take my husband with me, it would be easier for me to interact with the young men in the group. My husband came along with me and we started wearing the paint ball's special clothes. One of the executives who was in charge of this program, told the participants to divide into

⁸³ Eid Nowrouz that means 'A new day' is an Iranian New Year and is a festival, which celebrates the first day of the spring. A table is designed for this festival with seven objects such as apple, gold fish, mirror and sweets that are symbols for different aspects of life. This festival has been celebrated in Iran for more than a thousand years and has a Zoroastrian origin.

Yalda Night is the longest night of the year that is the last night of Fall season. Iranians come together and celebrate with specific fruits such as pomegranates, watermelons as well as pistachios. They get together and read famous poems from Hafez and Saadi books.

two groups of people.⁸⁴ I told my husband to be in the opposite group as mine so he would interact with the young men in that group. Bringing my husband to this program was a smart move and he made many friends and I saw him exchanging numbers with some of these youths. He quickly introduced me to them and said that I was working on Muslim youth and would like to talk to some of them. Some of them gave me their contact information and we set the times for the interviews. At the end of the program and for the launch we all went to La Petite Gondole restaurant that was a halal restaurant in Montreal.

Going to this club's 'fun' activities was a good opportunity for me to meet the participants as well as the executives in an informal atmosphere. We played paintball together and were in one team so this helped me become friends with them and break the ice.

When I went to their second program, there were many silent pauses and then two of the women participants kept asking me many questions, even some personal questions on where I lived or what I did for a living or even some personal questions about my family. I was disappointed and felt that some of them were intrusive. One of them asked me, 'Why as an Iranian Anthropologist, are you doing research on Iranians?' I replied 'What do you mean?' she continued, 'You know how many Iranian and non-Iranian Anthropologists have done research on Iranian's religion and culture although they had bad intentions and motivations?' The third participant who was talking to some other young men turned towards me and said, 'Yeeeah! Exactly! There were many scholars who have lived among Iranians as well

⁸⁴ As it was explained earlier, there were no specific tasks for specific executives rather there were a pool of tasks that they distributed among themselves during the executives' meetings.

as other Middle Easterners and wrote down everything they did so they could use it against them! There are records from more than 200 years ago!' She told me later that she was studying in the major of History and Classical Studies at McGill University and her project was on the history of Iran! She later explained that there were many Iranians throughout history that were hired by some other empires and countries to fit in among other Iranians.

I was not expecting this and was not ready for it. I knew that it would be harder to work with Iranians, but I didn't know that some of the participants were so suspicious of researchers. I thought that this would somehow challenge my fieldwork. My perfect luck was that one of my friends, Nina, was one of the executives. I told them that, 'I know, but I am Nina's friend and she knows me perfectly.' Nina explained to them that I was her friend and she knew me from many years ago and this made it much easier for me to interact with them and even when people were introducing me to each other the first thing that they said was that I was Nina's friend. The interesting concept here is that these tensions did not exist when I went to this club for the first time and these tensions started to develop when I went there more often. With participating in fun activities, I gained their trust and eased the process of my access.

Ali, one the executives of this club told me that holding these fun programs would help the participants become more friendly with each other and it would also ease the process of young men and women wanting to participate in the club.

This club as with the other two clubs had and still has tensions with the parent organizations, which are run by the first-generation Iranians. This club resists the

parent organizations in many ways, which will be explained in the chapter on 'resistance', which is chapter 5 of this thesis. Not only that, but many of them had differences with their parents in regards to religion which will be explained in the 'religiosity' chapter. Ali, one of the founders of Ottawa men's club, explained:

We were always sitting outside of someone's house and chilling. We tried to go to other clubs but we didn't like them and we found many faults in them.

Ottawa Men's Youth Club:

The second place where I conducted fieldwork was a youth club in Ottawa, which was specifically for young men and had been established in 2012. In contrast to the Montreal club, the Ottawa men's club had several key differences in organization, activities, and style. Since four years ago these youths had programs every week on Saturday nights at 9pm in the same place. This was different to the Montreal youth club that was explained earlier that did not have a permanent place and their fun activities were in various parts of the Montreal city.

The Ottawa men's club is specifically for young men. One of the executives told me through the interview that:

In this actual building it has been four years that we are working as volunteers for the club and before these four years which we are in this building we use to work before for this club house too so we have been active in this club right from the beginning.

Another active participant told me that four people established this club:

It has gone through houses before that and then we decided to rent a club. Someone would volunteer to have a youth center in his or her house. So the idea shaped in houses and we were chilling inside houses and so we talked and

talked and came up with the idea and then the name of the club. This club is a youth club, you know young men's club and it is not for teenagers. The main founders were three four people whom one of them is the sheikh and the other one found a job and moved to another city and the other two people are members of the club house themselves like any other people who attend the club.

Access:

The club being only for men and trying to access this club as a woman worried me. Would they give me permission to go to their club and do my fieldwork? Would I be able to connect well with these young men and would some of them be willing to be interviewed? Would I be able to participate in some of their activities? I thought to myself that having access to this club would be harder than the first club, the Montreal club.

One of my husband's friends knew a young man who went to this club. I told my husband to contact his friend. He explained my research to his friend. After 2-3 weeks he called one of the people that he knew in the club and that participant gave the phone number of both the imam and the president of the club to us. The imam invited me and my husband for a formal afternoon tea in the club.

The first time that I went to this club was on a Thursday evening. My husband, my two-year old daughter and I arrived there at 4pm. A day before the meeting I talked to one of my friends so she would babysit my daughter, but then I decided to take her with us anyway despite of not being sure what to expect by taking her to the club. I dressed up formally by wearing a long coat as well as a matching headscarf and my husband wore a formal black suite. We drove to the club.

Description of the neighborhood:

The club was located in an industrial and commercial neighborhood. The neighborhood did not have a single residential apartment, but instead it had many cars parking next to greyish industrial blocks. We passed these blocks and arrived in a place that had 4 other plots next to it. In front of each plot 2-3 cars could park. We parked in front of the club since only one car had parked there. The second plot was the youth club. The third plot was a take away small Middle Eastern restaurant. The first time that I went to the club with my husband this small restaurant was closed. The other three plots were vacant and had 'For Rent' signs in front of them. Those plots from the outside looked like storage places.

I knocked the door and a voice said 'come in please.' We took off our shoes and my daughter immediately ran into the club!

Description of the club:

The front of the youth club had a huge garage door that seemed it had not been used for a long time. Next to this garage door was a small door that was the entrance door. We entered the club through the entrance door and saw two men standing at the end of the club and telling us to come in.

The club was an open rectangular shaped room. All the walls were painted in dark blue, which could be noticed instantly. When you entered, you immediately understood that it was originally a garage or a warehouse that was turned into a youth club. Warehouses have been extensively used for youths' gathering, which in

itself symbolizes the lack of space in post-modern societies as Steve Redhead mentions in his book, *Subcultures to Clubcultures*. He says that 'Football grounds, shopping centers, tube and railway stations are, increasingly, put under intense surveillance.' He further mentions that young people search for warehouses to 'have good time' in them.⁸⁵ The end of the room had a small kitchen and a washroom. The kitchen had just a few white cabinets and a small sink. It had a microwave and an electrical kettle for making tea and coffee. In the middle of this room there were a pool table as well as a Ping-Pong table that consumed most of the space. You had to go around these tables to reach the kitchen and the washroom since they were placed in the middle of the club. The slogan of the club was written in English in a huge handwriting on the right wall next to the entrance door. The slogan was written in gold color on a black background.

The left wall of this club had many religious symbols on it that were related to Shia Islam's Imams. It is interesting that some of the participants of this club are Sunnis despite the obvious Shia Muslim symbols in the club as well as the contents of the lectures. All around the club there were many yellowish cushions that were put aside the walls so people would sit on them and put them behind their backs. The ceiling of the club was somehow unfinished with wires hanging down and it had an industrial design to it. There were two massive lights hanging from the ceiling on the billiard and pool tables. There were no windows in the club and was pretty dark inside despite the white lights. As a whole the club was outside the residential

⁸⁵ Steve Redhead, *Subcultures to Clubcultures: An Introduction to Popular Cultural Studies*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 59.

neighborhoods of Ottawa and had no symbol or sign outside of the club that would show that this place was a youth club.

In order to better show the appearance of the club from outside, please look at the picture similar to the outside of the Men and Women's club in Ottawa.

The most interesting element about this club was that the name of the club was made up of digital numbers. I had to ask the president of the club what these numbers meant. It looked like an insider knowledge that needed to be explained as well as have some knowledge in regards to Shia Islam to understand what the name of the club stood for. The name of the club was related to the last Imam of Shia Islam, or the awaited Mahdi, a messianic figure whom Shias believe to be their twelfth and final Imam that will come at the end of the world and create justice and peace, with the first step being the guidance of Muslim leaders who have gone

astray. It will be mentioned in the 'Religiosity' theme chapter that most of the participants and founders of these three clubs were critical of the present religious leaderships among some of the Muslim communities in Canada and some Muslim majority countries.

First encounter:

In the club there were two young men, one few years older than the other, with long beards coming forward to greet us. The young man, Hussein, was in his mid-twenties and the older one, Yusof, was in his mid-thirties. Yusof was the lecturer or as participants named him the 'sheikh.' They both wore casual outfits with dark blue jeans and loose white T-shirts. 'Asalamualaykum!' Said Yusof, 'Welcome to our club, please come in and sit down.' My husband and I went at the end of the room and sat down on one of the cushions and my daughter later joined us.

Both men sat in front of us and the conversation started with this sentence, 'what is her name and how old is she?' and when I said her name is Zainab and she is two years old, Hussein answered 'Oh, Nice! I have a niece named Zainab.' This was it! The sentence that broke the ice and started a conversation. As I explained in the positionality section, out of the three youth clubs taking Zainab to the Ottawa men's club benefited me more than the other two clubs. Yusof (the sheikh) stood up and brought us two cups of tea from the kitchen and he sat down next to my husband. My husband and Yusof started talking about their mutual friends, their original countries, and differences between the rituals in religious ceremonies among Shias in different countries as well as interesting issues that they had encountered as

Muslims living in Canada. The sheikh talked in details about his life. He went on and said that he grew up in Canada himself but was born in Dubai and had Lebanese parents, which I didn't know. He explained the ups and downs of being a second-generation immigrant and how this has inspired him to help establish this club. He explained:

The whole purpose was to create a place that youth feel that they belong to and they can connect with. Also we wanted some place that they could feel that they have built something and it is their own accomplishment. I use to be at their age and I use to go places and I always felt that my opinion is not being heard and that it was not fair enough. The youth always want their comfort zone despite it not being always right but we have all gone through youth ages and we all wanted our comfort zones. They feel that they can intellect and speak freely without being judged and that they are being heard and no one is judging and criticizing them because of the way they look or act.

From the interviews of some of the participants of this study, it could be understood that they felt proud of creating such a place and that they considered the creation of the club as their own accomplishment. Komeil an executive of the club told me:

We all have built this place from painting the walls and even upgrading the kitchen. As you could see from its door, this place was originally a garage and we have turned it into a useful room for our club.

The two other young men explained that this place had nothing in it and they have upgraded it. Basically they explained that this place used to be a garage/storage/warehouse that only had an old washroom. These two executives mentioned that they upgraded the place very quickly after they rented this place and that they turned it 'into a cool room for youth!' The Ottawa men and women's club was not in a residential area (it was in a warehouse), but the Montreal club was in the middle of the city in a university setting. The landlord of the Ottawa men's

club was not a Muslim, nor a parent of any of these youth. He owned the storage space and had rented it out to these youths, who had then turned it into a club.

The sheikh, mentioned some stories from his own life:

Non-religious but fun parents raised me. They did care so much about my education at school that they did not much care about the religious education that I received, so they sent me to a Sunni school and later a Catholic school just because the level of education was higher among other schools, even though we were Shia Muslims. Therefore I went and searched it for myself. I started questioning religion a lot and that led me to read more and more. I remember when I was younger I was being teased by my cousins a lot and they called me names because I was deeply studying Islam, name callings such as 'the sheikh.' (Laughing)

Then the conversation with Yusof shifted towards the Muslim community in Canada and how they are unorganized and that they have very few programs for youth who are eighteen and older. Hussein, the president of the club, nodded and said:

Unfortunately, many elders are suspicious about young people doing something wrong or dangerous and they have negative feelings towards us and therefore they don't even bother to connect with us whatsoever. They distance themselves from youth and ignore them. This is why and when we took care of ourselves.

Many other youth who I interviewed later also mentioned that the reason that they have created this club or started to participate in it was because other places such as mosques and Muslim centers did not have programs and activities for youth who were eighteen and older. Mohammad in the Ottawa men's club said,

Mosques have programs for younger kids like teenagers but not for older ones like soccer. They give up over 18. I think it is not their priority.

This was mentioned by some of the participants of the Montreal youth club as well.

Alireza told me:

Unfortunately, there are no programs for youth who are 18 and older in Montreal among Iranian communities while there are many fun activities for teenagers such as Pizza and football day and even they go on fieldtrips together.

The founder of the Ottawa women's club told me:

There were some communities that were not okay with us establishing this youth club because they already had some stuff for youth. But we told them those are not for youth. I mean we are talking about people who are above 18-19 years old and they don't want to be in a room that has programs for a 12-year-old girl. So we said no because we wanted to have our own way of handling things.

The Role of the Religious Leadership in the Club:

My first encounter with the sheikh and the president of the club went quite opposite of what I assumed. I asked for the ethics permission letter and Hussein, the president, told me, 'definitely sister! You are welcome to come and go whenever you like. Just tell us what you need. But before giving you a written permission letter we as executives need to discuss this in our next meeting.' It was obvious that giving a permission letter was the responsibility of executives and not the sheikh. This means that they have a semi-democratic way of making decisions and it was not based on one person alone. Having a leadership in this club was mostly just for the sake of giving lectures rather than interfering in decision-makings. Also later on the way the participants as well as the executives reacted towards the sheikh was as if he was their older brother. They did not consider him as a religious leader, but rather as an older friend who sat and watched football matches with them but only had read more Islamic books. As it was explained earlier, the youths that I have interviewed in the three youth clubs were somehow critical of most of the religious

authorities and explained to me that the concept of religious leadership was different in Islam, which will be explained alongside the presence and absence of a religious leader and its effects on these three clubs in the theme chapter related to religiosity.

This club had five executives and a president. One of them was responsible for the finance and another was responsible for communication. Suleiman who was responsible for financial tasks told me:

I am the Finance. I pay the bills and buy the stuff that they need like toilet paper or sugar or I don't know whatever supplies that it is needed here. I pay the landlord and give him a check and you know deal with these financial stuff. I do some other works in here besides financial stuff and help out as well. We are obligated to be here every week and clean the place every two weeks. If I lose a penny I am responsible for it so it doesn't mean that here if we work as a volunteer it is not a serious job and we take it very seriously.

Hassan who was the executive for communication told me,

I take care of communication meaning that I send out messages to remind people so they would come and we have Facebook and a website that we sometimes keep up.

Suleiman and Hassan were both second-generation Muslims. Another executive opened the club's door at 9 pm every Saturday, bought snacks and was responsible for 9 pm to 12am, half of the program, which was the gathering, the lecture and chitchatting part. This executive was an immigrant and he emigrated from Lebanon to Canada as an Ottawa University student three years ago.

The other two executives as explained earlier were responsible for 12 am to 3am, the other half of the program, which was the shisha part. They were both second-generation Muslims.

It was interesting that the president of the club who I met in the beginning with Yusof (the sheikh) was older and he was 28 years old compared to most of them being in their early twenties. He was married and had a one-year-old daughter. He did not stay for the shisha part as he said that, 'it is hard for me to keep up with the club's programs since I am married and have a baby.' He has been the president for about a year and before that one of the other executives who was younger was the president of the youth club. The current president of the club is a second-generation Muslim, but the previous one was an immigrant. Out of six (5 executives and a president) only one of them was a first generation immigrant and the rest were second-generation Muslim immigrants.

The participants of this club were mostly second-generation Muslims as well, whose parents came from a variety of countries such as Algeria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia and Iraq. Some of these participants had multiple ethnic backgrounds, for example one participant told me:

My mum is from North Africa (Tunisia) and my dad is from Saudi Arabia. I went to Saudi Arabia just once and to Africa a few times and all-together less than 4 months in my life.

I recognized two Iranians there since they spoke English but used some Farsi words in between their sentences. The language that most of the participants talked with each other was English.

As it was said earlier in the methodology part, I have interviewed 10 of these youth, from whom one of them self-identified as a Sunni participant and two as converts. Two of them alongside of the sheikh were the founders of the club who were

executives now. I interviewed four out of the five executives. I interviewed Yusof (the sheikh) as well.

Participants' style of clothing and their tattoos alongside the concept of consumerism among today's youth will be discussed in the chapter on style.

This youth club or as they call it 'the clubhouse' was not as organized as I had earlier assumed. They had executives such as someone for finance and one person for communication, but they didn't have regular fixed elections every year. When a person left because he found a job in another city, the other executives and the president talked to another person who would have been an active volunteer in the club and gave him the task. One of the founders explains: 'We have a lot of people coming but just a few are active and do stuff around here and that is why we are so picky and each person has to do his job very well.' So it should be said that this clubhouse is semi-organized.

Playing billiards and Ping-Pong, watching football and boxing matches together and smoking Shisha are some of the fun activities that this club had for youth. The flow of these activities is explained in the following section.

A different Saturday night:

From my first experience of taking my daughter to meet the sheikh and the president of the club, I took her to my first fieldwork experience in the youth club as well. I drove to the club with Zainab. It was a cold night in winter and their program would have started at 9 pm. It was a challenge for me to attend their programs since they were held late at night and the club was far from our house.

I parked my car in front of the club. There were four young men standing outside of the club smoking, talking and laughing. When I got out of my car to get Zainab, I could see from the corner of my eyes that they stopped talking and they all turned towards me looking surprised. When they saw a two-year-old get out of the car in a cold, snowy night in the middle of nowhere they were more surprised. Later on one of the young men told me that when they first saw me in front of the club, they thought that I was lost and looking for some place else. I did not look back at them and we walked towards the club. I needed to pass them to go to the club's entrance. We took off our shoes and Zainab ran towards the few young men in the club. I stood near the entrance door for a few seconds and one of the young men came towards me and said, 'Hi! Are you the sister that is doing her project in our club? Come and sit down. I am one of the executives and we talked about you in our meeting.' Suleiman introduced me to other young men in the club. I sat down on one of the cushions near the entrance door. When Zainab ran in the club towards those young men, they all suddenly turned towards her and looked very surprised. They looked at her and smiled back although they were talking about some serious topics such as Canadian and Middle Eastern politics as well as the role of imams in today's world.

Before the program started groups of 3-4 men entered the club. They started chit chatting and there was a lot of noise of young men talking to each other and laughing. I was paying attention to what they were talking about. Two men were discussing a religious topic related to a verse in the Quran about prophet Jesus. Another young man was telling his friends what happened to him during the last

week and how much fun he had had at a friend's party. The other young man who was a convert was talking to his friends in regards to the ups and downs of being a convert both among his non-Muslim friends and Muslim community. Another young man, who was a convert as well, was explaining to two other men how his parents reacted when he told them that he had become a Muslim. Two other young men discussed current politics in Canada. One of them said that 'I can't believe that Islamic extremists groups as well as the media have ruined our image.' The other man said, 'I know! The other day I told my classmate that I only eat halal and he panicked!' Three other young men were talking about ISIS and how they manipulate young people's minds to join them. One young man was saying:

Creating ISIS is mostly Saudi Arabia's and United States fault. Saudi Arabia created these monsters who are extremists in every possible way and they are Wahhabis who we don't consider Muslims and the US gave them money and weapons and called them freedom fighters and rebels while they are the most horrifying terrorists and they have shitty ideology!

The other one replied,

*The worst part is that the other day I was on Facebook and someone left me a comment that said, You F** Muslims, go back to your F** countries! I don't know what country he is talking about. I was born in Edmonton.*

Another young man was telling his friend about his girlfriend and how much of a good time they had together last weekend. Two young men were talking about different interpretations that exist for a verse in the Quran that was related to Adam and Eve. Although there were some serious discussions about religion and social life but some of them were just informal chitchats, telling jokes and laughing.

Ahmad, one of the young men told me:

We just talk about different stuff sometimes religion, politics, trade, family, culture and even something that comes up in everyday life in Canada.

The participants kept coming to the room and some left for smoking cigarettes. After half an hour of being in the club, I could hear Yusof's voice (the sheikh) chitchatting with the men who were standing outside and smoking. When the room was packed with 31 people, the sheikh entered with 2-3 other young men. He sat down with some of the other participants on the cushions and started talking about a hockey match that happened yesterday. After 10 minutes of chitchat he started the lecture and in the beginning he introduced me to the youths. The content of the lecture and the questions by these youth during the lecture will be discussed in the theme chapter of religiosity.

After about an hour and fifteen minutes the lecture finished and people scattered. A few of them left immediately but most of them stayed. Two young men went near the sink of the kitchen and prepared snacks for the rest of them. At this time, which was around 11 pm, three young men entered the club just after the lecture as it was called the 'chilling' part. Some of them played billiards and two of them went for the Ping-Pong table. Before the sheikh left he told me that, 'I sometimes stay with them for the shisha part, but I need to get up early tomorrow morning.'

One of the executives explained to me that the program runs till 3am! I was shocked and I didn't know. I thought that the program would start at 9pm and would probably finish at 12pm. I was thinking about how to handle Zainab and drive back home at 3am.

I could see how hard it was for someone like me as a woman and a mother to keep up with these young men's program that were in their early twenties. While the

young men were hanging around and playing billiards and Ping-Pong, I was thinking about what to do. Finally, I decided to go home at 12am and stay until 3am without Zainab the next week. When I was in the process of thinking what to do, two of the youths came towards me and said, 'we want to be interviewed.' They wrote down their contact information so I would call or email them and set a time for the interview. As it was explained earlier bringing my daughter to the club helped me a lot in many ways such as being flexible on setting a time for the interview. Ishamel, one of the participants said, 'I want to be interviewed but only on Ottawa U's campus since I am a full time student there. Well actually because you have a two-year-old, I am flexible about the time and the place.'

Two converts came to me and wrote their names and contact info on the paper and when I said thank you, they replied back 'No! Thank you! Thank you for interviewing us.' One of them said, 'There are many misunderstandings towards the converts especially with the rise of ISIS.'

It was interesting that when I was leaving the club; four other men just entered the club at 12 am! Later on I came to understand that two of them were executives who were responsible to be there from 12am until 3am and they locked the door of the club at 3am every Saturday. When I later interviewed these two young men together in the club, they said,

We take our responsibilities seriously since most guys stay here until 3am. We want to make sure that everyone leaves at the end. We sometimes come for the lecture but most of the times we come from 12 to 3am just for the Shisha and fun part.

The second time that I went to the club I did not take my daughter with me. I stayed there for the shisha part as well. Yusof could not make it and someone else delivered

the speech. He was young and he was in his mid-thirties. In the beginning he said that he liked the atmosphere of the club because it was less formal than mosques and other religious places. The lecture, the same as Yusof's lecture, was based completely on discussions.

Later on one of the executives told me that having programs every week is important to them and whenever Yusof cannot come they bring different guest speakers. He said:

Me as well as the other executives choose a topic and then find someone to come and speak. The topic has to be relevant to today's society. The topic has to be a way that it creates discussions. One of the roles that I have as an executive is to create some questions that make and create discussions among youth.

When I went there for the second time when it reached midnight, one of the men came to me laughing and said, 'Sister do you want to stay for the shisha time as well? If yes, it's totally cool for us and we can smoke together!' I smiled back but I felt a little bit uneasy being among 20 young men smoking shisha and cigarettes. I grew up in a family in which smoking was considered extremely unhealthy and I avoided hanging out around people who smoked and now I had to do fieldwork among 20-30 men that smoked for hours every week.

After 12 am, three young men brought eight shishas from their cars. Hussein (the president) told me in an interview, 'we don't provide shishas. The youths, who smoke shisha, bring them with them.'

The club executives had strict rules for the shisha part. Two executives told the rest what to do.

Ali, one of the executives told me:

We have some very very strict rules about shisha, like people under 21 they are not allowed, young people who have never smoked in their lives aren't allowed to learn how to smoke in the clubhouse. And we try to always divide the place and let the smokers smoke near the garage door, and smoking cigarettes is not allowed inside the clubhouse. Allowing shisha is only to attract the guys who had smoked it and tell them that they don't have to go to shisha places to do so where there is a bad atmosphere, they can bring it to the clubhouse instead.

Some of them sat down on the floor and started smoking shisha. Few others went outside for smoking cigarettes. Two men did not smoke so they were playing Ping-Pong. Two other men sat down on the cushions and continued their discussion that was related to the lectures' topics.

It was so awkward sitting next to them and not smoking shisha. I tried not to look at them directly. I pretended to be busy looking at my emails through my phone while looking through the corner of my eyes. I didn't want them to feel guilty or distracted by my presence although I think I caused that anyway. It was around 2 am and I was dying of tiredness.

For this club, smoking shisha was done as part of a religious event or as one participant put it, 'a halal way of chilling' or as one of the participants put it, 'simply have an appropriate place to hang out.' Having an appropriate/halal way of hanging out is very important to them and they insist on it. The concept of having fun and leisure will be discussed in the theory chapter in the part related to post-subcultural theories.

The Ottawa Women's Youth Club:

The Ottawa men's youth club sublet the place to another youth, which was only for young women that had a separate name and was a separate club, for a night each

week. The women's club did not pay any rent to the men's club and had programs usually on Thursday nights. Nevertheless, it operated completely separately and independently from the men's club discussed earlier.

The president of the men's club introduced me to the women's club:

No men are allowed to come when there is a women program. We usually send a broadcast message to all the people who are registered with us to remind them that this night is strictly for women. The sister's program is run by an independent group called (The name of the women's club). We offered them the clubhouse free of charge to do their programs.

The women's youth club was older than the men's and was created by two young women two years before the men's club. The women's club held their programs in other places and it was about two years ago when their club moved to its current location. The Ottawa women youth club was established in 2010 and has been holding programs for six years although not always regularly. As Neda one of the participants told me:

We try to have programs on Thursday nights every week but sometimes everyone is so busy. It is either at the end of the semester and finals are reaching or people are working late so we all decide not to have them for a week or two.

The name of the club was in Arabic and the English translation of the word meant, a person who brings good news and hope. Two best friends named, Maryam and Zainab who were both 19 years old at that time established the Ottawa women's club. After six years they were 25 years old and still both active in the youth club.

Maryam had immigrated to Canada from Lebanon when she was three years old with her parents. She grew up in Canada and went to school in Ottawa. Zainab was

born in Ottawa but raised in Calgary. She came to Ottawa for her university studies. Her parents had emigrated from Iraq. They were both at their final year of earning a bachelor's degree in engineering.

When I interviewed Maryam, she went into details describing her family. She said:

I grew up in a very very religious family at the same time very very open. It is very rare to find. I mean you don't find open and religious at the same time in a household and I am very blessed. This is what I wanted people to know that you could be super religious and at the same time open. You can be religious and you don't have to be like a cave man and very restricted.

The participants of this club had multiple ethnic backgrounds as well and they were second-generation Muslims whose parents had immigrated to Canada from various countries although mostly from the Middle East. The club had fewer participants attending each session (around 13 women, more or less) compared to the Ottawa men's club that had a minimum of 20 participants with a peak of 35-40 young men.

Zainab, one of the founders of this youth club told me:

The participants are over 18. I don't know the eldest. I mean we don't care as long as they are over 18 it is perfect for them to come. It is not my job to dig in, you know parents usually do these stuff and we are not like them (Laughing). As long as they interact it doesn't really matter.

When I talked to some of these participants in the interviews, two of them self-identified as Sunni Muslims.

This club unlike the Ottawa men's club that was very strict to have its programs every week on Saturday nights was not very organized schedule wise. As I explained earlier in this chapter, in the men's club even the nights when the sheikh (Yusuf)

could not come to give lectures, someone would give a lecture so the programs would still keep running.

Before participating in both clubs, I assumed that there was one club for both men and women but because of gender separation they hold their events on different nights of the week. But the reality was that they were separate clubs but were using the same space. The women's club used to hold their programs in different cultural centers as well as people's homes, which they regret. Maryam one of the founders of the women's club told me:

Our youth club is separate from the men's and they were kind enough to let us have one night. So we are so picky on where to hold our programs. Because we don't want it to be in a community or place that is for a specific ethnic community and we want it to be separate from these things and completely independent so no one would tell us what to do and have control over us which is the same mentality that this men's youth club has and lets everyone in.

I asked her about the evolution of the club, from its establishment to holding programs in the Ottawa men's club, and she explained to me that:

We held programs first in parent organizations and we did not have a good experience from doing that since the parents interfered too much in every aspect of our programs. Then we moved and held programs in each other's houses but that caused a problem too since some of us live with our parents and the parents' supervision was still obvious. After a couple of months we decided to rent community centers. After holding a few programs in community centers, a friend introduced me to the Ottawa men's club's president at that time and he told me that they went through the same problems. He spoke with other executives of their club and they offered us the place so that we could hold our programs once a week in their club. This gave us independence from parents' supervision.

Maryam explained the reason that she decided to establish this club was that ‘there were a large number of young female Muslims who didn’t know where to go and chill out and there was a sense of lack of community and shared identity.’ The other founder explained: ‘these girls were denied for many years and now that we have established something they (first-generation organizations) disagree with it?!’ In fact, parent organizations had attempted to intrude when the club was deciding on its programs and schedules. The notion of resisting the first-generation organizations will be discussed in the later sections of this dissertation.

Access:

I did not know about this youth club before going to the Ottawa men’s club and they introduced me to this club. Two of the executives in the men’s club asked me that if I had done fieldwork in the women’s club. I told them that I didn’t know that such a club existed and they looked surprised and were more surprised that I started doing fieldwork in the men’s club first. The president of the men’s club introduced me by email to one of the two founders of the women’s club. I never thought before doing my fieldwork that I could have access to women participants by men introducing me to women.

An Interesting Thursday Night:

As explained earlier the young women held their program in the same place as the men’s club. Their program started at 7 pm. It was much easier for me to attend since the program started two hours earlier than the men’s. As before, I drove there with

my daughter. I arrived at the club's entrance at 7 pm sharp. When we went inside the club there were three other women prior to my arrival. Since I was new to them, they turned back and stopped talking to each other. I said 'salam' and sat near them on the cushions.

Samira a young woman at the age of 21 asked my name and how old I was. It was interesting that none of them asked me why I was there as if I was a regular participant and not someone who had participated for her fieldwork research. Only me and another young woman were first time participants. Everyone greeted each other by hugging, kissing and shaking hands.

Since it was the time of prayer, four women stood next to each other and prayed. The rest were sitting down. Out of ten participants, four of them were without a hijab.⁸⁶ The type of the participants' style of clothing will be discussed later.

When we were sitting and talking, one of the participants whose name was Noor entered the club with a carseat that had a baby boy in it. The participants told me that she was the only one with a baby. She told me that she comes late and leaves early compared to other girls. She said:

I am a student as well as a mother. You could imagine how busy I am. I am not like the rest of them now (pointing towards them and laughing). I use to come here just for the sake of its fun but now I just come to see my friends.

What she said was similar to what Hussein (the president of the Ottawa men's club) told me. He was older and had a one-year-old baby and had to leave earlier than the

⁸⁶ By the word hijab I refer to the headscarf. The word hijab means 'covering' in Arabic.

rest of them. Then they all sat down and started reading Doa Komeil.⁸⁷ One of the girls named Mona started reading from the book and they all sat down in the direction of Mecca to listen to it. Neda, one of the participants who did not wear a hijab told me later in an interview:

We have doa komeil every Thursdays. Our main central concern is that many people grew up here and they don't go any place that has religious stuff but they come here to chit chat and have fun alongside of reading the doa.

After the Doa, one of the young women while seated, started talking about the concept of giving money to the poor. The topic was driven from 7 verses in the Quran (chapter 30) related to Muslims who have gone astray and do not give their money to people less fortunate. She was reading from some papers that she had prepared for the event. Rosita was a participant herself and was not a religious leader.

Mona told me:

We have usually just the doa but sometimes it is followed by a discussion either on a topic that it wasn't mentioned before and someone would do a research and come back and talk about it or sometimes it is just regular chit chat.

The main theme of the women's programs unlike the men's was not the religious lecture. For the men's club the executives insisted on the lecture and that they encouraged people to participate, but in the women's club giving a brief twenty-minute presentation was not a regular event. For the men's club even if Yusof (the permanent sheikh of the club) could not make it for a week, the executives chose

⁸⁷ A prayer in which everyone sits down and reads from a book called Mafatih Al Jinan. The prayer praises God and asks for his forgiveness. Some parts of the Doa Komeil is similar to the Psalms. This prayer was written by Imam Ali (the first Imam of Shia Muslims).

another person to come and speak for the club. During the presentation and discussions, one of the girls brought some snacks from the kitchen and put them in the middle. One of them was telling the other about how hard one of her assignments was. The other was explaining with a lot of enthusiasm about a goodbye party of her friend who went back to Lebanon. Others continued a discussion related to the topic of the presentation. The discussion was on some corrupt Muslim rulers such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia's kings who don't give their money to charity. While some women were sitting down and talking, others stood up and played Ping-Pong and billiards. Their type of chilling was very similar to the men's club only the women didn't have the shisha part. I asked them why and they said that there were not many people who requested shisha or a similar activity. Also they insisted that they didn't want their programs to be exactly like the men's and that they were a separate club. Two young women played Ping-Pong and two others played billiards. I stood up next to the tables and watched them play. After ten minutes or so, Mona who was playing Ping-Pong asked if I wanted to play. 'Sure! Why not, thank you!' I replied. We played for about twenty minutes. While we were playing, we talked about different issues from family lifestyles to Muslim communities in Ottawa. It was easier for me to interact with young women compared to men.

The men's club was on Saturday nights and they stayed there until 3am while the women's club was on Thursday nights and therefore their programs ended before 12am since many of them had to work in the morning or had university classes. Whenever I went to the women's club, I stayed until 12am and Zahra (the person

who had the key) locked the door. This club's timing was much more convenient for me than the men's club.

This club unlike the other two youth clubs (one in Montreal and the other in Ottawa that were semi-organized) was not organized at all. One of its members explained that they did not have executives; elections or a religious leader figure because they think this would force people to do things. Rather the way this youth club worked was that during each program whoever had come would stand up and if they felt like it, they would do some works. One of the participants said that:

Well the whole purpose is not to be organized. Women have always have and will have different responsibility such as studying, working and later on kids and marriage is added and everyone is busy so we don't want to add more responsibilities.

Another participant, Zahra, told me:

If I am not available another person takes charge. Especially when no one has time and we don't want to force people to do chores and tasks and it is 100% voluntary. It means that if you are not in the mood this week you just tell your friends to cover up for you or you say that I can just do this task for two weeks and that's it. Because everyone is busy. Someone is going through school, one person has a baby, the other is getting married, you know people have a life and you can't force them to do stuff just because they want to attend the club. You are not forced to be there all the time and it is okay that if you don't come. We talk to each other and cancel her task and someone else takes charge so it is just an extended family. We want people to feel relaxed.

This is completely opposite of the men's club. I think one of the reasons for the men club's seriousness was what an executive said. He told me that, 'There are many guys who stay until 3am and we are responsible for them.'

