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Canadian Youth Criminality and Identity Formation: A South Asian (Sikh) Perspective

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Canadian Youth Criminality and Identity Formation: A South Asian (Sikh) Perspective

by

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A Thesis

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Canadian Youth Criminality and Identity Formation: A South Asian (Sikh) Perspective

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the experiences of second generation Sikh males in Canada, focusing on involvement in criminal activities during adolescence. Using a deeply qualitative autoethnographic approach (Anderson, 2006), I conducted unstructured "active" interviews (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) with seven males ranging from 20 to 26 years of age. The interviews consist of a dialogue on how these youths' emerging identities as Sikh and as Canadians contributed to their adolescent experiences with crime. Findings highlight the importance of engaging youth at the level of personal experience and at the level of institutional and community influences. Specifically, an interplay of parental, cultural, institutional, and societal processes impacted participants' identities and subsequent actions, including desistance from crime as the youth emerged from adolescence. The major conclusion of the thesis is that while ethnic cultural influences and ethnic pride contributed to youths' involvement in various criminal activities, ethnic and especially family influences and pride also contributed to transitions to desistance. This speaks to the need for an inclusive environment that encourages integration of immigrant populations in ways that allow them to actively participate as full citizens within their families, communities and as Canadians.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the two people who continue to have the most influential role in my successes, my parents Piara and Rajinder Sidhu. Your undying love, support, and wisdom have affected me in limitless ways, which I continue to realize as I go through this game of life. I strive to carry myself with the values you have instilled in me since an early age. For your dedication to your children, I thank you.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my interview participants who made time for me to pry into their unique lives and experiences. Our voices are going to be heard and I take comfort in knowing you all are in the process of becoming outstanding individuals. See you all on the other side.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like thank my thesis committee who assisted me to be in the position I am in today. To Dr. Andrew Allen, your insights into ethnic minority populations through your research and experiences provided for invaluable and sincere advice. To Dr. Tanya Basok, your critical analysis of both my proposal and thesis really enabled me to think about what I wanted to bring to the forefront in terms of my research. Our thoughtful and endless discussions in class will serve as treasured memories. To my advisor Dr. Ruth Mann, your vested interest and support in me succeeding provided me with the guidance required in order to complete the piece I have produced. Your strong work ethic and dedication to my thesis are unmatched and for that I will be forever grateful.

I also want to recognize my fellow classmates who I will share a bond with for many years to come. We faced adversity and continue to prevail. I expected nothing less from you all. I wish all of you nothing but success in your future endeavours.

To the City of Windsor, a remarkable and resilient metropolis, that will always be a place I can call home. Contrary to popular opinion, you have been world class and a place that one definitely grows to love. I take great pride and comfort in knowing I have a second home down the 401, the 'gateway to Canada'.

To youth in general, we can be misunderstood more often than not. This further fuels our drive to 'make it' in life. I say keep your head up and don't ever stop going a hundred miles an hour and let's show them what we can achieve.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates second generation Sikh male young adults experiences with adolescent criminality and identity construction. Drawing upon theoretical work on identity formation, racialization and criminality as advanced in the works of Jean Phinney (1989), Lucy Tse (1999), Pavna Sodhi (2008), Raewyn Connell (2002), and Michael Humphrey (2007), I employed a deeply qualitative and highly self-reflexive ethnographic approach that combines strategies of autoethnography with a small number of depth interviews (Anderson, 2006; MacCormack, 2004). I conducted the interviews with seven Sikh male young adults recruited through personal networks who at the time of the interviews resided in the province of Ontario, resulting in data from eight research participants including myself. The aim of the research is to contribute to scholarship on adolescent involvement in crime and to explore how this involvement is shaped by and contributes to processes associated with Sikh youths' self-constructions as Sikhs and as Canadians.

The research addresses the following research question: How do the ethnic identities of second generation Sikh Canadian youth shape their experiences related to adolescent crime involvement?

This research question responds to scholarship that suggests criminalized youth in Canada are persistently framed in racialized terms (Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2008; Wortley, 2003; Wortley & Tanner, 2003). At the same time, it responds to research on how medial and political mobilizations of 'fear of crime' shape public perceptions, which I argue includes the self-perceptions of targeted youth.

I wish to emphasize the goal of this research is not to single out Sikhs as being particularly prone to criminogenic behaviours. Rather my goal is to investigate how criminogenic influences in high schools and other peer environments interact with adolescent Sikh males' struggles to establish self-identity in a context influenced by cultural, political, and social forces that both are and are not unique to the Sikh population. While the specific focus of the research is Sikh-Canadians' adolescent experiences with criminality and the ways these experiences contribute to youths' struggles to establish identity, it is important to recognize that the youth population at large hold an 'exceptional' position within Western society. Alternately construed as a vulnerable population to be guided to responsible citizenship and as a threat to public order, adolescents are a traditional target of social concern and moral panic (Schissel, 1997), which does not hold true for many other age cohorts.

My interest in this research resulted from popular stereotypes that assume underprivileged youth populations are the only or primary ones that engage in problematic lifestyles associated with exposure to and participation in criminal activities. This has not been my experience and this thesis highlights how more privileged youth are subject to similar risks and temptations, including new immigrant visible minority youth and especially South Asian youth. As more and more individuals of South Asian origin call Canada their home, research is needed on this population. Salient to this, I self-identify as a young second generation Sikh male who has resided in and around the Greater Toronto Area for my entire life, whose family and friendship networks extend across Canada to Vancouver and beyond. This experience provides me with a unique perspective on and insight into the problematic lifestyle of the Sikh youth I associated

with as an adolescent and as a young adult. Sikh male adolescents are a unique sub-population which generally has not been the focus of researchers traditionally.

Relevant to my concern with crime and youth identity, amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) which emphasize youth recidivism and violence came into force in October 2012, and were under development at the time I conducted the interviews. What is missing or minimally addressed in the Government's defence of these reforms is concern over inequalities that foster youth offending (see Barnett, Dupuis, Kirkby, MacKay, Nicol & Béchard, 2011). Rather than prioritizing positive initiatives to assist at-risk youth, the government has chosen to emphasize increasingly punitive measures that expressly aim to deter crime through fear of punishment. These and other tough on crime reforms have been a key policy focus of the government notwithstanding significant declines in official rates and severity measures of youth and adult crime and homicide over recent decades (Brennan, 2012). Indeed, in 2010 Canada's homicide rate dropped to a 44 year low (Mahony, 2011).

It is my hope that the research will contribute to intervention efforts that collaboratively take into account and build upon how youth themselves view and experience adolescent criminality and the challenge of forging an adult identity, in this instance an identity that is both Sikh and Canadian.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters including this introduction. In Chapter II I review the literature on Canada's immigrant make-up, adolescent involvement in crime and desistance from crime, and the ways these fit with ethnicity, racialization, policing and Canadian youth justice and its recent reform.

Chapter III situates the thesis theoretically, drawing primarily on work on identity formation and the particulars of this in the case of ethnic minorities.

Chapter IV outlines the details of my methodology including my analytic strategy.

Chapter V presents the findings in terms of themes and interpretive repertoires.

Chapter VI discusses the findings in relation to previously published research.

Chapter VII addresses strengths and weaknesses of the research and identifies future research needs.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review assesses published research on youth criminality and identity formation, focusing on contributions that provide an insight into how experiences or perceptions of racialization affect adolescent males' involvement in criminality, and also the role of ethnic or racial awareness in desistance from crime. For the purposes of this thesis, visible minority is defined as any ethnic group considered to be people of "colour", a problematic term that codes individuals by skin tone and reflection. Essentially, visible minorities include all individuals who 'come from non-European countries and constitute a large majority of recent immigrants' (see Ali, 2008, p. 90). In addition, I wish to state that the construct multiculturalism is a debated term that can be problematic. As James (2003) notes, researchers highlight that in Canada stratifications based on gender, ethnicity, race, and class persist within what is contradictorily an official embrace of equality and difference (p. 209).

New Immigrant Context

From 2000 to 2009, immigration from Asia and the Pacific into Canada tripled the next closest regional distinctions (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010). Many of these immigrants tend to settle in large cities for numerous reasons including employment opportunities, different modes and ease of transportation, and lower costs of living in inner city neighbourhoods. According to a City of Toronto report based on the 2006 national census, 43% of Toronto residents were visible minorities; moreover, Toronto

had the highest proportion of visible minorities compared to any other city in Canada (City of Toronto, 2008). In this context, the issue of minority criminality is implicitly extended to include the involvement of visible minority youth in criminal activities (Tanner, Asbridge & Wortley, 2009).

Adolescent Involvement in Crime

Male adolescent involvement in crime is commonplace across many Canadian jurisdictions and is not unique to minority or new immigrant populations (Tanner et al., 2009). Risks commonly associated with onset include peer influences (Dishion & Owen, 2002; Morrow, Hubbard, Rubin & McAuliffe, 2008; Lansford, Killeya-Jones, Miller & Costanzo, 2009), alcohol use (Coleman & Carter, 2005; Cumsille, Sayer & Graham, 2000; Peralta, Callanan, Steele & Chervenak Wiley, 2011), school dropout decisions (Staff & Kreager, 2008), and parental influences (Boyle, Sanford, Szatmari, Merikangas & Offord, 2001; Hemphill, Munro & Oh, 2007).

Masculinities and Crime

Masculinity has traditionally been linked to criminality, especially in relation to youth populations. Andersson's (2008) narrative of a young offender's experiences with criminality and violence reveal the complexities youth face in equating their actions with their sense of masculinity and its importance to their self identities. Essentially, for some males violence is seen as the only method of expressing and validating masculinity (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2005 cited in Andersson, 2008). Masculinities like other phenomena are not uniform and can be expressed in different ways based on a number of factors. The delay in economic independence that typifies transitions to adulthood in the

contemporary context and social status position can contribute to challenges related to masculinity that find expression through crimes such as joyriding (Stephen & Squires, 2003). Variations in hegemonic masculinity are influenced by cultural factors that include aggressiveness being seen as a norm (Connell, 2002). However, as Lusher and Robins (2009) point out, hegemonic masculinity is interdependent upon a number of factors including local, regional or global and structural, individual or cultural, and these factors work simultaneously contributing to individual performances of gender. It must be noted that the construct hegemonic masculinity has been critiqued on various grounds; yet it remains a powerful construct for those who wish to explore how norms and performances of masculinity shape involvement in violence and other criminal activities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Focusing on the Punjabi Sikh community, masculinity is influenced by factors including historical acts of discrimination on the Indian subcontinent towards Sikhs (Singh & Talbot, 1996; Shani, 2008) and the responsive development of a warrior religion (Dhavan, 2003). Also, the spotlight on various castes and their different roles has played a factor on masculinities (see Behl, 2010). Research is limited to the specific issue of second generation Sikh Canadian male youth and their experiences with criminality. Several documentaries produced in British Columbia on this issue highlight the severity of the problem. These are *Warrior Boyz*, which follows a young Sikh Canadian adolescent through his daily experiences with criminality. The other is *Ghumrah – The Lost Path*, produced by students at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), which examines the multitude of factors that affect Indo-Canadian youth as they transition through their lives. Other research confirms masculinity can be expressed as a

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response to racism, termed "protest masculinity" (Poynting, Noble & Tabar, 1999, p. 60). In addition, Torry (2001) highlights how judicial officials sometimes grant leniency to individuals who use "a culture defense of provocation" in certain cases (p. 309).

Desistence

Recent criminological literature emphasizes the role of shifts or transformations in identity to a youth or an adult coming to desist from engaging in crime (e.g., Haigh, 2009; Hartman, Little & Ungar, 2008). Hartman and his colleagues bring attention to a position of "not knowing" on the part of professionals, advocates, and workers who assist at risk and homeless youth (p. 53). Recognition of this position allows for a deeper understanding of the problems faced by youth who do not fit traditional stereotypes and labels associated with being at risk. Ultimately, youth move back and forth between their taken for granted world of doing crime and transitions towards desistence. Haigh (2009) highlights that this involves reinterpretations of actions and consequences on the part of youth and that this speaks to youths' changing sense of self identity. Essentially, young people's resiliency highlights their sense of agency and countering traditional beliefs of what in colloquial terms is 'goin' nowhere (Bottrell, 2007, p. 602).

Stephen and Squires (2003) report a range of different responses that highlight resiliency from crime through factors including maturing, obtaining higher education, and personal relationships. They also highlight the diversity attributed to youth offenders including having morals when committing crimes and following specific codes that value principles of respect. Parents can assist in fostering an environment of resiliency for their children (see Lalonde, Jones & Stroink, 2008). Although some protective factors are not seem to be fruitful for males compared to female counterparts (see Hartman, Turner,

Daigle, Exum & Cullen, 2009), a formulated theory on resiliency may also focus on cultural factors that can inhibit criminality.

Ethnicity, Racialization and Identity

In Canada and elsewhere, the construction of crime as racially based, especially in terms of young adults, is associated with the concentration of ethnic minorities in identifiable neighbourhoods (Shihadeh & Shrum, 2004). Although disparities exist with respect to which ethnic backgrounds are more reported in terms of violent youth crimes, scholarship consistently highlights the recurrent creation of moral panics with racialized implications (Wayne, Henderson, Murray, & Petley, 2008). Also, the presence of ethnic minorities in specific neighbourhoods can be influenced by an array of factors including socioeconomic status, financial and racial barriers, climate, and amenities (see South, Crowder & Pais, 2008) which may affect perceptions on the racialization of crime. This can also influence integration into mainstream society due to the homogeneity of particular areas (see Amarasingham, 2010; Chiswick and Miller, 2005). Whereas in the recent past young offenders were commonly portrayed as victims of poor upbringings, they are now in some discourses identified as sociopaths or 'super predators' who indiscriminately assault others (Estrada, 2001, p. 653). They are to be punished to deter their hyper-sexuality, violence, predatory, out of control, dangerous, and by implication their animalistic natures (Skott-Myhre, 2006, p. 224).

Images of youth crime as rooted in poverty and ethnic minority status plays on existing racialized biases in Canada as well as in the United States, fostering public anxiety and reinforcing existing social-hierarchical stereotypes relationships (Callanan, 2012). As in other jurisdictions, "otherness" comes to be used as a scapegoat for

robberies and other crimes committed by youth, which ultimately ignores fundamental social relations of domination and exploitation (Lindgren, 2009, p. 75). As Chettleburgh (2007) observes: 'it is just human nature for us to fear the evil outsider or the "outside agitator", the marauding interloper from afar who has come to despoil our environment despite our best defensive efforts' (p. 81). As a consequence of this hypothesized aspect of human nature, visible minority youth readily become a source of great unease. The social order based on repression and punishment is achieved through legislation that aims at firm control of violent and disruptive behaviour – identified as essential to maintenance of public safety, as in Bill C-10. Thus, youth and minority youth in particular become what De Castro (2004, p. 485) terms a demarcated territory that calls for an established position on the side of law and order.

