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# TOWARD UNDERSTANDING THE SUBCULTURAL MOSAIC: FRAGMENTATION OF THE CULTURE AND THE SYMBIOTIC INTERPLAY OF THE MARKET AND SUBCULTURES

A Dissertation
by
EMRE ULUSOY

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2013

Major Subject: Business Administration

# TOWARD UNDERSTANDING THE SUBCULTURAL MOSAIC: FRAGMENTATION OF THE CULTURE AND THE SYMBIOTIC INTERPLAY OF THE MARKET AND SUBCULTURES

A Dissertation
by
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August 2013

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## ABSTRACT

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This study brought to light the need for a more nuanced analysis and approach for understanding the observed tendency toward eclectic, fragmented, and paradoxical subcultures in contemporary society. It was critical to explore the impact of market hegemony and the response of subcultures to this hegemony leading to the development of contemporary subcultural sensibilities. The central purpose of this research was to develop a theory of subculture that accounted for the fragmentation observed in contemporary culture, and how this fragmentation influences subcultures leading to fragmentation within subcultures. To this end, using in-depth interviewing, netnography, and participant observation, I investigated the meanings that subcultural activities have for members of subcultures from the perspective of individuals who participate in music-based subcultures in their everyday lives. I adopted a poststructuralist approach in the interpretation stage to highlight the dynamic interplay between the subjective lived experiences of subcultural members and contemporary sociocultural discourses.

This study extends subculture theory by developing and introducing the concept of the 'subcultural mosaic'. Subcultural mosaic is based on an eclectic subcultural affiliation and a composite subcultural constellation. It is constituted through juxtapositions of several alternative subcultural discourses with each retaining, to some extent, its unique identity and qualities.

Moreover, findings reveal that people participating in studied subcultures find the current institutionalizations oppressive and limiting. As they seek solace in membership in subcultures, they also seek membership in multiple subcultures since each represents / inherits the residual discontent from the mass culture, which also maintains the impulse to fragment within each subculture. The underlying purpose expressed is not to exert power over others, but to present alternative modes of life. In this respect, subcultures are venues in which people form several alternative positions and discourses. They resist the given subjectivities through constantly negotiating and reconfiguring cultural and subcultural positions, as well as by presenting new thoughts, imaginations, conceptions, positions, and subjectivities. That is, agency lies in subcultural mosaic.

# DEDICATION

The completion of my doctoral studies would not have been possible without the love and support of my family. My wife, Aslı (my butterfly), my sons, Tipish and Elvin, my mother, Vahide, my father, Cumhur, and my grandmother, Sabiha, wholeheartedly inspired, motivated and supported me by all means to accomplish this degree. Thank you for your love and patience.

I would also like to dedicate this work to my grandfather, Bülent Mutlu, whom I will always keep in my most precious memories and moments to come.

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I will always be grateful to Dr. A. Fuat Fırat, chair of my dissertation committee, for all his mentoring and advice. He encouraged me to complete this process through his infinite patience and guidance. He is a great inspiration to me in all aspects. My thanks go to my dissertation committee members: Dr. Mohammadali Zolfagharian, Dr. Michael S. Minor, and Dr. Cory M. Wimberly. Their invaluable advice, input, suggestions, and comments on my dissertation helped to ensure the quality of my intellectual work.

I would also like to thank my friends, colleagues, my sister, Ebru, and my brother-in-law, Özgür, for all their support and love. Also, I would like to acknowledge all the subcultural members who volunteered to participate in this research.

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

> *The powers that be do not sustain their legitimacy by convincing people that the current system is The Answer. That fiction would be too difficult to sustain in the face of so much evidence to the contrary. What they must do, and what they have done very effectively, is convince the mass of people that there is no alternative. (Duncombe 1997, p.6)*

> *A comprehensive understanding of culture requires the study of groups and individuals outside the mainstream or "straight" society. The beliefs and activities of these groups and individuals hold the potential to inform our knowledge of both dominant culture and reactions to mainstream beliefs and practices. (Honea 2009, p.34)*

> *Subcultures therefore emerge as the new times and places that people occupy, subcultures are the new sources of identity, subcultures are the new signifier of difference. (Jenks 2005, p.145)*

On the one hand, different social groups are increasingly emerging as reactions against the mainstream culture and dominant social order by constituting their own cultures and alternative modes of living and being largely on the basis of personal and collective choices and preferences pertaining to their worldviews, lifestyles, musical interests, and ideological orientations (cf. Bennett 1999; Featherstone 1991; Gelder and Thornton 1997; Haenfler 2004a, 2006; Hebdige 1979; Jenks 2005; Muggleton 2000; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010; Williams 2011), thus marking and highlighting a division within society. In extant literature, these increasingly emerging distinct social groups are mainly called "subcultures" and the division process within the mainstream society and culture is mainly called "fragmentation" (cf. Bennett and Kahn-

Harris 2004; Chaney 2004; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Jenks 2005; Muggleton 2000; Williams 2011). On the other hand, the market, mainly via corporate culture producers, also known as the "culture industry" (cf. Adorno 2001; Horkheimer and Adorno 2007), perpetually seeks to assimilate these distinct oppositional social groups, that is subcultures, back into the mainstream culture and dominant social order through co-opting their expressions in pursuit of commercial interests (Clark 2003; Featherstone 1995; Frank 1997; Haenfler 2004a, 2006; Honea 2009; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007; Thornton 1995). In so doing, the market mainly tends to reshape, appropriate, and manipulate the cultural symbols, artifacts, practices, and expressions of these subcultures and empty their initial meanings, which, in turn, transforms them into socially acceptable commodities to make them more appealing to mainstream consumers (Blair 1993; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Heath and Potter 2004).

In line with this notion, the conventional approach to market co-optation asserts that since the market tends to transform, assimilate and incorporate subcultures into the mainstream, it marks the demise of their existence along with their oppositional stances and resistance qualities (cf. Clark 2003; Heath and Potter 2004; Honea 2009; Muggleton 2000; Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003; Redhead 1997). However, it is difficult to sustain this conventional approach, which asserts that subcultures are assimilated into the mainstream and thus disappear over time, in the face of so much evidence to the contrary as subcultures are increasingly observed to emerge, grow, fragment, and proliferate (Goulding and Saren 2006; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010; Weinstein 2000) as well as retain their oppositional stances and resistance qualities in contemporary society (cf. Haenfler 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Hodkinson and Deicke 2007; Williams 2011), where resistance is also considered to be a creative force and a means for self-reflection and self-expression (Bourdieu 1984; Cherrier 2009; Skott-Myhre 2008; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010).

Therefore, the alternative approach proposed in this research investigates the possibility that resistance remains alive as market intervention may trigger subcultural resistance and diffuse and disseminate subcultural ideals and values to a larger group of people (cf. Marion 2003; Roberts and Moore 2009), which, in turn, may give way to the dynamic and symbiotic interplay between subcultures and market institutions and to the burgeoning and proliferation of subcultural constituents in contemporary societies.

In other words, if market co-optation cannot defuse and eradicate the oppositional qualities of subcultures, it may not entirely assimilate subcultures into the mainstream. Echoing the 'melting pot vs. mosaic' metaphor in the context of subcultures, market co-optation seems to be unable to entirely melt subcultures into the pot of mainstream culture. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that subcultures will always remain marginal. On the contrary, since market co-optation is said to clash perpetually with subcultural resistance, this research will investigate this dynamic interplay between market institution and subcultures as this interplay may give way to the expansion, fragmentation, and thus proliferation of subcultures, which, in turn, may give way to what will be defined as the subcultural mosaic. Along these lines, therefore, this research will further investigate empirically how and to what extent contemporary subcultures may be emerging as reactions against mainstream culture and the dominant social order, and whether different subcultures may also be emerging as reactions against the subcultures that are claimed to be co-opted, commercialized, and commoditized by the market in contemporary societies (cf. Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004; Haenfler 2006; Goulding and Saren 2006; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010).

A growing number of people are observed to participate in life through subcultures as they increasingly organize their worldviews, thoughts, ideologies, lifestyles, consumption

activities, and construct their selves and/or identities in and through these subcultures in contemporary society (Jenks 2005; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010; Williams 2011). Therefore, studying subcultures and the dynamic and symbiotic interplay between subcultures and the market institution can help to expose and understand the developments and transformations in the market and in society, reveal contemporary and potential future consumption patterns and behaviors, and highlight the potential means and venues through which alternative identities and cultural forms may emerge. Besides, echoing the Hegelian dialectic, since subcultures are mainly considered to be the antithesis of mainstream culture (thesis), studying subcultures may provide us a broader picture and a more complete understanding with regard to the synthesis of our social world (Williams 2011).

The phenomenon of subculture has largely been studied in sociology and cultural studies (cf. Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004; Gelder and Thornton 1997; Haenfler 2006; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Hodkinson and Deicke 2007; Jenks 2005; Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003; Thornton 1995; Williams 2011). Recently, the concept of subculture has drawn attention in marketing and consumer research (cf. de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan 2007; Goulding et al. 2002; Kates 2002; Kozinets 1997, 2001; Leigh et al. 2006; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010) since contemporary subcultures are increasingly conceived to be formed around consumer lifestyles and tastes (Frank 1997; Hodkinson 2002; Muggleton 2000; Polhemus 1996, 1997; Thornton 1995). Yet, research that does exist adopts mainly a modernist approach and neglects alternative, for example, poststructuralist, approaches that are more likely to recognize the tendencies of fragmented, multifaceted, eclectic, and paradoxical components in contemporary subcultures. Few studies have adopted alternative

approaches in social sciences and consumer research (Bennett 1999; Maffesoli 1996; Moore 2004; Muggleton 2000; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010).

Subcultures are not stable, static, and clearly identifiable entities but constantly in the making (cf. Goulding 1998; Hodkinson and Deicke 2007; Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003; Thornton 1995; Williams 2011). Consequently, at least four different definitions of and approaches to subcultures exist in the literature. First, the traditional approach defines subculture on the basis of stable and clearly demarcated categories based on traditional and modern lineages, namely nationality, ethnicity, and religion (e.g., Gordon 1997; Green 1946). On the other hand, the Chicago School tradition has considered subcultures to be deviant, pathological, undesirable social groupings within the "healthy" mainstream society (cf. Becker 1963; Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004; Cohen 1955; Fine and Kleinman 1979; Irwin 1970; Matza and Sykes 1961; Merton 1968). In a third approach, the neo-Marxist approach to subculture, largely developed by the Center of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS hereafter) at Birmingham School, has introduced a different scope to the topic of subculture by claiming that the origination and maintenance of subcultures rely heavily on class-based orientations and experiences of dominated working class youth to exercise their resistance to the dominant structure and the hegemony through style and rituals associated with subversive qualities (Clark et al. 1976; Cohen 1972; Frith 1984, 1996a; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Leblanc 1999; Willis 1978).

As modernity wanes and postmodernity waxes (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Slater and Tonkiss 2001), globalization becomes more salient (Appelbaum and Robinson 2005; Fırat 1997), advancements in the sphere of technology (especially the Internet) appear (Poster 1990, 2006), and manufacturing processes move to economically developing countries (Harvey 1990), we

encounter transformations and new trends in society and culture (Baudrillard 1998; Bauman 1992; Featherstone 1991, 1995; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Gottdiener 1995; Hassan 1987; Harvey 1990; Jameson 1991). With these transformations, the central position of production in social organization has been replaced by consumption (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995). As consumption became the central focus of social life and the means for people in constructing their selves and identities (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991), consumerism became a way of life and the basis of contemporary culture (Miles 1998). Subsequently, the fourth, post-subculturalist approach aimed at bringing about a different insight into the phenomenon of contemporary subcultures to account for the transformations and new trends arising with the cultural turn (cf. Muggleton 2000; Redhead 1997; Thornton 1995). According to this approach, the distinctions of contemporary subcultures from the larger society or other communities are determined solely on the basis of consumption patterns and/or objects, thus, the distinctions are claimed to be blurred, fluid, ephemeral, and temporal (Muggleton 2000; Haenfler 2006). Furthermore, most scholars who adopt the post-subculturalist approach have overemphasized the hyper-individualized characteristic of contemporary subcultures and defined the phenomenon simply on the basis of de-politicized consumer lifestyles and taste-based communities by marking the demise of the collective ties and resistance qualities of subcultures (Haenfler 2006; Honea 2009).

Although each of these theoretical approaches accounts for parts of the subcultural phenomenon, there is a need for a more nuanced analysis and approach to understand and explore to a greater extent the tendencies of fragmented, multifaceted, complex, paradoxical, and eclectic subcultures in contemporary society, as well as the impact of market hegemony and the response of subcultural participants to this hegemony, on the development of these subcultural sensibilities. Besides, how market ideologies, consumer society, and market hegemony in the

cultural sphere are received and interpreted by subcultural consumers and how the tendencies of the market institution to transform and assimilate subcultures into mainstream culture through co-opting, commercializing, and commoditizing them are received, perceived, interpreted, negotiated and opposed by participants of subcultures are yet in need of careful empirical exploration.

With these goals in mind, the central purpose of this research is to develop a theory of subculture that accounts for the reasons why subcultures specifically may mark and highlight a contemporary fragmentation of the society and culture and why fragmentation is a phenomenon that is observed within subcultures as well. How and to what extent the tendency of dynamic and symbiotic interplay between market co-optation and subcultural consumer resistance may play a role in this fragmentation process will also be investigated. Further, this research takes aim at contributing to the existing literature also by introducing and discussing an emergent form of contemporary subcultural phenomenon: Subcultural Mosaic. Subcultural mosaic is a metaphoric term used to refer to eclectic subcultural affiliations and a composite subcultural constellation constituted through juxtaposing, overlapping, combining, and crossing over various multiple fragmented subcultures (subcultural meanings, narratives, politics, styles, elements, ideologies, experiences, etc.), as each also retains its unique identity and qualities. More specifically, this research conceptualizes subcultural mosaic in a way that whilst the concept of subcultural mosaic may account for the orientation of subcultures towards the values of diversity, heterogeneity, fluidity, reflexivity, complexity, plurality, and multiplicity, it may also acknowledge the oppositional qualities and characteristics and collective consciousness associated with the subcultural phenomenon. In other words, subcultural mosaic refers to the co-

existence of multiple fragmented subcultural narratives, where 'order of multiple orders' (Fırat and Dholakia 2006) can be illustrated.

As stated earlier, earlier studies of subcultures have mostly adopted a monolithic and modernist perspective assuming subcultures to arise not only from relatively homogeneous backgrounds and clearly demarcated given categories, such as being based on a social class, ethnicity, nationality, and religion, thus, stable, but also from delinquent and deviant marginal social groupings or from de-politicized and merely taste-based consumer communities. Especially in contemporary society, however, understanding the subculture phenomenon would benefit from a broader view that recognizes the multifaceted and paradoxical elements in contemporary life (Hodkinson and Deicke 2007; Muggleton 2000; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Therefore, in an attempt to close the gap in the literature, the alternative approach of subcultural mosaic presented in this research may help us develop better, different, and broader insights into the tendencies of heterogeneous, fragmented, paradoxical, and multifaceted aspects of contemporary subcultures.

Finally, this research takes aim at highlighting the impact of the dynamic interplay between market institution and subcultures on the formation of subcultural mosaic where multiple fragmented subcultural narratives may co-exist. Some subcultures are claimed to contain social movement qualities and thus distinction between these subcultures and fragmented new social movements are claimed to be blurred (Haenfler 2006; Hardman 2007). In line with this notion, also discussed will be how these co-existing subcultures that contain social movement characteristics may play a role in providing a "public sphere" (Habermas 1991) where consumers may organize themselves and express their antagonistic voices against mainstream culture and dominant social order and thus in mobilizing a larger social movement

and bringing about socio-cultural change with agentic ways in contemporary societies (cf. Haenfler 2004b, 2006; Holtzman et al. 2007; Roberts and Moore 2009).

Therefore, in an attempt to expose the developments and transformations in the market and society, reveal contemporary and potential future consumption patterns and behaviors, and highlight the potential means and venues through which alternative identities and cultural forms may emerge, this research seeks answers to the following questions:

- Why is fragmentation so prominent in contemporary culture?
- When does a given fragmentation reach the state of subcultures?
- Why and how are subcultures fragmenting within themselves?

A review of the extant body of knowledge reveals both theoretical and methodological gaps regarding the contemporary subcultural phenomenon. On the one hand, since existing research mainly adopts a monolithic approach, it neglects the alternative approaches, such as poststructuralist, that may highlight the contextual, subjective, experiential, fragmented, multi-faceted, and paradoxical qualities and meanings of the contemporary subcultures. On the other hand, this phenomenon is yet to be sufficiently examined through empirical explorations (Hodkinson and Deicke 2007; Honea 2009). Consequently, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the meanings that subcultural activities have for members of subcultures as they vary in time and context. Specifically, the research will explore these meanings from the perspective of consumers who participate in music-based subcultures in everyday life (i.e., punk, hardcore, metal, straightedge, goth, rap, alternative rock, etc.).

# CHAPTER II

## THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the fragmentation in the culture and the development of the subcultural mosaic in contemporary society. These are complex phenomena and require an understanding of several factors that may generate and cultivate them. As a result of reviewing the literature, the factors that seem to make the key contributions to the understanding of the phenomena of fragmentation and subcultural mosaic are: (1) cultural turn from modern to postmodern and emerging subcultures as manifestations of the fragmentation of the mainstream culture and sources of alternative identities, (2) the nature of the mainstream consumer culture and the dominant social order as well as the social, cultural, and environmental problems associated with this mainstream culture, (3) increasing discontentment with and resistance to the mainstream culture and dominant social order, (4) quest for social and cultural change, alternative identities, and self-expressions, (5) the dynamic interplay between the market institution and subcultures, mainly in the form of market co-optation and subcultural resistance, and (6) fragmentation within subcultures.

According to extant literature, there is a growing fragmentation in the society and culture mainly generated as a result of the postmodern turn, which manifests the waning of grand narratives and domination and the waxing of fragmented co-existing multiple narratives and agency (cf. Lyotard 1984). A proposition in this research is that a key consequence of such a

break in faith and erosion of trust in the grand project of modernity and growing quest for resistance may be reflected in the fragmentation of society and culture. This fragmentation may reach the state of subcultures through which people can seek the moments of challenge, interruption, opposition, and resistance. Contemporary subcultures are, therefore, proposed in this research to be the key manifestation of the fragmentation of society and the means for producing the meaningful experiences that are sought in life, as well as for constructing individual and collective identities and producing selves or self-images within these experiences. Also, subcultures may be providing a venue where multiple fragmented narratives and life modes co-exist through tolerance for differences and plurality. In contemporary society, contrary to the monolithic perspectives of earlier subculture theories, understanding the subculture phenomenon would benefit from a broader view that recognizes the multifaceted and paradoxical elements in contemporary life (Hodkinson and Deicke 2007; Muggleton 2000; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Therefore, the alternative approach of subcultural mosaic presented in this research may help us get better, different, broader, and more comprehensive insights into the tendencies of heterogeneous, fragmented, paradoxical, and multifaceted aspects of contemporary subcultures.

Subcultures are presented in this research to be distinct social groups that emerge as reactions against the mainstream culture and dominant social order. They are in pursuit of not only bringing about socio-cultural change but also creating venues or 'public spheres' where they may organize themselves, express and articulate their viewpoints, and construct their selves and individual and collective identities (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Subcultures, therefore, are proposed here to be venues through which members constitute their alternative modes of living and being and produce and consume their own cultural products, artifacts, and experiences that are mainly different from what is pre-established and provided by the market (cf. Honea 2009;

Riesman 1950) and disseminated through means of communication that are largely controlled by producers of the corporate culture (Honea 2009).

Further, this research takes aim at highlighting the impact of the dynamic interplay between market co-optation and subcultural resistance on the formation of subcultural mosaic where multiple fragmented subcultural narratives may co-exist. More specifically, the conventional approach is that the market co-opts subcultures and assimilates them into a mainstream consumer culture, and thus erodes their collectivity and undermines their resistance and agentic potentials, which in turn marks the demise of these distinct subcultures along with their antithetical stances (cf. Clark 2003; Heath and Potter 2004; Hebdige 1979; Honea 2009; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). However, contrary to the conventional approach, a proposition in this research is that resistance may not disappear and thus subcultures may not simply be assimilated into the mainstream culture as a result of market co-optation in the face of so many still emerging, growing, and proliferating subcultures in contemporary society. Rather, this research aims to investigate whether subcultural resistance changes its forms and strategies over time in an attempt to respond to and resist more effectively the market hegemony and its assimilation-oriented 'melting pot' strategy. In other words, two potential reasons are proposed here that may limit the market's ability to co-opt: (1) the speed and the number of new subculture formation, and (2) subcultural strategies against the market's ability to co-opt (i.e., coming up with unco-optable elements).

The next chapter first provides an overview of the literature regarding the fragmentation phenomenon and reveals its socio-philosophical underpinnings and then indicates the role of subcultures in this fragmentation process. Second, it outlines the earlier theories regarding the subculture phenomenon and then discusses the interplay between subcultures and contemporary

social movements. Since consumerism is said to be the key ideology and organizing principle of mainstream culture and dominant social order (Miles 1998) against which subcultures may be emerging and thus manifesting the fragmentation of the culture and society (Hebdige 1979; Jenks 2005; Williams 2011), the next chapter thirdly provides an overview of the literature regarding ideology of consumerism and mainstream consumer culture in order to gain a broader understanding of the origination and continuation of contemporary subcultures.

Next, whilst it outlines the main problems associated with consumerism and consumer culture that may trigger the fragmentation of society through the genesis of subcultures, this chapter also provides a broad literature review of the rise of critical consciousness, consumer agency, and consumer resistance forms, linking these to the role of subcultural agency in these socio-cultural critiques of consumer culture. Finally, as it discusses the dynamics of continuous cycle of market co-optation and subcultural consumer resistance, it also presents music as the research context where this interplay between co-optation and resistance is claimed to be largely observed.

Consequently, the next chapter presents these aforementioned factors in more detail in terms of how they are reflected in extant literature. Further, it discusses the strengths and weaknesses of these reflections as a result of a critical review that informs the theoretical model presented in Figure 1 on p. 63. This model brings these factors into view in a fashion that enables us to present an explanation of the phenomenon, which will be investigated, and empirically explored to determine whether it is supported, as well as provide insights into the interactions and relationships taking place.

# CHAPTER III

# THEORETICAL DISCUSSION, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND THE PROPOSED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## Fragmentation of the Society/Culture and Proliferating Subcultures

As we move from modernity to postmodernity, fragmentation seems to be gaining strength not only because the grand project of modernity has increasingly been perceived to be a failure and given way to the erosion of taken for granted ideas and beliefs (Bauman 1992), but also because tolerance for differences and multiplicity without any prejudgmental assessment in terms of superiority and inferiority has increased (Fırat and Dholakia 2006). In modernity, differences were assessed on the basis of superiority and inferiority and the differences that were seen to be inferior were not accepted, appreciated or respected, and attempts were made to exclude them (Fırat and Dholakia 2006). Whereas, given that one of the key traits of postmodernity is tolerance for differences, they are accepted, appreciated, and respected without judgments of superiority and inferiority (Fırat and Dholakia 2006). Thus, this postmodern turn may have paved the way for multiple fragmented narratives (e.g., subcultures) to co-exist. This research aims to investigate whether subcultures may be considered to be not only one of the most visible illustrations of fragmentation in contemporary society and culture, but also the very reason for it. This section starts with the socio-philosophical underpinnings of the fragmentation

phenomenon and then it reveals and discusses the relationship and significance of subcultures in the fragmentation process.

Echoing some postmodern social thinkers and philosophers, such as Baudrillard (1983), Lyotard (1984), and Foucault (1990), Jenks (2005, p. 134) argues that the main reason behind the waning of modernity and waxing of postmodernity and thus the fragmentation of the social as a grand narrative relies on the fact that humanity has lost faith in the emancipation potential of science and the progress of modernity, along with many other instances in relation to the politics of modernity such as "industrialization, the division of labor, urbanization, capitalism …" That is, the state of the contemporary world, still harboring wars, poverty, pollution, instead of peace, progress, and quality of life, explicitly reveals and announces the failure of this grand project of modernity and yields to the erosion of trust of the multitude in the premises of this project.

Further, Nietzsche's (2006) call that "god is dead" has signaled a shift in life at large and marked three different processes, namely, "(1) it has removed certainty; (2) it has mainstreamed the re-evaluation of values; and, finally, (3) it has released control over infinity" (Jenks 2005, p. 140). It has shaken and eroded all existing belief systems and forms of knowledge on which modern society was established (cf. Foucault 1990). While it embraced the individual by freeing her/him from all lineages and fundamentals, it burdened her/him with the responsibility of assessing the impacts of her/his own constructions (Berman 1982; Jenks 2005). Along these lines, Berman (1982, p. 21) proposes that modern humanity "found itself in the middle of a great absence and emptiness of values and yet, at the same time, a remarkable abundance of possibilities." Further, poststructuralist scholars, echoing Nietzsche's call for challenging the conventional approach stating that "[I]f there can be no end, then the process built on the 'grand narrative', 'myth', or 'values' of history is nothing more than an eternal return of circumstances,

values, people and things. We must seek out moments of challenge, interruption, opposition and resistance" (Jenks 2005, p. 141). In sum, Nietzsche, Baudrillard, and Lyotard have given notice of the fragmentation of society, culture and life, thus, of grand narratives.

Along these lines, a key consequence of such a break in faith and growing quest for resistance may be reflected in the fragmentation of society and culture. The result is the genesis of subcultures that may be considered to be the primary venues in contemporary life where consumers can seek aforementioned moments of challenge, interruption, opposition, and resistance. According to Lyotard's (1984) premise of the demise of grand narratives, multiple, fragmented narratives arise and co-exist, a phenomenon that may also be occurring within subcultures (cf. Haenfler 2006; Muggleton 2000; Wood 2006). That is, this research aims to investigate whether subcultures themselves may be rapidly growing, fragmenting, and proliferating in contemporary societies with the very same motives (i.e, music-based subcultures; in this case: punk, hardcore, straight edge, heavy metal, nu-metal, metalcore, grunge, post-rock, goth, rave, hip hop, etc.).

Accordingly, Fırat and Venkatesh (1995, p. 253) emphasize the liberatory and resistance implications of fragmentation, indicating that "[fragmentation] allows the liberation and acceptance of differences, as well as putting an end to the dominance of any one regime "of truth"." It is a transformation of a single reality into multiple realities that are accepted as legitimate and freed from the totality. Echoing Baudrillard and Lyotard, their elaborative analysis of the condition of fragmentation in postmodernity indicates that:

> *...with the increasing role that consumption plays in human lives, fragmentation now pervades all activities. The individual is freed from seeking or conforming to one sense or experience of being; the disenchantment from having to find consistent reason in every act, in every moment, is transcended, and the liberty to live each moment to its fullest emotional peak, for the experience, for the excitement of the senses,*

*for the pleasure, is regained, even when each moment, each spectacle, does not connect into a logical, centered, unified meaning (ibid: 253).*

With the postmodern turn in contemporary society, the globalization process has also been viewed as a fragmented process (Fırat 1997) where one form or style does not dominate or eliminate all others (Fırat and Dholakia 2006). Instead, different styles work as a catalyst for fragmentation, in which consumers, regardless of their nationalities, ethnicity or religious affiliation, are willing to experience and sample the different styles and (sub)cultural artifacts (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Subcultures can provide these cultural venues and artifacts for consumers to be able to actualize their quests for alternative and plural modes of experiencing, living, and being. Therefore, as the impacts of globalization become more noticeable, the tendency to recognize and respect different ways of being and lifestyles as well as allow them to exist in their own ways seems to be gaining strength (Fırat and Dholakia 1998, 2006). However, as Fırat and Dholakia (2006) claim, this respect for difference doesn't mean an absence of preferences in postmodernity because preference still exists. The difference is that a postmodernist sensibility recognizes the fact that various groups, including subculture groups and communities, will have preferences for different and multiple ways of being and living rather than cling to or claim the superiority of just one (Fırat and Dholakia 1998, 2006). Instead, it is recognized that there is a multiplicity of choices and each of them is seen as a "complex of favorable and disagreeable elements that can be differentially evaluated by various communities. In the postmodern sensibility, no possibility of consensus on any foundational or fundamental essential representing 'a universal best' is foreseen" (Fırat and Dholakia 2006, p. 127).

To sum up, contemporary subcultures are, then, proposed to be the key manifestation of the fragmentation of society and the means for producing the meaningful experiences that are

sought in life, as well as for constructing individual and collective identities and producing selves or self-images within these experiences. Therefore, subcultures are venues where consumers can be performers in the theater of life (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Along these lines, a proposition in this research is that subcultures provide a venue where multiple fragmented narratives and life modes may co-exist by having tolerance for differences and plurality and thus give way to subcultural mosaic.

The next section outlines, to the best knowledge of the researcher, all the main theoretical orientations developed to understand the contemporary subculture phenomenon in more detail. In so doing, it will present the arguments both for and against each orientation and will seek to investigate whether any of these theoretical orientations might be able to account for the proposed concept of 'subcultural mosaic'.

## Theories Regarding Subcultures

As one of the opening quotes in the introduction section of this dissertation indicates, a more insightful and "a comprehensive understanding of culture requires the study of groups and individuals outside the mainstream or "straight" society. The beliefs and activities of these groups and individuals hold the potential to inform our knowledge of both dominant culture and reactions to mainstream beliefs and practices" (Honea 2009, p. 34). Further, pertaining to the conventional binary relationship between subculture and mainstream culture, Crane (1992, p. 89) states that "to understand a subculture or a counterculture it is necessary to understand its relationship to both the dominant culture and to the social class within which the subculture or counterculture is emerging." Along these lines, Riesman (1950, 2001) defines subculture as social groupings or minorities who actively seek styles, experiences, activities, images, symbols,

and meanings with a purpose of subverting the values of the dominant commercial culture, whereas he defines mainstream dominant society as the majority who passively accept the styles, experiences, activities, images, symbols, and meanings that are mainly commercially provided by the culture industry. Similar to Riesman's point of view, Hebdige (1979) views subculture as a resistance strategy of a minority against hegemony. However, in contemporary society, subcultures that may often start as rebellious collectives change the forms of resistance they use as they eventually evolve, fragment, and grow (Goulding and Saren 2006). For instance, on the one hand, subculture is widely perceived to be a meaningful alternative to a dominant culture, therefore, not a direct challenge to the dominant institutions or a 'true struggle for power' (Deicke 2007, p. 100) in our lives, as it is observed in the form of a confrontational process in the modern sense (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). On the other hand, alternative lifestyle practices and creating venues for expression for alternative ways of being can also be perceived to be an indirect challenge to the dominant system of meanings and values, as it is observed in the form of a presentational existence and expression process in the postmodern sense (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010).

A wide variety of subculture definitions and theoretical orientations exist in extant literature. However, defining such a multifaceted concept and describing the characteristics and motives of subcultural consumers is a complex task. Attempts to explain the multiple dimensions of the subcultural phenomenon using a single theory, relying on an either/or approach and ignoring the others, would be reductionism because, echoing Williams (2008), no one theorization as to the motives of subcultural members is universally relevant but all theories are sometimes valid.

Traditionally, subcultures have been defined mostly on the bases of nationality, ethnicity, and religion (cf. Gordon 1997; Green 1946). That is, people have been categorized and compressed into given, stable, and clearly demarcated categories based on traditional and modern lineages. For instance, Gordon (1997, p. 41) defines the concept of subculture as a "sub-division of a national culture, composed of a combination of factorable social situations such as class status, ethnic background, regional and rural or urban residence, and religious affiliation, but forming in their combination a functioning unity which has an integrated impact on the participating individual." Similarly, in discussing subcultures, Green (1946, p. 354) states that "in modern society no individual participates in the total cultural complex totally but primarily in a series of population segments grouped according to sex, age, class, occupation, region, religion, and ethnic group…" These approaches to subcultures clearly exhibit that earlier conceptualizations of subculture referred largely to belonging, specifically in terms of lineages.

Alongside the traditional approach, another theoretical approach largely originated at the University of Chicago defines subcultures mainly as deviant, criminal, and unwanted social groups considered to pose a threat to the normative structure and the cohesive whole of society at large (cf. Becker 1963; Cohen 1955; Fine and Kleinman 1979; Irwin 1970; Merton 1968), where deviance is not considered as a symptom of psychological deficiency (Frith 1984) but mainly as a non-conformist and non-normative stance toward some cultural norms of the mainstream culture (Matza and Sykes 1961). On the other hand, the neo-Marxist approach to subculture, largely developed by the Center of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the Birmingham School, introduced a different and one of the most influential aspects to the topic of subculture by claiming that the origination and maintenance of subcultures rely heavily on class-based orientations and experiences (cf. Frith 1984, 1996a; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979;

Willis 1978). Therefore, in this approach, subculture is no longer considered as a deviant or unwanted social group; instead it is situated as a venue for dominated working class social groups to practice and experience political resistance to the dominant structure of society and accordingly to resolve conflicts with the parent generation by developing their own cultural cohorts (Cohen 1972).

Further, these subcultures have excessively used rituals and styles in the form of music, dress, dance, and certain leisure activities in signifying their ideological yet at the same time symbolic resistance to mainstream values and dominant culture (Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979). According to Honea (2009), the CCCS approach contributed to the understanding of consumer culture in many ways. First of all, it introduced the political significance of the style of subcultures that are considered not only to be ideological constructs but also constituents that are in pursuit of winning cultural space from hegemonic dominant culture. Secondly, this approach indicated the significance of the youth segment that was widely ignored and neglected until then in contemporary society. In so doing, they emphasized youth lifestyles, attitudes, activities, and creative and innovative potential in cultural (re)production. In line with this, Honea (2009, p.27) argues that "the role of young people in the culture industry cannot be underestimated, as they are often both an important target market for consumer goods as well as a significant source of ideas for corporate culture producers themselves." Finally, the theoretical approach developed by CCCS has introduced the study of the relationship between consumerism and resistance. In so doing, drawing on Marx's original concept, they focused on the commodification of the culture and developed a concept of 'bricolage' to account for how subcultural members, with some subversive purposes, appropriate consumer items of the mainstream culture for their own use and thus attach to them a new, different, unintended, and

unprecedented meaning to convey oppositional messages and reject the identities presented by the culture industry (Hebdige 1979; Honea 2009).

However, the theoretical approach of CCCS is not without its critics. The most common criticism coalesces around the notion that this approach confines the existence of the whole subcultural phenomenon into a mere class-based experience of subordinated working-class social cohorts (cf. Muggleton 2000). Another criticism levied at this approach maintains that arguments made by CCCS scholars do not rely on empirical evidence. Accordingly, echoing these criticisms toward CCCS, Honea (2009, p.29) states that "one of the methodological shortcomings of the CCCS is that they tended toward semiotics - the reading of style as a text, rather than using a more ethnographic approach and considering what the subculture members themselves articulate as the symbolic meaning of their style or what activities the groups actually participate in that might also be considered political." Another criticism focuses on the CCCS researchers' conceptualization of subcultural groups as short lived with no data gathering through a lengthy field study and thus claims that the "lack of rigorous analysis across time limited their ability to draw accurate conclusions about the effectiveness of resistance" (Honea 2009, p.30). Lastly, the CCCS approach is criticized also due to the pessimistic view they take, similar to that of Frankfurt School scholars, noting social structure is far too strong to be overcome by consumer agency and thus agency disappears as resistance only feeds off the capitalistic system and inequalities (Willis 1977).

Contrary to these orientations that confine subcultures into predetermined and given lineages and static categories, McCracken (1986) and Schouten and McAlexander (1995) contend that people have the potential and the vision to generate their own categories, and therefore do not need to obey or try to fit in predetermined and static categories with boundaries.

In contemporary life, subcultures transcend the boundaries of aforementioned categories, specifically, nationality, ethnicity, and religion (Fırat 1997). That is, people have begun to construct and structure cultural identities no longer just on the basis of where they belonged in the past, their origins, roots, or lineages but more often on the basis of their personal choices. Even ethnicities are now often constructed rather than born into (Bouchet 1995). As it is also seen in one of the opening quotes in the introduction section, Jenks (2005, p. 45) states that subcultures are "the new sources of identity and the new signifiers of difference." Increasingly, people take on values and find ways to organize their lives on the basis of their lifestyles, musical interests, sexual orientations, ideological orientations, and technological orientations (cf. Bennett 1999; Hebdige 1979; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Thus, people begin to see themselves as identifiable groups different from the others, but now the differences are based on their different world views and selected lifestyles rather than their given and predetermined backgrounds. With growing fragmentation in culture, moments of life experiences become increasingly disconnected from each other, their origins and history, and contexts (cf. Baudrillard 1998; Featherstone 1991; Featherstone 1995; Fırat 1991; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Fırat and Dholakia 2006; Harvey 1990; Jameson 1991). Thus, subcultures have come to provide a venue or a way for people to find anchors and feel empowered to generate more dynamic, fluid and organic identities and modes of life (Bennett 1999; Maffesoli 1996; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Bennett (1999, p. 599) claims that in subcultures "the notions of identity are 'constructed' rather than 'given', and 'fluid' rather than 'fixed'."

Along these lines, postmodern subculture identities are multiple and fluid and in many ways subcultural style is no longer articulated around the relations of class, gender, or ethnicity, as was the case in modernity. That is, postmodern politics embraces pluralist and liberatory

concerns, values difference over consensus, and elevates differences and heterogeneity over conformity (Muggleton 2000). Therefore, contemporary subculture studies challenge the notion of coherent and stable subcultures with easily recognizable demarcations and question the usefulness of conceptualizing subcultures as such (Haenfler 2006). In so doing, they focus mainly on the qualities of heterogeneity, fluidity, tastes of such cultures in postmodernity (cf. Bennett 1999; Maffesoli 1996; Muggleton 1997, 2000; Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003; Polhemus 1996, 1997; Redhead 1997). Therefore, CCCS subculture theory has been challenged by post-subculture theory due to its lack of attention to the fragmented, multi-ethnic, multi-class, non-gendered, and transitory nature of so-called postmodern subcultures. Being influenced by poststructuralism, post-subculture theory has emerged as a reaction against the dominant paradigm constituted by the CCCS School and focuses instead on the plurality of current subculture styles and practices (Muggleton 2000). According to post-subculture theory, it is undeniable that boundaries of subcultures are fluid since their members are found not only to switch their scenes and constitute multiple identities and tastes with ease but also to construct both individualized and collective meanings through their participation (Haenfler 2006; Melucci 1996; Muggleton 2000).

As aforementioned, subculture tends to manifest the fragmentation and as the impact of fragmentation has become more noticeable, the debates focusing on the style-orientation of subcultures have grown even more (cf. Muggleton 2010; Polhemus 1996; Redhead 1997). According to post-subculture theory, a consumer with her/his multi-faceted and fragmented existence demands a broad and unrestricted venue in pursuit of navigating freely without belonging to any unity and committed conformity (cf. Maffesoli 1996; Muggleton 2000; Polhemus 1996, 1997; Redhead 1997). Polhemus (1996) names this free movement ‘style

surfing', where consumers "move quickly and freely from one style to another as they wish; indeed, this high degree of sartorial mobility becomes a source of playfulness and pleasure. They do not have to worry about contradictions among their selected subcultural identities for there are no rules, there is no authenticity, no ideological commitment, merely a stylistic game to be played" (Muggleton 2000, p. 471). In line with this notion, Maffesoli (1996) claims that there is only a temporary affective attachment to a variety of styles. Further, Baudrillard's (1983) question (The end of the social?) attempts to express that consumers retain only the image of fashion, not the idea, which in turn, marks the notion that meaning gets lost (Lyotard 1984) and gives way to spectacle (Baudrillard 1983). In other words, style represents only appearance without any underlying connotative message, and thus emphasis is placed on the qualities of the spectacle rather than on any underlying ideologies (Muggleton 2000). In criticizing the aforementioned postmodern orientation toward style, Jameson (1985, p. 115) evokes the concept of pastiche to account for the situation "in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum." Yet, he goes on and states that postmodern fragmentation of style involves 'bricolage', which refers to the reassembling, juxtaposing, and blending of elements, and therefore manifests a certain degree of creativity and originality (Kaiser 1990; Muggleton 2010) along with the construction of new meanings and conceptions in the emerging subcultures (Barnard 1996).