Another reason for having executives might be that the men's club had many participants compared to the women's club. Also the women's club had its programs without having to pay any rent. Another reason might be that the women's club did not have regular programs every week while the men's club had. I have interviewed four women from this club. As a whole the number of interviews for my fieldwork in these three clubs reached 26 people.

Fieldwork Challenges

Montreal Youth Club:

Having access to this club had its own difficulties compared to the other clubs. Also no one in the men and women's club asked me for a final copy of my thesis while some of the Montreal youth club requested a copy of my thesis. Fulfilling the ethics' mandates were more important during my fieldwork in Montreal city since the participants very much cared about their image in the Iranian community as well as their friends in the club. With the methodology of snowballing many Iranians introduced me to the participants as well as the executives of the Montreal club, but for the sake of ethics I did not tell them whom I have interviewed before talking to them. I paid a lot of attention to who introduced me to this club. I participated as well as observed the programs of this club since it did not have gender segregation and this made it easier for me to participate. Taking my husband to this club was helpful to become friends especially with the young men.

Men's Youth Club:

Before going to the club and encountering the sheikh and the president of the club, I thought that they were very serious people since they told my husband that we should first have a formal meeting before me going to their club and meeting the participants. They said that they are strict on who does research in their club, which I found logical and normal. I went there for a formal and was able to gain their trust. I think being a Muslim has very much eased the process of having access to the club since they were not looking at me as an outsider especially when we all talked about the challenges of being a young Muslim in the West both among non-Muslims as well as among the Muslim community. The sheikh and the president and later on the participants saw me as a Muslim who was doing her work on a subject related to Muslims rather than someone who was watching them in an awkward way and they needed to justify what they were doing in the club. Even during the lecture when I was taking notes, it was normal for the sheikh. It was as if I was taking notes for my own Islamic knowledge. I did not mention the name of any mosques or Islamic centers that I went or used to go to prior to coming to this club since they were suspicious about first-generation organizations coming to their clubs and eventually gaining influence and authority on the participants and their programs. One of the participants had told me that 'even some Muslim parent organizations want to change the themes of our lectures and they love to monitor and interfere in our lectures, discussions and talks.' It should be noted that the interference of parent organizations in the women's club was the same as the men's club. The only

difference was that the women's club was older than the men's and therefore they had a longer history of tensions with parent organizations.

It was very easy for me to understand and connect with the lecture, and I was even able to understand the inside jokes and laugh with the other participants.

No one from this youth club asked me about my ethnic background, which was surprising for me. What they cared about was me being a Muslim. This was true among the women's club as well. Unlike first generation immigrants where they get together one of the first questions that are always asked is where are you from? The Iranians in the Montreal club already knew that I was Iranian since we talked in English but with some Farsi words in between.

In the men's youth club, most of the participants looked at me as a mother figure or an older sister rather than just a young woman. During one of the interviews that I had with one of the executives, he said,

This is only a men's club, you know like a man's cave so women are not allowed. Then he looked at me and said, 'Oh! Well except you of course because you are doing your research in here and you are like an older sister to us. I mean not old but you know a bit older! (Laughing)

Although it should be mentioned that some of these young men seemed surprised when they saw me sitting in the club, but when they took off their shoes and said 'salam' (Hello in Arabic) to me any way and sat down next to their friends. None of these participants came to me and asked me questions in regards to my presence. Many other youths who did not look surprised, said salam and passed me as if it was completely normal for a young woman to participate in their programs. Throughout

the program I tried my best not to bother or disturb their program but it was inevitable to some degree. It is worth mentioning that the second time that I went to the club, two young men were playing billiards. When I entered, Komeil who was an executive told these two men to stop playing because last time that I was in the club, I sat near the billiard table and he said that it is distracting for me. I said, 'No, no play! I don't want to disturb!' and they continued playing billiards. I could see that my presence was disrupting these young men's programs sometimes especially when they were chitchatting with their friends about some private matters in their lives.

Women's Youth Club:

I enjoyed talking to these young women and played Ping-Pong and I wished I knew about this club sooner so I would have participated earlier not for the sake of the thesis but to have fun. In the women's club I was participating as well as observing the programs while in the men's club except the lecture part, I was only observing. I did not interfere in their chitchats before the lecture started. Even during the lecture, I did not answer or ask any questions from Yusof while the other participants were very active and discussed many issues. I also did not smoke shisha or play pool or Ping-Pong with these men. While in the women's club I participated in all the talks and chitchats as well as played Ping-Pong. It was easier to chill out with the young women than the young men for me. For the men's club I had to be more careful about what to do or say compared to the women's club. The only issue with the women's club was the timing of their programs, which were not very

organized. The men's club weekly program made them connect more with each other as if they were an extended family, but for the women's club it was different. This club had programs sometimes as infrequently as twice a month and in the middle of the winter once in a month.

It is worth mentioning that my participant observation was not limited to the clubs' spaces. I interacted with members outside of the clubs and attended their outdoor gatherings as well. For example, I interviewed one of the participants of the Montreal youth club in her house in one of the main streets of downtown Montreal. Her house as she explained was 'very Iranian' meaning that she had Persian calligraphies hanging on her walls and she had many small statues of Iranian architectural sites as well as ancient mosques. The same as a typical Iranian apartment, shoes needed to be taken off before entering her home. She had married a year ago and she moved in with her husband two months before I interviewed her. She told me that, 'I wanted to keep on with my Iranian background and that is why me and my husband, who is an Iranian himself, decided to decorate our apartment like this.' Besides this participant, I went to the houses of two other members to conduct interviews. Moreover, as I explained in the settings chapter, I rented an apartment from one of the members of Montreal club and this gave me a great opportunity to interact with the founders and participants outside of the club. I was invited to their gatherings and parties in each other's houses, as well as going out with them to restaurants and coffee shops.

I did not interview the participants of the women's club in their houses and instead interviewed most of them in the club, except one of them whom I talked to in a McDonald's near her house. I went out with these young women to eat Shawarma three times on Friday and Saturday nights. These young women had become friends with each other and had then continued their friendship outside of the club and they hung out in restaurants, cinemas and coffee shops. This was the same for the Ottawa men's club. They had created friendships within the club and they went to public places together to have 'fun.' The only difference was that I did not interact with these young men outside of the club because of the concept of modesty in Islam. I did not go to restaurants, parks or other places outside of the club with them since it would have created an uncomfortable situation both for them and myself, considering that most of them were single.

Conclusion:

This chapter explained the setting and methodology of my fieldwork. With detailed description of the participant observation and quotations from the participants, the usefulness of this methodology was shown. The three clubs of the research project were introduced by how I accessed each one of them, the description of the building and programs, as well as the number of participants and executives. Each club was introduced separately in three different sections. Also the chapter explained the inner working of each club and how doing fieldwork in each came with its own set of unique challenges. The next three chapters will focus on the three themes under study, namely religiosity, resistance and style, which address the reasons behind the

establishment of the clubs and their *raison d'être*. Before looking at the three themes present in the youth clubs, it is essential to discuss the theoretical foundation of the dissertation, which is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Theory

This chapter will elaborate the theoretical framework used in this dissertation. As the following sections will demonstrate, youth subcultural theory is especially useful in studying the case study of this research project. The chapter begins by defining the word youth and how different scholars give a variety of definitions for this word. The definition of the word 'subculture' is further explained so that it becomes clear why this dissertation has employed subcultural theories for its theoretical framework. Then the three major theoretical schools in subcultural studies, which are the Chicago school, the Birmingham school and Post-Subcultural theories, are elaborated in detail. After that the criticisms raised regarding each school is examined. Also the difference between these schools in regards to why subcultures are created and the difference of views regarding resistance and style are also studied. Finally, it is demonstrated why Post-Subcultural theories compared to the other two schools of thought is more suitable for the case under study. To begin and in order to have a better understanding of youth subcultural theories, the word 'youth' needs to be defined.

Definition of Youth

The definition of the word Youth is not crystal clear and has a variety of meanings. For over 150 years the definition of youth has somehow been associated with unruly nature and the involvement in gangs, behavior that was considered as typical

for young men and women.⁸⁸ Scholars define youth by using different criteria based on age, psychology, biology and others. The term youth is significant in that it conveys a sense of transition, since many changes take place during these years such as family formation and participating in society as well as going from living with parents to becoming independent financially.⁸⁹ In Western culture the most obvious criteria for defining the word youth is age. Youth were originally considered teens who were in secondary school. Aries (1962), the famous historian, explains that the term childhood, as what is known today, was not used before the fifteenth century because it was considered as part of adulthood. After the fifteenth century children were considered as having a different nature and different needs than adults. It was just at the end of the nineteenth and early twenty centuries that childhood was defined as a time of innocence and freedom from the responsibilities of adulthood.⁹⁰

As the term childhood became 'discovered,' the term youth began to also emerge as the transition phase from childhood and being innocent to adulthood and being mature. More recently however the term youth is increasingly being applied to more mature and older people. Youth are now mostly considered as being between the ages of 16 to 25, which is approximately the age when childhood has gone past, while the responsibilities of adulthood have also not fully materialized.

⁸⁸ Government of Canada, *Youth in Canada Today*, Policy Horizons Canada, (October 28, 2013).

⁸⁹ Gill Valentine, *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (New York: Rutledge, 1997), 3.

The notion of 'performativity' has a major role here. As Solberg (1990:12) explains some youth resist the idea of being youthful and might act in a way that his/her attitude is read younger from their actual age, while other youth might act the opposite in that their manner and actions in front of others is read as if they are older in age and physical body. What is clear is that for scholars of youth culture the term youth is not a uni-dimensional category and that it signifies the complexity of the lives of youth as well and that is why there is no single definition for the word 'youth.'⁹¹

What is a Subculture?

Youth subcultural study is still a popular subject in the US, UK as well as in other European university campuses. The 'Golden Age' of youth subculture was from 1950s to 1970s.⁹² The earliest study of subcultures was conducted in the University of Chicago from the 1920s to the 1940s. In Britain the CCCS or the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies developed a subcultural approach in the 1960s and 1970s, which is known as the Birmingham school of thought. It is difficult to define exactly what subcultures are since there are diverse definitions. More importantly it is important to consider that in most cases subcultures are not stable, rather they are fluid social networks. As a result, different scholars provide various definitions, but the most shared definition is that subcultures are unorganized social networks in which their participants share a common identity. Moreover, subcultures have a

⁹¹ Ibid., 5-7.

⁹² Steve Redhead, *The End of the century Party: Youth and Pop Towards 2000*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 1.

certain meaning or meanings for various items and practices. Also subcultures are usually considered marginalized and as a result subcultures usually have a sense of resistance towards the 'dominant' culture, as well as the parents' culture or other subcultures.⁹³ Participants have a shared identity and have meanings for certain items or practices. There has always been a distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in the study of culture.⁹⁴ Subcultures distinguish themselves both from society as well as other subcultures.⁹⁵ Becker (1963) argues that social groups create certain rules and regulations that they apply those rules to particular people and then label them as outsiders.⁹⁶

Brake argues many youth subcultures emerge in response to the contradictions that they see in their parents' cultures.⁹⁷ Also scholars have argued that youth join subcultures for various reasons such as marginalization, discrimination or even just as a way of having extreme fun.⁹⁸ Scholars believe that many youth who look or act differently than their peers at school, resulting in their friends, families or teachers treating them differently, join subcultures. These youth join in order to find a place or a group of people who they feel safe and comfortable with, while also not being judged.⁹⁹ Some other scholars have declared that other youth who do feel 'normal'

⁹³ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*, 16.

⁹⁴ Patrick Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies: Sociological Traditions and Core Concepts,' *Blackwell Publishing*, (2007): 585.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 586.

⁹⁶ Haenfler, *Subculture: The Basics*, 3.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 40.

join as well for the sake of fun and not just any fun but extreme ways of fun that cannot be gained in a nightclub.¹⁰⁰

The extent of commitment to the subculture is different among its members. Some change their lifestyles completely based on it, but for others subcultures are only a weekend of fun.¹⁰¹

Subcultures neglect some parts or all of their parents' cultures and/or dominant culture and/or other subcultures.¹⁰² Dick Hebdige argues that like-minded people who feel neglected by society's norms come together in a subculture and build a shared identity.¹⁰³

Pierre Bourdieu explains the concept of cultural capital and subcultural capital in his book called *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction* (1973). He says that the upper class creates some distinct objects and practices, which are unreachable and unavailable to lower classes such as expensive jewelry and clothes, ways of speaking and other items. Bourdieu names this 'the cultural capital.' In response to this, sub-culturists also create subcultural capital, which are insider knowledge, forms of tattoos or specific ways of dressing.¹⁰⁴ This can be seen in the difference between the middle class and the working class when they call themselves 'Chavs', the way they talk and the clothes they wear and then as a result the working class creates their own subculture.¹⁰⁵ Also Williams argues that the use of the Internet has made it simple for subculture participants to connect with each other and with other

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰¹ Bennett and Kahn-Harris, *After Subcultures*, 145.

¹⁰² Ibid., 31.

¹⁰³ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The meaning of Style* (New York: Rutledge, 1979), 12.

¹⁰⁴ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*, 37.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 64.

subcultures.¹⁰⁶ Youths are in the front row of political and cultural change and their ideas move easily and faster especially now than ever with the help of the Internet across the nations.¹⁰⁷

People join a subculture from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.¹⁰⁸ Subcultures such as punk are a worldwide subculture and people from different background cultures join a united subculture. This is similar to Ottawa men's and women's club that was mentioned in the setting chapter.

Why Should We Study Subcultures?

The young men or women who participate in subcultures become teachers, artists, musicians, businessman/woman, engineers and even activists, later in life. Essentially these youths enter social institutions and job markets when they become adults and form the basis of the working society in the future. In that sense subcultures impact our society as well as our lives directly.¹⁰⁹ That young man or woman becomes a father or a mother in the future and raises children; therefore, we need to study subcultures to better understand what will be taught to the next generations. While the public assumes that youth put aside subcultures when they grow up, many scholars believe the opposite, arguing that subculture meanings and practices are present throughout young people's lives and are passed on to the next generation.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 583.

¹⁰⁷ David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl, *The Post Meaning of Style*, (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 11.

¹⁰⁸ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, 66.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 24.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 137.

There are three main subcultural theoretical schools of thought: The Chicago school, the Birmingham school and the post-subcultural school. These are briefly explained in the following sections. In order to study subcultures deeply, American and British schools must be distinguished.¹¹¹

The Chicago school

The 'scientific' study of subcultures with participant observation methodology started in the 1920s with its main focus on urban life in the city of Chicago.¹¹² Scholars of the Chicago school worked extensively on youth subcultures in the urban context from the 1920s to the 1940s. These Sociologists and criminologists studied different gangs as well as deviant groups in the city.

Two notable early Chicago scholars were Robert Ezra Park and Ernest W. Burgess. These two scholars proposed the notion of human ecology, which compared social life with biological organism. They believed that like the human body, social groups are made of different and various parts that function perfectly if they all work together. However, migrations, economic change, industrialization and other rapid changes that create instability, unemployment and poverty, led to the creation of subcultures. Therefore, the Chicago School believes that social disorganization and urbanization creates subcultures.¹¹³ Robert Ezra Park presented his theory in 1926 and named it 'the marginal man' which refers to an individual being suspended between two cultures and struggles to establish his/her identity. Park explains that,

¹¹¹ Blackman, 'Youth Subcultural Theory,' 2.

¹¹² Hebdige, *The Meaning of Style*, 75.

¹¹³ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, 4.

‘the marginal man... is one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic cultures.... his mind is the crucible in which two different and refractory cultures may be said to melt and, either wholly or in part, fuse.’¹¹⁴ He argues that due to migration and instability individuals are caught between two diverse cultures and he says that an unstable character is born, which he names the ‘marginal man.’¹¹⁵

Labeling theory is one of the core concepts in the Chicago School, which means that a group becomes ‘deviant’ when they are labeled by society as deviant. One of the examples of labeling is skinhead subculture. The history of skinheads started when society began to label some youth, especially young men who listened to a certain type of music and wore different type of clothing, as ‘dirty and rude boys.’ Their response was to isolate themselves and reject bourgeois British society.¹¹⁶

A study in Melbourne, Australia declared that adults have assumed that many youths have joined gangs just because of the way they dress and for belonging to a specific ethnicity.¹¹⁷ Robert Merton (1938) argues that since some people don’t have access to wealth, education and power, they go towards illegitimate means of achievement such as crime. The two main scholars in the Chicago school who have worked on deviance in urban poor neighborhoods are Thrasher’s (1927) *The Gang*

¹¹⁴ Goldberg, Milton M. ‘A qualification of the marginal man theory.’ *American Sociological Review* 6, no. 1 (1941): 52-58

¹¹⁵ Robert Ezra Park. ‘Human Migration and the Marginal Man.’ *The American Journal of Sociology*, no. 6 (1928): 88-89.

¹¹⁶ Marco Menicocci, ‘Dream-land: The Mythical Skinheads’ Communitarianism, ^{ANTHRO}*Antrocom Online Journal of Anthropology*, (2012): 265.

¹¹⁷ Williams, ‘Youth-Subcultural Studies,’ 584.

and Cressey's (1932) *The Taxi-Dance Hall*.¹¹⁸

At the same time other scholars such as Matza and Sykes (1961) have argued the opposite in regards to the concept of deviance.¹¹⁹ They argued that in contrast to the assumption that all subcultures are deviant in some ways, which contradict societies' values, there are actually many legitimate subcultures that are deviant in a way that they offer non-conformist routines to pleasure and they do not disrupt dominant society.

The interesting point about studying deviance is that this topic has been studied mostly through ethnographic work of anthropologists rather than sociologists. This is exactly what this thesis aims to do since understanding deviance in youth subculture studies needs more focus on specific details that cannot be achieved except via ethnographic work.

The Birmingham School

In the late 1960s and 1970s the definition of subculture was further elaborated with the concept of counterculture or contra-culture.¹²⁰ After World War II, youth cultures shifted due to a variety of reasons since youth had more leisure and free time. The working class had shrunk and the number of middle class youth increased compared to the years before the war. In the U.K, scholars at the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham studied

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 574.

¹¹⁹ Bennett, *After Subculture*, 4.

¹²⁰ Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 575.

youth cultures after World War II. Albert Cohen from the school began to argue that participants in subcultures invert mainstream culture.¹²¹ Also Cloward and Ohlin (1960) insisted that subcultures' participants had the ability to change and create an alternative culture that would resist the dominant culture.¹²² The main subcultures that these scholars studied were teddy boys, mods, hippies, punks and skinheads. Teddy boy was a British subculture that was created after WWII in which its male members wore Edwardian style suits. Mod (abbreviation for *modernists*) was a subculture that was made up of a group of young proletarian English men.¹²³ It started in Britain among young stylish men and then spread among British women as well. Their passion was for music, fashion and motor scooters.¹²⁴ Hippies were made up of upper class youth who were against the Vietnam War. They held up rallies and protests against the war and their symbol of peace has become a worldwide symbol. Moreover they were against nationalism, which is in complete contrast to the belief system of skinheads who are very patriotic as well as nationalist.¹²⁵ Skinheads are mostly from working class youth who are very critical of the conditions of the working class. It started in Britain and spread in American and other parts of Europe. Their style is to shave their head along with wearing leather jackets. They have strong ties to body modification such as tattoos. They also have inner group tattoo symbols that can be identified especially by the other

¹²¹ Albert Cohen, *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang* (New York: New York Free Press, 1955).

¹²² Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 576.

¹²³ Menicocci, 'Dream-Land,' 268.

¹²⁴ Stanley Cohen, *Folk devils and moral panics: the creation of the Mods and Rockers* (London: Routledge, 2002), 10.

¹²⁵ Menicocci, 'Dream-Land,' 267.

skinheads.¹²⁶ The use of violence is more common among this subculture than the subcultures mentioned earlier. Moreover, skinheads have aggressive attitudes towards people who don't look and speak like them, which they call foreigners. For example, skinheads have violent attitudes towards the Pakistani and Indian community in Britain. Skinheads have a name for anyone that has brown skin and looks like a 'foreigner,' referring to them as 'Paki.'¹²⁷ The type of music that they listen to is very similar to punk and many believe that skinheads started from punk groups.¹²⁸ Punk is a subculture that its center is the punk rock music. Riot grrrls, which will be explained in this chapter, emerged out of punk's type of music, an aggressive and loud style of music.¹²⁹

The core concepts in CCCS are resistance and style. Each of these concepts is discussed below:

Resistance

In contrast to the Chicago school, which says that youth are under society's pressures to conform to the norm, the Birmingham school argues that youth resist these pressures and create their own voice. This resistance can be seen in their styles, cloths, and types of music and other aspects of their lives. Also Early Chicago School focused on immigrants, poor people and mostly African Americans while CCCS's main focus were on class struggles in Britain. For the Chicago school the dominant culture has full force on participants who create subcultures while for the

¹²⁶ Ibid., 269.

¹²⁷ Steve Redhead, *We Have Never Been Post-Modern: Theory at the Speed of Light* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 2011), 72.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 271.

Birmingham school although the dominant culture pushes young people to act in a certain way, but they can resist that force.¹³⁰

One of the most important books in CCCS is *Resistance Through Rituals* by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson. This book looks at different subcultures that emerged after the war in Britain such as teddy boys, rude boys and skinheads. When the book *Resistance Through Rituals* was first published in 1975, youth culture theories shifted from the locality and community to class and class struggles after WWII when discussions on class was at its peak.

The concept of resistance is divided into two dimensions; the macro level and the micro level. The macro level is resistance towards governments and the micro level is resistance towards peers who tease youth.¹³¹ Also resistance can be public and/or private. For example, Riot grrrls is a feminist punk subculture that prefers its rituals to be more private and underground than on the streets.¹³²

It should be noted that some scholars see what CCCS regards as resistance in subcultures as wishful thinking and exaggeration.¹³³ Also For CCCS the concept of space is important since 'with the space there is real time for leisure and recreation, actual room on the street corner.' Youth creating a space for themselves constitutes a challenge to authority and some of them have strategies of resistance.¹³⁴ Hebdige also mentions that when subcultures are first created they are authentic and have 'pure' resistance towards mainstream, but after a while and rapidly this authenticity

¹³⁰ Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 581.

¹³¹ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, 48.

¹³² Tony Jefferson and Stuart Hall, *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (New York: Rutledge, 1993), xviii.

¹³³ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, 47.

¹³⁴ Bennett, *After Subculture*, 6.

fades. Also Albert Cohen has studied gangs and found out that the reason behind the majority of youth joining gangs is not to resist the authority of society, but to resist parental authority, meaning that this resistance is the result of the hostility of a child towards his/her parents control and regulations.¹³⁵ Not only that but for the gang members the concept of home is important since they have broken from home controls and for them there is a dilemma between gang controls and home controls.¹³⁶

Style:

Another very important book in CCCS youth cultures is, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) by Dick Hebdige, which argues that subcultures take ordinary items and transform them into something that has meaning for them. A very good example of that would be a safety pin, which becomes a lip or ear-piercing for punks. Therefore, understanding and studying subcultures means decoding their style, which represents the group's values and behaviors. This approach is taken in this dissertation and the following chapters will try to achieve this very aim. The concept of style is explained further and in detail in chapter 4.

The concept of style means the active organization of objects and items with activities that create a distinctive group identity and a way of 'being in the world.'¹³⁷ For today's subcultures the concept of body modification such as tattooing,

¹³⁵ Cohen, *The Content of the Delinquent Subculture*, 203.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 204.

¹³⁷ Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 578.

branding, and piercing is an important part of their style (Winge 2003).¹³⁸ The concept of tattooing will be further discussed in this dissertation.

Subcultures and moral panic:

CCCS believes that media and authorities create moral panics.¹³⁹ Stanley Cohen (2002) is a prominent scholar who has worked on this concept. He studies the process of how a subculture or a group of people is considered a threat to society.¹⁴⁰ He says that in the beginning when a group is being stereotyped by the mass media, experts such as religious authorities, politicians, think tanks and so on express their solutions for dealing with such groups and as a result create moral panic in society.¹⁴¹ One example of this moral panic is the murder conviction of three heavy metal teenagers in the 1990s. As a result of which experts on news and other channels began to link heavy metal with Satanic activities (Berlinger and Sinofsky 1996).¹⁴² Such moral panic have a long history, such as witch-hunting in the 16th century, and are also present in contemporary society such as the moral panic toward American Muslims in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.¹⁴³

The increase in prejudice against Muslims after 9/11 intensified the pressure on them to assimilate into the dominant practices of North American society. ¹⁴⁴ For

¹³⁸ Ibid., 580.

¹³⁹ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, 9.

¹⁴⁰ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 26.

¹⁴¹ Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 584.

¹⁴² Ibid., 585.

¹⁴³ Chas Critcher, 'Moral Panics Analysis: Past, Present and Future,' *Blackwell Publishing Ltd*, (2008): 1127.

¹⁴⁴ Nagra, *Being Muslim and Canadian in the Post 9/11 Era*, 111.

example if we look at the Media coverage of Muslim women after 9/11, the media's representation of Muslim women were based only on women who wore long black garments (jilbab), with some of them even wearing a face veil (burqa).¹⁴⁵ After 9/11 images of Muslim women such as these were shown in the media to indicate the 'lack of integration' and the 'threat' the West faced.¹⁴⁶

Since the tragic events of 9/11, the Muslim community living in Canada has been under a national security spotlight. Security officials from organizations such as the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) and local police have been visiting and talking to Muslims. The Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relation (CAIR-CAN) has conducted a national survey on this issue. The result of the survey shows that 8 percent of the 467 respondents were questioned by security officials, with 46 percent of them reported feeling fearful, anxious or nervous and 24 percent of them felt harassed and discriminated against. Many reported that the officers were aggressive and threatened them with arrest based on the Anti-Terrorism Act. Many problematic questions were asked, such as their loyalty to Canada, their level of commitment to the Islamic faith and its rituals, as well as questions asking their opinion about the word *jihad*.¹⁴⁷ CAIR-CAN also conducted a study on death threats, assaults, harassment, discrimination, vandalism, racial profiling and attacks on Muslims and their institutions and places

¹⁴⁵ Jilbab is a full-length garment that some Muslim women wear, and its colour is often black. Niqab and burqa are the veils that cover the face and they are worn by some Muslim women in public. It should be noted that although these two types of face coverings are synonym in today's English but they have a slight difference, which is the burqa covers the eyes as well.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., Chap. 4.

¹⁴⁷ Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations. *Life for Canadian Muslims the Morning After a 9/11 Wake-Up Call: Presumption of Guilt A National Survey on Security Visitations of Canadian Muslims*. Accessed January, 2017. <http://www.caircan.ca/downloads/POG-08062005.pdf>, 2-5.

of worship in the year following the terrorist attacks of 9/11.¹⁴⁸ The results indicate that 56 percent of respondents reported anti-Muslim incidents at least in one occasion in the year after 9/11. Thirty-three percent of these anti-Muslim incidents were verbal abuse; other highly reported experiences included racial profiling and 16 percent included workplace discrimination. Also 56 percent of respondents indicated that they felt media reporting on Islam and Muslims in Canada had become increasingly biased.¹⁴⁹ Erving Goffman, a prominent sociologist's theory on stigmatization and what it is like to be a stigmatized individual is especially useful in understanding Muslim women's dilemma in identity representation. Stigmatized people are those whom society does not consider 'normal.' As a result, these people do not have full social acceptance, and are constantly striving to adjust their social identities in order to fit into society. The kind of stigma Muslims faced after 9/11 is characterized by Goffman as 'group identity stigma,' in which the stigma comes from being of a particular ethnicity,¹⁵⁰ nationality and religion. Finally, aside from the Chicago and Birmingham schools we must examine post-subcultural theory which has become much more prominent in recent times.

Post-subcultural Theory:

In the 1990s some scholars began to criticize the Marxist view on subculture (which emerged from CCCS in the 1970s). Throughout the 1990s, scholars who researched on youth have been using ethnography alongside of in-depth interviews to have a

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁵⁰ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*, (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1963), 31.

better understanding on youths' lives.¹⁵¹ Post-subcultural theories help us better understand various and creative practices of young people in a post-modern world.¹⁵² The definition of subculture in post-subcultural studies is more exclusive than CCCS's definition that it has to have few criteria to be part of subcultures.

Post-subculture theorists say that subcultures are not pre-existent, but they change by everyday action and are influenced by different cultures and therefore they have fluidity and dynamics.¹⁵³ Some prominent scholars such as David Muggleton say that Post-subcultural theory is a constructed field of study and it is a recent development.¹⁵⁴ Scholars such as David Muggleton paid more attention to 'club culture' rather than what CCCS gave for the definition of subculture.

The focus on subcultures shifted from the political dimension and class, to young people constructing their identity through fun and leisure.¹⁵⁵

Post-subcultural theory was first introduced by Steve Redhead (1990) at Manchester University and then later on developed by Muggleton (2000). Redhead looked at subcultures from a postmodernism lens. In the postmodern world individuals create their own type of style and they are less interested in a collective identity. CCCS and Chicago school gave priority to collective but post-subcultural theories give priority to individuals.¹⁵⁶ Therefore there is not a clear line between

¹⁵¹ Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 9.

¹⁵² Blackman, 'Youth Subcultural Theory,' 17.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵⁴ Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 4.

¹⁵⁵ Tammy Anderson, *Rave Culture: The Alteration and Decline of a Music Scene*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 13.

¹⁵⁶ Blackman, 'Youth Subcultural Theory,' 7.

what is considered 'sub' and what is considered 'dominant' culture. Post-modernist scholars believe that nowadays unlike in the past, with the rise of multiculturalism and globalization the boundaries between cultures are very loose and there are no clear boundaries for a hegemonic culture.¹⁵⁷ Redhead mentions that, 'subcultures were produced by subcultural theorists, not the other way around.'¹⁵⁸

Redhead argues that in the modern world compared to the era after WWII, youth have more free time and this is the main reason that a new 'clubbing culture' has emerged. This culture has dissolved concepts such as class, race and gender.¹⁵⁹ Although it should also be mentioned that Steve Redhead in one of his latest books, *We Have Never Been Post-Moderns*, uses the concepts of post-youth, post subculture and accelerated culture and non-postmodernity as an alternative for the concept of post-modernity.¹⁶⁰

Muggleton explains that post-subcultural scholars are torn between should we work within the existing limitations of 'subculture' or has the word lost its usefulness completely.¹⁶¹ Post-subcultural theorists use Max Weber, Jean Baudrillard and Michel Maffesoli ideas to say that unlike what CCCS have said, subcultures don't exist anymore and they are replaced by 'lifestyle.'¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Bennett and Kahn-Harris, *After Subculture*, 12

¹⁵⁸ Blackman, 'Youth Subcultural Theory,' 8.

¹⁵⁹ Bennett and Kahn-Harris, *After Subculture*, 13.

¹⁶⁰ Steve Redhead, *We Have Never Been Post-Modern: Theory at the Speed of Light* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 2011), 10.

¹⁶¹ Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 3-5.

¹⁶² Blackman, 'Youth Subcultural Theory,' 1.

Two of the famous books related to post-subcultural theories are *Rave Culture: The Alteration and Decline of a Music Scene* (2009) by Tammy Anderson^[163] and *Subcultural Theory: Traditions and Concepts* (2011) by Patrick J. Williams. Anderson looks at the decline of Philadelphia's rave scene from the 1990s till 2009 using ethnographic methodology. She mentions that rave has moved from an 'authentic rave' to 'commercial club culture.' During her ethnography she asks questions in regards to participants' different motivations. She argues that rave culture's participants have changed some of its elements through the 20 years of their existence. Therefore, subculture's participants have different reasons and motivations for joining that subculture. Also as Anderson mentions a subculture changes throughout time.¹⁶³ For example, the early punks are different from 2016's punks. In regards to the end of subcultures, as Dave Rimmer (1985) has mentioned in his book of 'New Pop and Culture Club' subcultures change very much from their origin as if they have never happened. For example he mentions that as if 'punk had never happened.' This is the main reason that Steve Redhead says that 'now we are in the era of post-post-punk!'¹⁶⁴ Nowadays youths want to go back to the past because they think that punk for example is lost and going back to the past creates hope for them.¹⁶⁵

Anderson looks at rave culture and gives insights in regards to its complex relations

¹⁶³ Anderson, *Rave Culture*, 3.

¹⁶⁴ Redhead, *Subculture to Clubcultures*, 39-40.

¹⁶⁵ 'The End-of-The-Century Party,' in Andy Furlong and Dan Woodman (eds), *Youth and Young Adulthood*, (Routledge, London and New York, 2015), pp. 23-26, 40-47

with the media, their internal politics, generational differences between various rave's participants and many other dimensions that adds insights to post-subcultural theory. Post-subcultural theorists pay more attention to participants defining the meaning of each item or object compared to CCCS in which only the meaning of resistance is studied. Also Anderson investigates subcultures related to the people of color and women and says that subcultures transform and reproduce dominant social relations, whereas CCCS disregards issues of race and gender.¹⁶⁶ Also Angela McRobbie studies Black American hip-hop culture, which has now become a dominant culture. Another example that she gives is the hooded top, which in the past was restricted to a specific subculture, but now it has become a 'norm' among youth especially young men.¹⁶⁷

Patrick Williams tries to answer questions such as how and why subcultures emerge and how 'mainstream society' responds to them. He focuses more on subcultural theoretical work unlike Anderson that uses ethnography as her methodology. Williams tries to understand how young people in a subculture create social worlds and also what subcultures mean to young participants of them.¹⁶⁸ Thus for these theorists coherent subcultures do not exist. Another perspective of Post-Subculture theorists is that youth's involvement and participation in subcultures is more a matter of choice rather than determined social positions such as being from a working class or a specific race and other factors.¹⁶⁹ Also unlike CCCS theory, post

¹⁶⁶ Anderson, *Rave Culture*, 5-6.

¹⁶⁷ Angela McRobbie, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (London: Rutledge, 1994), 14.

¹⁶⁸ Patrick Williams, *Subcultural Theories: Traditions and Concepts*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 29.

¹⁶⁹ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, 12.

Subculture scholars declare that goods and items that youth use are more related to consumerism rather than pure acts of resistance. Post-subcultural theorists believe that what youths do today is 'pure joy of individualistic consumerism.'¹⁷⁰ Steve Redhead argues that consumerism mostly started from the 1960s, at the same time as Pop music offered a cultural politics. He goes further and explains that 'consumerism traded its moral ideals for other satisfactions and that consumerism is precisely what the West wishes to export, masquerading as "freedom and democracy" though the West keeps silent about its consequences...take the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in the early 2000s; these events are producing the smooth idea of "virtual" war that we have adopted to conquer the consideration of death.'¹⁷¹

CCCS has been looking deeply and studying the political agenda behind the creation as well as the continuity of a subculture. Muggleton says that they are important but there are many other subcultures that do not resist capitalism and consumerism and they are mostly based on consumerism such as Skateboarders, bikers, and windsurfers.¹⁷² 'Subcultures may serve a useful function for capitalism.' Muggleton mentions that style being a symbol of resistance is not the case anymore and the styles of youth are more related to consumerism than resistance. In regards to resistance, there are some youth subcultures that resist some political dimensions, but the notion of resistance is not absolute in every aspect of subculture unlike what CCCS has explained. He mentions that all of the post-subcultural theories agree that

¹⁷⁰ Blackman, 'Youth Subcultural Theory,' 9.

¹⁷¹ Redhead, *We Have Never Been Post-Modern*, 81.

¹⁷² Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 7-8.

in this time, there are no rules, authenticity and no reason for ideological commitment especially in the concept of styles.¹⁷³ The concept of styles being based on consumerism is discussed in the theme chapter related to Style.