Hebért (2001) argues that some minority youths draw attention to themselves with bold fashion statements through the use of hats, bandanas, specific labels, and physical actions including exaggerated walking styles, identified as a "glare"; while others attempt to detract attention from them selves, resulting in negative self worth or a negative self "gaze" (p. 161). As is the case of people generally, ethnic youth develop multiple identities. For ethnic minority and immigrant youth, however, the process of identity development involves an understanding of themselves as ethnic individuals – resulting in a sense of ethnic identity (Liebkind, 2006).

In many cases, these identities are more problematic for second generation immigrant youth who do not have previous identities to draw upon and grow up in an environment 'outsiderness' (Rajiva, 2005, p. 26). Rajiva (2006) is among those who observe that many visible minority youth do not share a sense of attachment to their

parents' past cultural landscapes, but nor do they feel entirely part of the Canadian mainstream (see also Ting-Toomey, 2005). Their identities are formed along multiple axes including gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual preference, and class which develop meaning in peoples' lives both at the ideological/political and social/cultural level (Ghosh, 2000). One of these pathways may include the maintenance of ethnic friendships, which is an important influence on the lives of adolescent youth (Xu, Shim, Lotz, and Almeida, 2004). In addition, as Taylor argued twenty years ago in his essay entitled The Politics of Recognition, 'Non-recognition or mis-recognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being' (Taylor, 1992, p. 25). Thus, the influence of multiple identities and consequent hyper-visibilization shapes the behaviours and identities of minority youth.

This is exemplified in research on dealers, many of whom are minorities in identified research sites (e.g., Convington's (1996) research on the perceived American minority drug problem). Research finds that ecstasy dealers do not see themselves as deviants, nor do their peers given the general acceptance of the drug and intimate relation between sellers and buyers (Jacinto, Duterte, Sales, & Murphy, 2008). This self-outlook is much different from the negative labels assigned once they are caught trafficking an illegal substance. Similarly, Manzo and Bailey (2005) argue that historical discriminatory practices against blacks in North America have influenced black Canadian youths to express their individuality in different ways and that the "gangsta" identity is clearly one of these. They found that black youth offenders in Canada embraced popular gangsta stereotypes and adopted gangsta as an important part of their identity as "blacks" (p. 298). By implication, similar processes impact other minority youth populations who

may or may not adopt popular stereotypes that are constructed for their particular group. These stereotypes appear to underpin institutional practices that manifest as racial targeting, including but not limited to law enforcement agencies.

Policing and Racialization

Racial profiling is believed to be present in a number of ways. It is essentially defined as the racial disparities within law enforcement practices that encompass an array of daily tasks including custom searches at airport and border crossings, increased patrols in racial minority neighbourhoods, and selective undercover sting operations (Wortley & Tanner, 2003, p. 369-370). Despite regular denial of racial profiling by law enforcement agencies (see CTV Toronto, 2006), countless allegations have surfaced throughout the global west. In 2002 the *Toronto Star* published a series of articles that aimed to prove racial profiling was a reality in the city and that black and 'brown' youth were more likely to be stopped and searched by the police compared to youth from other racial backgrounds (Wortley & Tanner, 2005). It is important to note the use of colour to specify ethnicity and/or race is a widely critiqued classification that can mean different things depending upon the self-perceptions of individuals in particular communities. Brown, for example, is used now in visible minority contexts to refer to non-African origin minorities, which may include Latinos in the U.S. or South Asians in Canada or the United Kingdom. Subsequent to Wortley and Tanner's (2005) study, the Toronto Star followed up by analyzing data on who the police stopped during 2003 to 2008. Not surprisingly the results were the same, black and brown youth were two and a half times more likely to be stopped compared to white youth (Sewell, 2010).

Similar practices can be found outside of Canada as well. Although Lundman (2004) focused on adults in the United States, his research sheds light on how youth criminality can be constructed racially. He found visible minority drivers were more likely to have their vehicles searched in spite of the fact "hit" rates (i.e., the proportion that yield evidence of illegal activities) were higher for white drivers than for drivers of colour (Lundman in Holley & VanVleet, 2006, p. 48). Furthermore, racial profiling has also received much attention after the events of September 11, 2001. Young adult males that self-identify or are perceived as being from the Middle East are subjected to intensified scrutiny by the state. In Canada, Muslim/Arab communities raised concern in 2004 and 2005 in regards to their unequal treatment and discriminatory state security practices directed towards them at the O'Connor Commission of Inquiry (Hanniman, 2008, p. 275). The over policing of certain ethnic groups has assisted the construction of criminality in racial terms, especially in regards to ethnic youth who are viewed as out of control deviants. This predictably has an impact on the developing identities and activities of immigrant and second generation Sikh and other minority youth.

Canadian Youth Justice

In 2002 the Federal Government of Canada passed the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA), which came into force on April 1, 2003. As many note, this legislation was an explicit attempt to appease societal concerns about serious youth criminality (e.g., Hogeveen, 2005). In October 2012 deterrence-oriented amendments to the YCJA came into force that purport to provide a better response to the problem of serious an repeat youth offending. The legislative summaries on a succession of bills to amend YCJA are rich in content on the need for enhanced youth accountability, deterrence, and other

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"additional tools" to deal with out of control and violent youth (Barnett al, 2011; Casavant & Valiquet, 2010; Valiquet, 2007). None of these texts focus on over-representation of Aboriginal or other minority youth though this issue is a key theme in Canadian criminological literature (see Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2008; Edmondson, 2009). Rather, the changes to the YCJA that came into force October 23, 2012 reflect a strategy that incorporates blaming and stigmatizing that essentially vents feelings of retribution (Hogeveen, 2005). Feeley & Simon (1992) and Rose (2002) argue that the "new penology" is less concerned with the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders than with identifying and managing "risky" population subgroups.

The amended YCJA exemplifies this through changes to the Declaration of Principle that re-order the intention of the act, placing protecting society and proportionate accountability ahead of rehabilitation and prevention, while eliminating reference to the long-term protection of the public (s. 3(1)(a)), and that add to denounce and to deter as sentencing aims (s. 38(2)(f)). Moreover, the amend act requires the courts to consider publishing the identity of any youth found guilty of a violent offence (s. 72), which now includes not only acts that involve the threat or consequence of harm, but also acts that have a substantial likelihood of causing harm, such as joyriding (s. 2(1)). Arguably, the current government's emphasis on accountability, deterrence and exposure will have especially detrimental impacts on minority youth, exacerbating challenges associated with the need to establish a positive pro-social identity both as a member of a minority community and as a citizen of Canada.

Literature Review Summary

      The above literature review explored previous literature on the issue of minority youth identity and subsequently the racialization of criminality. Previous research on the subject will be used a basis for the present study that specifically explores the identity of second generation Sikh Canadian male youth and their experiences with criminality.

CHAPTER III

THEORY

Overview

This chapter addresses the theoretical approaches that were fundamentally important in building an understanding of Sikh youths involvement in criminal activities and relevance of processes associated with identity formation to this. As outlined in this Chapter, ethnic identity formation highlights the processes groups of visible minority youth experience in order to develop their multiple identities. These identities can be problematic and may result in ethnic youth taking up temporary or long term criminogenic lifestyles. For Sikh and other racialized youth, identity formation challenges are complicated by the need to contend with racism. For males, these processes are further complicated by norms of masculinity both in Canadian youth culture and norms specific to the ethnicity of the youth.

Ethnic Identity Formation

As stated in the introduction, the main theoretical anchor for the research is literature on ethnic identity formation. Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity status model postulates a three phase process that explains how minority adolescents develop an understanding of themselves based on characteristics of their surrounding environment. The first stage consists of the youth or child coming to form a sense of him or her self prior to exploring or being aware of their ethnicity. This is followed by a phase marked by experiences that increase awareness of physical and cultural markers of ethnicity that

a youth comes to see as setting them apart from the main stream. In a third or final phase, the youth comes to a deeper understanding and appreciation of their ethnic identity.

In a complementary formulation, Tse (1999) contends that ethnic youth experience a dilemma of identity formation at a younger age and that they attempt to resolve this by distancing themselves from their group of origin through measures such as adopting youth fashion trends and aligning with peer groups not specific to their ethnicity. As they mature, however, Tse argues that youths come to recognize that they cannot fully join the mainstream culture. Realizing this, they turn back to their own group for acceptance, forging connections through participation in family, religion, and peer groups of similar ethnic origin. This is reportedly different for members of racial majority groups, such as the second generation Finnish Canadians who express their ethnic identity in relation to "Canadianness" (Jurva & Jaya, 2008) or minority groups in other countries including East Indian American youth who encompass a diverse group of faiths and traditions offering varying accounts of their identities and experiences (Purkayastha, 2005).

Hebért (2001) similarly contends that as youths move into adult life the ethnic identity conflict may be resolved through joining the ethnic group, which he terms ethnic/racial group incorporation. However, as Phinney, Horenezyk, Liebkind and Vedder (2001a) note, identities are not singular. Indeed, ethnic identity formation in diaspora contexts are comprised of both a national identity, that links individuals with the nation to which they have immigrated, and an ethnic identity, which links the individual to the history, culture and religion of the nation from which they or their family have

emigrated. It is in this dual experience of self that an opportunity exists for a bicultural identity to develop, comprised of customs and values from both cultures (Sodhi, 2008).

These processes theoretically take place at the level of the individual, but also over the course of generations, resulting in the long term presence of ethno-cultural communities in Canada and other diaspora nations, based on the persistence of ethnic identity in second and subsequent generations (Berry, Phinney, Kwak & Sam, 2006). This is to say, second generation youth are exposed to and identify with both mainstream Canadian culture and an ethnic culture that has been instilled in them through their upbringing. This sometimes complex process can produce an array of conflicts for the children of immigrant parents, who are raised within two distinct cultures – one associated with school and street life; the other with family life. In addition, the presence of an "ethnnoburb" (Li, 2009; Plăeşu, 2010), where one ethnic community dominates in an area through businesses and residential prominence, influences identity formation by raising ethnic and class consciousness within that group. This type of arrangement may also assist in the types of actions and behaviours youth exhibit contending with not only their parent's expectations but also those of ethnic community members (Vo-Jutaabha, Dinh, McHale & Valsiner, 2009). Other culture specific practices such as residing with extended family members also positively influence the development of youths' identity as members of an ethnic community (Lourenço & Cachado, 2012)

Equally important, youths' identities are shaped by daily interactions that influence their thinking about where they fit within the mainstream culture to which they struggle to assimilate or adapt. "Sociocultural adaption" refers to the quality of relationships between individuals and their sociocultural contexts (Berry et al., 2006, p.

13). Adaption is expressed through the adoption of attitudes that are understood as mainstream, success in school and the lack of problem behaviours in community contexts. All of this speaks to youths need for a sense of belonging, which goes beyond language skills, citizenship, birthplace, job skills or even full immersion within the dominant culture (Rajiva, 2006, p. 170). Going beyond group categories and labels, for immigrant youth this involves a sense of belonging to one or more cultural group and experiencing the feelings associated with group membership (Phinney, 1990).

In the case of Sikh and other racialized youth, long and short term memories are often linked to experiences of cultural alienation (Rajiva, 2006). As Rajiva (2006) puts it, second generation 'Otherness' is directly connected to how individuals learn to see themselves as different (p. 166). Parental influence plays an important role in positive ethnic identity formation. For racialized youth, positive ethnic socialization by parents results in a positive sense of self and group pride, and also in awareness of racial barriers. Together, these foster resiliency (Hebért, 2001). However, many youth are faced with the problem of de-emphasizing their 'difference' and instead promoting their 'sameness', a process that can involve giving up a sense of ethnic identity in order to fit in and progress in terms of employment, education, and social contact (James, 2003, p. 82-102). Nevertheless, a positive racial identity provides protection for youth living in racist societies.

In addition to race, gender is integral to identity. In the case of ethnic male adolescents, it is important to account for how they come to terms with competing 'masculinities' and how this affects struggles to forge a sense of self that is both Canadian and ethnic. According to Brickell (2005),

Those performing masculinity are therefore constructs and constructors of symbolic orders; simultaneously productive and produced, loci of action and participants of interaction, they may perpetuate and/or resist hegemonic social arrangements (as cited in Andersson, 2008, p. 140).

Given the problematic nature of adolescent development and identity, it is important to recognize how masculinities can influence this population. This importance is magnified when dealing with ethnic minority populations who are subjected to a variety of forces that influence their self identity. Masculinities are constructed through practices by fathers and other men or groups of men that may aim to intimidate, gain material advantages, or claim respect and that more than anything demonstrate and assert what it means to be a man (Connell, 2002). In a global arena, complex interactions between institutions and local cultures result in varieties of masculinities that reflect class as well as cultural differences (Marchand and Runyan, 2000; Altman, 2001). This is to say, different family situations, including specificities of gender relations at home, can play an important role in youth criminality, as noted by Belknap and Holsinger (2006). This is an important point given the vast amount of global diversity that exists. In Canada and other diverse societies, differing understandings of masculinities are reproduced in family and group context which deviate from popular perspectives on masculinity conveyed in the mass media, for example. As Connell (2002) argues, 'hegemonic masculinity may help explain the cultural embedding and specific shape of violence in communities where physical aggression is expected or admired among men (p. 93). On the other hand, where physical aggression is not esteemed or considered an appropriate act or display of manliness, resorting to violence can mark a male as outside the mainstream, or at least as immature.

In sum, immigrant children and those born to immigrant parents are required to develop a cultural identity based on their family's culture of origin and the prevalent culture of the society in which they reside (Berry et al., 2006). Adolescents develop their ethnic identity through a number of factors including the importance parents place on ethnic socialization efforts, acculturation processes through different avenues including constructions of masculinity in home, school and community contexts, the experience of self as racialized, and attitudes towards ingroup members (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001; Erikson, 1968)

Youth Criminality and Racialized Youth Identities

Drawing on Humphrey (2007), the culturalization of crime and consequent hyper-visibilization of targeted minorities operates as a two-way phenomenon. When a community comes to associate certain cultures and ethnicities with crime, criminally involved individuals within these targeted categories use this to their advantage (Bovenkerk, Siegel & Zaitch, 2003). This is to say, racialized individuals who participate in criminal networks develop identities that draw upon prevailing stereotypes. Though they may attempt to keep a low profile with law enforcement agencies, youth have been found to use their ethnicity to their benefit when dealing with other criminals. This research draws upon understandings of identities which are subject to change and are negotiated through a complex process over time and space involving "multiple identifications and attachments, as well as multiple social, psychological, and cultural dimensions in everyday life." (Hebért, 2001, p. 157).

Papastergiadis (2006) uses the construct invasion complex to conceptualize how a mobilized fear of other fits with popular opinion on ethnic minorities. He defines the

invasion complex as 'a fragmented, ever-shifting and evolving collage of fears and desires' (p. 429). He argues that in the public imaginary this complex results in a chain of associations that reinforce 'fears based in historical racism, and wide-open horizontal anxieties around globalization and the nation-state's failure to control global flows' (p. 429). Papastergiadis contends that these flows fuel a perceived need for control mechanisms and that the psychoanalytic aspect of this complex is implicated in processes of boundary formation and a projection of fears on to the "foreign" elements. This can be extended to visible minority youth.