The post-subcultural approach contributes to the understanding of contemporary subcultures in various ways. This approach not only introduces the fragmented and pluralistic aspect of subcultures by paying attention to different time and cultural contexts but also methodologically it allows the members of these (sub)groups to speak for themselves rather than

make assumptions on behalf of them (Harvey 1990; Honea 2009). In so doing, it takes on a more optimistic stance toward human agency and emancipatory potential compared to its Frankfurt School and Birmingham School counterparts. The main argument relies on the notion that subcultural consumers may interpret the culture in their own ways and assign their own meanings and positions to their experiences. Further, new technologies, especially the Internet, enable them to construct and disseminate their alternative cultural values, signs, and meanings. Therefore, these consumers can participate in the entire production of meanings together with other culture (re)producers (cf. Harvey 1990; Honea 2009; Jameson 1991; Lasn 1999).

However, the post-subcultural approach is not without its critics either. The most common criticism of the post-subcultural approach revolves around the notion that this new paradigm considers subcultures mainly as mere aesthetic codes in which, echoing Baudrillard, "subcultural styles have become simulacra, copies with no originals" (Muggleton 2000, p. 46). Further, by falling into the same trap of previous approaches it criticizes, post-subcultural approach confines the analysis of subcultures into the experiences based merely on hyper-individuality characteristics, and thus it largely underestimates, degrades, and abandons the collectivist qualities, ideological orientations along with the resistance potentials of subcultures in its exemplifications and analysis (Hodkinson and Deicke 2007; Honea 2009). Overemphasis on the agency of individuals is problematized not only because of the "ability of corporate culture-producers to disseminate ideological messages through the colonization of these new media and technology forms" (Honea 2009, p.38) but also claiming the notion that consumption of popular culture is power would be misleading in the face of ample evidence to the contrary when there is a growing backlash against mainstream consumer culture in various resistance forms. Along these lines, therefore, Jameson (1991) suggests "retaining the agentic potential of

postmodern culture while resisting the tendency toward celebrating personal freedom through consumption" (Honea 2009, p.39).

Furthermore, obviously subcultures cannot be individually constructed. In order for these fragmented life modes to work a community is required because consumers can only achieve meaning and existence through participation in or construction of communities, thus enabling experiences of varied subcultures, styles, and modes of being (Fırat and Dholakia 2006). Therefore, contrary to the claims of most of the post-subcultural theorists, the condition of fragmentation does not simply promote individualism but collectivities. These collectivities are also variably called in the literature by names such as tribes, neo-tribes, scenes, subcultures of consumption, consumption communities, brand communities, microcultures, and the like (cf. Benneth 1999; Giddens 1991; Maffesoli 1996; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), although each represents some considerable differences or nuances from subcultures (cf. de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan 2007).

Consequently, although each of these theoretical approaches explains parts of the subculture phenomenon, there is a need for a more nuanced analysis and theoretical approach to understand and explore to a greater extent the tendencies of fragmented, multi-faceted, complex, paradoxical, and eclectic subcultures in contemporary society, as well as the impact of market hegemony and the response of subcultural participants to this hegemony, on the development of these subcultural sensibilities. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, this research aims at contributing to the existing literature by introducing and discussing an emergent form of contemporary subcultural constituents and existence: Subcultural Mosaic. Therefore, a proposition in this research is that this proposed approach to the subculture phenomenon contradicts the mere class-based (CCCS) and mere hyper-individualized (post-subcultural)

explanations of previous subcultural theories and thus attempts to bridge the theoretical gap in accounting for the new contemporary subcultures.

The next section first outlines the theoretical orientations that have been adopted in exploring the consumption phenomenon and identifying consumers through the lens of structure and agency social theory. Second, it discusses where and how subcultures have been argued to fit in among these orientations.

## Theoretical Orientations Regarding Consumers and the Role of Subcultural Agency in Critiques of Mainstream Consumer Culture

With the cultural turn from modern to postmodern, technological advancements, and the globalization process, the individual's role has been argued to transform from relatively passive consumers to active producers in contemporary society (Appelbaum and Robinson 2005; Cova and Dalli 2009; Featherstone 1991; Fırat 1997; Fırat and Dholakia 1998, 2006; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Hassan 1987; Penaloza and Price 1993; Shankar et al. 2006; Slater and Tonkiss 2001; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). This research will investigate whether subcultures may represent venues where consumers become active producers and reproducers of meanings and alternative cultures in contemporary society (Honea 2009; Moore 2007; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010), and thus comprise a vital context for researching the new role of consumers through the theoretical lens of structure and agency. On the one hand, echoing Giddens' and Bourdieu's description, structure refers to "regular, relatively fixed, objective, and generalized features of social life" (King 2005, p. 215) where individuals reproduce social structure with their actions. Therefore, structure refers to "social facts that are independent of the individual and are able to determine and constrain individual action" (ibid: 215). On the other hand, agency refers to "the action of human

individuals or groups of individuals" where individuals are "capable of choosing alternative courses of action" (ibid: 215) even though their choices and preferences are constrained and molded by structural realities (King 2005).

So far, four main theoretical orientations have been adopted in classifying consumers: (1) consumers as 'rational heroes', (2) consumers as 'hopeless dupes', (3) consumers as 'postmodern identity-seekers' (cf. Campbell 2005; Williams 2008), and (4) consumers as 'resisting agents' (cf. DeCerteau 1984; Hebdige 1979; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Penaloza and Price 1993). Consumers as rational heroes originates from neo-classical economic theory in which consumers are active, calculative and rational actors who take aim at maximizing their utilities by carefully allocating scarce resources to the purchase of goods and services (Campbell 2005; Hochschild 2003; Slater 1997). Consumers as hopeless dupes originates from critical theory, mainly of the Frankfurt School, in which consumers are passive subjects whose needs and wants are determined and who are manipulated, exploited and constrained by the mass media and other market forces (cf. Adorno 2001; Campbell 2005; Horkheimer and Adorno 2007; Marcuse 1969; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Slater 1997; Williams 2008). Echoing the Frankfurt School scholars, Honea (2009, p.23) posits that:

> *...ideological hegemony has been achieved despite the fact that most people are not ignorant dupes truly believing in the values of consumerism. Instead, if the claim is correct that individuals suspect that the promises of commodified culture are lies, then people have a generalized sense that something is not right in the messages they absorb through their consumption of mass culture and yet they accept them because it seems the "only way" to survive in a world monopolized by corporate interests and dominated by the messages to "consume, consume, consume.*

This pessimistic view of Frankfurt School scholars limits and underrates the potentiality of resistance to consumerism and concludes that social structures win over agency (Gunster

2000). The third orientation that sees consumers as postmodern identity-seekers originates from postmodern theory, according to which consumers manipulate the symbolic meanings of commodities and construct identities (cf. Campbell 2005; Featherstone 1991; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; McCracken 1990; Woodward 2003). The fourth and last approach views consumers as 'resisting agents' who constantly seek to escape, liberate, and emancipate themselves from (cf. Kozinets 2002, 2004; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Penaloza and Price 1993) or subvert, disrupt, and erode the hegemonic and oppressive market structure in an agentic way (Fırat and Dholakia 1998; Hebdige 1979; Harvey 1990; Jameson 1991).

Of these orientations, the third and the fourth have dominated extant literature in accounting for subcultures. This research will introduce these two orientations through the theoretical lens of structure and agency theory. Some consumers may engage in activities in pursuit of fitting in with the values of contemporary life through reproducing what exists. This notion falls mainly under the realm of structure theory due to the lack of an attempt in challenging, transforming or shaping the structure through bringing about novelty with a presentational sensibility. However, agency exists in the presentation of the new, not in the representation of that which is already produced or in other words reproducing what exists (Fırat 1999; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Consequently, as human beings transform from relatively passive consumers to active producers and increasingly participate in life and organize their consumption activities and social life through their own subcultures formed on the basis of their personal and collective choices (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010), the scope of subcultural consumption has also soared.

Over recent decades, along with postmodern turn in contemporary society, the emphasis on consumers has switched from consumers as "rational heroes" with a utilitarian motive to

consumers as "postmodern identity seekers" with a symbolic motive where consumers engage in activities in pursuit of expressing their selves, creativity, and potential alternative modes of life (e.g., Campbell 2005; Featherstone 1991; Williams 2004, 2008). Whilst they once sought to fit in with values of contemporary life by reproducing what already exists, they now seek to stand out by producing novelty. Therefore, this research aims to investigate whether subcultural participants produce symbolic meanings and meaning of life in general and construct creatively individuated and collective identities and lifestyles (cf. McCracken 1996; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010) not only through manipulating, subverting, and consuming the symbols, products, or services that exist in the market (Featherstone 1991; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995) but also through engaging in activities with less or no market intervention (Williams 2008), introducing different social relationships (Holtzman et al. 2007), and producing their own cultural artifacts and independent media to disseminate their own subcultural values and ideals (Moore 2007). Therefore, some subcultures may take this potential of self-expression, identity construction, subversion, deconstruction, imagination, and creativity to the extreme by challenging and transforming the structure, such as the market and mainstream consumer culture. This is where the last two orientations (consumers as identity seekers and consumers as resisting agents) may intersect and where subcultures may give way to social movement participation (cf. Haenfler 2006; Melucci 1985, 1996).

More specifically, for instance, the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethic is the core component of contemporary subcultures, especially the ones based on music such as punk and hardcore. Although the term DIY has long been used, the contemporary usage of the term DIY comes mainly with the emergence of punk subculture (Shantz 2009). Malekoff (2010, p. 305) states that "DIY represents an ideal or value for many young people who associate themselves with the

punk subculture" and DIY has taken a different shape and allowed for a more radical agency within society with the emergence of punk subculture in the late 1970s (Moore 2007; Shantz 2009). According to this radical agency standpoint, DIY is defined as "the idea that you can do for yourself the activities normally reserved for the realm of capitalist production (wherein products are created for consumption in a system that encourages alienation and nonparticipation)" (Holtzman et al. 2007, p. 44). Shantz (2009, p. 61) claims that "in place of a consumerist ethos that encourages consumption of ready-made items, DIYers adopt a productivist ethos that attempts a re-integration of production and consumption." Therefore, subcultures with a DIY ethic provide more than symbolic alternative forms of social organizing for participants while simultaneously undermining the dominant structure by introducing different social relationships and creating value outside of dominant social order and mainstream culture (Holtzman et al. 2007). In other words, while the previous orientation may provide a venue for participants to construct symbolic alternatives and identities, this radical agency role of subcultures may play a role in bringing about structural change.

The DIY ethic of punk subculture, for instance, with its direct action philosophy and democratic and participatory methods of organizing, has become an influence for many events and social organizations and social movements in contemporary societies (Haenfler 2006; Holtzman et al. 2007; McKay 1998; Shantz 2009). For example, having been influenced by the DIY ethic of punk (Shantz 2009), the main objective of the founders of Food Not Bombs (FNB) was to "reclaim food that has or will be discarded by businesses and distribute it publicly in order to help those in need and draw attention to the realities of poverty and military spending" (Holtzman et al. 2007, p. 49). 'Reclaim the Streets', which is a DIY street party that combines celebration and protest, parade and blockade, is another example for contemporary DIY activity

(McKay 1998). The other example is the creation of non-commercial (fan)zines as a grassroots independent media in pursuit of spreading the ideals and values of the subcultural DIY movement, empowering minorities and becoming a voice for them, and mobilizing oppressed individuals and groups (Duncombe 1997). Therefore, if agency lies in the action, Holtzman et al. (2007, p. 53) states that "with direct action as with DIY, individuals are not asking power to address their needs and concerns through processes of representation--they are carrying out actions on their own behalf in which the means are also the ends."

Along these lines, subcultural consumption can be considered to be a form of consumer resistance as it may espouse the forms and values of anti-consumerism and/or ethical consumption. These subcultural consumers refuse the ideology of consumerism and the market hegemony and, with a counter-sub-cultural stance, express their antagonism toward capitalism and market forces, which they consider to be oppressive (Holtzman et al. 2007). Therefore, in addition to the motives of identity-seeking, resistance toward hegemonic market structure and ethical orientations may also be key motives for consumers who participate in subcultures and thus manifest the fragmentation in culture (Holtzman et al. 2007). Since it has been argued that some subcultures and related social movements harbor a potential for liberating the advocates from the repression and social conditioning imposed by the institutions of contemporary society (Holtzman et al. 2007), many people have turned their interests to these subcultures and social movements (Haenfler 2006). With the quest for social and cultural change, this research will investigate whether these social groups with different orientations, lifestyles, worldviews, consumption patterns, tastes, and ideologies than the ones pre-established, provided, and imposed by the hegemonic market forces may mark the division of the society and culture at large.

The next section outlines existing theories on social movements in general terms, indicates the symbiotic and overlapping interplay between subcultures and social movements, and discusses how the new forms of subcultural constituents and existence (subcultural mosaic) may play a role in bringing about socio-cultural change through engaging in fragmented social movements.

## Subcultures and Social Movements Interplay for Social Change

To examine the interplay between subcultures and social movement, it is crucial to have a broad review of the extant literature on social movements. Social movement is a multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon and it has a wide variety of meanings. Therefore, it has been conceptualized differently at different times by various scholars. Thus far, social movements have been examined mostly through the lens of the dichotomy of traditional social movements and new social movements as though they are totally mutually exclusive phenomena.

Social movement is simply referred to "a collective form of action to challenge the exploitation of political and economic power and to change the political and market institutions" (Binay 2005, p.14). Additionally, social and personal transformations are also the main concerns of new social movements (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2006). In its simplest sense, social movement refers to collective cause and strife for a social change. In its broadest sense, social movement refers to a continuum with one extreme being fully bureaucratized and formally organized movements focusing on institutional and political change, and the other extreme being highly diffuse, decentralized, and fragmented movements devoid of any bureaucracy and formality focusing more on cultural and lifestyle-based change (Haenfler 2004b, 2006). While the former has been called old or traditional social movements, the latter has been called new

social movements. For the latter, Haenfler (2006, p. 61) claims that "a strong collective identity is the foundation of diffuse movements, providing structure, a basis for commitment, and guidelines for participation." In this spirit, new social movements can be considered to be taking aim at constructing the social life (Cohen 1985).

The proponents of new social movements challenge the formal, bureaucratic, stable, homogeneous, and class-distinction oriented structures of traditional social movements that focus on merely outer political and institutional change. According to this relatively new school of thought, traditional social movement theory cannot adequately explain the contemporary new social movements that revolve around the components of ideology, lifestyle, cause, individual and collective identity, and culture (Buechler 1995; Melucci 1985; Touraine 1985). These may include the civil rights movement, gay and lesbian rights, the anti-racist movement, the anti-war/anti-military and peace movement, the feminist movement, the green/environmentalist movement, the animal rights movement, the human rights movement, the labor rights movement, and the like.

As Haenfler (2006, p. 61) states, new social movements theorists "have brought renewed attention to movement culture, the role of expressive action, how movements construct an ideology, the connection between individual and collective identity, and how participants interact at the micro level of movement activity." The identity aspect of the social movements has gained wide attention because, as Haenfler (2006, p. 80) points out "movements are more than organizations raising funds, holding demonstrations, and lobbying politicians. They include identities that shape people's lives in the most personal ways, while simultaneously making a collective statement." He also states that this link between individual and collective identities will likely to increase the members' commitment to the cause.

Johnston and Lio (1998) claim that with the waxing of postmodernity social movements are becoming more widespread and increasingly weaving into the very fabric of everyday life with the cultural changes and transformations in contemporary society. They also argue that lifestyle-based, identity and cultural challenges are more effective than mere political challenges in bringing about social change and making the world a better place to live in. Collective identity is crucial for all movements but since new social movements provide a venue for cultural change, it gains even greater importance due to the fact that without collective identity there will be no sense of belonging and a connection among the members of the movement (Haenfler 2004), therefore a social movement will have "no formal structure to ensure continuity, consistency, action, and commitment" (Haenfler 2006, p. 195). Along these lines, the success and the emerging reasons of new social movements lies behind the fact that these movements are less structured, non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian, non-bureaucratic, participatory, autonomous, lifestyle oriented, ideology oriented, and most importantly (sub)culture oriented (Haenfler 2006).

Further, these movements involve moral concern and most importantly provide connection between personal and collective identity. This collective identity can be said to be a challenge to the dominant order because it is also a reaction against the alienating and objectifying individualism dictated by the capitalist market order (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Therefore, Haenfler (2004b, 2006) states that less-structured, culture-oriented new social movements may also bring significant social challenges as much as more formal, organized, bureaucratic movements can do. Additionally, they also pose a meaningful cultural challenge through their subcultural characteristics. Along these lines, new social movements pose symbolic challenges to the dominant culture (Binay 2005; Melucci 1985) through their abilities to decode the mainstream codes of the culture with their code of consciousness (cf. Baudrillard 1998).

According to Eyerman (2002), social movements are venues for political and cultural experimentation and, echoing Habermas (1985), a means for consumers to take their 'lifeworlds' back from the market hegemony and to protect them. That is, subcultures as social movements present a venue for the consumer to be an agent in social life. Further, consumption involves both cultural and political challenges and in order to be able to bring about a change to the culture and the political structure, both types of social movements are considered to be necessary. Further, Haenfler (2006) argues that these two movements need to be complementary because taking a single approach at the expense of the other can limit our understanding of subcultures.

To sum it up, a proposition in this research is that while subcultures as social movements may provide venues for people to construct individual and collective identities and challenging dominant cultural codes and values, they may also look for challenging the political and economic structures. Collective identity empowers consumers and provides and shapes meaning to their personal actions where personal actualizations and social transformation are complementing each other in the manner of making a world a better place to live (Haenfler 2006). Along these lines, subcultures involve characteristics from both traditional/old and new social movements. Similar to hybrid consumer activists (Fırat 2004), this research aims to investigate if subcultures may provide consumers a venue to construct and negotiate their individual and collective identities, yet at the same time they may take aim at multiple causes such as egalitarianism, ending global poverty, sweatshops, inequitable distribution of resources, and the like, and to incorporate ideas for social change (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2006). Melucci (1996) states that people pursue personal quest for identity and empowerment as they also work for collective action and social change. Therefore, members of subcultures may both serve the

cause of the movement and enjoy their experience and existence in that movement through constructing individual and collective identities.

In other words, these antagonist entities may pose a meaningful social and cultural challenge to an alienating and objectifying trait of modern capitalist economies by constructing collective identities and collective behaviors (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). They may also have an impact on some socio-cultural and political issues such as racism, sexism, human rights, animal rights, environmentalism, and the like. Subcultures and social movements seem to be providing a venue for consumers to contest the consumer culture and the ideology of consumption and create their own alternatives. Hardman (2007, p.10) claims that "identity as a project and the creation of alternative cultural spaces in which such identities can be played out are rarely non-political." Therefore, subcultural social movements in contemporary society cannot be reduced to a either strictly political or strictly cultural category as how it is mainly reflected in extant literature.

Consequently, a proposition in this research is that a continual multiplication of subcultures may be occurring as different members of an initial subculture find purpose in presenting a different, even if in nuance, mode of organizing and experiencing life to produce meaningful and substantive moments (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). This impulse in contemporary culture cannot be dismissed if a broader and more insightful understanding of consumption is desired.

### The Nature of the Mainstream Consumer Culture and Dominant Social Order

Since subcultures are presented in this research to be possibly emerging in reaction to the mainstream consumer culture and dominant social order, it is crucial to have a broad understanding of the underlying social, historical, political factors of the mainstream consumer

culture and dominant capitalistic social order and values. Since the Industrial Revolution, production has mainly occupied the center of industrial societies in modernity (cf. Marx 1990). However, with the cultural turn from modern to postmodern (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Hassan 1987; Jameson 1985, 1991; Slater and Tonkiss 2001), rapid technological changes and advancements (e.g., computer technologies) (Harvey 1990; Poster 1990, 2006), and the proliferation of mass media (Schor 1998), consumption has arguably replaced production and thus taken center stage in contemporary Western post-industrial societies (Baudrillard 1998; Bocock 1993; Featherstone 1991, 1995; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Harvey 1990). In other words, we are said to be living in a society where the centrality of the organizing tenets of production in social life is rapidly replaced by the centrality of the organizing tenets of consumption (Harvey 1990; Honea 2009; Moore 2007). Although consumerist values - consumption-oriented means for happiness seeking - are spreading from the West to the other parts of the world as the impact of globalization becomes more salient and prevalent, consumerism is still maintained to be largely a Western trait that has a central role in industrial and post-industrial societies (Belk 1985).

In contemporary society, the centrality of consumption is woven into the very fabric of everyday life as a key element of culture, and plays a significant role in molding and influencing many aspects of lives of many people at both the individual and the collective level (Baudrillard 1998; Featherstone 1991; Fırat and Dholakia 1998; Miles 1998). In other words, consumerism is now a key element of mainstream culture that has considerable impact on a common set of attitudes, values, goals, ideals, norms, rituals, habits, behaviors, and identities shared by members of a society (Lury 1996). Thus, consumerism represents a way of life for citizens and is considered to be the essential component of contemporary culture (Miles 1998). Along these

lines, whilst spirituality, frugality, simplicity, community, integrity, and production were espoused as the central virtues of the traditional and modern societies, these virtues have been arguably discarded and replaced in consumer culture with the virtues of (over)consumption, material accumulation, and spectacles in pursuit of material pleasures and aesthetic and sensual experiences (Bocock 1993; Ger 2005).

While cultural spheres are said to be increasingly monopolized and dominated by the ideology of consumerism that is disseminated by corporate culture producers (also known as culture industry) through control of the means of communication, Honea (2009, p.6) contends that "media representations of popular culture provide examples of which consumer goods are considered "hip" or "cool" and encourage individuals to shape their identities through the consumption of these goods and services." Therefore, consumption works as a catalyst for individuals and groups not only in defining and extending their self-concepts (Belk 1988), but also in constructing their identities, constituting their value systems, and organizing their social structure (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). Therefore, consumerism is credited with being the social and economic order as well as the collective system of attitudes and practices that pervade the value structure of a society, which, in turn, constitutes a central part of the ideological elements of contemporary societies.

It has been argued that the ideology of consumerism, which is reinforced, disseminated, and perpetuated by neoliberal institutions and the capitalist free-market system (Heath and Potter 2004), and that it requires the values of self-interest and materialism as the main dimensions of the prevalent value system in contemporary societies (Slater and Tonkiss 2001). For instance, materialism includes mainly material objects and considerations in scope and refers to the importance consumers attach to these objects and worldly possessions (Belk 1985). In an attempt

to disseminate this new value system to the members of contemporary societies, the pursuit of accumulation of material possessions, (over)consumption activities, and utility maximization acts are depicted not only as more desirable than the pursuit of higher spiritual goals or social relationships, but also as a means to bring about prosperity, seductive good life, and improved quality of life for everyone (Beruchashvili and Arnould 2005). Along these lines, neo-classical economics and neo-liberalism take aim at relocating the power to the individual (cf. Hayek 1976; Smith 1991; Ricardo 1817; cited in Slater and Tonkiss 2001) ―more specifically to the consumer―by eroding the sociality and promoting the notion of individual's freedom to choose. In other words, neo-liberal political economy grounds its ideology through this notion and narrative of freedom and autonomy. In so doing, it acknowledges and advocates the capitalistic order as the essential and necessary component in providing freedom to individuals due to its choice provision (Shankar et al. 2006). Echoing Foucault (1984, 1990), Shankar et al. (2006, p. 1015) argue that since "choice as a manifestation of people's ability to exercise free-will, thereby demonstrating their autonomy and self-determination has become normalized." Furthermore, since choice "involves the creation of markets, consumers and consumption" (Dholakia and Dholakia 1985; cited in Shankar et al. 2006, p. 1015), it is also perceived to be a means of improving quality of life[1] within the capitalistic mindset (Shankar et al. 2006).

Further, marketing is increasingly perceived to be not only a vehicle and a critical set of institutions for the improvement of societal welfare and quality of life (Ekici and Peterson, 2009), but also a life support provision technology for society (Fisk 1981). Therefore, the marketing institutions, claimed by some to be the promotion tool of consumer capitalism (cf. Heath and Porter 2004), plays a key role in promoting the ideology of consumerism as the

[1] Quality of life is a term used to refer to an aggregation of consumers' experiences in some domains such as basic needs, healthcare, education, political participation, community, freedom from harm, aesthetics, and the like (Kilbourne et al. 1997, Sirgy 1991).

primary means of achieving quality of life (Kilbourne et al. 1997). This is in line with the assigned role of marketing in promoting the values of consumerist capitalism including individualization, competition, and consumption (Honea 2009). Consequently, marketing institution, as one of the key components of social control, is said to play a critical role in converting society from a producer to a consumer culture (Lazer 1969) and make the consumption an ideological necessity to sustain a market economy (Cochoy 1998; Shankar et al. 2006).

Consumerism, however, has been increasingly criticized and problematized due to various negative social, environmental, and cultural consequences it is said to cause and thus gave way for some groups of people (e.g., subcultures) to attempt socio-cultural change and alternative identity construction (cf. Bocock 1993; Cherrier 2009; Hebdige 1979; Lasn 1999). In line with the growing critiques of consumerism and mainstream consumer culture, a proposition in this research is that subcultures may arise as reactions against the market 'hegemony' (cf. Gramsci 1971) and the consumerist ideology of the dominant social order and mainstream consumer culture where the cultural sphere is claimed to be occupied and monopolized to a greater extent by the 'sphere of circulation' (cf. Marx 1990) and 'culture industry' (cf. Adorno 2001; Horkheimer and Adorno 2007).

The next section provides an overview of the literature on these problems largely associated with consumerism and mainstream consumer culture. It then outlines the growing critiques from different perspectives, including subcultures, in relation to these problems in more detail.

## The Discontentment with the Mainstream Consumer Culture and Dominant Social Order

Consumerism as a way of life, an ideology, and a grand modern project is not without its critics. The ideology of consumerism is largely criticized and problematized due to its detrimental consequences for society, environment, and culture such as increasing social and economic inequalities, personal debt, environmental degradation, and market hegemony and authority in cultural spheres (cf. Fırat and Dholakia 1998; Honea 2009; Iyer and Muncy 2009; Kilbourne et al. 1997; Schor 1998; Schor and Holt 2000). Further, since some social groups are said to emerge in the form of subcultures as reactions against the problems largely associated with consumerism and mainstream consumer culture, this chapter takes aim at outlining various critical standpoints—societal, environmental, and cultural—addressing these problems in an attempt to provide a more profound insight into the emergence of subcultures with social movement qualities.

From a societal critique standpoint, the ideology of consumerism is problematized mainly for permeating and instilling the values of 'living to consume' (Kilbourne 1997, p.5), and for paying little or no attention to distributive justice, and thus income and consumption inequalities (Fisk 1999). Even though the dynamic dyadic relationships of the producers and consumers are thought to bring equality and yield to balance in the current power structure in the marketplace (cf. Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2006; Holt 2002), there exist growing inequalities and imbalances observed within the marketplace reflected also by rapidly growing multinational and transnational corporations (Klein 2009; Lasn 1999; Ozanne and Murray 1995). Consequently, Fisk (1973) claims that individuals and social organizations need to adopt and implement a novel attitude toward the meaning of consumption in order to achieve transformations within

contemporary societies. In response to this need, this research will investigate subcultures as entities that may adopt an attitude different than the attitudes in the mainstream consumer culture and thus attempt to emancipate it from its hegemonic structure and bring about social and cultural transformations within contemporary societies.

Quality of life level can be considered to be one of the key determinants of the contentedness and the discontentedness of the members of contemporary societies. In line with this notion, the relationship between an increase in consumption and the improvement of quality of life and happiness has long been questioned and investigated, and as a result highly confuted, criticized, and problematized by some scholars. For instance, Kilbourne et al. (1997) state that there is a decline in the quality of life in Western societies where the prevailing belief of achieving happiness is based merely on consumption (Hetrick 1989), and thus quality of life is assessed through the increasing levels of consumption. Belk (1985) provides empirical evidence regarding the negative relationship between materialism and happiness in life. Similarly, Durning (1992, 2009) reveals that greater material consumption does not bring about greater happiness. Further, Fırat and Dholakia (1998) claim that many powerless consumers either indicate imbalance in their satisfaction of their basic needs or overspend and go into debt and financial dependency. Along these lines, De Graaf et al. (2001) claim that such materialistic tendencies yield a lower quality of life satisfaction, owing to the negative impacts of such tendencies in generating more debts, bankruptcies, and stress, and less savings and time for family and friends.

Further, individuals who espouse consumerist values tend to strive for more material acquisition and are said to be in a state of permanent dissatisfaction or temporary satisfaction (cf. Fromm 1979). On the other hand, consumption has taken a role in consumer society of satisfying

the needs to be valued and respected by others. Hence, it has become a means to gain self-esteem and social acceptance. Even success has been assessed relative to the ability of consumers to consume. Therefore, since opportunity of consumption is not evenly distributed (Schor 1999) and consumers feel and know that they are judged by what and how they consume, those who cannot consume are claimed to become oppressed and disappointed (Fırat and Dholakia 1998).

According to Bourdieu (1984), consumption as an everyday act plays a key role in reproducing class inequality, status, and alienation, and thus reinforcing power structures. In line with this notion, Schor (1999) claims that since consumption practices reproduce and reinforce social and consumption inequalities, consumption patterns need to be changed in an attempt to achieve equality, such that consumers should look for quality of life rather than quantity of commodities and avoid unregulated consumption that may pave way to the erosion of societal welfare. In terms of the essence of consumption dynamics, Schor (1999, p.5) points out that "the aspirational gap has been created by structural changes-such as the decline of community and social connection, the intensification of inequality, the growing role of mass media, and heightened penalties for failing in the labor market." Therefore, Schor (1999, p.2) also claims that we need cultural change and new policies that will turn consumption into a more "democratic, egalitarian, and available to all" phenomenon. She goes on to state that "we need independent organizations of consumers to pressure companies, influence the political agenda, provide objective product information, and articulate a vision of an appealing and humane consumer sphere" (ibid: 12).

In sum, all these critical studies seem to imply and reinforce the notion that the grand universal happiness promises of the consumerism project cannot be accomplished (Alvesson 1994; Bauman 1992) and neoclassical assumptions that the maximum social good is achieved as

the sum of individual assets is a failure due to the non-egalitarian structure of capitalism (cf. Bauman 1992; Bocock 1993; Slater and Tonkiss 2001). Therefore, a proposition in this research is that subcultures may be the manifestation of the fragmentation within society/culture as a result of the failure of the project of modernity. However, this presented critique of consumerism and thus mainstream consumer culture is claimed to be reflected not only in problems such as social inequality, unhappiness, and low quality of life, but also in problems in relation to natural environment and sustainability (Kilbourne et al. 1997).

From an environmental critique standpoint, since the ideology of consumption is said to affect the environmental sustainability of present consumption, the contemporary consumption pattern is increasingly viewed to be problematic in terms of environmental issues (Kilbourne et al. 1997). For instance, Durning (1992) claims that population growth and consumption are two primary factors that yield environmental degradation. He goes on to state that although population growth has started to be perceived as a problem by both citizens and governments, consumption is still viewed to be critical and beneficial for national economic policy and well-being.

It has been argued that a mere focus on financial and economic growth and the rising intensity of competition in the market give way to a rise in unethical, socially irresponsible, and even abusive marketing practices in contemporary societies (Preston and Richard 1986; Sirgy and Lee 1996). Since economics cannot be separated from nature, this pursuit of mere economic growth, which encourages over-consumption behaviors, is claimed to have a damaging impact on the quality of life and the environment (Humphery 2010; Kilbourne et al. 2007; Schor 1998). More specifically, it has been argued that pollution, global warming, poverty, extinctions of species, and resource depletion are considered to be the consequences of the very failures of the

market and consumerism (cf. Bocock 1993; Kilbourne et al. 1997; McIntosh 1991; Schor 1998, 1999). Varadarajan and Thirunarayana (1990) claim that scrutiny of the marketing practices of firms at large by governmental bodies, the media, and public interest groups is desirable from the standpoint of larger societal welfare. As a result of growing aforementioned environmental problems, not only are the environmental consequences of marketing and consumption practices and patterns increasingly observed to be taken into scrutiny but also growing environmental concern is increasingly observed among some individuals and social groups in contemporary society (Alwitt and Pitts 1996; Humphery 2010; Schwepker and Cornell 1991; Ulusoy 2012). It has been argued that growing public awareness and concern for social and environmental issues among some individuals and social groups as well as pressures from social movements may push organizations and marketers to transcend their economic oriented boundaries (cf. Schor 1998).

Kilbourne et al. (1997) argue that since the ideology of consumerism takes aim at disseminating the anthropocentric and egocentric values; consumption decision has mainly been reflected in the private realm of self-interest. Therefore, emphasizing the importance of socially and environmentally conscious and responsible behavior for ecological well-being, Kilbourne et al. (1997, p.11) point out that "in any consumer decision, the dilemma ought to be whether to act as a self-interested consumer and get what one wants, or to act as a responsible citizen and do what ought to be done in consideration of what one wants." Along these lines, Humphery (2010) and Kilbourne et al. (1997) suggest consumers be aware of the social and environmental crisis in order to respond with appropriate behavior and to balance the public and private interest in individual decision making. For instance, Frank (1988) claims that certain groups of consumers are casting their economic votes in an attempt to help save the environment and improve society. These socially conscious consumers "purchase products and services which they perceive to

have positive (or less negative) impact on the environment or use their purchasing power to express current social concerns" (Roberts 1995, p. 140). These socially conscious consumers may also reduce their consumption level (see Lee et al. 2009). Further, Roberts (1995) contends that socially conscious consumer behavior can also have an influence on particular groups within society such as minorities, women, labor unions, and the like, or can promote causes such as animal rights, lesbian/gay rights, reduction of weapons production, and the like.

According to some scholars, although the allure of the consumer society is powerful, there is a room for resistance (cf. Elgin 1993; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Honea 2009; Humphery 2010; Lasn 1999; Schor 1998). However, it has been argued that many consumers are still yet to be sufficiently aware about the social and environmental impacts of their daily consumption habits (Schor 1998, 1999). In order to solve this problem, Schor (1999) claims that consumers/citizens who are concerned about environment and social equality should cooperate with environmentalists, civil society organizations, social movements, and (non)governmental organizations which are trying to educate people. Beck (1992) claims that the activities of social movements have higher credibility for consumers than of the existing institutions in times of social and ecological crisis. These social movements are said to provide alternative solutions to the problems caused by consumerism and consumer culture. That is, subcultures and related social movements can be considered to be the sources for individuals who seek sound and reliable information regarding the facts and occasions in the 'risk society' (Beck 1992). Along these lines, since subcultures are considered to be the entities that emerge as a reaction against the mainstream consumer culture, a proposition in this research is that subcultures are entities that may be actively sought out by some individuals and social groups who quest reliable information as to what is really happening in the society and thus bring about

challenges to the marketing and consumption practices and status quo at large which may hinder societal and environmental well-being.

From a cultural critique standpoint, mainstream consumer culture is problematized mainly due to the fact that the artifacts of consumer culture are interwoven into the very fabric of our everyday life and the culture has become very advertising and brand friendly (Lasn 1999). In other words, it has been argued that all facets of culture have begun to revolve around the activities of selling, buying, promoting, and consuming the products and services along with living the experiences, images, and meanings largely associated with them. One of the key criticisms to consumer culture is raised by Frankfurt School scholars who argue that consumers are manipulated into participating in an artificial consumer culture, which may generate only few true satisfactions if at all (cf. Fromm 1979; Habermas 1991; Horkheimer and Adorno 2007; Marcuse 1969). Likewise, echoing the Frankfurt School tradition, Schor (2007, p.22) states that "capitalist production creates capitalist culture and a passive citizenry, in which cultural consumption is used to reproduce an exploitative economic system." Subcultures, however, are venues where members are considered to be the active producers and constructors of their own cultures, cultural artifacts, products, symbols, experiences, and meanings (Hebdige 1979; Honea 2009; Muggleton 2000; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010; Williams 2011) mainly as reactions against the mainstream cultural sphere that is largely monopolized and dominated by the ideology of consumerism and the market culture (Honea 2009).

Furthermore, it has been argued that in mainstream consumer culture consumers are forced to conform to the spoon-fed identities pre-established by the actors of the culture industry such as marketers and advertisers (Binay 2005). Since most of the social relations have been constructed through this paradigm in contemporary societies, consumers who don't want to be

excluded or discriminated against feel the need to conform, and those who cannot afford this conformity feel oppressed and depressed (Fırat and Dholakia 1998) and those who refuse to conform feel marginalized (Honea 2009). However, these negative consequences of mainstream consumer culture also give way and foster its own opponents in various subcultural forms mainly because subcultures are considered to be "a resource from which to develop a positive self-concept, a confidence in non-normative thinking, and a network of support in a world that often feels alienating and unfulfilling" (Williams 2011, p.2).

The clash arises especially when these subcultures gain popularity to a certain degree and therefore grab the attention of the culture industry and the market. It is argued that the market institution tends to co-opt and appropriate the expressions of these subcultures and present them as commodities to wider audiences through mainstream media, and thus empty the meanings of their critical and oppositional stances (Heath and Potter 2004; Honea 2009; Marcuse 1969). In other words, while the market is claimed to dominate all facets of life by acting as a cultural authority, dictating its own preferences and values in contemporary society (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995), and monopolizing, governing, and dominating the cultural sphere via control of the means of communication and thus of popular culture to disseminate the values of the dominant ideology of consumer capitalism; it also seeks to appropriate, transform, and assimilate all the oppositional and antithetical cultures and values into the mainstream consumer (Honea 2009).

Based on the claims of Antonio Gramsci, Fırat and Venkatesh (1995) and Holt (2002) point out that while some consumers are mostly conforming to significations developed in marketing practices and use the meanings so created in living their lives, such as mainstream consumers, other consumers do find possibilities to refuse and resist marketing's cultural authority and its consumption codes (Baudrillard 1998) by attempting to produce their own

meanings and consumption practices (Fiske 1989), such as subcultural consumers. In contemporary societies, increasing numbers of people resist the market hegemony, consumer culture, and capitalism in an agentic way (Hollenback and Zinkhan 2006; Lee et al. 2009; Penaloza and Price 1993). While some of these agencies attempt to bring about change through social and environmental structures, others strive for a cultural change relying on the notion that cultural change will eventually result in structural change (cf. Duncombe 1997; Haenfler 2006; Holtzman et al. 2007; Moore 2007; Shukaitis and Graeber 2007). Further, a proposition in this research is that consumers who are forming and participating in subcultures tend to refuse and resist the prefabricated and spoon-fed identities that they are said to be forced by corporate culture producers to conform to via using and consuming their commercial brands (Binay 2005; Hebdige 1979; Honea 2009; Muggleton 2000) and tend to reject corporations, as the main actors of the dominant structure, mainly for conducting unethical practices around the world through violating human and animal rights, exploiting the natural sources, and damaging the environment and mental health (Haenfler 2006; Klein 2009; Lasn 1999).

In sum, a proposition in this research is that these social, environmental, and cultural problems, which are examined in detail in this section, largely associated with consumerism and mainstream consumer culture may pave the way to the rising critiques from different perspectives, including subcultures, which will be examined in the next section in more detail.

### The Quest for Social/Cultural Change and Alternative Identities and Self-Expression

Consumers, who have antagonistic stances against consumerism, mainly stress the values of frugality, simplicity, community, integrity, anti-materialism, environmentalism, human and animal rights, social equality, pacifism, and the like as socially acceptable considerations

(Bocock 1993; Humphery 2010; Schor 1998). They may take a critical stance not only against the activities of consumption that may represent profane acts (Belk et al. 1989), greed, waste, and self-indulgent hedonism (Belk 1983), but also against the ideology of consumerism in general (Kozinets and Handelman 2004) that is claimed to promote materialistic values, self-interested efforts of material accumulation, overconsumption behavior, and the notion that accumulation of materials and possessions would lead to subjective wellbeing, happiness, and common prosperity (cf. Belk 1983; Kilbourne et al. 1997; Slater and Tonkiss 2001).