New forms of political cultural activism that have been on the rise recently should not be underestimated. Muggleton mentions that CCCS over-politicizes subcultures but some post-subcultural theorists under-politicize subcultures. He says that although subcultures are more pleasure-seekers and have individualistic issues but political activism should not be undermined in some subcultures. So for most subcultures it contains both factors; fun and political agendas. CCCS has explained that youths resist through indirect means such as their styles but as post-subcultural theorists have mentioned today's youth do not use style as a way of indirect resistance but they resist with direct ways.¹⁷⁴ To give an example, Muggleton explains that rave parties and acid houses were especially in 1990s confronted by British police during John Major's authority.¹⁷⁵ Another example of that is on 18th of June 1999 when massive global street partying occurred at the same time of G-8 meetings in Germany.¹⁷⁶ It should be mentioned that many youth clubs do not have political agendas behind their partying. Martin declares that rave parties 'may prove to be one of the most dynamic political movements of recent years.'¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, 29.

¹⁷⁴ Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Blackman, 'Youth Subcultural Theory,' 11.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁷⁷ Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 74.

Also the concept of partying and leisure time is very important in post-subcultural theories. It is very interesting that partying is considered in post-subcultural theories as a form of resistance. This is accurate in regards to the three clubs under study in this research project. For example, the men's club resisted their parent organization by smoking shisha and cigarettes because the parents' organizations had told them to immediately stop smoking shisha, which edict they did not listen to. Also they were resisting the dominant culture in Canada, by not going clubbing on Saturday nights in clubs that are associated with alcohol, sex and drugs. Therefore, they were resisting by engaging in fun activities. This is exactly what post-subcultural theorists mention when they talk about some youths resisting through partying.

Theoretical Criticism

Chicago School:

Critics declare that the Chicago school's main concept, which says that subcultures are a direct result of society especially social disorganizations, is too deterministic. The Chicago school sees all subcultures as social problems rather than diverse social phenomena. According to the Chicago school, society has a strong force on individuals and that all individuals in society instantly have no choice other than to obey the rules and regulations of society. This school of thought believes if a group of people won't follow the rules they become an outcast and this creates a

subculture. According to the Chicago school, subcultures are a negative and deviant phenomenon.

In contrast the majority of the youth that I talked to in my thesis are not deviant towards Canadian cultural hegemony and as one of the youths said it perfectly, 'we as second generation have seen both cultures, our parents background culture and the Canadian culture, and this give us open mindedness so we pick the good stuff from each culture.' Also these youth don't necessarily act based on Canadian cultural norms such as having sex before marriage and drinking alcohol. What the Chicago school mentions is an oversimplification of what subcultures are. Young people may reject some norms of society and/or may accept some other norms completely and/or change some parts of the 'norms' and at the end they can still be part of subcultures. Muslim youth that I have worked with in this project have rejected some norms of Canadian culture such as drinking alcohol or having sex before marriage, but at the same time they have accepted many other norms in society and they are still part of a subculture as it was explained earlier. Thus, in order to be part of a subculture, you don't necessarily need to reject society's norms completely.

Birmingham School

The Birmingham University Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies or CCCS has been extensively criticized for not being up to date. Today more than ever 'subcultural' theories are being criticized. CCCS has emphasized on the word 'subculture' but some scholars especially in the post-subcultural group believe that

in today's world there is no fixed definition for this word.¹⁷⁸

Contemporary works on subcultures such as Paul Hodkinson's study of Goths, Tammy Anderson's study of electronic dance music and many others, pay much more attention to what the participants understand from their own activities through the lens of in-depth interviews alongside ethnographic work rather than categorizing subcultures as CCCS does.¹⁷⁹

As Matza and Sykes (1961) have explained the deviance that these subcultures have are not towards the society but to their parents' culture. The three youth clubs that I looked at completely fit this framework, as explained earlier. All of the youth clubs stated that they do have a sort of deviance, however it should be mentioned that their deviance is in regards to the Muslim community, especially the elders in this community, and not in regards to Canadian culture. Therefore, their act of deviance is towards a minority group in Canada and not towards the dominant Canadian culture. These youth are a minority within a minority group in Canada.

Various criticisms of CCCS can be raised, some of the more important ones are mentioned below:

Absence of women:

The first criticism is what McRobbie and Garber (1976) have said and that is there is no mention of accounts of girls' involvement in subcultures. These two scholars

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 135.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 14.

mention that CCCS is very focused on just male participants especially working class white males, and the subcultures that are related to them such as skinheads.¹⁸⁰ Riot grrrls is an example of a subculture whose participants are young women. These women have created a subculture based on two concepts of feminism and punk. This subculture is mostly underground and private.¹⁸¹ They address issues such as domestic violence, rape, sexuality, patriarchy and many other issues that they think are more related to women.¹⁸² Although it should be mention that scholars such as Jefferson who fit into the Birmingham school do not consider riot grrrls as subcultures. In his book, *Resistance Through Rituals*, he said, 'since riot grrrls are from middle class women and they have political motivations therefore they are not considered a subculture. They are a counterculture.'¹⁸³

The concept of bedroom culture was first used as a response to CCCS since this center did not include girls in their studies. This concept proved that girls might be absent from male dominated, street based cultural activities but they have their own type of subcultures, which might not be obvious on the streets. ¹⁸⁴ McRobbie's work was first published in regards to bedroom culture in the 1970s. She said that it is very important to consider women and girls in subcultural studies since they become wives and mothers in the future and what they do, wear and believe influences other people's lives directly.¹⁸⁵ Three out of seven board members of the

¹⁸⁰ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, 7.

¹⁸¹ Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 583.

¹⁸² Marisa Meltzer, *Girl Power: The Nineties Revolution in Music*, (New York: Macmillan, 2010), 42.

¹⁸³ Tony Jefferson and Stuart Hall, *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, (London: Routledge, 1993), xviii.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 94.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., xvii.

Montreal youth club that I studied were young women. The Ottawa women's club is a completely women based youth club that has been established for young women many years before the men's youth club. As one of the founders said, 'young women were neglected for many years and they had no place to go for chilling.'

McRobbie added the concept of sex and gender to the Birmingham school's definition of subcultures. In other words, she agrees with CCCS in regards to subcultures being from the working class as well as the notion of complete resistance towards society. Her only criticism is the absence of women in these subcultures.

Sian Lincoln has criticized McRobbie's work. She states that bedroom culture has its 'uniqueness' as opposed to the definition of subcultures, which are rigid definitions through 'style' and 'membership'. Basically she mentions that although the bedroom culture is a subculture itself, but unlike some other subcultures it has uniqueness to it. One girl's or boy's bedroom is never the same as another, but still follows and represents contemporary cultural and social life at that time.¹⁸⁶ For girls they do different activities in their rooms, a private space, because they think that the public is a dangerous place.¹⁸⁷

In regards to the presence of women in subcultures, it is worth mentioning that in the Montreal club, the only youth club out of the three that had a gendered mix environment and men and women held programs together, the women of the club

¹⁸⁶ Bennett, and Kahn-Harris, *After Subculture*, 98.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 103.

were as involved as the men. The Montreal club had active women executives that were elected by the participants and voted for different motions to pass. Two young women as it was explained in the previous chapter, founded the Ottawa women's club. Therefore, young women were present and active in the clubs under study.

Lincoln unlike McRobbie that has interviewed girls in regards to bedroom culture in youth clubs, interviewed them in their own bedrooms, the actual place of the study. Therefore she believes that if a scholar is studying a geographical place and the culture associated with it, he/she should talk to its participants in that specific place.¹⁸⁸ I agree with this notion and believe that talking to participants in the actual geographical place that you are studying is very helpful in understanding that place. For example, my participants pointed towards many symbols and explained to me the meanings of each of them in detail.

Working class:

The second criticism raised is that some scholars such as Muggleton (2000) argue that CCCS has focused too much on working class youth. As it was explained earlier Toney Jefferson, one the CCCS scholars, did not consider Riot grrrls as a subculture since they were from the middle class. Most of the youth that I have interviewed were from middle class Canadians. Also these youths were mostly students who wanted to achieve highly paid jobs as well as continue their educations through applying for Master's degrees especially Montreal youth club that had programs in themes of academia. Thus limiting subcultures to the working class is highly

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 95.

problematic. ¹⁸⁹ Another example is youths in acid houses were white, male and middle class unlike what CCCS has mentioned that subcultures are all from working class youth.¹⁹⁰

Resistance and having fun:

The third criticism is that CCCS sees every act or style of dress of youth in subcultures just through the lens of resistance. As it was explained earlier in this chapter, CCCS says that youths resist indirectly through their style and the cloths that they wear. This school of thought believes whatever consumer goods youth use are uniforms and part of strategies of resistance. Critics believe the opposite. They say that all the goods that young people in subcultures use such as the way they dress are not always for resistance and we should look for each actual meaning.¹⁹¹ Critics say that some of the young people's presence in subcultures is just for 'fun' but this issue is never mentioned in CCCS.¹⁹² Some researchers have studied subcultures in which its members do not adopt a specific lifestyle but rather it is just a weekend or holiday of fun.¹⁹³ Albert Cohen in his work, *The Content of the Delinquent Subculture*, mentions that even gangs do many things just for the sake of its fun and as one gang member said, 'just to laugh, feel good and to have so many jokes.'¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 71.

¹⁹⁰ Redhead, *Subcultures to Clubcultures*, 58.

¹⁹¹ Haenfler, *Subculture: The Basics*, 8.

¹⁹² Bennett and Kahn-Harris, *After subculture*, 8.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 31.

¹⁹⁴ Cohen, *The Content of Delinquent Subculture*, 202

For some other youth subculture participants' style is an active way of resisting, either towards the 'norms' of their parents' culture or towards 'norms' of society or even as an act of 'rebellion' between childhood and adulthood. But for many others the way of dressing, haircut or tattoo is not related to resistance, but rather it's related to consumerism.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, post-subcultural theorists believe that nowadays the concept of work has been replaced by consumption. Riot, rebellion and resistance towards society are disrupted by consumerism through entertainment and leisure.¹⁹⁶ Youths have learned to consume more than to produce.¹⁹⁷ Product sellers sell their products and brands to children and teenagers as well as encourage adults to remain 'youthful.'¹⁹⁸ The concept of leisure and what he calls 'consumption of fun and leisure in industrialized societies is big business.' The youths in these clubs have a lot of money to spend. Therefore, rich youth getting into violence needed more explanation and studies unlike working class youth that social conditions caused it, and it was explained as a result of having unfortunate social conditions.¹⁹⁹

Not only that but sometimes these acts of fun is an act of resistance themselves for example the police in Britain and later in the US wear anti-riot customs for dealing with partygoers.²⁰⁰ Rave parties and other parties want to dance and drink whenever they want and throughout the morning till noon, but they have to first get

¹⁹⁵ Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 580.

¹⁹⁶ Thomas Hine, *The Rise and fall of the American Teenager: A New History of the American Adolescent Experience* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2000), 8-9.

¹⁹⁷ John Berard, James Penner and Rick Bartlett, *Consuming Youth: Leading Teens Through Consumer Culture* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), 33.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 42.

¹⁹⁹ Redhead, *Subculture to Clubcultures*, 58.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 92-94.

a license. The problem is that many times the police do not approve such acts and what the partygoers do becomes illegal. The police see 'rave culture' as a new 'threat to public order.'²⁰¹ Therefore Reynolds called these clubs that are for leisure but are monitored by authorities, 'pleasure prisons.'²⁰²

The concept of fun in the three youth clubs that I studied through ethnographic work is very dominant and was explained earlier in this chapter. These youths have created their own ways of fun. Therefore, even the way of having fun is different among various subcultures. CCCS not only does not consider leisure and fun in subcultures and only looks at the concept of resistance, but the act of fun has varieties in it too. As one member told me: 'our way of having fun is a halal way of chilling.' Some of the participants in these clubs came from the beginning of the programs, but some others came after the lecture in order to only participate in fun activities. One of the executives of the men's club said, 'We encourage people that they come before the lecture but some people don't do that and it's totally okay; they come for the fun part and engage with other youths. We don't encourage them to just come at 1am and chill.' We can conclude that unlike what CCCS argues there is no specific and rigid definition of subcultures. The word resistance has different dimensions such as minor/major and private/public. The concept of resistance has many dimensions and can be towards different groups and cultures. Youth resistance can be towards society and its norm, other subcultures or towards their parents' cultures. All the three clubs I studied have resistance towards the parent

²⁰¹ Ibid., 97.

²⁰² Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 73.

organizations' way of running their centers. So, basically similar as it was said in post-subcultural theories, the three clubs resisted directly and not through their styles but they resisted through the concept of fun and leisure. The parents' organizations did not approve of the way these youths ran their club and had issues with them having fun in these ways.

Class:

The fourth criticism of the Birmingham school is related to the notion of class, which can be considered as oversimplified. Post-subcultural theorists mention that the concept of class is fading in many societies.²⁰³ Toney Jefferson however declares that the concept of class has not disappeared in explaining social order unlike what post-subcultural theorists say.²⁰⁴ The concept of race was present in the study of subcultures before. For post-subcultural theories the concept of race and class has faded while other scholars mention that in racialized societies such as Britain and America these concepts still play a major role such as give value to certain styles and challenging social hierarchies.

No mention of regional subcultures:

One of the other important criticisms of Birmingham school is that it doesn't consider variations that youth have in response to music and style. CCCS as Waters (1981) argues focuses too much on universality of subcultures and much less on

²⁰³ Bennett and Kahn-Harris, *After subculture*, 8.

²⁰⁴ Jefferson and Hall, *Resistance Through Rituals*, xvi.

regional subcultures.²⁰⁵ Paul Hodkinson mentions that the CCCS's concept of subculture is fixed and therefore it does not consider internal diversity among youth by not following group boundaries.²⁰⁶ He further explains that although gothic subculture has internal differences as well as diversity among its members, but this diversity doesn't undermine group boundaries significantly and they all still consider themselves gothic. As Muggleton has mentioned CCCS's focus is more on collective identity while undermining individuality of each subculture.

British subcultures:

Another criticism is that CCCS has focused too much on British subcultures and they haven't worked on subcultures that are present in other countries such as in African or Middle Eastern countries. Not even subcultures in Canada are studied in detail. The CCCS is specifically based on subcultures in the U.K. Some scholars such as Mike Brake (1985) have worked on subcultures in Canada and he criticizes CCCS for not doing so.²⁰⁷ Another example of not studying subcultures in other countries is related to Russia. One of the core concepts of CCCS is the existence of a generational gap and the resistance of children toward their parents' culture. On the other hand, some Russian sociologists believe that such a generational gap is a Western phenomenon that does not exist in Russia.²⁰⁸

Brake argues that many Canadian youth subcultures are different from subcultures that exist in Britain and the U.S. There are many reasons behind this difference he

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 9.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 136.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 10.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 120.

explains, such as having a large country with a small population, having two established languages (English and French) as well liberalism and multiculturalism that is present in this country. Therefore, Brake declares that if the concept of resistance is present in youth cultures, they are not on the collective level but on the individual level. The vast geography of Canada doesn't let subcultures act in the collective level unlike youth cultures that are shaped and maintained in Britain. He further says that the long and severe winter in Canada works against youth's gatherings in public places and eventually their subcultures are dragged into shopping malls and indoor places.²⁰⁹ My study also agrees with Brake and explains that youth in Canada mostly create indoor spaces so they can overcome the long winter. Also the numbers of participants in these clubs that I have studied, doubles in numbers in the winter since there are fewer activities available outside during cold days and nights. Ottawa men's club had more than 40 youths attending its programs while in the summer they reached 25 young men.

Mass media:

Another failure of the CCCS is acknowledging the role of the media in the creation of subcultures and its identities. Mass media has a great impact on subcultures from the beginning as Thornton has explained.²¹⁰ Thornton has done extensive work on Bourdeau's cultural and subcultural capital. In regards to Bourdeau's subcultural capital Thornton explains that although the media has negative ideas about

²⁰⁹ Mike Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada* (New York: Rutledge, 1985), 143-145.

²¹⁰ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*, 10

subcultures, but subcultures search for alternative media and create their own type of communication with other people such as some music festivals.²¹¹ Sara Thornton explains that the media is crucial now for forming and creating and maintaining subcultures while CCCS saw media as a tool that saw subcultures for example punks as 'the others.' In subcultural studies the concept of geography and neighborhood is important and in today's world we have virtual neighborhood and social media.²¹² Although it should be mentioned that not all subcultures do that and many of them such as Riot grrrls are private and underground and therefore their cooperation with alternative media is much less than Goths.

Organization:

One of the other important criticisms of the CCCS is from a sociological point of view. Subcultures and their activities unlike what CCCS believes are not organized.²¹³ As it was mentioned earlier in this chapter the level of organization in the youth clubs that I have studied varies sharply. The Ottawa young men's youth club is semi-organized in which each executive has a specific role in the club such as communication or finance but the young women's club in Ottawa is not organized at all. There are no executives, presidents or leaders. The Montreal Youth club is semi-structured and democratic. Therefore, the concept of organization in subcultures greatly varies.

²¹¹ Bennet, *After Subculture*, 68.

²¹² Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 31.

²¹³ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*, 30.

Definition of Youth:

The last but not least criticism on CCCS is that it has a limited definition of 'youth.' This school of thought mostly focuses on the factor of age for youth definition which says mainly it is from sixteen to twenty-one. Some scholars say that youthfulness is a state of mind rather than a particular stage of life. Therefore it has no explanation for adults who refuse to grow up and use music and various forms of style in order to keep a sense of 'youthfulness.'²¹⁴

The Strengths of Post-Subcultural Theory

The criticisms of the Birmingham school and the Chicago school of thought helps us understand why post-subcultural theories, despite some of its limitations, is to most suited to understand the complex activities of youth today. There are various reasons behind choosing a post-subcultural framework for this dissertation's case study, some of which are briefly mentioned below. It should be stated that the definition of 'subculture' in post-subcultural studies is more exclusive than CCCS's definition, which has fewer criteria regarding what constitutes a subculture.

1) Various clubs name their clubs differently. For example, football hooligans name their clubs, 'crew.' This is similar to how the Montreal club named itself, 'The society' and the Ottawa men's club named itself the 'clubhouse' and the women's club had a special name for their club.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Bennet and Kahn-Harris, *After Subculture*, 10.

²¹⁵ Redhead, *Subculture to Clubcultures*, 23.

2) In a postmodern world there are many parties that are held and organized in warehouses. Warehouses have been extensively used for youths' gathering, which in itself symbolizes the lack of space in post-modern societies as Steve Redhead has mentioned in his book, *Subcultures to Club cultures*. He says football grounds, railways, shopping centers, parks and many other places are under the surveillance of the authorities and therefore warehouses are the only escape places for youth to 'have a good time' together.²¹⁶ Illegal youth parties are being held in industrial non-residential warehouses.²¹⁷ This is similar to the Ottawa men's and women's club. They held their programs in a warehouse outside of a residential neighborhood in Ottawa, which was explained in the setting and methods chapter. As it was explained earlier, Reynolds names these clubs that are for youths' leisure, 'pleasure prisons.'

3) Post-subcultural theories argue that today's youth have plenty of time for leisure and fun and therefore many youths join subcultures specifically for this reason and that is why 'club cultures' have emerged. The majority of youths in subcultures are not from the working class; rather they are from the educated and middle class. Also these youths have money to spend for their leisure. As it was explained earlier, many youths in the Ottawa men's and women's clubs went there to have fun with their friends and 'chill out'. The men told me that they were completely independent and many of the participants helped pay the rent. Therefore, these youths paid money to have fun activities.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 57-59.

²¹⁷ Muggleton and Weinzierl, *Post-subcultures Reader*, 73.

- 4) In all the three schools of thought; Chicago, CCCS and Post-subcultural theories, it is mentioned that in subcultures the concept of insider knowledge is present, a knowledge that is gained when someone enters the subculture. In the Montreal youth club, the executives were somehow not known to the general Iranian community in Montreal, such as the case of the Nina, one of my friends who was an executive and was mentioned in the setting chapter. Also the Ottawa men's club's name is a digital number, which I asked the president of the club what it stood for.
- 5) Not every subculture should have different 'Style' of clothing than the rest of society. For example, they could wear t-shirts, straight jeans or 'respectable haircuts.' Instead of having a style like punks, nowadays youth in subcultures because of the concept of consumerism wear casual outfits such as Lacoste t-shirts, which have labels and through these labels it can be understood how much it had cost them. Nowadays youth wear very expensive cloths such as Rolex watches.²¹⁸ Nowadays youth subcultures don't have a distinguished style to themselves like the punks or gothics or skinheads of the previous generation. The Montreal youth club as it was explained in the setting chapter did not have a distinguished style unlike what was known as subcultures in the time period of the CCCS framework. The only difference was women wearing fashionable styles of hijabs and clothing. This is similar to the Ottawa women's club, in which participants wore hijabs in a fashionable way. This is in line with a study conducted in Detroit, USA, which came to the conclusion that

²¹⁸ Redhead, *Subculture to Clubcultures*, 21-22.

many young Muslim women with Middle Eastern backgrounds wore fashionable hijabs and some of them wore headscarves just for the sake of being fashionable.²¹⁹

The Ottawa men's club had many different types of styles within itself. As post-subcultural theories emphasize today's subcultures are based on individualism and not that much collective identity. Although they have similarities but each club is unique. The concept of style and how the styles of these three clubs were similar or different to each other is examined in the 'style' theme chapter. It should be mentioned that although these youth clubs had the styles that post-subcultural theories explain, but they have the concept of resistance as well but not directly and not through style. The Montreal club did not have a specific style, which is in line with post-subcultural theories, but at the same time the concept of resistance is very much present in their club, the same as what CCCS argues.

The reason why different clubs are studied in this project is to show that in a post-modern world, some dimensions of a youth club might follow CCCS criteria while in other areas it might follow post-subcultural arguments. This is why it cannot be argued that a club exactly fits one theory or another.

Conclusion

Paul Hodkinson argues that in regards to Gothic culture, which is his case study, the word subculture is needed to explain some of the activities and styles in Goth, but it is not exactly what CCCS concept of subculture is but rather a reworked version. As

²¹⁹ Inger Furseth. "The Hijab: Boundary work and identity Negotiations among immigrant Muslim Women in the Los Angeles Area." *Review of Religious Research* 52, no. 4 (2011), 366.

explained in this chapter there is no need to ban the word subculture, rather each subculture is different as we have seen in regards to the three clubs under study in this dissertation. This is why for this research project I have adopted a post-subcultural framework, which allows for the diversity of subcultures and permits the understanding of each club based on its own internal definitions and understandings and not based on a rigid external theoretical framework.

As explained in this chapter the reason behind participants' involvements in the three clubs vary; some attend for the sake of fun, some see it as a getaway from their parents, others come for religious reasons, and for many founders resisting first-generation centers is a core reason for their involvement.

From interviewing the founders of the three clubs I came to the understanding that for the founders the concepts of resistance and rebellion towards first-generation centers is more obvious than for the participants. The concept of resistance is present but not as strong and complete way that CCCS argues. Therefore, not only should subcultures be studied separately, but also ethnographic work is needed to understand the different groups within each subculture.

In this chapter the three main subcultural theories were explained. Also the relations between the meanings of subcultures and Muslim youth were examined based on details from the three youth clubs. At the end of the chapter the main weaknesses of each school were studied mainly based on my own research. Details of participant observations, participants' attitudes and styles alongside detailed descriptions of the clubs' geographies will be explained in future chapters. This

detailed information will help us better understand the similarities and differences between these clubs and other subcultures.

Chapter 4: Style

The word 'style' is commonly used in our conversations. The word is defined as 'a manner of doing something or a distinctive appearance.'²²⁰ The concept of style in subcultures and what is meant by this word is explained in the following pages. The concept of 'style' is one of the most important issues in youth subcultural studies. This chapter provides an in-depth examination of the style of the three youth clubs studied in this dissertation, the Montreal youth club and Ottawa men and women's clubs. The chapter begins by explaining the Birmingham school and Post subcultural theories' views of style. Then the chapter examines the style of the three clubs, separating men's and women's styles into two subheadings. In order for the reader to have a better understanding of these dress codes some pictures are also provided. At the end of the chapter and based on these styles Erving Goffman's concept of 'performance' is discussed.

Finally, the chapter explores whether and how the styles of these clubs fit into CCCS and post-subcultural theories' concept of style.

The Birmingham School on Style:

The most famous book on the concept of 'style' in subcultures is a book by Dick Hebdige, titled: *The Meaning of Style*. Hebdige defines style as 'the mundane objects that have double meaning.' He says that objects such as safety pins, pointed shoes, motorcycles, plastic clothes pegs and bondage straps might not have a meaning on

²²⁰ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/style>

their own other than being objects; however, they are given meanings when they become the style of a subculture.²²¹ Styles are not just a way of clothing but can also be related to body modifications such as tattoos. Hebdige explains that the purpose of subcultures creating a particular style is to draw attention to themselves and so that they are marked as distinct from the rest of society. Hebdige even mentions graffiti artists writing on the walls of prisons as a way to draw attention. Styles are gestures that break the silence of the dominant majority and they are symbols that 'violate social orders' and are against 'normalization.' This is why subcultures are considered noises as opposed to sounds.²²² Hebdige argues that our role as academics is to find out the meanings and 'hidden messages' behind these styles.²²³ Hebdige himself focuses on punk style, arguing that punk was the main style of post-war subcultures. During the 70's in the UK, second-generation youth combined their parents' way of clothing in their home countries with the styles that were present in the UK and created their own version of styles. For example these youths have created Rastafarian styles, which were symbols of black identity. They also emphasized on the importance of resistance in the white dominated culture of the West. These second-generation youth created these styles as part of a 'back to Africa' movement.²²⁴ They resisted by clothing similarly to their ancestors in Africa. This way they created closeness to their ancestors and distanced themselves from

²²¹ Hebdige, *The Meaning of Style*, 3.

²²² Ibid., 90

²²³ Ibid., 18.

²²⁴ Ibid., 43.

white dominated youth in the UK.²²⁵

In the case of immigration, some second-generation immigrants have created specific styles in a subculture to resist the dominant culture. In contrast there are some subcultures such as skinheads that resist immigrants and their cultures. Skinheads, who are white working class youth, have aggressive attitudes towards people who don't speak and look like them and are considered as 'foreigners.' As was mentioned in the theory chapter, skinheads have violent attitudes toward both first and second-generation Pakistani and Indian immigrants in Britain. An example of that is the summer of 1972, during which skinheads joined other white subcultures to attack second-generation immigrants especially the Rastas in the Toxteth area of Liverpool.²²⁶ Therefore there can be resistance from both sides and towards the dominant culture through styles; a concept Hebdige calls 'codes.'²²⁷

Another example of subculture, mainly white working class young men, being antagonistic towards an immigrant community was the 'Teddy boys' in 1950s to 1970s that resisted the immigrant black community.²²⁸ However it is also important to point out that white youth did not always respond negatively to immigrants. In the UK for example 'mods' that grew up around West-Indians, responded positively towards the presence of these immigrants.

Mods were very sensitive about their style and whatever they wore from suits and

²²⁵ Ibid., 58.

²²⁶ Ibid., 59.

²²⁷ Ibid., 45.

²²⁸ Ibid., 81

shoes had to be handmade. Mods' style unlike punks and skinheads was not something 'extraordinary' and they wore conservative color suites with short and tidy haircuts. It will be argued in this chapter that mods' style is similar to what post-subcultural theories declare what today's youths' styles have in common. This is why Hebdige names mods style as 'Quietly disrupting the orderly sequence which leads from signifier to signified.'²²⁹

Some styles in subcultures are responses to a specific dress code in society. For example, teddy boys transformed the Edwardian style that was the wealthy men's style in the 1950s and used it as the style of their own subculture. In this way the original meaning of the Edwardian style was subverted or erased.²³⁰ Sometimes one subculture's style is influenced by the style of another subculture. For example there are traces of Rastafarian's famous colors in the 1970s punk styles.²³¹ Punk's style is an extraordinary type of style among subcultures. Some objects such as a television component, a razor blade, a tampon or even a plastic cloths peg that do not have a meaning on their own are used by punk styles for the purpose of 'confrontation dressing.'²³²

Post-Subcultural theories on Style:

As it was explained in the theory chapter, the most prominent theorist of post subcultural theories is Steve Redhead followed by David Muggleton. Steve Redhead

²²⁹ Ibid., 52.

²³⁰ Ibid., 104.

²³¹ Ibid., 67.

²³² Ibid., 107.

was the first scholar who explained what post-subcultural theorists meant by the word 'style' and how this concept in post-subcultural theories is different from CCC's definition of 'style.' Redhead argues that not every subculture necessarily has an awkward and different 'style' of clothing from the rest of society. For example, they could wear normal t-shirts, straight jeans or 'respectable haircuts.' He further explains:

At first sight, these young people looked like an undifferentiated mass, but nothing could be further from the truth. If you knew what to look for, you soon realized that these young people were engaged in style wars, the like of which had not been seen since the original 'mod' era of the 1960s.²³³

Basically instead of having a distinct style such as punk's style, nowadays young people who participate in subcultures, based on the concept of consumerism, wear casual outfits that cannot be distinguished from other youth who are not part of any subcultures. One of these casual outfits for example is a Lacoste t-shirt. This is why today's style should be studied more deeply. For example, Lacoste t-shirts have labels on them and from the differences between these labels it could be understood how much it had cost the buyer. Nowadays youth wear expensive clothes such as Rolex watches because youth participants in subcultures are more from the middle class rather than the working class.²³⁴ This concept is very much present among the three clubs discussed in this dissertation. For example in the Ottawa men's club the participants and executives have rented a place for weekly programs that are mostly

²³³ Redhead, *Subculture to Clubcultures*, 21.

²³⁴ Ibid., 21-22.

dedicated to providing fun and leisure, or as Steve Redhead mentions in order 'to have good time.'²³⁵

David Muggleton for his book, *Inside Subculture: The Post-modern Meaning of Style*, interviews 57 punks, rockers, skins and mods of mid-90s Brighton. When he transcribed the interviews he states that the responses from the participants created an ambiguity in his research since the outcome of these interviews was a rejection of any 'unifying' style among the participants.²³⁶ These participants had hybrid styles and identified themselves as such. For example, one participant's style was 'goth-metaller' and the other was 'hippy-punk.' This forced Muggleton to use words such as 'punk-ish' or 'a bit Mod-y' styles in his book.²³⁷ This is why he concludes that punk is what you are and not how you dress which some argued would degrade CCCS's concept of style. Muggleton argues that 'doing punk' is a superficial adoption of style while 'being punk' covers all the aspects of a life style.²³⁸ He says that 'personal freedom' in the choices of styles for youth in today's world is more important than a group's favorite music, drug or dress code. Steve Redhead also argues that 'it was this "hedonistic individualism", which, manifested in all kinds of youth cultures. The mid-1990s, though, was a watershed. The creative industries such as design, film and fiction co-existed with youth culture in a way not witnessed before. A "creative modernity", a new creative individualism, was on the

²³⁵ Ibid., 24.

²³⁶ Muggleton, *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style*, 71.

²³⁷ Ibid., 122.

²³⁸ Ibid., 94.

horizon, with specific industries in the lead.'²³⁹

The concept of individuality is a major difference between post-subcultural theorists and Birmingham school. CCCS does not explain personal choice and argues that whoever participates in a subculture instantly and always follows the style and the theme of that group, while post-subcultural theories argue that with the rise of globalization and multiculturalism each individual in a subculture chooses what to wear. When Muggleton talked to his participants they declared that following the style of a specific subculture is too restrictive for them. This is why he argues that using a style is to show one's identity and not losing that in the collective. Therefore, it should be explained that each individual chooses his/her style and being from the same subculture does not restrict him/her to follow the exact same style.

CCCS considers youths who are part of a subculture as not having 'respectable' styles,²⁴⁰ and that their style distinguishes them from other youth in society. On the other hand, post-subcultural theorists such as Redhead argue that today's youth in subcultures have 'respectable styles and even haircuts.'²⁴¹ Therefore, CCCS states that subculture's styles create an otherness because they are very different from normal people's choices of clothing.²⁴² This is in contrast to post-subcultural theories, which argue that the styles of youth in subcultures are similar to other youths who are not part of any subculture. Participants of a subculture according to CCCS resist the dominant culture or other subcultures indirectly through their styles

²³⁹ Redhead, *We Have Never Been Post-Modern*, 25.

²⁴⁰ Hebdige, *The Meaning of Style*, 73.

²⁴¹ Redhead, *Subculture to Clubcultures*, 21.

²⁴² Hebdige, *The Meaning of Style*, 89.

while Post-subcultural theorists such as Mugglton argue that youths in subcultures resist directly without using their style. Although it should be mentioned that there are still subcultures that use their styles for the purpose of resistance. An example of that is Park's study (2011) on four Japanese subcultures in which their style is based on Western fashion, and by doing this they resist their parent's culture and traditional way of clothing in Japan.²⁴³ Another example is Baxter and Marina's study on African-American youth in New-Orleans who use hip hop fashion such as 'braided hair and baggy pants' to resist the hegemonic discourse of dominant culture and in this way they have emerging identities of 'becoming black.' The same study has also been conducted on African refugees in Canada.²⁴⁴

Consumerism:

Post-subcultural theories argue that the styles of subcultures are based on consumerism. In industrialized societies, consumer culture powerfully shapes the experiences of young people growing up to become adults.²⁴⁵ Many youth are subjects of consumerism, but they do not recognize it themselves.²⁴⁶ 'Consumer capitalism' is an important issue raised among post-subcultural theorists. Mara Einstein states:

²⁴³ Saba Alvi, 'Voguing the Veil: Exploring an Emerging Youth Subculture of Muslim Women Fashioning a New Canadian Identity,' Doctoral Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2013, 32.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 33.

²⁴⁵ Berard and Penner, *Consuming Youth*, 78.

²⁴⁶ Bennett and Kahn-Harris, *After Subculture*, 122.

*This consumerism is not limited to just seeing some billboards. People in these societies on average will see 200 advertisements a day and much more marketing messages for different products is presented to them.*²⁴⁷

One of the performative dimensions of identity is what we buy and what we wear. Therefore, identity is based on need and belonging.²⁴⁸ Today young people consume many products from their trusted and their favorite brands. Today's youth are the 'Facebook Generation.' They are from the generation of *American idol* and constant reality shows such as *keeping up with the Kardashians* in which the whole concept of the show is advertising the products and goods of a consumerist lifestyle.²⁴⁹ This consumerism is also very much present in Katy Perry's (a famous pop singer) music album, *This Is How We Do*. In this music album she wears luxury dresses, shoes and handbags such as Channel and says that this is how we live and this creates a fake ideal lifestyle for young men and women. Companies and brands even encourage adults to remain 'youthful' so they can sell more products.²⁵⁰

Today's youth wear the wealthy style and do not transform or resist it, unlike for example the Teddy Boys. As it was explained earlier, post-subcultural theorists such as Steve Redhead argue that contemporary youth in subcultures buy clothes from expensive brands in the consumer markets of capitalist societies, brands such as Adidas, Tacchini, Fila and Lacoste.²⁵¹ Not only that but they buy expensive and very new Ipods and tablets as well. Youths being from the middle class and being able to spend for their leisure and style, has a great impact on subcultures.

²⁴⁷ Mara Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age* (New York: Rutledge, 2008), 10.

²⁴⁸ Berard and Penner, *Consuming Youth*, 82.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 20.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 42.

²⁵¹ Redhead, *Subculture to Clubcultures*, 21.