Theory Conclusion

Phinney's (1989, 1990) analyses of racialization and identity provides insights into how experiences and practices of identity formation as both a member of a racialized ethnic minority and as a member of mainstream culture and society contribute to youths' struggles with crime and identity in the contemporary Canadian context. Competing public and political dialogue on youth crime and minority youth contributes to the hyper-visibilization of ethnic minority youth. In Canada and beyond visible minority youth are therefore commonly viewed as both violent offenders and as victims (Tanner et al., 2009). In a climate of increased securitization hyper-visible minority youth are met with increasingly punitive measures, as evidenced in changes to the YCJA that have direct implications for youth and minority youth in particular. Logically, this punitive approach influences how minority youth view themselves and how their identities are shaped.

As Phinney's (1989, 1990) and Berry et al., (2006) emphasize, a multitude of different identities are present for ethnic youth that play upon countless factors and discourses that bring these factors into popular understandings of self and other. These

identities often conflict with each other and are presented in different ways depending on circumstances. My aim is to explore how these come together in narratives of crime and self-identity among Sikh youth.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

Overview

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the research is deeply qualitative. It addresses

the following research question through a combination of autoethnographic and active

interview strategies:

> How do the ethnic identities of second generation Sikh Canadian youth
>
> shape their experiences related to adolescent crime involvement?
>
> Specifically, I conducted one-on-one depth interviews with seven young Sikh

adult males who are over the age of eighteen, recruited from various urban centres in

Ontario. I employed the active interview strategy advanced by Holstein & Gubrium

(1995) to elicit and as importantly to share narratives on adolescent criminal activities

and related processes of identity formation (MacCormack, 2004), in conjunction with

autoethnography. My analysis of the data is rooted in principles of autoethnography as

outlined by Anderson (2006), complemented by thematic analysis as outlined by Braun

and Clarke (2006). At the same time, I attend to what Chen and Collier (2012) terms

interpretive repertoires, a construct that refers to discursive resources that enable and

constrain particular identity positions in specific contexts (p. 46). That is, I incorporate

sensitivity to prevailing discourses into my construction and analysis of themes and the

substantive concerns embedded in these themes.

> The qualitative approach employed differs from the more positivistic research,

which aims to be value-free and objective. Qualitative methods prioritize instead

reflexively, a construct that highlights the subjective nature of research and the inherent

embeddedness of researchers in the research encounter (Cassell, 2005; Guba and Lincoln,

2004; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). Otherwise stated, the research process aims to be

reflexive and committed, rather than objective and detached. Specifically, this research

project is committed to examining and displaying both how the research process itself

shapes the data and its interpretation, and to its potential to shape future practice relevant

to my hope that it will contribute to understandings that might lead to intervention

strategies that collaboratively take into account and build upon how Sikh-Canadian youth

themselves view and experience adolescent criminality and the challenge of forging a

responsible adult identity that is both Sikh and Canadian.

Research Ethics

The research protocol was cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics

Board (REB). Consistent with the terms of this protocol, I orally recruited seven

individuals to participate in a single depth interview through personal networks. As stated

on the consent document, the purpose of the interviews was to explore how exposure to

crime and related activities shape the identities of second generation Sikh Canadians. All

seven interview participants were over the age of eighteen with normal adult functioning

levels and were thus able to make an informed decision to participate in an interview. No

previous power relations existed between myself and any of the interviewees. Each

participant was informed of their right to refuse to answer questions and to withdraw at

any time verbally and in writing. They were also informed any decision to withdraw from

the research would be accepted without any negative response or consequence. Consent

was oral, to protect identities. However, each participant was provided with a copy of the

Consent Document, which I signed. This document briefly described the study, active interviewing, and the potential risks and safeguards in place to protect the identities of all involved. These included destroying the audio-recording of the interviews after these were transcribed, and using pseudonyms for participants and also for any specific place that they referred to, including cities, schools, and so forth.

Since the interviews were conducted with individuals recruited through personal networks I have built over the years, in the course of the interview I drew upon knowledge based on personal relationships, recognizing that some of this was not publishable. Ellis (2007) reflects on her own research and highlights some of the problems that can arise in the event a research participant shares intimate details they might not expect to be publicized, and offers advice to those who choose a line of inquiry with intimate others to deal with this. She suggests that interview participants be given the opportunity to read the transcribed interview data on the understanding that the researcher is committed to maintaining personal relationships which should not be ruined through conducting research. Rather the focus is on implementing positive change, and the interview participant is viewed as a valued contributor to this. With this aim in mind, I invited the interview participants to delete or assist in masking any data that they viewed as too sensitive to potentially include in this publication. None asked for any further masking of their identity or to have any of the narrative removed from the data.

The unstructured and the active nature of my interview strategy, outlined below, meant that participants had the opportunity to take the lead and to ask as well as answer questions in an open dialogue on the issue of adolescent exposure to criminality and how this fit with Sikh and Canadian identity. This reduces the sense of researcher control and

contributes to the positioning of the research encounter as posing no greater risk than is posed in everyday life experiences, defined in the TCPS2 as low risk research (see also Corbin & Morse, 2003).

Reflexivity

Given my personal connection and exposure to the research and my positioning of myself as also a research participant, it is particularly important to reflexively account for my dual role as a researcher and a participant. Initially, my interview participants only agreed to participate in the interviews due to being acquaintances of mine. Several had expressed in informal conversations essentially that they would not waste their time on this or be comfortable enough to participate had it been a different interviewer they did not previously know. Given this, my role as a researcher and an insider needs to be carefully considered.

My dual status as a researcher and a trusted insider undoubtedly influenced how the interview participants conveyed their narratives. This could have been beneficial and also a shortcoming. For example, some of the participants may have left out relevant information they assumed I would know, effectively leaving things out of their story and therefore out of the data. In addition, their responses may have been limited due to the informal nature of the interviews. Although this setting serves to make participants comfortable, it may also limit their responses as opposed to a formal setting with a third person interviewer. Alternately, due to my personal connection to the participants, they may have felt responsible to not let me down and in turn disclosed more than they might have or even sensationalized or exaggerated their experiences.

My lack of interview experience as a graduate student may also have affected the interviews in different ways. This lack of experience may have contributed to the high comfort level that was a prevailing contextual feature of the interview encounters, and may have made up in terms of obtaining relevant data. Moreover, my appearance and relatively similar age to those of my participants also contributed to a certain undertone – helping to constitute me as someone who could relate and understand where the interview participants were coming from and what they were speaking about. Such considerations inevitably affect the interview process and must be acknowledged by a researcher (see Bishop & Shepard, 2011).

It is also important to recognize that I inevitably influenced the interviews by steering the dialogue in a direction that was relevant to my research question. Although this is necessary in conducting research, it also influences the narrative, not only in the sense that important information may be left out, but since producing narratives rather than gathering information is the goal (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), but in the sense that the stories conveyed are shaped by my research purpose. In addition, my personal connection and experience with the research topic inevitably influenced my thinking not only in carrying out the interviews but also in analyzing the data. My unique upbringing in a specific urban centre in Canada and associations with fellow South Asian males has influenced my thought process in certain ways. Although I may believe the research concern to be an important issue that must be addressed, it would inevitably be different for other individuals in different parts of Canada and globally. Thus, I can only produce a fragmented version of the "reality" of the lives of second generation Punjabi Sikh male youth in Canada, rather than a complete understanding of their experiences and identities.

I must also acknowledge my intentions with this research. I have a strong desire to enact social change on all levels of equality and discrimination. This has influenced my decision to pursue this research topic and my understanding of the results, including future directions to alleviate the risks of criminal involvement and facilitate meaningful integration of Sikh youth both as members of a proud and distinct ethnic minority and as Canadians – as identified by the interview participants. My academic influences have exposed me to various literature and thoughts on social equality and inevitably, this has given my research focus and analysis a specific direction that may be identified in my work. It is only when the role of the researcher and the complexities associated with that role are addressed, can the research start beginning to make sense (see Mauthner & Doucet, 2003).

Autoethnography and Active Interviewing

My research was conducted using the deeply reflexive autoethnographic framework advanced by Anderson (2006) and other advocates of using or including autoethnography as a data collection method (e.g., Foley & Valenzuela, 2008). This enabled me to provide an account based on my personal experiences, both prior to and in the interview interaction itself, and to incorporate both into my analysis of the data. In conducting the seven interviews I employed Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active interview strategy, which assumes that the researcher and interview participant will jointly construct and interpret accounts of experiences through an interpretive process that both parties contribute to with the ultimate goal of making sense of themselves and the research topic (see also Cassell, 2005).

Autoethnography

As O'Byrne (2007) notes a mixed methods strategy that draws upon multiple sources and modes of inquiry has strengths and drawbacks. Anderson's (2006) analytic autoethnography enables a researcher to take a step further and go beyond simplistic narrations of a particular story or phenomena. However, this strategy suggests a degree of premeditated distance from participants and the subject matter is possible. As O'Byrne (2007) notes, this suggests that a positivistic stance which conflicts with core understandings of both autoethnographic and depth interviewing, the understanding that the focus upon the self as a source of knowledge and understanding is what is to be fore-grounded and explored.

Drawing on Roth (2009), autoethnography is a form of writing where the people are writing about the people, and as a result the self has an important role to play in the research process (p. 4). I aimed to carry out the research through a combination of the lived experiences of recruited male Sikh young adults and my own experiences which have undoubtedly shaped me through the years. In addition, the fact that I could personally relate to other male Sikh young adults allowed for a comfortable interactive atmosphere which helped reduce the likelihood of psychological or emotional harm to the participants.

Salient to this, as discussed above and as stated in the introduction to this thesis, I identify as a young adult South Asian male. I personally hail from a second generation Sikh family, which is to say I was born in Canada but my parents were born in Punjab, India. I have resided in communities with a heavy Sikh population my entire life and have firsthand experience with what young adult Sikh males deal with in relation to crime

and associated delinquent activities. Both high schools I attended had a heavy Sikh population, which attests to the diversity and growing number of Sikhs in Canada. Moreover, family and friendship ties across Canada meant that I regularly interacted with males from other Canadian communities, including British Columbia. As a result, I am in a unique position with the potential for valuable insight into the topic at hand.

Active Interviewing

Holstein and Gubrium (1995) define active interviewing as "an interpretive practice involving respondent and interviewer as they articulate ongoing interpretive structures, resources, and orientations with what Garfinkel (1967) calls 'practical reasoning'" (p. 16). This is to say, active interviewing involves more than just a mere exchanging of information between a researcher and participant; rather it is a meaning making process for both parties involved (see also Cassell, 2005; MacCormack, 2004). In active interviewing the interview is constructed throughout the interaction rather than adhering to a to strict interview guide. As a result, the interview process becomes an intimate experience for both parties and the traditional unattached approach is avoided. Importantly, active interviewing allows for not only gaining knowledge on the 'whats' of social relations, but also on 'how' knowledge is narratively constructed (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 56).

Active interviewing does not use a formal interview guide. However, a small set of identifying questions are commonly posed, followed by one or more "grand tour" questions (Miller & Crabtree, 2004, p. 191). In the interviews, after confirming Sikh family background, second generation status and current age, I posed and reposed the two "grand tour" questions, outlined in my REB protocol, punctuated by dialogue inspired by

questions that both I and the research participant posed during the emergent interview interaction:

1. Can you tell me about cultural influences associated with being Sikh versus Canadian that have shaped who you feel you are as a person? How big of a role do you think these influences have played in your life and in how you see yourself? How do you think 'society' perceives you?

2. Are you willing to share some of the experiences you had as a teen that brought you into contact with activities that might have involved a run-in with the law, for example fighting or drugs? Perhaps these would be things you witnessed or they might be things you participated in or even that you were a victim of.

In addition, I posed a follow-up question that seemed to naturally emerge from the dialogue that ensued in my initial interview encounter. I asked all interview participants to share their perspectives on what they thought might help reduce the chances of young Sikh males getting caught up in crime. This follow up question, which emerged in the first interview, elicited informative and engaged discussions on different opinions and viewpoints on what could be done to minimize Sikh youths' involvement in criminality. The question is an outcome of my personal connection to the topic and my hope to produce knowledge that will advance the interests of Sikh males and Canadian society as a whole.

Data Analysis

Autoethnography

Anderson's (2006) analytic autoethnography was a key anchor in both conducting the interviews and in analyzing the data that was collected. As mentioned earlier, a key feature of analytic autoethnography includes being a full member of the group or community being researched. However, it also involves theoretically anchoring personal experiences in relation to larger social phenomena. Thus, data analysis involved recognition of my role as community member but also extended to my role as a researcher that went beyond a simple descriptive story by situating the data within a larger framework. Since several interviews were conducted, thematic analysis as outlined in Braun and Clarke (2006) was particularly beneficial in analyzing the data. As they outline, this commonly used analytic strategy allows for analytic organization of data while making space for detailed and rich descriptions. A comparison of the narratives generated in the interviews thus gave rise to a range of unique and common themes.

Relevant to autoethnography, Cassell (2005) emphasizes that individuals are constantly doing "identity work" (p. 175), that is they are constantly projecting and interpreting the various competing identities that all individuals possess and present. Thus, I remembered throughout my interviews that although I may have wanted to be seen in a certain light by interview participants, they may have had a different perspective on who I am and what my role is. I endeavoured to reflexively consider how my identity was constructed over the interviews, how my multiple identities have influenced my thinking process as I attempted to make sense of the data, and how my perceived identity may have influenced responses from interview participants. Furthermore, reflexivity

involves acknowledging numerous aspects that may influence how data are interpreted including interpersonal and institutional contexts of research, and ontological and epistemological assumptions embedded within data analysis. Finally, in order for a higher degree of reflexivity to be achieved, I needed to reflect on the multiple influences that shaped my train of thought. They include, but are not limited to, theoretical exposure, institutional influences, epistemological and ontological influences, and personal experiences (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003).

Relevant to the constitution of identities in the interview interaction, I attended to interpretive repertoires, which are typically a concern when conversational data are analyzed (Chen and Collier, 2012; Stuber, 2006). Importantly, individuals refer to or draw upon different interpretive repertoires throughout an interview and can shift from one to the other with ease. As outlined by Chen and Collier (2012), this analytic construct refers to a discursive resource that allows for identities to be negotiated, for instance the ability to change problematic life situations (see also Stuber, 2006). Therefore, during the coding and analysis of the data I attended to whether this occurred and whether I used similar discursive resources in my own sharing or constructions of narratives in the interview encounter. However, as previously mentioned I was also alert to the fact that true reflexivity, even with hindsight, is never fully possible. There are always a changing multitude of factors and discourses present (see Bishop & Shepherd, 2011). Furthermore, the narrative approach to this research influenced how participants' stories were reproduced (see Georgakopoulou, 2006).