Consumer resistance can take various forms such as anti-consumption (Humphery 2010; Lee et al. 2009; Zavestoski 2002), brand avoidance (Lee et al. 2009), brand rejection (Sandikci and Ekici 2009), culture jamming (Lasn 1999), voluntary simplicity (Cherrier 2009; Elgin 1993), boycotting (Kozinets 1998), consumer activism (Kozinets and Handelman 2004), anti-brand communities (Hollenback and Zinkhan 2006), counter-cultural/subcultural movements (Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Zavestoski 2002), and the like. In so doing, these consumers may construct alternative identities mainly antithetical to the mainstream culture (Cherrier 2009), produce their own cultures, including cultural products, artifacts, expressions, significations, and the like, and create an independent media largely driven by do-it-yourself ethic (Moore 2007), develop anti-consumerist tendencies and then engage in anti-consumption behaviors (Lee et al. 2009; Ulusoy 2012), and become involved in anti-brand communities (Handelman and Zinkhan 2006) and anti-consumption movements such as frugality, simple living, downshifting, voluntary simplicity, and the like (Elgin 1993; Humphery 2010; Schor 1998).

For instance, frugality refers to an escape from consumerism in contemporary society and represents an effort to achieve greater fulfillment through reducing working hours and the level of consumption and material possessions (Dominguez and Robin 1999). In line with this,

consumers who are in pursuit of simple living, seek meaning and fulfillment through enriching their inner selves and experiences rather than through the materials they accumulate (Elgin 1993). Therefore, they take frugality, sufficiency, and simple living as positive life statements (Schor 1998). Downshifting represents a disbelief in the values of materialism and consumerism and places the emphasis on 'soul-searching' and a 'coming to consciousness' (Schor 1998). It is mainly considered to be a process of trading off money for time and quality of life (Humphery 2010). Voluntary simplicity is considered to be a constructive alternative to consumerism and a more politicized form of downshifting (Doherty and Etzioni 2003; Humphery 2010; Schor 1998). However, similar with downshifting, consumers who engage in the voluntary simplicity movement also consciously take aim at taking control of their behaviors, thoughts, and desires through putting some restrictions on their own consumption behaviors and patterns in an agentic and voluntary way (Schor 1998). Further, the mediation of self-reliant communities in holding the balance between material and spiritual needs and in fostering inner growth and spiritual development are another trait of the voluntary simplicity movement (Doherty and Etzioni 2003; Humphery 2010).

In sum, this research aims to investigate if these aforementioned social, environmental, and cultural problems associated with consumerism and mainstream consumer culture give birth to its own opponents largely in the subcultural forms. Therefore, contrary to the thesis of passive consumers of mainstream culture, a proposition in this research is that those who are discontent with the mainstream consumer culture may attempt to create their own alternative modes of living and being that espouse mainly antithetical values to the mainstream culture by playing an active and creative role in contemporary society. Along these lines, therefore, this research will further investigate whether these consumers may seek venues or 'public spheres' where they can

freely articulate and express themselves, discuss critical socio-cultural issues, speak their antagonistic voices to the existing socio-economic structure, imagine alternative social orders and relationships, and attempt to bring about different social and cultural organizing and individual and collective identities. In result, since the hegemonic nature of mainstream culture is proposed to give birth to subcultural resistance, and if this resistance cannot be eradicated by market co-optation, this research aims to investigate if there arises a continual cycle of market co-optation of subcultures and subcultural resistance to this market co-optation and dominant ideology, which, in turn, may give way to something that we could call subcultural mosaic where fragmented and proliferated subcultural constituents may co-exist.

The next section first provides the main discussions on the co-optation strategies of the market. Second, it outlines the historical development and amendments in the forms of resistance over time and questions how subcultural resistance may play a role in this continuous cycle of market co-optation and consumer resistance process.

**The Continual Cycle of Market Co-optation and Subcultural Consumer Resistance**

On the one hand, the market constantly seems to attempt to co-opt and assimilate every oppositional subculture into the mainstream, while on the other hand, subcultures constantly seem to be growing, fragmenting, and proliferating. Therefore, this research aims to investigate if there is a continual cycle of market co-optation and subcultural resistance in contemporary society (cf. Brown 2007; Clarke et al. 1976; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979). More specifically, the conventional approach is that the market co-opts subcultures and assimilates them into a mainstream consumer culture, and thus erodes their collectivity and undermines resistance and their agentic potentials, which in turn marks the demise of these distinct

subcultures along with their antithetical stances (cf. Clark 2003; Heath and Potter 2004; Hebdige 1979; Honea 2009; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). However, contrary to the conventional approach, a proposition in this research is that resistance may not disappear and thus subcultures may not simply be assimilated into the mainstream as a result of market co-optation in the face of so many still emerging, growing, and proliferating subcultures in contemporary society. Rather, subcultural resistance may change its forms and strategies over time in an attempt to respond to and resist the market hegemony and its assimilation-oriented 'melting pot' strategy more effectively. Therefore, this research will further investigate whether there exists this dynamic interplay between market co-optation and subcultural resistance that may work as a catalyst in fostering and accelerating the fragmentation process of the culture and subcultures themselves, which in turn may result in subcultural mosaic where multiple fragmented subcultural narratives shall co-exist. Also discussed is the potential role of these co-existing subcultures in bringing about social/cultural change in contemporary society.

As mentioned earlier, in playing the role of culture authority, the market constantly seeks to dominate the entire cultural space and assimilate those containing distinct and antithetical stances into the mainstream dominant consumer culture through engaging in co-optation, commercialization, and commodification processes (Clark 2003; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Heath and Potter 2004; Hebdige 1979). Therefore, market co-optation and subcultural resistance to the market and co-optation process itself seems to be one of the most critical concerns for consumerism critics who are constantly seeking the venues and possibilities for agency and resistance to and emancipation from the market hegemony and mainstream culture. In line with the notion that the market is dominating all facets of life and dictating its own preferences and values by acting as a cultural authority, Honea (2009, p.1) claims that:

> *…the creation of culture through interaction has become a much more complex process in a highly stratified social world in which cultural production and reproduction can be strongly influenced, through control of the means of communication, by representatives of a mere handful of powerful transnational corporations. These corporate culture producers have the ability to disseminate forms of popular culture, including sports, which reinforce dominant values.*

In sum, the market with its corporate culture producers and disseminators seeks to appropriate and assimilate all the oppositional values and stances and therefore co-opts (sub)cultures containing antithetical stances to dominant consumerist culture and capitalist values in contemporary society (cf. Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Honea 2009).

Based on extant literature, Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007) identified two theoretical approaches to the co-optation phenomenon namely 'classical co-optation theory' and 'the hip consumer variation of co-optation theory'. Similar to the previous discussion, 'classical co-optation theory' takes a pessimistic stance to subcultural existence and states that the market co-opts and commercializes the distinctive and mainly antithetical values and symbols of subcultures into the mainstream realm by appropriating, sanitizing, packaging, and selling them to the mass market, and therefore marks the demise of these constituents (Hebdige 1979; Marcuse 1969). Alternatively, echoing mainly the claims of Heath and Potter (2004), 'the hip consumer variation of co-optation theory' claims that subcultures work in favor of hip bourgeois consumerism and argues that subcultural identities and activities are not mutually exclusive from that of the mainstream commercial marketplace but, instead, the very product of it. Along these lines, subcultural participation is presented to be only a status symbol where some consumers can differentiate themselves from the conformist mainstream culture and indicate personal autonomy through using countercultural artifacts and products and engaging in related activities. That is, according to these two approaches, subcultures are confined to entities either sold-out by

being bought out by the culture industry or are already the products of consumer capitalism and thus their oppositional resistance qualities seem to be downgraded. However, Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007, p.138) claim that "the corporate co-optation of a counterculture can generate countervailing markets. These markets are countervailing in the specific sense that they amplify, implement, and actively promote the countercultural principles, meanings, and ideals that have been attenuated by corporate co-optation."

On the other hand, resistance is a highly controversial, complex, and significant phenomenon in subcultural domain, especially with the increasing fragmentation of contemporary life. Resistance has many different meanings, targets, and methods (Haenfler 2006), and the forms of resistance have transformed in step with the epochal changes in human history (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Rebellion was the dominant form of resistance in traditional culture (Hollander and Einwohner 2004) where forces beyond humanity were believed to control human destiny. Discontent with one's lot could result only in rebellion given that humanity's fate was ordained by superior forces thus rendering alternatives impossible. With modernity, confrontation became the dominant form of resistance. That which caused discontent could now be confronted with the goal of changing the world. Modern humans believed in their ability to act upon their world and determine their own destiny through knowledge of the universe they inhabited (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). As Jenks (2005, p. 139) articulates, "reason was to triumph over faith, humankind was to become the measure of all things, nature was to be quelled and put to the service of human kind, and time was to be measured in terms of a transition from darkness into the light, a transition and an implicit theory of moral evolution that came to be known as progress." Knowing the fundamental universal principles and laws of nature, they could then intervene to take control and maximize their potential to construct the best social existence

possible. Given this belief in themselves and their ability to know the truth, they felt that they had the right to confront conditions or systems that kept them from realizing the highest potential, the superior order (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010).

With what many consider to be the waning of modernity (Featherstone 1991; Jameson 1991) the belief in humanity's ability to know, with any degree of confidence, fundamental laws and principles of the universe, or even in the existence of such fundamentals has also waned. As a result, humanity's discursive forms of engagement with the world and each other are observed to transform (Eco 1986; Lyotard 1984). Moreover, with the loss of confidence in the existence of fundamentals to be discovered and represented, representational forms of discourse are increasingly being substituted by presentational forms (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). That is, given the idea that there are no fundamentals, but that the encounter with the universe is based on culturally constructed categories, specifically in the case of the social universe, a greater license to present possible and potential modes of living and being in the world is evidenced in how people behave (Fırat and Dholakia 2006).

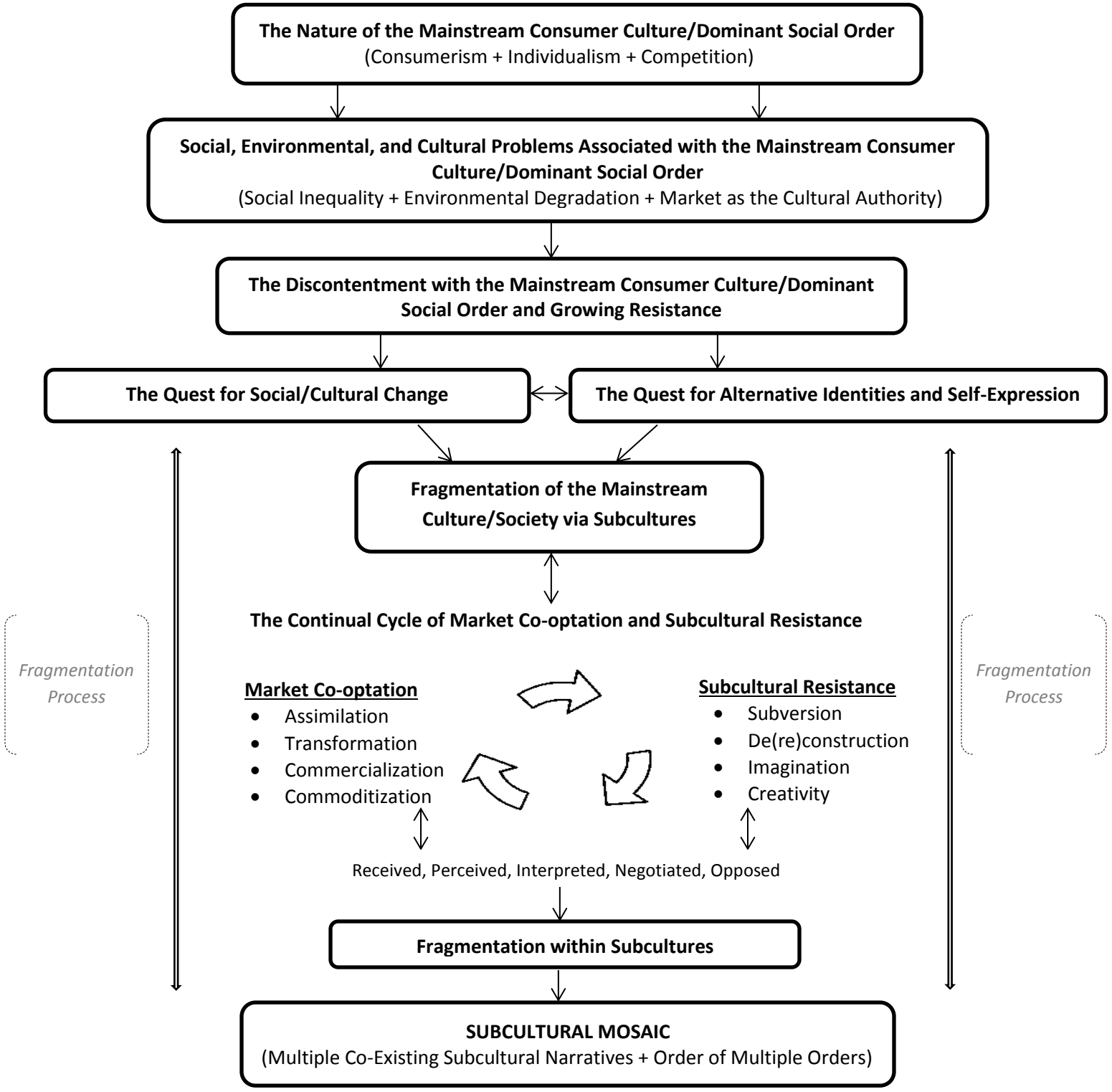
There are tendencies in the history of resistance that favor creative fragmentation of presentations of modes of being, contributing to the growth of new forms of subculture as a means for constructing imagined forms of existence and experience. Contemporary subcultures often present core qualities and meanings of resistance as they also offer a venue for individuals to customize their subcultural identities as alternative modes of being. A growing sensibility asserts that agency exists in the presentation of the new, not in the representation of that which is already produced (Fırat 1999); in the possibilities offered by the 'excess' (Bataille 1985) or 'seduction' (Baudrillard 1990). Presentation, therefore, is substituting confrontation as the dominant form of resistance mainly because resistance is now considered to be a process of self-

reflection and self-expression rather than gaining power over the dominant order (Bourdieu 1984; Cherrier 2009; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Further, self-presentation is considered to be a performance (Goffman 1959) and consumers present their sense of self through participation in particular subcultural activities in shared interaction contexts (Malbon 1998). Therefore, subcultures now exhibit characteristics of constituting venues in which consumers can be performers in the theater of life, with agency (Fırat and Dholakia 1998; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010).

A proposition in this research is that subcultures are consumers' own sites of being through resisting meanings imposed by hegemonic market forces while producing their own. Self-creativity through resistance, mixing styles, music, and ideologies, which offer aesthetic avenues and thereby greater texture for immersing into and experiencing life, becomes the preferred presentational mode (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Furthermore, modern capitalist economies arguably emphasized expanding individuality by eroding the foundations of sociality (cf. Hayek 1976; Ricardo 1817; Smith 1991; cited in Slater and Tonkiss 2001). In this attempt to instill individualism to the value system at large, the attention has been on personal autonomy and distinctions through different lifestyle choices. Thus, this research aims to investigate whether subcultures have grown to be venues for consumers to not only perform their personal lifestyle choices, but to also respond to an alienating and objectifying individualism (cf. Marx 1990) through constructing collective identities using activities, including music, style, and ideology more so than ethnicity, nationality, and religion (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010).

**FIGURE 1 Proposed Theoretical Model**

**Fragmentation of the Social and Subcultural Mosaic**



## Music-based Subcultures as the Research Context

Subcultures formed around music are chosen as the research context for this research because music is claimed to play a key role not only in the formation but also in the maintaining and proliferation processes of many subcultures (Bennett 1999; Haenfler 2006; Hebdige 1979). Besides, music is one of the most prominent and salient domains where the interplay between resistance and commercialization plays a key role (Moore 2007). Understanding how music is used and why it is used as a means of constructing subcultures is especially significant because subcultures most often originate as a combination of ideology, tailored uniqueness, and musical preferences (Bennett 1999). As Beezer (1992) notes, music is a leisure commodity that is specifically conducive to directing focus on subcultural identity. Likewise, according to CCCS, youth subcultures are established in leisure activities, most importantly music, and a conspicuous consumption of a certain style. Hebdige (1979) and Frith (1996b) also argue that music is a means of constructing subcultural identities, subsequently; identities also express themselves through music. Therefore, music becomes a core element or artifact for subcultures.

In marking out a distinctive taste community whereby cultural taste is becoming more fragmented and pluralistic (Savage 2006), music serves as the tie of subcultural phenomena (Williams 2006) and a main component of specific subcultures. Music sets itself apart from other arts and activities, in terms of its significance for subcultures, due to its transcendent popularity over the others and its highly permeated position in everyday life (Savage 2006). Also its "forms have been part of a long-term historical tradition associated with 'high' culture, which has been institutionally venerated and supported over several centuries" (Savage 2006, p. 160). Bourdieu (1984) suggests that music has become the main defining feature of cultural capital. However,

Savage (2006, p. 161) argues that music "plays a key role in defining elite cultural forms, but is also central to many kinds of popular sub-cultures." Thus, music may also cause a tension between high and popular culture that is claimed to be fundamental to the operation of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984; cited in Savage 2006).

Williams (2003) and Frith (1996b, p. 62) provide experience insights into music subcultures and how the "inner rationales of music, its histories and conjunctures, its relationship with capitalist modes of production, and how music is understood simultaneously as a subcultural resource, a form of subcultural expression and a medium for subcultural existence." As Frith (1996b) also contends, music is not simply a means of reflecting people but also producing them and creating experience. That is, music is found to be crucial in the creation of a subculture, not just a consequence of subculture (Williams 2003). Subcultural identities are created and developed through active participation in the production and consumption of music. Through the musical experience, Williams (2003, p.62) states, "individuals become locatable within conjunctural cultural formations… Music subcultures are fluid and constituted by the experiences of both producers and fans (not to mention the fact that producers are also music fans)." Music works as a means of facilitating the entry into a subculture as well as diffusing it to a wider audience by means of its popular position. Music has this great capability for subcultures and "central status in facilitating subcultural participation and identification" (Williams 2006, p. 175) because it is a subcultural resource that not only members can utilize easily but it also has a culturally integrative potential that integrates individuals with the group.

Music, as a form of cultural expression and cultural artifact, offers a sense of group belonging and collectivity, which is something greater than the individual and thus provides a source of strength. Music and live performances of music play a key role in generating

subcultural identity and collective experience consisting also a fluid characteristic (Bennett 1999). Eyerman (2002, p. 443) has argued that music plays a role "in relation to the formation of collective identity, collective memory and collective action." Thus, a subculture "can objectify itself and its history, making itself visible to others, as well as creating and establishing a sense of continuity" (p. 447) through songs. In addition, live performances also have a role in generating collective experience and identity and emotional connections between the individual and the group. Following this argument, Eyerman (2002, p. 449) states that "music is central to getting the message out, to recruiting, but collective experience is the core of collective identification/identity formation."

In contemporary society, different social groups are increasingly manifesting a division within the society by forming various subcultures on the basis of musical genres and scenes (Bennett 1999) such as rock, punk, heavy metal, rap, reggae, rave, jazz, blues, electronic, and the like. However, while these music-oriented subcultures are manifesting the fragmentation of the society, subcultures themselves are also increasingly fragmenting and proliferating (Haenfler 2006; Weinstein 2000). For instance, several subcultures such as hardcore, straight edge, grunge, emo, goth, riot grrrl, ska, hip-hop, black metal, trash metal, metalcore, acid jazz, club, house, techno, etc., have emerged from aforementioned subcultures or from the combination of some aforementioned subcultures. More specifically, for instance, while hardcore, straightedge, riot grrrl, ska, etc., emerged from the punk subculture or from the combination of punk subculture with other subcultures (Blush 2001; Haenfler 2006; Kuhn 2010; Leblanc 1999; Monem 2007), black metal, death metal, trash metal, gothic metal, alternative metal, nu-metal, metalcore, etc., emerged from the heavy metal subculture or from the combination of heavy metal subculture

with other subcultures (Walser 1993; Weinstein 2000), which in turn were influenced by and emerged from blues and rock subcultures (Gross 1990).

Since a growing number of consumers now participate in life through their membership in subcultures, and as they also organize their consumption activities and preferences in and through these subcultures, a more insightful and a broader understanding of contemporary and future consumption patterns will be helped by understanding the development of subcultures. Therefore, the central purpose of this paper is to contribute to the re-conceptualization of subculture and to develop a theory that accounts for the reasons why fragmentation is so prominent in contemporary culture, when this given fragmentation reaches the state of subcultures, and why fragmentation is a phenomenon that is observed within subcultures as well. Also discussed is how fragmentation of subcultures plays a role in the formation of emerging subcultural mosaic.

# CHAPTER IV

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

As stated earlier, the central purpose of this research is to develop a theory of subculture that accounts for the fragmentation observed in contemporary culture, and how this fragmentation influences subcultures leading to fragmentation within subcultures. Besides, other important questions are yet to be answered: how market ideologies, consumer society, and market hegemony in the cultural sphere are received and interpreted by consumers and how the tendencies of the market institution to transform and assimilate subcultures into mainstream culture through co-opting, commercializing, and commoditizing them are received, perceived, interpreted, negotiated and opposed by participants of subcultures. Along these lines, how and to what extent the dynamic and symbiotic interplay between market institution and subcultures play a role in this fragmentation process was investigated in an attempt to expose the developments and transformations in the market and society, reveal contemporary and potential future consumption patterns and behaviors, and highlight the potential means and venues through which alternative identities and (sub)cultural forms emerge.

This research topic has evolved toward recognizing that there is a need for a more nuanced analysis and approach to understand and explore to a greater extent the tendencies of

fragmented, multi-faceted, complex, paradoxical, and eclectic subcultures in contemporary society, as well as the impact of market hegemony and the response of subcultural participants to this hegemony, on the development of these subcultural sensibilities. To this end, in this research, the meanings that subcultural activities have for members of subcultures were investigated and these meanings were explored from the perspective of consumers who participate in music-based subcultures in their everyday lives (i.e., punk, hardcore, metal, grunge, goth, rap, alternative rock, straightedge, electronic, etc.). As discussed, the concept of subculture is not stable, fixed, and clearly identifiable but contextual, subjective, and in constant flux. Echoing Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) account of 'concept', the concept of subculture is always in the making as it is forever contested among its participants (Holtzman et al. 2007). Along these lines, this research adopted a poststructuralist approach to highlight the dynamic interplay between the subjective lived experiences of subcultural members and contemporary sociocultural discourses.

## Data Collection and Analysis

This research takes aim at understanding and exploring the meanings, narratives, and 'lived experiences' (Thompson et al. 1989) which people derive from engaging in subcultural activities. Therefore, in this research, phenomenological interviewing (Thompson et al. 1989) was employed to attain various and rich textual data and 'thick description' (Geertz 1973; Goulding 2003) regarding the subcultural consumers' first person descriptions of their everyday experience with mainstream consumer culture, their subcultural activities, commercialization and commoditization of their subcultures, and their response to these market interventions. Since resistance forms of subcultures and market co-optation are found to be most prominent in the

domain of cultural production (i.e., music, film, art, craft, etc.) (Holtzman et al. 2007), this research primarily focused on selecting participants for in-depth phenomenological interviews mainly from this domain, specifically music-based subcultures for this present study. This researcher also engaged in netnographic research (Kozinets 2002) for over two years in several punk, metal, hardcore, straightedge forums on the Internet and observed the discussions and threads without participation. Moreover, he engaged in participant observation in several hardcore, punk, metal, alternative rock music related events, shows, video-clip shootings, house parties, and rehearsal studios for over a year in South Texas area.

In terms of phenomenological interviewing, a non-probability sampling approach was employed. Participants were selected through their affiliations with one or more aforementioned music-based subcultures. Initial participants were found through personal contacts and/or through attending the subcultural underground music scenes activities, including concerts, shows, video clip shooting, bars, rehearsal studios, house parties, and the like in South Texas area as well as contacting band members and subcultural members through their social media networking accounts. For the subsequent participants and especially for those who were not reached with ease by the researcher otherwise, snowballing was employed. In order to create diversity in the sampling, as well as to investigate the dynamics between subcultures and the market in terms of cultural production and consumption, the researcher contacted music bands or solo artists/musicians engaged in aforementioned subcultural DIY ethic, be it in recording their own albums, making their own video clips, creating their own promotions, booking their own tours, making their own merchandise, shirts, posters, album covers, organizing their own concerts, distributing their own work, and the like, through attending aforementioned events and places and employing snowballing technique.

This researcher recruited and interviewed 15 volunteer participants, as suggested in the literature, until he reached a theoretical saturation where nothing of new significance was arising in the last few interviews he conducted (Thompson et al. 1989; Thompson and Haytko 1997; Russell and Levy 2012). Gift cards ($20) were provided as an incentive to encourage participants for these phenomenological in-depth interviews. The length of the interviews ranged from 72 minutes to 202 minutes, on average over two hours. In total, the interviews lasted over 34 hours of recorded dialogue. See table 1 for the list of the participants' brief profile. Before each interview, the participant was informed about the purpose of the study as well as assured of anonymity and confidentiality and her/his consent was taken. All interviews were conducted in a convenient and quiet place such as an office or study room on campus and participants' residence. The researcher tried to create a comfortable, informal, and friendly interview atmosphere with a conversational tone and mode to make the participants feel at ease in articulating and discussing their feelings, perceptions, narratives, and "lived experiences" in relation to subcultures and mainstream consumer culture (Thompson et al. 1989). The researcher also tried to build enough rapport to be able to attain these thick descriptions and narratives of participants in more detail regarding their lifeworlds.

Interviews began with a set of "grand tour" questions (McCracken 1988) about participants' general demographic and background information and lifestyle to set the stage for an open-ended dialogue, and then continued with a general question about their subjective narratives and perceptions of subcultural experiences and about how they become involved in their chosen subculture/s or music scene/s, for how long they have been involved, the brief history of their involvement, and the like, in an attempt to break the ices between the interviewer and the interviewee and also to gain relevant insights into the research questions. The role of the

interviewer has been mainly to encourage participants to "describe actual experiences related to their general perceptions rather than allowing the dialogue to stay at an abstract, experience-distant level" (Thompson and Haytko 1997, p.19) and to elaborate on these experiences and narratives through probing and follow-up questions and clarification questions where necessary. In so doing, the interviewer paid attention to let the course of the dialogue be set largely by the participants and to protect an emic approach throughout the interview to attain distortion-free data. Therefore, the interviewer had semi-structured interview questions (see appendix 1 for interview questions, p. 93) regarding the phenomenon under the investigation, that is, the descriptive questions were generated mainly as a result of the course of the dialogue rather than a predetermined path (Thompson et al. 1989).

Moreover, in terms of methodological procedure, as suggested in the literature, the interviewer stressed not only employing short descriptive questions to be able to obtain participants' lengthier and detailed descriptions, but also not asking "why" to be able to avoid the abstract level answers that might be received in return from participants as the intention is to attain their detailed descriptions (Thompson et al. 1989). At the end of the interview, some general demographic information about participants are asked and gathered such as age, sex, education, location, occupation, ethnicity, and the like. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim, resulting in 1428 double-spaced pages of text.

This research sought to relate descriptions and narratives of specific subcultural experiences to each other and to the overall context of the life-world (Thompson et al. 1989). In line with this notion, the hermeneutic framework "interprets consumption meanings in relation to both a consumer's sense of personal history and a broader narrative context of historically established cultural meanings" (Thompson 1997, p. 439). To this end, after the interviews were

transcribed verbatim, the textual data were interpreted and analyzed employing the hermeneutic approach in order to capture and expose the meanings and experiences that subcultural members' narratives have in common with the broader narrative of subcultural existence and activities and a mainstream consumer culture (Thompson et al. 1989). This mode of interpretation required going over each transcript multiple times and each interpretation was evaluated by referring back to the transcript (Thompson et al. 1989) and revised as the researcher gathered more textual data (Thompson et al. 1990). Hermeneutic approach involves continuous iterative part-to-whole process of interpretation and stresses identifying recurring common experiential patterns among interview transcripts, which are referred to as themes (Thompson et al. 1989). Moreover, a poststructuralist approach was adopted in the subsequent interpretation stage to highlight the dynamic interplay between the subjective lived experiences of subculture members and contemporary sociocultural discourses.

**Table 1.** Participants Brief Background

| Participant | Age | Sex | Occupation | Education | Religion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Musicians: | | | | | |
| Chi | 30 | Male | Musician/Teacher | MA | Agnostic |
| Dave | 22 | Male | Student /Musician | PhD | Agnostic |
| Bob | 23 | Male | Student/Driver/Ex-musician | BA | Catholic |
| Charles | 26 | Male | Student/Video Editor/Ex-Mus. | BA | N/A |
| Emma | 28 | Female | Nurse/Musician | Voc. Col. | Agnostic |
| Darrell | 27 | Male | Student/Musician | PhD | Atheist |
| James | 42 | Male | Librarian/Drummer/Author | MS | N/A |
| Matt | 23 | Male | Musician | BS | Agnostic |
| Fans/Non-musicians: | | | | | |
| Tom | 24 | Male | Freelance Writer | High School | N/A |
| Donna | 22 | Female | Student | BA | Christian |
| Amy | 23 | Female | Student/Call Center Rep. | BS | Atheist |
| Rob | 23 | Male | Valet | Voc. Col. | N/A |
| Kate | 30 | Female | Student/Research Assistant | MS | Agnostic |
| Edward | 24 | Male | Student | BS | N/A |
| Jason | 23 | Male | Student | BA | Agnostic |

# CHAPTER V

# FINDINGS: FRAGMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL/CULTURE AND EMERGING SUBCULTURES: *"UNDER A PALE GREY SKY, WE SHALL ARISE!"*[*]

*"All the world's a stage,*
*And all the men and women merely players;*
*They have their exits and their entrances,*
*And one man in his time plays many parts..."*
--William Shakespeare, As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII [All the world's a stage]

## Subcultures in the Macro/Societal Discourses: The Quest for Socio-Cultural Transformations

### Subcultural Antagonism toward the Institutions of the Hegemony: "*It's domination pushed into living hell, domination!*"[**]

Modern social and cultural institutions of civil society – such as religion, family, education, the media, the market, and mainstream consumer culture – are argued to work as catalysts for organizing, structuring, reinforcing, and sustaining the dominant social and economic order established by and primarily for the ruling, prevailing, and leading groups (Gramsci 1971). That is, not only the dominant ideological or intellectual and cultural discourses

[*] A part from the lyrics of a song called "Arise" by Sepultura
[**] A part from the lyrics of a song called "Domination" by Pantera

but also the various institutions of civil society are made use of to establish an oppressive and hegemonic system of totality through implicitly and perpetually reproducing consent for the masses to the dominant order (Gramsci 1971). The consent aspect here is used as a complementary manifestation to the force aspect of the hegemony which actually exerts power and domination in a more overt authoritarian and even violent manner by such as "the police, the military, or vigilante groups" (Kellner 2005, p.159). Yet, whilst this hegemony contains "technologies of domination" to manipulate and oppress the masses, it may also hold the potential for engendering the "technologies of self" (cf. Foucault 1984) through which to provide a venue for rising social critiques (cf. Bloch 1952). That is, wherever there is a power, there exists also resistance because power is said to reproduce its own resistance (cf. Foucault 1984; 1990) and trigger new forms of fragmentation within the mainstream culture (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). This resistance can also manifest itself in the 'counter-hegemonic' mode to contest and challenge the hegemonic authority (Gramsci 1971).

The subcultural participants in this study reported their discontents with, or negative experiences they encountered in their everyday lives regarding, these institutions that exert authority over them such as religion, the family, the schooling, working life, and generally the mainstream culture. They reported that the discontents and the negative experiences they encountered were actually the *raison d'être* of their initial subcultural affiliations, owing to, for instance, metal/hardcore/punk music's anti-authoritarian, anti-essentialist, anti-establishment, and/or anti-institutional images, symbols, and messages as well as their aggressive, angry, and frustrated emotional tones. Emma, for instance, who is one of the key characters in the local metal scene in South Texas, is very overt and vocal about her long-term observations regarding

the negative and deprecating impact of parents in many subcultural members' initial subcultural involvement.

> *I think I've seen… The anger I've seen, I think it comes… It roots from parents. A lot of times I think it comes… I think with metal music, some other people I've seen that have gotten into metal when I was a teenager, I saw the kids like that into metal earlier. They always have problems with their parents. They weren't understood. So their anger came from their parents… And I've seen that with some of my friends. And even close friends that they… the root of their anger came from their parents. Some of them was from a lost love or from a heartbreak but most of them, I've seen it coming from misunderstanding parents (Emma).*

The discontent of the subcultural participants with their families, at first glance, may seem to be a generational matter. Yet, it is, indeed, found to be more a systematic matter as we will also see in the following quotes that exhibit how different institutions of the civil society, including the family, intersect and influence each other as power figures in generating resistance rendered through subcultural participation. Subcultures are formulated mainly away from home and family as a reaction against the adult authority (Gelder 2007) and as a symbolic collective statement signifying the failure of the parent culture (Moore 2007). In addition to the problem they encounter in regard to their parents, religion is found to be another critical institution, though somewhat related, with which these subcultural participants seem to have problems.

> *At the time I was dealing with my father who was a fanatical Christian, and seeing the death metal culture which was mixed with the black metal culture, I immediately recognized that they were the absolute opposite of Christianity. Today, I recognize that death metal culture works as a parody of Christian culture. Everything that they have that's light and gentle, we want to be really dark and evil about it, and it's almost to the point and I think death metal people already caught on to it that we're making fun of the genre itself already. We want to go so extreme that it's not extreme anymore. It becomes a joke. It's beyond a joke. It's like a meta-joke 'cause we're joking about joking around at this point in death metal. But at the time it just felt so powerful that this is everything that—this crowd is what I want to be a part of which is because I don't like my father telling me that I need to be a Christian because that's the right way*

> *to live. It didn't make sense to me then. It still doesn't make sense to me now. We still talk. But he knows that I'm an atheist, and I know he's a fanatical Christian but I think it was just that. I think it's was just the opposite of the mainstream and that's what drew me into it immediately… Yeah, I wasn't really anti-religion. I was very not pro-religion. I really didn't care about religion. That was more of it. It was religion being forced upon me and I just grew very resentful for it, so I didn't want to be a part of it. It's not that I wanted to actively be against it. I just didn't want to be a part of it anymore. So it gave me some room to pull away from that (Darrell).*

Tom, a twenty-four-year-old freelance writer, considers himself mainly a metalhead, yet he also acknowledges his current eclectic subcultural affiliations. He was drawn into this subcultural music when he was young through its anti-religious messages and attitudes. He states "-- or anything that do with rock, the first thing I ever listened to, I was in the sixth grade, I was going to a Catholic school then. And the first thing I listened to was Marilyn Manson's Anti-Christ Superstar album and I enjoyed it." Yet, his position toward religion or his questioning of this dominant institution seems to be preceded mainly by his broken home situation, and, in turn, this skepticism seems to be reinforced by the social problems he encountered – such as inequality and poverty – and gave way to the erosion of his faith in such grand narratives.

> *I grew up in a Catholic setting, I attended a Catholic school until I was enrolled in pre-K and I will stay there until about sixth grade. But when I was younger, my parents divorced when I was about four or five so that kind of challenged my religious views as to God loves everyone equally. I've always found that hard to believe considering some people are rich and famous and others are living under expressways. So I mean, when I listen to things like black metal that have a very anti-religious message, I listen to it because I personally can attest to what that message is saying. One band in particular, a band called Deicide, they're actually more of a death metal band but their vocalist has -- I don't think he has ever changed his lyrical pattern from ever having anything other to do than just about bashing God's name. I think the day they came out, I think they may have started around the late '80s and I believe they're still around today, and from all that time all his lyrics have ever been are just about bashing God. And that has not changed from then. And I enjoy that. I admit it gets a bit stale, but I enjoy that because it's a sentiment that I could share…*

*People in religion, Christianity, and Catholicism, you constantly hear, "God loves us all. He created us equal," blah, blah, blah, and I remember thinking to myself as a kid if I'm so equal to every kid around me, why is it that I'm sitting here watching my family be torn apart while my friends and neighbors are the ones enjoying family dinner. It started off as something as small as that, just questioning. For me, I've always been a family-oriented person. I've always thought family comes first to me and over time I've kind of evolved my idea of family. I've come to the conclusion now that a family isn't entirely blood. Just because someone has a blood relation to you doesn't -- I mean, it makes them family, but I don't think it makes them a family. There's more to being connected family-wise that you share the same bloodline (Tom).*

According to the subcultural participants, both family and religion institutions signify authoritarian adult images. Similar to Tom's narrative, Rob also articulates a narrative from part of his life implying the impact of the problems he is having with his family on developing a negative attitude toward a religion. Yet, he is more overt and firm about his feelings of tedium and anger against circumstances where he is also judged for his styles, clothes, tattoos and the music he is listening to by those who are arguably overtly conservative and religious people.

*Like I said when people do push their beliefs on, not necessarily just me like another people that does bother me 'cause I don't right that anyone should tell somebody else what they should believe or what they should do morality or whatever. But, I do think, me personally, I do think that Christians are the biggest hypocrites ever 'cause after my parents have gotten divorce I was living at the house of my dad and his girlfriend ended up moving in and she was real religious, she was a real big Christian and I guess she kind of like didn't like me 'cause of my tattoos or 'cause the music that I listen to… So, I guess they kind of when she heard the shit that I would listen to or whatever and I guess just thought all these negative things about me that I mean that was on her and then finding out that she was a pretty big hypocrite and yeah, I mean it's like most Christians tend to be hypocrites because they are supposed to be like I guess like closest to God or whatever really holy people, but yet they judge you or they tell you what to do or whatever and it's kind of like you're not supposed to be doing that, you're no one to be telling anybody or to be judging but I mean (Rob).*

*It feels good. People who aren't a part of any subculture are like… They think you' weird or something like why are you so obsessed with music or*

*something like that. But it just depends on the type of music you listen to or the message behind it. My mom is very Christian so she hates anything I like and so that's also why I listen to the things I listen to just 'cause she tells me not to. Yeah, but it feels good. I mean I can relate to things. I feel like I belong somewhere (Donna).*

Based on these articulations, it can be argued that a discontent with one institution may extend with ease for some participants into a discontent with another dominant institution. Emma, for instance, problematizes the institution of religion through linking it to the current major problems of the contemporary society, owing to its dominant position within the mainstream culture. For instance, she links many prominent social and environmental problems of today - such as global warming and marriage inequality - to the institution of religion and its alleged conservative, backward politics which is argued to be interwoven into the very fabric of everyday life.