An example of this concept is present among young Muslim women as well. Some of them wear Gucci headscarves or wear *burqa*, while their Nike shoes appear out of their long black *abayas*.²⁵² It is interesting that all of these young women are 'hijabis' but have different ways of presenting themselves as such. These women that combine fashion with the covering represent the concept of veiling in a way that is not represented in this way in the 'mainstream discourse.' Young Muslim women are very much influenced by the fashion industry, which is explained further in the section of women's styles in this chapter.²⁵³

Emma Tarlo, an anthropologist who has worked on Muslim dress codes in the West, has pointed out that Western journalists and policy makers as well as pro-hijab and *niqab* campaigns portray Muslim women who wear the hijab and *niqab* with long *abayas* as 'representative' of the Muslim community more than others.²⁵⁴ I have tried to show the diversity and individuality among the styles of second-generation Muslims, both men and women in the following pages. As post-subcultural theorists such as Muggleton have pointed out, the concept of individuality is as important as the groups' collective styles.²⁵⁵ Although the styles of individuals in a club have similarities they have differences with each other as well. Not only that, but the styles of a club have similarities and differences with other clubs.

²⁵² Alvi, 'Voguing the Veil,' 9. (Burqa is a material that covers the face and *abaya* is a long black cloth.)

²⁵³ Ibid 14.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 16.

²⁵⁵ Muggleton, *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, 224.

Women's Styles:

An important part of style is clothing. It should also be noted that clothing is a significant social institution through which important ideological and non-verbal communications take place.²⁵⁶ The first time I went to the Ottawa women's club, I noticed that the clothing styles of the women were very diverse. Out of the 13 young women present in the club, three young women wore colorful braided scarves and two wore toques for the head covering. Four of these youth wore more conservative cloths that used long and dark clothes while the rest wore a simple headscarf or hijab with long sleeve and jeans. Just with a glance at their style of dressing, these varieties were noticeable. In the Montreal club most of the young women wore casual clothing such as pants and long sleeves, which as one of them explained, 'something that is more comfortable and convenient in Montreal.' The detailed description of these styles of clothing is mentioned below.

The results were found after semi-structured interviews that took place in the Ottawa women's club as well as the Montreal youth club. I talked to some members of the women's club in focus groups of five to six people and this created a discussion among them on the subjects of hijab, fashion and style.

These following categories better demonstrate the concept of style among Muslim women in the three clubs.

²⁵⁶ Fadwa El Guindi, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*, (Oxford: Berg Publisher, 1999), Part 2: The Anthropology of Dress, accessed on July 20, 2013, <http://www.bergfashionlibrary.com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/view/VEIL/chapter-VEIL0009.xml>

1) Mona alongside another young woman wore a toque to cover their hair and necks.

The toque is similar to a cap or a hat that some women wear with shawls around their necks especially in the winter. In this way they fulfilled the concept of hijab and covering without the headscarf. When I lived in Iran, toques and hats were used only during the winter but after few years when I went back to Iran I could see that they had become popular among young women in other seasons as well. Toques give Muslim women a twist of fashion. Mona who wore a dark purple toque with a light pink shawl told me:

In this way I can design my hijab. I sometimes wear matching shawls and toques and sometimes use contrasted colors. I like how I can use the beauty of the concept of the hijab by wearing fashionable hijabs.

She continued:

I watch many hijab tutorials on YouTube and learn how to wear hijab fashionably. I mean there are tons of ways of how to cover your hair and neck. I have a collection of toques for different places like university, parties and mosques (laughing).

Below are some sample pictures of hijab with toques and shawls in order to better understand the style:

2) Braided headscarf:

Three of the young Muslim women from Ottawa women's club wore a braided headscarf. Toques were visible in the Montreal youth club as well but I only noticed braided headscarves in the Ottawa women's club and not in the Montreal club. This is a style that is not common among Iranians.

One of these young women who wore a braided scarf told me:

I wear one scarf underneath to cover my hair and one scarf braided with a different color just for the sake of beauty and fashion. You know I guess I want people to see that hijab can be beautiful too and you can combine fashion with it. I don't want to be like a cave woman!

For some of these women the hijab or head covering symbolizes their hair and it is as if they had braided their hair. In this way instead of using their hair, they used their headscarf to show their beauty in public. Saba another participant in the women's club said:

My braided scarf acts as if it is my hair that I have braided. I re-style my scarf the way I do my hair. I have a pretty hair though! Don't think that I am bold or something or I always wanted to have hair! (Laughing)... I mean I decorate my hijab so it looks as beautiful as my hair.

I asked three of the participants who wore fashionable clothing about the concept of modesty and their types of hijabs and all three declared that this type of scarf does not contradict modesty in any way.

Maryam told me:

If I wore a braided scarf in Iraq it would have turned heads since most women wear jilbabs and dark color scarves and wearing a colorful scarf especially braided one stands out but in Canada it is a different case. There are many different ways of wearing scarves in Canada and one of them is the braided

type. Well, Muslim men are used to seeing these stuffs and for non-Muslim men it makes no difference since they consider all hijabis the same and it does not stand out for them.

This point of view was different from the viewpoint of two of the young women who wore long, dark color conservative clothing who believed that the concept of hijab and modesty should be the same in different places.

These are some sample pictures of the braided hijab:

Azadeh who was one the participants of women's club told me that she does not wear a single hijab everywhere:

I pick and choose between these styles. I mean I might go to a place that has more a religious theme to it and I wear jeans and long sleeves while when I go to a party I wear like a braided scarf or something like that. I mean you don't need to always look the same.

The concept of watching YouTube tutorials was very much present in the discussion groups. They mentioned how they became more 'up-to-date' through these videos. I searched on YouTube and thousands of videos came up. Hijab tutorials for weddings, Eids (celebrations), every day, back to school, modern, Ramadan and even 2016 hijab styles were among these videos. I knew that such videos existed but I wasn't aware of the varieties for different occasions.

The book *Consuming Youth* explains that there were 60,000 hours of material added and uploaded on YouTube each week, which shows how our cultures are consuming a lot of information via these videos.²⁵⁷ Other studies have shown that it has become more common among Muslim women to spend time on YouTube specifically searching for hijab tutorials.²⁵⁸

As it was argued in the theory chapter, the internet is helpful in shaping and maintaining subcultures and for the purpose of this chapter the styles of subcultures. Williams has argued that the use of the Internet has made it simple for subculture participants to connect with each other and with other subcultures.²⁵⁹ Youths are in the front row of political and cultural change and their ideas move easily and faster, especially now than ever before, with the help of the Internet across the nations.²⁶⁰

- 3) A few of these young women wore a lot of makeup. Three women in the Montreal youth club and two women in the women's club wore strong makeup that could be noticed instantly. When they are covering their hair, their face became the focus attention of other people. Sepideh, one of the participants in the Montreal youth club, told me that by wearing lipstick she still has that femininity side.
- 4) Most of the young women both in the Montreal youth club and the women's club wore colorful headscarves with casual pants such as jeans and simple long sleeves. The most common style among young women in both clubs was this style. Jeans

²⁵⁷ Berard and Penner, *Consuming Youth*, 164.

²⁵⁸ Alvi, 'Voguing the Veil,' 185.

²⁵⁹ Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies,' 583.

²⁶⁰ Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*, 11.

with a headscarf that was simply wrapped around their head. Nina, my friend who was an executive in the Montreal youth club said:

I wear jeans and long sleeves because they are manageable, simple and comfortable for everyday use. I mean if I were not a hijabi,²⁶¹ I would have still worn the same pants and clothes, and as a Muslim woman I just add a headscarf to my clothing style. I mean I think the whole concept of hijab is to be simple. Right?

It could be understood from the interviews of these young women that for some the concept of simplicity had a great importance, while for others the concept of fashion and beauty was important.

When I asked Mina about beauty and fashion she replied:

Well, you could be very fashionable even with jilbab²⁶² and dark colors. You don't need to go extreme and decorate your hijab like a fashion girrrrrr!!

- 5) Not all of the women participants in the Montreal and women's club followed those styles that were mentioned above. Some others dressed conservatively meaning that they wore darker colors with long and loose cloths. It should also be noted that none of these young women wore a *burqa* or a *niqab* to cover their faces.²⁶³

²⁶¹ A word that is commonly used for a woman who wears a hijab.

²⁶² Jilbab is a long and usually black dress.

²⁶³ Face coverings.

- 6) The style that was present only in the Montreal club and among Iranians was wearing a shawl or headscarf loosely, in which some parts of their hair were shown. This style of hijab is more common among women of Iranian and Pakistani backgrounds.²⁶⁴ When I asked one of the participants she said that ‘by leaving some hair out I want to show people that I have hair and that I have kept my beauty and I give the front part of my hair a fashionable twist, sometimes highlight it.’

- 7) In Ottawa women’s club two participants and in Montreal club four participants did not wear a headscarf and participated in the clubs’ programs without any specific coverings. They wore casual pants and clothes.

The two best friends who were the founders of the Ottawa women’s club had two different styles. Maryam wore a long black *abaya* with a white shawl to cover her hair while Zainab wore a purple headscarf with jeans and a short white coat.

Zainab told me that:

The whole purpose of the hijab was to not stand out and therefore the way I dress in Canada is different from the way I dress in my mum and dad’s home country (Iraq). I wear longer and darker cloths in Iraq because if I wear the casual fashionable hijabs in Iraq, it stands out.

²⁶⁴ Alvi, ‘Voguing the Veil,’ 175.

This concept, however, was not present among many of the young women, mostly second-generation immigrants, which I interviewed. Nina who was one of the executives of the Montreal club, who was discussed in the setting chapter, told me: 'I wear the same shawl and colors in Iran and Canada and I don't have a 'proper' way of dressing or style for Iran, the same as my many Iranian friends.'

Saba, a participant in the Ottawa women's club, wore ripped jeans with a headscarf. The interesting point here is that ripped jeans would show some skin while she covered her hair fully. She said during an informal interview that 'I want to look like a Canadian young woman and at the same time be a hijabi girl and there is nothing wrong with that. I mean you could wear whatever you like.'

As it was demonstrated in this chapter, women's styles in these three clubs had great variety. It was not as if someone would walk into the club and instantly notice a specific style of clothing. What was common among most of these young women was the concept of being comfortable as well as fashionable. Six of these women wore accessories such as necklaces and earrings that were seen out of their scarves. Many used decorative pins for their headscarves.

Why some of these young women wear fashionable clothing?

First it should be mentioned that the words fashion and fashionable are somehow vague since who is considered fashionable can vary.

When I interviewed some of these women they explained some of the reasons behind wearing the hijab fashionably. Mina, a participant in the Ottawa women's club, explained:

I don't want non-Muslims to think that there is only one narrative of the concept of hijab and that is a long black scarf usually worn with abayas.²⁶⁵

Another participant from the same club told me: 'the concept of hijab is beautiful, why should we make it into something ugly!' Fatemeh, one of the participants in the Montreal youth club told me that 'as a hijabi woman we all represent other hijabi women and I want people to think of us as up-to-date fashion girls and not some old grannies!' When I talked to young women who wore more conservative types of clothing, they disagreed. Zahra, who was a second-generation immigrant, told me: 'you need to be modest, I mean wearing tight jeans which shows all your curves is not modesty.'

The narratives of Muslim women living in Canada can help us reach a better understanding of the issues that they face in present-day Western metropolitan societies, and suggest how Islamic female identity is made and performed and how it may be constructed and performed elsewhere.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ *Abaya* is a long black dress that covers the body from shoulders till the toes.

²⁶⁶ Shahnaz Khan, *Aversion and Desire: Negotiating Muslim Female Identity in The Diaspora* (Toronto: Women's Press, 2002), 7.

Men's styles:

The styles of the men in the Montreal youth club were no different than any young man outside of the club. Pants with T-shirts and shirts were the only style that these young men used.

I paid a lot of attention to their types of clothing and tattoos as well as asking them what some of these symbols stood for.

Clothes:

They wore 'cool' and youthful types of clothing such as wearing a long sleeve and a different color short sleeve on top of it with ripped jeans. This style of clothing was the most common style at first glance. They mostly used dark colors. Some of them had a ponytail hair as well as a beard, which gave them a religious and 'cool' look at the same time. There were two men who shaved their heads completely without any type of beard.

Rings and accessories:

Some of them wore huge Aghigh rings (the ring has a specific stone on it that is commonly worn by religious Muslims especially Shias).²⁶⁷ Three of these young men wore caps that had Arabic calligraphies on them and one had the word 'Muslim' on it. The Arabic calligraphies were some Arabic poems. Some of them wore necklaces

²⁶⁷ Aghigh(Carnelian) is a gemstone, which men and women wear them in necklaces and rings. In Shia Islam there are few Hadiths that prescribe wearing aghigh rings.

on black T-shirts. These necklaces were related to Shia symbols such as the name of the first Imam of Shias (Imam Ali) in Arabic calligraphy.

When I looked at some of them, I could instantly understand that they were Shia Muslims because of the symbols that they had on their clothes or skins. Two of these young men wore the T-shirt of the clubhouse that had the group's slogan on it in English, which was explained in the setting chapter. When I first paid attention to their style of clothing I could see that their style was like any other Canadian youth, such as wearing ripped jeans as well as casual t-shirts, however it had a religious (especially Shia) twist to it.

Decorated Beards:

Some of the men in the Ottawa men's club had beards, while others were without a beard. Young men in the Montreal club were mostly without beard except one of the executives that had a long beard. Two of the men in the Ottawa men's club had a 'cool' and decorated type of beard. Although not the same kind of decoration, but the two men trimmed their beards to create some curves.

Tattoos:

As it was explained in the theory chapter (the third chapter of this dissertation) some subcultures have stronger ties to body modification such as tattoos. They also have inner group tattoo symbols that can be identified especially by the other skinheads.²⁶⁸ Sub-culturists create subcultural capital as well, which are insider knowledge, forms of tattoos or specific ways of dressing.²⁶⁹

Two young men in the Ottawa men's club had a tattoo on their arms and one young man had it on his left chest. The concept of tattoo is an interesting issue among young Muslims that needs to be studied in detail. The tattoos that were on the hands of two of these young men were both in Arabic. The tattoos being in Arabic and also having a religious theme to it provided 'insider' knowledge to them. The meanings of these tattoos could be instantly understood by Muslims especially Shia Muslims.

Mohammad, one of the club's participants, explained:

I have tattooed 'Iman' (faith in Arabic) on one of my arms and 'Hob' (Love in Arabic) on my other arm to remind myself that having faith is having love. You know when you tattoo something on your body you always see it and are reminded. I mean also it is really cool especially when it is in Arabic and other people don't understand it. You know it is like how some guys and girls tattoo something in Japanese or Chinese! If I was in Dubai or Lebanon or someplace like that I would have tattooed something in English or French. (Laughing)

Ahmad one of the executives who had a huge tattoo of *Mohammad, the messenger of Allah*, in Arabic calligraphy on one of his arms told me:

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 269.

²⁶⁹ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*, 37.

I guess I want people to know that I am a Muslim. I mean when you are a Muslim girl you could wear a headscarf to show that but for a Muslim guy like me, I need to use something to show that.

From these two interviews we could understand that the reasons behind tattooing even among this small group of young Muslims varies. Some wear it just for the case of being 'cool' and others tattoo as a religious reminder, while for some having a tattoo is to show their identity as a Muslim.

Hassan was another participant of the Ottawa men's club. When we talked about tattoos he suddenly said that he has a tattoo on his left chest. He said that: 'I didn't want other people to see it since religion is a personal thing. I could have tattooed it on my arm or someplace visible but I decided not to do that.' He told me that he had tattooed Alhamduleallah (Praise is to God) on his chest. They all said that tattoos that have religious themes to them are becoming more common among Muslim youth in the West, especially second-generation. Other than these three young men from the Ottawa men's club I did not encounter anyone else having a tattoo. Having a 'religious' tattoo was an interesting concept for myself since there are many arguments and discussion around tattoos among Muslim scholars. Having a tattoo is a source of disagreement among Muslim scholars. Some say that you can't have Wozou²⁷⁰ with a tattoo and as a result you cannot pray while having a tattoo. Other scholars disagree and mention that tattoos are under the skin and they do not interrupt the ritual of Wozou.

One of the executives of the Ottawa men club declared:

²⁷⁰ A washing ritual that takes place before the prayer and is a requirement for doing prayers.

The concept of doing tattoo on your body is not a new thing and it is permitted in Shia Islam and therefore it is popular among Lebanese youth. It is not something haram that second generation Muslim youth have changed and created the concept that you could have a tattoo and do wozou with it. There are some Muslim preachers that say that tattooing is not a problematical thing in Islam because it is under your skin and therefore you can do Wozou with it and pray.

Another participant of this club told me that it is both common among young Muslims in some Muslim countries as well as young Muslims in the West:

I have a relative that just very recently immigrated from Lebanon to Canada and he has a tattoo on one hand that says Aboufazel which is the name for Imam Ali (first Imam of Shia), and on another hand he has a tattoo that says Lailahaellaallah (There is no one worth of worship but God) so it is a general Islamic slogan. So it has been popular among Lebanese culture in Lebanon and it is not a specific thing among second generation Muslims living in Canada.

Suleiman one of the other executives told me that ‘not all the young ‘religious’ Muslims have a ‘religious’ tattoo and some of them just tattoo like an Arabic poem or something.’

It should be mentioned that although the ethnic background of young men in the Ottawa club were from different Muslim countries, but the majority of their parents came to Canada from Lebanon.

The Ottawa men club compared to the Montreal youth club had more symbolic items that were not present among young men in the Montreal club. Although it should be pointed out that many of these symbols were not specified and restricted to their group, rather they were Islamic symbols and names. Other than the tattoos, necklaces with religious themes and long beards that were present in the Ottawa men club and were quite absent in the Montreal club, young men in both the Ottawa

and Montreal youth clubs wore casual shirts, t-shirts, pants and jeans like any other Western youth.

Subcultures and Young Muslims' Styles in the Three Clubs:

The Hebdige declares that youth use meaningless items and objects such as safety pins and give them meaning for the purpose of resistance.²⁷¹ On the other hand post-subcultural theorists argue that this was accurate among subcultures that emerged after WWII, while today's youth wear casual outfits that are quite expensive. Redhead for example says that youth from the middle class in these subcultures have changed their ideas of 'style.' This dissertation also confirms that the styles that are being used in the three clubs under study are not extraordinary. This claim is in accordance with Steve Redhead's claim that the styles in subcultures are not extraordinary and the participants wear casual outfits with 'respectable haircuts.'²⁷² Unusual ways of clothing such as colorful hair was not present among the men and women. Instead of a sense of resistance in their styles, consumerism was quite present among these youths. One young woman in the Montreal club told me that she wore a Burberry headscarf and two others told me how they were too sensitive about what type of headscarf they wore. Others bought expensive scarves costing \$150 from Dubai and Canada. Another young woman from the Ottawa women's club told me that her jeans have to be bought from Laura jeans. Tommy Hilfiger socks were worn by two men in the Ottawa men club that could be noticed by their trademark. Many young men and women wore Nike Air, Reebok and Puma

²⁷¹ Hebdige, *The Meaning of Style*, 118

²⁷² Redhead, *Subcultures to Clubcultures*, 23.

shoes alongside ripped jeans. From these examples and many other examples in these clubs we can conclude that the youth in these subculture do not use the tool of style to show their rebellion and resistance. Rather they buy the exact products that are advertised to them by industrialized societies and become very much good consumers for these giant companies, while embracing consumer culture fully. The majority of youths from these three clubs are university students who work part time and are from the middle class. They have money to spend on their outfits and also for their leisure time. For example, the Ottawa youth club rents a place to have a good time and the Montreal youth club also pays for many 'fun' activities. As Steve Redhead in his book *Subcultures to Clubcultures* argues, youths create and participate in a club culture.²⁷³ This is true among these three clubs as well.

Redhead explains:

*Clubbing is . . . the most popular past-time amongst a highly individualistic 'young generation', foreshadowing a more widespread principle of 'mutual-ity' in 'club culture' (from sports clubs to local history clubs) which might help to renew civic culture.*²⁷⁴

Another important concept in the styles of these clubs as was mentioned earlier is individuality. As Muggleton explains, the styles of youth in subcultures are influenced by individualism. Steve Redhead also argues in his book, *We Have Never Been Post-modern*, that the mid 1990s was the time that individualism became bold in youth cultures and that is why Leadbeater and Oakley have stated that starting

²⁷³ Muggleton, *The Post-subcultures Reader*, 6.

²⁷⁴ Redhead, *We Have Never Been Post-Modern*, 22.

from this era young people should be labeled as 'the independents.'²⁷⁵

I believe that this is one of the main reasons why in-depth interviews are necessary. As was mentioned in the tattoo section, the reasons behind tattooing were different among these youths.

Erving Goffman and Second-Generation Muslim Youth:

Goffman was a renowned Canadian sociologist, who, made important contributions to social theory and symbolic interaction theory.²⁷⁶ Goffman's most famous book is *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and is widely cited in the discipline of sociology, particularly in the areas of individual behavior and social order.

Erving Goffman defines social interaction as a theater, in which people are actors on a stage, each playing a variety of roles. He defines the behavior of individuals in society as a 'performance,' explaining that a performance is 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants.'²⁷⁷ Goffman is the first scholar who used the term 'impression management.' He argues that when an individual comes in contact with other people, that individual attempts to control or guide their impression of him or her. He or she achieves this by manipulating the setting as well as his or her appearance

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 26.

²⁷⁶ 'Most cited authors of books in the humanities, 2007,' *The Times Higher Education Guide*, 26 March 2009, Accessed

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=405956§ioncode=26>

²⁷⁷ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self In Everyday Life*, (New York: DoubleDay Anchor Books, 1959), 15.

and manner. This means that people are constantly expressing themselves to others through impression management.²⁷⁸

Goffman argues that people put time and effort in their daily lives to construct a favorable impression in the minds of other people. This is similar to the role an actor has on stage, where he or she has to act and pretend in front of an audience and is only relieved of this burden once he or she reaches his/her private space. It is only in this 'private area' where people can be themselves and abandon their public role and identity.²⁷⁹ In social interaction, like in theatrical performances, there is a front stage where the actors perform in front of an audience. There is also the backstage, where individuals can be themselves. Goffman also asserts that this form of social acting is carried out both intentionally as well as unintentionally at a subconscious level and without a particular objective; however, the audience is always attributing meaning to it and to the actor regardless.

For some youths that I interviewed their youth club was considered the 'backstage' for them and first-generation centers were considered the 'front stage' meaning that when they are in the youth clubs they feel more comfortable regarding what to wear and act and therefore the club acts as 'a private space.' For example, Bashir in the Ottawa men club told me that, 'I really like the youth club because no one criticizes or judges me for the way I look or act.' He then continues, 'I mean I feel comfortable in this club more than me being among my non-Muslim friends as well as my parents' generation.' Some young women wore more formal and conservative

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 20-24.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 26-36.

clothing when they were attending the parent organizations such as Saba who wore ripped jeans in the women's club. Although it should be mentioned that the concept of front and back stage is not absolute and some other young men and women like Nina wore the same outfits everywhere and did not act selectively.

Conclusion:

This chapter examined the styles of the young Muslim men and women in the Ottawa men's, women and Montreal youth clubs. The concept of individuality and the variety of the styles among both men and women were described in details. Ripped jeans, religious themed tattoos, necklaces, and rings alongside different types of hijabs, casual outfits and beards were among the styles of these youths. At the end of the chapter and based on studying the three clubs, we can conclude that the styles of today's youth in subcultures as well as the meanings behind them is different from the styles of club youth after World War II and at the time Birmingham school scholars such as Dick Hebdige were conducting their research. The importance of individuality over collective and group styles urges the scholar to study the new styles of subcultures more deeply. Also more scholarly research on second-generation Muslim youth styles and their insider emerging subcultures is needed.

Chapter 5: Religiosity

This chapter begins by explaining the arguments of some of the key scholars of the Anthropology of Religion and their viewpoints on religious identities and complex definitions of the word 'religion.' Also the word 'religious' with its varieties of definitions is elaborated with quotes from the participants and what they mean by 'being religious.'

Then issues such as being religious and Canadian and the effects of place on being religious is addressed. Subsequently the influence of religious lectures, the role of religious leadership and the differences between the religious identities of immigrant parents and their children and the concept of 'new Islam' is examined. Finally, the relation between religious groups and subcultures is studied. Throughout the chapter many related quotes are mentioned to clarify and show the variety of answers that were received during the interviews.

What Does 'Religion' Mean Anyway?

Religion has become the subject of debates and discussions in a variety of places such as social institutions, universities, communities as well as the media.²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ Iori G. Beaman and Solange Lefebvre, *Religion in The Public Sphere*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 3.

Defining 'Religion' has always been a challenge without any conclusive results.²⁸¹
Religion is a word for which scholars cannot agree on a single definition.

In *Religion and Anthropology: a Critical Introduction*, Brian Morris provides an overview of the theoretical approaches anthropologists have used to study religious phenomenon. He categorizes these theoretical frameworks into seven groups: 1- Intellectualist approaches, which define religion as systems used for the explanation, prediction and control of world events; 2- Emotional approaches which see religion as a remedy for the fears, anxieties and stress people have; 3- Structural approaches, which heavily borrow from the works of Claude Levi-Strauss to analyze religion as an ideological structure; 4- Interpretive or Hermeneutic approaches which is identified with Clifford Geertz. In contrast to the structural framework, interpretive approaches see religion as a cultural system or system of meaning which shapes people's social reality and identities; 5- Cognitive approaches which define religious systems as 'basic or pan-cultural human psychological characteristics'; 6- Phenomenological approaches which emphasizes the importance of an empathetic and neutral approach which provides an account of how people themselves view religion; 7- Sociological approaches that see religion as a social phenomenon, which should be understood within its socio-historical context.²⁸² Morris himself points out that religion is a complex, variable and social phenomenon, as a result there have been widespread disagreements about what its

²⁸¹ Michael Bergunder, What is Religion? The Unexpected Subject Matter of Religious Studies, *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 26, no. 3, 2014.

²⁸² Brian Morris, *Religion and Anthropology: A Critical Introduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 3-10.

main elements are and how its boundaries are defined.

Geertz, in his influential essay titled 'Religion as a Cultural System', provides a new 'cultural' approach to the study of religion that emphasizes the study of meanings and the analysis of religious symbols. Geertz defines religion as: '(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.'²⁸³ Central to Geertz's definition of religion is the use of symbols, which he defines as 'any object, act, event, quality, or relation, which serves as a vehicle for a conception -the conception is the symbol's "meaning"'²⁸⁴. The interesting aspect of such a definition is that it is very broad and inclusive and as a result enables the study of a wide range of religious phenomena.

Another important anthropologist who has approached the study of religious groups from a theoretical framework is Talal Asad. Asad looks at the early history of Western Christianity to analyze the relationship between religion and power.²⁸⁵ Such a selection of case study is very interesting in the field of anthropology of religion, which has largely focused on studying 'exotic' areas and the practice of religion in tribes (including the examples used in Geertz's article discussed earlier). In a more recent article Geertz points out that there has been a general shift in

²⁸³ Geertz, Clifford. 'Religion as a Cultural System,' in: *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, pp. 87-125, Fontana Press, 1993.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 91.

²⁸⁵ Talal Asad, 'Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz,' *Man New Series*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1983), 237-259.

anthropology from deserts and jungles to the study of 'high religions' such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam.²⁸⁶ Nevertheless even in cases where anthropologists have approached the study of 'high religions' they have largely focused on the practice of these religions in Third World countries, and as a result the Western world has been largely excluded from such studies. Therefore, Asad's case study is a welcome change to this trend. Asad raises several important criticisms regarding Geertz's article. He points out that Geertz's definition of symbols is not consistent since in some instances Geertz uses 'symbols' as aspect of reality, and in other times as only its representation and not to be confused with empirical objects. More importantly Geertz argues that religious symbols induce in the worshipper a certain set of dispositions and tendencies, which create a chronic character of his activities and experiences. Asad on the other hand points out that religious symbols are not the sole shapers of one's activities and experiences, but rather the social and economic institutions present in one's environment also play a large role.²⁸⁷ Assad's main objection to Geertz's definition is his disregard of how religious power creates 'truths.' Asad argues that it is power that decides which discourses and practices are included and praised and which ones are systematically excluded and forbidden. This has been particularly the case in Western Christendom. While the Christian church did not seek to impose universal practice, it did successfully establish itself as the sole and universal authority for

²⁸⁶ Clifford Geertz, 'Shifting Aims, Moving Targets: On the Anthropology of Religion,' *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 11, no. 1 (2005), 1-15.

²⁸⁷ Asad, 'Anthropological Conceptions of Religion,' 241.

legitimizing and authenticating discourse and practice.²⁸⁸ Moreover Geertz sees religion as a means of coping with the problems, pains and suffering of the human conditions. Asad argues that if this were the case then every philosophy that has such a function would turn into a religion. This weakness is a result of Geertz's effort to define religion in universal terms.

Aside from the criticisms that Asad raises, Geertz's definition of culture and religion results in a lack of agency of religious adherents. Both Geertz and Asad disregard the individual's meaning-making power. Such frameworks are unable to account for why different individuals within the same culture and religion understand the same religious symbols differently. For example, in the context of this dissertation, some second-generation Muslims in Canada had a slightly different understanding of Islam and its symbols compared to their parents. Moreover, in reality individuals have the agency and power to redefine and transform religious symbols and meanings. Acknowledging this would allow us to account for religious meanings created by religious authorities, as argued by Asad, as well as meanings and beliefs created and redefined by the individual and divergent groups. Moreover, studies of religious groups should approach the subject from a multidisciplinary perspective, since in today's era of global communication people live in complex political, cultural and religious environments often placing contradictory pressures on individuals. Without understanding the complex and contradictory forces shaping people's lives today it is impossible to get an accurate understanding of religious identities and issues in the 'connected world' we live in. As a result, the past rigid

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 241-244.

theories used by anthropologists to study religious communities will hamper our understanding of these groups. This is why recently a few anthropologists have sought to approach the subject using new tools. The most noted of this group of scholars is Saba Mahmood's approach in the *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, which was explained in chapter 1 (Introduction).

Peter Beyer and Rubina Ramji's book, *Growing Up Canadian*, is focused entirely on second-generation immigrants who live in Canada. As it was explained in the introduction chapter, these youths were either born and raised in Canada or came to live in Canada before reaching school's age. In this exclusive study they have interviewed many Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim second-generation immigrants. This book has reached many results. One of its results was that unlike what Reitz and Bannerjee (2007) indicated that second-generation immigrants have less belonging to Canada, Beyer and Ramji's study shows the opposite. These youth although some very religious have more sense of belonging to Canada than their parents. Also research shows that people who are raised in a non-religious household become non-religious themselves, but Beyer and Ramji's study shows that this is not always the case.²⁸⁹

Growing Up Canadian is a rich study of second-generation immigrants but has few weaknesses. Although the definition of the word 'religion' is not crystal clear in religious study, this book has used the definition in a loose manner. Also Beyer and Ramji initially categorize the religious identities of Muslim men and women and

²⁸⁹ Peter Beyer and Rubina Ramji, *Growing Up Canadian: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 45.

then fit their study's participants in those categories, such as 'highly involved,' 'involved,' 'less involved' and 'non-involved.' A better methodology would have been to let the participants create their own categories rather than fit them in preconceived groups. Such a weakness again points to the need for participant observation in the study of such a complicated topic. Participant observation is an important method in studying youth subcultures. As Mark Cieslik and Donald Simpson argue:

Qualitative research, therefore, involves the collection and analysis of mainly textual data (spoken or written language) through semi- or unstructured interviews, focus groups and observations with young people. The researcher therefore has a direct interaction with the young people involved in the research. Qualitative youth researchers analyze data to develop an explanation about lives experiences and everyday phenomena. They will attempt to ground this explanation in the voice of the young people involved in their research. They use different research designs, popularly ethnography, to research youth subcultures and biography to explore youth transitions. In order to better understand young people the methodology should involve participant observation, which does research with young people rather than on young people.

For the purpose of this study I asked the participants what the word 'religious' meant to them and each person defined it differently. Therefore, instead of categorizing the people into different groups and fitting the rest in these categories, it is better to let the participants define their identities. Another weakness of his book is that contrary of what Beyer has argued that 'religious Iranians stay in Iran'²⁹⁰ this study have focused on an Iranian youth club where the participants were from both immigrants and second-generation and some of them especially two executives who have immigrated from Iran four years ago, were practicing Muslims.

²⁹⁰ Peter Beyer, 'Can the Tail Wag the Dog? Diaspora Reconstructions of Religions in a Globalized Society,' *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*, (2007): 53.

Not only that but also a young man in Ottawa men's club and a young woman in Ottawa women's club who have immigrated from Iran recently were practicing Muslims. The sample that Beyer has used to study is limited and applying the results from this small sample and generalizing them makes the study less valid. Also the word 'religious' and its ambiguous definition need to be explained in more details.

Who is Religious?

The word 'religious' is as ambiguous as the word religion. Each scholar defines the word 'religious' differently. Who is considered 'religious' varies among different religions as well as among the believers of a specific religion. In order for the participants to define this word, I asked them what does being religious mean to you? The answers varied. It should also be mentioned that that because of the ambiguity of some of the words used by participants, direct quotes are provided in this chapter.

For example, Jamal who was a second-generation and an executive of the Montreal youth club explained:

In our mum and dad's generation there was only a single way of being religious but now there are multiple ways of being religious.

He clarified his sentence by saying:

I won't practice my religion regularly and I would say I do practice by main events. For example, I would fast in Ramadan and I do pray but not regularly. I think being religious in Islam is related to ethics as well. I think the main and real message of Islam is that to become a better person but it is lost in the details of daily rituals.

Another participant of the club said that, 'I think a person who prays regularly and then does charity work and helps other people is a religious Muslim.'

For these two participants as well as some other participants, ethics is the core concept of being religious, which was the majority of answers that I received. For Mona, another young woman in Montreal's club the concept of hijab is the most important factor. She said:

I am Muslim and I follow Islam. I am very religious. Here when Muslim people come from their countries some of them don't wear the hijab but I wear it and I like it.

It can be argued that for some participants the concept of ethics is the most important factor of being religious, while for others rituals such as praying, fasting or wearing the hijab are the most important elements of being religious.

Therefore, as it was argued earlier in contrast to Peter Beyer's work that he himself categorizes the participants, in this study there are no categorizations and instead each individual's understanding of the word is separately studied.

The Montreal youth club's participants varied in regards to religiosity. Few of them such as a female participant explained to me that, 'I don't identify myself with a particular religion and religion is not important to me at all' while some other young men and women such as Maryam told me:

Religion is very important in my life. It is the main bridge in my life that everything else evolves around it. Everything we do, our entire gathering with our Muslim friends is around some religious practices.

Another participant said that, 'My religion is very important and it is above everything else.' Montreal club's participants' level of religiosity varied more than

the Ottawa women and men club. Also the Women's club participants' level of religiosity varied more than the Ottawa men's club. Maybe one of the reasons was the presence of religious events such as lectures in Ottawa's programs every week and the holding of occasional religious ceremonies such as different Eids and Ashura ceremony, while the Ottawa women's club only had a brief Doa and occasionally short presentations. The Montreal youth club's religious programs were scarce and only in very private programs for the executives and not for the public.