Thematic Analysis

In coding the data and in generating themes I relied upon Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines to using thematic analysis as a line of inquiry in qualitative research. Thematic analysis is essentially defined as a method that identifies, analyses, and reports patterns within the data and ultimately 'works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of "reality"' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). As they outline, this data analysis technique follows a flexible six-step process that allows for repeated rethinking, re-ordering and re-defining what the data convey. It involves repetitive categorizing of data extracts associated with various topics that emerge in the data or that are relevant from a theoretical position, organizing these into themes and then revisiting these themes to further organize and produce sub themes. The coding involves extracting data that appears salient to one's research concern, and then working these codes into non-exclusive themes. These themes are revisited and narrowed down to important main themes. Defining and naming the different themes itself entails evaluating the data for relevant processes identified by interview participants themselves, or noted by the researcher.

Methods Conclusion

This section set out the methodology that was used in this research project. A qualitative approach was taken towards the research. This allowed me to develop a greater sense of the various meanings of the issues addressed in the interview narratives. In doing this, I relied on an analytic autoethnographic approach advanced by Anderson (2006) that aims to go beyond mere mutual storytelling to making sense of the data

through recourse to one's own experiences. Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active

interview strategy served as important resource during the actual interview process. It

allowed for an open ended discussion to take place that produced rich and informative

narratives. In analyzing the data, I employed thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and

Clarke (2006), which served as a primary research tool for categorizing the data so as

both to highlight fundamental experiences and concerns shared among participants, and

to identify those that appear unique.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter addresses the research question through an exploration of the interview data. First, it describes the interview process and participants, each of whom is assigned a PSEUDONYM, placed in upper case in excerpts from the data to remind the reader that personal identities are purposefully disguised to protect identities. At the same time, I refer to myself as "Me", to remind the reader of the autoethnographic sensibility and assumptions that underpin both my construction and my analysis of the data. The chapter then explores the data in terms of five key themes, through which I address a range of substantive concerns relevant to my research question:

How do the ethnic identities of second generation Sikh Canadian youth shape their experiences related to adolescent crime involvement?

As outlined in the Methods chapter, I addressed this research question through seven depth interviews using the active interview strategy that aims to elicit dialogue around broad 'grand tour questions'. The first grand tour question addresses how culture – both Punjabi Sikh and Canadian – shape participants' views and experiences of themselves. The second addresses how exposure to and involvement in adolescent criminal activities fit with self-identities. This chapter will outline the major themes identified throughout my analysis and will then discuss how I interpret what these themes convey about the self-identities and experiences constructed in the interview dialogues.

Interview Process and Participants

The seven one-on-one interviews took place over the course of several months in 2012. Participants were initially approached in order to gage their interest in taking part in a discussion about ethnic identity and criminogenic lifestyles. Several participants had enthusiastically indicated their desire to take part in such an interview. After receiving REB approval at the University of Windsor prospective interviewees were again approached with the proper documentation as set out in the University of Windsor REB application. Interview participants indicated they competently understood what a research interview entails and agreed upon dates and locations for the interview itself to take place. In each instance the interviews took place in a private residence which helped ensure a comfortable, quiet, and discreet environment, either the interviewees' places of residence, or mine. The private environment in which the interviews took place had an effect on the emotional tone of the interviews. Interview participants were relaxed and freely discussed their experiences with a compliment of both humorous and serious undertones.

Interview participants were asked to suggest their own PSEUDONYM on the understanding I would change this in the event this was the actual name of another interviewee. The median age for the interview participants was 23. The majority were enrolled in post secondary education or had already obtained post-secondary degrees, diplomas or designations. Four of the participants had completed post secondary education or a specific designation certificate. Two were working in a field consistent with their training and two were looking for work in their respective fields. Three were currently enrolled into a post secondary program and were working towards completing

it. Notably, of the seven interviewees, four had faced one or more criminal charge as an adolescent: three for varying degrees of assaults, one of whom had multiple assault related charges, two for property related offences and one for impaired driving.

In alphabetical order by PSEUDONYM, the eight research participants are:

ANMOL, age 20

BALJEET, age 23

DALJEET, age 23

JAGJEET, age 24

MANDEEP, age 24

Me, age 24

SATNAM, age 23

TANVIR, age 26

Thematic Analysis

Using the thematic analysis strategy outlined in the Methods chapter, I generated five key themes, with strong overlap between these (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). Consistent with my attention to discursive repertoires, each theme resonates with the actual language or discourses deployed in the interview interactions. The five key themes are:

1. "Because that's how I was brought up."

2. "I see myself as a Canadian first."

3. "Everyone knows Canada is a country of immigrants."

4. "Why would I even come in this direction if I have so much already?"

5. "I need to do something with my own life."

Predictably, participants produced a multitude of sometimes contradictory responses that highlight the problems and issues faced by Sikh male youth in the twenty first century.

Theme #1: "Because that's how I was brought up."

It became apparent from the very first interview that stories of growing up convey how participants themselves understood how they initially formed their identity. Topics that were discussed include learning cultural and religious traditions and basic strategies used by parents in raising children.

Speaking Punjabi

One of the first and most important things that emerged revolved around the notion of communicating within households. Many of the interview participants indicated it was essential to speak Punjabi—the native language spoken by the vast majority of Sikhs—at home. JAGJEET, for example, indicated Punjabi was almost always spoken at home:

> So growing up in my house we still spoke fluent Punjabi with my parents. We went to the *Gurdwara* [Sikh temple] and participated in all the festivities and everything. I guess it shaped me cause I know even though I grew up in Canada, I know where I come from, I know my culture.

This sentiment – that speaking Punjabi shaped participants' sense of self – was common amongst the majority of researcher participants. Learning how to communicate in the native language of Punjabi was viewed as a fundamental requirement of children by their parents. As MANDEEP reiterated:

> I think my parents always tried to keep the Indian/Punjabi culture inside of me. They put me in Punjabi School for 5-6 years when I was growing up

so I learned the Punjabi alphabet. I think I even learned Punjabi before I learned English, even though like I was growing up in Canada.

Moreover, some of the participants indicated knowing one's mother tongue was essential in order to communicate with all family members.

ME: Did your grandparents teach you anything while growing up?

DALJEET: Yeah because they didn't understand English so we had to speak Punjabi with them and they used to tell us old stories of where they came from and all their life experiences.

MANDEEP made a similar statement in regards to his grandparents when he stated:

Yeah I guess they were more traditional with their ideas. If I was speaking English with my parents my grandpa would get mad at me and say speak Punjabi and my grandma does not understand English so we have to speak Punjabi with her and other little things.

In essence, learning to communicate through Punjabi was an important skill that all research participants had to master. However, this did not hold true for all participants in the present, due to shifting values as the family as a whole integrated into Canadian society, exemplified in the following statement by TANVIR:

Like now we speak English most of the time. Growing up as kids, we spoke Punjabi just to know the language. I can't speak it as good now because other people speak it at home all the time, for me it's rarely.

Punjabi Education

The majority of parents enrolled their children willing or unwillingly into Punjabi School in order to teach their children about their roots. The majority of the time these schools are held in *Gurdwaras* (Sikh temple) and are equivalent to Sunday School for Christians. When I disclosed I had attended Punjabi School for a long period of time and did not particularly enjoy it JAGJEET responded:

Um yeah definitely, growing up I did that too. I was forced to join Punjabi school too. I think most Punjabi kids are forced. Yeah I think it helped out with my identity because it gave me more of an understanding of our culture.

Furthermore, some parents completely changed the way of life for their children. This sometimes caused problems for some due to nature of these changes.

ANMOL: Yeah it's just hard for some people to fit in sometimes. I know gym class was annoying for me. I had a *Kachera* [under garment] and *Kirpan* [ceremonial dagger] on and it was hard to run around. Other people would just go change but I couldn't even do that because I couldn't take off my shirt since I had a dagger underneath. So I had to put a shirt on underneath and wear another one on top. It was hard to do physical activities at school.

Punjabi Discipline and Parenting

Other noticeable examples of how Sikh youth are raised included how they were disciplined growing up in a traditional South Asian household. One conversation consisted of the benefits of this form of traditional discipline, which is not experienced as child abuse but which research participants colloquially referred to as 'getting beat'.

ME: Something I remember was getting beat as a kid.

JAGJEET: Personally I think it's very beneficial.

ME: You hated it?

JAGJEET: Obviously I hated it when I was small. I think it helps out though, I'm not quite sure how to explain it. I wasn't beaten to the extent where I got my ass kicked. I was beaten when I did something wrong so I guess that kind of helped me in the past.

ME: So then would you say that it's beneficial?

JAGJEET: I guess it gives you more of an idea of what is cause you're only punished when you do something.

These types of culturally specific parenting techniques were viewed as a hindrance in the ability of adolescents to have a diverse group of friends and ultimately to better integrate into society. ANMOL addressed this issue:

> Their home environment and what they do outside. We get beat by our parents when we make mistakes but other kids don't. They look at you confused and wonder what's wrong with you. Why would your parents do that? You can't explain that to them so it's tough to communicate simple and basic stuff like that to them. They don't have the same problems and they don't have the same issues we do. Without similarities it's hard to get along with them. That's why I have brown friends because they have the same or similar cultures.

The above examples of how adolescent Punjabi Sikh youth were brought up begins to paint a picture about the uniqueness of their upbringing.

Theme #2: "I see myself as a Canadian first."

A second important theme that was constructed throughout the various interviews revolved around the notion of identity, namely Canadian identity versus Punjabi Sikh identity. Both the interview participants and myself engaged in important discussions about ethnic identity contrasted with national identity in Canada, and seemed to 'naturally' choose to speak in English, only occasionally inserting Punjabi words or phrases. The vast majority of participants explicitly identified themselves as Canadian first before relating to other identities. For example, BALJEET discussed his identity:

> I would say I'm Canadian. I identify myself as a Canadian Sikh. I was born in this country! So Canada made me who I am. I'm thankful I was born here and not India, a third world country. I had the privilege of growing up in one of the best countries in the world with a good standard of living. Canada has been good to me. I still love India but I identify as a Canadian. I went through the Canadian school system and went through Canadian traditions as well.

This type of sentiment was in evidence across the interview participants' discussion on self identity. Most acknowledged their ethnic identity and pride but also saw themselves as proud to be Canadian, sometimes first and sometimes concurrently. TANVIR situated his identity in terms of his family's history in Canada:

> My family's circumstances are unique. My parents are first generation in Canada but my dad has been raised in England since he was 3 years old. My great grandfather was actually Canadian. He came to Canada and he helped build the Canadian Pacific Railway back in the 1900's. We pretty much have family in Canada since the beginning of Canada. I'm more Canadian than certain white people so when people ask "Where are you from?", I say "I'm more Canadian than you!"

In contrast, ANMOL saw himself as a Sikh first, before identifying as a Canadian, even though he was born in Canada.

> Me: So you see yourself as a Sikh first and Canadian after?
>
> ANMOL: Yeah definitely because that's how I grew up. I have an attachment to Canada but I know more about my religion, being Sikh. It's more important to me because we are such a small minority. It's more important for people to know about us, right? This shooting that happened (Wisconsin Sikh temple shooting), it happened over confusion. Like people don't really know about our religion. They confuse us with terrorist groups. It's important to address that.

What it means to be Canadian

In a discussion about what it means to be Canadian there were several different responses expressed by some of the interview participants. MANDEEP touched upon some of the Canadian values he holds:

> As a Canadian you are free to live however you want as long as you follow the laws. Just living in Canada, you assimilate into society and you learn what it means to be Canadian. I love watching hockey and being friendly with everyone. I also believe in the values of not being racist, not discriminating against others based on their beliefs, and also being a good person in general.

This statement by MANDEEP is consistent with other expressions of identity that prioritized ethnic identity along with being Canadian. Drawing on the interview with DALJEET, being Canadian and 'having a background' both did and did not manifest as contradictory:

> I would say I'm Sikh. I am Canadian but what I believe in is Sikhism and that's what I was raised with. I'm not going to say I'm Canadian and I don't have a background. Obviously I do have a background and views I follow.

It was interesting to see the vast majority of interview participants embrace their Canadian identity, as do I though I had not previously anticipated this finding. This was due to personal experiences growing up in the school environment where being Canadian was grouped together with a distrust of whiteness and authoritative statuses, both within the school system and law enforcement. Interview participants' responses highlighted their shifting identities as they matured and became more accepting of their Canadian identity, something which I thought was more or less unique to me prior to conducting this study. It is important to remember that ethnicity and identities are situational and change over time due to various factors and circumstances. Maturing is clearly one of these.

Theme #3: "Everyone knows Canada is a country of immigrants."

The third theme constructed from the data revolved around experiences and opinions on racism and discrimination that interview participants had either gone through themselves or had witnessed throughout their life. The theme's title encompasses the general belief and acceptance that I shared, that Canada is a diverse and multicultural country but that the realities of ethnic minorities include the experience of racism

associated with an 'othering' of non-white Canadians. Every single interview participant

shared at least one story of racist or discriminatory experiences. SATNAM described an

incident in which someone intentionally mocked his turban when he was young:

> I remember going to a men's washroom and a guy goes, "The girl's
> washroom is that way!" I don't know maybe he said it because of the long
> hair or something.

Whether the participants had a turban or not did not seem to matter, as they still

remembered such experiences vividly. BALJEET described his first memory of a racist

incident that he indicated will stick with him for the rest of his life:

> I experienced a lot of racism. The first incident I can remember is when I
> was a kid in kindergarten. Me and my cousin were riding our bike and my
> mom and grandma were walking behind us. I look over and see these
> white girls come out of a house, teenagers. One of the girls was attractive,
> they were all drunk. She goes to my mom and says "Go back to your
> country you fucking Pakis!" I turned around and said "Fuck you, you
> honky!" She started screaming her head off and tried chasing me and my
> mom was trying to stop her. I was just a little kid, like I have been scarred
> for the rest of my life from that experience. We drove off on our bikes. My
> mom kept walking and ignored it. The teenagers were chasing us and my
> mom and grandma were chasing them. That's the first experience in
> kindergarten.

Discussions about discrimination and identity also produced a variety of

responses. Some of the participants indicated how troublesome such experiences were

and how at certain times they had wished for a different identity.

> ME: Were you embarrassed of your culture growing up?
>
> DALJEET: Sometimes I guess. Some cultures are cool and our culture
> isn't like that I guess? It's different and people looked at you different.
> Sometimes I thought I would rather be white. Even with my name they
> used to be like, "What the fuck?" They used to pronounce it wrong.

The above excerpt highlights how some individuals begin to internalize some of the discrimination they faced on a daily basis. In another example, ANMOL highlighted how his religious beliefs and practices led to him being singled out on a school field trip:

> ANMOL: We went on a school trip once to a courthouse and I had a *kirpan* on and it was kind of embarrassing because I was singled out.
>
> ME: So what happened?
>
> ANMOL: They wouldn't let me in unless I took it off so I didn't go in. I said I wouldn't take it off. I just waited outside.
>
> ME: How did that feel?
>
> ANMOL: It was pretty embarrassing because everyone else just walked in and they had no problems.

As the above excerpts exemplify, perceptions of racism, discrimination and the constant reminder of being different were an obvious undertone in the lives of each single research participant.

Theme #4: "Why would I even come in this direction if I have so much already?"