*When you get away from religion to say global warming doesn't exist, that just means the world's gonna end… I mean it makes no sense. When you start becoming more educated towards science and when you hear a scientist, you're an outcast to mainstream because I guess mainstream is more of the religious sense. So it's really sad to see that these brilliant people that are scientists and they've studied what's going on in our world… How are we gonna end up messing up this world, we're gonna end up fucking it a lot with the oceans and all that with the oil and with consumption and with the carbon footprints and all of that. And they're seen as the outcasts because, "Well, that's all God," or "That's all this. You're wrong," like there's no way… They don't understand it then that's the mainstream. Those are the people that are in charge of making big decisions especially in politics. So to be knowledgeable of what's going that's gonna affect the world, like with our environment, with the quality of being… I mean I don't understand, like with marriage equality, I don't understand what is it really gonna do to straight couples if gay couples are able to get married? I mean I don't understand how that's gonna be a detrimental thing to a married couple that's straight. If my friends get married and they're gay, I don't think that's gonna affect my marriage in any way. They're seeing it more of, "Well, in the Bible it says that so it shouldn't be like that." They're following that nonsense. And so when we become an outcast like that that we believe, "Well, no. We need to follow these more of the human thing, more of the world thing, environment*

*thing. We get involved with that altogether like let's all talk and try to convince these people they're wrong or they're looking at it the wrong way. It happened with the… Baptist church that they came down last year to protest a couple of churches and I didn't get to go. I still have it recorded. But my husband got to go and he described it as this big, huge community made up of all these different communities to protest this one group of messed up people (Emma).*

On a related note, Amy, who is a twenty-three-year-old Social Work major, mother of a daughter, considers herself an atheist and complains about religion's hegemonic institutional position along with the current situation of humanity reduced to egoism and consumerism:

*Yeah. Right now, I'm really frustrated with human beings in general because we're so shitty. We're so mean to each other even on a one-on-one level, but also on a global level like war, famine, and how we're not doing anything about that. We're so focused on iPads and iPhones and we're so focused on the next material object that's going to make us complete or something. I'm frustrated now at humanity as a whole, especially America. I don't know. We're just a shitty country right now. I think it's been that way for a long time and we do a lot of messed up things. That's what my concern is right now. Religion also pisses me off a lot, all kinds of religion. It frustrates me because I have a daughter now and I don't want her to grow up here in an unsecularized world. I want her to know that there's a separate of Church and state and I want that for her. I don't know how to explain it. I want her to know the truth. I don't want her to get sucked in by these lies. That's what I'm frustrated about right now (Amy).*

Thus far, we have seen the discontent and problems of the subcultural participants have with family and religion institutions. Yet, in addition to these institutions, these participants are also highly pessimistic about the dominant position of the mainstream consumer culture and they think it has a detrimental effect on people, environment, and society.

*Everybody's just… Everybody wants to consume everything. I guess now, these days, that's become an obsession and I guess that affects I guess our society and I guess the environment today 'cause… I mean it's just changing the way life is. Nobody… People are so obsessed with consuming things and consumption that they're… Obviously that ruins the environment, obviously 'cause people are so… They wanna consume,*

*consume, consume and there's always supply and demand and stuff like that. So that harms the environment because everybody's always preoccupied with creating products and consumers are always preoccupied with purchasing things. And I mean obviously that affects the, I guess nature and stuff because… I mean, obviously pollution and stuff like that. But I just feel like people are so preoccupied with consumerism that they don't enjoy the little things. I guess that's… I don't even know if that has to do with what you're saying but they're so preoccupied and they're so involved in this culture of just buying things and the best things and they're just so preoccupied in that little state of mind that they don't…The world is up, working in such a fast pace, nobody actually takes the time to just sit down and just appreciate the little things like… Whether it'd be going to purchase an album where now, just people want to go I guess… How there's trash cans that open or that open up and people don't wanna… They're getting so lazy with buying certain products that they want everything done for them… And that's just… Our culture's just deteriorating 'cause of that, because of consumerism, because they just demand a lot and they don't appreciate anything so we're just getting fat and lazy (Donna).*

*Well, I want to say "no" because I want everybody to be involved in this, but sometimes yeah, dude. Sometimes people don't care. They don't care. They just want more. They just want to consume. They want the biggest TV and the biggest house and they want five cars. They don't care. They don't care about the things that we should care about. I hate to make that assumption not just because they're not in the subculture, but from what I've seen… If you read enough magazines and you watch enough reality TV, if you watch "Keeping up with the Kardashians", you're going to want to be like them. I think that the American Dream before like during the 1950s was "I want to get married and have two kids and have a white picket fence," that type of thing. But now it's like, "I want their houses. I want one in Spain and I want one in Italy and I want one here." It's just grown to the point where it's not the American Dream anymore. It's consumed us and it's unrealistic. We're getting drilled into our heads that we can make it, that we're all going to be rich one day, and you see it everywhere like commercials and TV shows, books and articles. They make it seem like you're going to be rich one day, like you're going to be okay. It doesn't matter if you're poor right now, but one day you'll be rich. I think that mentality is what's killing us (Amy).*

*So I feel as if we are nothing but debt to these institutions. We're nothing but a piece of debt. As our population increases, I just feel like I'm nothing but an animal in a cage… and that's not fair. It's not fair one bit. I've been scared recently because of things like faith. I feel like places or restaurants like McDonalds and Wal-Mart are endorsed are still very powerfully intact because I feel like there's a subconscious sort of effort*

*that religion gives birth to. That, "Oh, God put McDonald's there. Oh, God gave Wal-Mart its power, its existence." People are okay with that because they're born into it. They're born into thinking there is God and that they're born into being as comfortable with being their God as well as the coincide of McDonalds and Wal-Mart. Those institutions are going to kill people… The people controlling the strings of mainstream are the people wanting to keep us uneducated, stupid and fat and eating at McDonalds. I want to tackle religion. Not faith, religion. I want people to have their own attempt at interpreting what really is. Who is God? Why are we here? I want people to be gutsy, to be man enough to do that. I think that would help society a lot. That would help the suffering of others (Dave).*

*I think generally, people are just really fucked up... And it's crazy how much money changes people or how fucked up people can be over money… And it's like really like you're going to change because of money like you're going to be a totally different person like friendship is going to go out the window because of money... it's just crazy like how -- how messed up the world is…(Rob).*

As observed in the above passages, the subcultural participants in this study are intrinsically discontent with the predominant positions of materialistic, money oriented values within the culture. These materialistic values and consumerism as a way of life (Miles 1998) and the market as the cultural authority (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995) are instilled by neo-liberal politics, which, in turn, feeds the corporate capitalism (Heath and Potter 2004). In a broader sense, this system of plutocracy infuses and permeates to the very cells of each institution, determining individuals' everyday lives. These determinants constantly reproduce and recycle every day the circumstances of inequality, injustice, poverty, and environmental degradation (Schor 1998) and use the culture industry and the mass media to instill, with the participants' own words, the "artificial" and "fake" values that will reinforce the corporate capitalist status quo (Habermas 1991; Horkheimer and Adorno 2007; Marcuse 1969).

Having considerable impact on social, political, economic and cultural realms, the culture industry and the mainstream culture are regarded as the major modern institutions that function

to legitimize and stabilize a hegemonic capitalistic order (cf. critical theorists of the Frankfurt School). Thus, having infused into leisure time and everyday activities through the means of mass communication and consumption, the culture industry integrates people into the ideology of consumerism as the way of life and thus exerts greater social control (Cochoy 1998; Lazer 1969; Shankar et al. 2006). Yet, the lure and the power of the subculture are found here to rely on its relative autonomy from the mainstream culture and dominant social/economic order that represents and reflects the "totalizing logic of the market" (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995) that acts as the cultural authority. These participants are also concerned with more macro issues at the global level such as hunger, poverty, wars, and the like.

> *Well, the subcultures kind of break away from that [materialism] a little bit. I guess the subculture that I associate myself with is just locally. It's just us. It's all my friends. We would break away from that. I feel like sometimes we're not a part of that world because we're not materialistic, because we care about issues that need to be taken care of before they eat us alive. We care about stuff like that. Sometimes it does feel like we're not even a part of this materialistic world… For me personally, as I told you earlier, I'm a Social Work major, so one of my goals is to help the poor and the oppressed. If I didn't have a child, if I hadn't gotten pregnant at 18, I would've probably joined the Peace Corps and traveled around the world. There are a lot of people that are starving and they don't have homes, and I find that myself to be absolutely ridiculous because we're in the year 2013 and we still haven't figured our shit out. We're up here bombing the Middle East and killing so many innocent people. There are still people who are hungry, and that's the most basic human need. I can't believe people are still hungry right now. It kills me. It kills me to see homeless people. I just can't believe that as human beings, we are at that point still right now. I'm working to change that. I know that I can't fix the whole world by myself, but I know that if I had everybody on board and if there were millions of us, we could change things. That's what I'm hoping to do. We need to change the way we are so that people don't have to suffer anymore because there's not a God in the sky that's going to fix everything obviously, so we have to do it ourselves (Amy).*

Power and greed are some of the most articulated values among many by the participants and they exemplify these values embodied by not just single but multiple actors, hand in hand,

such as government, corporations and institutions, in the context of every day practices.

> *They want power and greed and right now they're very, very powerful. The oil industry is more powerful than it was in the 60's and- 50's and 60's- and it is so powerful it's controlling our government and they have so much money that they are making all kinds of laws now that have basically- that are slowly stripping away our human rights and their undermining environmental laws that were put into place by the government, they're putting crap on the radio waves, they're putting crap on the television screens, they're putting crap in our public educational systems, and that's all oppression. And they're doing it all for- because of power and greed, and they don't want us to rise up against them. And I think that they're trying to keep our society uneducated, hungry, diseased, and sick so that we need the government. For example, the health plague that we have in our nation versus the pharmaceutical corporate giants. The government- they know better. They know that they're killing us with this GMO and subsidized foods but they also know that they can make a lot of money because there's money in sick people. There's no money in cured people. And so why are they doing that? Because for power. If you cure everybody and no one needs you then you're not powerful. So I think they're… Now why do they wanna be powerful? That just goes back to the simple concept of having an ego and trying to satisfy your ego. And how they get that powerful? Money, different commodities that we need, that they know we need (Kate).*

Mainstream culture and society is perceived by these subcultural participants to be highly materialistic – money and material oriented. This orientation that yields people to feel discontent with their lives traces back to the critiques of the neo-classical politics and capitalistic market order. This material orientation also leads to individualization and fierce competition among people. So by criticizing the material orientation of the mainstream culture, they actually criticize the status quo and the existing hegemonic social/economic order - consumer capitalism.

> *That's good. That one is kind of funny. I think because of the mainstream culture overall is so much more corporate and I hate to use that word, but it really it is, it's much more corporate. When I think of all the bands that I hear on the radio, all I think of is money for some reason, a lot of the times. It's terrible. It's sounds cliché to say something like that but it really is true because like I put on a radio station that plays new age music, it plays mainstream rock music or whatnot, or mainstream country, or whatever it maybe, or mainstream rap, whatever. All I think of is how*

> *much money that guy made for this terrible song because I listened to the song. I'll tell you, it was a terrible freaking song, yet this guy is making millions of dollars out of it because it's so inflated. These bigger companies they will play it so much. It's like, "Hey, this is what you're going to like. This is what I'll make you listen to." And they're going to like it. And because of that there's a lot less feeling into it, a lot less involvement into it because it's so mainstream, because it's so corporate. To me, it's just so superficial. It is so egocentric. I wasn't raised that way. I'm not an egocentric person. I like to help people around me. I like to go ahead and live a comfortable life. I don't need extravagance. I don't need a 30-pound chain that spins hanging around my neck at all times that somebody would more likely just rob me for. That's not what I am. It's not what I do. I go out. I'm comfortable in what I wear. I'm comfortable in the way I look. My car isn't the nicest car out there and I love the hell out of it. I'm never going to get rid of that freaking car. I don't need some $70,000-$80,000 car to show everyone, to prove to anyone, "Oh, I've made it in life." No, I don't. I know that I made it in life when I know I made it in life, and that's about it. I don't need to go ahead and have all this extravagance. It's just not me (Bob).*

Along with that, they also implicitly criticize the homogenizing and totalizing hegemonic structure of the market institution that forges superficiality, simplicity and mechanic existence and attempts to keep the emotions first and thus keep the complexity, heterogeneity, fragmentation and organic existence alive. Even in playing music *per se*, human and organic aspects are intimately sought and, according to many participants, that's where subcultural music demarcates itself from the music associated with the mainstream consumer culture, which is perceived to contain synthetic qualities (Roszak 1995). James, who is a forty-two-year-old librarian, author, and a drummer in a relatively world renowned death metal band, listens to a wide range of music but evaluates on the basis of whether it is human and organic or mechanic and synthetic:

> *Growing up, I had some friends that were really into metal at the time, late 70's early 80's, stuff like Sabbath, Van Halen, Riot, Deep Purple and I've always liked that and I evolved with the evolution of metal, the aggressiveness and then went on to Metallica, Slayer, Anthrax, and then it just got heavy and as it got more extreme, I always went to that tip of…*

*That apex of extremity with music. And then when I started playing drums, I guess I started appreciating other styles so as a listener, it was strictly metal. Now that I actually speak with my instrument, I love a lot of jazz, I love a lot of new age… It seems like I enjoy the things that aren't mainstream. I don't know if it's in my blood. I'm not into pop, I'm not into rap, I'm not into country, and I'm not into RnB but there's so much more out there. And I guess because it's almost under the surface that when you dig it up it's like, "Wow, that's great." Even in commercial new age like Enya or Yanni or stuff like that and some folk stuff like Tori Amos, I'm into that stuff but mainly metal but I'm really open-minded because I'll usually hear something in a form of music that speaks to me or that I can relate to or that gets my attention like "Oh, wow, it's pretty neat. Play that again." But I have to say my second main love aside from metal is probably jazz and then maybe an ambient type of new age type of sleepy music. I guess they have all these names for it now, it's hard to pinpoint these genres but that will be my third love but I'm pretty open-minded. It's just I'm not really into the mainstream poppy stuff. It just doesn't do much for me. The more human the music is the better. And a lot of the stuff is almost synthesized and synthetic now. It turns me off. It's like I wish it wouldn't have happened but it's there. Some are gonna like it but to me it's not, but someone will (James).*

In sum, the subcultural participants in this study are discontented with and resist the authoritarian and hegemonic nature of some or all modern dominant institutions that are interwoven into the very fabric of their everyday lives. These institutions are found to have huge impacts on perpetuating the status quo, especially the mainstream culture and consumerism promoted by market capitalism (see Frankfurt School), as well as on the participants' lives, identities and subcultural positions. Although most critical theorists take a pessimistic approach regarding the agency and its emancipatory potential due to the very powerful structural influences and impositions by capitalist imperatives (Horkheimer and Adorno 2007), contemporary subcultures are presented here to be the manifestations of fragmentation emerging as reactions against the dominant institutions of the hegemony, including the market and the ideology of consumerism. Along these lines, subcultures seem to provide the means and venues through which subtle, creative yet powerful social critiques toward this alleged hegemony can

exist and be eminently exercised. Hence, subculture's underlying concern seems to be social, cultural, and political in character. Thus, although subcultures appear to be in contradiction with the mainstream culture by their ethos and ideals, they are not necessarily in contradiction with other subcultures. In fact, they work as catalysts for enriching participants' subcultural experiences and discourses. Moreover, these constituents function as a site of education through which alternative social learning is realized, which will be reported in more detail in the next section.

**Subcultures as a Learning Community: *"When I channel my hate to [be] productive, I don't find it hard to impress"*** [*]

Given the fact that most dominant institutions of civil society, including the mass media and schooling, play a great part in reinforcing and maintaining the status quo and existing power structures (Gramsci 1971) by manipulating the information and manufacturing consent (Herman and Chomsky 2002), some critical people, such as subcultural participants in this study, seek genuine, autonomous, non-biased information and knowledge regarding the social life or 'the risk society' (cf. Beck 1992) and learning experience. Schor (1999) suggests consumers who are concerned look for objective and genuine information on social issues regarding ecological and social well-being, to participate and/or consult with the civil society organizations, social movements, and (non)governmental organizations. Compared to other existing dominant institutions in contemporary society, these constituents are argued to be more reliable for most individuals in providing alternative solutions for social and/or ecological problems (cf. Beck 1992). In a similar manner, subcultural participants in this study articulate that they had some sense of ideological awakenings and raised social awareness after listening to subcultural music

[*] A part from the lyrics of a song called "Mouth for War" by Pantera

and/or engaging in their subcultures. That is, education, or more importantly, learning came to be one of the most prominent discourses articulated by these subcultural participants in this study with respect to their associations of sense of awakenings and enhanced awareness with the power of the music, its message, and their subcultural affiliations. Kate, a self-titled punk environmentalist girl, despite her plural subcultural affiliations, states:

> *From punk music, I have learned creative ways to fight. I have learned that there are different outlets than just being angry and causing havoc. I've learned that there's a lot of cool things you can do out there instead. I've learned about different historical facts that I didn't know about. I've learned about different righteous leaders that I never knew about. I learned about people that have been imprisoned for social... Human rights movements that I've never knew their name, no one every spoke of them. Do I still learn from them? Yeah but I can't say I learned from just punk. I learn from all the music I listen to. Forexample the hip-hop, that Immortal Technique artist. Through him I've learned a lot of the Peruvian civil rights oppressions that are happening over there. I have learned about the United States cocaine agenda and how they have financially supported cocaine agriculture, I don't wanna say, in Peru. Yet they strike warfare on it soon as it crosses the border. Those claims I've taken further and investigated, slightly, the claims. They're true! So, I'm still learning, fuck yeah! I'm always gonna learn from music because music is a language that some people use to spread awareness. Sometimes that their agenda. Sometimes it's just to have fun but you gotta have both. Because if you're not having fun in what you're doing it's going to be boring. No one's going to want to do it. I'm always gonna learn… Yeah, well, music is wonderful in fighting oppression, I think, because again there's people that will affiliate with certain genres of music that might not be aware yet of what's going on but because they listen to that music, there's a chance that they might find out and that's all because- that can all happen through education. And education, again, is just the willingness to learn about something. And so the willingness to sit down and listen to lyrics that are coming from someone who is singing about oppression, then they have then instantaneously learn something and then they can share that with their friends and the best- that's awesome- the best way to share excitement and the need for certain movement is, one is through music because you can be joyous and happy with other people and celebrate your affiliation or your want to associate or to make that end goal of fighting something (Kate).*

> *That will be one of the -- one way to see or to be crust punk that changed me, that you see -- you question everything that you don't try to agree or*

*with everyone because you see something wrong or something that is not right (Jason).*

As aforementioned, anger and frustration precipitated mainly by the hegemonic state of the social and cultural institutions draws the individual into the music-based subcultures, the ones they can most relate to or feel connected in terms of their feelings, experiences, and thoughts, where affective and cognitive aspects intersects. Yet, subcultures seem to transform these negative feelings, which could ultimately turn into destructive forces, be it for themselves or for the others around them, and channel them into more constructive, creative, presentational and intellectual modes of resistance. Subcultures seem to generate an exciting and effective experience of learning for participants, owing mainly to the incorporation of knowledge into music and modes of fun with creative efforts. This avoids members getting bored and overwhelmed by loads of mere facts and incidents in relation to the local and global problems of the everyday life. Rather, through incorporating music, fun, poetry, theatrical performances, and style, they are rendered more active, and subsequent participation in learning and ultimate action is triggered and enhanced. Subcultural learning community is found here to trigger two core intrinsic motivation orientations: intrinsic-knowledge and intrinsic-stimulation (Noel 2001). Whilst intrinsic-knowledge refers to "feelings of pleasure that come from developing knowledge and satisfying one's curiosity about a topic area", intrinsic-stimulation refers to "simple enjoyment in the aesthetics of the experience…characterized by a sense of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi 1975)." (Noels 2001, p. 45; cited in Belcher and Hirvela 2005, p. 193). Moreover, most of the participants in this study reported experiencing a social learning process through multiple different alternative sets of subcultures, rather than just one.

*I will say that meanings has meeting new people that have new ideas in ways to see like or ways to see the people or ways to see the economy as a*

*political view, the system, the television, the news. I will say those are the meanings that I find when I talk to people or when I listen to music or what I see in the subcultures because every culture has a different view of a lot of things. And that will be one of the main reasons that I like to see or to know subcultures or to be part of one or to be part of many because you see different views, you share different ideas as you learn new meanings of things that you didn't see. I think that will be like the main reason of this or the means that I will find when I'm in this group or subculture… I don't know if -- it changes a lot because the only view that I had it was the one that my parents gave me or what the TV showed me or what I used to see on TV or even before I didn't care a lot about that. But then after listening to this punk band or this hardcore punk band or this metal band and what they do besides playing music, they acted these views, their political views, their views about almost everything or the way they talk or have their opinion will be something really new and different to me. And that will make me to have more interest, to see more, to look for what they talk about, to be more involved in the things that they talk about when they have an interview, when they play music, when they share their opinions to people. I will say that it changed my view of everything a lot because it helped me to see the other side of the cube, let's say. I think that will be...(Jason).*

*…And if those electronic music started making a big change on my life, in my head, like making me go into rock and roll, and then making me go also into other types of music that is like, I think it's like indie stuff, like I don't know, like beach rock, I don't know how that genre is called, like Jack Johnson, like more chill…And it changed my style and my way of thinking and I started paying attention to the lyrics. And I started getting also into literature and poetry and… I'm totally different from what I was a long time ago. So it all started with that, with electronic music…(Edward).*

Even if they are already aware of the facts regarding the problems that the existing system engenders through other external factors before their subcultural affiliations, subcultures, be it through music or through people cultivate alternative cultural elements and moments around music, and may play a role in reinforcing the knowledge as well as radicalizing these stances and attitudes.

*I studied biology so I was becoming an environmentalist from a biological- from a scientist point of view. But then I became radical from the music I listen to and the people that I want to associate with, people*

*that I look up to what I think is right and what I think we should do, my ethics and my morals, I became more radical and I feel that punk is very- it is a radical movement and it goes hand in hand. But I think that's on an individual level. So I think in the broad sense of things, yeah, I think this music- I think the radical music helps people awaken to the global issues. I think it does 'cause it's radical and these issues that we're trying to tackle need a radical movement in order to tackle them. You can't just sit on your ass and expect it to happen. You have to get out there and learn about it and do it and fight. I mean you can't fight from your couch. You have to get up… And if you're not gonna be- you can't fight listening to mainstream music so if you're already listening to alternative and alternative I mean other than mainstream- then you're already going towards the right direction, you're already fighting mainstream which is what we need. So if there's a little bit of awakening there, sure, yeah — anything's better than not listening and anything's better than being mainstream… Maybe if they were to learn to be influenced by musicians in their genre to do the same, then maybe they'll be more inclined to become more aware… No, I wasn't. I don't think I was that aware. I was becoming aware but- so what pulled me in to these movements I guess was my interest in biology and in science and becoming educated in science and I started to learn from a scientific point how degrading certain things are for the environment and to people and to cultures. But I didn't really dive into it. And so once I started affiliating with these subcultures, it's like opening Pandora's box or something. Or it's like opening- once you started getting into it, you can't go- I can't go back. And I know a lot of people that have said the same thing. You can't go back like once you start to know about what's out there, once you start to learn and become more aware, you can't regress…(Kate).*

Kate, as a biology graduate student, is very interested in issues and circumstances regarding nature and environmentalism as a social movement as well, and she seems to learn a lot from the subcultural sources complementing her institutional graduate education. Yet, she still metaphorically likens the information she receives or learning she attains from subcultures to "opening Pandora's box." This might imply that other mainstream or institutional sources may in fact not be sufficient , effective, or exciting enough as subcultures in attaining a broader, more comprehensive and reliable information, insight, and knowledge as to what is really happening in 'the risk society' (cf. Beck 1992). With such an awakening and mind-opening experience they

attain that they can't go back, subcultures seem to trigger hunger for more knowledge and more awareness and this hunger triggers people to get interested and engage in other subcultures.

> *So one really good- one band that I can think of that comes to mind- I was like in my skating days and when I was- started listening a little bit more punk rock, Youth Brigade came out and when I started listening to lyrics of Youth Brigade, it was like fucking awesome because they're singing about how the young punks should awaken and it wasn't really like a "hey, you should," because no one like to get told what to do. It was more like a "hey, do you know what's going on?" They're trying to tell us what to do and we should actually come together and we should all fight together. And I thought that was fucking awesome to hear out of a punk band especially out of a skate punk band or something like that that they wanted the youth to become collective and to fight the older- I don't know- I guess like a conservative, strict sense of the way you should be and they were kinda… And Youth Brigade would sing about being smart and educated and you don't have to- you can be a smart punk and I thought that was pretty fucking cool (Kate).*

> *I learned more about the message they were saying. Also there's a song by Muse called MK Ultra or something like that and I didn't know what that was and then I listened to it and then I go online and I was like, "What are they talking about?" And so then I learned more about government mind control and stuff like. I sound crazy but… Yeah, things like that. If I listen to a message or something like that, then, it'll spark me to go research and become more aware of things like that. But I mean as far as, like I said, music can make a difference in changing people's behaviour and mind but really, what can we do? I feel like even if you sing about a song, I feel like the government is so huge. We can't overpower them. There's so many people who have a lot of money and if you disagree or anything… You really have… We have power. We have representatives and stuff but I feel like there's only so much we can do (Donna).*

Education and social learning takes place through various means in and through subcultures. Many subcultural participants articulate self-education as a form of learning process through the discourses of bands, musicians, artists in terms of their lyrics, interviews, acts, etc. and they further and enhance these knowledge themselves by doing more research. Yet, based on the ethnographic text of this study comprised of the depth interviews, longitudinal netnography, and participant observation, it is safe to claim that subcultures also provide a 'public sphere'

(Habermas 1991) where subcultural participants can also learn from each other by sharing their knowledge, experiences and concerns in their gatherings; mostly criticizing and challenging the status quo and dominant institutions; and imagining and sometimes actualizing alternatives.

> *But I've met a lot of people that are self-educated and I find them to be very aware. And a lot of them are- I have some very good friends that are in the movement here where I live in South Texas that are self-educated and very aware of what's going on. And they're in the punk movement and hopefully that- and I know that they're influencing others… So it started to take off exponentially when they started to affiliate with subcultures because you get so into it. You just start meeting other people that are aware and you share stories. They turn you onto new news links that are even more in-depth, it blows my mind. I couldn't imagine going back to me pre social movement, to me pre music, like pre punk skate music, I wouldn't wanna go back there… I definitely really like when someone for example, I go to a punk show. Where I'm just talking to another punk. And I say "Aw you're vegetarian too, you're vegan too or you're environmentalist? Hey do you know any musicians out there?" and they tell me "Yeah so and so from Circle Jerks [Hardcore/Punk band] is a vegan." I'm like "What? No fucking way." That's just one example and then I check out their music and everything they're singing about is fucking rad. I learned about something, they sing about something I have no idea about. I didn't go to a book. I didn't go to a book, I didn't go to a school to learn that but that's still education I think. I still definitely still learn and I will always will (Kate).*

> *There's another band that I was really big on for a while, Circus of Dead Squirrels. They would talk about animals being beaten and all that and trying to inform people of how I guess how people are fucked up and you know just try to make money off I guess their fur and all that. They would have people donate or they would donate two bucks out of either CD or the concerts to help out different animal foundations and stuff like that… So, I guess like being a fan, I like checking all their Facebook constantly. I would see how people would try and get involved in all that and it did kind of -- I did learn a couple of things about stuff like that and it made me get interested in trying to help out and so, yeah, like I mean… I became more conscious about it. I mean I've always been like an animal lover which I think is funny 'cause like I guess the way I look or whatever and then I don't really care, you know, whatever. We now have three cats and like it pisses me off when I see people like abusing animals and I started researching little things that they are cool stuff and try and learn about that, so it did kind of open my eyes a little bit and make me want to learn more about it (Rob).*

The tone of the message in this learning experience is critical for subculture members. Their preference lies behind the experiences of a presentational mode of learning in this interactive and communicative process, and having mainly critical and antagonist subjectivities they mostly dislike authoritarian impositions and enforcements. In other words, or more simply, they dislike someone or any institution telling them what to do in an authoritarian manner. Rob, for instance, would like to raise awareness and get others involved in the learning process regarding animal cruelty and veganism after he learns himself from a band called Circus of Dead Squirrel. Yet, he tries to be careful to avoid being overly assertive towards others and aims at solely exhibiting the information he gained in a presentational rather than a confrontational mode.

> *I did like when I was listening to the Circus of Dead Squirrel band I was trying to get others involved in the whole knowing how people or the animals or I guess like how they would kill them just for like food and all of that or whatever when it wasn't inhumane way.But, I guess it's just the way that I am. I don't try to push my beliefs or anything on anyone 'cause I never liked when people do that to me. I feel like everyone should be able to think however they want or express themselves however they want. I don't like really telling them what to do 'cause it's just I don't think it's right. So, if there is something like messages in the songs or whatever I don't really try and push them on to other people. I feel like if they're going to -- if they're going to do it themselves, they can do it themselves not -- you shouldn't really have someone push you to it... 'Cause it's like I'll mention things that I'm picking up from I guess learning to what they're talking about, but that's as far as it goes, I won't tell them to like I guess like into themselves or just inform them of what I've learned about or whatever and if they want to check it out themselves, they will, if not, I mean I guess I don't really like pushing things on other people (Rob).*

> *One band, Rage Against the Machine, I think they do it right. The way they do it, they're very passionate about what they say because the messages are very… They know what they're talking about. So I feel like if they would, I guess, not be phony about it, just know what they're talking about and they have the actual proof behind what they wanna change, let's say they're trying to change poverty, they know the actual statistics, and they incorporate that in their lyrics or also simple things like when*

*they go touring to give half proceeds to poverty and stuff like that (Donna).*

In sum, subcultures are found here to be educational sites for social learning and ideological awakenings, yielding to gradual disjunction from the mainstream. Subcultures' success in achieving an exciting, effective, and multi-perspectival learning experience seems to lie behind their incorporation of social imagination and mindset, perpetual interaction and relationships, presentationality and creativity, and identity aspects to generate and cultivate mutual learning process. Subcultures seem to function also as a learning community where community is indeed imagined by the participants with no strict boundaries (Anderson 1983), yet mainly differentiate themselves through their identity disaffiliations with the mainstream culture and the institutions breeding the hegemony. Contrary to highly structured institutionalized education (La Belle 1984) subcultures provide venues for informal, unstructured, unsystematic learning experience in a participative, (inter)active, creative, and mutual learning process. Moreover, subcultures are learning communities for participants "to hear their collaborated voices; engage in civil conversations to plan and bring about changes; discuss specialized topics and provide social activities and shelter from modern displeasures…" (Hollenbeck 2005, p. 51) In this respect, it can be argued that these subcultural learning communities seem to work as a catalyst for the drawing of 'cognitive mapping', referring to a didactic impulse of a politics of aesthetic representation, which, in turn, may engender a new alternative radical subcultural politics (Jameson 1991).

## Subcultures in the Micro/Individual Discourses: The Quest for Alternative Identities and Self-Expression

### Subcultures as the Nexus between Empowering the Individual and Reclaiming the Communal: *"A new level of confidence and power"*[*]

> *Subcultures can affect the way we think and the way we act, they influence our daily decisions, and subcultures basically just… We identify with the subculture. So then that just affects who we are. I mean I don't know how to say it. If we identify with a certain subculture, whether it'd be music, we absorb their morals and their thoughts and then we try and incorporate that in our social life whether it'd be the activities we're participating or just any of the beliefs that we believe in (Donna).*

> *When I first got into the death metal scene I was extremely excited because everything was very new - the music was new to me, the people were new to me. Inevitably man just gets used to things though. Right now I feel like it just kind of exists with me. It's not really that I have particular strong feelings about it anymore but it's just become a part of who I am. I guess it's part of my identity now. I still dress the same way that I did back then which is kind of ironic that the death metal scene itself has a dress code. It's long hair and beard and black t shirts. You think that they would not want some kind of uniformity in the group but of course its...(Darrell).*

Traditionally, identities have been defined mostly on the bases of the aforementioned components of the dominant institutions of civil society including nationality, ethnicity, religion, occupation, family, and the like (cf. Bocock 1993). That is, people have been categorized and compressed into given, stable, and clearly demarcated categories based on traditional and modern lineages. With the cultural turn from modern to postmodern, however, people have begun to construct and structure cultural identities no longer on the basis of these predetermined categories but more often on the basis of their personal and collective choices and constructions. In this respect, the most prominent discourse regarding the subcultural participants' discontent

[*] A part from the lyrics of a song called "A New Level" by Pantera

and antagonism is observed to pertain to their percepts on the mainstream consumer culture as well as the mainstream consumer identity against which they discursively constitute their own ongoing individual and collective subcultural identities. To this end, they seem to resist the mainstream and constitute antithetical subjectivities in order to protect their self-esteem and field-dependent identity investments to avoid undesired-self association and devaluing marketplace myths (Arsel and Thompson 2011; Ogilvie 1987). As one of the participants in this study, Rob, states: "I'm definitely not mainstream 'cause I try to stay away from what everybody else is listening to 'cause most of the time I feel like it's just copying I guess bullshit copying other bullshit." Almost all subcultural participants in this study indicate their discontent with the mainstream culture at large through using the dialectic between the mainstream music and subcultural music.

> *And it's really sad but I think that mainstream music- people that listen to mainstream music don't have a clue of the music that they're listening to- I listened to and I've turned it on and like I really quickly, I turn it off. I find it disgusting and think the word is I'm appalled by it because it doesn't open your eyes to what's really going on in the world today. It doesn't talk about anything of relevance; it doesn't talk about any issues that are on a global scale or even on a local scale—it doesn't talk about that kind of stuff. Mainstream music is very artificial and very fake and it's very- it triggers- I think it triggers the wrong senses, the wrong - I don't know maybe neurological feelings or something when you're listening to it. I find it to be extremely corporate and because it even sounds corporate, it's just disgusting. It sounds like they don't even give a fuck about anything. All they want is money. It's not even good music—they just want money. And if you'll listen to the lyrics and I know people nowadays, they say there's no good music. But if you really get into the subculture music and you really listen to the lyrics, there's- people are still talking about social issues and global issues and, yeah, just different. Yeah, they still might be talking about feelings but not every song is about their girlfriend not liking them or whatever. I think they're more mature than mainstream music definitely. And because of that, you're influenced by what you listen to and so it's like mainstream music is doing it on purpose or something. They're trying to- I don't know- make you insensitive or desensitize you from what's really going on in the world*

*today… I think the only stark contrast I can make is between the punk music and mainstream music because mainstream is everywhere. When I turn on the radio, you listen to, you can tell it's bull shit, you can tell its crap, you don't wanna listen to it. They're not teaching you anything. They're singing about shit. Then you listen to the punk music. Yeah, maybe they're not trying to teach you everything in every single song. But it's definitely there. The message is quite clear. It's there for you if you listen to it (Kate).*

*I tried to stay away from the mainstream media. I started to dislike it a lot. It's too commercial. I don't like when an artist sells himself out just for money. The quality of their work starts going down. It's like they don't care about their fans. They care about gaining money. They don't care about making music for the sake of making music which was the first thing that started making me to like them. So from that point to now, I don't like anything mainstream… It's I think is what is commercial, it's only based on greed. I got the idea from greed from it, because I think it's only the focus of it. It's only to producing, make more and more and more and more. And we don't care. And if you check out like the type of music that was coming years ago, for example, let's put it this way, the masterpiece from Queen, Bohemian Rhapsody. If you check that song, the lyrics are amazing. It's a masterpiece. It's like Picasso or I don't know, Michelangelo did something. But if you check nowadays music, it's just repetition of the same thing over and over eight lines, that's it, that's the song. And they… to advertising and all those things. They make the people believe it's amazing. I think they, like I don't know, they make too much propaganda… So mainstream for me, it's mostly -- that is a self-act, just wants to be sold. It's the stuff they show in the TV and the radio. It has come to that way. It has come to that way because the people have let it. And the people who are in charge of that, they agreed, want it to be that way. So it's no more for the quality or for what the people want. It's for money which I think is what is driving mostly all of these were greed. So greed based system (Edward).*

*I guess [being a mainstream consumer is] just being a follower doing what everybody else is doing whether or not you like it. You're doing it to either impress people or to fit in. I think they are just people partying and all that, I mean the way people dress. I think that's probably it just doing what everybody else is doing to either fit in or to impress somebody (Rob).*

*So much stuff in the mainstream, it's so difficult to find bands and music and something that's legit or authentic. And so that's why mainstream things, they rule. I mean, mainstream things, they influence everything because they're on the top. That's what everybody sees, that's what's presented in the media. People who aren't mainstream, they have to look harder… People who are looking for something that's not mainstream,*

> *who are more authentic and actually passionate, it makes it harder for them to go and look for… To find people who actually care. And so even though people are doing things and it's not getting noticed, I feel, because people are consuming things at such a fast rate and stuff like that that their efforts are going to waste because it's not mainstream. In order to be mainstream… I mean unless it becomes mainstream, then, I mean, then people will start caring but… I mean I think society judges who's mainstream. The media is what… How people determine what's mainstream. They decide. So let's say MTV wants to make a band famous, they have the power or any giant corporate person has the power to actually influence society but they just need… They're the ones in charge of it. They're the ones that have the channels and the connections to the public. So that's… Yeah (Donna).*

These passages above resonate greatly with the mainstream consumer culture critiques of the Frankfurt School scholars who were arguing that capitalism is promoting a shallow and artificial culture, using the means of communications such as media to manipulate the masses (cf. Fromm 1979; Habermas 1991; Horkheimer and Adorno 2007; Marcuse 1969). Yet, contrary to the 'hopeless dupes' argument, subcultures are found in this study to be the fragmented venues for those who are seeking to stand out by producing novelty – referring to a presentational mode – whereas mainstream consumers are criticized for seeking to conform and fit in with values of contemporary life by reproducing what already exists – referring to a representational mode (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Besides, mainstream materials are perceived by the participants in this study as something we might call '*kitsch',* referring to the symbol of identity or social status that is associated with conformity, mediocrity or lack of originality. In other words, mainstream culture is regarded as a totalitarian entity that reproduces passive and nescient consumers who also reproduce what already exists. Whereas, subcultures are depicted as venues for claiming democracy and public voice and for plural radical democracy (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 1985) where individuals and social groups are found to be active, creative, and participative in most aspects of social life.

With the cultural turn from modern to postmodern, individuals, who feel frustrated and alienated by the aforementioned dominant institutions of the civil society, find it possible to resist and disassociate from it and thus manifest a new form of fragmentation. Yet, with the attempt to avoid emerging subsequent social isolation and seek a re-connection in the face of a new mode of alienation (Thompson and Troester 2002), these individuals are drawn into the subcultures mainly through the passion and emotion the music releases, with its mostly angry and aggressive tones and controversial messages that they can relate to. This emotional connection between these frustrated and alienated individuals and music seems to create a bond with the others who also participate. Dave states:

> *So what that [subculture] is, is basically it's people who are lost. People who are very lonely and very, very sad and they hate mainstream culture. To a certain extent I am a part of that and I am glad I'm a part of that... They've been waiting for something interesting and why that is genuine is because it was sad. It was real people. It wasn't people who were growing up in rich homes. They wanted nice cars. They didn't want to have fancy steak, a fancy lobster. What these people wanted was a place to call their home… just wanting to change the world, wanting a place to call their home, wanting to be affiliated with punk rock because it was a way to empty out this loneliness. These were people coming from abusive households, people with broken marriages, people who were being abused, people who were being made fun of for being homosexuals. This kind of development in their social life led to a genuine development in music (Dave).*

> *I listened to some of those songs so much as a kid because I felt the concept, kind of like an alienation, being kind of an outcast, being kind of looked at from a distance and kind of laughed at. I was pretty much me growing up (Bob).*

> *So the people that I got along with were not like mainstream culture. And that's why I liked it is 'cause the accepted me for who I was… But I really just liked rock music 'cause of the energy. I guess the anger it captivated me. I could relate with it. But I don't wanna sound like there's people like, "Ooh, I had a bad childhood," or anything like that. I liked my growing up but I guess a lot of people just didn't accept me for who I was. They would just make fun of me all the time. My uncle showed me the Guns n Roses CD, I was like he had Guns n Roses shirt. I was like, cool can I*

*wear this so I were at school and then my friend John approached me. Well, he wasn't my friend then. He's like "Guns n Roses!" "My Uncle just gave me this CD and I think it's really interesting." So that's when we started talking and then he introduced me to his friends and them I met my friend Ruby and my friend Marisol and we all got along with that kind of music. So that's how I guess we connected was through music. But I guess… I don't know why they didn't accept me as far as bullying and stuff like that. I guess 'cause I was short and then they would just make fun of me 'cause I was a little bit nerd. I loved reading and stuff like that so that's why I guess… The music had nothing to do with why they didn't accept me. The music is why I guess I got along with certain people (Donna).*

In Amy's case, for instance, the institution of religion is interpreted to be no longer a uniting force or a phenomenon that individuals can relate to, therefore they seek other sources, such as subcultures, through which they can feel a genuine sense of passion or love and acceptance.