From my interviews many participants told me that they 'became more religious' when they participated regularly in the programs. For example, Sajjad from Ottawa men's club explained:

A friend invited me to the youth club. I go there for about 2 years now. There is something that you can't find in a mosque environment. I mean some of the guys were not interested in religion. The good thing is that instead of boys going clubbing they go there for entertainment. Even the youth who are there just for the entertainment they get a bit of lecture too. One of my friends left his home and left his parents and didn't talk to his parents and he got to do really bad stuff. I talked to him and brought him to the club and then after sometime he kind of eventually changed his mind and behavior. He listened to the lecture as well as hanging out and having fun at the same time. So the environment is good in a sense that you are comfortable.

Ali, one of the executives of the men's club told me:

I wasn't that much religious when I was younger. I mean I did fast but I didn't pray. I didn't miss religious events at the mosque such as Ashura but I didn't pray. I liked, enjoyed and respected religion. Then a friend introduced me to this club and I eventually embraced religion.

Hassan another executive said:

There are four converts. We have a few reverts that they were originally Muslim and they didn't practice Islam and put aside the whole religion and then when they came here they embraced Islam again and started practicing. Even our previous president was a revert himself. His mum was a Shia Muslim

and he was born as a Muslim but he didn't practice Islam at all before coming to the club. He started praying, fasting and doing the rituals after he came here.

Ibrahim, another participant, explained:

After high school I kind of got out of religion and I got lost but then eventually and a few years later I got interested about the religion and I started reading about Jaffari and different schools of thought in Islam and fell in love with them. I started to research for myself and then found some good religious friends. After a year of my research I found and became acquainted with these brothers of this club and that is when I enjoyed religion and embraced it.

This concept of becoming 'more religious' was not present among the members of the Montreal club while in the Ottawa men's club many participants mentioned it. Their definition of 'religious' was mostly a combination of rituals as well as ethics. For the women's club although it was not as frequently mentioned by the participants as the men's club but one young woman told me:

My friend and I did not wear a hijab when we first came to this club but after a couple of months being around some hijabis who were open-minded and fun, we started to wear it as well. I searched it for my own and read some books and started praying too. My friend wears the hijab and doesn't pray.

At the end of my fieldwork in the Ottawa women's club I could see that a few young women had started to wear a headscarf and another participant who used to wear a loose headscarf covered her hair completely. Other than that there were no indications of life changing experiences by the participants' interviews as well as my own observation while more lifestyles were changed in the men's club. The Ottawa men's club had created a sense of brotherhood that most people talked about. They helped each other in many aspects of their lives from school, jobs and personal choices such as helping not to be tempted to drink alcohol. This bond was strengthened every time a Muslim parent organization wanted to interfere in their

affairs as well as when stereotyping of Muslims heated up in Canadian society and media, for example when a terrorist attack had happened in another country. For example, one participant explained:

When that crazy dude went on the Parliament Hill with a gun I was like oh my God not again! Once in a while a Wahhabi goes and does something terrible and we have to pay for it. I mean my non-Muslim Canadian friends are polite and don't tell you in your face but people tell us stuff on the Internet.

Therefore, connecting with one's religious community can help overcome the sense of being lost among second-generation whose religion is a minority religion.²⁹¹ Also as Sameera Ahmad has argued:

*Religious organizations and institutions create support and a sense of belonging and community. Such organizations sometimes integrate youth in activities that make them happy as well as creating feelings such as self-confidence and belonging.*²⁹²

The issue of 'being religious' and who is considered religious is an interesting issue even between two sisters that I have interviewed. Zainab was the younger sister who looked up to the older sister and said that:

I have a sister who is 7 years older than me and she influenced my life a lot. She was and still is more religious than me. She was and still is stricter about her hijab and prayer and other practices so I always looked up to her. I mean she was always chill to me, I mean she would help me do things that I wanted to do but when it was about religion she told me don't do that or do this and I listened to her because she was my best friend.

She told me that her sister was more religious because she was more observant. When I talked to her sister and asked the same question about who is considered a religious person, she replied:

²⁹¹ Ahmad, *Religiosity, identity and pro-social values*, 7.

²⁹² Ibid., 12.

I think I am less religious than my parents. For example, I don't participate in a lot of religious ceremonies that my parents go to. I go the main ones and it is two or three times per year. On the personal level it is not any different I think compared to the social level.

We can conclude that the word 'religious' has a different definition for different participants. Some emphasize ethics while others emphasize more on observing and practicing rituals. A few participants also argued that a person who participated in religious ceremonies is more religious. What was common among all of these youth was that the concept of ethics and helping others in Islam was bold in their minds, although to varying degrees.

Being Religious and Canadian

In research, which was conducted in 2007, Jeffery Ritz and Rupa Bannerjee argue that second-generation who have immigrant parents have difficulties fitting into the Canadian lifestyle. Their research data, however, did not use religion as a variable.²⁹³ My participants as well as Peter Beyer's prove the opposite. The participants in this study even the ones who self-identified as 'religious' and as 'observant Muslim' told me that they saw no contradiction between being a second-generation religious Muslim and being Canadian. Peter Beyer also comes to the same conclusion. He argues that the level of religiosity does not contradict the participants' sense of belonging to Canada.²⁹⁴ Not only that but they have a stronger sense of belonging to Canada than the Canadian average in the same age group.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Beyer and Ramji, *Growing Up Canadian*, 47.

²⁹⁴ Beyer, 'Can the Tail Wag the Dog?' 51

²⁹⁵ Beyer and Ramji, *Growing Up Canadian*, 48.

This study also confirms the above finding. For example, Ahmad from the Ottawa men's club states:

I am a religious Muslim. I mean I try to do all the rituals as well as help others and do volunteer stuff. I am a proud Canadian as well. I really don't understand how people cannot get over the fact that you could be both an observant Muslim and a Canadian at the same time. What's wrong with people? Stop telling us who we are!

Ali, a participant from the Ottawa men's club, told me that 'Islam is the most important thing in my life and I try to practice it fully and in every aspect.' At the same time, he explained:

I do consider myself to be Canadian, and to be honest not Egyptian. I was born here and value many of the Canadian values because they overlap with many Islamic values. While when I went to Egypt with my parents for a visit I saw a difference for example between my relatives and myself. I consider myself Canadian rather than Egyptian.

Another participant from the Montreal club said, 'There are many shared identities between Islam and being Canadian.'

Sara a participant from the Ottawa women's club told me that 'I practice and try to include Islam in all the aspects of my life' and she further said:

I mean being raised in Canada makes you Canadian and it's not just the passport. I mean there is no other group that I could identify with especially as a second generation. I can't identify with being Saudi Arabian. I haven't really been there. I don't know the culture there. I understand much more Canadian culture (however conceived) than anywhere else.

So for these participants being a Canadian as well as an observant Muslim was not contradictory at all.

Unlike how some scholars would prefer to categorize people into groups so studying them would be easier, this was not possible among the participants of this study due to the fact that the answers received varied. For example, the opposite of what Jeffery Ritz and Rupa Bannerjee have argued the participants that were more 'religious' in my study identified themselves more as Canadian such as the Ottawa men's club while the participants who identified themselves as 'less religious and less observant' identified themselves more with their parents' ethnic background. For example, Samira, who self-identified as 'not believing in a specific religion,' said that she is not a Canadian. She explained to me:

I am dealing with this question all the time. I grew up in Canada and I don't that much feel that I am a Canadian although I have citizenship. The reason is that my parents came to Canada when I was very young and they were students at that time. For a long time we didn't have citizenship and we wanted to go back to Iran but we stayed too long here and so we got the Canadian citizenship. When growing up here we were on student Visa and we didn't have immigration. So we didn't have many benefits. For example, we didn't have health care and I couldn't go to school for a year because my dad's visa had expired and for me it was a terrible experience. Even when they gave us permanent residency after a long time I was like that's a little too late. I mean I lived here so long and I didn't see a difference between myself and other kids but because of this bureaucratic stuff it was a huge difference. That is the main reason that I don't have a sense of belonging to Canada. I consider myself an Iranian who lives in Canada.

Second-generation youth are born and raised in Canada or they have immigrated to Canada in their childhood and went to Canadian schools. Samira had immigrated to Canada when she was four years old.

Razack argues that the marginalization of Muslim communities has intensified the boundaries and borders that mark who belongs and who does not belong in Canada.²⁹⁶

A participant from Montreal club who said that, 'I use to be religious but I am not anymore' said:

I don't really consider myself Canadian although I was born here and if someone asks me about my ethnicity I would say that I am Iranian. Of course growing up here and living here has shaped my identity but when someone asks me where are you from I would definitely say Iran.

Sajjad who was from Ottawa men's club and had a Lebanese background said that he is less religious than many of his friends because he doesn't pray and fast regularly but he said that: 'To be honest I consider myself Lebanese although I have lived here and went to school here. I love to go and live in Lebanon one day.'

Thus the results of this research indicate that many of the youth identified themselves as fully Canadian although they were 'very religious', while others identified themselves with their parents' ethnic background although they were 'less observant and religious.' The main reason that some 'religious' youth could not relate to their parents' country of origin was that for them religion was the most important factor of their lives and the religion that they saw in some Muslim majority countries and among their relatives was 'an Islam that was mixed with their culture' and therefore was not pure. That is why they couldn't identify themselves to be a part of that ethnicity and culture. For the 'less religious' participants their parents' countries of origin were an ideal place to live that were

²⁹⁶ Baljit Nagra, *Unequal Citizenship: Being Muslim and Canadian in the Post 9/11 Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011), 11.

taken from them because they now lived in another country, and 'it has become harder and harder to go back because you become used to Canadian culture.' It should be mentioned that there were some exceptions as well. One young woman in the Montreal club for example stated that 'she wasn't a practicing Muslim at all' and she did not relate to her parent's country and that she felt she was Canadian. She explained:

I was raised in Canada although not born here. My parents taught us Farsi and Iranian culture but going to school in Canada and having many Canadian friends I identify myself with Canada than Iran. I have never ever been discriminated or felt that I was different in Canada. On the other hand, Iran is so different than what I assumed.

Also there were two young men in the men's club who said that they considered themselves to be 'more Iraqi and Tunisian' than Canadian although they self-identified as 'super religious.' One of them told me:

My parents raised me very much as a Tunisian with its culture. When I go to Tunisia I can relate to the people there and how they practice religion than here. On the contrary I experienced two times people teasing me because I have a mum who wears traditional Tunisian cloths in Canada and since I am very close to her I felt that my ethnicity was being teased.

Two of the participants said that they don't know and have not figured out who they are and where they belong yet, while a few others had mixed feelings about whom and where they belong. For example, Raha from the women's club told me:

All my parent's friends were Iraqi but now I see myself as a strange mixture. When I went to school especially at high school I could see a difference between how my parents were and how other kid's parents were.

Before continuing the discussion on belonging it should be briefly mentioned that this is the main reason why some immigrants send their children to Islamic schools. Sending their children to American or Canadian public school has always been an issue for some immigrant parents. Some say that it is better to send your children to public schools so they are exposed to mainstream culture, which is much more useful for them than isolating them. Others however argue that it is better to protect and educate your child from the early age with their ethnic and religious background and it is better to hold up to that way of education as long as possible.²⁹⁷ One of my participants who was a second-generation and came to Canada when she was four years old said that parents should not just rely on schools even if they send their kids to Islamic schools. She mentioned that ‘the new theme nowadays is that parents are super busy but they still care that they want their children to be religious so they decide to send them to Islamic schools which I disagree.’ Then she continued and said, ‘The kids who go to these schools I personally think would become more rebellious and they want to do exotic things and it closes their minds for nothing.’ Ten of the participants of this study argued against sending kids to Islamic schools, while five participants emphasized that Islamic schools are helpful in overcoming the dual and mixed up identities of second-generation Muslim youth. The rest of the participants were undecided in regards to the issue of Islamic and public schools.

²⁹⁷ Rohany Nayan, ‘Reading Jihad The Identity Enactment and Literacy Practices of Muslim Immigrant Children in the United States’ Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2012, 8.

I argue that having a sense of belonging to Canada is not based solely on 'being religious' or not for example the case of Samira shows that the sense of belonging to Canada for a person especially second-generation has many factors and one of them is religion, but it is not the only one. The results that I received vary and I couldn't categorize them into few groups and generalize. People have different experiences in their lives that could shape their identities as well as their opinions and there is no single answer for what people express. We come to the conclusion that in-depth interviews as well as participant observation have a major role in understanding the complex issues that second-generation youths face.

Does Place Matter in being 'Religious'?

One of the questions that I asked my participants was: do you think if you were raised in the home country of your parents, would you have been 'more religious' based on the definition that you just gave me? Their answers varied.

Maryam one of the participants of Montreal club told me:

I would think I might have been less religious if I was raised in Iran and one of the reasons is that living here I always had to remind myself that I am different from the people around me, I had a different religion, culture and ethnic background. So when I saw what some people did like alcohol and boyfriend, I always reminded myself that it is okay for them but not okay for me to do these stuff. If I was raised in Iran, I would have had the same mentality and I think the last couple of generations in Iran are not that much religious so probably I wouldn't have been religious at all. I mean when you are growing up in Iran you would do whatever other people are doing because you have the same religion, culture and ethnicity.

The feeling of being different and not doing some of the activities that most other Canadian youth do such as sex before marriage and alcohol that are all forbidden in Islam was mentioned by some other young men and women from the three clubs.

A young woman from the women's club said:

As a teenager I always knew that we were different and we shouldn't be doing that but living in Lebanon I think people have the same religious crisis but they do it because everyone is doing it and they think to themselves why shouldn't I do it.

I interviewed two second-generation Muslim men in Ottawa men's club at the same time. Their parents were both from Lebanon. Their definition of someone 'religious' was similar and they both argued that a person who prays regularly and fasts and does all the rituals in Islam is a 'religious' person. The following is the conversation between Ali and Hassan.

Ali: A youth that lives in Lebanon might do more haram²⁹⁸ things than us. Listen it doesn't matter where you live.

Hassan: Actually it does kind of matter. It has an effect. For example if I were born in Najaf (Iraq) it would be a bit different than me being born in Las Vegas.

Ali: Ya right! I didn't mean like that. I mean that you could be the same person in Las Vegas and as religious as a person living in a really religious and holy city although it might be harder on you. I mean nowadays with the spread of and access to the good media like getting contacts and religious books and stuff like that you have all the information that you want and it is on your fingertips and there is no excuse.

Hassan looked at me and said:

I think it is harder to be religious in some places compared to others like I know some guys in Brazil that they have difficulties living there as religious people. I think it depends on the country as well.

²⁹⁸ Doing the acts that are restricted and forbidden in Islam.

I interfered and asked Ali how a young man/woman becomes more 'religious' in Canada than in Lebanon?

Ali: I think it is harder to be religious in Lebanon. It is what is established in public but people do whatever they want to do. I mean you have access to haram things easier than some other places and alcohol is all over the place. There is alcohol in Lebanon too but it is just harder to get it but here it is in the corner store. So the only difference is that you have more access to certain things and that's it! I mean in Najaf and in Lebanon you can't avoid the market place and at some point you need to go there. There is less haram here in the market place than in Lebanon because you do see adds on bikini and stuff like that in Lebanon while you don't see that here in Canada.

Most of the 26 young men and women that I interviewed said that they think they would have been less 'religious' if they were raised in their parent's countries, which were Muslim majority countries and only few participants argued the opposite.

Sepideh a participant from the Montreal club said:

It is easier to practice the religion in the birthplace of where the religion came from so it is easier to observe the religion in Middle East. I mean it is normal there to pray or wear a headscarf while here you are always struggling for these things. Also not finding a halal food in small cities is big issue as well.

The sense and feeling of being different among other Canadian youth in some aspects is one of the main reasons of establishing these youth clubs. As many young men and women have told me, second-generation youth are more comfortable in these clubs since they are caught between resisting first-generations' expectations of following a certain type of tradition and at the same time not hanging around some other non-Muslim Canadian youth who do 'haram' acts such as sex before marriage and alcohol.

One young man from Ottawa men's club said:

When I go out with my Muslim friends I feel more comfortable. Because with my non-Muslim friends you have to be careful that they don't go out somewhere bad and don't go to certain places that you are not allowed to go to. It's not too hard not to go to bars with your friends but sometimes you feel shy or socially restricted.

Noora from Ottawa women's club told me:

On Saturday nights my non-Muslim friends go out and hang out in a club or a bar but if I have time I go to a restaurant and then come home and watch a movie. So I would say our leisure time is different. Even we have different concepts of what leisure is. I always tell my non-Muslim Canadian friends that I couldn't come with you to a club so we have to go someplace else. I always make excuses not to go with them since they go to a bar and I don't want to go to a bar. I am not comfortable in these places. I know I don't have to drink but they are the places that people get loose and they talk and do stuff that normally without the drink they don't.

Dating and Sexual Pleasures

Before continuing with the discussion on religiosity, the pressures to conform to the Canadian culture of having sex before marriage should be discussed. While many of these youth date the opposite sex for the purpose of marriage, however because of religious reasons they do not have sex before marriage. As I explained earlier, these youth are part of a 'religious' subculture and as a result they try to take religious rituals and laws seriously and that is why they see sexual pleasure outside of marriage in a negative way.

The youth were comfortable talking to me about dating the opposite sex and it was not seen as a taboo subject. For example, one of the converts of the men's club told me that 'a big challenge that I have as a Muslim now is that I don't know how to meet someone for marriage.' Then he continued and said, 'my friends in the club

told me that there are many ways to meet and date good Muslim women for marriage. For example, one of them told me that you could meet someone on universities campus or any other public place and ask her out. To be honest I didn't know that dating for marriage purposes is okay in Islam and only having sex before marriage is forbidden.' The president of the Ottawa men's club told me:

When I was 22 years old I dated a young Muslim woman from college. We saw each other and went out for ten months with out having any sexual pleasure and not even holding hands for religious reasons. Our parents were aware of this relationship from the beginning. When we got to know each other well and when we fell in love I asked her to marry me. If in the middle of the dating we figured out that we were not suitable for each other as a husband and wife we would have stopped dating.

Maryam from Ottawa women's club said:

I went out with a Pakistani guy twice and I found out that he was not going to be a suitable husband for me so I told him that it is not going to work.

While the youth were comfortable discussing the issue of dating, at the same time they were not very open about the topic of sex before marriage, as it is a forbidden act in Islam. The only participant that told me about sexual pleasures was a young man from the Ottawa men's club. He said:

I use to go out with a girl when I was 18 years old. I was not religious at that time. I had a religious friend two years older than me that came to this club. He told me not to have sex with her and stopped me from doing that which I am very glad. We broke up after a few months since I think dating her was not for marriage reasons in the first place. I came to the club and the sheikh talked to us about marriage and this stuff, which I was, shocked how open he was. I mean you could go and talk to him for hours about this stuff and he will tell you what to do without judging you.

Also it should be mentioned that since I am an older married woman, many of the youth were shy talking about sexual pleasures. An example of this was when two men were talking about a young Muslim woman whom one of these men was dating. When they looked at me, they stopped talking about her. I argue based on the interviews that this negativity is based on religious and to some extent cultural reasons. Therefore, we should not compare these youth with other Canadian youth who might talk about their sexual pleasures more openly and in a less negative way. This is why we should not generalize reactions, behaviors and attitudes of youth living in the same environment.

In fact, one of the reasons behind the creation of these clubs was to find close friends and create a sense of sisterhood and brotherhood that would help them overcome the desire to have sex before marriage. As mentioned earlier, the participants of this study drew a line between dating the opposite sex and having sex with the opposite sex before marriage. Having said that, not having sex before marriage is a struggle for Muslim youth.

This is part of the dual religious identities that some Muslim youth in these clubs argued that their religious identities are not completely the same as their parents and at the same time they cannot do all the activities that a young non-Muslim Canadian man or woman does. Creating a club for their own type of leisure time is exactly what post-subcultural theorist such as Steve Redhead have argued. They argue that today's youth do this in order to 'have good time' and this is the new way

of subcultures.²⁹⁹ As it was explained in previous chapters these second-generation Muslim youth had rented a place to hold both religious lectures as well as their own type of leisure activities that was not available in other places in Canada and among non-Muslim Canadians as well inside mosques. The concept of a 'new Islam' will be discussed in the following pages, but before looking at this concept and whether such a term exists in the viewpoint of these youth; the religious lectures of these clubs is briefly explained in order to have a better understanding of why these clubs are interesting from a religious perspective for the youth.

The Religious lectures:

A) The Ottawa Men's Club:

The religious lecture in the Ottawa men's club was the main focal point of their program. The sheikh after a brief chitchat would start the lecture. The content of the religious lectures are explained briefly in this chapter. In one lecture, Yusof, the sheikh of the Ottawa men's club, wrote a translation of a verse from the Quran (from the chapter 'Maryam' or Mary) and then he wrote it in a point format and underneath the verse he wrote lessons, conclusions and interpretations from the verse. Then he started his lecture while one of the men was video recording his lecture. Yusof talked about the story of Prophet Jesus and Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist) and how Maryam (Mary) devoted her life to God. He then explained how much Jesus is a highly respected prophet in Islam as well as his mother. The reason

²⁹⁹ Redhead, *Subculture to Clubcultures*, 22.

that he chose prophet Jesus was make his lecture relevant to Canadian society. He asked questions from the audience such as what we talked about last session and what that word meant. He spoke very enthusiastically and told many jokes in between, making the audience laugh. Aside from the jokes, what made his lecture interesting were the examples that he gave and the stories from real life that he told. I listened to the lecture same as the participants, but I did not answer any of his many questions since I didn't want them to be distracted. Although I think the sheikh mellowed some of his jokes because of my presence since he kept looking at me and paused before telling a joke (me being the only female participant). After the interpretation of the verse he went on to contemporary discussions related to Islamic ethics. He said that slavery has a modern feature now. He said:

You could be a slave of a habit or a thing. Your friend has to tell you if you are doing bad stuff and stop you from doing so. He/she is your true friend.

I could understand from his lecture that he tried strengthening the sense of community and brotherhood among these youths.

He continued and said:

You should smile everyday and the prophet told people to do so. You should pick a career or a study or anything that pleases you so you would be happy in life. For 10 years prophet Muhammad just talked about ethics and not sharia laws and rules. Ethics is very important in Islam but we pay less attention to it.

The rest of his lecture was completely a discussion-based lecture and young men gave their opinion regularly.

There were some discussions related to contemporary youth and their challenges.

For example, two young men disagreed on the positive and negative effects of social

media that was briefly mentioned in Yusof's lecture. Another time a young man named Ahmad who wore the club's T-shirt disagreed with the sheikh on an interpretation of a verse in the Quran about honoring your parents and the discussion went on and on.

On another Saturday night when I went to the Ottawa men's club, Yusof wasn't able to attend the club and instead another man in his late thirties came to give a lecture. As it was explained in chapter 2 (setting and methods chapter) for the executives of the Ottawa men's club the religious lecture is the one of the most important aspects of their programs and that is why if their permanent sheikh couldn't attend a week they would all decide on a guest speaker.

Ibrahim sat down on the floor and all the youths sat down around him then he read from some of his notes. His lecture was unorganized and he jumped into many topics ranging from Islamic rituals, death and afterlife and ethics. His short lecture created discussions and mostly arguments among the young men. These young men did not ask their questions which were related to religion from this guest speaker in contrast to asking their questions from Yusof. They instead asked their questions from each other in the presence of Ibrahim, the guest lecturer. This example shows that Yusof had more religious authority on them and his opinion was more valid among them. It also points to the fact that second-generation ask their questions related to religion from another second-generation who might be familiar with religion as well as today's society. This concept was mentioned by many of my participants that they ask their questions from their friends as well as Yusof much more than from their parents.

It is worth discussing the concept of authority here. Most of the youth rejected the religious authority of their parents as well as some prominent Islamic sheikhs in Muslim majority countries. At the same time it should be noted that these youth did not reject the religious authority of all the Ulama (well-known Islamic scholars). For example, Yusof used many quotes from some of these scholars in the interpretation of the verses of the Quran. Also he told the life stories of some of these Ulamas in order to give examples of lives based on ethics and morality. This is similar to the Ottawa women's club and the Montreal youth club, in which participants presented religious lectures and used quotations from such scholars. The Montreal youth club had private sessions for founders and executives in their houses, in which books, articles and quotations from some Ulamas were used.

There were two converts in the Ottawa men's club who participated in the men club's programs. One of the converts told me that his intention of participating in the club was solely based on gaining more Islamic knowledge. He said:

I was told that it is a rare place in Ottawa that you can hear some good lectures so I participated and I loved it. I just go the club to listen to lectures and see my friends. We discuss everything like religious courses or what is happening in the world. I don't attend a mosque and just went to a mosque just a few times. They didn't have any activities and if there were they were not in English, which matters most. The only problem in being a convert among Muslim community is the obstacle of language, which is not a problem in this club for me because they all speak English. As a convert you want to learn more and it is always good to be exposed to this knowledge.

This convert emphasized more on the religious lectures and how useful and important they are for him, but the other convert that I talked to emphasized more on the leisure and 'fun' part of the club. He said that, 'I think the club is very good because I could have gone downtown Ottawa clubbing but I chose to go to this club

that is totally halal and everything is okay.’ This points to the fact that the reasons behind participation vary.

B) The Montreal youth club:

The Montreal youth club, in contrast to the Ottawa men’s club, did not have a regular public religious lecture every week and instead most of its programs were related to practical day-to-day issues such as finding jobs in Canada alongside programs and events specifically designed for having fun. The private religious lectures were short and a brief Doa (prayer) followed them. It was more similar to the Ottawa women club’s program, the only difference was that men and women were not separated and sat together. This group only had religious programs occasionally at the time of religious ceremonies such as Ashura or Muslim Eids. Each time an executive would present a religious topic related to that occasion such as Imam Hossein’s Ashura³⁰⁰ for fifteen minutes and then it immediately followed a doa without any major discussions. After the doa they talked about the ‘fun’ activities of their club and what needs to be improved. Also future plans were discussed in groups. The people who participated in the club’s private religious events were 11 including me compared to the public events that reached 30 or more.

³⁰⁰ Imam Hossein is the third Imam of Shia Muslims.

C) The Ottawa Women's Club:

As it was explained in chapter 2 (setting and methods chapter) this club did not have a religious imam or sheikh. Young women in this club started their program by reciting a specific prayer from the Shia prayer book,³⁰¹ and then occasionally a different person would give a short presentation to others each time. They insisted on not having anyone to come and give lectures because of two reasons: the first reason was that they didn't want to have 'an authority over the club' as one of the founders of the club explained and the second reason was that they didn't want to have fixed religious lectures every week. Zainab one of the founders told me that, 'we didn't want the club to be like a classroom so everyone should sit down and listen. We wanted to be a relaxing environment and hang out.' This club only had presentations, which were given by different participants and not every week. For example, one time Rosa, who was one of the participants, gave a brief twenty minutes presentation on the topic of charity in Islam. She explained a couple of verses from the Quran that tells Muslims to give their money and time for the people in need.³⁰² Then the conversation shifted towards Saudi Arabian and Qatar kings and how they are so corrupted. Samineh said:

*I really don't know how that is Islam! Having so much money without giving it to the poor and spending them on luxurious houses and cars. Also how the F*** did they become so rich! There is no such thing as kinghood in Islam. I mean don't they compare their lifestyle to prophets'!*

The other woman who was the only woman with a baby said:

³⁰¹ As explained earlier, Doa Komeil is a prayer from Imam Ali.

Not only that but how they treat women is disgusting! Their men have to be present everywhere with the woman as if the woman is so weak that she always needs a man in doing her basic chores! I personally don't understand why women can't drive. They made up this shitty thing and they themselves name it Islam, which is not Islam!

It is worth arguing that what I have heard and experienced in my fieldwork in these clubs is that these youths are very much critical of Muslim authorities as well as Sheikhs and Imams. The Ottawa women's club and the Montreal club were critical of sheikhs and this had prevented them to invite one for their clubs' events. The Ottawa men's club was slightly different and they had a sheikh, but they saw him as a 'different' sheikh from the rest of 'established' sheikhs. This was mentioned in the setting chapter on how this club decides on different issues without the sheikh being involved. Even permission for my participation in the club was also discussed in their executive meetings and the president of the club gave me the permission letter and not the sheikh. Personally I saw a difference as well between Yusof and some of the sheikhs in Canadian mosques. He had not formally studied in an Islamic seminary. Also he was very open about the challenges that these youths might have in today's society. During my fieldwork attending the men's programs every week, the sheikh discussed many challenging issues such as sex before marriage, homosexuality, men's and women's hijab, marrying a non-Muslim, alcohol, drugs, clubbing as well as other subjects related to a young Muslim man living in Canada.³⁰³

³⁰³ The word hijab, which means covering, has been used both for men and women in the Quran. In chapter Noor (The Light), the Quran mentions the hijab of men surprisingly before mentioning women's hijab. Men's hijab is described as not staring at women, and to look and talk to women respectfully.

Mahdi one of the participants of men's club who wore the T-shirt of the club (a black T-shirt which the name of the club was written in gold color on it), told me:

The sheikh is very friendly. He sits with us and we discuss issues in our personal lives. He explains the stuff that is going on in his life as well and we feel that he is one of us and he doesn't hold back. He has studied Islam through various books and I enjoy asking him questions.

Mohammad another participant told me:

I mean the sheikhs and imams should be just like him. In Islam they are like everybody else only they have studied more books like the Profs at the university. In Islam unlike some other religions we don't have the notion of holiness, which creates authority over other people. Unfortunately, many sheikhs create this fake holiness for themselves. This is completely against Quran's teachings.

Montreal and women's club argued that they did not need an imam figure because they themselves do all the work that an imam would have done such as the lectures. Therefore, they believed that 'why should we bring someone to have authority on us and tell us what to do' said one of the executives of the Montreal club.

One of the founders of the Montreal youth club said:

We don't have a leader in our society. Even me as one of the founders, intentionally left being one of the executives. I didn't nominate myself as a board member intentionally because I wanted other people to come and take positions. Having a religious figure is not necessary because we want our club to be completely democratic and giving someone a fixed job all the time fades this democratic policy.

Noora, a participant in the women's club mentioned that this club did not want to have a religious leader figure for a variety of reasons:

We don't have an imam figure at all. We didn't want to have religious lectures and something serious. Even when we want to increase our knowledge in

regards to Islam, if we feel like it each week one of us would go and read some books and come and present the topic to the rest of us. Therefore, this club there is no need for an imam.

Religious leader (sheikh) as a Second-generation:

Some of the participants of this study from the three clubs mentioned that if an imam in Canada would be a second-generation it would be easier for the youth to connect with him. For example, Kourosh who had an Iranian background and was from the men club told me:

I go to sheikh of the club and ask question that I am too shy to ask my parents or friends from him because he knows our challenges being raised here. I mean, him being raised here in Canada really helps us.

Fatemeh, one of the participants of Montreal club, explained:

Imam as second-generation it would be a lot easier. Once in while you get an imam that is an immigrant and they would understand and they know how to answer questions and they know Canadian society but they are rare.

There were some exceptions on views regarding imams being second-generation immigrants. For example, Reyhane, a participant in the Montreal club stated:

A few years ago I attended a Muslim youth event and some of the guys there were so closed-minded and they were second-generation themselves. So I don't think just being a second generation would help. For me what really matters is that if I approach an imam about a question I want him/her to give the choice so that I would choose what I want to do. I mean I want the imam to explain to me the logical reason behind the questions that I ask so it doesn't matter if that person is an immigrant or not. Also the language barrier is important. If he speaks very simple Farsi or English, he could connect much more with youth.

Saeed a participant in Ottawa men's club said:

The sheikh being friendly and well known about Islam and what is going on around the globe is not related to him being a second-generation. I have seen and talked to many sheikhs and imams that are immigrants and they are as open-minded as him. Actually besides Yusof who is knowledgeable about Islam, I do prefer first-generation sheikhs because they know more about Islam since they had more access to original books. Many second-generation don't know Arabic fluently and that restricts their knowledge to read original books and reading from translation is not the same. It is like someone studying Judaism without knowing Hebrew.

The following section discusses the difference between the religious identities of parents and their children from the latter's point of view. After the discussion about religious identities of first and second-generation Muslims, the type of arguments that these two generations have in regards to religion will be discussed. One of the main arguments that they have is in regards to marriage and whether the whole concept is a religious matter or a cultural matter?

Religious Identities of First-Generation Muslims:

Studying religious identities of second-generation Canadian Muslims has some interesting twists to it. These young men and women on the one hand are being raised in Canada and consuming the 'indigenous' culture, but on the other hand belong to a religion that is considered a 'diaspora' religion in Canada.³⁰⁴ Peter Beyer argues that many second-generation immigrants compared to the first-generation decide on what counts as 'proper' Islam themselves and do their own individual research on the subject. This is the opposite of first generations that usually receive their Islamic knowledge from a sheikh or an imam that they think is knowledgeable

³⁰⁴ Beyer, 'Can the Tail Wag the Dog?' 49.

and reliable.³⁰⁵ The participants of this study confirm these results. Even the reverts that 'came back to Islam' and started to follow the religion again told me that they gained their knowledge from studying books and researching by themselves. The Montreal club and the Ottawa women's club mentioned that the main reason that they did not wish to have an imam or sheikh was that 'we can study ourselves and give religious presentations and lectures.' Few participants asked their parents if they had a question in regards to religion.

For example, Somayeh, a young woman who was a student at McGill University from the Montreal club told me:

Me as a second generation keep asking questions about religion and the reasons behind the purpose of rituals. Whenever I have questions in regards to religion I ask my mum but if I am not convinced enough I search more and then if I am not convinced at all I don't ask anymore.

Another young woman from the Ottawa women's club said:

My mum is a lot more religious than I am. She is more restricting than I am in practice. I have a lot of doubts and for her everything is correct and she doesn't doubt any of it. My mum's family is not religious at all and she is the only one that is religious and she prays and fasts while her family doesn't and I guess she has completely chosen her religion herself and that is why I ask my religious questions from her.

Other than these two individuals, the rest of the participants explained that they would ask their questions in regards to religion either from their friends in the youth club as it was explained earlier or they would research it for themselves from Islamic books and websites. Many of the Ottawa men's club insisted that they would ask Yusof (the sheikh) first and he is the first person that they ask questions. Only

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 52

four participants, two young women from the Montreal club and two young men from the Ottawa men's club told me that they ask a first-generation imam from their local mosque. The main reason that these youths do not ask questions related to religion from their parents was that most of the participants declared that their parents' Islam was mixed with the culture of their parents' home countries. Other studies have also indicated that second-generation Muslim youth see the mixture of their own cultural background into Islamic teachings as a barrier for not having a 'pure' Islam among the first-generation.³⁰⁶ Before moving on to the next section, a brief discussion regarding the issue of changing one's religion is presented.

None of the participants, except for the converts to Islam, indicated that they had changed their religion when I asked them 'have you changed your religion since childhood?' One of the participants, Samira, said that she was not Muslim anymore but that she had not chosen another religion, for example to become Buddhist or Christian, but rather explained: 'I still believe in God but not in any religion.' Five of the participants mentioned that they had studied another religion deeply, mostly Christianity and Buddhism, at the end of their high school years and in the beginning of college because they had a close Christian or Buddhist friend. But when I asked them have you thought about changing your religion to Christianity or Buddhism they all said no and as one participant put it, 'it was based on enthusiasm and interest to study other religions rather than changing my religion to them.' We should also bear in mind that changing one's religion is not seen as something positive among the followers of that religion and since they were aware that I was

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 53.

Muslim, they might have not been comfortable explaining the issue further. Also it should be mentioned that all the participants of my study self-identified as 'Muslim' except for one, as was explained earlier.