The next theme speaks to all research participants' exposures to criminal influences while growing up in Canada and to some of the participants coming into conflict with the law. These experiences shaped identities as both Sikh and Canadian. This theme also highlights the privileged position participants enjoyed in terms of both their family's position and how supportive their families' were, which contrasts with the experiences of more disadvantaged youth. Importantly, the interviewees spoke to a range of different experiences. These varied for each participant, and included many different elements of criminality.

Intergroup and 'gang' rivalries

JAGJEET stated that his criminal involvement started in high school over rivalries with other youth:

> I got charged with two counts of mischief and assault. You know what it is, like I told you, it's about different schools. So these guys came from a different school and a different part of town, FRASERWOOD. Their high school was a different school and a lot of those guys I guess got expelled from their school so they had to come to my school. You know like for us, we don't take kindly of that. They're coming from their school starting shit and it's like, "Who are you guys!?" This is our school and we ended up getting in a couple of fights ...

SATNAM indicated how minuscule an initial incident might be for a long standing "beef" to develop with a rival 'crew':

> Me: So what did that BRIDGEDALE beef start over?
>
> SATNAM: No idea. It's always this one line that people say and no one wants to let go of. So they must have said one thing we decided we're not going to let go of. Then an event happened where we kicked their ass, run a guy over, that type of thing. Then they came to our neighbourhood and drove around and made an appearance but didn't actually do anything. Then obviously we have an ego issue, like, "Fuck! They came here?" Then we got into two cars, loaded them up and went to BRIDGEDALE.

Making money – Drugs

While some interview participants spoke about their experiences with gangs, rivalries, and fighting, others focused more on the economic aspects of crime. Many of the participants were exposed to various ways to make money illegally including by selling drugs. BALJEET highlights his experience following this path:

> Then I got into the white stuff and it was like twenty grand every time. I pocketed two grand for every deal. It was the easiest and most amount of money I've ever seen. I worked in a mushroom farm and busted my ass with 14 hour shifts and the money was nowhere close to $2000. That's where I was like I'm going to be the next Tony Montana and drug lord of the world and I thought I would be driving a Ferrari in 10 years.

When I asked BALJEET how he had gotten out of that lifestyle, and if in fact he had, BALJEET indicated it was in part due to him being caught by his parents:

> One time my parents found my wallet with $250 in 5 and 10 dollar bills. One day one of my dad's buddies who worked in the drug unit with the police gave him a call. He said your son's name came up with information about him selling drugs at school. He told him if you see a lot of $5 and $10 dollar bills then it's a sign. So my dad thought back to that and figured it out. I came home one day and they started telling me all this. They told me to pull out my wallet and I had more money and they caught me.

Theme #5: "I need to do something with my own life."

The last theme that was constructed across the different sets of interview data revolved around interview participants recognizing their former lifestyles were not going to get them far in life and in turn making changes towards positive goals. Attachment to parents and the fear of disappointing them was an important factor for many of the interview participants in their eventual departure from different aspects of criminality. How these sorts of sentiments were constructed will be discussed below.

DALJEET addressed how important it is for a male of his age (23) to work hard to establish himself:

> It's on some people. Some are business minded and they want to start making money or go all the way. Some people just don't care. Maybe they aren't thinking that far? Sometimes my dad is supporting me too but I'm not trying to abuse it. I'm trying to work on my own. By the end of this year or next year, I want to buy a house on my own and have something under my own name. Some people are getting money from their parents so they don't give a fuck then.

Responses similar to DALJEET's, above, were prevalent and highlighted how with age, adolescents began to assign more importance to demonstrating responsibility. ANMOL identified a cultural responsibility he knew was going to fall on him:

We're expected to take care of them [parents] and usually it's the oldest brother. Like even though I'm not the oldest, I know I'm going to have to take care of my parents. Like pretty soon I'm going to have to manage the household.

It became apparent over the course of the interviews that there were a number of solutions participants were confident would work and help reduce the chances of future generations being involved in criminogenic lifestyles growing up. TANVIR is among those who offered an opinion on what could work:

You got to educate kids and give them the words of wisdom. Explain to them right now it's bad ass and later on it won't be if they continue down that path. You got to connect these kids with people who have gone through it. When I heard it, I only heard it from teachers and parents. They were all basically authority figures.

Others, JAGJEET for example, identified the need for greater societal efforts to curb minority youth violence and to assist immigrant youth to more smoothly integrate into Canadian society. Relevant to this, JAGJEET addressed the issue of equality and how more attention to promoting multiculturalism, a term many interview participants used in the course of the interviews as a marker of Canadian norms of equality:

More recognition of multiculturalism so people know the difference between Indians and Pakistanis and so on. People should know the differences. As much we claim to be multicultural, people still make dumb assumptions like that. In general, don't be part of the whole stereotype of sticking to your own people, be open minded. That's what schools are for, you're working with everyone else.

Interpretation – Interpretive Repertoires

This sub-section will go beyond mere theme classifications to interpret how identities and experiences were constructed by the interview participants. As outlined in the Methods chapter, I draw upon Anderson's (2006) analytic autoethnography in conjunction with other qualitative perspectives that include attention to interpretive

repertoires (Chen & Collier, 2012). The following discussion speaks to a number of intersecting clusters that articulate how discursively constituted assumptions influenced involvement in violence and crime, and also desistance from crime as the interviewees moved towards adulthood.

Being a Man, Being Violent, Being Sikh and Being Jatt

The first interpretive repertoire identified in my analysis and interpretation relates to culture specific practices that appear fundamental to processes of coming to terms with the self in all of the interview participants' lives. In sum, building upon practices that were learned growing up, participants came to rationalize and understand their crime-implicated experiences as adolescents as necessary to display and protect their manliness, and beyond this their status within their ethnic culture.

JAGJEET indicated how a sense of cultural or rather caste and class superiority operated to legitimize what can be construed as male privilege in a discussion on what he witnessed in a trip his family took to India while he was growing up:

> I went to India when I was younger and I noticed a lot just chilling there, and seeing how my cousins and everyone else were raised. Yeah that's all it is, they have that ego that we're superior guys and we're *Jatt* [caste]. We like fighting. And with that also comes alcohol. We drink a lot. That's where it all gets mixed up.

Later in the interview when we discussed JAGJEET'S involvement in violence in Canada, he elaborated on how family stories told by his father and grandfather posit violence, and temper, as appropriate. The following excerpt speaks to how the ways JAGJEET exposure to these cultural norms contributed to his adolescent involvement in crime:

You know what it is too, I think the temper that comes along with our anger comes from our culture. For example, I know my dad had it back in the day growing up. I still hear stories from my grandpa. All those stories have to do with like "back in the day I beat this guy because of this." But it's like dumb! It's pretty much the same thing now that I do.

Virtually all the participants relied upon experiences in their families and cultural exposure to pro-violent norms of superiority and alcohol consumption to rationalize their adolescent and current lifestyles. The spotlight on alcohol was constant, exemplified in the following statement by BALJEET:

I have a picture of when I couldn't even walk but I'm holding a beer bottle. Every Indian boy has a picture like that. I've seen my father and family drink since I was a kid. They get drunk at parties and dance and I see them have a blast. Since I was a kid, I've always thought it looked like so much fun. It's just in your mindset and you want to do it too. Everyone you look up to is doing it all the time and you can't [but want] to grow up and do the same thing. The first time I drank was in grade six. My cousins slept over and we took it out of my dad's cabinet and got trashed.

Stories like the above are fairly common within the Punjabi Sikh community. Alcohol is heavily used by older males in family get togethers and when relaxing at home. Thus, most youth are exposed to excessive alcohol use via family gatherings and on a daily level by their fathers and relatives.

Notably, it is rare to witness older female members consuming alcohol, at least within the Canadian context. This is salient to the importance of the patriarchal system that has traditionally been in place within the Indian culture, which places some men in a superior position vis-à-vis other men, and also in relation to women who are excluded from the privileges of drinking and violence. BALJEET described his mindset about women and about sharing a drink with women, and by implication about being superior to women, as not being the regular "Canadian mindset", but a traditional one that sees

women needing a man's protection. Contradicting himself, BALJEET later indicated the

generational differences:

> Our parents are still old school and they won't ever pass that line. If they
> see us hanging out with our wives and having a drink with them or going
> out with the boys, they are going to have a different thinking and won't
> like it. I think our generation has the most drastic jump considering where
> we were born and our parents were born. After that I guess it'll change and
> we'll be more westernized.

Cultural influences were not just limited to coming from parents. Several

participants connected their involvement with criminality to the influence of older

siblings, relatives and friends. Thus, in these cases the blame fell on someone else but not

the participant himself. ANMOL indicated how he was forced into constant

confrontations with a rival crew because of his brother and other older people he knew:

> It's kind of a gang. I'm not even sure how it started, it kind of just carried
> on. It started with my brother and other people who were older than us and
> then it just carried on and we had to deal with it. We didn't really get a
> choice. We fought them all the time. They first day of school I got into a
> fight, a big one. There were probably like 50 of them and 20 of us. They
> brought their boys from a different school and they had axes and shit and
> we were standing there with our fists ... It just carried on from their older
> brothers to them and then us on the other side from our older brothers
> passing it down.

Growing up and being surrounded by older individuals who are involved in

problematic lifestyles serves as a gateway for some to enter similar ways of life (see

Geraghty, 1997). ANMOL indicated with hindsight that it was "stupid" but there was

nothing he could have done to change the situation because he did not want to be the

"bitch" at school, a construct that strongly speaks to the importance of adhering to

masculinity norms.

TANVIR discussed how his need to hold his ground and get back at a rival from

another school lead to his involvement with the justice system. In this particular incident,

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TANVIR was embarrassed by a rival crew member, inherently an affront to his

masculinity and also to his future safety. The only solution he saw was that of retaliating

violently:

> I got charged because I went to summer school. Our parents put us in
> summer school and said you guys aren't sitting around at home. I wasn't
> failing. I was getting a credit for the next semester, advancing. We knew it
> was a dangerous situation right away. One brave soldier walked up to me
> and asked me my name in front of all his friends. I had no idea who he
> was. I'm like "Yeah that's me." He slapped me in the face. I knew if I
> retaliated right there I would have got rocked. So I said "I'm going to get
> you back when you least expect it."
> …
>
> He went back to class and I sat there thinking of what to do. I let him go
> tell everybody and spread the news of what had happened. I went down
> with three of my boys after the same day. We decided fuck summer school
> and let's drop out before hand. I thought the worse that would happen is
> we would get kicked out of summer school. I wanted to beat the
> motherfucker and not worry about school. We sat down and came up with
> a plan. We drew exit routes out of the school. We walked up to his
> classroom and he was reading a book. I walked in and beat him inside the
> classroom while he was reading. ... I left him in a puddle of blood in the
> classroom. It's funny cause this guy went around and told everyone he
> slapped me and at the end of the day everyone saw him go out on the
> stretcher.

The above violent attack was seen as essential in upholding TANVIR's

reputation. In the following excerpt he elaborated on his logic about what he did:

> After that no one ever fucked with me ever again. I got charged. I got
> expelled from regular school. It was a double whammy. I was on
> probation for awhile. I even remember my PO saying that it sucked and it
> was unfair I got kicked out of school and charged. I was a kid and I made
> a mistake but I was put in a situation these people wouldn't understand. It
> was either I fought him or I would have got beat. What would have
> happened if I didn't do anything? Guess what, those 30 guys are going to
> come jump me because I'm easy prey now.

Across the interviews, there was little recognition of resisting the negative

pathways that led participants to participate in acts that included at least elements of

criminality. Ultimately, interview participants constructed their experiences by making

sense of them through cultural and relational factors that speak to a need to respond

violently to safeguard self-respect and respect from others.

Another important interpretive repertoire used by the participants combined a

strong sense of ethnic pride and masculinity. In many cases it was referred to by the

participants in third person which freed them of any direct link to it, although it

resurfaced in a personal level at other intervals in the interview. MANDEEP discussed

pride in relation to castes:

> You always know to be proud to be *Jatt*. We were farmers back in India.
> We worked very hard and have probably more pride than any other castes.
> If you meet someone else who isn't *Jatt*, they'll kind of be looked down
> upon even if they are successful businessmen ... [A]lot of castes lower
> than us, are now doing better than us ... [W]e have an attitude of, "we don't
> need to do anything, who gives a shit!"

This statement served as a prime example of how many youth recognize the

traditional divisions we are exposed to within our culture. Although it is recognized and

is perceived as being a negative element of our culture, there is no explicit attempt to

resist this way of thinking. It is also important to note Sikhism was established on

principles of expelling the caste system and viewing everyone as equal. Unfortunately,

the caste system remains an important element of the culture and many Sikh Canadian

youth indirectly accept class divisions. SATNAM explained how this sense of caste or

class-based pride manifested:

> War was incorporated into our religion because otherwise we wouldn't
> have survived but we have taken it to another level. Stuff gets handed
> down and it always gets altered. Now we have pride, false pride. There is
> one thing to have pride for your religion and defend it with honour, but
> there is another thing to have pride to protect your ego and that's what we
> tend to do nowadays. We have no reason for it. The same problem we
> could have resolved with words.

In many cases, that is essentially how Sikh Canadian youth construct their experiences with violence, as noted above. TANVEER weighed in on the issue:

> It happened recently in our culture [referring to conflict] too, so that ego allowed that culture to survive. It's part of the survival mechanism for our culture.

The above quote and the excerpt that follows relates back to historical roots that acknowledge aspects of self defence and war. The legitimacy of these has been altered in the present, and consequently the norms have mutated to serve a different purpose. SATNAM provides insight into how historic pride in Sikh survival as adept in the use of violence fuels conflicts in high school:

> When you go to a school like LANGVIEW, when you see 95% of the people are white and then a bunch of brown people flooded their block, there is obviously going to be racism. Punjabis, no one thinks to talk it out, who talks it out? What do we do? Fists! We took over their territory for a bit. ... If white people came to a brown school, there would be no fights because they would just know it's a brown school. When it comes to us and we enter a white school and we want a corner to hang out in and you tell us not too, we're going to make sure we do and then if you want to fight about it, then we will. Fighting is just in our blood! ... [N]o one has ever touched me though, since I'm such a big guy.

A strong rhetoric of pride, masculinity, and violence was evident across the interviews and was constantly referenced in accounts of the violent lifestyles interview participants engaged in. DALJEET linked this to racism when he discussed how he first got charged. This example highlights how some aspects of criminality may develop based on larger issues of racism and discrimination:

> Back then no one knew and people used to say, "Who the fuck is this Paki?" ... I got picked on but I held my ground too, I didn't get bullied, I fought back. ... My first charge was assault with a deadly weapon. There was a fight because of racial shit. This white guy kept fucking with me. He kept calling me a "Paki" and saying "Fuck you!", and basically wanted to fight. Then I'm like, "fuck this, let's go outside." I beat the shit out of

him outside and he went out on a stretcher. Both of our groups of friends were involved in it too. The police were called in and some of us got charged, expelled, or suspended.