*Yeah. I do really, really believe that everybody strives for a sense of acceptance one way or another. Some people have religion and most, not all, but I would say most people who are metalheads or listening to this type of music aren't religious, so I feel like that has a lot to do with it. But I think as a human being, you're always going to want to feel -- you're always going to search for love and acceptance. And I think that being a part of a subculture like that brings acceptance because you have people who are like you and who love the same things you do and have that passion. I think it's really important (Amy).*

*Because that's [metal subculture] what -- that's what I grew up with. That was my first real passion because I used to be in a band, I was a guitar player and, you know, we recorded in studio, we heard stuff on the radio, this was back in Mexico City and it was just my life revolve around metal. You know I would wear the t-shirts every day, I would watch videos on the internet all day of my favorite bands, I would buy the DVDs, I would -- they were like a huge, huge, huge part of my life. And I think now because of -- now even though I listen to wide variety of things, that -- that genre or that -- yeah, I guess you could say that genre or culture is still very close to home. It's still like my base. Everything else things you know I touch on, but that was still like my home in terms of music… Well, I think since metal heads are very -- it's very tight knit community, I made a lot of friendships because of it. You know it was like, oh, you like metal too and instantly you have something in common and so... It's like you find --*

*you're not going to find for example a fan who is -- a fan of Katy Perry and another fan of Katy Perry they're going to meet and they're going to be like it might not -- they might not have that click, but a fan of I don't know Black Guardian [power/heavy metal band] from Germany and then if you're a fan from Black Guardian and I meet you and we find that about each other, we'll talk for hours about it because I'm sure you're going to be that into it as much as I am because metal -- some of the most diehard music fans out there are metal fans. The reason behind that, I'm not so sure (Charles).*

*How did it feel? How does it feel now? Well, feelings of identity, feelings of enjoyment, it's exciting to meet people that have the same interest that you do. Everyone likes to make friends and so it takes a while. It might be a generalization but socially as humans we're like social creatures and most of us like to make friends. It's great to make friends with people that share your same interest because you feel like you can be part of a community. Now I feel like I am part of a larger community that's doing well for the general life. I feel good being part of this overall environmental movement/community. Wherever you go and you meet someone that's in the same movement, you can get along on a certain level. So, I guess it feels better now than before (Kate).*

Postmodern sensibilities of tolerance for differences and multiplicity and respect for, appreciation and acceptance of the multiplicity and the differences without judgments of superiority and inferiority (Fırat and Dholakia 2006) is observed to be remarkably prominent in subcultures. As someone who had an opportunity to observe extensively the metal community both locally and globally, owing to being a wife of a singer of a renowned metal band that is frequently performing at local places as well as touring around the world, Emma, twenty-eight-year-old nurse, seems to be excited and vocal about the acceptance and appreciation of differences and plurality in terms of styles, ideologies, and worldviews, sexual orientations, and the like in the metal community.

*There are a lot of times we do see that they're part of our culture because they're misunderstood as well and so they, I guess, they find that they're understood within people that look like them and respect them. So we have the people that are… Like the LGBT say they dress a certain way. They're more of a gothic dress. Their parents don't like it. They treat them in a*

*certain way. People around them treat them a certain way because they shouldn't be dressed like that but then you go to this culture of metal, death metal kind of people that all dress the same like that or however you're dressed, doesn't really matter. You're there to be part of that music. You listen to them. You like them. It doesn't really matter how you're dressed, how you act because you're just there. And you're accepted. And part of that… That acceptance that you get from people like that, I think… It might sound weird, I think metal people are the most accepting people that there are because they don't judge someone for how they choose to live their life or how they're life is. A lot of times when you're in a… You go anywhere. You go to an international club, there's people dressed like they're rich. They're dressed up and if you walk in dressed a little bit different, you'll get that social anxiety like you don't belong here. And I've gone through that 'cause I don't like to dress up and I go to places like that and I feel like they don't want me there. It's like, "What do you care? I'm not here to talk to you. I'm just there to listen to music." And when you go to a metal show, however you dressed – however – even if you're dressed up or if you're in jeans and t-shirt and… or if you're in a dress or whatever or dressed all messed up however they don't care. They accept you. And I think because they're a very accepting group of people, all of the other subcultures join in because they feel that acceptance (Emma).*

Subcultures also provide the means and venues, be it music or other subcultural participants, conducive for empowering the individuals through not only educating them as a learning community and providing a genuine sense of communal and family but also reinforcing their identities in the making through enhancing their self-confidence and intellectual level in this process.

*Yeah. And you don't find that with other genres. It was a way for me because when I was younger, I was very shy. I was, you know, bury to myself and when I discover this type of music and I discovered other people that were into that type of music, my social skills just exploded because I felt comfortable just, you know, expressing every -- like everything that I was thinking and feeling with other people because I knew that those people had similar expressions and similar thoughts. I can't -- I can't give all the credit to the music, it was also the people that I was, you know, hanging out with because of the music that helped me, you know. Well, it may sound a little bit farfetched, but it did help a lot of these songs that I was listening to were based off of a -- all these songs I was listening to were based off of a historical events or mythology and things*

*like that and I learned a lot from that and also, you know, it would help me spark a conversations because it gave me a lot of like knowledge it's not mainstream and it would give me something to talk about and give me like that interesting edge to talk to other people about… Also the fact that I was being in a band, you know, standing in front of -- on the stage or in front or a crowd, at first I was terrified. Then I started loving it and I started, you know, it gave me energy and that same energy helped me open up more socially to talk to people, you know, because if -- it doesn't make sense for you to be standing in front of large audience and everybody's looking at you and then get off stage and then be afraid to talk to them, you know, because you're already exposed -- you're already in the spotlight, so that helped me a lot to open up and be more social (Charles).*

*Yeah, I think personally, I became more open. I think I've always been the shy person and that was always part of my childhood up to high school. I was very shy. And in high school, when I was in the ROTC, that's when I became more outgoing. Before that I was a really, really quiet person, really, really shy. I was really, really tiny, and as a kid I was always sick so I never really got to do a lot of things. It took me a long time to, I guess, develop my personality because I was always sheltered, I was always sick, I was always in the hospital. I had all kinds of diseases when I was little… And so coming from being a really, really shy person that really spoke… really didn't say much, didn't like to speak out loud and to give speeches, I would turn red and my stomach would hurt to being a person that's on stage singing… I mean… or hosting parties or hosting people at my house and… I mean it really made me more outgoing. And it was part also of our friends like I was more comfortable with them but I'm outgoing but I was never outgoing before. I think that's part of… that made me become more outgoing and more open and…(Emma).*

*I know Iron Maiden, one of my favorite bands, the reason I like them so much, because they're actually a very intellectual band.One of things that really got to me about them is the fact that they were so intellectual. And growing up I always read more than I ever watched TV. Always reading books and I remember I went ahead and read Red Badge of Courage when I was young and I found out, holy crap! It actually has a song based off of that book. More of an intellectual sense of things actually that's what really drag -- not really drag but it has really caught me about them. And not just based off of stuff like that but when they went ahead and would talk about was actually very well researched and they actually know what they were talking about. And me being the nerd, I guess that I was back as a kid, I understood it more because it was more of real life thing. It's was more factual-based rather than me just coming up with stuff. They have songs, Aces High, based off of real events; that you could base off of Red Badge of Courage, stuff like that. Their stuff are based off of ancient pharaohs and Egypt and whatnot. They have so many different levels and*

*so many songs throughout their entire careers that they always went ahead and wrote based off of real things. And once I would go ahead and listen to them, I was like "Well, actually I kind of do know something about that. I do know something about this," and then I go ahead. I got it more because I actually knew about it and I would read about it so much as a kid. When they will go and sing about it, I was like, "Oh. Well, I understand that." So I go ahead and listen to more of it (Bob).*

This bonding is interpreted by the subcultural participants as eminently different from, and more genuine than, the given ties and categories through kinship lineages or blood relations. The following quote documents the power of common feelings of anger and frustration in encouraging some individuals to seek and reinstate a genuine sense of family and communitas. In Tom's case, for instance, since he encountered several divorces in his family, the family he was born into and thus has a blood relation, he has lost faith in the family institution in its conventional meaning and seeks ways to regenerate a new form of family of his choice, rather than given, through engaging music-based subcultures (i.e., metal community) he finds genuine and passionate.

*For me, I've always been a family-oriented person. I've always thought family comes first to me and over time I've kind of evolved my idea of family. I've come to the conclusion now that a family isn't entirely blood. Just because someone has a blood relation to you doesn't -- I mean, it makes them family, but I don't think it makes them a family. There's more to being connected family-wise that you share the same bloodline. That's fine and dandy but I had nothing to do with that. As far as I'm concerned, if you're a family member but you don't take the time to congregate and talk to each other and understand then you're not family. So things like that. I've never even really been close to my family. The only people I've really been close to in my family is my mother, my grandmother, my uncle and my elder uncle and my tia… Even when it comes to my family I've always thought of me and my brother. My brother listens to rock, but he's more of a grunge person, Nirvana, that kind of stuff, but I've always thought of me and him as the outcasts of the family. No, I don't think anyone in that family has ever really understood us mainly because I think our family, my mom and dad started the whole divorce cycle. Now, that I've seen a couple other of my family members that have suffered divorces I think my mom and my dad really were the ones who started it. But it's*

*simple things like that from childhood that kind of just plant that seed of -- and it doesn't necessarily have to be anger. It can just be doubt, doubt of -- having this doubt that this life is as grand as everyone tells you it's going to be. It doesn't always have to be anger, but I mean I think it's kind of -- I think as a child it's kind of hard to not be able to distinguish that line and then let it kind of -- you let it roll it over to that because you don't know how to really stop that. But it just comes from any kind of simple tragedies I guess, if you will, like that. I could never understand as a child why it was the way it was but -- so simple things like that being brought up Catholic, people telling you that God loves us all and we're all equal, it's like -- and you don't know what to do with that. You look at -- you're told that everyone is equal that we should all be as happy as the person next to you, but you sit there and you observe everything around you, the world around you and you see how chaotic it is. So it leads you to question what the beliefs that you are supposed to have at your core and that kind of -- it leaves you troubled and confused and not really knowing what your place is. I mean if that's not -- if you don't have any help around that dealt with as soon as you can, all those troubles, that sadness, the anger, all that kind of just boils up until you find something you can relate to. And I think that's why people find their place in any type of metal community…(Tom).*

*It feels like you're part of a family. I felt that way when Cannibal Corpse [a death metal band] came to play and we saw all these people that we hadn't seen in years, maybe a couple of years, we saw a lot of people that came down to see that band, well, they came into that show and we just kept running into all these people and it felt like a big family reunion and that's how we feel. A lot of time I think our house is a small little Mecca for metal heads. We'll have a small gathering and everybody comes and they like hanging out at our place. I don't know if it's… 'cause it's our place, there's no parents, or – I don't know. It's always been that we have the house that there's not parents and you can come and have a good time and somehow we just end up doing something fun or just having music on and talking and making food or… and it just feels like a big family reunion and we get along so well. I mean there's no… That's very rare when we find people in the same group that… Somebody to sing along with 'cause even though we may have a lot of different ideas about different things, we just come together as friends and it seems more like family sometimes (Emma).*

These communities and identities that are formed by the subcultural participants on the basis of their personal or collective choices, worldviews, lifestyles, ideological and musical orientations seem to empower them against the various types of oppression. These communities,

through music-based subcultures, are perceived to be the means to deal with and/or fight against oppression, ranging from micro-level oppression – by friends, families, the local community - to a more macro-level oppression – government, corporations - they often encounter in their everyday lives.

> *Okay- well, I don't know- I guess greed. Greed creates oppression when people in power don't care about the entire community and they just do it out of greed and selfishness and hunger for power. They oppress people. And we see that on the big scale as in our government oppressing us but you can also see them on a small local individual level like being within a group of friends or being within a smaller community, being in a scene, you'll find people that are- they wanna be in power and so they oppress. And oppression takes many forms. It can be not letting someone speak their opinion- not respecting their opinion- not letting someone- not empowering someone to do the work themselves like domestic oppression—the wife has to stay home and cook and the man works; or friend oppression wherein a friend tells someone "the music you listen to sucks" or something or I don't- "Oh my God, you're not wearing that brand," kind of thing. And so within our subculture communities fight oppression. One really great way to fight oppression is to do things yourself. And that's where the DIY community comes from and it's radical and you're fighting on an individual level but when a whole bunch of people are fighting the same way with you, then it becomes a group- all of you are fighting together (Kate).*

Subcultures have a critical importance in providing members with a means, venue and a platform through which they can stand out and generate novelty with a presentational mode (Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). Do-it-Yourself is one of the main tools, which was turned into a punk ethic and became more prominent as a term in 1970s through punk subcultures (Holtzman et al. 2007), providing means and relations for breaking social ties and identities once established on the basis of lineages and given categories, experimenting individual and collective identities and empowering ones who feel alienated and frustrated by the dominant institutions including consumer culture and the market institution. Subcultures are traditionally defined on the basis of these traditional and modern lineages and given taken-for-granted categories that left almost no

room for distinct individuality or standing out with novelty. However, subcultures, defined here on the basis of world views, ideologies, lifestyles, musical interests, and the like, provide more room for people to play and experiment with their multi-phrenic and fragmented selves and identities (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995), thus find a possibility to break away from those given and imposed social chains and stand out as an individual, exhibit novelty with a presentational mode, empower themselves, and form their own genuine sense of communality.

> *I think it's [DIY] a wonderful thing to embrace because it's very empowering and it makes you become a free thinker and a leader, not a sheep, not a follower, and you start to develop your creative side and you express yourself as an individual, what you like to do, what you like to wear and you stand out and I think that it's a very liberating, I don't wanna say skill because you don't have to be skilled, it's all about just doing it and trying it, and I think if you adapt a do it yourself lifestyle, then you are choosing to empower yourself, you're choosing to be a leader. You are putting your foot down and saying, I'm not gonna be a follower. I will not follow the pack and you take hose freakin' mass corporation blindfolds off and you lead yourself, yeah, you're following in other sub-genre, but you're following a genre that empowers people to be different. And you're following communities that enjoy and accept people that are different. And that community, in turn, becomes more powerful, because everybody brings something new to the table. It's not like the leader of the pack telling the sheep how to act where the leader is the powerful one…Because it breeds free-thinkers, it can also break the chains of people that have been, of people that are enslaved by delusions of corporations and of mass corporation false identities and false ideals. Like, you have to be a certain height and weight to be a model, that kind of stuff for women, and so do it yourself… It breaks stereotypes. So, and once you start breaking those social chains and you become a free thinker, then you're allowed to become more aware and more involved in the bigger picture. Not just what the advertisements want you to think about. You can think outside the box, as they say (Kate).*

> *But once we actually started the band, started performing live, we got more involved. We got to know a lot more people and through them we got to go and help out more. We'd go ahead and help out with sound, help out with promotion, help out with getting places for some of these shows. I remember one time we were actually the reason why the entire show happened. There was this show that happened out in some middle of nowhere field in Alamo.The only reason that show was able to happen last minute was because they needed a generator and it just so happen that we*

*were able to get one. Through stuff like that, we provide things here and there. We never ever expected anything in return, because back in the day when we were a part of it, it was actually a lot more united. It was a lot more of a "Let's just help each other out" kind of vibe going on. We really enjoyed then. For all the help that we went ahead and got out there, we got a lot of help back. That's one of the things that we kind of went ahead and notice and took pride, the fact that we were a part of something. Hardly anybody went ahead and really knew about any of this -- I guess we can call it camaraderie, like a brotherhood of a sense that was outside of it. I would try to explain these things to people at school, trying to get them to come out, enjoy it, come take a listen. Not a single one ever went. They just didn't get it. They couldn't get involved and it's something they didn't really understand and it's okay for them. To each his own I guess. But for someone like us who was actually more involved, it was right around that time. And being involved, being a band member was actually a really interesting feeling. And because of that involvement, because we were so heavily involved, we were actually the frontrunner. Our band was actually a frontrunner, a movement and that was down here. I remember they still use the logo that I created way back in the day (Bob).*

Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007, p. 147-148) state that "consumers are proactively integrated into a social network linked by a common ideological outlook and goal system and, conversely, that its members develop an enduring sense of commitment toward the community and its core values." As for subcultures, subcultures avail music to heighten awareness of the contemporary drawbacks attributed to mainstream consumer culture and the market logics whereby music is argued to be conducive for setting up the stage for educating members and drawing a 'cognitive map' in mobilizing them to a more conscious and open-minded phase. In so doing, subcultures reconstitute enlivening connections to their social, environment, and the like and deepen the familial and communal bond. In this respect, it is conducive for constructing alternative identities and building a spirit of sociality and thus collective identities. According to Kate, music is another language different than linguistic. It speaks to the heart and emotions. It generates means for participants to express themselves alternatively and creates stronger social bonds with those who feel the same way. Ultimately, it turns out to be a way of life.

*But then again you can also- at the end of the day, at the end of the protest, you can all come around and sit around the campfire like sing songs about it. Music's great because it's like another language and it's a language that you don't have to- it's not a word- it's not a linguistic language. You don't have to speak the same language but if you can feel it, then you can like it. And so you can get all kinds of people all over the world to like the same type of music and bring them together and I think it's an awesome avenue for getting people to fight different agendas because then it's not coming from just one little tiny part, with the world you're attacking it from all sides. And that's the best way to attack something- you attack it from all sides and take down the corporate giant… I guess I'm seeking to hold on to my identity of who I am and what I stand for. I like that music. The music makes me feel good. I like listening to most of it. I'm seeking community? Yeah, I guess I'm seeking community because I wanna keep in conversation with people that like the same kind of music… Coz music is a great outlet because music is a wonderful outlet. It's a way to release. It's something fun to do, especially live music. It's fun to go to a live show and see other people... it's something you look forward to it's because we can all listen music in our house, that's fun too, but it's great to celebrate. It's like a celebration. You go and watch live bands. You hang out with your friends (Kate).*

*Metal music is not just a genre it's a lifestyle. I guess if you want to turn it into a message is, not really a message, but a consequence of metal being a lifestyle, they are very tight knit communities of, you know, people who follow metal and a lot of people who are very, very into this lifestyle everything that they do somehow relates back to metal. For example when I was in high school and since the beginning of my college, all of my homework assignments I would somehow relate it back to metal. You know even it was -- even if I really implicit say in the -- in an essay maybe if I had to write a story for an English class, I would -- I would base my story of -- what you call that like a concept album. The story from that album, I would make my version of it for school like I would always go back because I loved it so much that I want to put it, you know, through me (Charles).*

*So we're always surrounded by that music, we're always surrounded by that equipment, and we're always surrounded by those people. And so it just became really a way of life. And even now, me being part of the music scene as myself as a band person, it's just been really like another aspect of my life that I really enjoy. It's changed only I guess that I've involved it more than before. Now it's more of a… It's a bigger part of my life than it was before. But it's still definitely a big influence and a big part of our lives (Emma).*

In sum, subcultures provide a conceptual venue within which members consider, challenge, and recontextualize the contradictions of the dominant structure. In this respect, subcultures are arguably conducive to constant negotiation and re-contextualization of the alternative cultural positions and thus for the cultural reconfigurations by providing the means and venues through which fragmented alternative identities and cultural forms emerge, and voice and reproduce the critical values, ideals, and discourses oriented to oppositional cultures, similar to the radical media politics (see Benjamin 1934). Subcultures seem to diverge or disintegrate themselves from the mainstream on the basis of clashing values and ethos. Thus, subcultures are presented here as the fragmented social venues emerge as a result of the manifestation of the demise of the notion of the social as totality by the market society. Subcultures' opposition to mainstream culture and dominant order is the primary common denominator through which individuals construct their subcultural persona, identities and subject positions.

The participants in this study praised subcultures for rectifying the social isolation, depersonalization, emotional detachment, and ignorance of the dominant structures about other life modes and plurality. Passive, de-skilled, disengaging positions where there is no innovation and autonomous actions are intimately questioned and criticized. Moreover, subcultures constitute overt divergence and deviance from status quo and marketplace norms and tacitly reinforce subcultural discourses, ethos and ideals by structurally and perpetually encouraging participants to modify and play with their identities and subject positions. Subcultures as 'imaginative communities' (Anderson 1983) or 'lifeworlds' (Habermas 1985), are beyond the given essentialist or traditionalist and/or modern categories such as nationalities, ethnicity, religion, and the like. They are critical venues for those who seek not only existential meanings and a personal empowerment but also experiencing of reconnection and communal solidarity,

becoming part of a communitas, and building enduring relationships.

In this respect, subcultures reproduce many embedded and genuine relations and experiences. For the participants in this study, 'subcultural identity' seems to be a supra-identity which is more intrinsically oriented and idiographic owing to members' creativity in combining several different heterogeneous elements from different subcultures and cultivating composite constellations of discourses and constantly negotiate and reconfigure subcultural positions out of them. Yet, if they have a preference for any particular subculture outweighing the others in its priority, be it punk or hardcore or metal or electronic, the one to which they may feel more connected, closer to their individuity, then this type of identity might be called sub-identity. Sub-identity is more extrinsic and socially oriented, pertaining to the influence of existing friendship, social peers environment, accumulated social/cultural capital throughout the socialization process, and aesthetic proximity (Bourdieu 1984). Subcultures serve to simultaneously promote individual autonomy while they make people dependent upon others (cf. Durkheim 1984).

**Subcultural Escapades: Radical Self-Expression, Therapeutic Praxis, and Controlled Chaos**

The proliferating forms of oppression by hegemonic structures and institutions that people experience in their everyday lives yielding the growing social isolation, desolation, alienation, and frustration as a result of fragmentation, which, in turn, is preceded by consequences of discontent with modern institutions and discourses. Thus, people feel the need to release their frustrations and anger. This release has taken, to a great extent, the mode of radical subcultural creativity in the form of music, style, and dance.

> *...Then you venture over to metal where everyone is angry and even if you watch concert or go to concerts or something, you start seeing people in*

*moshpits. You see all this anger and frustration. And even if you start talking to some of the people at the concert that you find that you're having all these similarities and it kind of just -- it's almost like a tractor beam that just pulls you in because you can understand and you can relate to what everyone is telling you, to what the message of the music being sent to everyone bashing against each other with their bodies in a moshpit. You understand that anger. It almost feels like a new home to you and you just end up getting lost in there (Tom).*

*Maybe they've got- I don't know- for example, maybe they're angry and this type of music can be an outlet for aggression. And it feels good to go to a moshpit and mosh and then roll out and that kind of stuff, maybe they play in a band and maybe they find that playing this type of music is an outlet for them and they're releasing whatever it is that's inside… Well, maybe they affiliate with some of the larger ideologies of punk like "fuck the system." It's very accepted throughout the whole punk ideology, punk genre- fuck the system- full compression. And maybe they also agree with that but they have it taken any further than just that, than just "fuck the system," and so they- and knew that they- yeah, they like it- fuck the government and fuck the government… Fuck the system also like no one telling you what to do—you're an individual… I think it just have something to do with the oppression and doing thing your own way, doing what you think is right… (Kate).*

*A lot of the members of the scene have full-time jobs, eight to five. I think a lot of the times, they're just very frustrated with their lives including the musicians that are involved. There's a lot of very hopeful musicians. They want to make it as musicians, and if you ask them what they do, then, you'll see that they work these menial jobs where every day is the same. They work in factories or they work in the oil industry where they go away for a week and then, they come back. And then they go away for a week and then they come back. I think they're just trying to escape the absolute, this repetition of daily working life. I'm one of the ones that's more fortunate that doesn't actually feel that but when I speak to my friends that—one of my friends has been working for a car wash place for years or maybe six years, and he has all of his hopes on his band… I think it's just escape from banality. Their lives are just so stuck that they just—and a lot of the musicians included—their lives just suck and they want to do something fun. And playing death metal is fun, and playing angry music that's meant to be angry and brutal and dissenting from society, dissenting from their jobs or their shitty marriages or their shitty apartments and the shitty food that they eat (Darrell).*

*One of the things that I love about these shows and whatnot is that when these people go out, they just look to have a good time. They're trying to go ahead and get out and forget the stresses of their job, the stresses of*

*reality, daily life, paying bills and all these other bullshit they have to deal with. So that's one of the things I really love about it. They just want to go out just so they can have fun, forget about it and have a good time and share the experiences that everybody else is sharing. They all love the music. That's one thing everybody there has in common to begin with. They can go up, they can just relax, have a good time despite the fact that a lot of people think that metal shows aren't very relaxing… For some reason, as soon as I did that everything went away. It was just me driving on the road listening to music, and for some reason that went ahead and just changed everything for me. It was an escape. It was a physical escape. And actually I had to get in the vehicle and move, but sometimes it doesn't always have to be. It's mental sometimes. It's very mental, which is why like I said, I love Iron Maiden so much. They're very mental on what they talk about. They're very educated, all those guys. And that's why it worked so well for me. Bands like that, especially the older classic bands, they're very mental about things they talk about, which is why they can go ahead and like paint these scenes in my head and I could just go ahead and just fall asleep to this stuff, or just lock myself away and don't have to worry about a damn thing that's outside of my door. I get my own little personal vacation sometimes (Bob).*

Subcultures also provide venues and means through which participants find an abundance of opportunities for self-expression in alternative and different manners. Darrell, for instance, one of the key characters in the local metal scene in South Texas, who is also a vocalist in a considerably renowned death metal band, articulates how he uses death metal for playing and expressing alternative and different selves and identities.

*Performing death metal is my primary reason into being in the culture because there's definitely a God-complex that comes with performing death metal. When I'm on stage, I'm not really myself, but I'm performing a certain identity which I know that the death metal scene wants me to be whether it be hypersexual or hyper-atheist or—so I feel like it gives me a chance to exaggerate certain features of my personality that I wouldn't actually be able to do in any other occasion. So performing is always a fucking good time. And then it gives me a really good reason—I mean I think I even drink extra just to perform being an alcoholic or something. I'm not an alcoholic, but I think on stage, I'll perform an alcoholic on stage. I'll take way too many beers on stage, and drink way too many beers on stage. At the same time, I know that I'm putting in these hyper-masculine ideas because that's what death metal culture seems to revolve around to is this hyper-masculinity, this anger that only males can have.*

*And for one reason or another, I think the female population also just digs that. I don't know why, but—I mean if you were to ask me about the female population, I think it's this weird, very extreme form of feminism that involves—that's within the female population. They like males to act like this even though perhaps they don't really like them to act like that, but they like them to perform that way… (Darrell).*

*Any subculture actually has an impact on a person's everyday life particularly my subculture. It has an impact on my everyday life and the fact that, hell, I'm regrowing my hair back out. I want to be linked to it again. I don't go anywhere without my music. Music is always with me, whether it's my entire collection that's in my car at all times, because I'm literally in my car half of the day, or it's on my phone. I have a choice amount of songs that are saved in my phone at all times where if I need to, it's there with me at all times. It is such a huge part of me that I get it tattooed on me. One of my favorite bands of all time is tattooed right here on my shoulder. I'm even thinking about getting a few more like Iron Maiden tattoos and whatnot. I've even gone so far as to do that. The subculture is -- I mean, if it's relevant enough, it will impact everybody in a major way. Not just with me itself. People like my brother, who would never detached from it like I was for a while. I was actually detached for almost five years. He never detached himself from this subculture at all. He still walks everywhere all black with the band T-shirts. He still has the long hair. He's got the tattoos that he purposely lets them show and whatnot. And just being a part of the subculture just affects him to the point where he feels he needs to go ahead and he takes pride in it and he'll express it (Bob).*

These manifestations of subcultural resistance, however, exist in a more symbolic and presentational mode. In other words, for the subcultural participants in this study, the aim is not to 'struggle for power' (Deicke 2007) or overthrow the system and then take over and dominate themselves, rather they seem to be in pursuit of the struggle for existence and/or the struggle for recognition.

*It's also the image that they have, you know, the scary image, the long black hair and sometimes they -- they have like the more Goth-type look with the long leather coats and the big boots and, you know, it's a scary look, so they associate it, they associate that with violence and with aggression and crime. Maybe they are trying to achieve is -- is maybe they don't want to dress and look that way necessarily, but they do to prove that they don't have to abide by society's rules. That they can express*

*themselves however they want and how eccent -- eccentric as they want to and they don't have to follow society's rules...Maybe the rules like you have to -- you have to maintain a professional image maybe or you have to maintain, you know, a family oriented image, you know, clean cut clean shave, you know nicely dress is the good image and maybe what some of these metal or hard core punk followers are doing is saying, hey, I can be just as good as you. I can be just as good a person. It doesn't matter what I look like… I don't think it has because they -- I don't think it's -- the metal community is like, okay, we're metal community, we're going to show you that you're wrong. I don't think that's the way it is. We're not going against your society we just want you to accept ours. And I think they've actually succeeded in that because of the large following that the genre -- that this genre has more so than any other genre. The other genres don't really have that culture behind it. It's more of a marketable product, you know, if you will. It's not so much a lifestyle… Lifestyle is when you don't -- you don't only listen to the music for recreational purposes I guess sort of just, you know, to have it in your car or just to have something playing while you're driving or it's more you really live the music. You sit down and you listen to it and you pick up a guitar and you try and do it yourself, you go to the concerts, you -- you go out of your way to go and get an autograph, you read the biography or each of these -- the artists, you want to know what their artistic influences are like you really want to go deep into to the world of this music. It's not so much just on surface that you just listen to it. You go so much beyond that than just listening to it (Charles).*

Bob, who has long been active in the local metal scene in South Texas, first as a musician and lately as an organizer and promoter, articulates that subcultural participants release their anger and frustrations through radical, extreme and chaotic modes yet in a relatively controlled and secure environment relying on the codes, norms and rituals usually embraced and carried out within the metal music scene.

*Yeah, controlled chaos. I like to use that term when it comes to these music because it's a self-expression kind of thing in these shows. It's kind of chaotic, these shows, because you have so many people running around in all these circles and people thinks it's kind of violent, be with the whole mosh pits and what not. It's basically people ramming into each other and getting physical with one another. People doesn't even know sometimes and it's chaotic. It really is. It's slightly violent but it's chaotic, and the reason why I say it's controlled because it's in a safe environment to me. These shows are meant to be safe. Basically a designation point where*

*everybody can come together and let out their frustrations, like there was this one singer, a singer for a band and whatnot. I'm not a terribly huge fan of them but he had a really good point. It was a documentary. My favorite documentary I have ever seen. It's called Metal: A Headbanger's Journey. He went ahead and interviewed some of the guys, and this one interview he had with Corey Taylor. He just went ahead and said, "I'd rather have some guy in a mosh pit letting out all of his frustrations where he is surrounded by these people, by other black metal people rather than going out and doing it to some complete stranger on a shooting spree." Something like that. I'd rather have him do it here in this environment where it's controlled rather than do it out there in public. The scene, the show can be violent but at the same time it's very controlled. There's rules when it comes to it. If somebody falls the pit stop, you pick them back up. You make sure they're okay. If they're hurt, you get them help. I've personally seen this happen many times where if somebody falls or I myself have, actually at one time I have fallen and people stopped to help me up. The very first mosh pit I was ever into I fell. People stopped. People helped me up. You don't go ahead and keep it going and I've actually seen what happens when they kept going. When a person is like trampled on the floor, it's not a very good sight to the person who actually was doing the trampling. They kick him out basically. They get rid of him. They don't want a person who is beating on someone defenseless on the floor. They don't want that type of person around. They will get him the hell out. It's meant to be fun. It's meant to get your aggressions out. Yes, you can get a little bit aggressive with it. You can get a little bit violent with it but as long you don't take it over and as long as you still have a general love and respect for everyone around you, it's all in good fun (Bob).*

Subcultures are mainly positioned in opposition to the mainstream culture that is perceived to exclude the genuine values and organic relations and experiences. Subcultures, therefore, present the autonomous social venues where individuals can experience and live these feelings and values and express their oppositional and intellectual qualities and stances in a creative manner. Subcultures provide sensory appeal, genuine creativity, organic social relationships between fans and musicians who are also fans, and a sense of direct participation in a tightly knit social groups and immersion into the radical, likely extraordinary, experiences. Charles, who likes to explore and challenge the taboos that make up society and who views

himself and metal music as controversial, illuminates how subcultural music (i.e., metal music) transforms individuals into active individuals and enhances their immersion into the world of subcultures. Along these lines, he also separates the notions of hearing the music and actually listening to the music.

> *Well, I've always -- I've always liked music. I've always listened to music, but I never really had -- you know what? I have always heard music, but then when I was introduced to metal, that's when I started listening to music, you know, sit down and break the song apart and, you know, and really analyze the arrangements and what the musicians are doing and the ability that they have to house able to do such things and metal introduced me to really listen to music. So, it was metal that got me so immersed into the music world. Now, I listen to a song, you know, I'll separately listen to the base line, I'll separately listen to the drum track, I'll separately listen to the guitar riff and you know it -- metal made me a much more active listener… It's just I feel like that heavy music evokes more emotions. You know pop music can be a bit more -- sometimes can be more relaxing pleasing to hear more kind of like background music, you know, for social gathering while metal is more, you know, to listen to you sit down and listen to. Also, the way some of these metal bands write their music for example, concept albums where there's a whole story behind the music and behind the lyrics through each song and through each song the story progresses. I think that's something that captures the fan and you know falls into the world of the band therefore into the world of metal (Charles).*

Throughout the conversation, Charles linked many times the state of immersion to the world of metal subculture or the state of being an active listener to the feelings of passion, passion considered to be lost within modernity, which now can be found in music-based subcultures.

> *Because most metal heads are very passionate about the music. Most of them are musicians themselves because of the music they love it so much that they want to learn how to play it themselves which is my case. So when you're so passionate about something and you encounter someone else who is just as passionate as you are about the same thing, it -- you have a very tight connection with that person. But then when that person becomes three hundred other people in the same concert venue that you -- that you know have that same passion for music that's where the magic happens because and, you know, you can go to a pop concert and you*

> *know that maybe twenty people -- not twenty people, but about may be 20, 30%, I'm just throwing numbers out there, 20 or 30% of the audience is a diehard fan, the others are, you know, a group of friends who just went out for a concert and have a good time, you know, the others there are just, you know, because they were invited you know. But at a metal concert, you know that more than 80% are there because they are passionate about going to it (Charles).*

We can read in this passage that whereas metal music represents passion, mainstream pop music represent non-passion. This dialectic between metal music and pop music can be extended into the interpretation of the dialectic between subcultures and the mainstream consumer culture, which can be metaphorized by Nietzsche's (1993) notion of the dialectic between the Dionysian and Apollonian principles. Subculture here represents the Dionysian principles of passion, chaos, irrationality, enchantment, raw energy, unpredictability, art, and creativity; whereas mainstream culture as well as the market represents the Apollonian principles of order, ordinary, mundane, comfort, security, rationality, logic, and reason. On the one hand, subculture represents the Dionysian principles, owing mainly to its participants' orientation toward art forms, radical and extreme modes of self-expression and creativity, symbolic display of chaos and being active, controversial, and unpredictable. These principles overlap to a great extent with the postmodern sensibilities. On the other hand, mainstream mass culture represents the Apollonian principles, owing mainly to its members' orientation toward consuming passively, rationally, and predictably the popular products and brands sold in the marketplace and adopting the spoon-fed identities that are pre-established by the market institution. These principles overlap to a great extent with the modern tendencies.

# CHAPTER VI

# FINDINGS: FRAGMENTATION WITHIN SUBCULTURES, RECONFIGURATION OF THE MARKET, AND SUBCULTURAL POSITIONS TOWARD A SUBCULTURAL MOSAIC

## The Symbiotic Interplay between the Market and Subcultures:

***"It's time to spread the word, let the voice be heard"***[*]

> *Like I say some things the media tends to hide the real truth of what the subcultures talk about or the way of thinking or whatever. But now they cannot stop hiding what they really talk -- and here is where the good part comes. When the subculture really takes the space that the media gives them and use it as something positive, as something that they can share their own stuff; the reality of the subculture, the real meaning of the group or their ideas. It can be like the media uses the subculture but now the subculture uses the media as something to be mainstream or people to get to know them. I will say that will be one of the good place to use the media or to have the media on your side (Jason).*

> *Well, I don't have a very, very huge problem with commercialism as long as it's done right. If I know that the exposure that these people are being given is simply for the fact of the exposure and not for the money side of it, I'm good with it. Because I think that some bands are good enough and they need to be heard by other people. And the only way you can do that is through media. I know media is controlled by these huge corporations and whatnot, and you have to play by their rules because there's no other way to do it (Bob).*

Subcultures are found here to be discursively constituted systems of meaning often revolving around the discourses of resistance to, negotiation with, and interpretation of the

[*] A part from the lyrics of a song called "Rise" by Pantera

market logics promoted by corporate capitalism. The market institution functions within the society as if it were a cultural authority (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995) forcing consumers to conform to spoon-fed pre-established identities and overconsumption (see Binay 2005; Kilbourne et al. 1997). Yet, there are paradoxical discourses among subcultures as to whether taking on a confrontational approach to the market portraying it as evil and try to eliminate it entirely, or adopting a dialogical approach in a process where the market can pragmatically be leveraged off for the avails of subcultures, which can also simultaneously expand the market and cultural resources and positions.

Most of the subcultural participants in this study demonstrate a critical and antithetical stance against the market institution as the propaganda tool of consumer corporate capitalism (Heath and Potter 2004) and as the hegemonic disciplinary force that exerts social and cultural authority and control over emerging alternative identities and cultures (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995). Yet, these antithetical stances seem to be directed prevailingly at the major market actors, those who manage and exploit the tools and resources of the marketplace (i.e., corporations, advertisers, marketers, brand managers, etc.), rather than the notion of the market itself as a phenomenon. These paradoxical and polysemous attitudes and meanings of the market are subject to how individuals use, respond, negotiate, exploit, oppose, receive, and perceive it to be. In other words, it depends on how individuals put it in perspective. Market, after all, is a social construction (Penaloza and Venkatesh 2006), constructed by the people (Fırat and Dholakia 1998).

Yet, there are also preexisting structural forces and influences not to be overlooked in understanding the subcultural discourses regarding the market. The ‘discourse theory’ warns us to celebrate the growing consumer agency more carefully in the face of the also growing impact

of the hegemonic institutions and structural forces of the social countering agency and restricting its autonomy (see Laclau and Mouffe 1985). In this respect, the power of the structural forces relative to the subcultural agency and the subcultural participants' social and economic resource dependency render the autonomous and 'monadic existence' (Laclau 1997) of these subcultural particularities almost impossible.