Changing one's level of religiosity is also not seen as a positive matter, however in this case the participants openly shared their experience with me. The concept of reverts (people who were born Muslim but did not practice the religion and again started embracing it) was pretty much discussed openly in these three clubs and among the participants and even other participants knew who were reverts in their clubs. For example, in the Ottawa men's club when I interviewed two of the young men at the same time, which was discussed in previous pages, they were very open in discussing their past during which they shifted from 'being religious' to not 'being religious' and now are trying to go back to religion and 'embrace' it. Also the participants of this research were open about telling me that they were 'more religious' before than they are now. This was the case in the Ottawa women's club as well as the Montreal club. To conclude, some of the participants of this study had changed their level of religiosity as 'Muslims' but based on the interviews not 'their religion.'

Differences on Religious or Cultural Issues?

Immigrant parents have many interactions with their children on what is right and wrong in their culture and ethnicity, especially when living in the West since mainstream culture is different than theirs. Also parents engage in cultural behaviors such as insisting on ethnic holiday and food as well as language so that

their children won't lose their ethnic background.³⁰⁷ Many of the young men and women that I interviewed as well as some parts in Yusof's lectures indicated that these youths' disagreement with their parents in regards to religion was that they saw their parents entering their cultural background into Islamic teachings. This reason as well as many other reasons has caused some of these youths to have arguments with their parents. An example that the participants gave me in mixing up religion and culture was related to marriage. A young man from the Ottawa men's club told me:

One of the big arguments that I have with my parents is about marriage. Because they didn't grow up here they don't know what are important to youth here and what are not. For me being Muslim is really important but not being from Pakistan or Persian or Canadian. I mean if the religion matches it is easier to raise kids and you don't have much disagreement on how to raise kids in Canada. I do prefer her to be a second-generation because she is raised here in the West and she will know and have a better understanding of how to raise kids in Canada.

Preferring to be religious than Iranian one participant said:

I am divorced. Due to the damaged that caused me, he said that he was religious but he wasn't. I don't really care the next guy that I am going to marry to be Iranian but my parents insist that he should be an Iranian. For me being religious is much more important than being Iranian. I mean my ex was an Iranian but not religious. I love to marry someone who is a good Persian man but the problem is that the religious thing is much more important than the cultural aspect. Who the hell cares about his cultural background! There are many challenges if you marry someone who is not religious and causes problems for your kids.

³⁰⁷ Shabana Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity*, (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 40.

A few participants from the Montreal youth club said that marrying someone non-Muslim and non-Iranian is what they prefer.

Maryam said:

My parents are very open but I could see there would be differences. For marriage parents say that you could only marry a person who is both Muslim and Iranian but I have my own idea that he doesn't have to be neither Muslim or Iranian and he could be Christian so I would have my own belief and he would have his.

Also for a young man from the Montreal youth club it was different. He said that, 'to be honest the Iranian part is more important for me than Muslim.'

Zeid, a Sunni participant in the Ottawa men's club declared:

My parents want me to marry a girl that is either Saudi Arabian because my dad is from Saudi Arabia or Tunisia because my mum is from there. I don't care at all what my partner's ethnicity is going to be! They say that you need to marry someone from our own culture but I only care about religion and I love her to be super religious Muslim. I don't care if she is Shia or Sunni but Muslim.

So we can see a variety of answers regarding the source of disagreement with their parents especially in regards to choosing a spouse. Nevertheless, the majority of interviewees indicated that religion was more important for them than the ethnic or cultural background.

Marriage is an example in which young men and women distinguish between cultural and religious practices and draw a line between them. Some scholars such as Reem Meshal and Olivier Roy have argued the same concept. This is opposite to what Paul Bramadat has argued in his book, *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*, in which most participants do not distinguish between religion and culture.³⁰⁸ My

³⁰⁸ Paul Bramadat and David Seljak. *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*, (Toronto, ON:

participants on the other hand insisted on the differences between religion and culture and gave examples such as the issue of marriage.

This growing community of second-generation Muslim-Canadians is part of what Olivier Roy, a Professor at the European University Institute in Florence, names a 'new Ummah' or Muslim community. He argues that Islamic revival or what he calls 're-Islamization' continues to shape Muslim communities living in the West. He contends that Muslims in Western societies have learned to be 'true believers' in the context of secular societies. Re-Islamization is part of acculturation and not against it. This means that a new identity is shaped for Muslims living as a minority that is influenced by the construction of a 'deculturalised' Islam, which expresses a religious identity that is not linked to an inherited culture and is able to fit within every culture.³⁰⁹

Meshal reaches a similar conclusion to that of Roy by arguing that second-generation Muslims 'are no longer identifying with their country of origin, but are indistinguishable from their co-religionists under the common label of Muslim,' implying that assimilation has already occurred, in that ethnic identities is not as important to Canadian Muslims as their religious identities.³¹⁰ According to the doctrine of re-Islamization, the Islamic Ummah in Western societies is not attached to a specific territory or culture. This leads to the notion of a 'universal Islam' that is valid in any cultural context. This is why the racial backgrounds of Muslims living as

University of Toronto Press, 2005) 2.

³⁰⁹ Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 23.

³¹⁰ Meshal, 'Banners of Faith and Identities in Construct,' 96.

minorities, whether one is from Egypt or Indonesia, are fading while at the same time their Islamic identity is becoming stronger.

Although this study confirms to some extent what Meshal and Roy have argued but it should be mentioned that these second-generation might reject the concept of their religion being mixed with their parents' cultures, but this does not mean that they are rejecting their parents' culture completely. Some of them were in favor of that culture, for example they only listened to the music from that country or mostly had friends from the same ethnic background. Their only issue was *mixing* an ethnic culture with Islam.

Samineh from Montreal club said:

I love Iran and maybe I want to go and live there. Here everyone is cold but in Iran strangers talk on the street instantly and a little of chitchat. My cousins are at the same age of me and there are many people in Iran that I can hang out with. I feel at home for sure.

Another young man in the Montreal club told me:

I hang out with my Iranian friends much more than non-Iranian friends. My parents raised us very Iranian. Even if you look at my apartment you see that it looks like a traditional Iranian home.

Ali from the Ottawa men's club also mentioned:

I don't know why but 80% of my friends are Lebanese either who have recently come from Lebanon or they are from Lebanese decedents. I think I feel that I have more common stuff with them.

The arguments that these youths had with their parents in regards to religion varied. As it was explained earlier some of them argued because of the distinction between religion and culture. Some others arguments were around the issue of their

parents being more observant Muslims than them in details of rituals and they expected them to do the same.

In contrast, another group of these youth told me that their 'religious' arguments were related to their parents not being 'religious or observant' enough. For example, Davood an executive of the Ottawa men's club said:

Actually I argue now with my parents especially my dad much more than before!! (Laughing). It is the opposite. I wish they were strict when I was growing up when I look back at it. Just drugs and alcohol were forbidden but partying and going out with girls were not a problem at all!

This sentiment is similar to some of Homa Hoodfar's young Muslim participants, which, in her study criticize their parents for being ignorant of the teachings of Islam. One of her participants for example claimed, 'I told my parents and others that their mistake is that they have never bothered to read and learn Islam for themselves.' She continued to say that her mother had told her friends that they had ended up learning their religion from their Canadian children rather than from their Muslim parents back home.³¹¹

Two young women from the Ottawa women's club who had started to wear a headscarf since they had participated in the club's programs told me:

My mum was shocked when she saw me with the hijab! She told me what are you doing! She thought that I would become super religious and start telling her what to do from now on.

The next section of this chapter is related to the concept of 'New Islam', one of the most important issues in regards to second-generation's religious identities which scholars have debated.

³¹¹ Hoodfar, "More Than Clothing," 23.

Is There a New Islam Emerging Among Second-Generation

Muslims?

A recent theme in the religious identities of these youth in academic literature is the concept of new Islam. Some scholars such as Roy have argued that the Islam of second-generation Muslims in the West is different than the Islam of their parents, the first-generation. They have argued that this Islam has to some extent different beliefs and in some parts different rituals. Also other scholars, such as Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, have argued that, 'religious ideas, texts, rituals, symbols, and institutions are in the end redeployed by new Canadians in a uniquely Canadian way. Another way to put it is to say that religion is never relocated (like baggage), but rather is always re-created.'³¹²

This study asked participants what they thought about the concept of new Islam. Before examining their responses, it should be added that this chapter mentioned different arguments that these youths had with their parents in regards to religious differences. All the instances and examples were related to the difference in the level of observing rituals, while their beliefs and values were largely the same as their parents. This research shows that perhaps these scholars have exaggerated somewhat in regards to the second-generation's religious identities as if they have created a new form of Islam for themselves.

³¹² Bramadat and Seljak, *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*, 13.

An exception to this were two converts of the Ottawa men's club as well as a young man who was a Sunni Muslim and participated in the Ottawa men's club that was mostly Shia Muslims for more than two years every week. He had arguments with his parents regarding his belief system. He told me:

I always have arguments with my parents about religion. Mainly about halal and haram stuff that something they say is haram and I say no its not and I bring them evidence and they bring me other hadiths and other stuff to prove it. We talk a lot about Shia Islam and the Imams and then the arguments really heat up.

I could understand from interviewing this participant that the influence and effect of Shia Islam teachings was obvious on him.

Nevertheless, the above was the exception rather than the rule. Azadeh a participant of the Montreal club said:

My parents are very religious and they take on little things. Although we are on the same page with the beliefs.

Another participant who said that their beliefs were the same was Amal from the Ottawa women's club, who nevertheless added:

I have disagreements with my parents about everyday mundane activities that are not formal rituals, but which can be, with the correct intention, considered to be forms of worship.

Fatemeh from the Montreal club stated:

We may not practice the same exactly like the way my mum covers up is different than me like wearing longer cloths or going to the mosque much more often. So maybe they practice more than me. We both believe in the concept of hijab and I think the more you cover your hair and body is better like my mum but she observes more.

Ziba from the women's club explained:

Girls nowadays kind of have changed the hijab like they wear the tank top and wear a shirt under it or go to a wedding and they wear a dress but with the hijab and they dance in front of men but with the hijab and it is a mixed wedding. They know how they should cover and the whole concept of hijab in Islam is modesty and not showing your curves but they wear lots of makeup but they wear it differently.

Based on my field work and the interviews I conducted I came to the conclusion that unlike what these scholars have argued there is no clear consistency among young men and women regarding the phenomenon of the emergence of a 'new Islam.' I asked all the participants about this concept and the answers they gave me varied greatly. Also it did not matter which youth club they were part of.

Some scholars argue that tattooing is a sin in Islam. Therefore second-generation tattooing is seen as evidence that a concept of a new Islam among second-generation is being formed.³¹³ In contrast to what these scholars argue, one of the answers that most of the youth gave to clarify that the concept of new Islam doesn't exist was the issue of tattooing while doing Wuzu³¹⁴ and praying, which is seen as not permitted among traditional Islamic circles. The concept of creating a new type of Islam was debated among the youths. Some participants of this study disagreed with the concept of new Islam completely and they wanted to clarify very passionately while a few others were not sure about it.

A participant in the Ottawa men's club clarified the issue of tattooing and rejecting the concept of a 'New Islam':

In Lebanese culture they do a lot of tattoos and it not anything new and I don't think there is a new type of Islam. Maybe there are certain things like

³¹³ Remzi Kuscular, *A Comprehensive Guide to Tahara: Cleanliness In Islam*, (New Jersey: The Light Inc., 2007), 43.

³¹⁴ This ritual was explained earlier in this chapter.

interaction between the two genders that is becoming very lenient and I don't really feel that there is a new Islam. I don't think there is a distinct second-generation way of Islam. One of my friends said that I don't fully participate in Canadian culture and don't have completely my parents' culture and a new type of culture is emerging but not a new type of Islam.

This points to the fact that most of the participants of this study distinguished between religion and culture and insisted on it.

Sara, a participant of the women's club explained:

It is not a new Islam I think. It is just more on the emphasis. The mosque they talk about logical stuff and what is haram and halal. The youth club talk about spiritual aspects of Islam and loving religion and ethics and so on. I mean it should be both but usually youth don't like the first aspect. No one likes to be told what to do.

This participant explained that their parents insist more on the religious laws while second-generation especially the ones in these clubs emphasize more on the ethical and spiritual aspect of Islam. These two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Ali one of the active executives of the Ottawa men's club had a strong view on the concept of new Islam. He said:

I think it is nonsense. People make up these things to make an excuse for what they want to do so they won't feel bad about it especially second-generation. Even the things that they say like it is a new Islam like we don't hurt people and we are peaceful it has been around from the beginning that Islam started and it is not anything new or anything related to second generation. You have to be nice to your neighbor and this has been in Islam from the beginning and it is not anything new about it as if because you are living in the West your savage Islam has changed to a new Islam and it is a good thing and a step forward for Muslims.

Suleiman, another executive of the club, declared:

I 100% agree. I think the concept of new Islam is a made up thing. Second - generation has not created this silly concept as new Islam because there is no new Islam and it is just Islam. Even the concept of doing tattoo on your body is

not a new thing and it is permitted in Shia Islam and therefore it is popular among Lebanese youth. It is not something haram that second generation Muslim youth have changed and created, that you could have a tattoo and do wozou with it. What I am saying is that these things that come up and they say they are new, they are not actually new and it is not like second generation are even in their details and small practices are changing Islam or creating a new form or anything like that.

Mohammad from the Montreal club argued:

We are not changing the religion so there's no such thing as New Islam that the second generation are changing practices and beliefs but they see what practices can be applied to Canadian society and in the point of view what practices cannot be applied and actually I should say paying less attention to some practices.

On the other hand, some other participants mostly from the Montreal club explained that the concept of new Islam is emerging among second-generation. They have elaborated more on what they meant by new Islam.

Ali, an executive in the Montreal club said:

Definitely a new Islam exists. I am definitely seeing today that kids who like me are practicing their religion in Canada. People don't see it black and white anymore. I think today's youth almost pick and choose and they do that for religion as well. I mean in our mum and dad's generation there was only a single way of being religious but now there are multiple ways of being religious.

When I asked him to explain more, he said that he emphasizes more on the ethical verses in Quran although he believed that all the rituals should be followed as well. He said that, 'my parents' generation emphasized more on dos and don'ts although I think they should be there and followed as well.' Sameera Ahmad's study also confirms some of Ali's quotation. She argues:

When an individual is born in a family that the type of religion that they practice is a minority religion, you act in different and complicating ways. There are many ways of dealing with this minority religion. One of these ways is

*putting aside the whole religion in order not to be rejected by society and the second one is that some youth see the need to become more religious and stick on to their culture and religion. In many cases youth pick and choose what they want and it is not either this or that response.*³¹⁵

Shabana Mir argues in her book, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity*:

As a result of Islam phobia in the West, young Muslims' faith is constantly being questioned and under attack by the dominant culture. This is why some scholars such as Suárez-Orozco (2004) refer to Muslim identity as 'identity formation under siege.'

Sara, from the Montreal club explained:

I think the concept of new Islam is true. In a non-Muslim country, you choose what could be applied. Like what part of religion, you can follow based on the context and that is how some second generation such as myself would see it but many people believe that it should be the same no matter what.

Rosita another participant in the Montreal youth club told me:

I do believe it is true because me as well as my friends we all have different ways of understanding Islam like I wear a scarf but I don't pray or fast. I do practice what the religion says ethically but I have never read the Quran or its translation and I don't know what it says. I have friends who don't pray or wear the hijab but they go the mosque much more than me but they don't eat halal food. There is a new Islam because we don't have any other choice. I don't pray five times a day because I am very busy and I go to classes. There are lots of stuff that we can't do and lots of stuff that we don't know why we should do and change it in a way that we want it.

It can be concluded that based on the varieties of answers that the participants gave me, there is no single answer for the question of whether the second-generation are creating a new Islam or not, and that we should avoid generalizations. From the responses I could argue that religious identities of first and second-generation in

³¹⁵ Sameera Ahmad, *Religiosity, identity and pro-social values*, 26.

regards to beliefs and rituals have similarities and differences. All the participants emphasized that they believe in the same religion with all its rituals and laws and the only difference, while important, is that these youths emphasize more on ethics. Some of the participants said that they believe in rituals such as hijab but they think it is easier the way they wear it. So the difference between the parents' religious identities and the children might be the difference between the level of observation of the religion as well as what part of the religion is emphasized more.

Good/Bad Muslim:

Scholars who mention the concept of good verses bad Muslims in the West especially raise the concept of new Islam. They argue that some Muslims especially the children of Muslims have developed and improved Islam and turned it into something that can be dealt with in the West³¹⁶ mainly because they have added ethics and morality to Islam. These scholars especially insist on Muslims being like 'us' the Westerners and they are considered good Muslims. Mahmood Mamdani mentions in his book, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror*, that because of political agendas instead of using civilians/terrorists the phrases good/bad Muslim is being used. Some other scholars argue that Islam in the West has progressed and reformed³¹⁷ while most of the participants in this study, as it was explained earlier, stated that this is an Islam without ethnicity and 'it is not a new Islam but the Islam that was around from 1400 years ago.'

³¹⁶ Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror*, (New York: Random House, 2005). 16.

³¹⁷ Joshua Gedacht "Holy War, Progress, and 'Modern Mohammedans' in Colonial Southeast Asia," *The Muslim World*, (2015): 446.

I argue that this is not just in the political sphere and can be traced in cultural aspects as well. Muslims who do not practice the rituals of Islam such as praying, fasting or wearing a headscarf and also do not follow the obligations of Islam such as alcohol and sex before marriage, but are still Muslim and believe in God and Mohammad are considered by these scholars as 'good Muslims' and the ones who observe and practice Islam are considered 'bad Muslims' and they are linked to terrorism. Mamdani explains that this dichotomy started after 9/11 with Mr. Bush's speech and it resulted in the idea that 'unless proved to be good, every Muslim is bad.'³¹⁸ The increase in prejudice against Muslims after 9/11 intensified the pressure on them to assimilate into the dominant practices of North American society.³¹⁹ A resolution (CB1) for the ground zero mosques explained that "whether Muslims shared 'our' commitment to tolerance."³²⁰ Therefore it is assumed that second-generation are the Muslims who are born and raised under our Western values and follow Islam without the rituals and, therefore, they are considered Westernized and 'good Muslim' verses their parents that are immigrants and have their own cultural backgrounds as well as follow dos and don'ts of Islam. Contrary to this, some studies have actually shown that the first-generation especially the ones that have lower education levels, accept the laws of the new country easily while the second-generation that are raised in the West and might have a higher education level than their parents resist those laws by saying that they are not

³¹⁸ Sunaina Maira, 'Good' and "Bad" Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and U.S. Orientalism,' *Feminist Studies*, (2009): 631

³¹⁹ Nagra, *Being Muslim and Canadian in the Post 9/11 Era*, 111.

³²⁰ Chris Earle, 'Good Muslims, Bad Muslims, and the Nation: The "Ground Zero Mosque" and the Problem with Tolerance,' *Journal of Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, (2015).

logical. For example, wearing the headscarf in France despite the law that opposes it is mostly done by second-generation. Another example of this concept was that after 9/11 some Muslim women, the majority of whom were second-generation and were raised in the West, started to resist the dominant discourse of all Muslims being terrorists and violent by starting to wear headscarves, while they hadn't done so before the 9/11 terrorist attacks.³²¹

As it was explained earlier in this chapter what my study confirms is that the more 'religious' youth identified themselves more with Canada than the ones who were 'less religious.' I argue that a 'bad' Muslim is a terrorist Muslim who gets into violence against civilians regardless of his/her degree of religiosity, while good Muslims are the majority of Muslims who are either 'observant and religious' or 'not religious.' Therefore, good and bad Muslims should not be based on the level of religiosity especially in being more observant. This should be applied to people who follow other religions as well.

Subcultures and Religiosity in the Clubs:

Scholars such as John Hayward argue that religious subcultures are more likely to reject and resist the culture of the parent and older generation and this makes them more attractive to people to join compared to other subcultures.³²² All the subcultures have a common ideology that bonds the participants together. For the

³²¹ Kristine J. Ajrouch, 'Global contexts and the veil: Muslim integration in the United States and France.' *Sociology of religion* 68, no. 3 (2007): 323.

³²² John Hayward, 'Growth and Decline of Religious Subcultural Groups,' Conference Presentation: Presented at: Sustainability in the Third Millennium^[L] 18th International Systems Dynamics Conference Bergen, Norway^[SEP] 6-10 August 2000.

Ottawa men's and women's club it is Islam and being Muslim and through religious ceremonies, presentations, lectures and Doas the youth become more 'religious' and observant as it was explained earlier about the presence of reverts (people who were born Muslim but did not practice the religion and again started embracing it) and converts especially the above two clubs. For the Montreal club their bond is based on their ethnicity and being Iranian. This is the main reason that they celebrate all the Iranian ceremonies and festivals such as the New Year and Yalda night, which were explained in chapter 2. Post-subcultural theorists declare that today's youth rebel against many issues such as capitalism by partying and 'having fun.' For the youth especially in the Ottawa youth clubs they have the concept of leisure and 'fun' and through those gatherings for having 'fun' they rebel against their parents through religion as well. As Peter Beyer has argued, 'The rebellion of second-generation Muslims is their connection to religion.'³²³

Some scholars consider conservative Christianity a subculture. When it started, it began attracting people to a culture that had been created within Christianity.³²⁴ Conservative Christianity is not a cult since cults change and alter some of the main elements of the main religion such as Ahmadia and Bahaism that have altered some of the main and core beliefs of Islam such as the prophecy. Another example of cults (New Religious Movements) is Mormonism.

I argue that a religious subculture is emerging and being shaped through these youth clubs although their Islam is largely the same as their parents in terms of

³²³ Beyer and Ramji, *Growing Up Canadian*, 45.

³²⁴ Noble, Scott. 'What do we mean by a Christian Subculture.' *Christian Examiner*, 01 July 2011.

beliefs and rituals and they only emphasize more on the ethical parts of the Quran without changing or altering the rituals. Therefore, these youth believe that ethics, rituals and laws exists in Islam, however while they practice the rituals, they emphasize more on the ethical parts. Conservative Christianity has its own influence on politics, art and many other parts of culture. They have television channels and other social media to promote that.³²⁵ The youths in the three clubs did this on a very small scale. They run their own websites, Facebook and Twitter pages. Although the reader should bear in mind that conservative Christianity and religious identities of these youth in the clubs are not the same since conservative Christianity has a bad reputation in today's world because of triggering different wars and extremist ideologies. The point of mentioning Conservative Christianity is that a religious group can become a subculture.

I argue that these youth clubs are creating a subculture that has a core religious theme as well as have the concepts of style and resistance that are common among most subcultures. Not only that but the youth clubs also have a leisure and 'fun' part which post-subcultural theorists emphasize.

Conclusion:

In this chapter we have looked at the religious identities of second-generation youth in the three youth clubs under study. The Montreal club had private religious events, while the Ottawa men's and women's clubs had public religious programs. The

³²⁵ Scott Noble, 'What do we mean by a Christian Subculture.' *Christian Examiner*, 01 July 2011.

Ottawa men's club had regular religious lectures every week by a sheikh names Yusof, while the other two clubs rejected the concept of religious leadership, which was addressed in this chapter. Many issues surrounding religious identities of these youth were examined such as the concept of 'being religious', the difference between the religious identities of immigrant parents and children and finally the phenomenon of a 'New Islam.' At the end of the chapter the connection between subcultures and these youth clubs were elaborated. It is worth mentioning that the data, which is shown here from second-generation immigrants is a small sample of second-generation Muslims and the results of this study should not be generalized.

The next chapter looks at different layers of resistance in the three clubs and its connection with subcultures. As we have read in the theory chapter, resistance is one of the main elements of subcultures.

Chapter 6: Resistance

The definition of the word 'resistance' means to refuse to accept or comply with a concept or notion and it is the act of fighting against something. The word is especially used to resist authority or someone with a higher power. Another similar definition of resistance is 'an organization that secretly fights and refuses to accept something.'³²⁶ The issue of resistance is of particular importance when discussing subcultures. Dick Hebdige for example argues that most subcultures are 'a threat to the older way.'³²⁷

In this chapter I argue that there are various layers of resistance that exist in the three clubs under study, including resistance towards parents' cultures and organizations, Canadian club and bar culture, and also towards the English language. It should also be noted that there are differences and similarities between the clubs on what and whom they resist. More specifically, resistance towards their parents' culture and religion, as well first-generation religious centers were a common theme in all the three clubs. Language resistance and marginalization were specific to the Montreal club. Resistance towards not having a sheikh or an imam for their clubs was the case for the Montreal club and the women's club, while on the other hand the Ottawa men's club had a permanent sheikh.

All the three clubs had major resistance towards their parents' culture and religion

³²⁶ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/resistance>

³²⁷ Dick Hebdige, 'The Meaning of Mod,' in *Resistance Through Rituals 1976*, Tony Jefferson and Stuart Hall (London, Routledge, 1976), 77.

and first-generation organizations and centers that will be explained in detail in the following sections. Before looking at the tensions that these youths have, it is worth mentioning the concept of sites for resistance. There are a wide range of sites and scales for youth resistance. These include youth spaces such as clubs, bodies as sites of resistance for style subcultures such as the ones that CCCS mentions, neglected spaces such as old buildings, state controlled public places such as streets, and even private spaces such as homes for some subcultures such as the riot grrrls.³²⁸

Tensions with parents' culture/religion: Resisting the parent culture

Subcultures usually have a sense of resistance towards the 'dominant' culture and/or parents' culture and/or other subcultures.³²⁹ Becker (1963) argues that many subcultures emerge among youth in response to the contradictions that they see in their parents' cultures. Some youth rebel against an 'imposed' cultural and religious tradition that is alien to them. Some rebel against their parent's culture or/and religion. Also Dick Hebdige argues that Middle class youth search for collective social arrangements other than their families.³³⁰ On the other hand, Hannerz argues that people who attend clubs just need to feel identification with other attendees of the club and a sense of complete unity is not needed.³³¹ The three

³²⁸ Fiona M. Smith, 'Between East and West, ^[11]^{SEP}Sites of resistance in east German youth cultures,' in *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth* by Gill Valentine, (New York: Routledge, 1998), 292.

³²⁹ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*.

³³⁰ Hebdige, 'The Meaning of Mod,' 78.

³³¹ Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the City: Inquiries toward an Urban Anthropology*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 22.

youth clubs, similar to many other subcultures, have various challenges with regards to their parents. Based on the interviews and the fieldwork that I conducted in the three clubs under study, the tensions and the resistance that these youths have towards their parents can be categorized into three categories:

- 1- The first category is that these youths resist their parents' organizations and centers. Some of the youths participated in the first-generation organizations but as one of them said, 'I feel much comfortable in the youth club than those centers.'
- 2- The second category is that some of these youths resist their parents' culture and religion that was explained in detail in the religiosity chapter such as Samira who refused her parents' religion and culture, as well as some young men in the men's club such as Ali and Zaid that told me that their parents' religious practice was not strict enough and that was why the youth club was an escape for them. For Samira the youth club was an escape for her, from the dos and don'ts of her parents, while for Ali and Zaid, the Ottawa men's club was a place that they could be comfortable in regards to religion and have friends that as they explained 'were practicing Muslims' and that they were receiving 'the proper religious lectures that we had searched for before and couldn't find.'
- 3- A third form of resistance is towards Canadian clubbing culture. The three clubs under study essentially provided an alternative club to the usual Canadian night clubs and this was explicitly mentioned in the interviews I conducted. Although this should not be understood as resistance towards Canadian culture in general.

The chapter first examines the first category, which is resistance towards first-generation centers, and then it briefly addresses the second category since it was discussed to a large extent in the religiosity chapter. Finally, resistance towards the Canadian clubbing culture is explained.

Resisting Parent Organizations and Centers

In many Islamic centers, the grand majority of which have been formed and are currently run by first-generation Muslim immigrants are not suited to address the needs of second-generation Muslims who are born and raised in Canada. My research indicates that this is one of the primary reasons for the rise of Muslim 'youth clubs' in Canadian cities such as Ottawa and Montreal.

First-generation Muslims have various mosques and centers in Canada. Many religious and cultural events are held in these centers, but as it was mentioned in the settings chapter most of these centers do not have designated programs for young men and women who are 18 years old. Instead they have programs for children and young teenagers. Tony Jefferson states that the reason that youth clubs are created is because there are not enough facilities for youth leisure outside of the club so youth create their own type of leisure and what they need in the clubs.³³² Also, Hebdige argues that some subcultures such as the Mods stayed in 'smoke-filled clubs' for the 'ultimate leisure.'³³³ For youths participating in the three clubs under study, the same argument can be made in relation to their parents' centers and mosques since they do not have programs especially for youth. In few cases they do

³³² Jefferson, *Resistance Through Rituals*, 69.

³³³ Hebdige, 'The Meaning of Mod,' 77.

have such programs but they are experienced by the youth as uninteresting and dull. For example, Hussein from the Ottawa men's club told me, 'these few programs are formal programs and they are not relaxing and fun. You have to obey some rules especially in the Mosques since they are holy places.' When I asked him what do you mean by rules, he continued and said, 'well you know, like you can't smoke shisha.' Nevertheless, I would argue that what Jefferson claims is not completely accurate for my case study since there are many leisure activities such as bars and nightclubs outside the youth club and in different parts of the city that these youths can go to but the type of leisure and 'fun' that they want is different. One of the participants in the Ottawa men's club said, 'we made the club so that we could have a halal way of chilling!' This notion will be explained later in this chapter.

Ali, one of the executives of Ottawa men's club told me, 'the main challenge that we have are some elders within the Muslim community. I mean some adults somehow disagreed with the youth club even from the beginning.' When asked why is that, he answered:

Well some of these elders disagree with what we are doing in this club and there are some adults that agree with the whole idea of having a youth club but they are upset why they are not being involved to the fact that they want to take care of things and rule things themselves. They Even want to interfere in the religious lectures and whom we invite as a guest lecture when Yusof is not present.

One of the founders of Montreal youth club explained to me:

The most difficult challenge we had and still have is that the elders in the Muslim community don't recognize our society. They say: why have you established a new center? and they argue that we are further dividing the community. We even tried to heal this tension and avoided having even one program that overlaps with their events. So we wanted to show them that we

are not competing with you and whomever, even the youths that participate in this club, if they want to go to the elders' organizations they can because our programs are on different days of the week than theirs. Even when they changed the date of their programs we changed ours as well so that in no way it overlaps with theirs.

When he was asked why did he wanted to create the youth club while there were already some Muslim centers that have programs for youth in Montreal, he further said:

Our mandate is not the same as their mandate. A family or a group of families governed all the other centers. They are not democratic. We needed a center for young men and women while the other centers were for families and children and not for student youth. Ours is the only center among our community that is run in a democratic way. We didn't have religious groups like that. I am not saying that theirs is awful or something but I am saying that instead of families running the centers we have elections to choose executives. Also they didn't have the cool and fun part that most of the youths are looking for.

He continued and said, 'um you know how parents are! They disagree with anything new and it just makes them worry instantly.' It is interesting that even though most of the Muslim adult community looks at these youth clubs suspiciously, the youth in the three clubs still continued to go, participate and be active volunteers in the youth clubs. In regards to marginalization, which is an important aspect of subcultures, one of the founders of the men's club explained:

The main reason that we went on and created this youth club was to create a place that youth would come and feel comfortable in. They feel that they can intellect and speak freely without being judged and that they are being heard and no one is judging and criticizing them because the way they look or act in a certain way.

The concept of resistance towards first-generation centers was and still is a big challenge for the women's club. The Ottawa women's club was established a few years before the Ottawa men's club and therefore the concept of resistance towards

first-generation was very much the central point of the interviews I conducted with the two founders and some of the participants. Zainab, one of the other two founders of the club, explained:

There were some communities that were not okay with us establishing this youth club because they already have some stuff for youth. So we said no to them because we wanted to have our own way of handling things. They didn't understand and still don't understand how it is to be young. In their mind there was no need to go elsewhere than their own centers.

She indicated that it was really hard and it is still a big challenge for their youth club since the parents want them to come and either join their programs or hold the youth club's programs inside their centers. Zainab (the founder) was very enthusiastic when she talked about the club's activities, but suddenly she changed her tone and became very serious when she talked about the role of adults in the club:

We refused to go to their centers, even to hold our own programs, because once you enter a center there are rules. So and so center only this people can go and we didn't like that so they wanted to wipe us out and we resisted.

As it was mentioned earlier one of the key core concepts in subcultures is the notion of resistance. For this youth club resisting the way their parents want the youth club to be is a major reason for the establishment of the club in the first place as well as holding various independent programs. They wanted to have their own way and they resisted their parents and adults in their community in order to establish something of their own.

Resisting First-Generation Religion and Culture

The second category, which was youths resisting their parents' culture/religion, I have elaborated it by looking at Samira as well as Ali and Zaid's case.

Samira was a female participant in one of the youth clubs. She did not self-identify as a Muslim, but she insisted on being an Iranian-Canadian. She said, 'I was raised as a Muslim but I am not a Muslim and say that to people when they ask me.' I met with her in a coffee shop and she wore casual jeans with a white T-shirt and without a headscarf. She ordered a soup and explained that she has joined vegetarian organizations. 'I don't care about something being halal or not but being vegetarian is important to me.' When asked about her parents she said:

My parents always put a lot of pressure on me and when we went to Iran for a visit it just intensified like don't do that don't wear that or don't be in that room... I had a strong tension in what was seen as normal at school and society and what was considered normal in my family. In terms of integrating my parents were kind of an obstacle for me. Actually I don't speak with my parents anymore and have rented a separate place. It's not because of religious things actually. So when I left I thought to myself now I can feel that I should not worry about what my parents think. I did have arguments with my parents especially my mum and she told me that you shouldn't believe what everybody is saying but to me she has believed what is said in that culture.

She used to go to the youth club more often but as she explained this club is becoming 'more religious' and that is why she considers herself a former member.

This resistance can be either to put aside the religion and culture of their parents or pick and choose between them or in some cases, which this thesis explains, create youth clubs that are a form of rebellion. For Samira she had both rebellions against her parent's culture as well as religion. She told me that she and her parents

disagreed on everything from wearing a hijab to who to hang out with as well as Iranian music or even movies. She said 'I think my parents were very strict parents compared to my friend's parents and this will eventually result in breaking from everything.' She explained that when she was introduced to the youth club she was very happy since she found a place that was comfortable for her and it was only for youth without the presence of any parent supervision but then after two years or so the club eventually became more religious by holding religious ceremonies and lectures which she disliked and that caused her to go there less. This was unlike many other participants that I talked to who said that they went to the club more often because they enjoyed the religious atmosphere and lectures. Although it should be further explained that as it was explained throughout this thesis, the Montreal club compared to the other two clubs especially the Ottawa men's club did not have permanent religious programs every week. It should also be mentioned that Samira did not identify herself as Canadian as well. She told me that, 'I don't feel that I am fully Canadian since I saw a difference between myself and my Canadian friends.'

I talked to one of the founders of the Montreal club and he explained that this club had many challenges in balancing the religious identities of its founders. He said that they held over 40 internal discussion sessions in order for the founders and their first board members to be on the same boat. One of the clubs first board members said that in the beginning of establishing this club, the religious opinions of its members varied so much that some of them were very rigid in regards to religious rituals and beliefs while the others were very liberal and did not emphasize on

holding religious ceremonies at all. This had created a gap in their club, but eventually through holding many talk sessions in different places such as parks and restaurants they came to an agreement on what programs should be held in their club.