A strong discourse based on group differences was present throughout the interviews. Although urban centres in Canada have diverse populations, a strong divide within school settings remain. Many of the participants indicated the divide was not noticeable when they were younger, but by the start of high school they and other youth seemed to naturally split into groups based on racial differences. MANDEEP exemplified this:

> When someone is different from you, you don't understand them as well. For example, white people would hang out in one part of the school and we would hang out in a different part of the school. Each group had their separate places within the school. We would chill at the front of the school and we would see it as we run the school, anyone who comes has to go through us. They would chill by the smoking area and they would think they're cool chilling there. Little differences that let you feel superiority over someone else because you do something different, even though it doesn't mean anything.

In virtually all cases, issues of racial differences were regularly dealt with through violence. Internalized anger and resentment towards general racism experienced by the interview participants, brought about a whole host of violent conflicts. BALJEET described what happened in his suburban and prominently Caucasian town:

> I've dealt with racism my whole life. I got so much anger towards it and sometimes someone just pushes that button ... then I got to grade 12 and it happened again. The white guys I grew up with and it's like they had it in them the whole time. They started talking shit to us and basically we got into a brawl right before prom in front of the school. The principal tried breaking it up but she got knocked down. We made the front page of the newspaper. At least 10-15 cop cars came and it was at the end of the school day when parents pick their kids up. It was really bad. People had bats and hockey sticks. A few people had to leave on stretchers.

Across the interview transcripts there is no acknowledgement of alternatives to violence through peaceful measures. Although the blame cannot be placed on one individual or group and must fall upon various aspects of society, self pride as males, as Sikh, and as Jatt and frustration due to racial differences that situate immigrant males as targets of racist-based adolescent bullying and violence played an important role in fostering willingness to engage in serious violence among all eight research participants.

Being Sikh and Being Canadian

Multiple identities were constructed and expressed throughout the interviews. These identities may conflict with how society views these second generation ethnic youth and as a result, create tensions that are visible through different forms of violence. In the example of TANVIR previously discussed under themes, he made it an important point to let people know his great grandfather helped build an important part of Canada's infrastructure. He was not the only individual who point to making sure others knew he was Canadian. JAGJEET described a non-violent disagreement he had with someone:

> I had this argument with a random guy one night and his point was because he's born here and he's white, he has more rights than me. I was trying to explain to him although I'm Punjabi and I'm Sikh, I'm a Canadian citizen too because I was also born here. ... It frustrates you. You want to sit down with them and calmly explain, "Buddy we're as much Canadian as you are. It doesn't get more Canadian than us!"

Many visible minority youth in Canada beyond the Punjabi Sikh population face similar scenarios when asked where they are from. For example if they self-identify as Canadian, they are further asked where they *really* come from (see Ali, 2008). This exemplifies a constant conflict that occurs when visible minority youth born in Canada

negotiate their identities based on their national and cultural roots knowing how others in society perceive their identity as being foreign.

Notably, participants also constructed their identity by explicitly categorizing themselves as being different from new immigrants to Canada. SATNAM made a reference to this difference:

> SATNAM: The idea of moving out of India is so great that it over shadows the negative aspects. Now *they're* educated enough. Before *they* thought they were going to freedom land.
>
> ME: Yeah I don't know why some people leave a good lifestyle over there and come here.
>
> SATNAM: The worst is when *they* come here and work in warehouses and complain about Canada. Then I tell them, because I get pissed off, will you go back? *They* [emphasis added] say no and I tell them to shut-up then because *they* have the option to leave. I tell them to stop complaining.

Referring to new immigrants as "they" highlights how many second generation individuals construct their identities as being distinct from others who are new. This repertoire points out the failure to address how individuals unknowingly contribute to the same sort of otherness that is assigned to them. Growing up in high school one would think there would be no discrimination against first generation immigrant youth from the same culture. This has not been the case to the best of my knowledge and new immigrant youth are constantly discriminated against and isolated, even by members of the same cultural background.

This conflict was also exemplified by ANMOL who indicated how important it was for others to know about his culture and religion so there would not be any confusion leading to acts such as the Wisconsin Sikh Temple shooting. On the one hand ethnic minority youth have a strong desire to express their "Canadianness" and on the other

hand also find it equally important to let others know they are unique and cannot be classified under common stereotypes of being Muslim or Hindu. ANMOL said it the best when he described how he felt:

> I think I'm always discriminated wherever I go because I have a turban. You can see it. Even if they don't say anything they look at you weird and give you cut eye. They look at you differently. Like if I go to the States you can feel the awkwardness. People look at you everywhere you go. I'm always out of place wherever I go. Other people just blend in because they have haircuts right? I'm always out of place.

What ANMOL described is a fairly common experience of visible minority youth who are constantly reminded of their differences, and this seems to inevitably affect their integration into mainstream Canadian society. Identities are regularly constructed based on feelings of being different and otherness.

The Blame Game

The issue of making changes and offering solutions to curb Punjabi Sikh male adolescent violence took a similar tone across the seven interviews. Much of the talk was framed in a way that looked past the individual to other areas including parenting and the school experience. Essentially, this took the blame off the interview participants.

The interview with DALJEET exemplifies how blame is displaced on to family and community influences that not only encourage the use of violence, but who reward youth who defend their ethnic identity and status through violence, including when this leads to criminal charges:

> DALJEET: Talk to your kids and tell them how life is. Tell them stuff but don't glorify egos and the proudness aspect. You can't always tell your kids to be this proud and cocky. Like even when I kicked that guy's ass my dad said good job, "He called you a Paki so too bad."

ME: It's funny though because a lot of people would say the same thing, it's our first instinct.

 DALJEET: He was like happy when I came out of jail. He told all his friends and everything. After he's like so many people know what you did. I'm like you're the one who told everyone!

DALJEET was placing some of the blame upon his father for his actions in regards to a specific racist incident he was involved in. On the one hand, there was little recognition of alternative ways to manage the problem; while on the other there was a sense that parents and the Punjabi Sikh community should not encourage violence in the ways it does. Thus, DALJEET gave little acknowledgment to his own decision to go outside and fight the individual which led to his subsequent charges. Rather it was constructed in terms to his sense of ego and pride, transmitted through his upbringing and membership in the Sikh community. This sort of thinking is not isolated, but is rather common in adolescent populations (see Tovar & Feliciano, 2009). In this study, it has specific meaning within a Punjabi Sikh context.

Parenting was further touched upon by other interview participants. ANMOL highlighted a problem within the Sikh community:

ANMOL: Yeah they think their kids are so nice.

ME: They don't even know half of the stuff that goes on.

ANMOL: All I said was I didn't do it and she believed me, just because I'm her kid.

ME: Parents blame it on other kids a lot of the time but won't say anything to their own.

ANMOL: They never blame their own son. They are so over protective. The kids aren't worried about punishment. I would skip class all the time and make up some stupid excuse and my parents would just believe me cause I said I was "late" everyday.

This sort of sentiment also found expression in the interview with

MANDEEP:

> Yeah they'll think my kid would never do that. They'll blame it on the friends and say they're messed up. They think their kids are innocent, good, and perfect. They are always in denial of the fact that their kids will never do anything wrong. It happens in all cultures, but I think it happens more in Indian culture ... They'll think the rest of society is fucked up, but not their kids.

These examples highlight a problem within the community. From the perspective of the interviewees' parents tend to not recognize that they in effect can encourage their children to be part of the teenage experience with criminality. Rather, parents are quick to blame peer influences on their children, and fail to recognize both their own influence and the autonomy of their own children and the decisions they make. Over protecting children is a fairly common occurrence with the Punjabi Sikh community.

Over the course of the interviews, considerable attention revolved around the issue of over-controlling and over-protective parenting and its influence on Sikh male youth heading in what the interviewees came to recognize was the wrong direction. TANVIR discussed how his father's constant focus on education and the importance of preparing for a high status career at home affected his lifestyle at school:

> School became somewhere I went to socialize, not study. ... I didn't look at it as a challenge. I was on top of everything. Before the teacher taught it to us in school, I already learnt it at home. My dad tried maintaining this control over me but lost it in high school. ... It was interesting because they sort of backed away and they thought maybe they were putting too much pressure on me or something after I started getting in trouble.

For TANVIR, his gateway into criminality was in part a consequence of how he was raised at home. TANVIR indicated he never got to do the normal things kids did

such as going outside to play, but rather spent his summers studying and learning

forcefully. MANDEEP similarly stated:

> Not putting so much pressure on them to go to university. I understand it's
> a good thing but when you don't meet those expectations you're an outcast
> all of a sudden. ... Some people I know who got into a life of crime, they
> didn't do what their parents wanted them to do and they [the parents] made
> them feel bad about it. Don't kick your kids out of the family if they don't
> go to university. A lot of parents are like if you're not a doctor or a lawyer
> then you're worthless.

These examples point to how culture specific values can affect and in turn

influence youth to lead criminogenic lifestyles. Sikh parents, as well as parents from

other cultures, place great importance on education. Many children are constantly pushed

to obtain high academic results and pursue careers that are traditionally respected. When

youth are unable or unwilling to achieve these expectations, it can produce negative

consequences that include participating in violent or criminal lifestyles, especially, as

discussed above, when these same parents esteem and encourage violence, and blame

anyone but the youth involved for any trouble that they get into including with the

criminal justice system.

Involvement with the Justice System and Views on the YCJA

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, four of the seven interviewees had

come into conflict with the law. Varying opinions were given on the legal system they

were exposed to as a result of their charges. Predictably, some of their narratives touched

upon how their perception of their treatment by various agents of the legal system as

different. The majority of participants, whether they had been formally charged or not,

experienced the police as racist and saw differential treatment based on ethnicity as the

norm. JAGJEET indicated when he was arrested the cops did not even attempt to listen to

his story:

> They don't even take you seriously man. Like they didn't even try
> listening to the whole story. They pretty much just took me and threw me
> into the holding cell like I was just another dumb brown kid. I just felt
> tension and hostility towards me and then they want to act like our friends
> and come into our schools and put on shows, like "Why would I respect
> you considering how you treat us?

The two interview participants who had identified themselves as repeat offenders

due to various charges over different incidents had more to say specifically on the legal

system and the YCJA. For instance DALJEET touched upon his identity as an offender

and redemption, which was made harder by the legal system. Essentially, DALJEET

wanted an avenue he could take that would allow him to be perceived as a normal

member of society without the label of being an offender. He indicated this was made

more difficult by the legal system due to his constant awareness of his status as an

offender:

> People look at you like a fuck up. Give that person an option where they
> can volunteer to make themselves better and so people know this guy
> worked his way up...right now you can do community service but they
> need to actually get everyone to realize that this guy actually did
> something and he redeemed himself. Community service is bullshit cause
> its mandatory but there should be something that is voluntary so it changes
> everyone's perception about you.

TANVIR also discussed his experience with being known as a repeat offender by

friends, family, and other individuals he interacted with in his life:

> ME: Once you got the "offender" title what happened?

> TANVIR: That title made things a lot worse. If I didn't have that title
> through the legal system then I would be better. I got labelled and people
> would come up to me and ask me to do thuggish shit, you know? I would
> get phone calls at home like "Yo TANVIR, we got this guy you were

looking for. What should we do with him?" and I used to say "Yeah beat him!"

TANVIR also indicated they had fingerprinted him and put him into the National DNA Registry. The stigma attached with these steps against him affected his identity and how he interacted and coped with the environment around him. As he indicated, the steps taken against his actions—being charged, expelled from school, fingerprinted and registered into national databases, and on probation--affected his ability to break the label attached to him and redeem himself amongst his peers and family. BALJEET also discussed how it would affect him if he had been formally charged by the police for selling drugs:

> If I got charged it would play a large factor in my decisions. I would have a criminal record. I'm not going to university and I won't be able to get a good job. I would have a downward outlook and would think what's the point of doing anything because once they found out about my record they wouldn't hire me. It would be so unmotivating to do anything even though the crime might have happened in the past, you can't do anything about it. Now I'm a lot more positive which wouldn't be the same with a charge.

In the above instance, BALJEET was appreciative of the fact he did not have to go through the legal system and officially be processed. His statement put further attention on the stigma attached to an offender label at a young and vulnerable age and how it can affect an individual long term throughout their life, even though a youth sentence does not follow an individual into adulthood unless they are a persistent offender (Doob & Sprott, 2004). Regardless of this, not receiving a criminal charge also served as one of the factors that influenced BALJEET to turn his lifestyle around, which may have important future implications.

Desistance

Many of the participants also discussed their eventual turn away from criminality and gradual steps they took to better themselves. There were a number of different factors that influenced participants to take this initiative including personal outlooks on life, parental influences, and cultural influences. JAGJEET discussed the eventual move away from selling drugs:

> You think I'm making a couple of more dollars, but you don't know the shit that goes on. What if someone tries robbing you? It could turn into you getting robbed and then stabbed for that shit. I've seen it happen too back in the day. Where does it get you? Making a couple of more dollars for your life?! I guess you don't think of it now the way you did in high school, your mentality is different.

> As JAGJEET's statement illustrates, as the participants matured they started to

realize how the dangers of the criminal lifestyle would ultimately affect their lives. TANVIR had a realization of different sorts through his own firsthand experience with the labour market. In TANVIR's case he was made aware of realities of the job market when post secondary education is not obtained. He also based his decision to turn it around on his parent's hard work ethic in order for him and his siblings to have better lives in Canada:

> That realization you're going to be working in a factory for the rest of your life. I worked when I was 17-18 years old in a factory. I worked two weeks and I couldn't take it. I saw people working there for the past 20 years and I was just like I don't want to be here. I realized that when my parents came to Canada they worked their asses off and that wasn't for me to work in factories. We're suppose to move up in society. It came to a point where I was like bring it on. I wanted to put effort into it and see if I could do it.

The need to have a positive relationship with participants' parents played a vital factor in reducing participants' criminality and ultimately allowed them to go down a positive and productive path, exemplified in the following interchange with DALJEET:

> DALJEET: Our parents work their asses off for us. Sometimes people have an excuse cause their parents don't give a shit about them so they need to hustle and make money. Our parents work for our lives to be better than theirs.
>
> ME: Why do "we" do what we do then?
>
> DALJEET: I don't know man. Even when I was in college I started selling weed and then after I thought if I get caught my dad is going to chop my balls off ... At the end of the day you don't even need to do that cause your parents are always always giving you money when you walk out the door. They make sure money is in your pocket. I realized it would have fucked me up even more and it would have hurt my parents so much if I got caught.
>
> In DALJEET's case, his parents had stuck behind him when he initially got

charged and had also assisted him in paying his legal fees associated with his charges. He quickly realized he needed to turn his life around as he could not continue to disappoint his parents who had done so much for him already. In essence, parents were an important influence on adolescents and their eventual desistence from criminality.

Solutions

Participants offered varying and sometimes conflicting responses to my efforts to elicit discussion on possible solutions to any perceived problems. Some indicated changes needed to be implemented at a societal or macro level that fostered an environment of inclusiveness and integration. For example, several discussed the complex issue of having ethnic and religious schools in Canada and how this reinforces divides amongst Canadians. Others discussed the divide they had witnessed in high

schools where groups of friends were almost always based upon ethnicity and race, which

fostered divisions and tensions between and among ethnic groups. Suggestions on how to

remedy this included that school authorities make a concentrated effort to eradicate group

divides by placing more focus on multicultural recognition and educating students on

cultures from around the world. Repeatedly, many interview participants suggested

developing programs in high school focused on facilitating entry into the job market and

obtaining money in legal ways. Many were concerned about a lack of focus and resources

for guiding students who wanted to work immediately on how to join the labour force.

Others indicated giving students opportunities during high school to work to make money

would have the added advantage of occupying their time, leaving fewer opportunities to

fall into problematic lifestyles.

In terms of offenders processed through the criminal justice system, suggestions

included developing programs that allow offenders to volunteer, as this would serve to

highlight how they were redeeming themselves. In addition, interviewees addressed the

harshness of the justice system and how negative self perceptions develop as a result.

These labels given to youth served to undermine their efforts to develop positive

identities and be productive members of society. This has important implications for the

direction of the YCJA in coming years.

Interviewees suggested that connecting youth to older individuals who had

already gone through similar experiences and lifestyles would be an important initiative

that may divert students from pursing criminal lifestyles. Essentially, participants

suggested older individuals needed to convey a message about how different life is after

high school and how fast one loses contact with people and lifestyles that used to be

important. Notably, participants recognized the importance of an older individual as someone who did not have an authority title assigned to them including that of an educator or parent.

Other suggestions included developing more sports programs for youth which would serve to teach discipline, teamwork, and also occupy youths' time and reduce their likelihood of developing negative lifestyles. However, since sports programs and camps cost money and not every single individual would be able to afford them, societal support would be needed. All of this speaks to the importance of facilitating youth engagement in positive activities and lifestyles as they move towards responsible citizenship.

At a more micro level, interviewees addressed the role of parents in influencing children and creating a positive environment at home. This was discussed by virtually every interview participant. As SATNAM stated:

> When they come here all they say is look at what I did and how hard I worked. They don't care about you. They have been through so much themselves that they could care less. The ones that do though, their kids do well.

SATNAM brought attention to the important issue immigrant parents face coming to new countries, many times with few financial and social resources. In the case of Punjabi Sikh immigrant parents, a key resource is reliance on a traditional ethic of hard work. Parents commonly work long hours daily in order to survive, raise their children in the hope that they will obtain a higher social economic status. This in turn affects relationships within the family, due to the lack of attention and time that is given to children.

Again and again, the idea of fostering a positive home environment resurfaced. Some of the participants indicated rather than isolating their children by keeping them

within the eye of family, kin and other trusted members of the ethnic community, parents need to support their children in the decisions they make in life, especially in regards to education and career choices. Others highlighted the fact that there was a divide between immigrant parents and second generation Canadian born children. Parents were seen as needing to make greater efforts to integrate into society and in turn transmit this to their children. Additionally, more education and resources need to be provided for immigrant parents where they can learn about cultural differences that exist in Canada and the general problems and influences youth are exposed to outside the home environment. MANDEEP highlighted how traditional biases and stereotypes manifested with his parents:

> Encourage your kids to become friendly with kids from other cultures. My parents and grandparents would always tell me stick with our culture, our culture is good, stick with Indians. Even when I was a kid and I would bring over kids that were black or white, you could see it in their faces. They kind of discourage you from being friends with people from other cultures. They should understand we live in a multicultural society. When you work, you're going to work with people from other cultures...Just because they feel comfortable with their own kind, they shouldn't expect us to as well because we're born here, we're different.

Specific to this, it was seen as important for parents to acknowledge their own stereotypes and create that inclusive environment they wanted their children to enjoy outside of the home environment.

Related, culture specific ideals that are reinterpreted into negative influences fostering aggressiveness, violence, and alcohol use need to be addressed by Punjabi Sikh parents and on a greater level the Punjabi Sikh community as a whole. As the former Sikh police chief of the Vancouver Police Department and current MLA for Vancouver-Fraserview stated in response to the alarming number of male Punjabi Sikh youth

murders in British Columbia around the turn of the millennium, 'Couple bravado with

Sikh religion, couple it with the Punjabi culture and attitudes, and a lack of positive role

models—look what you have' (Bakshi, 2002).

One of the dialogues that took place discussed alcohol use within the community:

ME: Teenagers experiment with drugs but it's a really important aspect of
our culture. It causes a lot of problems for people.

ANMOL: Because we don't know how to drink in moderation, that's
usually when fights start. It starts there and then just carries on.

ME: You watch family members having it when you're small and you
start doing the same thing. I think alcohol mixes with the ego that's
already there.

ANMOL: It goes through the roof after that. We have to change. It's part
of our culture now.

ME: How do you go about changing it?

ANMOL: You got to change the minds of our parents, right? It's their
behaviour that rubs off on us and they're so ignorant and they don't want
to change.

ANMOL and I were addressing a pressing concern specific to the Punjabi Sikh

community in Canada and beyond that needs to be addressed in order deter future

generations from the similar experiences we have lived.

Participants also discussed a lack of knowledge on the part of professionals and

outsiders who simply fail to recognize their unique problems from time to time (see

Hartman et al., 2008). This can also be attributed to the YCJA which does not necessarily

pay attention to the unique circumstances of youth who engage in criminal lifestyles. A

more inclusive approach as opposed to the current direction the YCJA is taking with

recent amendments may better serve the purpose of reducing youth violence and

criminality (see Barnett al, 2011; Casavant & Valiquet, 2010; Valiquet, 2007). Long term recognition of a past offender's turnaround from crime can result in gradual desistence from crime, as indicated by participants. An internalized recognition of the effects of criminal lifestyles on the part of youth is one of the driving forces in their desistence from crime and eventual identity change (Haigh, 2009). Moreover, research indicates programs in place to assist young offenders also need to be assessed rather than strictly evaluating the young offenders themselves (Andrews & Dowden, 2007). This has important implications for the legal system in Canada in terms of what factors need to be examined in terms of sentencing young offenders.

Lastly, participants indicated the need for youth themselves to make smarter choices in their lives that reduced negative influences and problematic lifestyles. Some of the participants indicated youth needed to make a greater personal effort to integrate into society and make friends that were not restricted to their own ethnicity. One of the ways this was to be encouraged included having true 'multicultural' communities that are representative of the Canadian population as opposed to areas dominated by specific communities which encourages divisions. How policymakers might attempt to implement such representative communities is unclear. Yet it should be noted that second generation children of immigrant parents are viewed as important transmitters of information. Inevitably, participants stated 'we' had enough knowledge about two very different cultures and would influence future generations and new immigrants who came to Canada. The challenge is to find ways to disseminate this to youth.

Findings Conclusion

       A number of discursive and cultural influences were identified over the course of the interviews that highlight some of the difficulties Punjabi Sikh adolescent males face growing up in Canada as second generation immigrants. Some of the experiences appear unique in the sense they apply specifically to Sikh ethnicity, while some point to experience of youth in general, and to the difficulties that male youth face growing up. The following Chapter will discuss these experiences in relation to theory and literature reviewed in earlier chapters.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Overview

This chapter will address the broader concerns that are raised and that continue to be addressed in academia on male visible minority youth identities and the numerous influences on youth criminalization that can be present in many forms. My findings reiterate a number of concerns that have previously been explored and also highlight new issues that are developing, some that are unique to the Punjabi Sikh population within Canada and some that are not.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is an important life process that individuals are made aware of very early on in their lives (Phinney, 1989, 1990; Phinney et al., 2001a, 2001b). Ethnic identity is formed through numerous different avenues including a person's upbringing and how they are made aware of their identity through societal processes. The importance parents attach to ethnic identity and their ethnic socialization efforts as well as broader acculturation processes that are present in all faucets of society contributes to how ethnic identity is formed during childhood and adolescence (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012). A combination of both contributes to how second generation youth in countries such as Canada are socialized. Noteworthy, when parents perceive their children will be subject to racism and discrimination and prepare them for this, resilience is fostered (see Lalonde, Jones & Stroink, 2008). In essence, how one is perceived by others influences how they will in turn see him or herself.

Specific to my interview participants, it was evident the vast majority of their parents placed a high importance on ethnic identity formation. From the onset, they were introduced to culture specific practices that were carried on to their adolescent years. Language training is often considered to be an important tool in the transmission of culture. My participants were readily engaged in this process throughout their lives. Moreover, extended families and the broader Sikh community constituted through participation in *Gurdwaras* contributed to this. Notably, many of the interview participants indicated they had at one point resided with different family members including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Residing with extended family members is a fairly common practice in many different cultures and contributes to the socialization of children, including South Asian households (see Lourenço & Cachado, 2012). This served as another tool in exposing youth to and reinforcing culture specific practices. The role of the family in allowing individuals to gain a sense of ethnic identity was essentially one of the most important factors in this regard. Interview participants also constantly indicated exposure to their culture through numerous avenues including family functions, *Gurdwaras*, and the ethnic composition of urban centres.

Ethnic Neighbourhoods

The majority of my interview participants indicated they had grown up in large urban centres where they were constantly surrounded by people from different faiths and backgrounds, largely including their own. This is in line with Census data that indicates South Asians as the largest visible minority group in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2012). Importantly, the experiences of visible minority youth can be vastly different depending on their living arrangements in or outside ethnic enclave communities (Vo-Jutabha,

2008). Residing in heavily dominated South Asian areas, particularly Punjabi Sikh communities, played an important role in all seven interviewees experiences developing an ethnic identity. Additionally, children of immigrant parents who live in the confines of micro-environments in the Greater Toronto Area and other locales may experience the myth of multiculturalism due to their limited interactions with primarily only other racialized immigrants (Ali, 2008). Li's (2009) construct ethnoburbs refers to diverse communities in which one ethnic minority has a significant concentration. This concept can be applied to many urban neighbourhoods in Canada. The majority of the businesses and surroundings in these areas are owned by the ethnic residents (see also Wen, Lauderale & Kandula, 2009). For instance, regions in the Greater Toronto Area and the lower mainland of British Columbia have distinct areas that are associated with different ethnic groups. Within these ethnoburbs, class consciousness can be acute since individuals are divided by not only class but in the case of Sikh youth also caste (see Plăeşu, 2010). This was reiterated by interview participants who highlighted their upbringing in lower income areas and eventual migration to the suburban centres. Although many of the same urban and suburban areas contained South Asians, there was a division between old and new immigrants and their places of residence.

Residing in areas with a heavy concentration of a particular ethnic group produces a variety of outcomes that are both positive and negative. New immigrants regularly flock to areas that are beneficial in terms of ethnic composition, speciality businesses that carry the same products they are accustomed to, and a general sense of belonging (see Chiswick and Miller, 2005). Alternatively, these types of living arrangements create complexities as well. The majority of the interview participants indicated personal

experiences that highlight problems with integration in this type of living arrangement. Essentially, integration into Canadian society is partial due to the dominance of a particular ethnic group in a given area, in this case the presence of the Punjabi Sikh community in particular areas. Many of the participants indicated their peer groups consisted of primarily other Punjabi Sikh males their age. One of the reasons given for this was because of the lack of a diverse community that is representative of the Canadian population. As Amarasingham (2010) indicated in his study of Tamil youth in Ontario, many individuals are constantly restricted to their own communities and group members throughout their day including associating with primarily Tamil co-workers and friends, visiting Tamil doctors, and shopping in Tamil stores (p. 163). Moreover, other discussions highlighted the need for new immigrants to give a greater importance to integration rather than restricting themselves to what they were previously accustomed to. Although place of residence can be influenced by a variety of factors including socioeconomic status, transportation, climate, amenities, and larger societal processes that create financial and racial barriers (see South et al., 2008), there must arguably also be a personal effort by youth and adults in ethnic communities to promote greater integration into Canadian society. Likewise, scholars' definition of integration may need to be reframed due to the changing characteristics of immigrant populations (Amarasingham, 2010).

Generational Gap

The participants I interviewed were all second generation immigrants in Canada. Their parents were born abroad and their families immigrated to Canada before the participants were born. Being a second generation visible minority youth in Canada has a

number of particular implications and challenges that are specific to the circumstances. Many of the participants indicated the difference in values that were present between their grandparents, parents, and them. This has also previously been confirmed by research. Parents have a more difficult time accepting change to their lives after immigrating to a new country, whereas their children are more flexible and acceptant of change (Aycan & Kanungo, 1998). The tensions that are created as result between older immigrants and younger family members remains an important area of research interest (Fan Ng & Northcott, 2010). For example, some of the interview participants discussed the traditional mentalities of their parents in regards to dating, education, and occupations. The differences created as a result of shifting values, can lead to conflicts within ethnic households that have an influence on competing identities, especially between first generation immigrant parents and second generation children (see Shariff, 2009).

Competing Identities

Although integration is supported by the Indian community within Canada (see Aycan & Kanungo, 1998) due to Canada's inclusive policy of multiculturalism, it overlooks the complexities of having both an ethnic identity as well as a national identity in unity (see Berry et al., 2006). Many of the interview participants made references to complexities involved in being Canadian as well as being Punjabi Sikhs residing in Canada. Contrary responses were recorded that both support and reject Phinney (1989) and Tse's (1999) notion of ethnic identity development. Some of the participants indicated a strong attachment to their cultural roots throughout their lifetimes due to the continuous cultural exposure they received, while others highlighted the greater

importance of their ethnic identity at different stages in their lives. There was also numerous discussions that took place that acknowledged childhood feelings of embarrassment and eventual pride and acceptance of an ethnic identity, which is line with Phinney's (1989, 2001a) research on ethnic identity formation processes. Ting-Toomey (2005) asserts the difficulties ethnic minorities face in being perceived as different and the inability to blend in either with the dominant cultural group or his or her own ethnic group (p. 211). Essentially, ethnic identity formation is a complex process that manifests itself through numerous avenues on a case to case basis.

The competing interests of both a national identity in Canada and an ethnic identity for Punjabi Sikh youth creates a sometimes conflicting challenge that must be delicately navigated. Phinney and her colleagues (2001b) found ethnic communities that are well established through cultural amenities, ethnic schools, and ethnic language maintenance, foster an environment that encourages active participation in ethnic culture. Xu, Shim, Lotz, and Almeida (2004) found the preservation of ethnic friendships strongly encouraged an ethnic identity. Alternatively, Fan Ng and Northcott (2010) indicate English language proficiency and age are important factors in developing a Canadian identity in addition to or in place of ethnic identity (p. 151). However, competing identities can affect groups on different scales. In Jurva and Jaya's (2008) study on second generation Finnish Canadian youth, they reported Finnish ethnic identity was expressed in relation to "Canadianness", highlighting the privileged position of being part of a racial majority group since 'ethnicity posed very little or no conflict with their broader Canadian identity' (p. 123). Notably, this can be different for ethnic minority populations including South Asians due to their appearance and customs that are not as

easily relatable to the Canadian identity, a controversial topic in itself. In short, numerous factors are constantly present that encourage the development of competing bicultural identities (see Sodhi, 2008).