> *They have no influence over… They do have influence but even then, it's not enough to spread ideas. I mean I feel like that's why a lot of the cultures and a lot of beliefs and systems like that, they're basically dead. I mean they have no power really, unless they somehow market themselves… I mean that's where social media comes in, that's why they have Facebook and Myspace and stuff like that because they market themselves and those things. And that's what's good about the new technological era but there're still ways to get your message out whether it'd be through social networking or just… I know bands here in the valley. They'll come to the campus and they'll pass out flyers so there're still ways to spread your messages. It's just more hard… It's difficult as compared to somebody who signs with the record label and says… And just conforms and spreads the messages that the record label wants them to do (Donna).*

> *Alive. I think it's [participating in subcultural activities] the only time I feel alive really. That makes me feel sorry for people as genuine as me that they don't have the money to do it. That is a very unfair aspect that marketing enforces in our culture. Marketing in such a way makes it very difficult for musicians to be creative because you need the environmental space for it. You would need something like this room which is expensive, isolated. You need to be working throughout the night. When people are sleeping so they call the cops on you and they shut you down. You need good equipment which is expensive… Being exposed to as much as I've been exposed to whether it'd be poverty, death, selfishness, money, greed, stupidity, different types of religion. I've noticed that there is just so much inconsistency and so much oppression for the artist. I believe that it's been more difficult more than ever for artist to be as creative as they have been and there is a brick wall. It's very hard to destroy, but I would rather die than not try because the more days and days go by the more my purpose in this life becomes more specific. It becomes more narrow. I want less and less to do with establishment, with institution, with making other people happy for their selfish motive. I can't do that. In a way, I need to be selfish, but it's not selfish because I want to help other people (Dave).*

*I hate the fact that music becomes a commodity. I would like there to be I mean in Mexico they have the Ministry of Art and Society where they pay the artist a certain monthly salary just to do what they do so they can live but trying to market a subculture and commodifying it I really hate the idea because it no longer becomes… it's not ours. It's not going to be ours anymore (Darrell).*

*…Like I said metal, you know, there has to be money involved because, you know, you can't live on eating your music or you know sleeping in your music. You know you have to make money, but it's the way it's done. The most important thing for a metal band is their fans. So, what I've seen so far from record labels and some in the commercialization of metal music is that they do in a way that it's going to be appealing to the fans. It's going to be beneficial to the fans not so much beneficial for the pocket of the record company or anybody else... Well, I don't like when someone outside of the band or the musicians to limit musicians' creativity or expression because that's what music is, it's a form of expression. Then if you're limited to or if they tell you what to express then that you lose the soul of the music creation of musical creation. As far as I know or as far as I've perceived through the bands that I listen to, that hasn't happenned. I know for example one of my favorite bands, they are Finnish band called Children of Bodom, and they have a very distinct sound. You listen to a song and then you kind of -- I'm not going to identify that that's them. And they have been extremely successful in Europe, in Japan, and in South America, but they never really penetrated the US market. So, I don't know if it was a marketing consultant or if was, you know, the labor or whoever it was, they said okay, we're going to -- we're going to penetrate the US market now. And to do that, you have to sound like this and like, okay. So they recorded an album more Americanized which I didn't like at all. That album is terrible and it got really poor reviews because all their loyal hard die -- die hard fans are like, what are you guys doing? That's not your sound, that's not who you are. So, I guess they kind of woke up and then the following album was back to their -- to their roots to who they really are. And like so that -- that goes back to what I was saying that the most important thing for a metal band is their fans because the fans are so loyal so diehard, it's a lifestyle that they have that the fans won't allow those things to happen. At least, I hope not… (Charles).*

The subcultural participants in this study present paradoxical articulations regarding the popularity and the mainstreaming of the subcultures. On the one hand, subcultures' finding voice in the mainstream is perceived to be something positive as it spreads the message and disseminates the subcultural ideals and ethos to a wider audience. This may enhance the

opportunities and means for accessing resources that subcultural participants can avail themselves of and exercise. Further, it may also result in a higher level of learning and social consciousness for a broader social and cultural transformation. Yet, on the other hand, these participants are skeptical regarding whether market actors exploit the genuine relations and use the marketplace resources for their own benefits and purpose only – the profit. Thus, it may dilute and be detrimental to the initial, crucial, and core meanings and narratives of subcultures.

> *…because I know when Kurt Cobain killed himself that was the end of that subculture. When Kurt Cobain killed himself, the mainstream was trying to turn that subculture into a commodity. Yeah. I can exemplify that with the fact that subculture fashion like flannel torn jeans, messy hair, torn t-shirts, t-shirts like this. They became a commodity in such that fashion magazines, the catwalk, people wearing flannel on the catwalk, come on. So that is a disgraced subculture. That itself killed subculture, but before that happened, right before that happened. That happened in 1994. Subculture was saving a lot of people because this feeling of loneliness and apathy, not giving a shit, this was a very serious emotion to a lot of people… I think the corporate involvement really dissolves the artistic capacity of music, of musicians. Generally speaking, there's not much coincidence that when a band released their first album that it's usually their best piece of work, but then when that happens and they sold a lot. It's a lot of pressure from record labels and corporations such that they're like, "Okay. You got a time limit. We expect you to sell more records than last time and these songs need to better." They can't do that because it takes time. Chances are it's not going to be as good as the first album. So you have a decline in artistic capacity. What you would call selling out. So bands like Foo Fighters and Green Day all sold out. They all sold out because of their long time involvement with corporations. So their music isn't really music anymore. I mean, sure you have some credibility for what you did in the past, but not any longer (Dave).*

> *And so I feel like when the artist feels like they aren't… You can feel. I guess you can feel when you're doing a job and when you're doing something you love. And I feel like if the artist isn't doing what they want, what they love, then they shouldn't do it anymore. And that's what Kurt Cobain did. He said that he felt like his music wasn't providing… He felt like… I don't know what he said. He said in one of his journals that it wasn't fun anymore. It was more like a job and obviously you don't go kill yourself but I feel like if you feel like you're not being true to your music and I feel like every artist knows or at least know… There's point whether it'd be media coverage or when they're altering their style or something*

*like that to fit in with the mainstream culture, that's when they know that they're selling out. I think there's always a point when you know that you're selling out (Donna).*

*That's -- I don't like it because it's -- music is supposed to be an art form, you know, it's obvious that artist have to make money, they don't do, you know, artists don't -- can't live, you know, can't eat their paintings, right? Or can't eat their music or can't eat their sculptures, they have to make money, but when money becomes a priority, that's when the music, the art, the quality of it deteriorates and that's something you seen a lot of in the last ten years. So, that's why I don't like it because of the way the market has taken the art that is music and to transformed it into a money making machine… So, that's why I don't like mainstream because the mainstream converts the music into purely business (Charles).*

Also stated negatively by the subcultural participants is that the popularity and the mainstream attention to the subcultures may ultimately bring more authority and structural influences, forces, and rules and regulations into the subcultural spheres by the hegemony. Further, this hegemonic intervention may ruin some of the core premises of subcultures - in relation to the Dionysian principles (cf. Nietzsche 1993) - such as the sense of passion, freedom, chaos and the extraordinary experiences that subcultures present. Indeed, these constraints are, according to the subcultural participants, among the key reasons why subcultures emerge and grow in the first place.

*Yeah, I know. That sounds like a really great end result. But it's tricky because, like, for example, in skateboarding, once it went mainstream, skateboarding started to suck, it sucked big time! Because it was cheesy, but then again, one of the great things about it going mainstream is that it became more acceptable so, shit, now there's a million more skate parks you can skate that've come about because now there's more people that like to do it, now there's more wealthier people, like, middle class people that actually have jobs and money and influence, there are local politicians to say, "Hey, we want a skate park in this town, our kids want to skate, we need a skate park" so they built skate parks. So that's one good aspect of it going mainstream, but then, the bad part is, now you have freakin' helmet laws enacted, and now you get arrested for skating without a helmet, and that's bullshit because skateboarding is not about being told about what to do, you wear a helmet if you want to, and no one*

*skated was stupid. If you ever skated in a vert ramp and wear a helmet if you want to. But now, yeah, it's great there's more parks, but now you go to a park and you have to wear a helmet. Nobody in the skateboard world prior to mass skateboarding, nobody wanted to be told what to do. You wanted to skate cause you wanted to skate. I'm sure it goes the same thing, I'm sure it goes with the music sense, I'm sure it's the same thing. I'm sure it's great because now it's more acceptable or something (Kate).*

As aforementioned, the subcultural participants perceive mainstream consumer culture, which is driven by the hegemonic, authoritarian, and totalitarian market logic, mainly to be the epicenter of the shallow and fake values (with the subcultural participants' own words), norms, rituals, beliefs, and praxis of ordinary consumers as well as the market actors. These mainstream consumers and market actors, it is argued by subcultural participants organize their lives mainly around and, more importantly, for the market, which implies that they live for and obey the authority of the market. On the other hand, the ideal perception of the market for the subcultural participants seems to pertain to the notion that the market, once stripped off its authoritarian structure, is no more than a catalyst for spreading their subcultural ethos and ideals and a means to organize their lives and to work their identity projects in their socio-cultural settings through using its resources.

*But if you want to commercialize this band that has a message that is about people not destroying forests or something like that, and then their band members are people that know about different stuff and know about different situations or things that are happening in the country or whatever, that will be a good thing because more people will know about these things that are happening that not everyone knows about and this is where commercialization will be a good thing (Jason).*

*Oh. Well, I don't know who's doing the commercialization. If it's corporations doing it, then all they're doing is, like, trying to tap into different audiences and they're trying to tap into different markets and try to get the attention of people that they are not typically getting attention from. And you see that a lot in skateboarding, like, a lot in skateboarding where now you have… skateboarding was once looked at, like, rebellious and bad or something negative and against society. And now you see*

> *billboards of kids holding skateboards and saying, like, "Don't do drugs" or something like that. I can relate on that sense and by that, I think it's just corporations that are just wondering how they can infiltrate the different subcultures that are against them, you know, like, know your friends but know your enemies better kind of thing. They just wanna tap into it and open their markets or expand their markets and so they make it mainstream (Kate).*

Aside from that, popularity is acceptable, indeed great, if it comes without the bands or artists 'selling-out'. Indeed, it pertains to how people use it. Edward notes: "I don't think popularity is bad. Like I say, there's no bad or right. It's what people do with what they have or what they are given or what they think of it." Selling-out, on the other hand, is an often used term by the subcultural participants in this study for those who start to espouse and follow the principles, norms, values, and the logics of the hegemonic market institution and thus fall into the illusions of mainstream consumer culture oriented toward, with the participants' own terms, 'power', 'money' and 'greed'. As Edward posits: "I think that's a sin. It's horrible. How can you -- it's like you're selling your soul. You're selling the creativity of your soul for money and you're going to have to do what they want you to do for their own gain. You're going to become numb or you're going to lose your spark." In addition to that, however, participating in the market, using marketplace resources, co-performing with organizations or establishing collaborative and dialogical relations with market actors, spreading their messages and thus preserving and enhancing their cultural positions through market-mediation is critical yet acceptable discourses among most of these subcultural participants.

Therefore, to recognize the tensions and the interplay of the market and subcultures in a broader sense, attention should also be paid to the discourses regarding the critical and skeptical positions of participants with respect to the market institution and corporate capitalism. Popularity of the subcultures is considered to be positive by the subcultural participants as long

as the actors of this market-mediation adapt and espouse the same or similar worldviews and ideologies with subcultural members. These worldviews and ideologies of organizations (i.e., companies) when they overlap with that of subcultures seem to increase subcultural participants' level of tolerance toward and acceptance of these organizations and thus engender the possibilities of co-performance in the marketplace.

> *Well, I don't even know about Vans anymore, I have to do a little bit more research into what their priorities are, their goals, but if you're being sponsored by a company that doesn't share the same ideologies as you do for your music…Yeah, fucking Coca-Cola! Then you're being a hypocrite and you're sending the wrong message to the mass media, and you are not doing what in your music you say you should be doing. But then again, it's also what the artist is singing about. So that's what I consider a sellout. Not that the band has become popular, because that's wonderful if they become popular, because the message can get sent and then they can afford things and have a better life and afford things for their family and maybe they grew up with no roof over their head and finally they can afford a house. Maybe they can afford good food and to live healthy and not be impoverished… But to me, a sellout is somebody who's gonna be contracted and get on a label that doesn't represent the views that they originally had in their music like Coca-Cola or something like that, and so that kind of mainstream, I'm pretty against it, I don't like it, I don't like it at all. I don't think that thatt's helping the movement at all. I think that it's allowing it to become more acceptable and it kind of dilutes the force. It kind of dilutes the energy behind it (Kate).*

For the subcultural participants in this study, if subcultures become mainstream this does not necessarily mean selling-out. They articulate the differences between becoming popular and becoming commercialized, or the difference between becoming mainstream and becoming a sell-out. The idea is that they would not wish to be marginalized and stay in a small community completely isolated from the common culture with some clearly demarcated and strict boundaries. In other words, echoing Laclau (1997), they would not wish for a 'monadic existence' for their particularities. They want their subcultures and their voice to be heard in the mainstream by people who do not have any subcultural affiliations. Along these lines, Emma

states that many people are introduced to and drawn into the metal subcultures owing to the band Metallica's (a trash metal band) popularity and eminent presence in the mainstream. That is, if Metallica, for instance, was not that popular or occupied a lesser presence within the mainstream, many people might not even have heard about them solely with their underground presence and thus introduction of them to the subculture would not be achieved.

> *I don't think it's a bad thing. I think it's… I accept it. That happened with Metallica like they were the underground, they were the thrash metal, they were playing local bars and stuff and then they just blew up and became mainstream and they lost a lot of their original fans because they became mainstream but then they gained so many more that those people were exposed to other aspects of the subcultures and maybe they're part of that subculture as well because of listening to that mainstream band that became that. But I don't think it's a necessarily bad thing for them (Emma).*

> *Well, I think that, I don't know, it's kinda hard because Bad Religion, I used to listen to them all the time. I still kinda want to listen to them, but they've gone very mainstream. And I'm sure that they say… I'm sure that they consider themselves that they're still punk musicians, but now that they're so, I guess, I don't know if I wanna say commercialized, but I mean, you can find Bad Religion shirts at Hot Topic, you see mainstream kids walking out with that kind of stuff, I don't know if that's what turns me off immediately, but when I listen to the music now, I'm not as interested in it anymore, the lyrics anyway. The music's still kind of fine, but the lyrics, now, they're not really, you know, singing the stuff that I can associate with, but then again, I don't know them! So I don't know the artist, I don't know if they're becoming sellouts or if the mainstream kids are not satisfied in their group and they want to be like the subcultures so they're grabbing on to the subculture music, but then, they're not really listening to it, they're just financially supporting it but not really listening to it. They're just doing it because it might seem cool or something, but they're not really listening…Yeah, it's crazy. It's like, the more you think about it, is this music becoming more popular because more and more people want to oppose and wanna fight for what the music stands for or is this music becoming more popular because the musicians want more money and they're settling for bigger payouts from different contracts, and labels and not caring about the music anymore? Do they care about the money? I don't know, that's a good question. I mean, I'd be more inclined, I'd be more in favor of the idea of a larger mass of people liking the music because they want to oppose corporate power and greed and all that stuff… (Kate).*

In sum, the subcultural participants in this study interpret the mainstream culture to be degraded and subordinated to the commercial interests and ends of the hegemonic 'market society' (see Slater and Tonkiss 2001). On the contrary, they view subcultures as manifestations of the fragmentation within the mass culture to resist the regimentation and coercion objectives of the market institution. Besides, they view subcultures as a means to protect the genuine, authentic, organic, humane values and ethos (passion, human effort, etc.) from the detrimental effects of commercialization and the market authority through taking aim at spreading these subcultural discourses to a wider audience in an attempt to increase awareness and critical consciousness. In so doing and in contrast to their views on commercialism in relation to selling-out, they do not consider popularity and carrying subcultural ethos to the mainstream to be acts of subcultural degradation or dilution. Moreover, with an alleged pragmatist sensibility, subcultures attempt to derive significant benefit via creatively exploiting and/or making use of the market resources, and to a degree, ceding control to the market intermediaries, which in turn increases the wider audience engagement. Thereby, this market mediation seems to be conducive to diffusing the ideals and meanings of subcultures and thus strengthening the subcultures.

Therefore, the question that remains here is, as also asked by Lenin, "kto, kogo?" ("who does what to whom?"). Based on this analysis, much of subcultures' philosophy is found to be a reaction to the concepts of market and mainstream consumer culture. In this respect, subcultures take aim at revitalizing the heterogeneous, fragmented, organic, humane, passionate and critical values and alternative life modes in hopes that they can transcend the market authority or its hegemonic institutions. Yet, they also understand and acknowledge the necessity of the market in contemporary society in the face of other structural influences, and therefore do not take aim at

explicitly attacking, exterminating or overthrowing it. Rather, with a dialogical tone, they wish to strip market's hegemonic and authoritarian clothes off and to place the market in a new context, that is, to put it in perspective for mutual benefit and ultimately for the betterment of humanity. To this end, they acknowledge the plural fragmented identities that espouse the dynamic interplay and connection of individual and communal orientations and ethos and work these fragmented identity projects into their everyday lives in pursuit of achieving a more sound and permanent, rather than a temporary and local (Kozinets 2002), emancipation process.

### Subcultural Resistance through Symbolic Manifestations:

### *"We are not selling out, we are buying in"*

Market authority and hegemonic endeavors of the market actors by means of co-optation, appropriation, commercialization, and commoditization to create a totalitarian marketplace may trigger even more fragmentation within the culture and also within subcultures as well. Subcultural participants exhibit typical anti-consumerist reactions toward the commercialization and marketization of their subcultures as well as toward consumer culture and the market institution. They boycott the bands, discontinue listening to them, do not buy their albums, do not go to their concerts and, that is, no longer support them financially if they think these bands or artists went mainstream and 'sold-out'. They do it mainly to avoid association of these commercialized meanings into their own selves and identities, that is, to avoid undesired selves (cf. Ogilvie 1987) and to protect their field-dependent identity investments from devaluing marketplace myths (Arsel and Thompson 2011). Moreover, although market-mediation is an acceptable phenomenon according to subcultural participants, they would not want bands and artists, who represent the subcultural values, ethos and ideals, to have contracts with major labels

and/or sponsorship with companies or corporations that are associated with the values and ideals antithetical to subcultural ones. This applies, for subcultural participants, to the artists and bands that have a tendency to sell-out. Since the principles of the economy may clash with those of the culture (see Slater and Tonkiss 2001), major record labels, with a mere profit orientation, may attempt to change some of the qualities of the bands and/or artists whom they do contract with. More specifically, the managers of these labels, with some governmental injunction (see Foucault 1984), may ask these bands and/or artists, for instance, to tone down the lyrics, if it is too critical; amend the sound, if it is not easy listening; and/or mold the attitudes of the bands and/or artists, if it is too rebellious.

> *...and it's because people need money to support their touring and... 'Cause the record labels don't pay them anything. The record labels are very greedy. And so I feel like now they're forced to change their music and their style because they need to support themselves and be famous 'cause if you listen to a lot of independent bands or record labels, you listen to them, they're actually good but they don't get any attention because they're so different and people don't like different.They like mainstream what's cool now and it's all marketing, it's all marketing scam. And I hate that that's why I don't listen to anything anymore. So that's how I feel. I feel like it's all about money. In order to survive in the music industry, you need to sound the same way, you need to agree with the same beliefs, and if you don't you're not gonna... You're just gonna be some little band down the street that plays and nobody's gonna know you. But I'd rather that than just pure fame. I think it's all – I don't know (Donna).*

> *I'm not too sure or I'm not too certain that I listen to that type of music anymore. I try to stay away from mass media. So I know that one way to know who to stay away from is to listen to it but I'm so involved in subcultures that I don't find myself listening to bands that are on huge corporate labels like that. One band that I listen to that might be considered on a big label is, okay, for example, Metallica. I used to listen to a lot of Metallica, I'm totally turned off by their new albums and the fact that I think that they've gone mainstream, and the TV shows that they are doing, and I was totally turned off by it. I don't listen to it anymore. So I can't speak for them now because I've distanced myself from their stuff, I don't know what it's about now. Social Distortion, I listen to that but I think he's on a pretty major label, but if you really listen to his music, he's*

*got a message and his message is positive. It's really positive. And it's really good stuff and he's an example of, see, I don't know if he'd ever take money from a bad corporation. I don't know if he'd sell out like that. I know he's gone mainstream, but I don't think he's gone sell'd out. I can't think of anybody that I listen to that has "sold out." I think that I begin to get turned off by their actions and I discontinue listening to them (Kate).*

In the past, according to the subcultural participants of this study, some bands and artists have fallen into this trap and been labeled by the subcultural participants as sell-outs. Therefore, artists or other subcultural participants are also taken to be responsible from the perceived state of the subcultures as much as the market actors and other structural influences. Yet, Emma and Amy provide examples as to how some artists or bands with subcultural affiliations resist and do not necessarily have to accept this injunction and remain true and genuine to their arts and attitudes.

*Okay. He's a rapper, but he's very political and he's very good. He's amazing. A major label offered him a contract that this is his chance to get big, to make it big, but they wanted him to be commercialized. They wanted to put him out there and they wanted to give him contracts with -- or endorsements or whatever, but they told him, "You've got to change your lyrics. You're rapping too much about war and poverty," the things that made him famous in the first place. "You need to change it" and he's like "Fuck you", you know. He didn't do it. Still to this day, he has a large following of people and the first profit he made was selling CDs out of the trunk of his car. He has a large following now and he's very good. He's amazing. I love him. He's great. He raps about things that matter. He's very intellectual, and not just that, but he combines that all into a sick beat. The music is really good. You can rap about something with substance, but to make it sounds beautiful, too, that takes talent and he's extremely talented. He didn't sell out. He's like, "I'm not going to tone my shit down."He says that in one of his songs. He says that in one of his songs like I'm not going to -- about "corporate sponsors telling me what to do, asking me to tone it down during the interview". And then he says, "I love the place that I live, but I hate the people in charge." The whole song is about that, speaking out your mind, I guess (Amy).*

*Well, if the bands do it, that's… I guess it's a bad thing. I always think of Rush. Rush said, "No, we're doing our own thing. You can try to tell us to do this, to do that, but we're not gonna be told. No, we're gonna do it our*

*own way." And when you're able to stand up for yourself like that especially with a major label like this that's saying, "Well, we're paying you to do this." "Yeah, but we're the ones writing the music. This is our writing. This is our soul that we're putting into this music. We're not gonna change it for you so that you can make more money. We wanna put it out there." That's something that I find really interesting about the metal scene. And some people… Some of my friends outside of our circle don't understand when I tell, "My husband's band's going to Europe." "Why, are they making any money?" "No." "Are they getting their tickets paid?" "No." "Why are they playing?" "Well, they're gonna go, they have to pay for their plane, and their playing, they're staying at somebody's house, they're being moved around and they're gonna come back." "Are they ever gonna make any money?" "Not really." "So why do it." "Why not?" It's not all about fame and making millions off of it. That's not what that music's about. Yes, you can make millions off of it or not really. You can make a lot of money. There's Cannibal Corpse and there's Slayer. There's a lot of bands that have made it and they're known. But those are the bands that the subcultures listen to but they're not the kind that are bands like… I mean you strive for that but then most of those bands don't make it to that. You get signed to labels which means that you get your CDs printed and you get the CD spread out to other areas of the world but you're not gonna be making money off of it or making any profit to where you can say you're gonna be a rich rock star like… And it doesn't really matter either. That's not their goal. So a lot of times I find that they find it weird. It's like, "So, they're going to Europe but they have to pay for the ticket, they have to find somewhere to stay or they're staying at a house or they're whatever and for what? What's the reason?"…The love of music. For that, I tell them, "Well, they love this music and that's their life. That's what they do." I mean they're not gonna go broke from it. I mean, if they can go, they can go. We're able to fund something like that to go. We're be able to do it. But it's all for the love of music and for the love of that culture and when they get to meet all these new people and they get their music heard in other places – that's how they got to Europe… They weren't really looking to make profit from it. It's just all about getting their music heard (Emma).*

*Well like I said the numbers are good, having more fans is good, having bands not being able to live off making music is good. Now if the record label is intruding on the musical process that's definitely fake and that's selling out. If the record label has say over what's on the cover and the bands have to submit to the record label that's also kind of pitiful from the band's perspective. I mean even somebody like Rush for example never ever submitted to anything a record label suggested from the art work to the material and they made it and they're fucking legends so it's possible to completely resist the industry in that particular context. It's possible to make it just by being really good musicians… I mean man*

*commercialization I guess it kind of takes away from the art any kind of any way that you way to put it. As soon as you start submitting to little tiny things you start compromising your art it's just being denigrated basically (Darrell).*

Some bands or artists in subcultural scenes prefer selecting music scenes that they think are not contaminated by commercialization and commoditization in order to make music, some switch their scenes, some focus on playing cross-over music, some compose long tracks to avoid easy listening and being played on the mainstream media (i.e, radio, TV), and some bands and artists perform an art or music that is hard to swallow and digest, which requires from listeners some efforts to be able to understand and immerse, for regular pop music consumers. Thus, commercialization in the sense of selling-out may trigger even more fragmentation within subcultures.

*"Do you listen to Metallica?" "Oh, I only listen to their older stuff." I was like, "No. Do you listen to Metallica?" "Yes, we do." Just say you do. But no. You'll get that kind of reaction. If this genre were to become mainstream or become corporate, commercialized, or whatnot, they'll find a way to designate themselves within it again, to try to form another subgenre saying, "I'm the truer form of this subgenre than you are. Yes, we'll call it one big genre, but I'm still a part from you." That's what they'll probably do. They'll probably find a way to go ahead and find a way to detach themselves from it (Bob).*

*So they grew resentments towards grunge because it became popular. So as soon as the music becomes successful then there's going to be a movement against it… Well since the subculture is contrarian by nature it seems perfectly logical that it will go against itself eventually. I guess it's a good thing (Darrell).*

*But I mean, I guess it protects them from being, I guess, categorized… If they don't wanna be categorized, they'll change… They'll do cross-over or something like that That's a strategy that they're using just to avoid… So they don't have to stop music, just continue making music but incorporate different sounds. And I mean that's how music is invented. But even then, that music is categorized eventually. Let's say they create a new sound and then that sound's cool, right? Other people are gonna hear that music and they're gonna wanna form bands that way. And so pretty soon,*

*maybe not immediately but eventually, that will become a category in itself and then what are they gonna do? Go on do another – I don't know. That's cool in some ways but I feel like it's negative because it's just a process. I guess it's a cycle of music. I mean you can't… It's inevitable. If you're gonna become mainstream, I mean you're gonna get categorized and you'll become categorized so… And if you try and adopt to another way and fight it, I mean it's a cycle and it's all… You're gonna end up… It's gonna be categorized eventually if it becomes mainstream. If it doesn't become mainstream, then, I mean that's cool. But if your music gets noticed, it'll become part of that cycle (Donna).*

*But I mean that's cool. I mean I agree with that that helps them, that gives them… I guess that opens new opportunities, new sounds and stuff like that. Well, for one, you're totally anti-system and anti-conformity. That may be a reason. You don't wanna be make art for the masses, you don't wanna do it for others but by same token, you gotta understand that the people who like this music that's harder to swallow, have their likings also and they need entertainment and because there's less of it, I think they're more passionate. And I don't mean to judge a Justin Bieber fan, but there's less of the music… That's easy to digest. There's a lot of it and it's no big deal. But for those people who like death metal and the more difficult to digest music and the less popular, they have wants and needs, too and they're not really as fulfilled as the mainstream because a mainstream has plenty of bands to choose from. And, yeah, there's a lot of metal bands as well but the numbers of the fans, the popularity doesn't compare as far as the mainstream. So when you see these people, these individuals, this genre, this society, social group that likes this, hey, we could do… we like it also, we can feed them this. They need to be fed as well, not just Katy Perry and Bieber fan. Napalm Death fans have a certain liking and they're not getting it from mainstream, they have a certain passion, too (James).*

*My computer is filled with electronic music. Like it was just, my friends check out the music I have, and it's like why are you, you're track is so long. But it's like a mix that has like several tracks together. We call it sets, as a DJ said. And it's just several tracks put together and they make up a mix and I just them all like DJ mixes into my iPod and it takes all of the space, probably one track is one hour or 30 minutes minimum.The longest one I have, I think, is nine hours for my crazy party I think in Europe…(Edward)*

*Something Severance does which I think makes the band a little bit harder to enjoy is that they don't ever repeat guitar riffs so we only play them one time. If you miss it, that's it. It's not coming back again as another part of the song. There's no chorus or any highly structured or typical structured, not highly structured – typical structured theme to any of the songs… But*

> *that's a conscious decision that the drummer had. Well, he's the founder… he just didn't want to ever repeat riffs which is metal when you think about it. It's like I'm not sure if this is gonna make us less popular or more popular. People aren't gonna have an easy time remembering our songs because you have to listen to them over and over again to actually remember parts of songs, to know like, "Oh, this song title has that guitar riff that I really like," as opposed to Cannibal Corpse who doesn't form a structure of chorus, first verse, bridge, first chorus or whatever… Maybe it's to further separate us from even our own genre of music 'cause not very many people do that. So I think it's probably an attempt to be even more authentic. So we just have that little tiny extra element in there of not repeating lyrics or riffs or anything (Darrell).*

In sum, subcultural members, although indicating acceptance of the market, are against its intervention in their cultural spheres as an authority. In this respect, they not only try to mitigate this hegemonic tone of the market institution, but also cultivate some type of resistance strategies through aforementioned symbolic manifestations to confuse the market actors and alienate them to the subcultural sphere. These participants seek to preserve their subcultures and aim at diffusing the subcultural discourses (signs, symbols, artifacts, practice, meanings, and ideals) to a wider audience also by means of market-related intermediaries. This quest traces to their subcultural collective identity directed at making the world a better place to live in. Therefore, as they work for personal empowerment and construct their ongoing individual identities, meanings, and positions; they also pursue social change (Melucci 1985, 1996). This is also illustrated by them as they engage in various social movements, mainly preceded by their subcultural engagement.

Subcultures are not isolated fragments in mainstream culture, that is, they cannot be considered to be the periphery as the mainstream culture is the center, they are, indeed, intertwined to some extent. In the context of subcultures, subjects tend to escape and emancipate from the market hegemony and dominant structure by creating venues not utterly outside of,

distanced from, the market as a total isolation for a 'monadic existence' (Laclau 1997), but they try to subvert and mitigate its hegemonic presence by engendering and carving out plural presentational alternative venues and modes of life – with a different social logic than the market – and likely to disseminate these alternative, likely oppositional, ethos, ideals and social logics via also pragmatically leveraging off the very market resources.

## Subcultural Eclecticism and Emerging Cross-over Incognitos: Creative Display of Resistance: *"Finding beauty in the dissonance"*[*]

> *...for a person to change the world, they need to change themselves first. That's my belief. So that's how I think they start achieving the changes. It's in the process or the path of change (Edward).*
>
> *I'm not saying music can't change the world because music can change a person and I think a person can change the world (Chi).*

Contrary to much previous music-based subcultural studies, especially those drawing on the CCCS approach that stress on monadic and homogeneous subcultural identifications (see Haenfler 2004; Hebdige 1985; Thornton 1995), this study documents participants' plural and eclectic interests, choices and affiliations with music scenes and subcultures, that we could call cross-over here. In this respect, the subcultural participants in this study eminently stress that they have a multiplicity of interests in music scenes and subcultures in concert with their eclectic selves. Even some have had experienced difficulty labeling themselves when they are asked by this researcher. Rob, for instance, has eclectic subcultural interests and affiliations, therefore he couldn't identify himself with any single existing subculture, yet when he was insistently asked by the researcher, he just made up a new hybrid label for himself: 'a Goth gangster' drawing on

[*] A part from the lyrics of a song called "Schism" by Tool

his most preferred subcultures, yet he is still skeptical about this label and repeats the impossibility of labeling his eclectic subcultural affiliations and identities:

> *...but then I don't necessarily just listen to metal or just like any kind of rap or whatever it's like, I don't know, I think I'm like a weird mixed breed or something that I don't even know so… Honestly, I wouldn't even know. I haven't even like a Goth gangster or something, I don't even know. It's weird 'cause I -- I can listen to like the chopped and screwed rap or whatever and anything that's really cool and then I listen to like hardcore screaming like just demonic sounding shit… So I guess I've always had a thing for like -- 'cause I really like vocals or whatever, so if I were to be in a band, I'd want to be a vocalist and I guess I would sing for like the whole deep voice kind of do. I don't know if that … anything on. But, I mean as far as being considered something, I mean I wouldn't really know. I wouldn't have a name 'cause I guess that means it impossible (Rob).*

Same applies to Donna and Jason when they are asked to label themselves or to identify themselves with any particular distinct subculture:

> *I would say, yeah, I guess the alternative subculture. I don't know. I wouldn't categorize it as something tiny like the punk or death metal or anything like that (Donna).*

> *I will say that I see myself in other subcultures because I like other stuff. What I will say is that I identify myself to this subculture but I can't say that I'm only from this subculture because I like everything from the others and I like to learn more from the others, the others that I don't even know or that I want to know about. I think that I might have one of something from each subculture or what I mostly have from this one. So it's complicated to say. I will say that I'm from a few, not from only one (Jason).*

These instances may highlight the growing tolerance for differences and multiplicity without judgments of superiority and inferiority (Fırat and Dholakia 2006). Yet, this acceptance of multiplicity, as we have seen above in Rob's, Donna's, and Jason's cases, does not necessarily result in absence of preferences or frame of reference for subcltural participants whom they mostly get attached to (Fırat and Dholakia 2006; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010) because even though

they are vocal about their eclectic subcultural positions, they masy still have their most preferred ones that they prioritize among the many.

> *I consider myself to be pretty eclectic and I therefore can listen to a variety of music, genres, but what I'll do is turn on either lastfm.com or something like that. I think it's European based, music station or Pandora and I'll punch in something that I like which could be anywhere from- let's see, I usually stick to punk music more of like pop punk and I'm not sure what I'd call the other genres but I guess it's like older skate punk—I like that stuff. I like metal but only- I don't know- only certain types, I guess. I can't go too far with too much metal. I can't get too black or dark but then there's a side of me that still likes electronic dance music so I'll type in a little bit of electro house or dubstep. It honestly just depends on the kind of mood that I'm in or what it is I'm doing and whether or not I'm trying to focus or whether or not I'm trying to just let go and have something in the background. I'm weird. I'll put on some Reiki music, stuff with no words. It's just like Buddhist monks chillin' in a forest kind of stuff. I'll put that on. So it's really hard to narrow it down but if you ask me what I was jamming on the way over here, it was Screeching Weasel, the Wiggle album which is pop punk. And I really like that but I just can't listen to it all the time. It's my driving music, I guess (Kate)*

> *…So my music genre is a little more varied. So, I listened to wide range of music, but I still could consider myself, you know, a metal head, that's what I mostly listened to, what I most identify myself with what I have more used for, I guess (Charles).*

For most of these participants, being eclectic means, being open-minded. Thus, compared to the subcultural participants of the focus of the previous studies, who indicate merely monolithic and homogeneous attachments and commitments to any particular single subculture, the subcultural participants in this study seem to be more willing to consider, accept and appreciate the alternatives, which, in turn, may result in perpetual search for different experiences and meanings pertaining to other music subcultures and life modes. Sticking with just one genre or life mode, for them, is a limitation and being non-educated and closed-minded. Metaphorically speaking, it means confining and prisoning oneself into a 'pigeonhole' as we will see in the below quote. Having plural interests in the music scenes, for instance, seems to be

depicted as having a multiplicity of life experiences and modes, owing most likely to music's eminent potential for engendering subcultural experiences and meanings. Yet, young individuals seem to take on a more monolithic and homogeneous approach when they are first introduced to subcultures, especially when the subculture itself is in its early years. In this respect, as the music genres and scenes get more mature over time since from their birth, along with the individuals who participate in them also grow older and get more mature, single affiliation give way to multiple affiliations, thus the eclectic approach toward subcultural affiliations becomes more prominent across various subcultures.

> *I don't like to stay to- what is it like pigeonholed or to narrow my interest because there's just so much beautiful stuff out there in the world and so much talent. And I found that actually a few- maybe like a few year ago when we're younger and people are trying to learn how to identify themselves, people are- I would say- like "Ew! You listen to that kind of shit? Oh, that music sucks! Oh, punks don't listen to that. Oh, that's not punk music," or like I'll try dance- "EDM sucks. You can't listen to that. That's for freaks." But after growing up a little bit, maturing and listening to the bands that I like that had matured and they finally- or not that they finally- I regress- but they've done blogs and interviews and they discussed their musical interests, they're extremely eclectic and they have a wide variety of bands that that they're influence by. And so now, I don't care- people and say "Oh, you listen to that? That's weird music." Being eclectic is great. There's so much good music out there (Kate).*

> *I could but it's funny because it's that whole labeling thing. It's kind of funny because back in the day, back when I was younger, high school, middle school, I would say yes. Definitely I'm a metal head obviously. I listen to nothing but metal. I'd go out to shows. I'd wear all black, long, long hair. I really wouldn't talk to a lot of other people who really didn't understand what listening to metal was all about. I really didn't go ahead and get out. I was very narrow-minded about it. So yes, back then I was very much a metal head. But nowadays, now that I have grown up, now that I've experienced a lot more, now that I've lived in a few other places besides around here and around the same people over and over and over again for the same ten freaking years. I can't really say that I belong to one so much because I can actually fit into so many different scenes around here. I can just as easily wear a pair of jeans, grab a hat and go dancing at a country club all night long, so much as I can go ahead and let my hair out and go to a metal show and headbang the whole night. So I*

*can't really say that I belong to one exactly -- primarily, I mean still yes. I still primarily go to metal shows the most but I can pretty much say I can fit into multi -- different subcultures around here (Bob).*

In addition to the impact of aging and getting more mature, subcultural eclecticism also expands through the influence of inter-subjectivity and influence of the main actors of subcultures, such as artists and musicians, on individuals. As the eclectic approach becomes more prominent the strict boundaries between subcultures, once discursively constituted and established as such, becomes relatively blurred and dissolved and gives way to fragmentation within subcultures and for individuals to experience multiplicity and broaden their horizons.

*Well, within the scene itself, there are different genres and because there are different genres, people for some reason they still go ahead and they go ahead and faction it off. It's a difference, yes it is, but it's like the difference between a dog and a wolf. They're pretty much still the same animal. They're still K-9, but there's a really small difference. Why bicker about it? There still is a lot of bickering, and not as much as they used to be. They used to be a clear, clear distinct line. You are either on one side or another kind of thing where there was an entire hardcore scene on this. Oh, and there was an entire death metal scene on this. So now, the people that I've known have, I guess kind of like started branching between the two, bridging them together and throwing his local music shows involving both bands, both genres and multiple genres, not just that. Like he'll have a hardcore band, a black metal band and death metal band all in the same show, and that's something that I can get into. I'll be there (Bob).*

*Well, I think the positive thing that I would see is you get more people involved so you get different ideas and you're able to change and evolve that music (Emma).*

*I think that's on an individual level. I really believe that if the individual begins to open themselves up to different artists and they kind of release those- release that tension on being in a strict music genre then they- it's like a domino effect. You meet one artist and then you look at that artist and then you start to see that artist was actually influenced by blues so then you start to get curious. Well, what is some good blues music? And then you find out those blues players were influenced by even earlier like… music or something. And then you start listening to that kind of music. And so I think it's on an individual level. I think the more experiences you have and the more people you meet, the more you get out*

*there and meet more people and listen to what they listen to and you like that person, you tell yourself, "If I like this person maybe I'll like their music." You open up to their music. I think it can lead to becoming a little bit more eclectic. But then again there's crazy overlap too. You can have thrash metal, which isn't punk, but it's rooted in punk but it's also rooted in metal I guess. Thrash punk or whatever it's like fast rifts. There's definitely overlap. I listen to a lot of different music, but again I only listen to what I like. That's why I don't really listen to a whole lot. So, lyrically I don't know if there's a lot of overlap. I just know that there's gotta be. It's like science. It all evolved from the same thing. Kinda goes up the music tree and just splits off on different branches. I'm sure somebody can do a phylogeny on music, find out where it originated from and how it's separated. I think that humans tend to branch of into different communities and I think it's just natural. So we listen to this type of music and... we wanna focus or sing a little bit more about one particular issue so we do that a little more repeatedly. It starts forming its own little group or something (Kate).*

*All those things can happen. Like go to another subculture and then maybe since they were already in the punk one and they go to, I don't know, reggae, they create something else from there. I think it's fabulous. It's like creating compounds out of chemistry with atoms and molecules (Edward).*

Cross-over experiments break the barriers across various subcultures. As these strict boundaries of subcultures are gradually blurred and as individuals adopt more eclectic, that is, cross-over, affiliations and identifications, that are themselves constantly in flux, these individuals turn into incognitos whom can no longer be identified with the clearly identifiable characteristics of any single particular subculture. Thus, it gets difficult for those aiming at segmenting, targeting, and controlling these individuals – such as marketers, advertisers, or brand managers - through their specific subcultural affiliation or identifications. However, being eclectic requires some sort of individual creativity and ability for experimentation with different alternative styles and contents, mixing and matching and juxtaposing different heterogeneous elements and generate dynamic and fluid constellations with some sort of coherence or frame of reference that itself is constantly in flux.