Samira's parents and their pressure on her should not be generalized among the participants of these three clubs especially the female participants. For example, Azadeh, one of the very active participants of Ottawa women's club, told me:

I am free to do whatever I want and my parents don't put any restrictions on me whatsoever! Actually I kind of did whatever I liked and I wished that they were more strict on me culturally and religiously so I wouldn't have tried the many things that I tried when I was a teenager.

This situation is very different than Samira's since she felt a lot of pressure from her parents on different issues. The participants of these three clubs explained to me a variety of lifestyles and how they treat their parents and more importantly how their parents treat them.

Unlike Samira's case that she disagreed with her parents on issues such as praying, wearing a headscarf or having sex before marriage as well as some issues related to her parent's culture and tradition, two of the young men in the Ottawa men's club, Ali and Zaid, said the opposite. Ali and Zaid explained to me how they have tensions and arguments with their parents because they thought that their parents 'are not as religious and observing Muslims as they should be and that is why having so many reverts in the club is so refreshing because we feel like although we were not brought up religiously but we have the choice to be religious and cool at the same time in this club.' I met with Ali and Zaid in the youth club and talked to them on

Friday afternoon, a day other than Saturday, which is club's day of programs so the club was empty and didn't have programs. They said that they came to the club because it was the cleaning day and they were in rush to clean and organize the club. This indicates how much time and effort these youths put in to keep the club running.

They said that, 'the arguments that we have with our parents is that we tell them that why are you not religious enough! And that is why we established this youth club!' I interviewed them both together in the youth club so as to create a discussion among them. The discussion between Ali and Zaid was explained in details in the previous chapter with the theme of religiosity. The key point of their discussion was this quote that one of them told me:

I started searching religion on my own and I found out about this new established club and understood that most of the founders and executives of this club are more religious than their parents and this is why they created this club to chill out together as well as to have religious ceremonies and interesting lectures. What is interesting about this club is that, it has both the fun and religious parts at the same time.

Peter Beyer (2013) has argued that having a strong connection to Islam among second-generation Muslims is for some of them a form of youthful rebellion.³³⁴ My research has also confirmed a tendency toward stronger identification with Islam especially in the Ottawa men and women's club. This rebellion leads to creating youth clubs, which are comfortable places for the leisure time that young people can interact and speak freely without being judged because of the way they look or act.

³³⁴ Beyer and Ramji, *Growing Up Canadian*, 215.

Financial independence from their parents:

Youth spaces are places that youth create for their own types of activities and therefore they are places of what they are currently and what could be there instead.³³⁵ Clubs are spaces that youth can express themselves and they are places that they can feel affection or affiliation with other youth.³³⁶ Maffesoli argues that 'the club space comes to resemble a scene in which everyone is at once both actor and spectator.'³³⁷ Valentine in her book, *Geography of Youth: Cool Places*, declares that little attention has been paid to the actual spaces of the clubs and many studies focus on the ways the youth act or dress in the subcultures rather than study the places that they attend in detail.³³⁸ She further stresses that a 'club industry' is growing in different countries especially in the West and for example in Britain each person spends \$35 every week to take part in a club. Going clubbing is the new phenomenon for youth since they used to hang out on the streets.³³⁹ The main reason for creating a space called a club or taking part in a club is that today's youth are from the middle class and they have money to spend. As Gill Valentine mentions in her book, *Cool Places*, creating a club or participating in a club are both signs that middle class youth need geography for their own activities.³⁴⁰ Also Steve Redhead argues in his latest book, *We Have Never Been Post-Modern* that hippies are from middleclass youth.³⁴¹ Youths in the three clubs under study also have the money to

³³⁵ Valentine, *Cool places*, 325.

³³⁶ Ibid., 267.

³³⁷ Maffesoli, M. 'Jeux de masques: postmodern tribalism,' *Design Issues*, (1988) 4 1-2: 141-51, 148.

³³⁸ Valentine, *Cool Places*, 278.

³³⁹ Ibid., 267.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 4.

³⁴¹ Redhead, *We Have Never Been Post-Modern*, 72.

spend since the clubs are running independently. The financial independence of the three clubs from their parent and first-generation centers is the prime reason why these clubs can continue being run independently from outside influence. Before I started my fieldwork my understanding was that all of the three clubs were semi-independent from first generation centers. However, during my fieldwork, I found out that all three clubs were completely independent financially. Financial independence is a form of resistance to their parents since renting even a small place in Ottawa and Montreal requires paying monthly rent.

It should be noted that the three clubs had different strategies in raising and spending funds. The Montreal club did not have a permanent place and rented various places such as cultural centers in the city of Montreal. The money they put for renting these places was manageable since they did not hold programs every week. Also cultural centers usually do not cost more than \$100 for each event. The rent and other costs is covered by some of the club's executives as well as by charging entrance fees for some of the events. Nevertheless, raising funds has always been a challenge for the club. This fact, however, has not resulted in the club turning to first generation centers for financial help. Maryam one of the executives of Montreal club told me:

We pay the rent ourselves. I mean to be honest I would have loved that the elders would have helped us in paying the rents and they told us million times that they would help but we know that their help has consequences. They will tell us what to do and how to run our society, which we reject.

The Ottawa men's club was the club that struggled the most with financial independency and stability since they had rented a permanent place in Ottawa for

their weekly programs. I talked to one of the founders of the club. He explained that financial stability was very important to them. He said:

We are a bunch of guys and the majority of us put money from our own pockets in this clubhouse. We have some generous donors that are members of the club themselves and pay the difference of the rent. We are completely independent and I mean literally independent. We are desperate for money to pay the rent and help (keep) this place running.

It is interesting that in order for them to pay the rent for the club every month, some days and nights of the week they sublet the place to other people who follow the club's rules. Mohammad explained:

We even give this place for rent for some nights of the week to help us pay the rent. I mean you can come and rent it but we have rules and that is no Music, no alcohol and no food and not even swearing is allowed here. So you could rent this place for private space. It can't be a (gendered) mixed party, people dancing together for a birthday party, and it has rules.

One of the participants of this club, Hassan, told me that in some months the executives distribute flyers and make a lot of desperate efforts to generate the funds necessary for the rent. Despite these difficulties it is interesting that they have not shut down the place and it is still running without resorting to collecting money from first generation centers, which are usually very wealthy.

The Ottawa women club held their programs in the same place as the men's club. I asked both of the founders of the women's club, Maryam and Zainab, and also the president of the men's club and they all indicated that the Ottawa men's club did not collect any rent from the women's club although they had programs every Thursday night. What Mohammad mentioned regarding subletting the place several days of the week did not apply to the women's club, even though the two clubs were

completely separate. Essentially the Men's club was trying to help the women's club by giving the club space to them for free one day of the week. The executives of the Ottawa men's club gave the place for rent to other people in the Muslim community to hold birthday parties that were specifically for women or men or as one of the participants told me 'last week there was a bridal shower in the club and we could see that the club was decorated for that.' So they have created a business in the Muslim community to generate the necessary funds for the rent and keep the place running in order to have 'fun' and hold religious lectures.

Therefore, these youths spent money for their leisure time and having their own independent halal 'fun' to the point that they went through a lot of trouble and spent money from their own pockets to keep the club functioning. This is exactly what post-subcultural theorists have argued that unlike the subcultures in the time of CCCS in which youth were from the working class and they hanged out and had 'fun' mostly on the streets without costing them any money, the majority of youth in subcultures today are from the middle class and they rent a place for themselves and for the purpose of clubbing and having 'fun.' This is why it is argued that nowadays youth are willing to pay money for their leisure.

[Why Participate in the Club?](#)

The motivations behind young people's participation in a subculture vary. For Samira joining the youth club is as she explained a runaway from her parent's dos and don'ts as well as the marginalization that she felt during her school years from

her peers, while for Mona and Ishmael this was not the case. As they explained they just enjoyed the fun activities in the club and they saw coming to the club as an act of leisure. For others the religious programs were the reason behind their participation. Thus for Samira membership in the youth club was an act of resistance to her parents and her peers while for Mona and Ishmael it was more about fun and socialization.

Ishmael was one of the young men that always came to the club when the religious lectures were finished. He told me:

To be honest the only reason that I come to the club is the fun part and hanging out with my friends. It is really fun and relaxing at the same time. I could get the religious information in another place and even at my home through the Internet and books. I come here to rest and it is a weekend of fun. Also let me point that it has nothing to do with Yusof (the sheikh) since after the lecture we play pool and stuff together and I think he is a good sheikh and lecturer. Well I always come late so I don't know that much what he talks about (laughing). I hear some stuff from my friends since they discuss stuff after the lecture too.

Becker argues that subcultures emerge among youth in response to the contradictions that they see in their parents' cultures. Some youth rebel against an 'imposed' cultural and religious tradition that is alien to them. An important conclusion that can be drawn from the current study, however, is that youth join clubs and subcultures for very different reasons. As a result, a theoretical school might be suitable in explaining a certain form of behavior while be completely unsuited to explain another. For example, Samira's case can be explained using the Birmingham School's concept of resistance while Mona and Ishmael's case can be elaborated with Steve Redhead's concept of club culture that can be found in his book, *Subcultures to Clubcultures* (1997). Redhead argues that in the post-

subcultural era youth don't join subcultures in order to resist their parents' cultures or political authorities, but just for the sake of fun and enjoying the culture of clubbing.

This was true for some of the members of the clubs under study in this dissertation. For example, John, a convert to Islam who went to the Ottawa men's club told me, 'I think the club is very useful because I could have gone downtown Ottawa clubbing but I chose to go to this club that is totally halal and fun at the same time.'

It should be mentioned that many of the members of the youth clubs I studied reiterated the above view. One of the members of the Ottawa men's club for example told me that nightclubs were 'inappropriate places for Muslim youth' since the Muslim clubs had now provided a place to hang out. Hassan, one of the executives of Ottawa men's club explained:

The reason that we allow Shisha was that a lot of guys here went to shisha lounges and so we decided to have our own lounge but nothing haram happens here and the atmosphere and environment there wasn't appropriate. I mean there are music, women and alcohol. So we decided to create an alternative.

Therefore, the clubs provide an alternative to some elements that are present in Canadian clubbing culture which are not allowed in Islam such as sex before marriage, alcohol and drugs. So as these youths mentioned the activities in these clubs created an alternative to the dominant culture. Ali one of the founders of the Ottawa club that was mentioned earlier argued: 'A lot of these young men used to go on the streets or nightclubs and they went to places that are not appropriate places and were wrong places to be around.'

We should also discuss why music was absent in two of the clubs under study. Hisham Aidi's book on resistance and music argues that second-generation Muslims use music as a form of resistance. This was somewhat in accordance to the Montreal youth club in which most of its participants and founders listened to Iranian music and by doing so they wanted to resist dominant Western music. Nevertheless it should be pointed out that music was not part of the club's events and the members only listened to it in their own private time. For example one of the participants of this club told me, 'Music has a great influence on our lives and it is part of the culture and that is why I listen to Iranian music. In this way I try not to lose my background Iranian culture.'

On the other hand, for both the Ottawa men's and women's clubs whenever I asked about music and what type of music they listen to, most of them told me that they do not listen to any music, which was to my surprise since music and youth, as Aidi explains, are usually intertwined. Only two participants in the men's club and a young woman from the women's club stated that they listened to some pop music both in English and Arabic languages. One of the participants of the men's club explained to me why he did not listen to music:

I thought it was strange not to listen to music and I thought it was a big deal. I used to like it a lot and listened to it a lot and then gradually I took it out of my life. Gradually I felt much happier and my relationship with my parents, friends and classmates got better. Well I think the concepts and stuff that they say in music are not good concepts. When you come home and listen to music, it is like a therapy that you have to constantly go back to it and feel relaxed and happy and I didn't like that. I mean I didn't want to listen to music because I felt down or something and then when I stopped listening to music I went to Duas (prayers) and Quran instead of music to gain comfort. Also you have to face

your problems. By listening to Music the problems don't go away and they are still there.

A participant from the women's club told me:

I try not to listen to music because of religious reasons and also for having a happy life. I mean they sing not good stuff, like what Katy Perry, Beyoncé and other pop stars sing is not good. I mean one or two songs might not have rude stuff in them but once you start listening to a pop star and you enjoyed it you go and listen to his/her other albums. Right?

Not listening to music is something that is different from other subcultures, in which music is one of the core elements such as punks, skinheads, rave subculture and many other subcultures. In most other subcultures music plays a crucial role, as Steve Redhead argues. He points out to the youth clubs and the types of music such as Jazz, Punk, pop and Rock and Roll... that is being played in these clubs.³⁴² This is different from the clubs I have studied. As one of the founders of the Ottawa men's club said, 'we have created an alternative fun that unlike other clubs in Canada, in order to have fun there is no need to have music.'

Gill Valentine argues that for some of the clubbers socializing and having a chit chat is the main reason why they go clubbing and not the music, dance and alcohol,³⁴³ which was very similar to what the youths told me in my fieldwork. These clubs did not have alcohol, music or sex but a form of clubbing did exist in the sense that there was a lot of socializing involved, together with some elements of religious themes and 'fun' activities. Therefore while they did not have a club that was completely in accordance with dominant Canadian clubs that have alcohol and

³⁴² Redhead, *We Have Never Been Post-Modern*, 75-80.

³⁴³ Valentine, *Cool Places*, 277.

music, they still enjoyed a different way of clubbing.

Therefore, for Muslim youth, clubs like these create an alternative that is not so rigid like their parents' organization regarding religious ritual and cultural traditions, rather they provide a fun atmosphere similar to a nightclub. The clubs' programs are an alternative way of having programs for youth.

Another major reason young men and women joined these clubs was for their religious programs and lectures. This reason was mentioned more among the participants of the Ottawa men's club that had a dedicated second-generation Imam, while the founders of the other two clubs indicated that there was no need for such a role as well as any other form of leadership figure. Nevertheless, they also held religious program, albeit with less frequency than the Ottawa men's club. David a convert who participated in the Ottawa men's club told me in a shopping center:

It is rare in Ottawa that you can hear some good lectures. I like the youth club very much because the lectures are very good and as a convert you want to learn more. I always come home bringing something because in everyday life you don't usually get exposed to these lectures and if you are a convert it is harder because you become the same as your parents and it is always good to be exposed to this knowledge. I just go there to listen to lectures and see my friends. Also if I don't find an answer for my religious questions I will ask the sheikh in the clubhouse. I don't attend a mosque and just went to a mosque just a few times. There were not any activities and if there were they are not in English, which matters most.

David was born in Russia and had converted to Islam in Russia and had come to Canada a few months ago. He told me about the lack of religious lectures in regards to Islam in Russia compared to Canada. He said that he was introduced to the club by one of his friends at work.

Mohammad who was a Sunni Muslim and went to the Ottawa men's club, even though all the posters in the club show that it is a Shia club, told me:

There is something that you can't find in a mosque environment. I mean some of the guys are not interested in religion at all. The good thing is that instead of boys going clubbing they go there for entertainment. Even the youth who are there just for the entertainment they get a bit of religious lecture too. So it is both fun and religious at the same time.

Many of the youth who participate in the clubs I studied explained to me that they did not attend a mosque but they do go to these clubs because they are able to mix religion with fun, unlike most mosques.

It should be mentioned that the youths in the three youth clubs have a purpose of having leisure and 'fun.' In fact, being fun was a primary goal of all the three clubs, albeit with a little difference. For the Ottawa men's club the religious part was the main purpose of the club and the fun part was there to attract the youth to the religious part of the program, while also providing an alternative to the city's clubbing scene. As it was mentioned few of the participants always came after the lecture. For the Ottawa women's club and the Montreal club, as the founders indicated the 'fun' programs and events were a major reason the clubs were created in the first place. These fun activities led to bonding between members and created a sense of community. This is similar to punks, skinheads, Mods and Teddies. But not all subcultures have a purpose behind their activities. For example, there is a youth subculture named The Smash Street Kids that have a slogan: 'doing nothing.' A study on them was first published in 1979. They said that they do not go to youth clubs in order to do some purposeless activities; rather they hang out on the streets

of different cities in Britain. They wanted their activities to be spontaneous and without a plan such as the spontaneous smashing of milk bottles. Every day one of them came up with a 'weird idea' and the rest just followed without any objection just to 'pass out time.'³⁴⁴ The three clubs under study in this dissertation, however, were very different from this subculture in the sense that their creators had very clear and explicit goals and objectives.

Marginalization for Being Iranian and Muslim

While young people are involved in different spaces similar to adults, they remain a marginalized people in society. Youth subcultures do not passively accept the dominant culture; rather they actively resist cultural practices in different ways.³⁴⁵ As explained in the theory chapter, one of the dimensions of a subculture is the concept of marginalization. Most subcultures are created because youth feel they are being marginalized.

For the Montreal youth club another type of marginalization is added to the fact of being youth. All of the Montreal club's members as well as its founders and board members had Iranian backgrounds, meaning that one or both of their parents were born and raised in Iran. It is interesting that even among the participants as well as the founders of 'the society' there is no consistency regarding their view of whether they felt they were being marginalized or not, growing up in Canada.

³⁴⁴ Paul Corrigan, 'Doing Nothing,' in *Resistance Through Ritual* by Tony Jefferson and Stuart Hall (London, Routledge, 1976), 84-85.

³⁴⁵ Valentine, *Cool Places*, 289.

When I talked to some of its participants they brought the idea that Iran's image has been destroyed in the Western media and there are many stereotypes about Iranians. That is why when they were asked about their ethnic background some of them responded by saying, 'I am Canadian and my parents are Persian' instead of saying that their parents were 'Iranian.'³⁴⁶ One participant explained:

Well unfortunately, Iran is associated with violence and irrationality in the Western media. When you tell people that your parents are from Iran, they pause and say oh, okay! Canadians are polite and they don't say it in your face but you get the feeling that the first thing that comes to their mind is violence, nuclear war or raping women!

Samira, who as mentioned earlier had given up the hijab, stated:

Now that I took off the hijab, it is different. You feel like that you don't have to justify yourself or your presence. I went to a school that I was the only girl with the hijab. There were some very mean boys in my class that always teased me because I had a hijab. Like they said that you have dandruff or something and that is why you wear hijab. Another bad experience that I had, was that one of the boys pulled down my hijab in school and I cried badly. I remember one time I talked to one of the boys about something and he said 'go away scarf head' and then our teacher was like no you couldn't say that! So when I was wearing a hijab people kept asking me where are you from or your parents' are from and when I said I have an Iranian background they kind of distanced themselves as if I was so religious. I think what came to their mind was savage people who dishonor women and are irrational and do stupid stuff. So I kind of became ashamed of my background to be honest. I wish my parents were born someplace else, I don't know maybe like Malaysia! (Laughing)

So one of the reasons that she put aside the hijab was that by wearing a headscarf people asked her more often about her ethnicity and although she told me that she did not consider herself as Canadian, but she also did not want to tell people that her ethnic background was Iranian. Although as it was mentioned earlier she told me that she identifies herself as Iranian-Canadian and not Muslim.

³⁴⁶ Persia was the name used for the country prior to 1935.

Samira told me that she joined the youth club because she felt that its participants have the same identity as her; they are second-generation Iranians as well as being cool. 'I didn't see any name calling and everyone is very friendly, they even help each other find jobs.' She explained that at school when she wore the hijab she felt that people reacted differently around her and this really bothered her although many of them were very respectful.

Unlike Samira that had negative experience from school and her later social life, Mona, an active executive of the youth club who wore long-sleeves and pants with a headscarf said that she had never felt that people treated her differently. She told me:

I think people are very welcoming even in Quebec although they are stricter in their culture, now more than ever. I mean people show interest in your culture and even food. There is less racism and judging.

Ishmael, a young man who is another member of this club, said:

I have never felt any discrimination, marginalization or even feel being treated differently among my non-Muslim and non-Iranian friends in my whole life living in Canada. Even my parents being from another country did not have an effect on people wanting to become friend with me! Montreal is especially very diverse and you feel very welcome here.

It should be mentioned that three of the participants in this study indicated that Montreal is very diverse unlike Quebec City where they had lived growing up.

Fatemeh, one of the young participants of the Montreal club who dressed in a traditional way, very long dress as well as a long scarf that covered her shoulders and all in black, told me about her experiences living in different cities in Canada:

In Quebec City, I was the only girl at school that wore a headscarf. I was teased a little bit for the scarf although at that time I wore a very loose scarf. The kids

thought that I was bald or something. But in Montreal city it was completely different despite wearing more conservative clothing. The principle in one of my schools was very supportive of immigrants and me as a whole. Later on I understood that she was Jewish. She was very interested in our religion and culture and she invited parents to have different religious and cultural ceremonies at school. I think this as well other factors influenced me wanting to be Iranian and Muslim and keeping my culture and religion because our culture and religion was celebrated. With the support of my friends in Montreal and this principle it wasn't hard for me at all to wear the hijab.

Maryam, a tall young Muslim woman who was an active member of other clubs on McGill's campus, told me that when she lived in Quebec City with her family when she was a child, she could remember how hard it was for her 'since everyone was white and you stood out. We were the few ethnic minorities in the city and it was hard and challenging for me especially as a little girl.' She told me about her feeling towards the club and how it helps her interact with people who are similar to her and that she doesn't feel that she is different.

It should be noted that although some of the youth that join subcultures feel that they are different and abnormal and by going to these places they feel that they are being appreciated for who they are, nevertheless many youth who are 'normal' kids and are from 'normative' families join subcultures as well just because they find it fun.³⁴⁷ This is more accurate in regards to these youth. One of the youth who is an executive of the Ottawa men's club said that he doesn't have a stable family and his parents are divorced and he went through a tough time and that is why he joined the youth club to find someplace safe. Another participant in the men's club said that he lived with his foster parents and he has gone through difficult stages.

³⁴⁷ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basic*, 36.

However, the majority of the people that I interviewed did not mention any significant experiences of discrimination or marginalization in their family or personal life.

The concept of resistance towards the parents' culture exists in both schools of thought, CCCS and post-subcultural theories. Resistance through styles, however, is an issue that these two schools do not agree on in regards to youth subcultures. The next section goes into details of whether styles are being used as a form of resistance or not.

Resistance and Style:

As it was explained in the theory chapter, youth subcultures have shifted towards club cultures meaning that socially diverse 'youth subcultures' have come together mostly for leisure, pleasure and consumption and now have a 'trance-like 'togetherness.' Iain Chambers argues that nowadays subcultures are 'private' bodies, public encounters' and have less the collectivity than youth subcultures after WWII.³⁴⁸

In the time of the Birmingham school and after WWII, styles were used for indirect resistance but nowadays as post-subcultural theorists explain style is not used for resistance anymore, rather clubbing, partying and having fun are used in some subcultures such as Acid House movements and Raves as a form of resistance. When Dick Hebdige first published his book in 1979 on style, *The meaning of Style*, he

³⁴⁸ Iain Chambers, *Popular Culture: The Metropolitan Experience*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 10.

argued in detail that style is used in subcultures indirectly for the purpose of resistance. But Hebdige in the book *Resistance Through Rituals*, which is edited by Tony Jefferson and Stuart Hall in 1975 admits that consumerism culture has a great impact on the lives of today's youth and he said, 'Styles are becoming manufactured from above instead of being spontaneously created from within.'³⁴⁹ Nowadays youth receive their style from massive companies that produce cloths and accessories. This is unlike before in the time of CCCS in which punk created their own style by adding accessories such as pinheads and through that created a meaning for meaningless objects. Today, youth buy different brand of clothes and as it was mentioned in chapter 4, some of these clothes are expensive. Being from the middle class allows them to spend money on their style. Basically youth in subcultures wear whatever other youth in the general society wear. In a few instances a style that was in a subculture spreads and becomes common among other people and youth who are not part of any subculture. An example of that is the hoodies.

Nowadays youth wear casual clothes such as hoodies, which were somehow considered problematic clothing, but now has been normalized and many youth wear it. So hoodies started in a subculture but spread among youth everywhere.³⁵⁰ It should be mentioned that the negative stereotyping issue surrounding hoodies still exists in some places. An example of that is George Zimmerman in 2012 that shot a young African American (Trayvon Martin) who wore a hoodie top.³⁵¹ Now

³⁴⁹ Hebdige, 'The Meaning of Mod,' 78.

³⁵⁰ Jefferson and Hall, *Resistance Through Rituals*, XI.

³⁵¹ <http://opinion.latimes.com/opinionla/2012/03/gerald-rivera-wearing-a-hoodie-while-black-is-asking-for-it.html>

many African Americans wear the hoodies in order to resist the stereotypes related to hoodies and African Americans. Some people wore T-shirts and hoodies that had Trayvon's name on them to resist this stereotype about black people wearing hoodies.³⁵² Thus this type of clothing became as a symbol of protest and resistance. The protests were named 'Million Hoodie March.'³⁵³ As Angela McRobbie has argued, wearing a hoodie 'transcends 'the boundaries of age, ethnicity and class.'³⁵⁴ This is an example of when a style is related to resistance and acts as a symbol of resistance.

A question that needs to be answered in regards to resistance is that if post-subcultural theories say that the styles of youth in subcultures are the same as other youth then why do we name them subcultures? It is because they are 'underground.'³⁵⁵ In regards to these clubs, the Ottawa women's club was more underground and at the same time had more resistance towards first-generation organizations while the Montreal club although it also had the resistance part, however, it was not as underground as the women's club. The Montreal youth club had another form of resistance that was not present in the other two clubs, which will be explained in later sections.

In conclusion, in older times subcultures indirectly resisted the dominant culture through their styles as punks for example did, and that is why the Birmingham

³⁵² https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/2chambers/post/rep-bobby-rush-wears-hoodie-on-house-floor-for-trayvon-martin/2012/03/28/gIQAlf8WgS_blog.html

³⁵³ http://www.salon.com/2012/03/22/occupiers_march_for_trayvon_martin_at_million_hoodie_march/

³⁵⁴ Jefferson and Hall, *Resistance Through Rituals*, xix.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., xxiv.

School emphasized more on styles and their meanings such as Dick Hebdige's book on style. But now as post-subcultural theorists such as Steve Redhead have declared, today's youths still resist the dominant culture but not through styles, which are not distinct from other youths, but through extreme and long parties such as the Acid Houses and Rave subculture. Although there are many stereotypes towards youth being in parties and common words such as 'carefree' and 'party animals' are being used for youths who go to extensive parties for long hours.³⁵⁶ Many youth especially from the Ottawa men's club told me that their parents disagree with them having 'fun' till 3 am. Mohammad said:

My mum and dad keep telling me that I am wasting my time by going to the club but I tell them that you don't get how awesome it is. I haven't told them yet that I give donations to the club for paying the rent from my savings from the part time job that I do. I am 100% sure that they will be pissed off.

Another participant from the men's club explained:

My dad says do you go there till 3 am to just smoke shisha and when I tell him that I go for the religious lecture too he says there are many religious lectures around the city why do you go to that one?! So it is a bit of a struggle.

A Sunni participant in the Ottawa men's club said that his parents preferred that he did not attend the youth club since 'they think that it would have a bad influence on me in regards to the club being Shia as well as the shisha part.' As it was mentioned earlier in this thesis, Shia teachings are obvious in the club such as the Shia symbols on the walls and some points from the religious lectures. Three of the participants in the Ottawa men's club told me that the club being dark and smoking shisha are two problematic issues for their parents regarding the youth club. Most clubs' inside are

³⁵⁶ Valentine, *Cool Places*, 3.

dark since as Goffman argues 'Individuals use of space changes as they lose sight of others.'³⁵⁷ Also smoking a drug or similar products increases the experience of pleasure in clubs.³⁵⁸ Noor a participant from the women's club said:

My parents and even my sister don't understand why I go to the club. I took my sister to the club once and she wasn't really into the atmosphere. My parents tell me: what's the point of going to a place to just play pool and talk. Also staying till 12-12:30. That is something that creates arguments since I need to work on Friday mornings.

The resistance that these youths had towards their parents in regards to participating in the club should not be generalized. Although most of them told me that their parents disagreed with their attendance but a few of them indicated that not only did their parents agree but supported them as well. For example, Zainab, one of the founders of the women's club said:

When I told my parents that we want to create a youth club with Maryam, my best friend, my parents supported me 100% although they were not sure if it was manageable or not. I have very open parents to be honest. My mum has watched the latest movies on Netflix that I still haven't watched and my dad knows all the popular singers that I am not that much familiar with! (Laughing)

Therefore, in the Ottawa men and women clubs we see a form of resistance that these youths face in order to participate in the clubs' programs from their parents. Although there were some exceptions that did not face such resistance and their parents themselves encouraged them to take part in the programs.

It is worth mentioning that the Montreal club's resistance was mostly towards other

³⁵⁷ Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, (London: Penguin, 1971).

³⁵⁸ Valentine, *Cool places*, 274.

centers especially first-generation centers in Montreal and its members as well as the participants spoke little about their parents' agreement with what they did. Most of the participants who were from the Montreal club told me that their parents did not have any issue with them participating in the club's programs and events. The Montreal club had another type of resistance that the other two clubs did not have and that was resistance towards the English language.

Resistance and Language:

Hebdige argues that some subcultures such as Rastafarians, which were explained in more detail in previous chapters, resist the English language. Rastafarians were a subculture related to second and third-generation Africans that wanted to go back to their origin, which was 'to go back to African roots.' Some West Indian subcultures also use language to resist assimilation.³⁵⁹

Another interesting form of language resistance that I came to encounter during my fieldwork was in the Montreal youth club. In the Montreal youth club although the majority of whom were second-generation youth and their first language was English and French but all the programs were in Farsi and most participants talked Farsi together with a few English words in between. This was an interesting shock to me. I asked why they didn't at least use French words instead of English and one of the executives explained to me that there were a few immigrant participants in the club and they know English but not French and that is why they speak Farsi with

³⁵⁹ Dick Hebdige, 'Reggae, Rastas and Rudies,' in *Resistance Through Rituals* by Tony Jefferson and Stuart Hall (London, Routledge, 1976), 114.

some English words in between instead of French. The Ottawa men's and women's club's participants' ethnic background were diverse. Therefore, English was a common language among all the members. However, the Montreal youth club insisted on using the Farsi language to the point that if one of their speakers spoke a sentence in English, he/she would instantly translate it to Farsi although all the participants could understand English as such there was no need to translate to Farsi. So while the programs were entirely in Farsi and some resistance was shown towards English and French, these youth had been raised in Canada.

Sahar from Montreal club told me:

My parents especially my mum taught me Farsi. My mum was a teacher back in Iran before coming to Canada and she had all the books at home. I was so excited to learn Farsi and when I was a little girl I always asked her am I old enough to learn Farsi? She made it very interesting.

When I asked my participants about learning Farsi most of them mentioned that it was not hard for them and they enjoyed learning it since they wanted to watch Persian movies and listen to Farsi music. All the participants except for two of them indicated that they spoke Farsi at home with their parents and three participants said that they spoke Farsi with their parents and English with their siblings. From this point of view most of the participants although being a second-generation did not have a language barrier while as Alejandro Portes argued in his book, *The New Second-Generation*, most of the second-generation in the West especially in North America cannot have a good relationship with their parents since their parents cannot speak English fluently and at the same time their children's first language is

English.³⁶⁰ Knowing how to speak Farsi has also influenced my participants' views on their parents' home country, Iran. A few of them that disliked learning Farsi were not interested in becoming familiar with Iran and did not want to visit frequently, while the majority that enjoyed learning Farsi and as a result watched Farsi movies and listened to Iranian music told me the opposite. Therefore, knowing the language of a country has a great impact on where can be considered as a home or a second home. For example, Sahar told me:

When we go back to Iran, everyone is like you, they speak Farsi...and it is really comfortable and it feels like home, but I have never stayed for a long time in Iran and also I have never been there on my own. But Montreal is very comfortable for me too and I don't know if I stay longer in Iran I will be homesick or not.

Another participant from the Montreal club who spoke with me in Farsi and English and knew Farsi very well said:

I love Iran and maybe I want to go and live there. Here everyone is cold but in Iran strangers talk on the street instantly and there is a little chitchat. My cousins are at the same age of me and I can speak Farsi with them and there are many people in Iran that I can hang out with. I feel at home for sure.

Ali, an executive of the club, explained:

I want to raise my kid here in Canada if I have a kid one day but I think it is a good idea to go back and forth to Iran and even stay there for a couple of months so he/she would learn Farsi completely. In this way he/she would understand Persian culture and his/her cultural roots better. I mean I was taught Farsi by my parents in Canada but I am still struggling to become fluent. I wish my parents did that for me.

Sepideh who was a young female and another participant of the Montreal club had the experience that Ali wished for:

³⁶⁰ Alejandro Portes, *The New Second-Generation*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 12.

In two months' time, I am going back to Iran for about two months. It makes me pretty nostalgic. It is nice to go back and see everyone. It does get sad because you don't see your cousins anymore and your close relatives and it doesn't mean that I am not happy here but here is more about strict stuff and more about real life. Visiting Iran takes me to the past. I had a very good time there in those 5 years that I went back. I went to a normal school. It was an all-girls school. It was very fun but the passing exams was really hard but I am glad that it happened and we went back to Iran to have that experience.

Although we should not generalize people's experiences and Ali might have lived in his parents' home country and had a different idea about it. Samira who did not self-identify as Muslim but she self-identified as an Iranian and spoke a little Farsi told me that, 'it is hard for me to go back to Iran since I don't understand the culture of especially elders in Iran, although most of younger generation are like me. Well not as anti-Islamic as me!' (Laughing) She continued and said, 'I don't know! I don't understand the language as well so I can't connect with people, like my relatives in Iran watch a lot of movies especially comedies and they laugh but I really don't get them.'

Another exception to this trend was Sajad who told me that he was a very strict practicing Muslim and spoke Farsi fluently, but he said that he couldn't connect with Iran since he does not see practicing Muslims in the younger generation and that is why he couldn't feel any connection to Iran, He explained:

I have been to Iran quite a bit and I have seen youth that are the same age as me and they grew up in Iran. They are not practicing Muslims at all as their parents. So I don't think just living in a Muslim country would make you a practicing Muslim. I think it has more to do with the time period that they grew up and spent their young ages.

Not all the participants indicated that it was easy for them to learn Farsi and two of the youth in the Montreal club told me about their dissatisfaction in regards to learning Farsi, for example Arman, an executive from the Montreal club said:

My parents were very strict in regards to learning Farsi and as a kid growing up in Canada it was hard to learn three languages, English, French and Farsi. They insisted that we spoke Farsi at home and if I spoke English with them they answered me in Farsi. So you can imagine how hard it was for a kid! I was crossed with them when I was growing up but now to be honest I benefit from it a lot and compared to my friends I have much more job opportunities since I know another language.

He further explained:

I listen to Iranian music a lot. I don't watch Iranian movies that much especially the new ones because they are so much based on the Iranian current culture which I don't know that much but I can connect much more with the culture here because I grew up here and watch mostly American movies and Netflix. It is much more accessible and easy and unfortunately as I grew older and older I find that I am relating more to the context of American shows than what is made in Iran today...I don't relate that much because I don't live in 2016 in Iran.

Maryam, another participant said:

My parents recreated the same Persian culture that is in Iran in our home like reading poems books together or celebrating a lot of events together. This is all because we went back and we as their children experienced the culture that they as parents grew up in so it was different for our family compared to many second generations that I know of who can read and write Farsi but hadn't had the same experiences as I did therefore their parents cannot create little Iran in their homes.

Ali and Maryam were the participants that although it was tough for them to learn Farsi but eventually they think it were useful. Hassan was another participant that had struggles with learning Farsi and he told me that he still couldn't stand the language since it was somehow forced on him. He explained:

I don't listen to music in Farsi and don't watch movies in Farsi since I don't like to relate to that language. I speak English with my parents and I don't care if they answer me in Farsi, I keep talking in English!