Peer Influences

Association with ethnic peers groups was a reality for many of the interview participants due to the composition of their communities among other factors. Peer influences were also referenced as a pathway to criminal lifestyles. Loyalty, respect, toughness, and coolness were consistently linked to aspects of criminality including turf wars, different degrees of assaults, gang involvement, and drug trafficking. These ideals were seen as being extremely important for interview participants, especially during their adolescent years. This is in line with research that indicates adolescents are highly susceptible to influence from peer groups (see Morrow et al., 2008; Dishion & Owen, 2002). For instance, adolescent engagement with violent groups can affect their probability of dropping out of high school (Staff & Kreager, 2008). In the context of Punjabi Sikh male youth, mitigating factors including their ties to a collectivist culture may offset traditionally negative consequences of criminality which will be further discussed below.

A number of key trends were identified during the interview discussions that highlighted how different aspects of peer groups may influence criminality. Carrying on turf wars from older generations was regarded as important as it allowed individuals to fit in and be accepted into peer groups. Trafficking narcotics was seen as an activity to do in order to be cool and respected amongst peers, although the gateways that led to this aspect of criminality varied among the interview participants. Personal drug use was also

largely based on cultural and peer influences as it was viewed as being both necessary and enjoyable. Research has indicated alcohol use by adolescents makes them feel they will fit into certain peer groups (Coleman & Carter, 2005) and changes their perception of its desirability due to peer influences (Cumsille et al., 2000). In light of these of findings, a response to address adolescent drug use should recognize the power of peer group norms and expectations (Lansford et al., 2009).

Cultural Influences

Going beyond an ethnic identity, individuals are constantly influenced by various cultural and religious ideals they are exposed to throughout their lifetimes. In this case, Punjabi Sikh values of pride and masculinity were expressed in different ways during the adolescent phase. Other cultural habits including alcohol use and a strong awareness of castes was also consistently referenced. Some of these cultural forces mixed with other societal forces created an environment where Punjabi Sikh adolescent males were more likely to engage in criminal activities and behaviours. On the contrary, it was also noted virtually all of the interview participants were now taking steps in their lives as they matured to obtain post secondary education and build legitimate and viable careers. This was largely attributed to the family support networks they had in place and the influence of a collectivist culture where education and career attainment are given a strong importance. Thus, cultural influences aggravated and mitigated against various aspects of criminality for the second generation Sikh Punjabi male youth I interviewed.

Aggravating Factors

Ethnic identities were in fact created by the influence of cultural traditions which were expressed through various avenues. Families which are regularly extended beyond

immediate members, served as an important gateway for the transmission of culture. The diverse makeup of large urban centres also assisted in ensuring youth are exposed to culturally significant institutions, relationships, and customs. For the Punjabi Sikh male youth I interviewed, it had a number of specific implications. Traditionally, Sikhs have faced different forms of persecutions as a minority on the Indian subcontinent (see Singh & Talbot, 1996; Shani, 2008). From the onset of Sikhism, numerous incidents of discrimination, torture, and death were heavily present. This in turn fostered an environment of warriors, resistance to inequalities, and pride, which is officially recognized in the tenants of Sikhism (Dhavan, 2003). A strong ethic of bravery and resilience has allowed the Sikh faith to survive over the course of the last 300 years. Self defence and the requirement to defend a defenceless person when all other means to do so have failed, was enshrined into Sikhism physically and symbolically through the *kirpan* (ceremonial dagger), a required article of faith for baptized Sikhs (World Sikh Organization of Canada, 2012). This religious aspect of Sikhism has manifested itself in various ways in the Punjabi culture through the centuries. Essentially, an ideal that was necessary to survive previously has different effects on second generation male Punjabi Sikh youth today. Many of the participants constructed their transgressions with violence by referring to the strong sentiment of bravery and pride that they had learned growing up. In this regard, a faucet of their religion and culture that was essential for its existence was taken and manipulated into a negative influence.

Consistent with the masculinities literature discussed in Chapter II, interview participants made references to Punjabi or Sikh norms of bravery and pride as one explanation for their overall aggressiveness and desire to be perceived as tough and

fighters. Poynting and his collegues (1999) highlighted the aggressiveness Lebanese youth in Australia evoked in response to their experiences with racism. The similar experiences of interview participants may have played a role in the development of their masculinities. Moreover, traditional cultural values that include aggressive and violent responses towards certain criteria can influence how individuals react, even when residing in western countries (Torry, 2001). As Connell and Messerschimdt (2005) argue, '"masculinity" represents not a certain type of man but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices' (p. 841). In addition, research indicates the need to expand definitions of risk factors including the interplay of gender, race, sexual identity, and age in order to truly assess gender-specific needs (Belknap & Holsinger, 2006).

A further cultural influence was expressed through participants' exposure to alcohol use. Although intoxicants are banned from Sikhism (along with the caste system), alcohol use remains a strong part of the Punjabi culture. Interview participants discussed the regularity of their exposure to alcohol use throughout their lives. Some indicated family members seemed to consistently consuming excessive levels of alcohol at various family functions. Others indicated their fathers and grandfathers consumed alcohol on a daily basis in varying amounts. Notably, first generation Punjabi Sikh women do not consume alcohol and interview participants' exposure to alcohol use came only from male authority figures. Some of the participants indicated they had a strong desire as children to get older and experiment with alcohol and enjoy themselves like their fathers and relatives usually did. This sentiment is confirmed by research that indicates parents can play a role in their children's drinking habits through different avenues including

directly purchasing and supplying alcohol to their underage children (Hemphill et al., 2007). It also highlights that other research (Boyle et al., 2001) on the lack of parental influence on adolescent alcohol use may need to be revisited given the changing demographic makeup of populations.

Another important cultural influence that was expressed revolved around the traditional notion of caste systems. Discussions took place on the issues of caste and how it affected interview participants. Many of the participants identified themselves as being a *Jatt*, a traditional caste that is equated to farmers/landowners with a history of being warriors (Dhavan, 2003). It is also important to note Sikhism as a religion was created on principles of equality and the elimination of the caste system. In this regard, although the tenants of Sikhism abolished the caste system, it is still heavily present in India and throughout the Punjabi Sikh diaspora globally, as noted in Behl's (2010) dissertation on the paradoxes of Sikhism, the caste system, and gender equality. As a result of this strong connection to the caste system, interview participants expressed how influential it had been throughout their lives. Pride, aggressiveness, and alcohol use were regularly referenced and constructed in relation to a number of factors including the caste system and being *Jatts*. Interestingly, masculinity, alcohol use, and violence are found to be correlated, even when controlling for different variables (Peralta et al., 2011). The mentalities interview participants were exposed to as children influenced their later behaviours and contact with different elements of criminality.

Mitigating Factors

Cultural factors also served to reduce continued involvement in criminogenic lifestyles in different ways. Many of the interview participants discussed the importance

of pleasing their parents. This sentiment was communicated in a number of different ways by the participants. Some referenced the hardships their parents faced coming to Canada with very little financial stability and overall resources. They narrated these stories by discussing how their parents had overcome difficulties by hard work and had established comfortable lifestyles. Others made reference to feeling guilt by committing crimes and ultimately hurting their parents in the end. When discussing being caught by parents, some of the participants indicated their parents stated they had not come to Canada so their children could be drug dealers and gangsters. Given their parents' success through hard work that enabled participants to live comfortable lives, it was seen as extremely important to not disappoint them. This is confirmed by research that indicates Punjabi second generation youth are upwardly mobile due to them drawing upon their ethnic community networks, along with an ethic of hard work and struggle (Purkayastha, 2005). The overall sense of commitment participants had towards their parents' expectations and goals essentially served as a buffer from criminality.

Community expectations were also discussed by interview participants. Many of them highlighted the importance of meeting the expectations of relatives and the overall ethnic community they were embedded in. The reputation of their parents and family was also referenced in relation to their gradual change towards a productive lifestyle. A strong parental focus on education and occupational expectations from an early age was acknowledged by numerous participants in their discussion of heading in the right direction. Often times second generation Indo-Canadian youth are conditioned to dismiss their personal academic interest in favour for their parent's expectations and community expectations (Sodhi, 2002). Although this may be problematic, the general focus on

education and prestigious occupations serves as a cultural influence that draws individuals away from criminality. Second generation Indo-Canadian youth are also exposed to a collectivistic lifestyle daily in their home environment and within their ethnic communities (Sodhi, 2008). Essentially, decisions and actions are taken in the family's interest before an individual's interest and respect and importance of older family members is a fundamental norm. This type of exposure influences individuals to make decisions based on a variety of different interests that need to be first considered.

Criminalization and Desistance

Desistence was demonstrated in a number of different ways by interview participants. Some discussed the influence their parents and cultural values had on them in turns of turning their lives around. As previously discussed, the collectivist nature of South Asian families places a greater responsibility upon youth to meet the wishes of their parents. Participants indicated the hurt they had caused their families by their violence and criminality and their gradual realization of the benefits of desisting from crime. Some made references to their first hand experience with the labour market and working conditions, and how this had gave them a sense of urgency in obtaining post secondary education and making the move away from a life of crime. Although youth might resist school, they are often well aware about the importance of education, especially in relation to work opportunities (Bottrell, 2007). This is also in line with literature that indicates resiliency is influenced by a variety of factors including personal relationships with family and friends (Haigh, 2009; Stephen & Squires, 2003). In addition, young people's positive achievements can go unrecognized by the broader

community and any view of them being "good kids" may be restricted to only their own neighbourhoods and communities (Bottrell, 2007, p. 609).

Canadian Youth Justice

As discussed in previous Chapters, Bill C-10 amendments to the YCJA which came into effect in October 2012 claim to provide a better response to the problem of serious and repeat youth offending. Specifically, there is a focus on enhanced youth accountability, deterrence, and additional tools to address the issue of Canadian youth crime (see Barnett al, 2011; Casavant & Valiquet, 2010; Valiquet, 2007). Notably, crime rates across Canada are at a three decade low and homicide rates are at a 44 year low (Mahony, 2011). The amendments fail to enhance preventative measures to curb youth involvement in crime. Interview participants who were formally processed through the youth criminal justice system addressed points relevant to the deterrent thrust of the amendments in a discussion of then proposed justice initiatives. Several noted that the stigmatization they experienced by family and peers after being charged and prosecuted affected their identities, and made their transition to desistance more difficult. Arguably, the current direction of youth justice policy will exacerbate this. Also participants indicated once they were stigmatized they lacked the available means to redeem themselves, and that this impeded their movement into responsible adulthood. This has significant implications for youth justice policy in Canada. If the long term goal is to reduce the number of youth who stray into long term criminal lifestyles, the likelihood of this is arguably increased due to the C-10 amendments to the YCJA that prioritize deterrence and accountability and encourage publicly identifying youth found guilty of a violent offence, broadly defined (see Barnett et al., 2011).

Discussion Conclusion

Punjabi Sikh adolescent male experience and involvement with criminality can be situated in broader processes that influence one's identity and actions. Ethnic identity formation is based on various internal and external factors that affect how individuals develop their identities, with a number of specific implications for the individuals I interviewed. The large urban centres they resided in played an important role in their emerging identity as Sikh and as Canadians. Moreover, the difficulties of competing cultural and national identities as second generation Canadian youth have specific implications. Peer influences were also highly influential leading to participation in criminal lifestyles. However, Punjabi Sikh cultural influences served two opposite functions. Certain cultural forces aggravated youth involvement with crime while other forces mitigated their experiences, fostering desistence from crime and encouraging positive lifestyle changes.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This thesis addressed youth criminality in relation to its connection to processes of identity formation. Specifically, it analyzed interview data generated in open-ended dialogues with seven second generation Punjabi Sikh males on their experiences growing up in Canada, focused on how experiences with crime fit with their developing identities as Sikhs and as Canadians. Interestingly, while ethnic cultural influences and ethnic pride contributed to the youths' involvement in various criminal activities during adolescence, ethnic and especially family influences and pride also contributed to transitions to desistance from crime. This is arguably the key finding of the thesis. At a policy level, the key conclusion is therefore that both the dangers and the strengths of ethnic difference must be recognized and addressed. In the end, this study suggests that what lead research participants who came into conflict with the law to desist from crime was an emergent sense of them self as an adult Canadian member of a distinct and valued ethnic community.

The data raise important concerns relevant to Canadian multiculturalism in an increasingly diverse global landscape. As the interview participants themselves indicated in discussions on solutions, the complex problems growing up Sikh in Canada and the issue of how to assist Sikh and other minority youth to avoid the lure of involvement in inter-ethnic violence and other criminal activities cannot be answered in simple black and white terms.

The thesis contributes to literature on ethnic identity formation and on various influences which foster an environment that encourages youth to engage in certain

elements of criminality. Specifically, previous research minimally addresses this phenomenon among Punjabi Sikh youth in Canada and beyond. Given the shifting demographics of Canada, it is imperative to acknowledge the experiences of various ethnic populations that call Canada home. More importantly as the research indicates, it is important for ethnic communities and for Canadian institutions, including in particular schools, to foster an environment of inclusiveness and integration in order to allow and encourage immigrant populations to actively participate as full citizens in a diverse society in which youth, their families and their communities know and take pride in themselves both as ethnic minorities and as Canadians.

The strengths of this research are rooted in the qualitative ideals that underpin the interview format. The unstructured interview guide allowed for a natural flow of narratives through which the participants and I constructed past and current experiences. The informality and openness of the interview context created a comfortable environment where many different and often troubling experiences and feelings were discussed. In addition, the specific focus on the issue of second generation male youth of Punjabi Sikh immigrant parents provided members of this community to contribute unique insights into how their experiences have been shaped by both ethnic Sikh and mainstream Canadian cultural forces. My personal role as a researcher who is himself a member of this unique group allowed me to produce rich levels of data. Participants repeatedly expressed their high level of comfort with discussing their experiences with someone who they could relate to and who they viewed as one of them. This insight may not have been obtained if I had been an outsider to the Sikh community. Essentially, my own self-

identity as a Sikh and as a Canadian has opened the door to the experiences and perceptions of a unique population that remains under researched.

It is also important to discuss the limitations of the current research project. My interviews consisted of a small sample of individuals from two geographically distinct urban communities in Canada. The narratives on identity and crime generated in these interviews may not be representative of other Sikh youth in Canada. For instance, varying experiences may exist between Punjabi Sikh youth in British Columbia and Ontario due to generational differences and the traditional ease of opportunities associated with the drug trade in British Columbia. Future research should sample a broader number of participants and focus on multiple ethnic identities in order to better explore how second generation youth experience and contend with the issues raised in this thesis. Furthermore, future research can focus on the upward mobility of immigrant populations and their progress from inner city neighbourhoods to suburban communities and how this can shape youths' self perceptions and identity. As noted above, my role as a researcher who has a direct link to the subject matter needs to be recognized as a strength, but also as a limitation. I was embedded into the ethnic group I researched and had previous relationships with the individuals I interviewed. As a result, I cannot and do not claim that I have generated an unbiased representative story about a population and ethnic group that encompasses an array or individuals, each with their own unique experiences. Rather, I provide a deeply qualitative situated account of adolescent male experiences of being Sikh and being Canadian in a life world in which violence and other criminal activities are commonplace.

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VITA AUCTORIS

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