*Maybe it's a little bit of, like, maybe they're getting creative and they're expressing themselves in a different way and in a different light. And I think maybe they're just bringing their own interests and creativity to the table and experimenting with it and the word is like appeased by it and they're finding joy in it and they find others that like it, too, and it kinda spurs off on its own. But without individuals being individuals and being creative, I don't think we'd have those different divergences and we'd be all very straight and it's all evolution and evolution is kind of related to adaptability and, I guess, in the biological sense, it's adaptability, it's ability to survive. But I guess in a social sense, it's being different. But then it's kinda weird because you wanna be different but then you find people that all still like what you're doing, too and it becomes it's own thing. So I don't really know. I don't know what I think about… I think it's great (Kate).*

*I mean 'cause even then, the things you like if somebody starts jumping into the things you like… If I like something and somebody else likes it, well that's fine but if they start labelling it… or the whole labelling thing, they're gonna try and label it as something else, that's what changes people's style sometimes. If I dress a certain way and then somebody starts dressing and then everybody starts dressing, I'll be like, you know what? I can't wear what actually is me. I'm gonna have to go wear something else. That's the same thing as the music thing. And that sucks 'cause then there's really no true identity. I mean there is but it eventually becomes mainstream. And that does sucks 'cause it makes it harder to be who you are (Donna).*

Along these lines, whilst cross-over incognitos exhibit higher level individuality and idiographic compositions at an individual level and represent extreme form of fragmentation of the culture, subcultures, and the selves; cross-over scenes and activities have a great potential to cultivate opportunities to bring people from different subcultural schisms, or even those who have no any subcultural affiliations, together into the same culture by uniting and providing them a collective experience.

*I do like certain bands from the other like from punk or from trash and things like that. I listen to certain songs that are more similar to the stuff that I'm used. And so when that's mixed, it's very enjoyable to listen to everything at once. I think one example of those crossovers are like when they're doing the hip-hop and back even going to classic with Aerosmith and Run-D.M.C. and things like that like that was a mixture of two*

*completely different cultures. And that was… I guess it opens up the opportunity to bring different people into the same culture and enjoy the same… When we saw Disturbed, when they came and played finally down here a couple of years ago, we saw a mixture of people. My brother's one of them. And he had never been to a show like that. He loves Disturbed but he's not a metal head. He's not a rocker. He listens to all those other stuff but he happens to like Disturbed. And so for him to go see them and see this eclectic group of people, it really freaked them out because he wasn't used to something like that. To me that was normal because I've been to shows like that that are heavier and to see a mosh pit and being pushed around and being stepped on, whatever, that was normal to me but for him it was a totally different experience.We had to leave because he got hurt. He has back problems and whatnot so he was not able to withstand being in the middle of two pits. But the mixture that we saw there, we were able to see people that were preppy and metal heads and rockers and just regular random people that didn't really belong anywhere all in one place. And when there's a mixture like that… I think Disturbed is a little bit a mix of what's the new metal. That was a mix of heavy metal with rock and a little bit of everything that brought together totally different set of group of people in one place. And I really enjoyed it. I'd listen to a lot of different bands that are like that, that they mix different genres together (Emma).*

*I think if it brings in more people I think it's very healthy for the scene. When I was a promoter I would throw these shows called Metal and Hard Core United. I would call them The United Shows and I threw four of them and every single time was extremely successful because me as kind of being thrown as it as the scene leader type aspects I would just make it a point to I guess sort of breach things about unity and the music scene and we should all come together as a scene and stop separating the shit and I remember intently thinking about what I was going to say. And since everybody respects Severance whether it be hard core punk or whatever they'll all go to see Severance. I knew that I had the platform to kind of make things the way I thought should be. So I threw those four shows. I just call them The United Shows and I would just pick the best punk, the best hard core and then I'd always put Severance in there and maybe two or three other. It was usually around 10 bands or something because we had two stadiums… Maybe I'm being nostalgic or maybe I'm giving myself too much credit but those particular shows I was really fond of those shows. It seemed like everybody got along together and I thought it would kind of start a trend and maybe somebody else would pick it up after me…(Darrell).*

*It allows for more people to become involved. It allows us to stand together for that cause. If we're all for it, we stand together for it. So yeah, it plays a role. Subcultures I think are more like communities now, even*

> *though we're all kind of mixed... We're all kind of mixed in, but really we all share that connection, so we feel the same about these certain things. I think it's good. I think that sense of community is always good and especially when it comes to these types of issues (Amy).*

Subcultural participants of this study articulated heterogeneous, fragmented, eclectic subcultural identifications and affiliations, rather than single and homogeneous subcultural commitments. In that, they strain to label themselves or their subcultural identities, although they have preferences over one or more subcultures (i.e., punk, metal, rap). They, broadly, consider themselves subcultural relative to the mainstream, yet, most of them do not feel content or comfortable with categorizing their complex subcultural identities into a single, homogeneous, and clearly demarcated subculture. Besides, their subcultural identifications seem to be in constant flux and change relative to various factors such as participants' age, environmental factors, the extent to which they use their subcultural capital, the status and the changing images of a subculture in regard to its relation with the market, commercialization, and fluid meanings being ascribed to it. They also link the elements of these ongoing subcultural identities and subject positions that are in the making to the collective identities through overarching systems of subcultural meanings and discourses. Therefore, subcultural eclecticism, along with emerging cross-over incognitos, is a signification of a fragmentation within subcultures and ultimately a subcultural mosaic with a growing tolerance for the differences and multiplicity and a growing quest for experiencing and experimenting different and alternative identities and modes of lives. Yet, it can also be interpreted as attempts to re-enchant the subcultures that have long been disenchanted as well as for reclaiming subcultures' political, ideological, and resistant qualities that have claimed to be eradicated within the society through the acts of co-optation, commercialization, and commodification by the market authority. Cross-over is difficult to be

categorized, targeted, and represented, thus, it, with a presentational mode, stands out and remains constantly creative. It hardens marketization and commercialization which leads to spoon-fed subjectivities representing, in a representational mode, fitting in and conformity.

Yet, although these individuals are in pursuit of eclectic and heterogeneous subcultural identities, they also seem to preserve, to some extent, the coherence and distinctive qualities of each subculture as a reference point that allows them not only to play with, mix and match, and be creative but also to capitalize, maintain, improve, reinforce, and make use of their subcultural capital. In this respect, while some subcultural participants are found to be stricter about their subcultural affiliations indicating higher commitment to a single subculture, some indicate no commitment and tend to navigate the core of their subcultural identity to another. Some anchor in a single subculture and affiliate their identities mainly through it, yet, incorporate and twist and tweak their subcultural identities and diversify and enrich by adding different elements from different subcultures. Those participants who tend to anchor in a single subculture seek to protect somewhat distinct features and qualities of the subculture, yet they can also be open minded, show tolerance, and experience also the other subcultures from time to time. In the end, some categories are still identifiable yet that provides a venue for experiencing multiplicity and diversity in terms of subcultural identification in a growing subcultural mosaic.

> *...we had all these new kids that maybe were more politically correct type people and they're bringing their politically correct ideas into the death metal culture which is supposed to be the exact opposite of that and I think that pattern just been continued. Death metal would be really popular, death metal would calm down or fizzle off for a little bit and then it'll become very popular again and then very recently I think it fizzled out a lot especially with this hard core metal that whatever they want they call it and so we had all those ideologies about what they sing because they actually sing about resisting the things. I guess the hardcore thing is more political I suppose and I think they're bringing maybe in some instances they're trying to bring the political stuff into death metal (Darrell).*

Otherwise, if all the frame of references and the venues for 'partial fixity' are de-centered and eroded, then it would be difficult for members to do their own bricolages (Hebdige 1989) and cross-over composites, which, in turn, let these constituents be assimilated and doomed to turn into a totality as a result of melting pot (i.e., empty signifier-frame of reference). In other words, although subcultural subjects tend to navigate and construct fluid and multiple identities, they preserve some unique essences and somewhat coherence in each subculture to find anchor and combine different modes of being. These individuals leverage self-referentiality, as in representational mode, in order to present something new, driven by the motive of not only having multiple experiences, selves, identities, symbolic meanings, modes of being, but also the motive forged by their discontent with what they refer to, single being, homogeneous mode, which also explicates their quest for multiple life experiences and subject positions.

In sum, through the lens of the account of *avant-garde*, subcultures' role seems to be to *épater la* (confuse, mislead, amaze) the hegemonic marketing system by crossing over, combining, and juxtaposing a wide range of signs, symbols, experiences of distinct subcultures as a bricolage and pastiches as well as constantly seek new conceptions, meanings, discourses and escapades. Moreover, subcultures do not seem to lose their sense of sociocultural impacts as they fragment into a diversity of alternative subcultural schisms with relatively different qualities, orientations and discourses.

## Subcultural Mobilization of Social Movements

There is a tight knit relationship between subcultures and social movements (Roberts and Moore 2009). This tie has become even stronger with the rise of the new social movements (Haenfler 2004). Therefore, it is safe to assert that subcultures provide means and venues through

which larger numbers of people are mobilized into various social movement engagements. In extant literature regarding the interplay between subcultures and social movements, the debate mainly revolves around whether subculture is only a means to an end, which is social movement engagement, or is an end in itself (Roberts and Moore 2009). Indeed, the boundary between subcultures and social movements, once demarcated, is observed here to seemingly become barely perceptible in due course. Even one of the participants, Kate, often uses the terms of subculture and social movement interchangeably and to avoid the confusion call herself "a punk environmentalist girl." These two discourses seem to be intertwined, in this context, and the identities associated with each seem to be feeding off each other in an ongoing constitution process, regardless of geographical and temporal constraints. Statements regarding these tensions are articulated as such:

> *But I do consider myself a punk environmentalist girl. Whenever I go out of town and I go to the environmental protests that I go to, it's full of punks and they're freaking awesome. Not that the punks down here are not awesome- I regress- I shouldn't say it like that. I meant, my excitement in meeting them was expressed in that statement and the fact that when I go out of town I'm happy to meet the punks that I can associate with then understand the level- the social level that I wanna be on and the environmental levels that I wanna be on.' And we all like to – and it's cool 'cause we still listen to same music it's just not about getting drunk. It's about rebelling. It's about fighting oppression and…(Kate).*

> *I will say that going to meetings from activist group will be one of the main things from people that are in a subculture from normal or another. Normally, people don't care about different situations or different things that is happening on the world or is happening but they don't -- they just don't care. And in X or Y subculture, let's say, crust subculture or punk subculture, you see most of them in activist groups that they go to march, they go to events, they help people, they inform other people, normal people that don't care about these situations or things that are happening. They tell them what is going on. They explain to them they want to share their thoughts to normal people that they don't see or don't know about these things that are happening… Yes, because the subculture gives you the music and the music talks about different stuff. This is how you can relate to the social movements because they have these ideas of what this*

*band or this song talks about or sings about. You see that you have this influence from this band and you have their ideas and you find this group that it's about the things that you're thinking or the things that you see. So, that's why you join them and you have similarities with them. I see that sometimes these groups or these social movements or some of the members have similarities on the music, some, and do some of them. But they have the idea that you got from the music. So yes, there are similarities that you can relate in (Jason).*

Subcultures with diverse social movement affiliations seem to provide members with even greater social proximity (Fırat 1997) and sense of community, regardless of their geographical limitations, and thus enhance the boundaries of their strength and impact on becoming an emancipatory voice for a multiplicity of subalterns, and on bringing about social/cultural transformations.

*Well, I can start with the few people I've met in South Texas that are in the punk scene and just a few that also affiliate with the environmentalist movement or the social movements and they're really interesting and for them, it's about fighting oppression from the government and usually it's wage based like the social movements are wage based and farm workers aren't getting paid a decent liveable salary and so they fight for that. They fight for that and because of their fights- their fight for better life and that they're supporting the community I feel like that's super punk. That's the heart of punk movement right there. This other female that I met, she is against corporate fashion and corporate consumerism. So she's very into making her own clothing. And I think that's super punk. The environmental groups that I've met out of town like I mentioned earlier, we all like the same music but they are all very aware of how corporate consumerism can manipulate and how it's a bunch of- they're a bunch of liars and they don't wanna support it so they make their own music or they make their own clothing. They grow their own food. And what I've found in these little punk groups that I've met is they're very community-based. They like to have communities that they affiliate with and they can share their ideas and with that they find strength to fight this oppression (Kate).*

*And then I'm sure I met some other people in the environmental awareness club and there's a bunch of people from different subcultures. I've seen people how they -- like well that's my judgment, but I'm not saying like they are like totally. But the way some are dressed, they are look -- some of them like punk, some others like reggae because they were always wearing the Rasta party. But they're all with -- they -- I think they focus*

*more on the thing that unites them, that is the environmental awareness club. And they set to do a bunch of activities. Also, I went to do with several friends and some classmates that I invited to -- it was a race. It was a 5k race here in Byzantino, Saturday around 7 am. It was for the -- to plant more trees. It was a fund raiser to plant more trees in the… area. Yeah, I invited friends and then the people get together. It was like yeah, it -- I don't think -- well, all my friends and I and the people I met, I know they're in subcultures. Some friends are -- their friends like not only music, like exercise subcultures like crossfit stuff. I'm not into crossfit. I'm into other stuff. Some others are into like, I don't know, the types of exercise. And they like different types of music which I don't like. But we all get together. We like agreed to go there and we always get together and then we have lunch. After that, we went to place forest… and we then have put together all vegetarian food even though some of them are non-vegetarian or vegan, we all ate the same thing.. So yeah, yeah, we engage a lot. And I believe more participation is needed. It's okay to start like that but at some point, it's much better if you are more active. It's for activism, for -- it's like well, of course it depends like if the person wants to create awareness. Some people just don't care which I think -- well, it's -- I think that's even worse than not doing the opposite because they just don't care. Just like ah floating. Man, do something. Be against me at least so that way I can like debate with you or try to convince you. But you are like, no, I don't care about it. How can I debate against someone that it's -- doesn't care. So that's even harder. It's like indifference. Indifference is even harder to beat that -- the opposite stuff (Edward).*

*We do see part of the metal culture, we see the subcultures like the LGBT culture. There are a lot of times we do see that they're part of our culture because they're misunderstood as well and so they, I guess, they find that they're understood within people that look like them and respect them. So we have the people that are… Like the LGBT say they dress a certain way. They're more of a gothic dress. Their parents don't like it. They treat them in a certain way. People around them treat them a certain way because they shouldn't be dressed like that but then you go to this culture of metal, death metal kind of people that all dress the same like that or however you're dressed, doesn't really matter.You're there to be part of that music. You listen to them. You like them. It doesn't really matter how you're dressed, how you act because you're just there. And you're accepted. And part of that… That acceptance that you get from people like that, I think… It might sound weird, I think metal people are the most accepting people that there are because they don't judge someone for how they choose to live their life or how they're life is (Emma).*

Whilst subcultures mobilize a wider audience to social movements, social movements

seem to provide an overarching venue whereby members from different subcultures and/or members with multiple eclectic subcultural affiliations (cross-over incognitos) converge to work for change under the same goal. Hence, subcultures are not only on the nexus between providing conditions for personal empowerment and working for social change (see Melucci 1985, 1996), but also conducive to liberate social movements from their once established structural and bureaucratic modes of percepts. In so doing, they turn these movements not only into novel pursuits of grassroots activities by regular people under various forms of oppression but also into celebratory, cultural, lifestyle oriented, collectively enjoyable experiences and discourses.

> *Yeah, and I guess… You know what? I'd like to highlight. I'd like to highlight the fun part of it. And so rebellion can sometimes be associated with negative feelings and anger like we're angry and we're fighting but what I found in some of these movements, I guess these are- and I guess these feelings are coming a little bit more from the people I've met that aren't really into punk music as much that they wanna instil this idea of bigger love and to have fun when you're fighting the corporations and to not get so angry and upset at them and like… I guess it's a really big distinction so it feels like the people that I've met that affiliate with the punk music and the metal and the rock, they can get a little bit more aggressive and angry. They say. "Fuck you! You guys are- Fuck you and your oppression. It's not fair what you're doing," just the normal stuff. And then the people that I have met that are in the same movement, we're going through the same purpose, same end goal but they listen to a different type of music. They're more like, "Hey, we need a bigger love and we need to not be so aggressive. We need to be happy and usually they have more crazy organic instrument based drum circle kind of thing and they're more like "Hey we love the environment so you need to love the environment," kind of stuff and it's kind of cool to see both dynamics converge at an event and make it work. Yeah it's really interesting (Kate).*

> *Sometimes, while we do this some of us get into other groups and start spreading our ideas and just check how they reacted them. For example, I have a friend he always gets with us. He is the one that persuaded me to be a vegetarian and he also persuaded me to be a total vegan. He started coming to the environmental awareness club and he started talking stuff there -- to them. He was like "oh yeah, they talked about this -- we agreed into this." And one day he invited me and I started talking to them and I started sharing the idea in a group because they separate in groups. They got us to talk about certain topics… I read this, it was an experiment of*

*quantum physics and I believe it's true. Once you start changing your patterns of thinking, you're going to meet more people that think the same way I do. It's part of that law of attraction. Or how consciousness brings forward the same type of consciousness. It was fantastic the moment I became a vegetarian I met a bunch of vegetarians. Then I started vegan then I met a lot of vegan. I am like "wow," the universe gives you what you need to support you, that's how I see it. So, yeah, some people do it some people don't. It's just how much impact they have when they listen to the music. To me music has a big impact of my life. I think -- how can I survive without it -- without music. I will die (Edward).*

Subcultures seem to draw people in and speak to them initially through their emotional and creative aspects and components. As these individuals involve in subcultures, they seem to go through a mutual learning process among multiple fragmented subcultures through which ideological awakenings and raised social awareness are generated with creative and presentational modes. Thus, subcultures seem to be channeled to converge with new social movements, which are mainly lifestyle and culture oriented, that also bring about more cognitive and conative aspects to subcultures and take their presentational and creative modes of resistance to another level to fight the multiplicity of oppressions. This subcultural mosaic seems to blur, to some extent, the distinction between the subcultures and social movements once clearly demarcated and work as a catalyst for an emancipatory alliance. In this respect, subcultures and social movements seem to feed off each other. Participants in this study showed their interests in some subcultural music even more when they heard that certain bands and/or artists are engaged in social movements with some social activist roles.

*There's this one really awesome example, Immortal Technique. I find that dude to be super punk but he doesn't play punk music. He plays hip-hop. And he draws a huge hip-hop crowd but that guy- what that guys sings about is so punk rock and it's about beginning out of poverty. It's about getting educated. It's about fighting for your rights to a better life. And he is so influential and- to the people that listen to his type of music that I'm sure in his part of the music world- that he's influencing and starting a social movement. I'm sure he is. That's what he sings about and I'm sure*

*that he has educated his listeners to become more aware of what's going on and how they need to fight that oppression and get out of it. But that's totally a different genre of music but same ideologies. And then another example is Mike Ness. He started to be punk- he started off with punk music when he was playing with Adolescence and Youth Brigade. But when he got a little older, I saw- a lot older- I saw a video of him advocating for PETA, for being a vegan and I said, "What the fuck? Mike Ness is a vegan now? Oh, if I can't- whatever. That's cool and- that's super cool because now I wanna listen to his music even more." And so people that… So he's- So by being elite like an idol or a leader in this music genre and advocating for social movement, I think he is helping to drive the social movement agenda. And he's influencing the people that listen to his music. And maybe they had doubted veganism or didn't know about it or weren't interested and then they find out—it can go both ways. They can get totally disgusted by it and not listen to his music or they can feel empowered and influenced by it and keep going with him on this crusade to- I think it's all fighting oppression and wanting a better life for yourself, for the community, for everybody. So when I started skateboarding, I started to pinpoint what it is I liked or what it is I wanted to listen to but I was very open to a bunch of different things. And then also, just being older and maturing and finding artists that affiliate with the same movements that I'm in, I'm drawn to want to listen to their music. I want to hear what they have to say and so I tend to listen to them a little bit more than I would other music like, for example, EDM (Kate).*

*I listen to this band that is from Mexico that talk about human rights, about liberty, about poverty, about how stuff related, that happens every day and I really like that band and what they talk about. So by that, I started to look for social movements, for groups, organizations, and I found one. I joined them and I found out that some of the members from that organization are into this group, and even this group is involved in this organization, and they support them and they help the organization (Jason).*

Many people start to listen to these types of music in their early ages. They grow up listening to these types of music and learning about the subcultures that the music is directing. Subcultures also mold destructive youth rebellion into constructive movements and praxis. In this respect, while subcultures work as a catalyst for mobilizing individuals for social movements, social movements imbued the term 'subculture' with a relatively radical political edge. Thus, subcultures and social movements work hand in hand for a more powerful quest for

socio-cultural change toward a more progressive society with radical plural democratic politics (Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

> *I have funnelled my energies from a young rebellious, destructive mode and character, beginning to listen to punk and rock and metal, and I have actually channelled them into more constructive mode of energy because I found that- a better way to fight and a more effective way is to be constructive such as making your own clothes, growing your own food, trying to make your own music whereas before, I just wanted to- wreak havoc and cause trouble and "fuck the system" and just fuck shit up. And I thought that I was- but I mean you're just young, you're just really young and… But now listening to these bands and seeing what they do and seeing what the people in the movement do and wanting to be more like that, to be more mature like them, yeah, I've changed and yeah, I've learned to be different- No, learn to be more effective but with the same goal. I still wanna wreak havoc, I still wanna say "fuck the system" but totally in a different method—totally constructive (Kate).*

> *Yeah I've seen artists that are -- they spread the word that I think like Morrissey is a vegan and an Italian and a love that guy and all the other bands and I don't know I can't think of any right now. But yeah they can help a lot they can help a lot on this. To change the world in any ways like making people vegetarian -- I don't know, giving the good information the people need, telling them that animal cruelty really like the real face of those things. Some people do. Like I said I get together with friends and we talk about (Edward).*

Along these lines, there seems to be interplay among affective, cognitive, and conative conditions and discourses within the subcultural realm. Subcultures present a venue for participants to fulfill their need of love, care, affection, and sincerity perceived to be lacking in their everyday lives otherwise, as it is discussed under the second theme. That is, subcultures provide them with some sort of social belongingness of their choice. The frustrations they develop against the consequences of their negative experiences with the dominant social institutions of contemporary society - such as parents, religion, schooling, working life, and the like - are channeled to a productive, creative, and expressive release, discharge and emancipation through subcultural engagement. These frustrations engender the feelings of anger and

resentment which, in turn, find a voice in the cultural codes of much subcultural music - such as punk, hardcore, metal, gothic, alternative rock, electronic, etc. As these types of music encode these affective codes and thus capture the attention of emotionally disrupted individuals, they facilitate the process of drawing these individuals into such music-based subcultures where they can release and express their emotions and develop collective experiences with like-minded and like-felt individuals. These affective codes may also yield to cognitive foundations. Since subcultures are found in this study to be a learning community, as subjects engage more in subcultures they gradually start to learn the ideals and values of these subcultures and develop some sort of cognitive foundations regarding the codes, signs, symbols, and meanings of the ontology of subcultures as well as that of the mainstream culture. Most of these oppositional music-based subcultures involve not only means for constructing collective memory, experiences, and identity but also resistant qualities and identities.

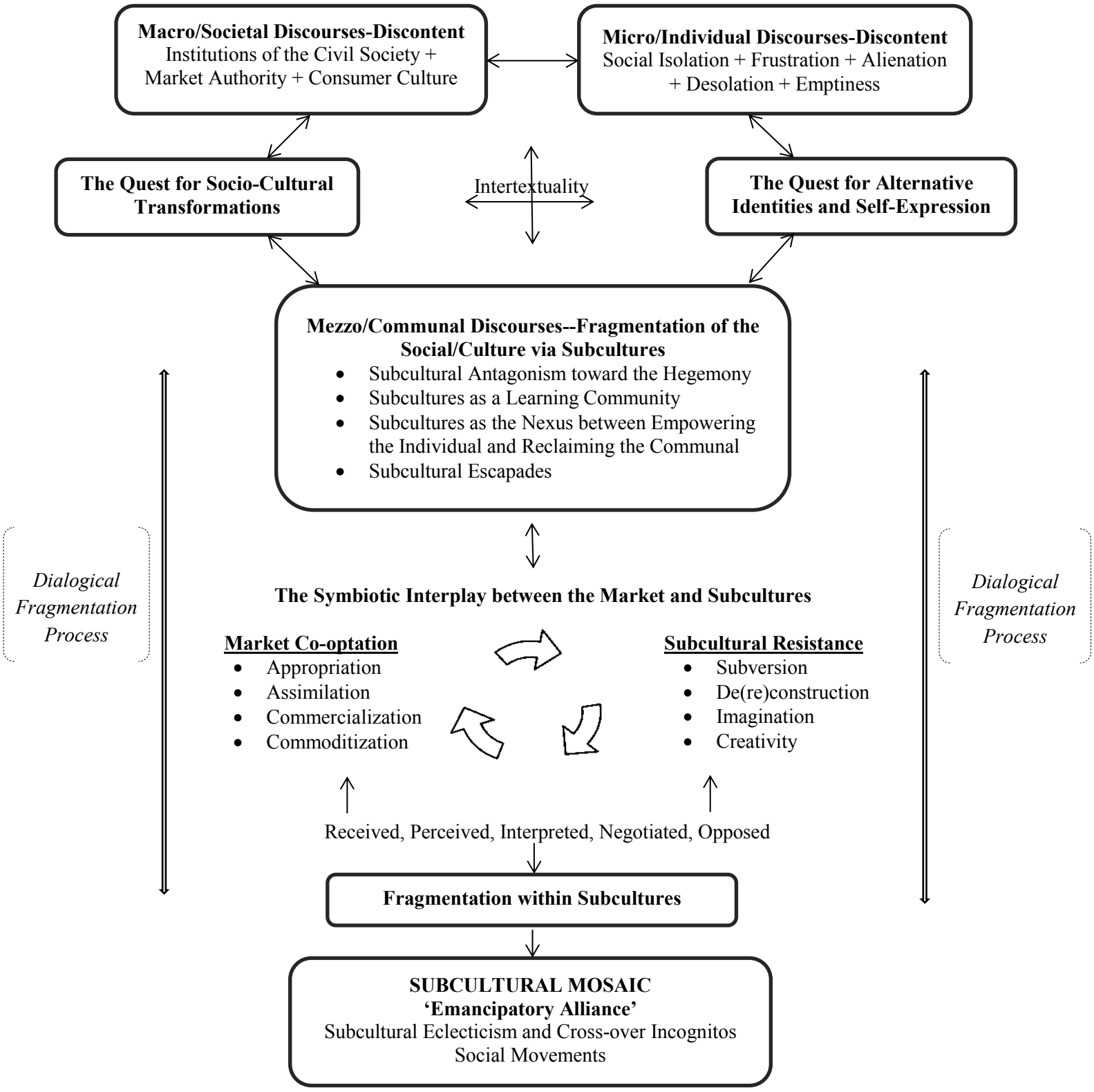
Within subcultures, as a site of education, these participants start to learn about the social causes, socio-cultural conditions and problems, and political issues and thus question the status quo and seek alternative modes of living and being and subsequent broader social and cultural change. That makes the conative aspect of subcultures where people hear and learn about radical ideas and thus may develop sympathy for alternative modes of beings and social/economic orders and incorporates activist identity into their subcultural identity. Thus, they enrich their fragmented subcultural subject positions and experiences as they construct and work their identity projects. In that, as these members pursue personal empowerment and constantly work on their dynamic, fluid and fragmented subcultural subject positions, they also pursue interest in bringing about broader social and cultural change for a better world to live in for everyone.

Along these lines, alienation seems to be the main impulse and catalyst for mobilizing

individuals to subcultural participation through the music or style they may adopt initially. Once they get into the subcultures and are exposed more to it, they start to delve deeper and learn more about the values, norms, beliefs, artifacts, attitudes, and ideals of subcultures and internalize them. Eventually, this awareness and socially active identity they develop in this process tend to make them more active also in broader social and cultural issues and mobilize them in partaking in social movements with a subcultural activist role. Besides, social movements are mainly considered to be the venue where fragmented subcultures unite and create a mosaic for social and environmental good, which can be called here 'emancipatory alliance'. Further, contrary to Kozinets' (2004) account of consumer activism pertaining to the puritanic approach, subcultures bring about a creative activism - which is more cryptic, implicit, and artistic. As members seek individual identity and personal empowerment, they also work for social causes (Melucci 1985, 1996). Besides, social movement is both political and cultural and the experience of activism is closely related with the issue of identity (Yazicioglu and Fırat 2008). Therefore, subcultures have a great role in mobilizing masses to new social movements and vice versa. These constituents represent a democratic form of social organization in the sense that it aims to protect the rights of each minority and the oppressed, and function in a manner conducive for their overall participation in the socio-political domain through their voices regardless of their numbers. This approach of participative democracy is situated in opposition to the conventional approach to democracy where majority rules over minority through their votes.

**FIGURE 2 Revised Theoretical Model**

**The Fragmentation Process and Emerging Subcultural Mosaic**



# CHAPTER VII

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Music-based subcultures provide a critical empirical ground through which the qualities of contemporary fragmentation and subcultures as well as the dynamic and symbiotic interplay between the discourses of the market and consumer resistance can be theorized. There is a growing, or coming into prominence, fragmentation, owing to a myriad of factors stemming from the waxing structural conditions of postmodernity, that is said to precipitate the sense of social isolation and feelings of loneliness. Yet, people who are in pursuit of seeking to circumvent this isolation, look for ways to reclaim and reform somewhat communal or collective affiliations, through the abundance of possibilities generated by such conditions, in various ways such as brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), fan communities (Kozinets 2001), subcultures of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), consumption communities (Kozinets 2001), tribes (Maffesoli 1996), neotribes (Bennett 1999), microcultures (Thompson and Troester 2002), and other constituents which are also known as 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983).

These liaisons become even easier as the technology, especially the Internet, is interwoven into the very fabric of the everyday life. These virtual liaisons transcend the boundaries drawn by the limits of time and space (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). However, these alleged constituents are

considered, mainly in consumer research, to be de-politicized entities that separate themselves from other groups mainly through their taste choice and commercial consumption activities. Contrarily, Anderson (1983) attributes a political edge to these commercial consumption communities by spotting the nationalist interest in consumers' identity formation that extends into the even more abstract level of interest in neo-liberalism with its laissez-faire politics, which, in turn, broadens into cosmopolitan reformulation of global corporate capitalism stripping off the affiliation of mere nationalism (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). These constituents, whether apolitical or involved only somewhat in politics, are said to feed off the status quo and the system.

There are other undertakings, however, that remain critical concerning the status quo and develop alternative ideas and values and further the reformist steps in precipitating broader socio-cultural and structural transformations. Subcultures are found here to be one of these critical entities. Yet, subcultures are also regarded by some scholars to be the very core of the system or means to reinvigorate it (see Heath and Potter 2004; Holt 2002), owing mainly to the inclusions of epiphenomenal commercial market activities within these antithetical cultural spheres and the perceived ability of the market to co-opt and assimilate subcultures into the mainstream with ease. It should be noted here that some mainstream consumerist tendencies can also be observed in some aspects of subcultural discourses and subjectivities. Yet, it would be reductive to make grand claims such that subcultures no longer exist (i.e., 'punk is dead') or just turned into mere consumption venues of bourgeois consumerism for those in pursuit of 'cool' consumption (Frank 1997) or a tamed means of reinvigorating the market logic (Holt 2002). In fact, most subcultures arguably hold a resilient stance in cultivating (1) compelling and challenging life modes, identities and discourses that are alternative to the spoon-fed lifestyles

and trends established by the institutions of dominant structures, (2) venues for alternative and/or radical ideologies, worldviews, and orders to be voiced and co-existed as an alternative to global corporate capitalism, and (3) platform, something we might call 'emancipatory alliance', conducive for mobilizing individuals from several different subcultures to engage in, or at least sympathize with, democratic direct actions and new social movements.

Along these lines, Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007, p. 137-138) argue that "treating all forms of commercial activity as manifestations of an undifferentiated global structure - consumer capitalism - is a very questionable theoretical move… By conceptualizing commercialism as a hegemon, social theorists will almost invariably reach the conclusion that a given counterculture has either been bought out (i.e., the classic co-optation thesis) or always been part of the system of capitalism (e.g., counterculture as hypocritical bourgeois affectation)" Therefore, drawing upon the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), we could argue that fixing all the elements of the commercial activities and moments into a differential logic within a concrete discourse of 'the system' would leave us no room to observe the irreducible surplus of meanings preceded by the partial fixation. This concrete discourse, however, restricts our vision toward the discursively constituted systems of meanings regarding the interplay between the structure and agency within a 'terrain of unfixity' (cf. Torfing 1999, p. 92).

So, the question remains still: What is the system? What are the dynamics that can be played out to transform or reform or revolt against it? Where is the 'out' of the system? Or is there a *tertium non datur*? Therefore, defining the system in such a narrow manner would blind us to the nuances and possibilities for change. In this respect, similar to the 'critical imagined communities', along with also alleged critical business models – such as Fair Trade, CSAs, some ethical and sustainable enterprises, workers-owned enterprises, non-corporate, local

alternatives – subcultures are found in this study to be making value-laden and moral and political statements in a presentational mode and tone and thus can be argued to pose a challenge, and be conducive to transpire more rooted change, to 'the system', let alone be regarded merely as a part of it as it was previously argued.

Since subcultures are found in this study to incorporate, to a great extent, ideological components in relation to the 'system', it might be necessary to have also a brief discussion based on the general notions in relation to the ideology that are articulated by the subcultural participants of this study in an attempt to contribute to the ideology-oriented theoretical discussions and implications. In this respect, the ideological discourses of subcultures seem to pertain to the alternative-reverse-readings, in that they seem to amend the culture by instilling antithetical values to the dominant norms and status quo with a presentational posture. In so doing, they ultimately take aim at changing the dominant order toward a more progressive (cf. Foucault 1984), radical-plural democratic (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), multicultural (Laclau 1997; Touraine 2000) order of multiple orders (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995).

## Toward a Poststructuralist Subcultural Theory with a Critical Edge: Subcultural Mosaic

Drawing on poststructuralist and post-Marxist accounts (see Foucault 1981; Laclau and Mouffe 1985), the monolithic conceptualization of the power and oppression are problematized here. The problem is that there is no one mode of power; it expresses itself in multiple modes in contemporary society. In contrast to the modern notion that oppression/power is limited with the class struggle and warfare, the power, in the contemporary moment, manifests itself in different and multiple modes through the disciplinary institutions (cf. Foucault 1981, 1984) of 'civil

society' (Gramsci 1971) such as religion, education system, working life, the market, mainstream consumer culture, and the like. These oppression modes are argued to induce alienation and frustration, which, in turn, yielding people to quest for existential meanings in life and emancipation from various modes of oppression.

Arguably, resistance to power / oppression / hegemony enhanced its boundaries and thus drew in a wider participative audience in due course with the cultural turn from modern to postmodern. That is, the boundaries, once drawn only around the class struggle, are enhanced by also incorporating other subject positions of oppressed subalterns such as the identities of cultural, ideological, ethical orientations revolving around the causes of new social movements (Habermas 1981; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Touraine 1985) – such as environmentalism, human rights, animal rights, gay and lesbian rights, veganism, pacifism, anti-global proponents, conscientious objectors, atheists, and the like. Consequently, fragmentation seems to pave the way for dynamic and various struggles for presentation and emancipation, let alone eradicating and diluting the struggle as conventional accounts hold.

In this respect, subcultures are presented here as the venue for aiming at fulfilling these domains of quest of alienated, frustrated subjects for existential meanings, resistance to and emancipation from oppression through providing them with symbolic means via music, art and alternative life modes and worldviews. The dynamic components of these symbolic means are observed here to work as a catalyst for (1) challenging the hegemonic discourses, (2) cultivating creative learning communities, (3) yielding presentational mode of life, (4) empowering the individual while reclaiming the sense of communitas, (5) releasing / discharging the frustration, and ultimately (6) pursuing social and cultural transformations as well as alternative individual and collective identities, expressions, and experiences. Along these lines, subcultures seem to

work hand in hand with new social movements in informing each other and cultivating fragmentation of the mass culture to enhance these possibilities with a more direct action and democratic means.

This study aims to contribute mainly to the subcultural theory to shed light on other related theories - such as the market co-optation theory and structure vs. agency theory - drawing on, and also aiming to contribute to, the broader accounts of poststructuralism, post-Marxism, discourse theory, and critical theory. That is, this study adopts a multi-perspectival approach (see Best and Kellner 1991). In terms of subcultural theory, whilst the Center of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) approach underestimates the fragmented, eclectic, and heterogeneous components of subcultures, the post-subcultural theory remains inconsiderate and indifferent regarding the collective and resistant qualities of contemporary subcultures. Therefore, this study aims to bridge the gap by introducing the concept of subcultural mosaic to shed light on the interplay of the pluralistic, heterogeneous and fragmented orientations and the collective and resistant qualities of subcultures.

Earlier subculture studies largely adopted a modernist perspective assuming that subcultures are constituted by members from relatively homogeneous backgrounds. They have been argued to be based in a specific social class, ethnicity, nationality, or religion, thus, exhibiting stable orientations. They were also seen to be from delinquent and deviant marginal social groups or from de-politicized and merely taste-based consumer communities. For instance, the Center of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) approach confines subcultures to class-based orientations and experiences of dominated working class youth to exercise their resistance against the dominant structure. This approach defines resistance mainly on the basis of class struggle for power with a confrontational mode. Therefore, the way this account explained

fragmentation relies on a power struggle in that homogeneous working-class youth manifest a fragmentation to overthrow the domination/power and replace it with another regime of totality. The post-subcultural theory, on the other hand, overemphasizes the experiences embracing hyper-individuality and taste-based characteristics although it recognizes the heterogeneous, plural, fragmented, and paradoxical qualities of subcultures. Yet, this approach overemphasizes aestheticism to the extent that remains indifferent to the social issues and collective and resistant qualities of contemporary subcultures in their explication of the fragmentation process. My position is that it is possible to better comprehend the contemporary nature of and resistance by subcultures by highlighting the fragmented, pluralistic, heterogeneous, and eclectic orientations of subcultures, as well as their presentational modes of resistance. That is, subcultural mosaic approach, drawing on poststructural and critical accounts, explains fragmentation as a quest for presentationality and as a struggle for existence and recognition, rather than a struggle for power to replace a hegemonic power with another. This study presents the subcultural mosaic approach as the fifth and the new approach to the subcultural phenomenon (see table 2).

Subcultural mosaic is based on an eclectic subcultural affiliation and a composite subcultural constellation. It is constituted through juxtapositions of several alternative subcultural discourses with each retaining, to some extent, its unique identity and qualities. Subcultural mosaic is discursively constituted systems of surplus meanings of dynamic subcultural subject positions preceded by the fragmentation of the culture and subcultures. This fragmentation is mainly precipitated by the dynamic interplay of the market institution and subcultures, which, in turn, preceded by the intertextuality between macro/societal and micro/individual discourses and discontents. According to this account, subcultures provide venues through which participants not only discursively constitute ongoing individual and

collective identities, alternative experiences and meanings, and constantly negotiate (sub)cultural positions, but also carve out presentational modes of resistance.

Since the power expresses itself in multiple modes in contemporary society, it can no longer be limited to the mere class-conflict; rather it manifests itself in different and multiple modes through the disciplinary institutions of civil society. These oppression modes are argued to induce alienation and frustration, which, in turn, yield people to quest for existential meanings in life and seek emancipation from various modes of oppression. Yet, the expressions of the experiences of subcultural participants via the concepts of alienation and oppression situated within their culture and stem from their interpretations of their situations relative to the culturally constructed and shared meanings and discourses. Therefore, the concepts such as alienation, objectification, and oppression do not posit an essentialist view of human nature and thus should not be taken in universal, foundational, or fundamentalist terms that account for all. Moreover, the boundaries of resistance, once drawn only around the class-based experiences (see CCCS account), are enhanced by incorporating other subject positions of oppressed subalterns such as the identities of cultural, ideological, and ethical orientations revolving around the causes of new social movements that are also fragmented and plural.