When I asked him about participating in a club in which all the programs are in Farsi, he said:

I wished they were in English or French. I kind of hate Farsi. I have no other choice but to go to the club since I go just for the sake of its fun and seeing my friends. I guess it is not forced on me here in the club.

Portes, in his book, *The New Second-Generation*, argues that second-generation immigrants are completely in favor of the English language and their parents, first-generations, have resistance towards their children only speaking English.³⁶¹ As a result of my fieldwork in the Montreal club I have come to a different conclusion. Except for a few of the participants in this club who were noted above, the rest of the participants explained to me that they enjoyed the club's Farsi language policy even though as second-generation their first language was English.

I argue that the language barrier for Iranian second-generation youth who live in Quebec is worse than the ones who live in English speaking cities in Ontario since their parents, first-generation immigrants, have learnt some English in Iran at the high school level, but French is not a common language in Iran and is not taught in schools.

One of the founders of the Montreal youth club told me that speaking Farsi is important for the club although there is no pressure on people to speak Farsi with each other. When I was doing my fieldwork in this club I could see that most of them

³⁶¹ Portes, *The New Second-Generation*, 11.

spoke Farsi and few of them spoke a mixture of Farsi and English. I think there were no deliberate pressure on the participants, but for Hassan and Samira they felt some pressure at least in the beginning of their membership.

Another founder named Maryam told me that 'we second-generation lose some of our background culture through the language and by speaking Farsi and the programs being in Farsi we can hold on to some of that culture.' My study and the interviews from the participants indicate the same results. The participants who knew Farsi and were able to watch Iranian movies, listened to Iranian music and News, said that they related more with Iranian culture and were more inclined to visit their parents' home country. Learning the language and passing it to the next generation helps in a fundamental way in maintaining the cultural roots of immigrant families. This is the main reason that the members of the Montreal youth club, although being mostly second-generation, resisted the English and French language and insisted on speaking Farsi.

Maryam's comments on keeping the parents' culture were the opposite of what I had previously expected and thought. As she further explained, 'we want to keep the parts of our parent cultures that do not contradict Islam. For example, marrying someone who is an Iranian is not in Islam. Ethnicity is not important in Islam but many parents insist on that!' Resisting assimilation was an important part for learning the Farsi language although a few of the participants mentioned that they 'just learned Farsi without any pressure because they wanted to talk with their friends in Farsi' or 'I loved to learn it to watch Farsi movies.'

For the Montreal club keeping the language was important although not for the Ottawa men and women's club. To my surprise not losing their parents culture came up in some of the interviews. For example, one of the founders of the women's club explained to me:

A lot of girls who grew up here and they are the foundation of the next society have lost a lot of religious and cultural stuff growing up. So this was and still is our main purpose and concern. We didn't create this [club] to just come and eat cupcake and I could do that in my house and there is no need for this [club] and it is not a big deal but the purpose of establishing it was something else.

That is why we should not generalize issues related to these youths. Although they are critical of their parents' cultural hegemonies, but they do not reject their parents' culture completely. This dissertation based on the quotations from the participants argues that these youths reject the parts in their parents' culture that is in contradiction with their religion for example marrying someone from the same ethnicity. Therefore, being Muslim has a higher priority for them than their cultural backgrounds. Thinking critically about their parents' religion and cultural background is common among other youth as well, and not just Muslim youth. Sameera Ahmad explains in her book, *Religiosity, identity and pro-social values*, that:

When a person reaches the ages of youth and then adolescence he/she thinks critically about religion and spirituality and start to question and at the end decide what values to keep which were given by their parents and what values to discard.³⁶²

Jefferson and Hull argue that there are two types of subcultures; one that does not have a very distinct 'world' than the parent culture, while the other rejects the parent culture completely and has territorial places, distinctive shapes, tight

³⁶² Sameera Ahmad, *Religiosity, identity and pro-social values*, 22.

boundaries and separate structure and identity.³⁶³ I argue that the Muslim youth subculture that is emerging among second-generation youth in Canada does not fit in either category while having some aspects of both types of subcultures. On the one hand they have territorial places (youth clubs) and they have their own styles such as the tattoos and specific ways of wearing the hijab and they also smoke shisha and have 'fun' and leisure programs, but on the other hand their practice of Islam in terms of beliefs and rituals is not entirely distinct from their parents and as it was discussed in the religiosity chapter the only difference is the cultural barriers of parents in regards to issues such as marriage, etc. Therefore, there resistance is more towards their parents' culture rather than their religion.

More types of Resistance:

In order to strengthen the boundaries between subcultures and the dominant culture, some subcultures like the Rastafarians emphasize more on stories that emphasize resistance. For example, the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of captivity is the central theme of this subculture's resistance.

For the three youth clubs under study, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter (religiosity chapter), the participants as well as the executives and founders were opposed and in disagreement with many leaders and rulers, both religious and non-religious, in Muslim majority countries and that is why when they read some verses of the Quran they emphasized more on verses which condemned corrupt leaders

³⁶³ Jefferson and Hall, *Resistance Through Rituals*, 7.

and religious figures. Also the ethics narratives were an important part in the three clubs. For example, Yusof, the sheikh of the Ottawa men's club, picked verses in Quran that were related to ethics and good doings because as he said the majority of Muslim nowadays pay less attention to verses in the Quran that are related to ethics. In this way, they paid special attention to resistance towards corrupt leaders as well as resisting their parents' too much emphasis on cultural laws and rules not necessarily rooted in Islam. In order to have a better understanding of what is being taught in these clubs I tried to participate in almost all of their activities during my months in the field.

Another type of resistance that was present in the Montreal youth club and the women's club was the resistance towards having a permanent sheikh or imam for their club. These two clubs unlike the men's club resisted having a religious figure that gives lectures in the club. Their founders argued that 'we can do whatever he wanted to do in our club.' This is opposite to the men's club in which the focal time of their program was the religious lecture given by a second-generation young sheikh.

Goffman and the Resistance of a Minority within a Minority:

An important dimension of Goffman's theory is that people who do not fit in the dominant culture and are perceived to be different than normal society usually become closer to fellow community members and peers whose situation is similar to them. Thus the notion of 'we' as a minority group is strengthened. According to

Goffman, these minority communities appreciate their members for whom they truly are and allow their members to be proud of who they are.³⁶⁴ These second-generation youths who have created youth clubs are a minority within the Muslim community that is a minority itself in Canada. Also these youths are a minority among other Canadian youth, the dominant youth culture, by not going clubbing and not drinking alcohol and having sex before marriage. These youths feel comfortable, closer and more open with their peers in the youth clubs. All participants declared that they would go to one of their peers first when he/she needed help to deal with a struggle in their lives and even when they have a question in regards to religion, which was elaborated in detail in the previous chapter. This is similar to Valentine's argument that clubs are 'social spaces' and 'spaces of relief' from the intensity that exists outside of the club and in people's daily lives.³⁶⁵ Researchers have indicated that clubs are relaxing places since they are not on the streets and under the eyes, surveillance and expectations of others.³⁶⁶ All the participants of the club, even the ones from the Ottawa men's club who mentioned that they mostly come for the lecture, told me that their clubs are places to 'relax and feel comfortable.'

Although Goffman's research on minorities that was mentioned above is valid in regards to my case study but his remark on participants' of the clubs needs some improvements. He says that 'losing' or 'losing yourself' is the core of the club experiences and that participants forget and walk away from parts of their

³⁶⁴ Goffman. *Stigma*, 3-18.

³⁶⁵ Valentine, *Cool Places*, 267.

³⁶⁶ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), 10. [L]
[SEP]

identities. He explains that the use of drugs, alcohol and dancing in the dark embraces this experience. None of these tools except the shisha, which was only in the men's club, were being used in this study. Also for the participants of the three clubs going to the clubs strengthened their identities as second-generation immigrants. For the Ottawa men's and women's club being a Muslim is intensified through the religious lectures, presentations and Doas and being a second-generation Iranian is strengthened through speaking and learning Farsi alongside of Montreal's cultural nights. Although as Goffman has argued some parts of forgetting their identity might be in their works and jobs.³⁶⁷ Some of the participants of the clubs and the founder of the women's club told me that one of the purposes of establishing the club and attending it was to 'forget for a few hours the tensions that exist outside of the club such as university chores and jobs and instead to feel relaxed.' As Valentine has argued for some of the clubbers socializing and having a chit chat is the main reason that they go clubbing and not the music, dance and alcohol,³⁶⁸ which was very similar to what the youths told me in my fieldwork.

Conclusion:

There are different levels of resistance in these clubs and before participating in them I assumed that it is only resistance towards first-generation centers. There are different layers, which are not completely the same in all the three clubs. For example, holding programs for the Ottawa men's club is because they want the

³⁶⁷ Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places*, 69.

³⁶⁸ Valentine, *Cool Places*, 277.

youth not to go to bars and clubs on Saturday nights, which shows that for them the religious resistance is the core element while for the Montreal club going out with Iranians and keeping some factors of their parents' culture and the Farsi language was more important. Although resisting the parents' organizations and centers was the resistance that was common among all the three clubs and was the most important one as they emphasized, having a sense of opposition towards sheikhs, political leaders and rulers were also common among the participants of the three clubs. Language resistance was only present in the Montreal club as explained earlier. Resistance is a major part of subcultures whether in the time of CCCS subcultures or subcultures that are present in today's societies. The concept of creating a space for their own and clubbing, is a resistance even in the ways of clubbing and 'resistance as located in the most minute subtleties of clubbing.'³⁶⁹ As Maffesoli has argued:

*This is resistance on a micro-level, on the level of everyday life, where the unspoken is that which binds the group together, where the desire to be with others is manifested, and differences are addressed.*³⁷⁰

Susan Ruddick also argues that, 'Space is a container where sub-culture 'takes place' as a by- product of acts of resistance.'³⁷¹ The form of resistance changes from one form to another and also resistance towards what and who changes but at the end resistance exists.

³⁶⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

³⁷⁰ Michel Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society* (London: Sage, 1995).

³⁷¹ Susan Ruddick, 'Modernism and Resistance: How "homeless" youth sub-cultures make a difference,' in *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Culture* by Gill Valentine, 345.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This dissertation began by introducing three clubs, two in the city of Ottawa and one in Montreal city. One of the Ottawa clubs was only for men and the other only for women, while the club in Montreal city was gender mixed and had both men and women participants. I began my fieldwork in May 2016 and finished it in April of 2017. As a whole I conducted fieldwork in Montreal city for four months and participated in their events eight times. I conducted fieldwork in Ottawa city for around seven months and attended fifteen programs of the Ottawa men's club and six programs of the Ottawa women's club. The Ottawa men's club compared to the other clubs had regular programs every week on Saturday nights.

My fieldwork led to several important conclusions about the clubs. Although it can be said that a collective style is present in each of the clubs, however each youth decided what to wear and how to dress. Individuality was particularly strong among young women since they displayed their individuality through wearing different types and colors of hijab such as braided, toques and casual scarves. This point is in line with post-subcultural theories which argue that the styles of today's youth is not 'extraordinary' and that they have 'respectable haircuts' which is the opposite of youth in important subcultures at the time of the Birmingham school such as punks and skinheads.

In regards to the religiosity present in the clubs we can conclude that there were a variety on what 'religion' and 'religiosity' even meant. On the issue of resistance,

however, it was interesting that all three clubs shared a sense of opposition towards Muslim sheikhs, political leaders and rulers and this was a common factor among the participants of this research. An important conclusion from this is that resistance is a crucial element of subcultures whether at the time of CCCS or subcultures that are present in today's societies. The main conclusions of the dissertation are summarized below.

Results of the Research Project:

- 1- This dissertation argues that a Muslim youth subculture is emerging among second-generation youth in Canada through the establishing of independent youth clubs. This new Muslim youth subculture is in accordance with some elements of the Birmingham School and in other areas fits Post-subcultural theories. One of the core factors that are argued in both schools of thought is the concept of resistance. The resistance in CCCS is indirect and carried out through styles while Post-subcultural theories state that resistance in today's subcultures is direct and through clubbing and 'extreme ways of fun.' Post-subcultural theories argue that the concept of style, which is a 'ordinary' style in today's subcultures is not part of their resistance in any way. Therefore, the Birmingham school introduced the presence of resistance in subcultures, but then Post-subcultural theorists gave a twist to it. As it was explained in chapter six, the three youth clubs had many layers and levels of resistance but their type of resistance was directly shown and not intertwined with their style. The notion of clubbing is in accordance with Post-subcultural

theories. The three clubs had created a specific type of 'fun' for themselves, which although 'halal' was not approved by their parents and as such was a form of resistance towards them. Not only that but these second-generation youths' fun and leisure was hybrid with religion. Religion played a great part in the programs of the clubs especially in the Ottawa men's and women's clubs. Also participation in a subculture is a matter of choice, which is what post-subcultural theories have argued, unlike the Birmingham School,³⁷² and that is in accordance with these youth clubs. As it was explained in the theory chapter, Post-subcultural theorists believe that subcultures are consumerists and this is accurate in regards to the participants of the youth clubs. Nevertheless this consumerism does not eliminate their capacity for resistance. Rather, their resistance is through clubbing, and for second-generation youth this clubbing is a form of resistance towards first-generation centers as well as the Canadian club culture. Also subcultures have symbolic boundaries but 'they are not absolute markers of belonging.' Individualism is an important factor in the three youth clubs. Subcultures have a 'shared identity' meaning that they see themselves as different from others and even different from other subcultures.³⁷³ This is accurate in regards to the participants of this study since they had a strong sense of shared identity that they believed as different from first generations as well as other Canadian youth. Not only that but as some of the participants told me: 'we have a lot of common things with the participants of this club that we

³⁷² Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*, 13.

³⁷³ Ibid., 16.

don't have with other Muslim youth such as our understandings of how being religious and being cool is intertwined and also how we emphasize on the ethical parts of Islam.' Another participant said, 'I think after a few months of participating in the club, our aims and values becomes one.' Subcultures also have shared distinctive meanings, which are related to having shared beliefs and practices, such as rituals and objects.³⁷⁴ The youth in the three youth shared fashionable hijabs, religious themed tattoos, decorated beards, clubs' T-shirts, clubs' name in numeric numbers as well as brief religious quotations from Shia Imams on the walls. We should bear in mind that although they shared distinctive meanings but as post-subculturists argue in today's subcultures the concept of individuality is important as well. Another indication of a subculture is the issue of marginalization. All subcultures 'share a degree of outsider status.' Some subcultures 'choose' their marginalization, while for others being an outsider is forced and pressured on them.³⁷⁵ Establishing the clubs and being a minority in the Muslim community is something that these youths have chosen but following a minority religion in Canada, Islam, and having different ethnic backgrounds are not chosen. Many subcultures such as this subculture serve as a social support system for youth. They may even form long-term bonds, which was explained in this thesis through sisterhoods and brotherhoods. A subculture is 'not an *immediately* recognizable group.'³⁷⁶ Therefore in order to better

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 17.

³⁷⁵ Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*, 19.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 16-18.

understand the subculture that is emerging among Muslim youth in-depth ethnographic work was needed.

- 2- This research also argues that a 'Religious Subculture' is emerging among second-generation Muslim youth beyond the three clubs studied here. When I was at the beginning of my fieldwork I became acquainted with these three clubs but at the end of my fieldwork I was introduced to three more youth clubs, one in Toronto, one in Vancouver and another in Montreal city that I was not aware of before participating in the clubs. I was introduced to these new clubs through snowballing methodology. Independent or semi-independent Muslim youth clubs are being established and are continuing to be created in Canada with the majority of participants and executives being second-generation. I have named this subculture that is emerging and being born in these youth clubs, *Muslim Youth Cave Subculture*. This subculture has its own version of resistance, style and religion that is quite distinct from other subcultures. The emerging gap between first-generation Muslim immigrants and their second-generation children is the driving force behind the creation of this subculture. Also the failure of first-generation centers to serve the needs of these youth in various Canadian cities has in effect created the need for the creation of the mentioned clubs, which are the focal points of the rise of the subculture.
- 3- Jefferson and Hall argue that there are two types of subcultures: one that does not have a very distinct 'world' from the parent culture, while another rejects the parent culture completely and has territorial places, distinctive

shapes, tight boundaries and a separate structure and identity.³⁷⁷ I argue that the Muslim youth subculture emerging today among second-generation youth in Canada does not fit in either category while having some aspects of both types of subcultures. The founders of the clubs studied have established territorial places known as youth clubs for themselves, the clubs have specific names and even logos. The name of the Ottawa men's club is a number, which requires inside knowledge of both the club and Shia Islam to understand. The clubs have tight boundaries and there exists a sense of 'brotherhood' and 'sisterhood' among many of their participants. However, although they have special territorial places, distinctive shapes and tight boundaries, the participants of the clubs do not reject the parent culture completely and do not have an entirely distinct 'world' than their parents. At the same time these youths have some important differences with their parents with regard to religion.

4- Gaddis (2013) has argued that Muslim students either have to put aside their religious identities and conform to society's norms or be excluded and isolated.³⁷⁸ I argue that most of these youth chose something in between. One of my participants, Samira, coped with this struggle until she got to the age of 18 and then she completely put aside her religious and ethnic background to the point that now she is 27 years old and doesn't talk to her parents

³⁷⁷ Jefferson and Hall, *Resistance Through Rituals*, 7.

³⁷⁸ Iram Jamil Shaikh Jilani, 'Muslim American Identity Under Siege: Muslim Students' Perspective of American High Schools', Doctoral Dissertation, Northeastern University, 2015, 15.

anymore. All the other participants, however, chose something in-between. For example, they did go out with their non-Muslim friends after school but told them that they would not go to bars or hang out with the opposite sex. As one of the girls explained: 'I knew the borders and I acted in those borders.'

5- The three clubs' type of resistance was different from what Hebdige argues.

He declares that subcultures have a sense of resistance towards the dominant culture. The youths in my study, however, on the one hand resisted the Saturday nights' club culture in Canada, however more importantly and strongly they resisted some parts of their parents' culture. Therefore, the main aspect of their resistance was towards a minority culture in Canada and not towards the dominant majority culture. The second-generation Muslim youths' resistance towards their parents' organization as well as cultural practices is a resistance of a minority within a minority in Canada. Also unlike what Hebdige argues that subcultures make 'noise,' these youths are not attempting to make noise, but rather to make a sound that is largely in accordance with the dominant culture. In fact, the grand majority of these youth consider themselves more Canadian than being part of their parents' culture. Although it should be mentioned that the creation of these youth clubs have unintentionally created noise in the Muslim community in their cities and has created opposition against them from first-generation centers and organizations.

6- This dissertation found that the majority of the participants of this study consider themselves Canadian and are less attached to their parents' culture. Also they are more attached to Islam, the religion rather than their ethnic cultural backgrounds. Identifying and connecting with one's own religious community can decrease the stress and sense of being lost that is common among many youth, especially those whose religion is a minority experience.³⁷⁹ If I want to summarize in one sentence: the majority of the participants of this study are proud Canadian Muslims meaning that they are proud at the same time to be both Canadian and Muslim. This is the opposite of what the media as well as some social science scholars have argued that religiosity among Muslim youth decreases their sense of belonging to Canada.³⁸⁰ Although these youths are critical of their parents' cultural hegemonies, but they do not reject their parents' cultural values and practices entirely. This dissertation based on fieldwork and in-depth interviews argues that these youths reject the parts of their parents' culture that is in contradiction, or absent in their religion; the requirement of marrying someone from the same ethnicity was one example. Therefore, being Muslim has a higher priority for them than their cultural backgrounds.

³⁷⁹ Ahmad, *Religiosity, Identity and Pro-social Values*, 8.

³⁸⁰ Beyer, *Growing Up Canadian*, 47.

Muslim Youth Under Pressure

Second-generation Muslim youth are raised in Canada and went to Canadian schools while their parents were raised abroad and have a very different viewpoint on social and political themes and issues. This is why many of the parents have discussions and arguments with their children on what is 'right' and 'wrong' in 'our culture' and ethnicity, especially in the West since mainstream culture is different than theirs. Also parents engage in cultural behaviors such as insisting on ethnic holidays, food and language so that their children won't lose their ethnic background. As discussed in the chapter on resistance, there is tremendous pressure from first-generation centers and 'leaders' of the Muslim community on these clubs, questioning not only how these clubs are managed and operated, but also their very existence. Essentially the elders of the Muslim community believe that 'youth activities' should be part and parcel of the first-generation mosques and centers operating in each city.

At the same time these youths live in two different cultures simultaneously, at home and among their friends in society. The children of immigrants are caught between two cultures. Some of the youth in this study explained that there is a lot of pressure on them to conform to the norms of society from their peers, for example to go to parties or drink alcohol as well as having sex before marriage, and they elaborated that this was very challenging for them. Further to that this thesis has shown that they are caught between different understandings of religion as well. Young Muslims on university campuses and at work face peer pressured to date the opposite sex, to go to parties and social activities, wear the same dress code as

others at school and after school, eat whatever their friends are eating while their Islamic and ethnic background tells them not to drink, have sex before marriage, wear a specific dress code and eat halal.³⁸¹ For example, Inger Furseth has found that many Muslim youth indicate that not wearing a headscarf is a direct result of peer pressure.³⁸² This is added to the pressures that students feel when they don't celebrate Christmas and other holidays. Also Muslim youth have challenges of dealing with the stereotypes present in Western societies that say that Muslim men are violent and aggressive and Muslim women are vulnerable, passive and oppressed.

I have argued in this thesis that the pressure Muslim youth are facing, on the one hand from their parents and on the other from Canadian society, are the primary reasons behind creating a comfort zone, a subculture, for them. A subculture in which clubbing is its core element, of course not clubbing in accordance with the dominant Canadian way of clubbing but the 'halal way' of clubbing. The understandings of these youth regarding Islam are also based on their comfort zone, which does not mean they are less 'religious' than their parents, but rather they have a different way of 'being religious.'

Recommendations and Implications:

This research had an impact on myself. As I became acquainted with the challenges that young men and women face in today's societies, I have more sympathy now

³⁸¹ Ibid., 12.

³⁸² Furseth. 'The Hijab: Boundary work and identity Negotiations' 366.

than before towards youth who rebel against their parents and society in different ways. I also became aware of some of the distinct challenges that second-generation Muslim youth face in regards to the cultural and religious differences that they have on the one hand with first-generation Muslims and on the other hand with the Canadian public. The lack of approval and support of Muslim youth's religious lives have made them more religious compared to other Canadian youth. Also being a religious minority has also had a positive impact on these youth making them social and active beyond their young ages.³⁸³ For example the three clubs under study in this dissertation were all run and financed by the youth themselves and without the backing of their parents or governmental institutions.

Also in order to have a better picture of the lives of these youth it is valuable to conduct more interviews with the participants. Also conducting interviews and getting the views of some second-generation youth who are not part of these clubs and participate in first-generation centers in order to compare and contrast with second-generation youth who are part of this emerging subculture can be of further value. Their views on the concepts of style, religiosity and resistance adds to our knowledge in regards to Muslim youth as a whole in Canada. It is worth mentioning that the data, which is shown here from second-generation immigrants is a small sample of second-generation Muslims and the results of this study should not be generalized. Future studies and research should be conducted on Muslim youth clubs that exists in other major cities such as Toronto and Vancouver. Studying such clubs and comparing them to the three clubs I have studied will definitely provide

³⁸³ Ahmad, *Religiosity, identity and pro-social values*, 2.

richer insights on how a minority within a minority group lives in Canada.

My ethnographic study provides insights to better understand Muslim youths' way of living in Canada. Such an understanding is particularly necessary in current circumstances where intense debates concerning second-generation Muslims are arising in Canada, especially in the political sphere. This thesis brings young people's voices to the academia, a topic that is a great interest for policy makers as well as NGOs and academics that work on the lives of young Canadians.

This dissertation also exposes how the secular liberal discourse of the West has misrepresented and downplayed the agency and empowerment of Muslim youth who are seen as cultural and religious dupes under the influence of extremists. In reality, rather than being under danger of radicalization, in the grand majority of cases Muslim youth seize the initiative and rebel against the religious and cultural authority of their parent's generation. This is why it is important to understand the pressures and incentives faced by Muslim youth both from mainstream Canadian society as well as from their own ethnic and religious families and communities. In reaction to these pressures Muslim youth in Canada have opted to form their own club culture that is not imposed and managed by first generations and is more adaptable to the times and circumstances they are living in.

Appendix A: Fieldwork Questions (Themes to be discussed)

1. How old are you?
2. What do you do for living? Do you go to college or university?
3. Do you live with your parents or do you have your own place?
4. How many brothers or sisters do you have?
5. Were you born in Canada or did you come to Canada in your childhood?
6. At what age did you immigrate?
7. When did the first member of your family come to Canada?
8. I have interest in religion in Canadian life so would you say do you identify yourself with a particular religion?
9. What would you say is your religion?
10. How important is your religion to you?
11. Would you say that you practice your religion regularly?
12. Have you explored other religions?
13. Have you changed your religion since you were a child?
14. What does being Canadian mean to you?
15. Do you consider yourself Canadian?
16. What are the most important rituals in Islam in your point of view? And why?
17. Do your mum and dad believe in the same religion as you? Or do they practice the same way as you?

18. Do you think the way you see and practice Islam is different than your parents or other members of your family? If yes why?
19. Have you traveled to your parents' original country? If yes how often have you been there?
20. Can you speak, write or understand your parents' mother tongue languages?
21. Do you watch movies, listen to music, watch the news in those languages?
22. Do you feel that you are treated differently because of your parents' background?
23. What language do you speak at home with your family members?
24. Do you attend a mosque? How often do you go there?
25. Do you go to the same mosque that your parents attend?
26. What do you think of the Imam there? What is the role of Imam in a mosque in your point of view?
27. Do you hang out with your Muslim friends? Do you hang out with your Canadian friends? What do you do when you are with each group? Watch movies, go to a community center, play football or other sports, talk,...
28. Do you hang out with both groups at the same time?
29. Do you see challenges or difficulties in order for the second-generation immigrants to integrate in Canadian society?
30. When you are at home do you spend most of your time in your bedroom?
31. In your own home, can you describe your bedroom? Where do you hang out ^[L]_[SEP] with friends? What do you do in your home? ^[L]_[SEP]
32. Where is your favorite place? Why? Can you describe it to me? ^[L]_[SEP]

33. Where do you consider home? ^[L]_[SEP]
34. What things represent home? Food? Music? Clothing? ^[L]_[SEP]
35. Do you play videogames online with some friends?
36. Do you have a second life account?
37. How much time do you spend online everyday?
38. Do you have Facebook, Twitter, Accounts?
39. Are you interested in online Islamic lecture,...?
40. How much time do you spend watching TV everyday?
41. Do you watch TV with your parents sometime? Do you watch Iranian, Pakistani, Arabic,... Channel together?
42. Do you watch movies or series such as House of Cards, Breaking Bad, Lost, Prison Break... with you parents?
43. How much time do you spend listening to music?
44. How would you define a role model? ^[L]_[SEP]
45. Do you have a role model in life and if yes who are your role models? ^[L]_[SEP]
46. Why are they your role models? ^[L]_[SEP]
47. Do you think there is a difference between the role model that you have and your parents' role model?
48. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
49. How long have you been attending this youth center?
50. How often do you come to this place?
51. Do you come with your friends or did you find most of your friends here?
52. What do you do in this youth center? What activities do you participate in?

53. How many people usually attend the center?
54. Do you know a mosque that has activities for youth?
55. Do you attend that mosque? Why yes and why no?
56. What languages do people speak in this youth center?
57. Do you go to other youth clubs as well as this one?
58. Do your parents know much about this youth club?
59. How do your parents feel about this youth club?
60. Do you have other family members that attend as well?
61. Do you have any major role here or do you just participate? Do you have tasks here?
62. Do you think different attitudes and practices are developing among young Muslims?
63. Do you think young generation practice Islam the way their parents do?
64. Tell me how a young Muslim grows up and becomes in his/her 30 s and 40s.
65. What are the obstacles that you have if you want to practice Islam the way you want in Canada? Or are there any obstacles?
66. What the new Islam look like or is there a new Islam in Canada in you mind? Are there practices and attitudes changing from parents to children? Are youth doing things differently?
67. Have you attended Muslim school or regular Canadian school? What do you think of both?
68. Are you 'more,' 'less' or about as involved in your religion as your parents?
69. Do you have arguments with your parents in regards to religion? If yes what do you typically argue about?

70. Do your parents practice your religion differently as you do? How? Give me some examples?
71. Do you make a distinction between your parents' religion and culture? Do your parents make such distinctions as well?
72. Do you think it is common among your generation to have these differences with their parents? Do you friends have similar differences?
73. Do you think these differences are more cultural or religious?
74. Do you argue with your parents because of your differences in cultural issues because you were raised in Canada and your parents were born and raised in another country? Give me some examples?
75. Does your religion affect the way you interact with your parents? How?
76. Do you think your religion is important when you are choosing some one for marriage?
77. How many of your friends belong to the same religion as you do?
78. Are many of your friends from second-generation (sons and daughters of parents who have immigrated to Canada)?
79. Do you think generally the people in Canada welcome immigrants? What about the children of immigrants such as yourself?
80. Do you think one can fully practice your religion in the birth country of your parents or in Canada or they are the same?
81. Were there any questions that I didn't ask you and you wanted to add?

Appendix B: Ethics Clearance

Research Compliance Office
511 Tory | 1125 Colonel By Drive
| Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
613-520-2600 Ext: 2517
ethics@carleton.ca

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS APPROVAL

Ethics approval for the following research has been cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A (CUREB-A) at Carleton University. CUREB-A is constituted and operates in compliance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2).

Ethics ID: Project # 103717

Principal Investigator: Fatemah Mohammadi

Co-Investigator(s): **Brian James Given (Primary Investigator)**
Fatemah Mohammadi (Student Research: Ph.D. Student)

Study Title: **Muslim Youth Identity in Canada [Fatemah Mohammadi]**

Effective: **May 03, 2016**

Expires: **May 31, 2017.**

Restrictions:

This certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modification to the approved research must be submitted to CUREB-A. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.
3. An Annual Application for the renewal of ethics clearance must be submitted and approved by the above date. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the closure of the file. If funding is associated, funds will be frozen.
4. A closure request must be sent to CUREB-A when the research is complete or terminated.
5. Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to CUREB-A.
6. Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans 2nd edition* and the *Carleton*

University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Please email the Ethics Coordinators at ethics@carleton.ca if you have any questions.

APPROVED BY:

Date: May 03, 2016

Louise Heslop, Chair

Andy Adler, Vice Chair

Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A

Office of Research Ethics and Compliance
5110 Human Computer Interaction Bldg | 1125 Colonel By Drive
| Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
613-520-2600 Ext: 2517
ethics@carleton.ca

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS CLEARANCE

The Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A (CUREB-A) has closed the research project detailed below. As per Tri-Council Policy on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), no further research interactions with participants under this protocol are permitted.

Project #: 103717

Project Team Members: **Fatemeh Mohammadi (Primary Investigator)**
Brian James Given (Research Supervisor)

Protocol Title: Muslim Youth Identity in Canada [Fatemeh Mohammadi]

Funding Source: (If applicable):

Effective: May 26, 2017

Project Status: Closed

Restrictions:

This certification is subject to the following conditions:

§ An Annual Status Report may be submitted to re-open the protocol. Justification should be provided to renew a protocol that has been closed for more than a one-year period. If there are major changes to the original protocol, the research team will be required to submit a new protocol.

Please email the Research Compliance Coordinators at ethics@carleton.ca if you have any questions or require a PDF certificate with a digital signature.

CLEARED BY:

Date: May 26, 2017

Andy Adler, PhD, Chair, CUREB-A

Letter of Interview invitation:

Title: Muslim Youth Identity in Canada

Dear Sir or Madam,

My Name is Fatemeh Mohammadi and I am a PhD student of Anthropology at Carleton University. For my PhD dissertation project I plan to understand the identities of second-generation Muslim youth living in Canada. I want to interview you to get your views and opinions on how you as a second generation Muslim understand your identity and what events or institutions helped to form your identity in Canada. Also I want to study how youth centers are different from their parent institutions? My study will help us understand the identities of young Muslims living in Canada, and it will allow us to reach a better understanding of the issues they face in present-day Canadian cities.

I will be audio recording the interviews to help ensure you feel more comfortable with the accuracy of the details I will be using. Before the interview starts I will ask your permission to record the conversation.

I will ensure you know that your answers will remain confidential and lastly I will ensure that you understand that if you choose before the interview, during, or after the interview that you would like to be removed completely from my documented research project I will do so. It should be noted that your decision to participate or withdraw from the research does not affect your access to the youth club.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed for about 1-2 hours.

Carleton University's Research Ethics Board has provided clearance for the research to proceed.

Should you have questions or concerns related to your involvement in this research, please contact:

*Dr. Louise Heslop, Chair
Dr. Andy Adler, Vice Chair*

*Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A
Carleton University Research Ethics and Compliance Office
511 Tory, Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
613-520-2600 ext. 2517
ethics@carleton.ca*

If you would like to participate in this research project, or have any questions, please contact me at fatemehmohammadi@cmail.carleton.ca or my supervisor Dr. Brian Given at brian_given@carleton.ca.

Sincerely,

Fatemeh Mohammadi

Consent Form

Title of research project: Muslim Youth Identity in Canada

Date of ethics clearance: May 3, 2016

Ethics Clearance for the Collection of Data Expires: May 31, 2017

I, _____, volunteer to participate in a study on Muslim Youth Identity in Canada. The researcher, Fatemeh Mohammadi, will be focusing on the identities of Muslim youth living in Canada. She is interested in investigating how second generation Muslims form their identity in everyday life in Canada. She plans to use ethnographic interviews along with participant observation to complete this project.

I have the right to end my participation in the study at any time. Also I may end my interview participation up to a month after I have been interviewed. If I withdraw from the study, any notes that refer to incidents involving me will be erased. I also have the right to request that specific incidents be excluded from the study and I can ask questions about my involvement at any time. While the researcher will take steps to protect my identity, it is possible that participants may be identifiable by inference. It should be noted that my decision to participate or withdraw from the research does not affect my access to the youth club. In case of emotional discomfort I may stop the interview at any time. Also in case I need further emotional support, I can contact Montreal Distress Centers such as Centre d'Ecoute Le Havre Inc (514-982-0333).

It should be noted that if I agree to participate in this study, I would be interviewed for about an hour.

Names and other personal identifiers will not be attributed to the observations noted. With my permission, I may be voice-recorded for this study:

- ☐ I agree to have my voice recorded
- ☐ I refuse to have my voice recorded

The researcher's supervisor, Professor Brian Given, will also have access to the field notes and interview questions but no one else will have access to the interviews notes.

The notes will be kept in a storage box accessible by code only by the researcher. The electronic files will be password protected and stored on an external hard drive, accessible only by the researcher. The data from this research will be kept for seven years for research about Muslim identity in Canada and related research.

Carleton University Ethics Board reviewed this project. If I have any questions regarding my involvement in this research, I can contact:

Prof. Louise Heslop, Chair of Research Ethics Board (CUREB-A) Prof. Andy Adler, Vice-Chair, address: Carleton University, 511 Tory, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6. Tel: 613-520-2517 Email: ethics@carleton.ca

Supervisor's contact information: Prof. Brian Given: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University Tel. 613-520-2600 ext. 3571, brian.given@carleton.ca

Researcher's contact information: Fatemeh Mohammadi: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University fatemehmohammadi@cmail.carleton.ca

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher Date

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