Resistance is also found to be directed toward the hegemonic and disciplinary institutions of contemporary society, mainly to these institutions' normalizing, homogenizing, and thus oppressing endeavors. Therefore, my position is that subcultural resistance is no longer a mere class-based confrontation for a struggle for power, yet it takes a presentational mode in that participants constantly negotiate and reconstruct positions and ideas thus carve out new conceptions, imaginaries, and senses. This presentational form of resistance reflects in what we call subcultural mosaic in that members constantly question and resist their subjectivities. In that,

they do not conform/fit into a single cultural or subcultural narrative but espouse eclectic subcultural positions and construct alternative modes of being by combining, juxtaposing, and crossing-over several alternative subcultural identities, positions and narratives. This form of subcultural resistance also extends into engaging with the new social movements for a broader social and cultural change. This illustrates that while one can strive for personal empowerment and constantly work on her/his identity projects, s/he can also pursue socio-cultural change.

**Table 2.** Introducing Subcultural Mosaic as the New Subcultural Theory

| Approach | Orientations | Theoretical Paradigm | On Resistance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Traditional | Belongings / Lineages | Structuralism | N/A |
| Chicago School | Deviant / Criminal / Unwanted | Structuralism | N/A |
| Birmingham School (CCCS) | Dominated Working Class Youth | Neo-Marxism / Critical Theory | Confrontational / Struggle for Power |
| Post-Subcultural | Hyper-individualized / Apolitical / Taste-based | Poststructuralism | No Resistance |
| Subcultural Mosaic | Fragmented / Eclectic / Plural / Cross-over | Poststructuralism with a Critical Edge | Presentational / Struggle for Existence & Recognition / New Social Movements |

In terms of co-optation theory, on the other hand, the conventional account suggests that the market institution, as the hegemonic ideological structure/force, tends to appropriate the discourses of all the emerging, mainly oppositional, alternative subcultural/countercultural constituents and assimilate them back into the hegemonic concrete discourse of mainstream culture. Hence, the market institution is argued to deaden the oppositional and resistant articulations and positions of these subcultures and then dissipates their social ties and ultimately their very existence (cf. Clark 2003; Frank 1997; Heath and Potter 2004). Yet, this conventional

co-optation theory seems to leave no room for subcultural subjects to 'reclaim and repoliticize' their allegedly co-opted and assimilated discourses (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007, p. 136). Given the observed dynamic and eclectic features of contemporary subcultures with collective and resistant qualities, and the need for a more comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the market influence, it is indeed contended here, as an alternative argument and with a corrective response, that the market indeed can work as a catalyst for disseminating the subcultural ideals and discourses to a wider audience. That is, it may function as a source mobilization by introducing subcultures to the masses and drawing larger groups of people into the subcultures, which, in turn, may fortify and empower subcultures, let alone exterminate them, especially when these people are exposed to the internal dynamics of subcultures. In so doing, it may also evoke and provoke alternative modes of subcultural escapades and resistance.

This study aimed at extending the subcultural theory by developing and introducing the analytic concept of the subcultural mosaic to explicate the contemporary fragmented, heterogeneous, and multifaceted subcultural venues through which subcultural subjects not only discursively constitute ongoing individual and collective identities, experiences, and meanings and constantly negotiate (sub)cultural positions, but also carve out creative, active, participative, informative, and radical plural democratic (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) resistance for broader socio-politico-cultural change. This study therefore extends prior conceptions of subculture by suggesting that contemporary subcultural constituents should not be defined merely on the basis of stable and clearly demarcated categories based on traditional and modern lineages, namely nationality, ethnicity, and religion (e.g., Gordon 1997; Green 1946), or as deviant social groupings with some pathological qualities (cf. Cohen 1955; Fine and Kleinman 1979; Merton 1968), or as homogeneous working-class youth exercising resistance to the dominant structure

with a mere confrontational mode as a struggle for power (cf. Clark et al. 1976; Cohen 1972; Frith 1984, 1996a; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Leblanc 1999; Willis 1978), or hyper individualized, apolitical, and commercially influenced forms of taste communities lacking of the discourses of any sort of collectivity and resistance (Muggleton 2000; Redhead 1997; Thornton 1995; Polhemus 1997).

Instead, contemporary subcultures might be better defined as subcultural mosaic referring to eclectic subcultural affiliations and a composite subcultural constellation constituted through juxtaposing, combining, and crossing over various multiple fragmented subcultures discourses (subcultural meanings, narratives, politics, styles, elements, ideologies, experiences, praxis, etc.), as each also retains its unique identity and qualities to some extent. Therefore, it can be conceptualized in a way that whilst the concept of subcultural mosaic accounts for the orientation of subcultures towards the values of diversity, heterogeneity, fluidity, reflexivity, complexity, plurality, and multiplicity, it also acknowledges the oppositional qualities and characteristics and collective consciousness associated with the subcultural phenomenon. In other words, subcultural mosaic refers to the co-existence of multiple fragmented subcultural narratives. Thus, they are not only temporary and local forces said to ameliorate the tendencies of the market logics to "weaken the social ties and to reduce or homogenize self-expression" (Kozinets 2002, p.34), but also, and in so doing, can turn into permanent and global forces, to some extent, to provide foundations or 'nodal points' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) for generating the 'emancipatory alliance' that can work as a catalyst for, and manifested in, new social movements.

Subcultures are observed in this study to hold a potential to morph subjects into active comrades / citizens / producers / consumers as their creative impetus lying behing their actions

may still pose a challenge to the hegemony. In this respect, the market hegemony seems to remain insufficient to undermine the resistant and oppositioal qualities and characteristics of these social groups. In that, drawing on the discourse theory (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 1985), subcultural subjects are found not only to resist domination creatively in a dynamic, eclectic, and presentational mode to confuse those who target and control them (i.e., market actors), but also discursively constitute system of meanings and constantly negotiate, reconfigure, and articulate alternative (sub)cultural positions, discourses, and new conceptions. These discourses are also found to be oriented mainly toward the interplay of individual and collective agency in seeking self-empowerment while also pursuing social change (Melucci 1985). Therefore, to contribute to the previous accounts on consumer emancipation, it is argued in this study that if more sound and permanent mode of emancipation is sought, then individualist orientation (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995) and temporally and locally bounded communal ethos (Kozinets 2002) in a mutually exclusive manner would not remain sufficient. On the other hand, subcultures acknowledge and highlight the dynamics of the emancipation process in result of the combination and connection of both the individual and communal orientations and ethos. That is, members experience intersubjectivity whilst perpetually exercise their ongoing identity projects and selves through the frame of interplay of collective ties and perceived autonomous fragmented existence.

Besides, whilst adopting fragmented and heterogeneous positions, subcultural subjects also seek some sort of essence or frame of reference or "partial fixation" (cf. Torfing 1999) or "regularities in dispersion" (cf. Foucault 1982) to be able to find an anchor to play with and combine different modes of heterogeneous elements, signs, and meanings pertaining to various subcultures through which they can build upon their diverse, heterogeneous, fragmented, and

eclectic subject positions. To this end, as aforementioned, they carve out composite subcultural constellations constituted through juxtaposing, overlapping, combining, and crossing over various multiple fragmented subcultural discourses, which are conceptualized here as subcultural mosaic. Subcultural mosaic is also discursively constituted systems of surplus meanings of dynamic subcultural subject positions preceded by the dynamic intertextuality between macro/societal discourses and micro/individual discourses, including the interplay between the market co-optation and subcultural resistance resulting in fragmentation within subcultures (see figure 2 on p. 158). To redress the oversight of the post-subcultural theory emphasizing the apolitical and hyper individualized components, however, subcultures are observed here to present also political and/or ideological subjectivities, unraveling the prospective political significance of subculture. Yet, this subjectivity, most likely, does not rely on the confrontational notion of the 'struggle for power' or replacing domination with another regime of totality, rather, more like on the presentational mode of the 'struggle for existence' and/or 'struggle for recognition'.

Subcultural subjects are found to be in the ongoing process of 'becoming' and pursuing subsequent personal empowerment as they perpetually construct, negotiate and transform their identities and subject positions that are constantly in the making and in flux. In so doing, however, they also work for broader social and cultural changes (Melucci 1985, 1996) through making use of subcultures as a site of education, increasing awareness and consciousness, constructing collective experiences and consciousness, and developing sympathy toward and involvement in social causes and social movements. Also, subcultural members are not entirely decentered subjects without any essence or coherence as the postmodern sensibility would celebrate, yet, they are also not coherent homogeneous subjects with fixed identity as the modern

sensibility would structure. Such fixed, consistent, rational and homogeneous identities and easily identifiable social groups formed by these fixed subjectivities can turn out to be easily targetable entities by the market, so that unexpectedness, unpredictability, such as eclectic cross-over subcultural experiences, would be conducive for them to escape from being targeted by the actors of the market authority with ease (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995).

On the other hand, the postmodern perspective marks the demise of this coherent and fixed subject positions and that manifests the fragmented subject positions that are proposed to be highly decentered and disconnected. Ultimately, the fragmented subject positions, as it is presented in this study, are reflecting upon the fragmentation of the social and culture. Subcultures seem to present the venue where these postmodern fragmented subject positions are recognized. Yet, these fragmented subject positions, as for subcultures, are not entirely disconnected and disjointed from each other, as it is celebrated by postmodern percept. Rather, these subcultural subject positions seem to hold some sort of a coherent base in their subcultural 'becoming' to find an anchor through which they might not only leverage off their subcultural capital and feel empowered and enchanted but also generate and experience fragmented, dynamic, organic, and fluid identities and modes of life in a richer socio-cultural contexts. Thus, modern and postmodern sensibilities, pertaining to the subcultural existence, seem to be highly intertwined with each other in contemporary culture. These modern and postmodern sensibilities are highly interwoven into the very fabric of subcultural existence and reflect upon the notion that once known dyads of polarized positions seem to feed off each other.

More broadly, this study confirms or supports the observations of many scholars (see e.g., Featherstone 1991; Jameson 1984; Harvey 1989; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995), arguing there is no radical break or rupture between modernity and postmodernity. We live in a time facing

transition from modern to postmodern. Yet, there exist both continuities and discontinuities simultaneously. Market, for instance, which will be examined in more detail in the next section, seems to stand as one of the obstacles for this transition as a very modern and dominant institution, and hence it is important today to investigate subject matters in relation to the market phenomenon by drawing upon both modern and postmodern accounts. Subcultures, in this context, however, represent arguably the postmodern rupture (discontinuity) and as a parallel to the market (continuity). Therefore, investigating the interplay of the market and subcultures may act conducive to provide richer and broader insights into the contemporary interplay of the modern and postmodern discourses. In this respect, the interplay of modern and postmodern impulses and discourses indicate that whilst this interplay increases the emphasis on the fragmentation of/within the (sub)-culture as a stance taken against the regimentation, coercion, and/or totalizing hegemonic forces, it also seems to work as a catalyst for liaision, something we might call 'emancipatory alliance', through juxtaposing and compositing these ever fragmenting constellations of discourses and alternative life modes. This alliance emerges not only by sharing the same common ground through which these subjects' ongoing identity projects are discursively constituted, but also with the increasing tolerance for differences and acceptances of different life experiences and discourses that are identified with their positions against the regimes of totality.

Consequently, these theorizations unravel the existence of the 'counter-hegemonic' (Gramsci 1971) ideals and the impulse for social transformation toward a politics of more radical plural democracy (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), and yet the market seems to be standing as an obstacle in front of that aim through its hegemonic position. In this respect, if the market institution strips off its hegemonic structure, and can act in a way that does not dominate, exploit,

and distort communicative action among alternative lifeworlds (Habermas 1985, 1991), and even also contribute to them via reconfiguring the marketplace resources, the transformation toward a more progressive and radical plural democratic society (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) might be more attainable. The market institution has long been conceptualized either as a threat to a culture or an instrument for emancipating it from elites and domination (see Slater and Tonkiss 2001). As an alternative argument, it is posited here that the market can also be conceptualized as *an* order among many, stripped of its hegemonic nature, working as a catalyst for establishing dialogical relations among various subcultures and wider audience and, in so doing, disseminating and spreading the subcultural ethos and ideals to a wider audience and empowering the subcultural fragments increasingly observed to emerge and proliferate.

## Dialogical Model of the Market - Subculture Symbiosis: Detotalizing the Market Structure and Rearticulating the Subcultural Agency

The postmodern appealing of the market institution and consumer culture is twofold; it is 'anti-elitist' in the sense that it works conducive to eradicating to some degree the clearly demarcated distinction between high and low-popular culture (cf. Bourdieu 1984; Slater and Tonkiss 2001); and it degenerates the traditional order and deconstructs the restrictions standing in front of the people whom were left to construct and/or define their identities and subject positions on the basis of the given categories and traditional modern lineages (cf. Bocock 1993). With the growing influence of the market mechanism and cultural turn, these given categories have lost its prominent positions and 'privileged signifiers', and gave way to an opportunity for the people to construct their own categories on the basis of their personal and collective choices, worldviews, lifestyles, musical, sexual and ethical orientations, and the like (Ulusoy and Fırat

2010). Within these categories, however, navigation from one mode to another or doing bricolage through interpreting discursively constituted systems of meanings based on multiple free-floating signs and symbols also gained prominence.

Market hegemony manifests itself in a discursive manner, and related discourses such as consumption, commercialization, commoditization, marketization come to be the prominent norms of the society, and these discourses as every day acts and vernaculars play a critical role in perpetual reproduction of this hegemony (see Foucault 1984). Subcultures, thereby, come to provide a venue where polysemous discourses of domination and resistance battle on. Drawing on the discourse theory, the long discussed dialectic of the market and subculture (i.e., economics and culture) relations in terms of autonomy and dependence seems to be getting blurred and permeable in contemporary society. On the one hand, subcultures emerge as lifeworlds take aim mainly at preserving the critical consciousness or non-utilitarian values eroded within the modern order as economics dominates over the culture at large (Slater and Tonkiss 2001). Yet, on the other hand, subcultural sphere cannot be entirely disjointed from the economic sphere. In other words, it enters into the economic sphere owing to the dual role of subcultural subject positions as both producer and consumer as well as they need to interpret the conditions of their own existence both culturally and economically, owing to the fact that they are not financially supported by another institution (i.e., government), which might have kept to a great extent their autonomous position from the market forces (Slater and Tonkiss 2001). Yet, subcultural positions still differs in terms of their intentions and priorities as they prioritise culture over economics. As for subcultures, economics appears to be mandatory means to an end, rather, as for the mainstream culture, economics rules out to a great extent the cultural priorities and thus economic success is perceived to be playful and celebratory end in itself.

In this respect, statements have been made in terms of prioritizing the intention over the action matters. Such that, producing music and subcultural symbols and experiences can be aimed at whether for the market only to be sold as a commodity and be a part of market driven by the market logic, reification mentality, and a mere profit motive (i.e., economic statement) – may require impression management -, or for the subcultural end in itself, without market logic yet using the marketplace resources with the motive of spreading subcultural discourses to a wider audience where the market is only mediator for the dissemination and distribution of experiences and ideals of the subcultures (i.e., cultural statement). In other words, whilst the latter prioritizes promoting and spreading the subcultural ideals, values, and discourses, and use the coming profit to this end, the former prioritizes profit-making by only exploiting these ideals. The former refers to a representational mode, and the latter refers to a presentational mode. Additionally, subcultural subjects are found to be commerce-literate consumers, they can decode the underlying messages with ease and react accordingly. However, as aforementioned, subcultures may participate in the market and use the marketplace resources as a means of disseminating their subcultural ethos and ideals along with its signs, symbols, praxis, and experiences to a wider audience, and reinforcing their subcultural enclaves in general. They may also make use of the market discourse to secure their social existence and continuously and dialogically negotiate and carve out various subject and (sub)cultural positions.

Contrary to the modern positions, subcultural consumers can liberate themselves from the "totalizing logic of the market" - that categorizes consumers as calculative, rational, and order seeking unitary individuals and then target them as such - by creating for themselves "emancipated spaces" (Fırat and Venkatesh 1995, p. 235) or "breathing spaces" (Žižek 2006, p. 241) whereby they can experience passion in that these spaces trigger the feelings of chaos,

irrationality, and unpredictability. Nietzsche's aforementioned comparison of Apollonian and Dionysian principles illustrates well this context of the tension between the attempt of the market's bio-politics to govern the population (i.e. governmentality) (cf. Foucault 1991), which represents Apollonian principles; and emancipated spaces realizing the real passion and the ongoing process of 'becoming' (Nietzsche 1993), which represents Dionysian principles. Yet, in addition to that, this study contributes to the theoretical orientations classifying consumers as 'rational heroes', 'hopeless dupes', 'postmodern identity-seekers', and 'resisting agents' by introducing a new classification: 'presentational agents' (see table 3). In that, this study also contributes to the structure and agency theory by revealing unique agency in contemporary society via subcultural participants who also incorporate the characteristics from both postmodern identity-seekers and resisting agents.

**Table 3.** Theoretical Orientations Regarding Consumers

| Theories regarding Consumers | School of Thought |
|---|---|
| Rational Heroes | Neo-classical Economics |
| Hopeless Dupes | Frankfurt School / Critical Theory |
| Postmodern Identity-Seekers | Postmodern Theory |
| Resisting Agents | Neo-Marxism |
| Presentational Agents | Poststructuralism with a Critical Edge |

The analysis of this qualitative study reflects and holds up well with the 'dialogical process' (see Thompson and Haytko 1997) where the relation between subcultural subjects and the market is not necessarily dialectical. Rather, there seems to be a symbiotic interplay between subcultural subjects and the market resulting in dialogical process where 'sign experimentation' and 'sign domination' (Murray 2002) co-exist, contradicts, and thus paves the way to the perpetual interpretation and mediation of this tension in realizing ongoing constitution and

transformation of identities and subjective positions. In that, although the market discourses seem to be conducive for subcultural subjects to construct oppositional identities against the mainstream culture and the hegemonic market logic, subcultural subjectivities are found to be constantly in the making through this constant negotiation, interpretation and reconfigurations of subcultural and market discourses. Hence, this ethnographic study documents that subcultural subjects do not firmly reject the market institution and the marketing system altogether; rather, they take aim at making use of the market for resource mobilization (cf. Roberts and Moore 2009) with a somewhat pragmatic approach. In so doing, they leverage off the marketplace resources and means in pursuit of diffusing and disseminating the artifacts, ideals, ethos and discourses of subcultures. However, these subjects resist the hegemonic presence of the market institution and the role it plays in culture and society as an authoritarian and a disciplinary mode. Thus, these subjects take aim at mitigating the power and the control of the market along with its institutionalized presence and ideologies interwoven into the very fabric of everyday life, implying that the market ought to be as just one of the components and/or co-performers of the 'multiple orders' (Fırat and Dholakia 2006) within a radical plural democratic society (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), rather than the essence of any single hegemonic order.

## Managerial Implications: Market without Co-optation

Whilst subcultures are increasingly observed to proliferate and thus highlight the growing fragmentation of cultures, they may also expose the developments and transformations in the market and society, reveal contemporary and potential future consumption patterns and behaviors, and highlight the potential means and venues through which alternative identities and cultural forms may emerge in contemporary societies. Therefore, marketers would seem to need

to have a more comprehensive and insightful understanding concerning subcultures and the forces that generate and cultivate fragmentation. This (sub)cultural orientation of marketers may have a significant managerial relevance due to the fact that a growing number of people are observed to participate in life through subcultures as they increasingly organize their worldviews, thoughts, ideologies, lifestyles, consumption activities, and construct their selves and/or identities in and through these subcultures in contemporary society (Jenks 2005; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010; Williams 2011).

Therefore, comprehension of subcultures may contribute to marketers not only in ascertaining the philosophical, socio-cultural, ideological, and symbolic aspects of consumption, but also in assisting them to develop more intelligent, social responsible, collaborative, (co)creative, sense making, and meaning generating marketing strategies (see table 4). As a consequence, marketers may gain substantial competitive advantage over their competitors through strategies that rely on profound comprehension and knowledge concerning subcultures in highly fragmenting, dynamic, and turbulent contemporary market environment.
Further, if marketers can recognize and acknowledge the key differences of subcultures from individual consumers (micro perspective) as well as other social groups and/or communities such as brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), neo-tribes (Maffesoli 1996), subcultures of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), and the like, they may not only better "apprehend the needs, character and activities of subcultural participations and market more strategically" (de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan 2007, p. 193), but also work as a catalyst for subculture to "construct, consider, experiment with and reflect upon new orders that can enrich life experiences, and thereby meaning and substance of life." (Fırat and Dholakhia 2006, p. 149) Recognizing the philosophical underpinnings that differentiate subcultures from other

groupings, segments, or individual consumers may also enable marketers to reach subcultural participants more readily and thus establish long-term relationship (Morgan and Hunt 1994), cocreative partnerships (Vargo and Lusch 2004), and even friendship (Price and Arnould 1999) with them.

One of the most noticeable distinctive characteristics of subcultures, at least music-based subcultures in this context, is their impulse and discourse for a presentational mode of resistance to mainstream values and commercially fabricated and provided meanings and identities (Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Riesman 1950; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). In line with this notion, these subcultures also define themselves on the basis of their antithetical stance toward other consumption and commodity oriented subgroups and brand communities that are perceived to espouse mainstream values and meanings (cf. de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan 2007). Marketers can benefit from a broader understanding of subcultural resistance in recognizing the broad range of resistive discourses and practices that circulate in the marketplace. In doing so, for instance, marketers would seem to need to ascertain that, unlike many other social groups and/or brand communities, subcultural members do not tend to differentiate themselves from these groups merely through their consumption patterns or the products/services they purchase and use. In other words, subcultures seem to exhibit significant differences from other groups and communities which are said to coalesce mainly around commodities, brands, and/or consumption activities (cf. de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan 2007).

The market, mainly via corporate culture producers, also known as the “culture industry” (cf. Adorno 2001; Horkheimer and Adorno 2007), perpetually seeks to assimilate these distinct oppositional social groups, that is subcultures, back into the mainstream culture and dominant social order through co-opting their expressions in pursuit of commercial interests (Clark 2003;

Featherstone 1995; Frank 1997; Haenfler 2004a, 2006; Honea 2009; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007; Thornton 1995). In so doing, the market tends to reshape, appropriate, and manipulate the cultural symbols, artifacts, practices, and expressions of these subcultures and empty their initial meanings, which, in turn, transforms them into socially acceptable commodities to make them more appealing to mainstream consumers (Blair 1993; Fırat and Venkatesh 1995; Heath and Potter 2004). In other words, marketers tend to utilize mainly the strategy of co-optation in an attempt to assimilate subcultures into commercial mainstream mass culture that may be based on the 'melting pot' cultural strategy approach. Therefore, marketers, as the gatekeepers in the cultural production process, may pose an obstacle for these diverse, heterogeneous, and alternative life modes to co-exist with other life modes, and thus shrink the choices and total set of possibilities in contemporary society. However, marketers, on the contrary, ought to encourage and promote diversity and multiplicity in practices of subcultures that may flourish, transform, and improve these markets and societies as well as the contemporary and potential future consumption patterns and behaviors. In so doing, marketers would seem to need to encourage subcultural interaction and engagement and assist participants to flourish collective consciousness and identity by, for instance, co-organizing music-related events, concerts, and festivals which may bring them together, foster interaction, and create collective consciousness and emotions (cf. Eyerman 2002).

Since resistance is considered to be a creative force and a means for presentational modes of being, self-reflection and self-expression (Bourdieu 1984; Cherrier 2009; Skott-Myhre 2008; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010), marketers' attempts to assimilate subcultures through adopting co-optation strategy and thus extinguishing the impulse for resistance may undermine subcultures' creative and innovative potential and eradicate their fecundity over time. Besides, since

subcultural participants resist market hegemony and its cultural authority through producing their own symbols, meanings, and consumption activities and practices, they may perceive the explicit commercialization and assimilation efforts of marketers as exploitative attempts, and therefore drift apart more from marketers. Thus, the marketer and consumer dichotomy as two opponents as in the conventional sense may continue to exist and even grow.

Contrary to the conventional approach to marketing, which is mainly oriented toward marketing mix, marketers would seem to need to employ strategies that foster and protect the diversity, heterogeneity, alternative modes of living and being, co-existing narratives, that is, 'cultural mosaic' within the marketplace (we can label this strategy 'subcultural mosaic' strategy in this subcultural context) in order to be able to keep pace with the new trends emerging with the cultural turn we experience in contemporary society. That is, marketers may need to adopt strategy that may cultivate and maintain 'subcultural mosaic' phenomenon if they are sincere in their quest for establishing strong relationship, co-creative partnership, or even friendship with them (contemporary approaches in marketing) in contemporary society wherein this cultural turn increasingly shows a trend of blurring distinction of marketers and consumers. As Fırat and Dholakhia (2006, p. 150) assert "marketing would have to develop a collaborative rather than a managerial mode. That is, marketing would need to collaborate, as a partner, with post-consumer communities in constructing their modes of life. Marketing's role would be facilitating and coordinating the efforts of the community's member. This role is a co-performer, not a provider role."

Along these lines, marketers have a responsibility not only to organizations but more importantly to subcultures, communities, and society at large (Fırat and Dholakhia 2006). Besides, subcultural consumers mainly seek personal empowerment and identity as they also

strive for social change (Haenfler 2006; Melucci 1996). Therefore, marketers may also assist subcultures to channel their aforementioned resistance-driven potentials in (co-)creating alternative ways of living and being and engaging in the social causes and movements (e.g. environmentalism, animal rights, human rights, anti-racism, veganism/vegetarianism, gay/lesbian rights, etc.) in an attempt to disseminate the ideals and values of subcultures to a wider audience and bring about social and cultural change for the betterment of humanity. Thus, marketers may be able to establish more trustworthy, genuine, and meaningful long-term relationship, partnership, and friendship with subcultural consumers through co-performing with them. In line with this notion, marketers would seem to need to stress less on commodity and commercial aspects of subcultures but more on the socially responsible, experiential, relational, collective, collaborative, and lifestyle aspects of subcultures in their activities and communications with subcultural participants. That is, commercial interests, profit maximization, and other financial measures of performance objectives of marketers in the conventional sense ought to be taken as secondary objectives whilst the subcultural ideals and values need to be taken as the primary objective.

Finally, it is suggested in this study that marketing and/or consumer researchers need to give more emphasis to investigating subcultural groups and collectives rather than mere individual consumers in order to be able to have a deeper understanding about increasingly fragmenting, multifaceted, and alternative social groups that illustrate present and future consumption patterns and life modes in contemporary society.

**Table 4.** Suggested Transformations in the Orientations of Marketing Strategy

| | **Mainstream / Conventional Strategy Approach** | **Subcultural / Contemporary Strategy Approach** |
|---|---|---|
| **Unit of Analysis** | Individual Emphasis | Subcultural Group / Community Emphasis |
| **Marketer's Role** | Provisioner | Facilitator / Co-performer / Co-creator |
| **Nature of Communication** | One-way / Two-way /Dialectical | Dialogical / Continuous / Interaction / Collaborative |
| **Outcome Orientation** | Commercial Orientation | Societal Contribution, Empowerment, Multi(sub)culturalism, Subcultural Ideals and Values |
| | Profit Generation Superior Financial Performance | Sense Making, Meaningful Experiences, Individual and Collective Identity, Multiple Alternative Life Modes Generation |
| **Strategy towards Resistance** | Resistance Co-opted / Assimilated | Resistance Channeled to Creativity and Productivity / Social and Cultural Change |
| **Purpose of Exchange/ Offering Orientation** | Product / service | Long-term relationship, Co-creative Partnership, Friendship |
| | Product / service is the end (terminal) | Product/service is a means to an end (instrumental) |
| **Social values** | Primary Responsibility to Organizations | Primary Responsibility to Society / Communities/Subcultures |

## Limitations and Future Research

Employing a similar type of ethnography in another context would be interesting, not for generalization purposes but to see whether the same patterns do emerge in another context. If similar patterns do not emerge, then it would be conducive for us also to broaden our horizon with respect to the subject matter and phenomena in term of the conceptual and contextual differences and divergences that can be observed and theoretically suggested. The term do-it-yourself (DiY) is (re)conceptualized via especially the hardcore/punk scene/subculture, and

became a more popular term in our everyday life, yet it requires investigation in more detail (the resistant discourses of DiY) as to how and to what extent the do-it-yourself practices might have a liberatory and emancipatory potential in the face of a culture turning from materialist to a symbolic. This study aims to bring about an eclectic and multiperspectival critical account (cf. Best and Kellner 1991) to synthesize the modern and postmodern theories in the face of intertwining sensibilities from both the former and the latter. Yet, in so doing, the focus was mainly on music-based subcultures as the manifestation of the fragmentation condition of postmodernity. Other research can adopt a different context as for the fragmented entities such as social movements per se (veganism, feminism, gay/lesbian rights, environmentalism, etc.), or different subcultures oriented toward different art forms than music or lifestyles. Cross-cultural study would also be interesting as to how resistant and emancipatory modes might change and reconfigure themselves in a different context and in different encounters.

As a researcher who is personally interested in music-based subcultures, although avoids being labeled and identified with any single subculture, thus as someone who might be considered as both insider and outsider, I attempted to distance myself from my subcultural engagement in an attempt to avoid any prospective bias that I might have developed toward not only subcultures but also market(ing) institution. Yet, I might still have inevitably instilled some of my biases into this research. Therefore, I would suggest similar studies conducted by not only marketing scholars who are not subcultural but also scholars from different disciplines – such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, cultural studies, economics, etc. – with and/or without subcultural interest, affiliation and/or involvement.

# CHAPTER VIII

# CONCLUSION

The growing postmodern sensibilities help to break the taken for granted and ostensibly oppressive categories as well as discourses and identities once thought to be fixed. The categories said to be disintegrating includes nationalism, ethnicity, religion, and the other categories. This break and rupture pave the way for fragmentation of the culture and society and heterogeneity, multiplicity, plurality, individuality, and fragmentation has come to be the prominent discourses and subject positions. Yet, this rupture and fragmentation of the social and culture, that is the disintegration of the given categories based on modern and traditional lineages, provide people with the opportunity and abundance of forming and establishing their own social ties, families, communities, social groups, and cultures mainly as they may wish. Subculture plays a very critical role in these developments and transformations within contemporary society by combining the urge for individual identity constitution and self-expression with the perspectives of communalities and collectivities. Subcultures have not only this potential to combine the self and the social but also the abundance of choices and possibilities and freedom and alternative modes of living and being. Also, I reviewed the primary and dominant conceptualizations of market co-optation and subcultural resistance, including agency and liberatory / emancipatory discourse, and unearthed the theoretical apertures regarding

their dynamic and plural orientations and symbiotic interplay. Similar to the theoretical vein of countervailing market responses (Thompson and Coskuner Balli 2007), I explored the ways in which some aspects of market co-optation can be turned by subcultural members into their own cultural and ideological advantages.

As a complex cultural phenomenon, music-based subcultures provide participants with the experiences of releasing their frustrations they might develop in their everyday lives, and eradicating their feelings of alienation that might emerge as a result of the practices and discourses of the hegemonic modern institutions and 'civil society' - religion, schooling, family, work, capitalism - embedded eminently in their everyday lives. The experiences subcultures provide to their participants also involve (1) forming community and family as of their choice rather than given; (2) developing strong and genuine social ties as opposed to objectifying and individualizing forces of capitalism; (3) feelings of the possibility of the co-operation and co-performance as the alternative modes counter posed against the notion of competition promoted as the main drive for social relations and for every section of everyday lives by the dominant market logic; (4) allowing them to find the passion in life and fully express themselves and leverage their creativity even sometimes in very radical, chaotic, and anarchic modes, thus allowing them to enter the process of 'self-transformation' as well as 'presenting' rather than merely 'representing' as opposed to the conventional view of rational consumers necessary for market sustainability. Along with these experiences, subcultures also play a role in participants' ideological and political awakenings by informing them also by providing them with the public sphere where they can criticize the status quo and develop alternatives.

As a subtext, the quest to evade the hegemonic structures and bringing about social and cultural transformation implicitly requires reformist steps and transition from inner change

toward outer change. Moreover, this emacipation cannot be conceived of as merely temporary or local, as Kozinetz (2002) suggests, because these alternative practices and discourses are conducive for subcultural subjects to (re)constitute their individual and collective identities simultaneously. Although they constantly challenge, negotiate, and reconfigure these alternative subjective positions, this dynamic identity construction or 'self-transformation' is somewhat playing the role of nodal points that possess a potential to be the foundation of 'emancipatory alliance' for the new social movements to bring about broader social transformation, which, in turn, may yield them to become more active for social issues and causes.

Within these dynamics, subcultures are sites of education and undertake a somewhat social activist role and aim at educating people, who are oppressed and/or who are in pursuit of genuine sense of communitas and the passion, in a presentational mode without imposition (Fırat and Dholakia 2006; Ulusoy and Fırat 2010). The market intervention, unintentionally, helps to disseminate and distribute these constituents by appropriating some signs and symbols or artifacts of them to make it more appealing and thus draw a wider audience into these subcultures. To redress the oversight of the conventional co-optation theory, these signs and symbols appropriated and transformed by the market to draw more people into subcultures, with some profit-oriented aims, are mainly deconstructed and reconstituted by the predominant subcultural discourses and ethos. As these people find the alleged passion and emotional connection, they get more involved, and as they get more involved, they get more educated with higher social learning level overtime, which, in turn, transform them into being social activists who engage in social movements, or at least engender sympathy for praxis in pursuit of the betterment of humanity. Subcultures and dynamic fragmentation within the subcultural sphere can be argued to contain liberatory or emancipatory potential for (1) providing a venue for

unlimited creativity, identity-experimentation and self-expression, (2) functioning as a therapeutic process where members can release and discharge their frustrations, (3) reconstituting of passion and sense of community, (4) working as a site of education and social learning, and (5) eradicating the sense of alienation and reclaiming the dynamic interplay of the individual and collective identity for a broader social change.

Consequently, what is found in this study is a continual multiplication of subcultures, as different members of an initial subculture find purpose in presenting a different, even if in nuance, mode of organizing and experiencing life to produce meaningful and substantive moments. This impulse in contemporary culture can no longer be neglected or dismissed if a broader and more insightful understanding of the dynamics of contemporary consumption, the market, and the culture is desired. It is attempted in this research to explain the reasons for the growth and multiplication, through fragmentation, of subcultures as the sites of much future consumption. The cultural impulse for fragmentation and the change to presentational forms of resistance, forces that impel each other, are identified to be the main critical forces in the development and growth of subcultures. In addition to that, music has been identified to be one of the key engines conducive for helping the trend toward fragmentation and presentation. Moreover, findings reveal that people participating in studied subcultures find the current institutionalizations oppressive and limiting. As they seek solace in membership in subcultures, they also seek membership in multiple subcultures since each represents / inherits the residual discontent from the mass culture, which also maintains the impulse to fragment within each subculture. The underlying purpose expressed is not to exert power over others, but to present alternative modes of life. In this respect, subcultures are venues in which people form several alternative positions and discourses. They resist the given subjectivities through constantly

negotiating and reconfiguring cultural and subcultural positions, as well as by presenting new thoughts, imaginations, conceptions, positions, and subjectivities. That is, agency lies in subcultural mosaic.

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# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX

## INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

**Section A. Introduction**

1. Thank the participant for taking time and talking to me.
2. Remind her/him briefly of the purpose of the study.
3. Get her/his consent and point out that participation is voluntary and information confidential.
4. Hint the interview will be fun as it relates to music, everyday life, and consumption.

**Section B. Interview Questions**

**Grand Tour Questions**

- Their main interests and activities they engage in their leisure time? Lifestyle
- Subjective narratives and perceptions of subcultural experiences?
- How they become involved in their chosen subculture/s or music scene/s?
- The brief history of their involvement
- What kind of music do they listen to? Favorite bands, scenes? Etc.

**Other Interview Questions**

*Questions will be asked in a way to attain and capture the rich and thick and contradictory stories and experiences of participants with regard to the following questions:

- What kind of subcultural activities do they engage in? (Probe for stories)
- Which of these occasions do you enjoy the most? Probe for stories (Tell us two most memorable stories about…)
- How often do you engage in subcultural activities?
- Could you tell me the story of how you came to participate in this subculture? Probe to make him/her recall more stories.
- How did it make you feel when you first began to participate? Tell me how you feel now. Tell me the stories how these feelings changed.
- What meanings do you seek to derive from subcultural participation?
- How do you feel when you participate in subcultural activities? Or how does it feel to be a ‘punk’ or ‘metalhead’? In different terms (feelings, experience, etc.)
- Tell me stories of how being a subcultural member (e.g., punk) affect your life.
- How would you compare the people who are engaged in subcultural and ones who are not? Probe for stories.
- Tell me stories of how others react when you are participating in subcultural activities.

- Tell me stories of how you feel when others (mainstream consumers and other subcultural consumers) participate in your subcultural activities.
- What comes to your mind or how do you feel when you hear 'mainstream culture' and 'subculture'?
- Tell me stories of how the 'mainstream culture' and 'subculture' affect your life.
- What other words come to your mind when you hear 'mainstream culture' and 'subculture'?
- What would you change about your subculture and mainstream if you were in control?
- What do you think about the relationship between subcultures and everyday life? Or mainstream culture? Does one have an impact on the other? Are they totally different moments of life? Probe for stories.
- What do you think about the commercialization of the subculture? Popularity/media attention? Positive/Negative? What are pros and cons? / Could you tell me stories of how commercialization affects your subculture/s? Probe for contradictions.
- What do you think about the media coverage and sponsorships of your subculture? How would you feel about corporate involvement in your subculture?
- What do you think about the bands doing contracts with major labels? Do you see any change? In the lyric, music, attitude? Probe for stories.
- How do you deal with and/or react/respond to the commercialization of your subcultures? Individual and/or collective? / Tell me stories of how you and others deal with and/or react/respond to the commercialization of your subcultures.
- What changes do you encounter in your subculture when commercial interests are involved? Detrimental or beneficial? or both? What are these changes? Stories for both detrimental and beneficial. Would you want your subculture to be mainstream?
- Are there people who don't like the new popularity and commercialism of your subculture? Tell me stories of what kinds of people are likely to disapprove of the new popularity and commercialism and in what ways they do show their disapproval.
- What differences do you see between yourself and other consumers? What makes you different than the ones who participate in other subcultures or mainstream? Probe for more differences and for depth.
- What do you think about people who do not participate in subcultures? Could you tell me stories about those who reject to participate in subcultures? Compare these people to those who participate.
- How do you think that your or other subcultures are changing overtime?
- What do you think your subculture/s will look like in the future? In what ways do you think that is good or bad? / What would the ideal state of your subculture/s be?
- If you were in charge of your subculture, what kinds of changes might you make? Would you want anything to be different than it is now?
- Are there differences in the perceptions across members of the subculture/s? Stories.
- What do you think about other emerging and proliferating new scenes and subcultures? How do you distinguish one from other? Are they totally separate entities? Or do you see any connection among them? Needs elaboration.
- Do you also participate in any social movement?
- Do you see any link between subcultures and social movements? Are they the same members?

**Section C. Participant Profile**

- Age:
- Ethnicity:
- Sex:
- Occupation:
- Education:
- Religion:
- Place of birth:
- Introduced by:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Location: | Date: | What day? |
| Start time: | End time: | Duration: |

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Emre Ulusoy earned a Ph.D. degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing at the University of Texas – Pan American (UTPA) in August 2013. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration at Istanbul Bilgi University in 2004. He earned his first Master's degree in Marketing with E-Commerce at the University of Portsmouth in 2006. In 2008, he earned his second Master's degree in Marketing Communication Administration at Galatasaray University, Faculty of Social Sciences. During his Ph.D. study, he worked as a research / teaching assistant and taught several courses an instructor at UTPA. During and between his master's studies, he worked as an account executive and a copywriter in an advertising agency, a strategic media planner and buyer in a media communications agency, and an e-marketing specialist and Internet media planner in an e-marketing service agency.

He sees himself as a lifelong student and is committed to learning via both teaching and doing research. He is committed to a multi/inter-disciplinary approach in achieving his academic objectives, and thus he has a variety of research interests. He is primarily interested in the social, cultural, political, philosophical, and critical issues as they relate to the phenomena of consumption, marketing, and markets. He presented his research in premier national academic conferences and published in their proceedings such as Association for Consumer Research and Academy of Marketing Science. Currently, he is working as an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio.