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Participation of Immigrant and Non-immigrant Youth in the City of Calgary

by

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ABSTRACT

Today, participation at all levels of society or community among Canadians appears elusive. More people appear to be disengaged in community affairs, and governments are concerned by lack of participation. Specifically, participation of youth in cities has become a concern since the well being of societies is dependent upon the civic engagement of its youth. In this context, I explore participation among immigrant and non-immigrant youth in the city of Calgary in order to understand the levels and patterns of participation among them. Mixing quantitative and qualitative paradigms, two sets of data are used in this study: a survey questionnaire administered to (N=811) high school students and follow-up interviews with (N=15) participants. Emerging patterns from both data sets are interpreted from a critical perspective. The quantitative findings suggest that youth’s level of participation in social and community activities is low. The qualitative data on the other hand suggest that youth’s level of participation is not necessarily low. Instead, the level of participation varies tremendously.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval page.................................................................ii
Abstract...........................................................................iii
Table of Contents............................................................iv
List of Tables................................................................v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..............................................1
  Purpose...........................................................................3
  Specific objectives.......................................................4
  Background of the Study ..............................................5
  Organization of Thesis..................................................10
CHAPTER TWO: THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL
  FRAMEWORK.................................................................12
  Youth............................................................................13
    Conceptions of Youth.................................................15
    Youth Related Issues................................................16
  Participation...............................................................19
    Alienation and Participation......................................21
    Generation Gap and Participation..............................24
    Individuality and Collectivity.....................................25
    Decision-Making and Participation............................27
  Community.................................................................29
    Changing Nature of Community.................................30
  Theoretical Framework.................................................32
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND ISSUES

Choice of Two Paradigms

Quantitative Paradigm

Qualitative Paradigm

Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixing Paradigms

Instrumentation

Initial Survey Questionnaire

Demographic Variables

Questionnaire Items

Justification for Selection

The Interview Technique

Ethical Considerations and Approval

Participant Selection

Selection Procedures

Participant Profiles

Profile of Survey Participants

Profile of Interview Participants

Context of Study: School and City

Data Collection and Interpretation Issues

Administration of Questionnaire

Interview Process

Methods of Analysis

Statistical Analysis
CHAPTER FIVE: A PORTRAYAL OF FLUIDITY AND PARTICIPATION AMONG POSTMODERN YOUTH

Youth and Sports

Immigrant Female Participation in Sports at School
Immigrant Male Participation in Sports at School
Non-Immigrant Female Participation in Sports at School
Non-Immigrant Male Participation in Sports at School
Participation in Sports beyond the School

Youth Participation in Social and Group Activities
Youth Social Networks
Youth and Codes of Conduct
Youth Space and Time for Social/Group Activities
Youth Participation in Decision-Making
Youth Participation in Voluntary Activities
Youth and Part-Time Work
Youth and Group Cohesion
Discussion of Findings from Critical Perspectives
CHAPTER SIX: A COMPLEX PORTRAIT OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY ................................................................. 128

What do the Findings Mean? ...................................................................... 128

Implications of Study ........................................................................... 133

Recommendations for Further Research ............................................. 135

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................... 137

APPENDIX A: Letter to Interview Participants .................................... 143

APPENDIX B: Participant Consent Forms ............................................. 145
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic Summary Profile of Interview Participants.................61
Table 2: Student Participation in School and Community Sports..................69
Table 3: Student Participation in School Intramural Sports.......................69
Table 4: Student Participation in Volunteer Services in School/Community........70
Table 5: Student Participation in Other Group Activities..........................71
Table 6: Student Participation in Music Programs In School or In Community.....71
Table 7: Student Family Structure and Participation in School/Community Sports Activities for Male and Female Youth..................................................73
Table 8: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Voluntary Activities...74
Table 9: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Other Social Activities.75
Table 10: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs.....76
Table 11: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in School Intramural Sports......................................................................................77
Table 12: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Other School-Based Activities.................................................................78
Table 13: Student Ethnicity and Youth’s Participation in Sports......................80
Table 14: Student Ethnicity and Youth’s Voluntary Participation....................81
Table 15: Student Ethnicity and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs........81
Table 16: Student Ethnicity and Youth’s Participation in Other School/Community Activities......................................................................................82
Table 17: Student Religious Attendance and Youth’s Participation in Sports........83
Table 18: Student Religious Attendance and Youth’s Voluntary Activity............83
Table 19: Student Religious Attendance and Youth’s Participation in Other Activities...84
Table 20: Student Religious Attendance and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs..84
Table 21: Student Self-esteem and Youth’s Participation in School/Community Sports.86
Table 22: Student Self-esteem and Youth’s Voluntary Activity..........................86
Table 23: Student Self-esteem and Youth’s Participation in Other Social Activities.....86
Table 24: Student Self-esteem and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs............86
Table 25: Student Part-time Work and Youth’s Social Life.................................88
Table 26: Student Part-time Work and Youth’s Participation in Voluntary Activities....88
Table 27: Student Part-time Work and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs........88
Table 28: Student Part-time Work and Youth’s Participation in Other Activities.......88
Table 29: Relationship between Parents’ Education/Financial Status and Student
Participation in Sports Activities...............................................................90
Table 30: Relationship between Parents’ Education/Financial and Student Participation in
Voluntary Activities..................................................................................90
Table 31: Relationship between Parents’ Education/Financial and Student Participation in
Music Programs.......................................................................................90
Table 32: Relationship between Parents’ Education/Financial Status and Student
Participation in Other Activities.................................................................90
Table 33: Place of Birth of Student and Participation in School and Community
Sports........................................................................................................92
Table 34: Place of Birth of Student and Participation in Voluntary Activities...........92
Table: 35: Place of Birth of Student and Participation in Music Programs...............93
Table 36: Place of Birth of Student and Participation in Other Social Activities.......93
CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Generally, human beings live in communities and not in isolation. Interest in community is very practical and important for many reasons. The immediate physical and social environment is the setting of daily activities. It is the place where we make our home, find employment, educate our children, and hope to live a safe and happy life (Hassinger and Pinkerton, 1986: 3). Moreover, historical evidence suggests that from the beginning of time, humankind has attempted to create concrete and relatively cohesive communities based on common participation, solidarity and involvement, shared values, common interests, norms and meanings (Durkheim, 1964; Berger 1977). Yet, in spite of myriad efforts, the formation and maintenance of successfully self-supporting social groups appear elusive to humankind, and especially so today.

The face of communities has rapidly changed and so has the way individuals and groups participate. In pluralist societies which have been constituted largely of immigration as is Canada, interpersonal relationships and membership of a group through participation are not confined by geographical boundaries within neighbourhoods or some other local areas (Fischer, Jackson, Gerson and Jones, 1977). Thus, the traditional image evoked by the term 'community' - a self-reliant, mutually supportive local, territorial or geographical group - may have changed to accommodate the new realities and patterns of participation. The contemporary situation as evidenced in urban
communities may impact upon social participation and involvement generally and, for youth, call forth other possibilities.

While concerns with participation and involvement in community and social activities are widespread today, a focus upon youth in large cities throughout the world appears to be warranted from a modernist perspective which assumes that youth is a difficult period of transition between childhood and adulthood (cf., Chawla, 2002).

These concerns and other questions are not completely new to research on youth. In fact, youth, immigrants as well as non-immigrants, have often been the subject of many studies in Canada and in other countries (Hurrelmann, 1994). What is new and critical, however, is the constant uneasiness and stark awareness of society that the youth of today do not appear to be adequately prepared for the responsibilities and challenges that await them as citizens and community leaders of the future. A common preoccupation with youth therefore animates the field of youth studies and includes a focus upon the participation of youth in community and other social activities. In this regard, the need to explore and understand youth’s patterns of community participation is crucial to the future of all communities and more specifically to urban communities. In order to do this, youth’s participation in communities must be explored not only from the modernist point of view but also from a more critical perspective in an increasingly post modern world where the tendency is more toward avoidance of fixation (Bauman, 1996).
Purpose of Study

Youth’s participation and active involvement in all spheres of life is an issue whose time has come. It is observed that youth have valuable insight into a wide range of topics, and by allowing youth to participate, they become more empowered (Bah and Johnston: 2001). A recent pan-Canadian study involving youth shows that youth’s involvement and participation in the decision making process connects them to their community and enables them to influence or affect the community (Caputo, 2000). This study also indicates that while youth may participate in group and community activities of some kind, their sense of ownership or control rooted in their participation and involvement in this role may vary. Moreover, youth’s interests in specific social and community activities may constitute a key condition of their commitment to such activities or groups. This means that a sense of ownership, control and interest would not only empower youth and give them voice but also make them worthy members of the community.

It is also possible that the nature of youth involvement and participation in group activities today may still be emerging and that their subtle patterns of participation may not yet be apparent to modern institutions in the context of increasingly post modern societies. Thus exploring and understanding some of these nuances and subtleties from the perspectives of youth sensitive to the context of a rapidly changing world may
suggest the reformulation of social and educational policies which impact upon youth, their participation and involvement in their respective communities.

In this study, I explore youth's patterns and levels of participation and involvement in group activities within the City of Calgary in Western Canada. I also intend to find out and better understand whether youth's participation or involvement in group activities go beyond mere social and group activities. I wish to bring the findings to bear on policy development and educational objectives in matters that relate to youth directly.

Specific Objectives of the Study

In order to understand youth's sense of community from youth's point of reference, I intend to:

1. Explore a more complex view of youth's participation,

2. Understand the notion of community and group participation from the perspective of youth in a contemporary pluralistic context.

The present study draws on both quantitative and qualitative data sources so as to obtain double sets of images of Canadian youth which provide discrete points of reference as well as detailed narratives to portray contemporary youth. The appropriateness of a mixed research methodology is discussed in a later chapter in this study.
Background of the Study

The present study is rooted not only in my own strong attachment to issues relating to community participation and involvement in Ghana, my country of origin, but also in recent study experiences at the graduate level in Canada. The specific case of reported non-participation and non-involvement of youth, immigrants as well as non-immigrants, in the City of Calgary in many social and community activities is foreign to what I have known and experienced as a youth and as an adult, in all the years that I have lived in Ghana where there is a greater participation, commitment and involvement of youth in social and community activities. Youth organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, Red Cross, Girl Guide, Boys Brigade, rural and urban youth socio-cultural clubs, just to mention a few, are all very active social entities and remain the bastion of Ghanaian community life. Eighteen years of teaching experience, working with youth from ages five through thirty, in three cities: Accra, Calgary, and Atlanta, have sustained my persuasion of the importance of community participation and involvement for the well-being of youth in contemporary urbanized contexts.

While a graduate student at the University of Calgary in Canada, I was employed as a research assistant to code the responses of a study on 'Youth and Employment: Family, School and Work' with Dr. Jim Frideres as the principal investigator. It was in this work that I first noticed the importance of the topic in 1998 in the contemporary Canadian context. From this data, collected through survey questionnaires administered
to students in grades ten through twelve in several high schools in the City of Calgary in Fall 1997, there emerged striking patterns that pertain to the non-participation and non-involvement of youth in social and group activities such as sports, community, extra-curricular and voluntary activities. Preliminary analysis based on simple frequency counts of some of the more striking items in the questionnaire data, such as youth participation in different group and social activities, seemed to offer little evidence as to whether youth have any interest in group and community participation. There is also an indication that youth have little desire to belong to any particular social group.

According to some of the responses in the survey questionnaire administered to eight hundred and eleven respondents (N=811), details of which are provided in a later chapter, participation in extra-curricular, sporting, voluntary, religious, and other social activities in their respective schools and communities were significantly passive, regardless of youth’s status as non-immigrant or immigrant. Based on my international experiences including a Ghanaian and international perspective, participation in group activities is considered highly passive if participation rates occur at 50% or less. This is a striking observation for me and largely influences my perception of youth participation and involvement in this study.

Upon careful examination of the survey questionnaire, it occurred to me that the non-participation and non-involvement patterns observed in the data could be said to be due, in part, to the formulation of the specific items in the survey questionnaire which
omits some information. Some questions did not ask why the participants did or did not participate in the specific activities. There was no clarification about who was involved in the planning of the activities in school and outside school, whether the respondents were interested in the specific activities, or whether these were for large or small groups. Typically, activities involve only a small number of student volunteers, for example, to view a serious film, to assure the production of the yearbook, and to serve on student council. Finally, there were no indications as to whether the respondents had the time to participate in the planned activities in light of other school, family or part-time work responsibilities.

Moreover, the term 'community' may not have been understood completely by the respondents. From the responses given, it is possible to surmise that the respondents understood 'community' more in terms of a geographic location with fixed boundaries, such as school and area of residence, or neighbourhood, or ethno-cultural communities. Thus, respondents' involvement in other communal and social activities with peers and friends with whom they 'hang out', and with people who are not necessarily their friends or peers may appear to be outside these boundaries. It is also possible that while respondents do not necessarily live in the same geographical location as the school, nor close to their best friends, there may or may not be an extension of active group participation in these situations. Nevertheless, it is understandable that these specific details were missing in the survey questionnaire because it was intended to serve a larger
study of youth and their entry into the labour market, of which only a small part is the youth’s participation in social and group activities within their respective schools and communities.

While these initial observations based on specific items in the survey questionnaire regarding youth non-participation and non-involvement in community and social activities are inconclusive at this point, they do raise questions, however, about whether youth have any interest in their communities at all. They further question whether youth in all large cities such as Calgary are experiencing a social crisis of major proportions vis à vis the rest of society. Additionally, the observations suggest to me that non-participation itself may be a complex and problematic phenomenon. As O’Toole (2003) observes, it is not clear why people do not participate, whether this is due to apathy, alienation, contentment, or because people choose to participate in new ways hereto unknown and unreported.

All these observations about youth and the whole puzzle about their participation in social and community activities, coupled with shooting incidents in the recent past involving youth in a high school in Taber, Alberta and in the United States, for example Columbine High School in Colorado, both happening one week apart in 1999 but not necessarily connected, remind me again that there is a form of elusiveness experienced by North American youth in particular.
While youth-related concerns such as the aforementioned critical incidents may not be general, they nonetheless suggest social preoccupations demanding attention because they are of great importance to communities as a whole. There is therefore an urgent need to understand what is happening in young people's lives generally and more specifically to understand what meaning youth attach to group involvement and participation.

On a much larger picture, major social trends such as global migration patterns with their attendant shifts in societal norms and values, increasing use of technology and the mass media, impact upon society by transforming social structures and norms. As well, it impacts individual roles and interactions between citizens and the state. In this context, the participation and involvement of both immigrant and non-immigrant youth in Canadian societies are critical to the future of the country just as the voluntary, social, political and economic sectors are dependent upon the good-will and engagement of all its citizens.

Unless Canadian youth become actively involved in groups of all kinds including community based groups, and unless the adult generation understands and recognizes the need to consider youth as partners in development and in decision making, Canadian society will face considerable socio-political disintegration and further internal alienation in the near future. Similarly, unless the adult generation appreciates the need to respect and understand the opinions of youth, non-involvement and non-participatory behaviours
are likely to persist. Thus, as an educator and researcher concerned about social cohesion, I seek to understand more fully youth’s patterns of participation and involvement in school, group and community activities.

Organization of Thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter describes the background and purpose of research, its objectives and the need for research on this topic. The second chapter reviews the relevant literature on youth participation and involvement in social and community activities while developing a theoretical framework for the subsequent analysis. Critically contrasting modern and post modern perspectives where necessary, it examines not only factors that are likely to affect youth in group and social activities, especially participation and involvement in community activities but also the fluid nature of the terms ‘youth’, ‘participation’, and ‘community’. The third chapter discusses methodological issues pertaining to the juxtaposed use of two paradigms and of two data sets: the initial questionnaire data and the follow-up qualitative data. Further, it describes the conduct of both parts of the study and profiles the participants and their urban context. The fourth and fifth chapters present respectively the analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data. Finally, serving as conclusion, chapter six provides a brief summary of the study, its implications and significance. Some limitations of the
study are discussed and suggestions for further research and recommendations for social and educational policy are offered.
CHAPTER TWO:

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Generally, life in our new society is in a constant state of flux, and understanding one's role in society and how to act in the world is more difficult and complex than it has ever been before (Brym, 1995). In the same light, the terms youth, participation, and community have become complex in the research literature. In this chapter, I review the relevant literature on youth participation and involvement in school, social and community activities while developing a theoretical framework for the subsequent analysis. Critically contrasting modern and post modern perspectives where necessary, I explore youth, participation, and community, the contexts of the different meanings attached to them while taking into account cultural, sociological and political underpinnings that inform research studies on this topic, and then reflect critically upon these. In doing so, I examine not only factors that are likely to affect youth in group and social activities, especially participation and involvement in community activities but also the fluid and problematic nature of the terms youth, participation, and community. In making explicit the theoretical perspective adopted herein, I situate the analysis within a critical approach to meaning making while at the same time drawing from both modernist and post modernist perspectives.
Youth

Youth is such a broad term that social scientists as well as cultural critics have long been both intrigued and confused by it (Epstein, 1998). While some define youth in terms of a specific group of young people or as an age category of persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years (United Nations, 1997) and from 15 to 30 years of age (Human Resource Development Canada, 2002), contemporary understandings of the term youth may refer to groups of people either younger or older than those who fall within organizational or governmental definitions noted above.

In Canada and many other modern societies, youth are often regarded and treated as children (Haas and Shaffir, 1995). The idea of specifying or delineating a category of persons as youth with all the possible labels ascribed to it draws from a modernist perspective which does not consider other possible interpretations, meanings and contexts of the term. For instance, Burgess and Richardson (1984) note that youth as a distinct period of life is strictly a product of industrialization. Sometimes, however, youth is most simply and frequently defined as a temporary phase in the life course between childhood and adulthood (Jones and Wallace, 1992) but such a definition also begs questions as to what is meant by childhood and adulthood, and when one ends and the other begins (Côté, 1997).

In general, people grow up in incredibly varied circumstances. Some, especially those from developing countries, grow up in agricultural or rural communities where age
segregation is atypical so far as work and community activities are concerned. Further, in pre-modern societies, youth did not exist as a separate and prolonged stage of the life cycle (Haas, J. and Shaffir, W. 1995). Instead, working alongside their elders, children grew into adolescence in a society where one’s participation in work did not necessarily mark the advent of adulthood. In such a pre-modern society, most youth interacted with their peers and with older members of the community and passed unobtrusively from their roles as children into their roles as workers and parents (Nielsen, 1991). In other societies and cultures, youth became adults socially either upon ritualized initiations into adulthood, puberty or upon marriage. Sometimes this involved leaving the family home, although this may not be true of all cultures.

In industrialized societies, the voting age may mark a transition from youth to adulthood, although the exact age may vary from one political territory to the other. In these states, the status of youth changes when youth attain the legal age to claim the right to work. The right to work in most cases varies from one political jurisdiction to another even within the same country. The transition from youth to adulthood is also determined by the legal age for driving, drinking any alcoholic beverage or even gaining admission into a night club. The clearest markers of transition to adulthood, in modern societies, were marriage and parental responsibilities.

Just before the turn of the millennium, however, the task of defining what it means to be a young person seemed to take on new urgency (Epstein: 1998). From a post
modern perspective, being a youth is not stable and does not define a single group. There are a series of markers, none of them clearly marking the passage to adulthood as before in modern societies. The status of the post modern youth is therefore always in flux and subject to complex processes of continuous negotiation between young people and families, peers and institutions of the wider society (Jones, G. and Wallace, C., 1992). In deference to the definitional uncertainty, the term youth as used in this study embraces its fluctuating nature.

Conceptions of Youth

There are myriad things said and written about youth, but much writing on youth in terms of socialization, community involvement, education or human development depicts youth as objects of adult activity. Helena Wulff (1995) notes that some of the recent writings on youth culture, mostly by cultural journalists, have predictably focused on resistance and deviance. These writings are more often concerned with institutional systems in which youth are implicated than with youth culture as such or with the issue of the production and management of culture by adolescents in youth peer groups. In fact, modernist conceptions of youth appear to be negative, dialectical and critical, with young people viewed mainly as a source of trouble and therefore a threat to the community and the social order. These are invariably buttressed by numerous studies which have emphasized dichotomies that represent youth and their involvement in what are perceived
as society's social problems such as teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, teen violence and delinquency, suicide, eating disorders, and academic difficulties (Pearson, 1983; Marsland, 1987; Coles, 1995; Papalia and Olds, 1995; Santrock, 1997). Other research indicates that youth themselves directly and indirectly alludes constantly to ways in which they are stereotyped, 'kicked' and 'tarred with the same brush' (Williamson, 1997). Yet still others (Bibby and Poterski, 1992) observe that youth are stereotyped because adults are generally intimidated by younger people, and because young people do not think that adults as a whole understand them. Very few youth feel adults have confidence in them, thus stereotyping of youth may be linked to either a false negative concept of youth or a lack of coherent conception of youth.

**Youth-Related Issues**

Moving beyond conceptions and stereotypes of youth, there are nonetheless major concerns and interests in youth related issues which are demographic, developmental, social and political in nature.

*Demographically*, the relative proportion of younger people is increasing particularly in cities. In Canada, youth under 20 years of age make up approximately 25% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada 2001c) and this figure includes immigrant and non-immigrant youth. As well, Canada is generally urbanized with about 80% of Canadians living in urban areas where the population is greater than 10 000
people. Moreover, it is estimated that over 55% of youth live in urban areas with over 100,000 people (Statistics Canada, 2001b). These figures suggest that in the not too far away future, almost all Canadians and particularly the youth will be living in quasi-urban or fully fledged urban communities. Further, immigration is an important demographic component and should not be treated as a separate phenomenon. For instance, in 1996, the immigrant population alone totalled roughly five million in Canada, an increase of 628,185 immigrants since 1991. This means that in 1996, the immigrant population in general represented 17% of the total Canadian population, compared to sixteen per cent in 1991 (Pendakur and Hennebry, 1998). Moreover, according to the 2001 population census, out of every 1000 Canadians, 252.1 were immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2001). In other words, there were approximately 7.5 million immigrants in Canada. An increase in the overall immigrant population may be expected to bring about a corresponding increase in immigrant youth population generally. Consequently, concern for maximum youth participation and involvement in group and social activities would increase, not only among their peers but also among members of the larger community and society of which they are a part.

*Developmentally*, whether living in urban or rural settings, the period of youth has become a difficult, complex and sensitive phase in the life course (Hurrelmann, 1994, Coleman, 1992). First defined as such by the American psychologist Erikson (1968), youth is considered to be a period of storm and stress, upheaval, rebellion, suffering and
experimentation, a view widely taken up by others (cf., Hall, 1994; Marcia, 1980). From such a modernist perspective, youth are seen as forming their identity during this transitory phase, reconciling societal norms, values, demands and expectations with their personal vision of society and the world at large. Youth want to understand who they are and where they belong in the total network of human relationships. They explore not only their own internal world but also the world outside their immediate environment such as the family. The problematic period is also characterized by physical, social, intellectual, psychological and emotional changes (Gerler, 1982). Yet, regardless of all these developmental changes, youth are expected to participate fully in all group and social activities.

*Socially,* youth will generally identify with their peers and their participation in social activities does not go beyond this boundary, eschewing the possibilities of connections with parents and family. This view, shared by Bah and Johnston (2001), may somewhat explain why youth in large cities, like Calgary and those of different sizes around the world, do not appear to participate in community and other social or group activities such as religion, voluntary, extracurricular and sporting activities. Additionally, Bah and Johnston (2001) offer three explanations likely to impact youth participation and involvement. (1) Non-participation and non-involvement may be due to alienation of youth from the larger community, generation gap between adults and youth, undue emphasis on the individual at the expense of the collective and issues specific to the
development of youth. (2) The greatest enemy to social inclusion and community participation is exclusion. (3) Non-participation and non-involvement of youth in group and social activities may be attributed largely to but not limited to the exclusion of youth from the decision making process in matters concerning the society and the community in general and more specifically on issues which concern the youth themselves.

Political issues are embedded in the heart of the complex youth-adult relation. Despite the rhetoric in recent times of choice and opportunity for young people, and incessant political claims that young people are our future in whom we must invest, the reality has much more to do with the subordination of young people to law and other political imperatives (Williamson, 1997). Coleman (1992) points out that one of the most striking features of much, although not all, youth policy is that it seems to be constructed more to meet the needs of adults than of young people and that there seems to be a general resistance of older folk to relinquish leadership to the young.

Participation

Participation has always been and continues to be the centre-piece of most social and community groups. In many social and community activities, commitment to a specific group appears to be measured more in terms of a member’s physical presence and direct participation in the activities of the groups. Participation has become even
more complex and fluid today than before and it has taken many forms ranging from physical presence to seamless networks of social relationships.

Depending on the nature of activities being planned, participation may take different forms (Pretty 1995). (a) Participation may be passive when people are told what is going to happen or what has already happened. b) Participation may involve the provision of information. For example, people may participate by answering questions posed by researchers using survey questionnaires or similar approaches, in which case, people have no opportunity to influence proceedings of the research. (c) Participation may involve consultation and in this case, youth may influence decisions to be taken. Finally, (d) participation may involve decision making directly.

According to Raymond Breton (1994), the fluidity and complexity of participation may appear, in many cases, to be reflecting modern life-style characterized by the dissociation of group or community membership from social participation, and even of membership from identification with the community. He observes that, as membership in a group or community of any kind does not necessarily involve identification, participation or contribution to group projects, people tend to have choices and whatever they choose is self-driven or voluntary and therefore commitments may not occur with equal frequency. I discuss some of these choices and influences that are likely to affect youth and their participation in group activities such as alienation, the purported generation gap, the individual as opposed to the collective, and decision making.
Alienation and Participation

Alienation may refer to a lack of social support or meaningful social connection. It may also refer to a state of mind that can find a social order remote, incomprehensible, or fraudulent; beyond real hope or desire; inviting apathy, boredom, or even hostility (Nisbet, 1974). Moreover, alienation of youth can be viewed as deriving from dilemmas associated with issues of common identity, common bond, or both (Newman and Newman, 2001). According to the latter, alienation associated with issues of common identity may occur when young people are forced to take on roles or are expected to comply with group expectations to which they do not subscribe which may result from stereotyping, racism, or elitism within a school or community. In regards to alienation associated with issues of common bond, these occur when youth are unable to form interpersonal ties that provide feelings of acceptance and emotional support (Dishion, Poulin, and Skaggs, 2000). They observe that this type of alienation may arise from several different sources as well. For example, under conditions of parental coldness, distancing, neglect, or rejection, youth find that they cannot count on the family to serve as a source of emotional or instrumental support. These youth therefore lack a template for experiencing the fundamental benefits of belonging that are associated with group identity. Secondly, as a result of harsh parenting, some youth have poor social skills and they are both overly aggressive and domineering or overly withdrawn and socially inept (Poulin, Dishion and Haas, 1999). Thirdly, alienation of youth may also
result from personality characteristics such as shyness, introversion, or lack of sociability. Kochanska, Clarke and Goldman, (1997) note that some young people experience social anxiety, mistrust in others, or cautiousness in interactions that prevent them from forming interpersonal connections. They also observe that others are overly self-conscious, becoming so preoccupied with their own feelings and thoughts that they withdraw from social interactions. Finally, it is asserted that youth feel alienated and deprived of social function and authority by the rest of society and particularly by adult-led institutions which include the school, family, community and religious organizations (Nisbet, 1974). These institutions assume that young people cannot undertake social roles and functions defining themselves with respect to others without assistance, and are intended to ensure the smooth transition of youth into adult society.

Given these negative ideas about youth, the individual youth either does not feel a part of the social order or s/he has lost interest in being part of it. In Nisbet’s modernist view (1974), institutions such as the family, church, community and the school may not have done enough to ensure that youth make a smooth and successful transition into the larger society hence, the apathetic and non-participatory and non-involvement behaviours of youth toward social, group and community activities sponsored by adult-led institutions. Furthermore, even though non-participatory behaviours appear to characterize almost all social groups, it is more pronounced among a constantly enlarging number of persons, including, significantly, young persons of high school and college
age. He observes that this state of alienation profoundly influences both behaviour and thought.

Alienation from physical place and nature is as important as losing one's identity. Again according to Nisbet, (1969) people identify themselves by where they are born and plant their roots. He admits, however, that there is slow erosion of regions and localities in present day mass culture that may impact the way people define their identity and how they relate to one another and to their community. He emphasizes that psychologically this may be an important matter, for disruption of a sense of place is no venial matter in humankind's effort to identify themselves with place of birth as well as with others.

Given the pervasive nature of such assumptions about youth, other analysts propose ways to ensure the reduction and management of youthful alienation. For instance, Somé (1994) suggests that one way that alienation and non-participation on the part of youth could be managed would be to welcome them formally into their community as worthy members through initiation rituals or other rites of passage. Somé notes that this rarely happens in North American society and as a result, many youth have no sense of the values of their society or of their place in it. Sense of place, he observes, fuels a continuous sense of belonging which is so much lacking in the heart of modern youth. He further cautions that until that day, gangs will remain an understandable alternative to the failure of community to relate to youth. A criminal youth, he adds, is only trying to send across the word that s/he is entitled to the support of the community.
He emphasizes that when initiation is restored and granted to a community’s demanding youth, members of the community, youth as well as adults, will no longer worry about crime, abuse, suicide and depression as these will cease and a better youth involvement and participation will evolve.

**Generation Gap and Participation**

Non-participation and non-involvement of youth in group or social activities may also be linked to a posited generation gap between youth and adults, especially where planned group activities meant for youth involve adults as well. According to Bibby and Poterski (1992), this is because youth have often alleged that adults have too much influence and power over what they want to do. Youth also claim that adults frequently use their personal experiences and behaviours that they might have experienced in the past when they themselves were young as a yardstick for appropriate behaviour (Bibby and Poterski, 1992).

In a much earlier attempt to explain the generation gap problem, Mead (1972) notes that youth and adults do not belong to the same world. According to her, adults are ‘prisoners’ in a new era who have moved as immigrants from the recent past into the present whereas youth were born here and they are at home in the new era. This discrepancy justifies youth’s crave for opportunity to live a life increasingly free of the control of adults, thus youth’s dire need to be treated as adults (Bibby and Poterski 1992).
Individuality and the Collective

Throughout life, tensions arise between desires for individuality and desires for connection (Kegan, 1982). Currently, however, there is a major emphasis on themes of individual identity, self-reliance, and autonomy as the developmental trajectory of youth leads to a lack of attention to the positive, normative mechanisms that permit youth to achieve a sense of belonging and connection (Newman and Newman, 2001). They argue that the primary motivational orientation for youth is to establish an understanding of groups and a basic sense of themselves as group members who feel valued and understood. They observe that perceiving oneself as a competent member of a group or groups is fundamental to one’s self-concept as well as to one’s willingness to participate in and contribute to society.

This observation complements an earlier work by Mead (1943) which suggests that the self-concept is a by-product of social experience, whereby one comes to define one’s self through the accumulation and synthesis of opinions, judgments, speech, and behaviours directed toward one by other. Mead adds that one is a person because one is a member of a community. Today, however, non-participation and non-involvement of youth in community and other social activities may not necessarily mean that youth are oblivious of the importance of social relations.

In fact, research has indicated that contemporary youth in Canada value relationships above everything else, especially among themselves (Bibby and Poterski,
According to these researchers, where there are observable patterns of non-participation or non-involvement in group or social activities, the likely explanations may be that they are mirroring Canadian society's unprecedented emphasis on the importance of the individual: personal freedom, personal rights, personal values, personal dreams, personal fulfillment and personal power without a corresponding relational model where self and society are merged. Overindulgence in individualization is, however, acquired at the cost of a loosening of social and cultural ties; and prepares young people poorly for both commitment and involvement in social life (cf., Hurrelmann, 1994).

Given such a dichotomy between what is personally satisfying and what is relationally necessary, young people will frequently fail at social ties for excessive individualism contradicts the possibility of good relationships. Individualism has the destructive result of failing to instil the commitment required of social life at all levels, be it in friendships and family life, neighbourhood and community, nation and world (Coles, 1995; Bibby and Poterski 1992). Individualism has led to the neglect of community values and intolerance of others, posing a great threat to Canada's future. There is therefore the need to recognize that social rights and responsibilities are as important as individual rights and thus the dire need to break out of the collective apathy, reach out to others and commit to the common good (Bibby and Poterski, 1992).
Decision-Making and Participation

While participation may take different forms depending on the purpose or motive for which one is participating (Pretty, 1995), involvement in decision making is considered an advanced form of participation. It is a prerequisite and key element for developing sense of community and participation (Qadeer, 1995). The nurturing of the culture of participation and involvement in decision making is directly related to meeting the needs for a sense of autonomy and space, and of community. It is closely linked to what Bernard Davies (1986) describes as the winning of consent rather than the coercing of compliance.

Drawing on fieldwork carried out in Britain on youth political awareness and participation, O'Toole (2003) concludes that there is a widespread concern about declining levels of political engagement and participation among young people worldwide. Specifically, she notes that there is a strong theme of exclusion in many of the group and individual interviews she conducted. Her study demonstrates that young people generally feel excluded or marginalised from decision making processes because of their age. She observes that there is an acute sense that young people are poorly represented at national and local levels. Moreover, with regards to decision- and policy-making, O'Toole notes that young people are rarely consulted or listened to, even with respect to issues which directly affect them. She observes that there is a recurring sense
that young people would not be taken seriously even if they were to participate in the
discussions of decision making bodies.

The growing demands of youth to be heard come as little surprise when a 15-year
old from Toronto remarked:

"In my opinion, my greatest achievement would be to be respected and heard
[...]. I feel I am mature and speak smartly, and I wish adults would really listen to
me and feel my view is important also" (Bibby and Poterski, 1992: 188).

Supporting this remark, Sarason (1990: 61) had already recognized that when a process
makes people feel that they have a voice in matters that affect them, they will have a
greater commitment to the overall enterprise.

Young people's involvement in schools is frequently limited. This is not
surprising in that educators frequently hold the belief that minors do not have the capacity
to make informed choices and decisions (Mann, Harmoni, and Power, 1989). However,
defining a youth's competence in decision making is not as simple as it first appears.
Initially, it seems reasonable to judge the adequacy of their decision making by the
correctness of youth's decision and to judge correctness by the degree to which young
people's decisions match adult decisions (Mann, Harmoni, and Power, 1989). These
latter assert that this is not a fair assessment of youth's ability to make informed decisions
particularly when young people have more than demonstrated a capacity for systematic
decision making that is similar in most respects to that of adults. Yet, there are reasons
why adult decisions are a poor measure against which to judge young people’s decisions. It is observed that not all adult decisions are sound and much of the research on errors in reasoning has been conducted by studying adults rather than children (Furby and Beyth-Maron, 1992; Mann, Harmoni and Power, 1989). Moreover, the correctness of a decision depends upon the information available and the goals of the person making it. Young people often have access to information that is different from what is available to adults. Moreover, young people and adults frequently have different goals. Hence, their decisions differ.

Regardless of the differences in the levels of decision-making and regardless of the negative portrayal of youth as individuals incapable of making informed decisions, it would be appropriate and expedient at this point to begin to dispel some of the myths and stereotypes about youth’s capacities to participate in planning and decision-making that has long served as barriers for them.

Community

Community, like youth and participation, has become increasingly fluid as well. It embraces many meanings, interpretations and uses. For instance, it is customary to view community geographically, as a place in which people live, be it a village, city or part of a city with fixed boundaries. Yet community need not be geographically defined and may be non-contiguous, for example, a population group with similar characteristics such as
rural and urban ethnic communities (Eng, 1988) or with similar shared interests and experiences, such as religious freedom (Steuart, 1985). Community may be defined in terms of social relations and may then be characterized by personal intimacy, emotional depth, social cohesion and continuity in time (Baltzell, 1968). Such a community may be a unit of solution in society, that is, a process through which people take initiative and act collectively. In such a case, community could include means of intervention and a process of participation and may revolve around interest groups, voluntary associations and social networks of variable scope and commitment (Qadeer, 1995). Some communities may even be ephemeral or virtual (Cox, 1987).

Out of this definitional uncertainty, one comprehensive conceptualization stands out for its integrative process-product perspective and, as such, is of particular interest to the purposes of this study. ‘Community’ is understood as both the process and product of people working together on projects, of autonomous and collective fulfillment of internal objectives, and of the experience of living under codes of authority which have been set in large degree by the persons involved (Nisbet, 1974).

**Changing Nature of Community**

There are factors that account for structural changes of community, and which determine the ways people relate to each other. In large cities, for instance, redevelopment projects may destroy social relationships that have kept individuals and
groups together for several years. People are forced to abandon their areas of residence and are obliged to accept relocation to new areas of residence. Once relocated, new relationships have to be developed and a new sense of place and belonging acquired. These realities contribute to the corrosion of the previous social relationships, for example, those within a traditional working class neighbourhood and all that went with its sense of belonging, capacity for common action, a high degree of face-to-face interaction, shared goals, and independence (Gillespie, Lovett and Garner, 1992).

Urban and suburban dwellers have abandoned many of the trappings associated with the traditional notions of community idealized in the images of life in smaller rural towns, in villages, as well as in working class neighbourhoods. As a way of developing sense of belonging, communities of association have been formed around social relations that allow for the generation of shared sentiments (Rubinstein, Kelly and Maines, 1985).

Though communities of association can be found in any kind of social unit, these are more observable in urban and suburban settings. In a typical traditional or rural setting, almost everybody is a member of the same social group, whereas communities of association are different in urban and suburban areas. In heterogeneous urban and suburban areas, communities of association take the form of social clubs, religious organizations, ethnic associations and professional associations. According to Gillespie, Lovett and Garner (1992), given the formal, rational, impersonal and calculated nature of relationships in big towns and cities, these communities of association offer the
individual urban dwellers an opportunity to socialize and to discuss issues of common interest. They also enable individuals to have a sense of acceptance and belonging.

While community is considered as the centrepiece of social action and as a continual and consistent strand in the public life of Canadians building upon social values of self-help and volunteerism (Qadeer, 1995), the reality appears to be different. Either people tend not to participate in social and community activities or they participate in different forms not yet evident to many. Relating this to youth, Nisbet (1974) argues that participation in social and community activities is a way of ensuring that youth have a social function and social authority. In this way, youth would have a meaningful role to play within the community, a role recognized by all, adults as well as youth themselves. Without participation, there will be no vital social relationship in society. Thus, the interplay between youth participation and community tells much about the development and vitality of both social and group participation.

**Theoretical Framework**

Drawing from the review of the literature, youth, participation and community presented a rather elusive and complex phenomenon. However, one commonality appears to cut across the three terms, and that is ‘change’. The literature suggests that society’s conception of youth, participation and community has changed over the years, and
continues to be formulated and reformulated even today. The meanings attached to these terms are also determined to a large extent by their specific contexts.

According to Brym (1995), in the dominant discourses of modernity, change is acceptable and it is legitimated insofar as it is thought to contribute to the improvement of the human condition. He argues that useful change is not only possible, but also normal because a discourse of progress demonstrates that progressive changes lay the foundation for future progressive changes. Similarly, Parsons (1966) explains that societies could be described in evolutionary terms as undergoing a kind of change he terms "adaptive upgrading". What Parsons means by this is that, in modern societies, specific procedures are developed by popular culture to solve well-defined problems within highly specialized institutions. Like most modernists, Parsons believes that things can be improved by using reason to calculate the most efficient means to achieve a given end.

These modernist views of societies that things must fit in a rational, developmental or functional manner and be controlled by institutional infrastructures is criticized by members of the Frankfurt School who view this as a means of manipulating the inhabitants of a totally administered society as institutions gain new force (Wallace and Wolf, 1991). Similarly, the postmodernist views societies as increasingly transient, interest oriented, calculative, chaotic, and less supportive of stable, long-term attachment or identities; a tendency to avoid fixation and where difference is the only justification
needed for existence (Bauman, 1996). Consequently, the ability and/or willingness of many new members to adopt or construct identities rooted in conventional institutions seem to be diminishing (Côté, 1997). Youth appear to be caught in all these.

Given the fluid nature of these terms, I adopt a critical perspective in my search to understand youth’s involvement and participation as it appears that youth non-participation in group and social activities is an indication of “contradictions” inherent in a given system (cf., Habermas, 1975). Habermas argues that these contradictions create steering problems, which eventually make the system untenable. He emphasizes that underlying structural changes and contradictions manifest themselves in the breakdown of shared values or “normative structures.” The old social system disintegrates because such changes threaten people’s feelings of social identity (and therefore social integration). Today, youth as well as adults may be living these contradictions. Whereas youth may be living a new reality in terms of what they want to participate in, adults may be clinging to the status quo thus creating an internal contradiction, misunderstanding and possible social disintegration.

While critical theory has no reason to claim that it is less context-bound than other approaches, it nonetheless lends itself to understanding rather than to explain youth and how they participate in their respective communities. Several scholars in the Frankfurt School, namely Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Fromm and Habermas, suggest two propositions to social analysis which are compatible with the theoretical perspectives
developed so far, appear to be robust enough to handle the data well, and fit into the data. The first is that people’s ideas are a product of the society in which they live. Because our thoughts are socially formed, it is impossible for us to reach objective knowledge and conclusions, entirely free of the influence of our particular era and its conceptual patterns. The second proposition is that intellectuals should not try to be objective and separate fact from value judgment in their work. What they should adopt is a critical attitude to the society they are examining, an attitude that makes people aware of what they should do and has social change as its aim. Equally, intellectuals should maintain a critical attitude toward their work; they should examine and make explicit its relationship to the current state of society and of socially constructed knowledge.

It does not follow, however, that critical theorists consider one critical attitude to be as good as another. Unlike Marx, they admit that since they too are products of a particular society, their own work is subject to its influences and is not uniquely objective. They also emphasize that it is difficult to separate value judgments from analysis (cf. Horkheimer, 1972; Habermas, 1973).

In this regard, the critical perspective that I have adopted in this study will allow me to examine the contradictions or differences, where they emerge, in youth participation vis-à-vis the rest of society. As well, with my specific position as researcher articulated earlier, my own value judgments and biases will inevitably come to bear on
my analysis and interpretation of the two data sets in this study. When it does, it will be clearly signalled to the reader.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND ISSUES

This chapter describes the choice of two paradigms, their nature and characteristics, their advantages and disadvantages. More specifically, this chapter explicates the selecting and mixing of paradigms while reviewing ensuing issues such as complementarity and generalizability. Next, the instrumentation is described in depth as are ethical considerations including ethical approval processes. Then, participant selection is reviewed, with particular attention to the criteria and procedures for selection as well as issues of confidentiality and anonymity. The discussion of data collection and implementation issues focuses upon the administration of the questionnaire and the interview process. Since two groups of youth are involved, one a sub-set of the other, two participant profiles are sketched, an overall one of the larger group and a more specific one of the smaller group. These profiles are then contextualized in school and city. Implementation issues discussed include the administration of the questionnaire and the interview process. And finally, methods of analysis appropriate for each data set are made explicit.

Choice of Two Paradigms

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to gather data on youth and their participation in group and community activities. The quantitative
approach preceded the qualitative as the former was the initial inspiration for this study. Following a brief presentation of each paradigm, I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of mixing paradigms.

**Quantitative Paradigm**

The quantitative paradigm framed the initial study on "Youth and Employment: Family, School and Work" undertaken by Dr. James Frideres. The principal investigator used a survey questionnaire technique in his research as this approach has the capacity of generating quantifiable data on large numbers of people who are known to be representative of a wider population. Secondly, many questions in the survey questionnaire were geared toward teasing out as many specific cases or themes as possible. Thirdly, in the specific case of the initial research, it would be time consuming and very expensive to conduct a face-to-face interview with eight hundred and eleven respondents and would require a large number of researchers trained for the project. Moreover, so many interviews would be difficult to accomplish in a limited time frame. Finally, the quantitative approach is good for "structure" and has an added advantage of enabling research findings to be replicated easily, thereby, increasing its reliability since most of the variables being measured can be controlled.

The quantitative approach, like many others, is not completely flawless and may not be advisable in some contexts. For instance, some vital information may be missing,
due to the outsider perspective, taken by the researcher, all in the name of objectivity. There is little room for spontaneity evidenced in qualitative research as the researcher is not available to probe questions that may arise at the time the questionnaire is being administered. A further weakness flows from the assumption that a stable reality exists, thus making a case for the possibility of research findings to be replicated. While this may be true in some specific contexts, for example in most scientific laboratories, it may not always hold in instances involving human subjects as the changing nature of human subjects cannot be controlled.

**Qualitative Paradigm**

In the follow-up phase of this research, I adopted the qualitative paradigm for a number of reasons. First, the qualitative approach tends to be more open to using a range of evidence and discovering new issues. This approach adopts a changing investigative stance which allows for creative, open-minded, and flexible inquiry. It also takes advantage of serendipity, that is, those unexpected or chance factors that may have larger implications. Further, in the qualitative paradigm, the researcher is closer to the data as a researcher and can adopt an ‘insider’ perspective while allowing for the participants’ own points of reference. The qualitative approach also enables the researcher to become more familiar with the basic facts, people, and concerns involved, and places him/her in a better position to develop a well grounded mental picture of what is occurring. This
approach lends itself particularly well to the generation of ideas and the development of tentative theories and conjectures. The qualitative approach enables the researcher to determine the feasibility of doing additional research, formulating questions and refining issues for more systematic inquiry. Finally, this paradigm helps to develop techniques and a sense of direction for future research since the researcher can crucially assume dynamic realities.

While this approach is criticized for its subjective stance, for its difficulty in generalizing, validating and replicating findings, and for unnecessary 'rumbling', it is good for understanding "process," and the flaws are more than compensated for by the real, rich and deep data that it generates (Geertz, 1993; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Further, the qualitative paradigm has the ability to observe and examine a particular unit holistically and calls upon the researcher to become more aware of contextual nuances.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixing Paradigms

The integration and mixing of the two paradigms in this study has become common since the seventies and eighties; nonetheless a balanced mixture has both advantages and disadvantages. First, the use of the survey questionnaire in the initial research offers panoramic view of what many of the respondents think or report doing so far as participation in group or social activities are concerned. Having the quantitative approach precede the qualitative also provided some definite advantages for the follow-
up research. One, the initial data collected through a survey questionnaire allowed for secondary analysis to be done in order to obtain an overall statistical picture of the data, which encouraged me to further explore the emerging patterns. Second, since the number of respondents who participated in the initial survey was a large one; there were ample possibilities for the judicious selection of youth for follow-up interviews.

Using already existing data, however, presented methodological issues stemming from differences in the objectives of the initial study and the follow-up one. In most cases, researchers are likely to be aware of the uses of integrating methods of data collection and they organize their overall research strategy accordingly. This was not the case herein as the qualitative research part was conceptualized after the data collection of the quantitative part was completed. Since the primary objective of the survey questionnaire was not to explore sense of community among youth, but to explore the transition of youth from High School to the labour market and the influence of the family and school in the transitional process, some items in the initial survey questionnaire did not address specific details relevant to youth and their sense of community. Far from invalidating the findings of the initial survey, the qualitative study seeks to inquire into, nuance and complement the findings of the initial survey. The qualitative approach allowed for the exploration of observations made in the initial survey questionnaire through the use of an in-depth one-on-one interview with a purposive sample of participants, and also for triangulation of some of the initial data.
Instrumentation

The two instruments used in this study are discussed in this section: the initial survey questionnaire and the follow up interview technique.

The Initial Survey Questionnaire

The quantitative data used in the present study are drawn from a three-year study of youth’s entry into the labour market, titled “Youth and Employment: Family, School and Work” with Dr. James Frideres as the Principal Investigator. This study was funded by the Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration from 1997-2000.

Actualized in the Fall of 1997, the survey questionnaire developed by the principal investigator included both structured and semi-structured questions. All those items which formed the basis of my first observation were structured and were intended to find out whether youth participated in school and community activities.

Used with permission of the principal investigator for the purposes of this thesis, those questionnaire items and demographic variables which prompted me to conduct further qualitative research on youth and the way they participate in group or social activities. While I identify five main themes below, I also discuss other factors that are likely to impact youth participation.
Demographic Variables:

1. Sex: I intend to find out whether there is any parity in the number of female respondents as opposed to males who participated in the survey. In the survey, the number of female and male respondents is fairly balanced.

2. Place of Birth

3. Number of years lived in Canada

4. Ethnicity

5. Educational background of parents

6. Financial status of respondents and their parents

Questionnaire Items:

1. Participation in community organizations: Sports, Volunteer services, Others.

2. Participation in school extra-curricular activities such as the music program, intramural sports, others.

3. Self-esteem, as revealed in these statements: I am able to do most things as well as other people; on the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

4. Relationship of respondents with parents in terms of church attendance.

5. Part-time jobs of respondents and effect of these on social life
Justification for the Above Selection

Sex is important as participation and involvement in some activities may vary according to the sex status of the participants as males may be more interested in some specific activities than females and vice versa.

Alienation from physical place and nature is equally important to processes of identity formation. According to Nisbet (1969), people identify themselves by where they are born and develop their roots; however, he notes that there is slow erosion of regions and localities in present day mass culture that may impact the way people define their identity and how they relate to one another and to their community. Psychologically it may be an important matter, for disruption of a sense of place is no small matter in humans’ efforts to identify with places of birth as well as with others.

The number of years a person lives in a particular place may play a major role in his/her social and community involvement. For those born elsewhere and who have not lived in a particular locality for a considerable length of time, especially immigrants, participation in social and group activities may or may not be limited to their immediate families. In this study, as all the participants were selected within schools, they may have benefited directly and indirectly from the numerous school activities geared towards social or group integration.

Canada places strong emphasis on the cultivation of one’s cultural heritage. Ethnicity has therefore been and continues to be a significant feature of Canadian society
and it does not only involve objective traits such as language and customs but also subjective elements pertaining to how people view themselves, i.e., their ethnic identity (Hiller, 1991). Ethnic identity is more easily consolidated when ethnicity is translated into participation in an ethnic organization. Thus, in an unfamiliar social world as it applies to immigrant youth in Canada, the individual can find in the minority group an alternative society with norms, customs, and values which may be more congenial. Some of the ethnic communities have achieved institutional completeness, that is, they have been able to provide an organizational structure which in turn provides most of the services required by their members (Breton, 1991).

The educational level of people actively participating in voluntary organizations is higher than the formal education of non-participants, according to Read and Davis (1958: 1-3). This suggests that youth whose parents have a higher level of education will participate even more in social and community activities.

Higher income group families may tend to participate more in voluntary organizations than lower income groups as the latter will normally work several hours to make a living, thus not having enough time to attend to voluntary activities. Also, local factors such as income, social values and homogeneity or heterogeneity of the community, may tend to influence the degree and extent of participation of people in voluntary organization activities.
Voluntary organizations or associations make distinct contributions to our society. They fulfill basic human needs of self-expression, power or protection, security, an outlet for creativeness and for self-assertion through collective action. They diversify power and influence. Through association, the individual is able to have his interests represented. Voluntary organizations are an important resource in our democratic society for problem solving and also for supervising solutions worked out in the past.

Music and television are almost universal sources of leisure for young people (Hurrelmann, 1994). As well, youth tend to be interested in sports and are often involved in recreation. This interest is understandable given the fact that this is the time of life when they are permitted to devote their time and energy to experimentation, amusement and competition in various facets of life. Indeed, it is the psychosocial moratorium of the life cycle as adolescence is the “time to explore, to dream, and to collect one's thoughts before entering main-stream life” (Braungart and Braungart, 1986; Hurrelmann, 1994). Thus, youth's interest in sports and recreation will likely indicate stable transition and integration.

Nisbet (1974) succinctly summarizes Durkheim's treatment of religion and its function in society as a necessary and vital mechanism of integration for human beings, as a means to unify symbols; as a consecration of community, a respect for society. The crisis of modern age basically is perceived more in terms of a disintegration of the roots
of stability which in this case is the church. For these authors, the attachment to meaningful groups is crucial to an integrated society.

Previous studies have indicated that in Canada, eighty per cent (80%) of youth identify themselves with a religious group. Only 20 per cent of youth, however, attend a religious organization weekly (Hurrelmann, 1994) and this has a serious impact on organized religion with respect to youth (Bibby and Poterski, 1992).

Today, eighteen per cent of the country's 15-to 19-year-olds indicate that they are attending religious services on a weekly basis. One tough reality facing Canada's religious organizations is that religion is being strongly marginalized by the vast majority of Canadian youth and involvement and interest in organized religion is consistently low regardless of region, community size, sex, or race. The pattern is that less and less young people are becoming interested in religious groups (Bibby and Poterski, 1992).

Youth who work part-time in addition to attending school are not likely to participate in group or social activities because they'll not be able to make time for these activities. Their social engagement/commitment will therefore be limited.

Finally, respondents' attitude to group participation is likely to be affected by self-esteem. Those who are shy and withdrawn may not be able to develop strategies and skills necessary for social networking.
The Interview Technique

The topics for the one-on-one in-depth interview consisted of twelve items. Although some of these topics were derived from the survey questionnaire, these were reformulated or re-worded in order to enable respondents to report in their own terms and permit 'thick description' (Geertz, 1993; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). These guided interview topics referred to considerations that might impact upon participation and involvement of respondents in group activities such as sports in school, sports in area of residence, and voluntary activities. Some of the topics appeared to overlap to ensure some degree of consistency in the responses of the participants.

The following topics and questions were fundamental to the interviews. When necessary in the course of interviews, additional questions were raised to probe or clarify responses.

1. Group activities in school and elsewhere: Participants were asked about their participation in group activities such as sports and other activities in school and outside school. This is to ensure that information is gathered from the participants regarding other community activities not captured by the survey questionnaire. For example, the question raised was: What sporting activities do you participate in at school and outside school?

2. Preferences for group and social activities. Topic two was to find out who they want to have as a group member for social or group activities; and the question was
worded as follows: *Who do you have in mind when you plan group/social activities and why?* The assumption was that young people would socialize mostly with their peers rather than with people outside their age group.

3. **Decision-Making.** Here, I wanted to find out what youth think about decision-making. Youth often allege that they are not considered when it comes to taking decisions. I wanted to find out what they thought they would gain if they were involved in the decision making process, by asking the following question: *How would it benefit you if you were involved in the planning of group/social activities?*

4. **Adult and Youth Participation in Decision Making.** Here, I wanted to find out whether and to what degree youth would mind having adults with them in the decision-making process; and also whether the posited generation gap was an underlying factor in youth not participating in activities planned by adults. For example, *“Would you participate in the activities with adults such as your parents?”*

5. **Rationale for Preferences for Decision Making.** Find out if the youth really did/ did not want adults in their activities, and if so, why this would be the case. Youth have often alleged that adults have too much influence over decisions that affect them. This topic was intended to find out whether their involvement in decision making alongside adults would make any difference in their participation. This is intended to confirm the consistency in the responses of participants to the previous question.
6. **Youth and Authority.** Several assumptions are made particularly from a modernist perspective to the effect that youth are not law-abiding and that they are always engaged in activities that are socially unacceptable. This topic explored the extent to which youth function well with rules and authority and whether youth involvement in the formulation of rules would impact their participation. For example, "*Under what conditions will you accept/allow somebody you do not want to participate with to join the group?*"

7. **Other Activities and Concerns.** Considering all the activities in which youth participate, I wanted to explore the possibilities of youth participating in other activities beyond those listed in the initial survey. Moreover, it was to verify the consistency of responses given by the participants as there is potential overlap with question two. This topic was also intended to find out whether youth are engaged in activities which thus far had remained unknown. "*In what other activities do you participate in?*"

8. **Volunteer Activities.** Since voluntary activities were considered very important and since participation is essentially based on the participant's own decision, I wanted to find out why youth participated and whether this had any significant impact on them. This item was also designed to find out if participants in the voluntary activity were their peers, adults or a mixed grouping. The multi-part question, *If you have been involved in any voluntary activities, why did you take part? Who was*
involved and how old were they? Where was it? Why would you take part again?
dealt with this topic and is linked to the subsequent one.

9. **Reflection upon Volunteer Activities.** Complementary to the preceding topic, these
questions, as given above, were a way of finding out if the respondents did or did
not like the experience and why.

10. **Group Cohesion.** This topic attempted to find out what actually kept youth
together and to understand what the youth themselves consider as binding to the
group. This led to the formulation of the following question, *Generally, what do
you think really brings people together for a common activity?*

11. **Impact of Work on Social Life.** Work may affect the way the youth participate in
group and social activities. In asking the following questions, *Do you work part-
time? How does this affect your leisure time or group activity?* I wished to explore
with those who work part-time in addition to their normal school work, whether
there was sufficient time available for participation in group or social activities
outside school and work.

12. **Personal Perspectives.** This topic and ensuing question, *Is there anything else you
will like to suggest or draw my attention to regarding what we have just discussed?*,
enabled participants make personal comments regarding the interview and what
they felt should have been included in the questions regarding their participation in
group and social activities.
Ethical Considerations and Approvals

In order to gain access to the field, the qualitative study needed a new ethical approval in order to carry out the follow-up interviews to explore issues flowing from the quantitative study on *Youth and Employment: Family, School and Work*, for two reasons. Ethical approval was obtained by Dr. Frideres for the questionnaire and I was responsible for obtaining appropriate approvals for my follow-up study.

An application was made to a first level of committee of the Graduate Division of Educational Research of the Faculty of Education (GDER) in January, 1999 and ethical approval was obtained for my qualitative study. Copies of the proposal were sent to the Faculty Chair of the Ethics Committee for final approval which was obtained in March, 1999. Extra copies of the proposal and the approval letters were then sent to the two main school districts, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and the Calgary Catholic School Board (CCSB), as part of their procedures for ethical approval to conduct research in their respective schools.

Having been granted approval from the Calgary Catholic School Board, one secondary high school offered me the opportunity to conduct the research before final examinations, subject to the availability of willing participants. Fortunately, this one school had participated in the initial survey. Meanwhile, attempts to obtain approval to conduct research within the Calgary Board of Education proved difficult because of scheduling and timing problems though I obtained final approval but too late to
incorporate respondents into my research project. Thus, this research is based upon students from one catholic school that has participated in the original quantitative research project. Participation was voluntary, and a self-selection process was used to obtain participants. Parental consent was sought for those participants who were below the age of eighteen.

**Participant Selection**

A group of youth in Calgary participated in both components of the research reported upon in this thesis. The eight-hundred and eleven (N=811) youth who participated in the survey questionnaire in Fall of 1997 were enrolled in four senior high schools. They ranged in age from fourteen to nineteen years, and were in grades ten, eleven and twelve.

The fifteen youth, males and females, who participated in the follow-up interviews, were selected from one of the participating high schools in the original survey, as noted in the previous section. The participants were between the ages of fifteen and nineteen and all were in grades ten and eleven.
Selection Procedures

For the quantitative part, the principal investigator of the initial survey contacted teachers who were in charge of the Career and Life Management (CALM)\(^1\) course in each of the schools he visited. Each teacher drew as many respondents as s/he could at the time from the CALM classes.

For the qualitative part, a purposive sample was used in the case of the follow-up interviews to ensure that the participants provided rich and important information for the study (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). It was also an attempt at ensuring that the participants represented divergent views on why they did or did not participate in social and group activities.

Given the limited time for my interviews in the school and the fact that the school year was coming to a close, I contacted teachers who had previously administered the survey questionnaires for possible help. This proved to be very fruitful as these teachers helped me to recruit participants for the interviews from among those who took part in the initial survey subject to some selection criteria.

The participants were to be selected upon three criteria: place of origin or place of birth, sex, and number of years lived in Calgary. Of particular interest were three groups of participants: those of East/South East Asian origin particularly Chinese, Vietnamese

\(^1\) The CALM course is geared toward informing students on career and life skills management as they make the transition from school to work.
and Filipinos, born in either their country of origin or in Canada of immigrant parents; those from Europe who were either born in their country of origin or born in Canada of immigrant parents; and a third group of non-immigrant youth born in Canada of one or both non-immigrant parents. These groups were important to the study because of their representativity as they constituted a significant part of the population of the City of Calgary and were well established in the city. Census data from Statistics Canada (April, 2001) show that the total population of the City of Calgary is 943,315. Canadians of European origins and Aboriginals\(^2\) together constitute eighty one per cent (81%) of the total population. Visible minorities represent nineteen per cent (19%) of the total population of the City of Calgary out of which ethnic Chinese population alone represents six per cent (6%) of the total population of Calgary. The Filipinos on the other hand represent two per cent (2%) of the total population of Calgary whereas the Vietnamese constitute one per cent (1%). Notably, there are as many females in the City of Calgary as there are males. A balance between the three groups allows for comparison and insight.

The quantitative data appear to somewhat reflect the overall demographic pattern of the City of Calgary. There were almost as many females as there were males, 50.2% and 47% respectively. Of those who participated in the survey questionnaire (N=811), the

\(^2\) Statistics Canada defined Aboriginals as Canadians from the First Nations and people of colour as visible minorities.
largest group was Canadians\(^3\) of European origins (46.8%). The remaining respondents identified themselves as Chinese 9.7%, Filipinos 5.1%, Vietnamese 2.9% and the British 2.9%. In the case of the follow-up interviews, two participants were of European origins (Polish and Portuguese), seven Filipinos, one Vietnamese and five Canadians. Even though their profile does not perfectly match the demographic pattern of the City of Calgary, it still mirrored a pattern somewhat similar to that of the city. In the case of the qualitative data, there were more males than females, 60% males and 40% females. The difference was due mainly to the fact that participants were not readily available. Availability was also dependent upon the neighbourhood in which the school is situated and the short time schedule imposed by the school. Striking a balance therefore was quite difficult to accomplish. Based on the number of participants available, 46.6% identified themselves as Europeans who are Canadian citizens whereas 53.3% identified themselves as East/Southeast Asians (i.e., seven Filipinos and one Vietnamese).

Thanks to the helpful teachers, most of the fifteen respondents who volunteered to participate were enrolled in religious education, mathematics or ESL classes. Grade twelve students were not invited to participate because most of them were either preparing or writing their final diploma examinations at the time of the study. The number of youth in each anticipating group varied: eight in the Asian group, all drawn from the ESL class, two in the European group, and five in the non-immigrant group.

\(^3\) This refers to Caucasians mainly of European descent.
Participant Profiles

Two sets of profiles are presented in this section: profiles of those who participated in the survey and of those who participated in the interviews.

Profile of Survey Participants

Sex: Of the eight hundred and eleven youth who responded to the initial survey questionnaire, there were 381 male respondents and 407 female respondents representing 47% and 50.2% of the total number of respondents respectively. The number of those who did not indicate their sex was 23, representing 2.8% of all respondents.

Place of Birth: Most of the respondents were born in Canada and only a few were born elsewhere. Approximately 79.92% (N=648) respondents were born in Canada and 19.7% (N=160) where born elsewhere. 18.7 % moved to Canada at least three years before the initial survey questionnaire was administered.

Number of years lived in Canada: Immigrant respondents may be involved in some social and group activities in Calgary which may or may not be limited to their immediate families as most of them have been living here for at least two years prior to the initial survey. In fact, all of them have been in school at least for this period of time suggesting
that they may have benefited directly and indirectly from the numerous school activities geared towards social or group integration.

*Ethnicity:* In the overall data, the majority were Canadians. 50.8% (N=412) identified themselves as Canadians, 7.3% (N=59) said they were Chinese, 3.8% (N=31) were Filipinos, 3.8% (N=31) were Italians, 2.6% (N=21) were Vietnamese, 2.2% (N=18) were Polish and 2.0% (N=16) were British. There were other ethnicities as well but who were fewer than those listed here and were not very important to this study. These figures are somewhat representative of the population of the City of Calgary. There are no marked differences between the ethnic composition of the respondents and the overall ethnic demographic representation of the city. This may be coincidental as the ethnic composition of the respondents may vary from school to school and from one quadrant of the city to another.

*Level of Parental Education and Financial Status:* Four hundred and seventy eight (N=478) parents, representing more than one half of the total number of parents (58.9%) have had some university education and above. Ninety-one (91%) of the respondents think the financial status of their parents is average, whereas 7% report that it is below average, and 2% did not specify this information. It is observed that the educational level of people actively participating in voluntary organizations is generally higher than the
formal education of non-participants. Similarly, higher income group families tend to participate more in voluntary organizations than lower income groups (Read Davis, 1958: 1-3). Given the favourable financial positions of their parents, it is expected that the participating youth need not worry about meeting their basic needs, are not likely to take part-time jobs, and would have some spare time to participate in social and community activities.

*Church Attendance:* Over a quarter of the responding youth (25.2%) indicate that they have never attended any religious service. Those who report attendance at religious services did so ranging from several times a year to several times a week. This latter group represents 73.3% of the respondents.

*Parents' Attendance of Religious Service:* 73.1% of mothers and 33.2% of females attend religious service whereas 61.8% of fathers and 24.3% of males attend religious service. Generally, a higher percentage of females and their mothers attend religious services compared with the males and their fathers.
Reported Cases of Self-Esteem: More than 94% of the respondents report that they can do most things as well as others, 86.7% are satisfied with themselves in all that they do and 75.8% feel that they are as good as others.

Profile of Interview Participants

A summary profile of each participant is given below in chart form. The names of the participants are represented numerically for reasons of confidentiality and anonymity whereas their place of birth and that of their parents, their age, and number of years lived in Canada remains unchanged. A letter code serves to differentiate the participants according to status and sex, where IF, IM, NF and NM is used to refer to immigrant female, immigrant male, non-immigrant female and non-immigrant male respectively.
Table 1: Demographic Summary Profile of Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Parents’ Country of Birth</th>
<th>Years in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>Father: Calgary Mother: Wales</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>Both: Vietnam</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Both: Canada</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Both: Philippines</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Both: Philippines</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Mother: Canada</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Both: Canada</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Both: Canada</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Both: Philippines</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Both: Philippines</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Both: Philippines</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Both: Philippines</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Both: Portugal</td>
<td>11⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Both: Philippines</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Both: Poland</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, fifteen (N=15) youth participated. Nine (N=9) of these were born in Canada and six (N=6) outside Canada. There were six females (N=6) and nine males (N=9). Six males and three females declared themselves to be Canadians.

**Context of Study: School and City**

The school was a preferred choice for the research as it is a place of highest concentration of youth at any given time and a place where most students are relatively at ease. Moreover, the school generally remains the one institution that systematically gathers society together. The family is involved in the school through participation in

⁴ Though this participant was born in Canada, she had lived outside Canada with the parents for five years.
school activities, such as parent-school collaboration and partnerships. The church also participates in school activities through various benevolent contributions and in this case, through spiritual guidance. For young people experiencing difficulties, school is the only adult-managed environment where they can experience life with some predictability (Bibby and Posterki, 1992). Finally, school is the only place that brings together the multi-ethnic youth population of interest to the present study.

The particular high school delivers grades 10-12 and houses approximately one thousand students, forty-three teachers, four counsellors, four administrators and several special education teachers. Approximately fifty-two different ethnic cultures are represented in the school. Education at this school is predicated on the belief that students have the opportunity to find success in terms that are meaningful to them. This explains why the school offers a wide variety of courses at different challenging levels, including the regular programme and the International Baccalaureate. This school is located in the north-eastern quadrant of the City of Calgary.

The choice of city is equally sensitive to issues of accessibility. Carrying out research in the home city of my university of choice is most convenient and economical. Moreover, an important survey of youth was already underway at the time of formulation of the present study and it provided the impetus for the formulation of the qualitative component. Calgary as a city is experiencing rapid growth and as of 2001, has a population of 951,395 (Statistics Canada, 2001). The city is considered to be the
administrative and financial capital of the oil and gas industry in Alberta. Once known for its booming economy, though it still is to a lesser extent, it has attracted a number of people of different socio-cultural backgrounds. This cultural diversity is manifest in the various cultural activities particularly during the summer months. Notably among these are the Calgary Stampede, Carrefest, Africa Day and the Latino Day. The city hosted the 1988 Olympics and major infrastructure was put in place for sports. Most Calgarians enjoy walking, biking, running or roller-blading along the trails by the Bow River. Dining out and going to the movie theatres also constitute a major past time.

Finally, focussing on urban youth and schooling is appropriate as Calgary’s population is urbanized and younger people in particular constitute the dominant age group in the city. Those between the ages of five and nineteen years constitute about 20% of the total population of Calgary (Canada Census, April 2001). This figure excludes those between the ages of one and five. This is comparable to the national average of youth population in Canadian cities that stands at about 25% (Statistics Canada, 2001c).

**Data Collection and Implementation Issues**

Issues that arose in the course of implementation of the two techniques are discussed below.
Administration of the Questionnaire

Even though the principal investigator did not administer the questionnaire himself to the respondents, the teachers talked to each of the class groupings to talk about the questionnaire to the students and explained why this was being done. The survey questionnaires were distributed among the students for whom consent had been obtained.

Interview Process

Prior to the interview process, peer review of the questions helped considerably and necessary adjustments were made to improve and nuance the wording of questions.

Prior to each interview, the participants were briefed generally on the purpose of the interview and research once again even though this information was included in the consent forms. The questions were mainly open-ended and were worded so as to ensure clarity and eliminate any ambiguity. Most of the questions were intended to encourage suggestions and comments from the participants.

The scheduling of interviews was depended on the time it took respondents to return the consent forms and their availability. I was the sole interviewer since the number of respondents was a small one; this minimized the possibility of multiple biases if several researchers had been utilized.

The interviews were conducted in a consulting room assigned to me by the school authorities. The doors to the room were left opened to ensure the comfort of all
concerned, especially the students, to emphasize how convenient the interview environment was, and to be accessible at anytime to members of the school community. The participants were interviewed one at a time. Each interview lasted between fifteen (15) to twenty-five (25) minutes; each one was tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis. The entire interview process was completed within a period of seven weeks, well within the time period specified by the school.

**Methods of Analysis**

The methods of analysis differ according to data set, especially since the quantitative study was generated from a view of truth as singular and convergent, whereas the view of truth within the qualitative which frames the interview technique is multiple and divergent. Each one is described below.

**Statistical Analysis**

Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the statistical analysis intends to make vivid the observable patterns in the survey, relevant to the topic under discussion. The statistical data presented in the subsequent chapter is based first of all, on simple frequency counts expressed in numerical value as well as in percentages of respondents who did or did not respond to the particular item of the survey questionnaire. Once a pattern emerges, then a bivariate statistical analysis is carried out. The
presentation of the data consists of cross-tabulation which means that the cases are organized in tables on the basis of two variables at the same time. Bivariate tables usually contain percentages and the use of cross-tabulation presents two analytic advantages. First, the same information is presented in a more condensed form than frequency counts. Secondly, by considering two variables together, the statistical relationship between them can be described as well as the relevance to participation and non-participation of youth in social and community activities.

**Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative explanations normally take many forms. According to Newman (1997), a qualitative researcher does not have to choose between rigid ideographic or nomothetic dichotomies, that is, between describing specifics and verifying universal laws. Instead a researcher develops explanations or generalizations that are close to concrete data and contexts but are more than simple descriptions. He notes that qualitative explanations tend to be rich in detail, sensitive to context, and capable of showing the complex processes or sequences of social life. The explanations may be causal but this is not always or necessarily the case. Again, the data from qualitative research might support more than one explanation, and may not necessarily be consistent with each other.
In this regard, the analysis was on-going in order to identify emerging themes and patterns. This successive approximation approach has some merits because it involves repeated iterations or cycling through steps, moving toward a final analysis. Over time or after several iterations, a researcher moves from vague ideas, assumptions, concepts and concrete details in the data toward a comprehensive analysis with generalization.

Since this study is a follow-up of a previous one and exploratory in nature, the analysis examines critically what constitutes a sense of community and participation for youth. Hence as qualitative and quantitative patterns emerged, these were questioned critically in order to develop insightful understandings of their meanings for youth and for their relevance to educational policy and practices.
CHAPTER FOUR:

A PORTRAYAL OF PASSIVITY IN PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUTH IN CALGARY

In this chapter, I examine the overall portrayal of non-participation among youth in the City of Calgary on the basis of their participation in such group or social activities as school and community sports, voluntary activities, music programs, and intramural sports as well as other social and community activities. Secondly, drawing from this portrayal and using cross-tabulation, I examine factors that are likely to impact upon the participation of youth in social and group activities in order to tease out possible relationship between them. More specifically, I seek to understand the relationship between participation and several variables, taken up sequentially: (a) sex, (b) family structure, (c) place of birth, (d) ethnicity (e) educational/financial background of parents, (f) religion, (g) self-esteem, and (h) part-time employment.

General Patterns of Youth Participation

Youth Participation in Sports

In general, youth tend to be interested in sports and recreation. According to the questionnaire data, however, 40% participated in sports whereas 60% did not. This data is presented in Table 2 which shows the number of respondents who did or did not participate in school and community sporting activities. Generally, few respondents,
males as well as females, participated in school and community sports. These results do not tally with the general view that youth are active and that their greatest past-time is sports as one would expect higher participation in sporting activities.

Table 2: Student Participation in School and Community Sports Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not participate</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 3 show the passive nature of participation in *intramural sports* among respondents, where only 18.1% of respondents indicated that they participated whereas 68.2% did not participate. A few did not indicate whether they did/did not participate.

Table 3: Student Participation in School Intramural Sports Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not participate</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing cases</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth Participation in Voluntary Activities

In the survey data, participation in voluntary activities was equally passive among youth, if not worse than for sports activities. As the figures in Table 4 suggest, 72.6% of youth did not volunteer in school, nor were they involved in any volunteering activities in their own communities.

Table 4: Student Volunteer Services in School and Community Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not participate</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asked whether they volunteered in other group activities, the respondents indicated their passivity as shown in Table 5, where 82.4% did not volunteer in other activities.

Table 5: Student Participation in Other Group Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not participate</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation in Musical Programs

Music and television are almost universal sources of leisure for young people (Hurrelmann, 1994). However, responses to a question in the survey questionnaire about participation in music programs pointed to the contrary. Only 12.9% (N=105) of youth participated in music making programs at school and in their areas of residence. The majority did not: 73.7% (N=598).

Table 6: Student Participation in Musical Programs in School or in Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not participate</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing cases</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the overall picture from the survey data suggests that youth participation in community sports, voluntary activities, music programs and other social and group activities is generally passive. These patterns require further examination as to why youth appear not to participate in these activities. To begin this process, I explore through cross-tabulation, factors likely to impact upon youth participation in these activities with particular emphasis on those who did/did not participate in specific activities. It is anticipated that the emerging patterns in various types of activities will help clarify youth’s non-participation and non-involvement.
Student Family Structure and Youth Participation

Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Sports

The sports activities of choice for majority of respondents were basketball (N=65), hockey (N=52), track/field (N=42), baseball (N=40), football (N=18), swimming (N=14), karate (N=9), and rugby (N=9). These are mainly very physical sports and involve a lot of body contact with the exception of track and field, and swimming.

Exploring the family structure and its impact upon youth’s rate of participation, the survey data reveals two general patterns as shown in Table 7. First, participation rate for males in school or community sports activities is higher than that for females regardless of the family structure. Second, male respondents from dual parent home with siblings recorded the highest participation rate whereas the highest participation rate for females came from dual parent home without siblings. The lowest participation rate for females was 21%, i.e., respondents from dual parent home with siblings. For male respondents, those who came from single parent home without siblings recorded the lowest participation rate (33%).
Table 7: Student Family Structure and Participation in School/Community Sports Activities for Male and Female Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Sports</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, no siblings</td>
<td>50% (139)</td>
<td>50% (139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, Plus siblings</td>
<td>52% (18)</td>
<td>48% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, no siblings</td>
<td>33% (6)</td>
<td>67% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, Plus siblings</td>
<td>41% (21)</td>
<td>59% (30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Student Family Structure and Youth’s Voluntary Participation*

In Table 8, female participation in voluntary activities is higher than that of males across the different family structures except for male respondents who came from single parent home with siblings. The highest participation rate for females in voluntary activities was recorded among those who came from dual parent home without siblings (35%) and the lowest from single parent home with siblings (23%). For male respondents, those from single parent home without siblings recorded the highest participation rate (28%) whereas those from the dual parent home recorded the lowest (21%).
Table 8: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Voluntary Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, no siblings</td>
<td>21% (57)</td>
<td>79% (221)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, plus siblings</td>
<td>24% (8)</td>
<td>76% (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, no siblings</td>
<td>28% (5)</td>
<td>72% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, plus siblings</td>
<td>25% (13)</td>
<td>75% (38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Other Social Activities**

Table 9 shows that participation rate for females was higher than that for males regardless of the family structure. Second, the highest participation rate for females (27%) was recorded among respondents who came from dual parent home without siblings and the lowest (18%) from dual parent home with siblings. For male respondents, those who came from single parent home without siblings recorded the highest participation rate (17%) as opposed to those from dual family home without siblings (14%).
Table 9: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Other Social Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participati</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, no</td>
<td>14% (39)</td>
<td>86% (239)</td>
<td>27% (64)</td>
<td>73% (219)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, plus</td>
<td>15% (5)</td>
<td>84% (29)</td>
<td>18% (8)</td>
<td>82% (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, no</td>
<td>17% (3)</td>
<td>83% (15)</td>
<td>19% (3)</td>
<td>81% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home,</td>
<td>16% (8)</td>
<td>84% (43)</td>
<td>20% (14)</td>
<td>80% (55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plus siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs

In Table 10, music did not appear to be an interest area for male respondents as fewer males than females participated. The data show that female respondents recorded a much higher participation in music programs than males regardless of the family structure. The highest participation rate for females (26%) and for males (9%) were both recorded among respondents who came from dual parent home without siblings. Similarly, the lowest participation rate for both males and females was recorded among those respondents from single parent home with siblings, i.e., 11% for females and 0% for males.
Table 10: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation In Music Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, no siblings</td>
<td>9% (20)</td>
<td>91% (213)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, Plus siblings</td>
<td>6% (2)</td>
<td>94% (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, no siblings</td>
<td>6% (1)</td>
<td>94% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, Plus siblings</td>
<td>0% (N/A)</td>
<td>100% (41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Intramural Sports

In Table 11, participation for male respondents was higher than those for females in intramural sports activities across all the family structures. The highest participation rate for male respondents was recorded among those who came from dual parent home without siblings (34%) as opposed to 17% for female respondents from the same family structure. The lowest participation rate for male and female respondents was from among those who came from single parent home without siblings, 12% and 7% respectively.
Table 11: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in School Intramural Sports Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home,</td>
<td>34% (80)</td>
<td>66% (157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home,</td>
<td>15% (5)</td>
<td>85% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plus siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home,</td>
<td>12% (2)</td>
<td>88% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home,</td>
<td>17% (8)</td>
<td>83% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plus siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation in Other School-Based Activities**

In Table 12, the data show that participation rate in other school-based activities was highest for male respondents who came from single parent home with siblings (43%) whereas the highest participation rate for females was recorded from among those who came from dual parent home without siblings (27%). The lowest participation rate for males was 9% from families with dual parent home with siblings. For females, the lowest was from single parent home without siblings (14%).
Table 12: Student Family Structure and Youth’s Participation  
In Other School-Based Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, no siblings</td>
<td>21% (50)</td>
<td>79% (187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent home, plus siblings</td>
<td>9% (3)</td>
<td>91% (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, no siblings</td>
<td>33% (6)</td>
<td>67% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home, plus siblings</td>
<td>43% (18)</td>
<td>57% (24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnicity and Participation**

In the survey questionnaire, 88.3% of the respondents, immigrant as well as non-immigrant youth, indicated that ethnic identity was important. Only 9% of them indicated that ethnicity was not at all important. This is contrary to findings in other studies in which only 24% of youth say that their cultural group background was very important (Bibby and Poterski, 1992). The data in Tables 13-16 represent an aggregate of those who responded that ethnicity was very important, quite important and somewhat important. Yet, as will be seen below, ethnicity does not appear to be relevant to leisure pursuits among the responding youth.
Ethnicity and Participation in Sports

Sports in general appear to be the activity of choice among youth, males as well as females but with males having higher rates of participation, regardless of the importance of ethnicity, as shown in Table 13 below. For those who did not participate, ethnicity was as important for them as those who participated. Some 93.7% of females who participated indicated that ethnicity was important. Similarly, 89.1% of males who participated also indicated that ethnicity was important. Yet, the number of those who did not participate but thought ethnicity was important was high as well (81.2%) for males and (90.7%) for females. There was however, a slight difference noted between males who participated and those who did not.

Table 13: Student Ethnicity and Youth’s Participation in Sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community sports</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Ethnicity is important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>89.1% (164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>93.7% (119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>81.2% (160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>90.7% (254)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnicity and Youth’s Voluntary Participation

Ethnicity is not a factor in youth’s participation in group or voluntary activities as there are significant numbers of respondents, males as well as females who did not
participate but claimed that ethnicity was important to them, as illustrated in Table 14 below. Among the respondents who participated in voluntary activities, 90.4% of males and 95.5% of females thought ethnicity was important. Similarly, a large number of males and females who did not participate also attached importance to ethnicity.

Table 14: Student Ethnicity and Youth’s Voluntary Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Ethnicity is important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>90.4% (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>95.5% (126)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>83.6% (249)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>89.8% (247)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnicity and Musical Participation of Youth

Fewer respondents participated in musical programs and ethnicity did not appear to be a crucial factor in youth’s participation, as can be noted in Table 15 below. However, more females than males participated in musical programs. 73.9% and 95.0% males and females respectively who participated in music programs indicated ethnicity was important. However, a large number of respondents did not participate although they also indicated that ethnicity was important. Among those who did not participate, 86.2% were males and 91.8% were females.
Table 15: Student Ethnicity and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music programs</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Ethnicity is important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>73.9% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>95.0% (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>86.2% (262)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>91.8% (256)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnicity and Youth Participation in Community Activities

Among those who participated in other school and community activities and indicated that ethnicity was important, there were 89.1% males as opposed to 92.9% females, as can be seen in Table 16 below. The data suggest that female respondents who thought ethnicity was important participated more in other activities than their male counterparts. However, ethnicity was not a determining factor as the number of those who did not participate was equally high.
Table 16: Ethnicity and Youth’s Participation in Other School/Community Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other activities</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Ethnicity is important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>89.1% (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>92.9% (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>84.4% (275)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>91.3% (295)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship between Religious Affiliation and Participation

*Religious Affiliation and Sports Participation of Youth*

Tables 17 to 20 show whether there is any relationship between participation in religious affiliation and community sports, voluntary activities, other social activities and music programs. The data obtained was based on the aggregate of attendance for those who participated in religious service from ‘several times a year to several times a week’.

The data show that participation rate in sports activities for male respondents who attend church, was higher (53%) than that of their female counterparts (34%), as illustrated in Table 17. The indications in Table 18 were that the rate of participation in voluntary activities among female respondents who attend church was higher (39%) than that of their male respondents (26%). The data also indicated a general low participation rate for both males and females. The data in Table 19 also showed a very low participation rate among males and females. Females, however, participated more (26%)
in other social activities than males (14%). Finally, in Table 20, while female participation rate was higher in music (28%) than that of male (8%), the data indicated that participation in music programs was generally low among males and females. This means that across all these activities, religion or attendance at church did not determine youth participation in identified activities.

**Table 17: Student Religious Attendance and Youth’s Participation In Sports Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents attendance</td>
<td>53% (108)</td>
<td>47% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s attendance</td>
<td>53% (110)</td>
<td>47% (96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s attendance</td>
<td>51% (83)</td>
<td>49% (79)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 18: Student Religious Attendance and Youth’s Voluntary Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents attendance</td>
<td>26% (52)</td>
<td>74% (145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s attendance</td>
<td>24% (50)</td>
<td>76% (156)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s attendance</td>
<td>23% (37)</td>
<td>77% (125)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19: Student Religious Attendance and Youth’s Participation
In Other Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>14% (27)</td>
<td>86% (170)</td>
<td>26% (57)</td>
<td>74% (165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s attendance</td>
<td>16% (32)</td>
<td>84% (174)</td>
<td>23% (49)</td>
<td>77% (167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s attendance</td>
<td>17% (28)</td>
<td>83% (134)</td>
<td>23% (40)</td>
<td>77% (132)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20: Student Religious Attendance and Youth’s Participation
In Music Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>8% (15)</td>
<td>92% (163)</td>
<td>28% (55)</td>
<td>72% (144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s attendance</td>
<td>9% (16)</td>
<td>91% (167)</td>
<td>25% (49)</td>
<td>75% (144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s attendance</td>
<td>9% (13)</td>
<td>91% (132)</td>
<td>26% (40)</td>
<td>74% (111)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Relationship between Youth Self-Esteem and Participation*

Generally, respondents’ answers to several questions were examined to find out if their non-participation patterns have anything to do with low self-esteem or lack of confidence. Given youth’s positive responses, it is expected that this would translate into active participation in group and community activities.

When respondents were asked whether they think they ‘do things as well as others’ and whether they are satisfied with themselves’, most of them indicated that they have
very high self-esteem. Their self-esteem ranged between 84.0% and 100%. However, upon the examination of the survey data, their confidence level did not match their rate of participation in the various activities. For example, in Table 21, participation rate for male respondents in sports activities was only 50% while that of the female respondents was between 31% and 32%. Male respondents participated more than females generally. In the area of voluntary activities, Table 22 indicated that the rate of participation was generally low; 33% for females and 23% for males though the rate of participation in voluntary activities among female respondents was higher than that of the males. In Table 23, the data showed that the rate of participation in other social activities among females was higher (21%) than that of males (15%) though participation was generally low for both males and females. Participation in music programs was also very low regardless of the high level of self-esteem. The data in Table 24 demonstrate that female respondents recorded a higher rate of participation in music programs than males though the participation rate was low among males (7%) and females (23%).
Table 21: Student Self-esteem and Youth’s Participation in School/Community Sports

|                                | Males                  | Females                |
|                                | Participation Rate    | Non-Participation Rate | Participation Rate | Non-Participation Rate |
| Do things as well as others    | 50% (178)             | 50% (178)              | 31% (122)          | 69 % (267)             |
| Satisfied with myself          | 50% (167)             | 50% (167)              | 32% (110)          | 68% (237)              |

Table 22: Student Self-esteem and Youth’s Voluntary Activity

|                                | Males                  | Females                |
|                                | Participation Rate    | Non-Participation Rate | Participation Rate | Non-Participation Rate |
| Do things as well as others    | 23% (81)              | 77% (275)              | 33% (128)          | 67 % (261)             |
| Satisfied with myself          | 22% (75)              | 88% (259)              | 33% (116)          | 67% (231)              |

Table 23: Student Self-esteem and Youth’s Participation in Other Social Activities

|                                | Males                  | Females                |
|                                | Participation Rate    | Non-Participation Rate | Participation Rate | Non-Participation Rate |
| Do things as well as others    | 15% (53)              | 85% (303)              | 21% (82)           | 79 % (307)             |
| Satisfied with myself          | 15% (50)              | 85% (284)              | 22% (75)           | 78% (272)              |

Table 24: Student Self-esteem and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs

|                                | Males                  | Females                |
|                                | Participation Rate    | Non-Participation Rate | Participation Rate | Non-Participation Rate |
| Do things as well as others    | 7% (22)               | 93% (282)              | 23% (78)           | 77 % (267)             |
| Satisfied with myself          | 8% (23)               | 92% (265)              | 24% (73)           | 76% (235)              |
Relationship between Part-Time Work and Social Life

Approximately half of today's teenagers work part-time according to Bibby and Poterski (1992). In our overall survey data, 52.8% of youth do some part-time work. Of these, 47.1% admitted that part-time jobs frequently or occasionally interfered with their social life which explains their inability to participate in group or social activities.

Regarding part-time job and its effect on social activities, Table 25 indicates that 49% and 24% of males and females respectively indicated that they worked part-time. 49% of males who claimed that part-time job interfered with their social life participated in social activities as opposed to females (32%). In Table 26, though the female participation rate in voluntary activities was higher (37%) than that of the male respondents (22%), the general pattern was that participation in this activity was low. In music programs (cf., Table 27), the participation rate for both males and females was low as well. However, female participation rate was still higher (17%) than that of the males (8%). Regarding participation of respondents in other social activities, the rate of participation is generally low for males as well as females. There was no big difference in the participation rate of males and females: 24% and 26% for males and females respectively.
Table 25: Student Part-time Job and Youth’s Social Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked part-time</td>
<td>49% (107)</td>
<td>51% (110)</td>
<td>24% (59)</td>
<td>76% (191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job interfered with</td>
<td>49% (92)</td>
<td>51% (97)</td>
<td>32% (57)</td>
<td>68% (121)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26: Student Part-time Work and Youth’s Participation in Voluntary Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked part-time</td>
<td>22% (48)</td>
<td>78% (169)</td>
<td>32% (63)</td>
<td>68% (132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job interfered with</td>
<td>22% (42)</td>
<td>78% (147)</td>
<td>37% (65)</td>
<td>63% (113)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 27: Student Part-time Work and Youth’s Participation in Music Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked part-time</td>
<td>8% (16)</td>
<td>92% (176)</td>
<td>19% (33)</td>
<td>81% (145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job interfered with</td>
<td>8% (14)</td>
<td>92% (156)</td>
<td>17% (27)</td>
<td>83% (131)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 28: Student Part-Time Work and Youth’s Participation in Other Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Non-Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked part-time</td>
<td>24% (46)</td>
<td>76% (145)</td>
<td>23% (41)</td>
<td>77% (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job interfered with</td>
<td>24% (41)</td>
<td>76% (128)</td>
<td>26% (41)</td>
<td>74% (116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Relationship between Parents’ Education, Financial Status and Participation**

What is the possible impact of the parental level of education and their financial statuses upon their youth’s participation in group and social activities? Majority of respondents think that they are financially average or above average compared to their colleagues, including those who did not participate in the various social activities. The percentage of those who indicated that they were financially average and above average ranged between 88.1% and 94.5%; an indication that their financial status is not a predictor of their participation in social or group activities particularly when fewer respondents participated compared to those who did not participate.

Further, the data from the survey also indicated that less than 50.0% of parents of respondents had at least university education. In Tables 29-32, I examined the relationship between the rate of participation of respondents in sports, voluntary, music and other activities and their parents’ level of education and financial status.

Data in Tables 29-32 indicated that the level of education and the financial status of the parents of respondents did not have any negative impact on the rate of participation among respondents. In Table 29, the rate of participation in sports activities for males was higher than that of the females. Between 49% and 55% of males participated in sports activities whereas for the females, the rate was between 33% and 40%. The rate of participation in voluntary activities, music programs and other activities was also low. Participation rate for males in voluntary activities was between 24% and 42% and for
females, it was between 32% and 38% (cf., Table 30). Music programs recorded between 7% and 11% for males and between 22% and 31% for females (cf., Table 31). Male respondents’ participation rate was between 15% and 22% whereas the females recorded between 23% and 30% in other activities (cf., Table 32).

Table 29: Relationship between Parents’ Education/Financial Status and Student Participation in Sports Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education of father</td>
<td>53% (72)</td>
<td>47% (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education of mother</td>
<td>55% (78)</td>
<td>45% (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial status</td>
<td>49% (171)</td>
<td>51% (178)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30: Relationship between Parents’ Education/Financial Status and Student Participation in Voluntary Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education of father</td>
<td>24% (34)</td>
<td>76% (107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education of mother</td>
<td>42% (78)</td>
<td>58% (106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial status</td>
<td>39% (171)</td>
<td>61% (273)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 31: Relationship between Parents' Education/Financial Status and Student Participation in Music Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education of father</td>
<td>11% (12)</td>
<td>89% (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education of mother</td>
<td>10% (11)</td>
<td>90% (104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial status</td>
<td>7% (22)</td>
<td>93% (276)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 32: Relationship between Parents' Education/Financial Status and Student Participation in Other Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education of father</td>
<td>22% (27)</td>
<td>78% (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education of mother</td>
<td>22% (30)</td>
<td>78% (104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial status</td>
<td>15% (49)</td>
<td>85% (276)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship between Place of Birth of Student and Participation

Place of birth does not appear to be a major factor in youth involvement and participation in social or community activities. According to the patterns in the questionnaire data, as shown in Tables 33-36, those who participated in school and community sports, voluntary activities, music programs and other social activities were
generally fewer in number than those who did not, regardless of their place of birth, in Canada or elsewhere.

In all the activities observed, participation was low both for males and females. However, sports activities aside, females born in Canada and elsewhere recorded a higher participation rate than males. Males who were born in Canada have a higher rate of participation in all the activities than males who were born elsewhere with the exception of those who participated in other social activities not specified in the survey. Regarding female respondents, the rate of participation was higher for those born in Canada and who participated in sports activities and music. Females who were born elsewhere have a slightly higher participation rate in voluntary and other activities.

**Table 33: Place of Birth of Student and Participation in School and Community Sports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Canada</td>
<td>50% (158)</td>
<td>50% (157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born elsewhere</td>
<td>39% (25)</td>
<td>61% (39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 34: Place of Birth of Student and Participation in Voluntary Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Canada</td>
<td>24% (76)</td>
<td>76% (239)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born elsewhere</td>
<td>11% (7)</td>
<td>89% (57)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 35: Place of Birth of Student and Participation in Music Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Canada</td>
<td>8% (21)</td>
<td>92% (252)</td>
<td>25% (71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born elsewhere</td>
<td>4% (2)</td>
<td>96% (50)</td>
<td>12% (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 36: Place of Birth of Student and Participation in Other Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Non-Participation Rate</td>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Canada</td>
<td>24% (65)</td>
<td>76% (211)</td>
<td>25% (71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born elsewhere</td>
<td>23% (12)</td>
<td>77% (41)</td>
<td>27% (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Findings in the Quantitative Data

While there was some level of youth involvement and participation in all the activities being observed, the general portrayal is that participation is passive across all the activities. Out of (N=811), a much lower proportion of youth participated in any type of social activity. For example, 40% participated in school and community sports, 27.4% in voluntary activities, 12.9% in musical programs, 17.6% in other social and group activities and 18.1% in intra-mural sports. Although the new Alberta Physical Education Program in high schools places much emphasis on general participation in all leisure and sporting activities, participation in intramural sports was considered to be highly competitive in schools at the time of the survey. According to the survey data however, youth involvement in this aspect of sports was remarkably passive. Moreover, the general
participation of youth did not appear to be influenced or impacted upon to any great extent by any of the usual contextualizing factors such as ethnicity, composition of the family, religion, self-esteem, and part-time job, place of birth, parents' educational level and parents' financial status. A much closer look at some of the above patterns of passivity raises many issues worthy of discussion.

Youth is the time of life when time and energy are given to experimentation, amusement and competition in various facets of life. During this psychosocial moratorium of the life cycle, youth are expected to collect their thoughts before entering mainstream adult life (Braungart and Braungart, 1986; Hurrelmann, 1994). Generally, sports activities are considered to be one of these facets and a common pastime for youth, especially male youth as observed in the data.

Secondly, voluntary organizations or associations make distinct contributions to civil society. They fulfill basic human needs of self-expression, power or protection, security, an outlet for creativeness and for self-assertion through collective action; they diversify power and influence. Through association, the individual is able to have his interests represented. Voluntary organizations are an important resource in our democratic society for problem-solving and also for supervising solutions worked out in the past. Above all, voluntary organization guarantees freedom of choice of the individual. Yet, in the survey data, youth participation rate in voluntary activities was remarkably low.
Thirdly, the family plays a significant role in the psychosocial development of youth. According to Nisbet (1969), nowhere is the concern with the problem of community in western society more intense than with respect to the family. It is in light of this that the youth want and need the support and guidance of caring adults, especially their parents as a characteristic constituent part of the youth phase is the process of integration into adult society (Hurrelmann, 1994). Some authors have gone further by urging the state to do all in its power to encourage a return to traditional models of family responsibilities (cf., Coles, 1995). In spite of these calls for attention to the importance of family and community, the patterns in the survey data suggested that the family factor did not appear to have impacted upon youth participation in any major way, with the possible exception of youth's non-participation being conditioned in part by the presence or absence of siblings, in both single and dual parent homes.

Fourthly, religious affiliation and sense of community as observed in the survey data also revealed a general passivity across all activities, although religion has a necessary and vital function of integration of human beings into society and serves to unify symbolic life, consecrate community and develop respect for society (Nisbet, 1974). According to Durkheim, the crisis of the modern age basically is perceived more in terms of a disintegration of the roots of stability which in this case is the church. Thus, attachment to meaningful groups is crucial to an integrated society.
Previous studies have shown that 18 per cent of the country's 15-to-19-year-olds indicates that they attend religious services on a weekly basis (Bibby and Poterski, 1992). Today, in Canada, eighty per cent (80%) of youth identify themselves with a religious group, although only twenty per cent (20%) attend a religious organization weekly which has a serious impact on organized religion with respect to youth (Hurrelmann, 1994).

The tough reality about Canada's religious organizations is that religion is strongly marginalized by the vast majority of Canadian youth as involvement and interest in organized religion is consistently low, regardless of region, community size, sex, or race. These observations are further substantiated by the survey data in which participation in religious activities was quite passive.

The general pattern of passivity may call forth other possible explanations as to why youth do not participate. For instance, if youth of today are not enthusiastic about participating in any group activity because they feel estranged and alienated, then there may be some underlying factors particularly flowing from a negative modernist conception in which youth are inscribed. Such an observation may seriously hamper any possibility of both generations working or participating in any group or community activities together.

From the modernist perspective, there may be a widespread recognition among adults that youth are entering adulthood without the necessary balance between providing them with direction and giving them room to explore and to grow. There may also be
other salient reasons that account for non-participation and non-involvement of youth in community and group activities. Youth themselves have asserted that they are not only ignored when decisions regarding the community in general are made, but that they are particularly and conspicuously left out when decisions regarding them and their welfare are being taken. It stands therefore to reason that youth are more likely to commit and participate provided they have the opportunity to express their views on issues that directly impact them and suggest ways of solving them. This way, they feel they are a part of the decision making process and therefore develop a sense of ownership and community.

Finally, human communities and interpersonal relationships have evolved significantly over the years from those inscribed in simple traditional agricultural societies to more complex urban settings and cosmopolitan conglomerates. The resulting societal changes transform norms and values, reflect current social and human trends, and influence the ways people relate to one another. Thus, with changing structures and functions of community, the youth of today expect that adults would relate to them differently, and vice versa. This does not seem to be the case and the result of this very discrepancy in terms of the dynamics of youth’s relationship with adults may in itself be a major source of conflict between them if this relationship is not mutually re-negotiated. But the tensions between generations are not new! What may be new is the form of commitment to a group. In a post-modern society, relationships tend to be calculated and
transient and dependent to a large extent on the interests of the individuals. The portrayal of passivity among youth in the survey may therefore be mirroring the avoidance of fixation which is a major characteristic of postmodernism and at the same time echoing a different kind of youth culture which may still be emerging.

In the follow-up qualitative research, I explore participation from youth's own points of reference in order to establish a better understanding of what constitutes sense of community and belonging.
CHAPTER FIVE:

A PORTRAYAL OF FLUIDITY AND PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUTH IN CALGARY FROM A CRITICAL THEORY PERSPECTIVE

This chapter explores youth's sense of community and of fluidity, as lived in meaningful ways through sporting and social activities and networks, revealing codes of conduct and involvement in decision making. This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the quantitative part of the study. Moreover, critical theory perspective is brought into play with a focus on the framing concepts: youth, participation and community. In doing so, the analysis is sensitive to sex, ethnicity and religion.

Youth Participation in Sports

Participation and involvement of youth in sporting activities in school, community and beyond looms large in the everyday lives of most of the fifteen participants, regardless of their immigration status and sex (see Table 1 in Chapter Three). The majority of the youth interviewed indicate that they participate in sports generally. More specifically, nine out of the fifteen participants are active in at least one sporting activity in school. The responses vary according to sex. Two out of six females take part particularly in swimming, tracks and fields, soccer and basketball whereas male participation in sports at school is higher. Seven of nine male participants are active in at
least one kind of sporting activity, most prominently in basketball, hockey, football, tracks and field.

In terms of the importance given to the youth's area of residence, the interview data point to active participation of youth in sports in other places other than their school. Twelve out of fifteen participate in a kind of sporting activity, particularly in their neighbourhood. Three of the female participants and all nine males participate actively in sports outside school.

In the presentation of the follow-up data, the same codes used earlier in describing the profile of survey respondents are used in this chapter to describe the profile of the interview participants, where IF, IM, NF and NM mean immigrant female, immigrant male, non-immigrant female and non-immigrant male respectively. Each of the general patterns is now examined more closely and supported with interview quotes providing evidence of youth perspectives.

**Immigrant Female Participation in Sports at School**

All three female immigrant youth participate at different levels in school sporting activities which range from soccer to basketball. Only one female immigrant participant claims: "Not really, but somehow, not very serious" (IF#9-16yrs., grade10) in sports at school. She further explains: "Sports, huh, no! I have interest in sports but I don't like to participate myself." One of the other two female respondents of immigrant origin says: "I
play basketball. I tried volleyball but I quit after two days. I now try roller blade” (IF#10-16yrs., grade 10) and the third adds: “Yeah, Softball, sometimes swimming” (IF#15, grade 11).

Immigrant Male Participation in Sports at School

All three immigrant males also participate actively in sports at school with the exception of one male interviewee who claims: “I really do not participate in anything but I did work at a daycare at church” (IM#14-18yrs., grade 12). The two others are active in sports. One of them indicates: “Yeah sports, this year, I played football. Next year when I graduate, I’ll still play” (IM #12-15yrs., grade 10).

Non-Immigrant Female Participation at School

None of the non-immigrant youth is active in sports at school. The only one who mentions sports at school claims she no longer participates: “Well, I was on the volleyball team” (NF #6-17yrs., grade 11). For the two others, one categorically says: “Not at all” (NF #13-16yrs., grade 11). The last non-immigrant female claims she is involved in other activities which has nothing to do with sports: “Yes, I’m in Young Canadians. Um, it is a performance group. There is singing and dancing, um, we do the Grand Stand Show at the Calgary Stampede every year. Yeah, so I am a singer and dancer, actress. Yeah, well.” She emphasizes: “Ah, no, because this pretty much takes
up all my time because I go Tuesday nights, Wednesday, Thursday nights and the
Saturday and Sunday. So, pretty busy, yeah, until we have the summer off so just the
school year, yeah. Then, of course, at the beginning when Stampede is, so beginning of
summer” (NF #3-17yrs, grade 11).

**Non-Immigrant Male Participation in Sports at School**

Out of six male non-immigrant participants (N=6), two do not participate actively
in sports at school although they do participate occasionally. One of the two is planning
do so actively. The very active one says: “Yeah, um, I play rugby, football, wrestle,
um, play basketball in the morning, weight train and that’s pretty much it, drama club
too. I did that last year.” He also adds: “Um, yeah, I play arena football at lunchtime and
a little bit of rugby” (NM #7-16yrs., grade 11). Another respondent claims: “I used to
participate in school basketball. Yeah, I do intra-mural sports like hockey, volleyball,
basketball. Now I didn’t have time for that because I was planning some other stuff” (NM
#8-17yrs., grade 11). Yet a third plays “basketball and volleyball, yeah. I used to play
hockey too. Ice hockey” (NM #4-16yrs., grade 11).

**Participation in Sports beyond the School**

The pattern of involvement in sports, however, appears to differ according to
location, whether at school as noted above or beyond the school, either in areas of
residence or at church. Generally, participation in sports in areas of residence appears to be more favourable than sports at school for three immigrant youth. One of them indicates: “I used to play but I really don’t have the time now. I usually play with my brothers and sisters” (IM#14-18yrs., grade 12). Another says: “I tried to meet other guys after school” (IF#10-16yrs., grade 10) and the last one notes: “I play off campus, in my area of residence” (IF#15-17yrs. Grade 11).

This pattern is less clear-cut for non-immigrant youth who also participate in sports elsewhere. Two of the three non-immigrant female youth participate in sports in their area of residence, one of whom participates in sports at church (NF#13-16yrs., grade 11). All six non-immigrant males participate actively in sports in the communities in which they live either with other community members or with immediate family members and neighbours. “Yeah, my sister and I or brothers play hockey around the mall in my area. Sometimes, play with our neighbours” (NM#8-17yrs., grade 11). “Yeah, I play community basketball and I play um, community soccer for a while” (NM #7-16yrs., grade 11)). Another says: “Um, like for….Yup, yup. Like I live by a lake so I go fishing, boating, um basketball” (NM #5-16yrs.,grade 11). Still, some do participate but not “really” “Um, like community sports? Yeah, yeah community basketball and stuff like that” (NM #4-16yrs., grade 11).
Youth Participation in Social and Group Activities

This section explores youth's participation in other social and group activities in and outside school and beyond areas of residence. I also consider some of the activities they participate in so as to understand youth's interests.

Participation in Extra-curricular Activities: Youth participation in social and group activities appears to go beyond the boundaries in evidence for their involvement in sports, either at school, in areas of residence or with family members. Yet, some of the participants may not be interested in certain activities within the school and in their areas of residence.

Generally, for this group of fifteen, participation in extracurricular activities is not as extensive as in sports. Eight participants participate in extracurricular activities. Three females participants are actively involved in some kind of extracurricular activity as opposed to five male participants.

Extra-Curricular Activities, Immigrant Youth and Sex: All three male participants are active in extracurricular activities mainly outside school even though one of them insists he does not like to participate in anything. On the part of the female participants, one out of three (N=1/3) participates in extracurricular activities.

Extra-Curricular Activities, Non-immigrant Youth and Sex: Among non-immigrant males, participation in extracurricular activities is not very extensive. Two out of six non-
immigrant males (2/6) report being active in extracurricular activity: "I am in the drama club, that's pretty much it," notes one (NM#7-16yrs., grade 11). The remaining four non-participants in extra-curricular activities cite reasons such as "I try to....." (NM#1-17yrs., grade 12) and "I didn't have time for that because I was planning some other stuff" (NM#8-17yrs, grade11).

In comparison, two out of three non-immigrant female youth participate in extracurricular activities while the third does not. Of the two female participants, one is a member of a youth club in town with which she identifies, "I'm in Young Canadians...Um, it is a performance group. There's singing and dancing. Um, we do the grand stand show at the Calgary Stampede every year. Yeah, so I am a singer and dancer, actress" (NF#3-17yrs, grade 11).

**Youth Social Networks**

An exploration of youth's sense of community through their social networks is important particularly for understanding more about group membership, bonding relationships, and the dynamics of group cohesion. Generally, the interview data show that, although a few of the participants think it does not really matter who they have in their social groups, the majority still maintain that it is desirable nonetheless to have close friends in their groups. There are signs of convergence among immigrant and non-
immigrant youth as well as across sex on the reasons for and nature of participation in group activities.

*Immigrant Youth Social Networks and sex:* Male immigrant youth prefer to interact with friends and family members when planning group or social activities. As one of them notes: “With my brothers and sisters. Probably with my friends and my brother’s friend” and he has these people in mind whenever he plans any social activities […] “Friends, family, other students. If it is for younger people, then people my age, not my parents” (IM#14-18yrs., grade 12). These are of prime importance when it comes to group or social activities. A second immigrant male would usually go with “my friends just because we are together and we get along well […] usually guys in the school. Got to do more stuff with them” (IM#12-15yrs., grade 10) and the third of the three immigrant youth is more fluid or non-committal, “Anybody at all. Anybody, it doesn’t matter” (IM#11-16yrs., grade 10).

The female immigrant participants appear to be attached to their very close friends and families, an observation quite similar to the preferences of their male counterparts. All three immigrant females prefer to have their families and particularly their mothers in any group or social activity that they plan. One female respondent note: “My mom because she invites me to anything. Actually my friends too but actually, it’s like my mom. My mom because she is so special to me” (IF#9-16yrs. Grade 10). Friends do matter for the other two immigrant females although other people who are not
necessarily friends can participate: "My friends and family because they are closer to me. Some of them are my friends, others are not" (IF#10-16yrs., grade 10). The third immigrant female re-echoes the importance of the family and friends: "Um, anybody, especially my friends 'cos we get along. My good friends and my close friends and my parents" (IF#15-17yrs, grade 11).

Non-immigrant Youth Social Networks and Sex: Non-immigrant youth also put a premium on friends while few consider the importance of immediate family members, especially parents. No one singled out their mother for special attention and friendship. A male participant notes that he would participate with "My friends. Yeah, because they are easy to get along with [...] the people I know who would enjoy to do something like that" (NM#1-17yrs., grade 12). Another participant shares a similar view: "Hmmm, like my friends and stuff. Yeah, I don't know. Ummm, I don't know 'cos like all my friends are good. My close friends; yeah, well, 'cos they all kinda goof around me so it's kinda easier to get familiar with them; just like hang around them; they make me feel good, yeah" (NM#2-16yrs., grade 11). Others emphasize the importance of friends and family although they admit they will accept anyone: "friends, family and stuff like that, because you know them and they understand you better" (NM#4-16yrs., grade 11) and they claim that with friends and family, "I can keep a close knit, yeah" (NM#5-16yrs. Grade 11). Yet other males indicate that they would still participate with others who are not necessarily friends and family, "People who would enjoy to do something like that
(NM#1-17yrs., grade 12). "[...] the people playing the game or the people doing the activity. Students or individuals playing the game; just the general public" (NM#7-16yrs, Grade 11) and with "people who really think that they can do it and participate well [...]My friends, my family. No, no. Not my parents. I mean my siblings but if they want to play with me, why not?" (NM#8-17yrs, grade 11).

The female non-immigrant participants also emphasize the importance of friends and family: "My parents. People like my age. Some are my friends but like not all. People who are like ready to help me. My friends or others" (NF #13-16yrs., grade 11). However, their inclination is more toward friends who are compatible and interested in what they are doing; people who are committed to their activities, and can be relied upon: "The good people, uh my friends, yeah, cos they like doing the same stuff like me, yeah I know that they will participate" (NF#6-17yrs, grade 11).

**Youth and Codes of Conduct**

An exploration of the links between participation in group activities including sports and youth's close code of conduct seeks to explain the presence of rules that guide their participation in specific activities.

While participants in the interview almost unanimously indicated that they would not like to participate in sports with people they do not know very well, a few others think they have no problem allowing people they do not know to participate. An
examination of both immigrant and non-immigrant youth separately shows the different responses to rules and codes of conduct that they have set in motion themselves.

Immigrant youth, Sex and Codes of Conduct: Immigrant youth think that it is important to know who you participate with in a group activity. Moreover, these youth are interested in a synergetic compatibility among group members in terms of adherence to common behaviour patterns for reasons of group cohesion.

Among immigrant males, one would not accept “People who try to investigate others. Try to fight in the game” (IM#12-15yrs., grade 10). Another would not tolerate “Somebody who is always looking at negative things instead of positive things. Somebody always complaining and not having fun” (IM#14-18yrs., grade 12). Others are indifferent about who eventually participates, and they do not care whether they know the other participants prior to the activity, for example, “they can come because, through that, I get to know them” (IM#11-16yrs., grade 10). Some of the participants say they would adopt a problem-solving approach in dealing with those who are interested in the activities but have bad attitudes. They propose for instance, an open discussion with them with particular focus on what constitutes good behaviour. Some of them feel that there is a need to help others fit cohesively into the group.

On the other hand, the female participants of immigrant origin give stronger indications that “people they hate, annoying people (laugh)” (IF#9-16yrs., grade 10), “people who don’t participate, who ask a lot of questions” (IF#15-17yrs., grade 11) are
not likely to be welcome in the group for such persons may hinder their own as well as the group’s sense of participation and community.

*Non-immigrant Youth, Codes of Conduct, and Sex:* To be able to participate in group activities with participating non-immigrant youth, one needs to be interested and motivated in the activities and show good behaviour and attitude. Female participants are less tolerant and would not accept unwarranted attitudes. They would definitely not want to have “someone who doesn’t want to be there [...] or someone who’s rude or she doesn’t participate in stuff. It’s they who bring you down...” (NF#3-17yrs., grade 11); and another states, “they make me mad” (NF#13-16yrs., grade 11). These remarks are not substantially different from those made by female youth of immigrant origin.

Responses from the male participants suggest an inclination for strong teamwork, group cohesion, and interest in the specific activities. They also emphasize the importance of having people who would make the time to participate in the activities, people who “like um team concept, people who just want to be there to win [...]and not people who are there to run over people, you will just be a jerk” (NM#7-16yrs., grade 11). Another explains: “Um, yeah, as long as they have good time. Yeah, like...yeah. Mmm, I don’t know. Personally, I like to play sports so I will play anyways. Okay, I think I would. What bothers me is people who like to play but don’t drive. Yeah, so I will only pick. I want the only people to come that will put all their efforts into actually playing. And something else that bothers me is people who smoke. Yeah, so they have to
like stop to go for a smoke, right? Like they can do it in their own time, yeah” (NM #1-17yrs., grade twelve).

One participant is particularly concerned about the involvement of females in group activities. He complains about female youth “Like no whining and uh just no whining, I guess. No complaining, no wanting to go home early. They whine too much because they always want to do what they want to do not WE want to do. They’re always like first in line so WE may as well not bring them” (NM#2-16yrs., grade 11). This youth places some importance on the male collective and group dynamism, as evidenced in his emphatic use of the pronoun, “WE”, and his comments may or may not necessarily reveal a dislike for females in general. It may suggest the seriousness which he attaches to group activity and his strong preference for people who are keen on taking part in the activity, rather than settling for what he considers to be disruptive behaviours.

The rest of the male participants would accept anybody provided the person wants to try and learn to do what the group is doing and play by the rules. They expressed their openness with statements such as, “I don’t really have any enemies. I would let anybody, yeah...Um, depends what these conditions were...was. Why? Yeah, like why wouldn’t he fit in? Oh, I would implement rules like with uh suspend or uh take that person out of the league if he continues that behaviour” (NM#5-16yrs., grade 11). [...] “Well as long as they’re with everything. Yeah, well, I guess I would let them. Yeah, you can as long as you follow the rules” (NM #4-16yrs., grade 11).
Youth, Space and Time for Social/Group Activities

The exploration of youth’s preferences for social activities is extended, in this section, to the location, timing and time of social and group activities. A congenial place and convenient space for social activities may be a determining factor in their participation. Generally, the participating youth prefer to have their activities out of sight of adults, revealing a preference for places outside school but not necessarily in their areas of residence. These youth also prefer having these activities over the weekends which serve as primary moment of leisure time. Twelve out of fifteen interview participants (12/15) indicate a preference for activities outside school, either outside the school building or outside home areas of residence.

Immigrant Youth, Sex, and Location of Activities: Male immigrant youth prefer to have group activities outside school and, by this, they mean outside the school building, either on the school field or somewhere completely away from school and home. “Outside school. Probably like somewhere near a lake, a park. Mostly on a weekend” (IM #14-18yrs., grade twelve). The two others prefer to have it especially over the weekend but outside the school building, on the field. A similar picture is conveyed by the three female immigrant youth. Some of them would like to have the activities outside school, particularly in their neighbour’s house “Outside school. Particularly in anybody’s house. At home. There is more freedom there. You are not under any pressure at home” (IF#15-
17yrs.-grade11). One female respondent, however, prefer to participate in school but claims she has problems trying to socialize with others: "I don't know, in school maybe. I prefer to have this in school but I usually feel shy in groups" (IF#9-16yrs.-grade10). This feeling of 'shyness' is not an uncommon observation of immigrant youth who are learning English as part of their integrative process to the host society.

*Non-immigrant Youth, Sex and Location:* Although some of the male non-immigrant youth want to have social and sporting activities within the school for a variety of reasons such as efficiency and convenience: "A good time is right after school, yeah. Um, the gym at school. Um, because you don't have to go through time to get everyone together because everyone is already at school" (NM#1-17yrs., grade12). Others appear to dislike the school environment: "Mmm, in the summer. Around, outside school because I don't like school that much, I don't like school that much" (NM#4-16yrs., grade11). Yet another confirms the same feeling about school: "Outdoors, I love outdoors. I hate being stuck in school all day. If we could have school outside, it would be perfect. And when it is cold, put a bubble over it just so it looks real outside. That's my idea, school in a bubble that would be cool. Yeah, just outside, yeah, but within the compound" (NM#7-16yrs., grade 11).

Two other non-immigrant participants think they would prefer to have these activities at different places, if possible, and it does not really matter where these take place provided it is outside school. In the case of female non-immigrant youth, all three
prefer to have group activities outside school and they would like to have these activities over the weekends as this is the only free time.

**Youth Participation in Decision-Making**

The extent of inclusion/exclusion in the decision making process is also explored in the interviews. This dimension is particularly important to young people as the extent of inclusion and or exclusion in the decision making process may potentially influence youth’s commitment to social and community issues.

*Immigration, Sex and Inclusion:* While exploring youth responses in the interviews, the majority of male participants say they would participate in activities provided they are involved in the planning of such activities. Asked how this would benefit them, some of them thought that participation at the decision making level would help them to have group consensus. Others claim it is an opportunity to “see more people out there. Get people out to socialize and it kinda teaches self-discipline” (IM#12-15yrs., grade10). Participation at the planning level also offers youth an “opportunity to work with other people and get to know other people rather than do nothing” (IM#14-18yrs., grade 12).

Responses from female immigrant youth also reveal that they would benefit greatly from participation in the planning of group activities. One notes, “Oh yeah, I could gain more knowledge, share my ideas more than I usually do and learn more from it” (IF#9-16yrs., grade 10). In comparison, another is of the opinion that participation in
planning or decision boosts her confidence: “Oh yeah, helps me gain my self-confidence, b’cos I know this guy who is kinda shy but now feels cool when he does stuff with people. It’s kinda good to come out and say something” (IF#15-17yrs., grade 11) and yet a third respondent thinks it offers her something interesting to do.

Non-immigrant Status, Sex, and Inclusion: To be part of the decision making process is crucial to non-immigrant females as they “get to be part, have a part like in the show, really” (NF#3-17yrs., grade 11) and “show leadership, get a life, one life interesting and fun” (NF#6-17yrs., grade, 11). With regards to male non-immigrant participants, they emphasize the sense of ownership and responsibility in one’s involvement in the decision making process. “Yup, if I were part of the planning […] it will give me power to do what I want, freedom” (NM#5-16yrs., grade 11). While some of the participants consider participation in the planning of an activity to be fun, “getting a life”, and a way of having something interesting to do, others think it is a learning process in itself.

Youth Participation in Voluntary Activities

Participation in voluntary activities received positive responses. Some of the services rendered are: car washing, fundraising, helping seniors at homes, helping the sick and disabled in the hospitals while others do voluntary work in churches. Participants, who have never volunteered before, indicate that they have plans to do so once they have the time. Although they would prefer to volunteer alongside their peers,
such youth still maintain that they would participate with anybody regardless of their age and relationship. The responses are positive both for female and male participants who offer various reasons for participating in these activities.

_Immigrant Youth, Volunteerism, and Sex:_ Two immigrant males participate in voluntary activities. One volunteers at a daycare in a church and derives much satisfaction in helping people. The second participant does it for “personal gain. It’s like helping people out. I have done it for a couple of years. Hmm, we had mostly school guys, members of the Boys and Girls Club. I want to get into coaching. The guys were same age as me” (IM#12-15yrs., grade 10). The third has never volunteered before but hopes to be able to do it one day. He says he would volunteer in order to “get experience. Haven’t done it before. To meet new people, to learn on the job. Easier to get a job once you volunteer. I can work with anybody, doesn’t matter” (IM#11-16yrs., grade 10).

One of the three female participants has volunteered prior to the interview. She thinks volunteering is good: “Yeah, because the country needs it. I used to do it when I got in trouble. At Malborough Boys and Girls Club. Those who got in trouble do community service. I’ll take part again if I’m into it, coaching or teaching other people. It doesn’t matter which age group, once you get a lot in common” (IF#10-16yrs., grade 10). The other two express the desire to volunteer if they could help people especially children: “So I could help people. I haven’t done it before but I would want to. Maybe next year. Help children mainly but will like to volunteer with my best friends. Give me a
lot of work especially" (IF #9-16yrs., grade 10). [...] “I’ll love to volunteer. Gives me
credibility” adds the third immigrant female (IF #15-17yrs., grade 11).

Non-immigrant Youth, Volunteerism, and Sex: All three female non-immigrant youth had
volunteered prior to this study and claim to have benefited in one way or another. For
example: “Helping people has always been part of me because I feel um that I have to do
my part, ‘cos I feel bad if I don’t help. I volunteered at the hospital and I helped my mom
and other people there. That was two years ago. The others were like thirty years old.
[…]. I’ll do it again ‘cos it makes me feel good helping other people” (NF#13-16yrs.,
grade 11).

Volunteering by male participants is similarly very positive and rewarding. Those
who had not engaged in this experience share similar views about the benefits of
participating in voluntary activities. They affirm that volunteering is good for the society.
Participating youth indicate their desire to be part of society and to be able to help as
much as they can. A participant explains: “Um, well it is kinda good to do that for
society. Yeah, well, like I volunteered at the hospital to helping out the disabled at
Oldman’s Centre, yeah, so it’s just good to help people that need help […]” (NM#5-
16yrs., grade 11).

Another participant echoes these words: “Um, I volunteered at the Rundle
Community. I, um, during the winter, I take care of the ice rink and during the summer I
do uh community like yard work there picking up garbage and stuff like that and then I
also volunteer sometimes at Mustard Seed. Yeah, yeah, I have been doing that for the last three years. Uh, well my dad, he's the big guy, he helps me help at the Mustard Seed. I just go there whenever I have a free weekend, I go there. I like doing it. Well, when I'm at the Mustard Seed, there's all types of people there. Young people, teenagers, some kids there, some adults, like all ages” (NM#7-16yrs., grade 11).

Also, participating youth indicate that they can really be counted on in spite of all the misconceptions about them. Asked whether they would take part again, most of them say they would, provided, they do not have other "stuff" to do. They note that they benefit a great deal from the experience. One youth, for example, indicates: “I'll continue to take part to increase my knowledge of different cultures […] because it makes me feel good helping others […] it was nice and fun. Interact and meet people” (NM#8-17yrs., grade 11). Another states: “Oh, yeah, I'll always take part. Because, um I like giving back to the community; the community they gave me lots. I've got scholarship, I was given a scholarship, I was given a scholarship by the Rundle Community for my help, $200. And so I just think they gave back to me and I may as well give something back” (NM#7-16yrs., grade 11).

Youth and Part-Time Work

The issue of part-time work among the participating youth is explored in the interviews in light of its impact on participation in group and social activities. Thirteen
out of fifteen (N=13/15) participants, immigrant status or sex notwithstanding, do not engage in part-time work.

Among the numerous reasons that they offer, the most revealing is lack of time and restrictions from parents not to work. In other words, the participants do not have time to work part-time because they have so much going on already. Even those who work part-time think "it would keep me busy, I guess and it would reduce your social time because you are working. Ah, because I know people who work after school or whenever and they are tired and less time for homework and stuff" (NF#3-17yrs., grade 11). Two other participants, both non-immigrants, work part-time and note, however, that part-time work affects their social life but not seriously.

**Youth and Group Cohesion**

Participants were asked a general interview question about what they think would bring people together and how, in the event of any interpersonal conflict, they would be able to resolve the issue. In their responses, the majority, immigrants as well as non-immigrants, indicate that people come together for social reasons and to be part of something. Youth recognize the importance of making friends and of trying to understand each other. Sharing common interests and treating one another right are considered to be fundamental to group and social cohesion. Words from two participating youth illustrate this fact: "mostly if they have things in common, I would say, enjoy doing the same
things” and in resolving an issue “Um, just talk about it, try to see what’s going wrong, all the problems that we are having. Um, sure, if they started like doing bad things or something” (NM #4-16yrs., grade 11); and “sometimes, you just want to get to know people, you want to go hang out, go do some activity” (NM #7-16yrs., grade 11). “Sometimes, probably attitudes toward people and stuff. Like how you treat one another. That’s why people who treat you good, yeah, we cope better” and in terms of resolving a sticky problem “I would put the matter into my hands, I guess then work things out. Sometimes I sense it. Yeah, it’s like when they fall apart, it’s like cause like there’s I don’t know what side they are going or whose side to choose and stuff, so I pick one side and they fall apart” (NM #2-16yrs., grade 11). Others think “friendship will bring people together. Try to understand each other, not to keep fighting. I’ll be sorry to lose friends” (IM #11-16yrs., grade10) and to resolve a bad situation “Talk to the group members to make peace and try to resolve the problem” (IF #15-17yrs., grade 11).

Respondents’ Comments about the Interview Process: Asked whether they have any comments, suggestions or additions regarding the interview process, and on the interview questions discussed, seven participants, three immigrants and four non-immigrants, offer their comments. The four non-immigrant youth agree on the importance of school and of participation generally. One participant remarks: “Yeah. Um, we should be more especially in school because for one thing, it keeps people out of trouble especially young people” (NM#1-17yrs., grade 12) whereas a second youth advises: “just do it for yourself
and what benefit society” (NM#5-16yrs., grade 11). The third non-immigrant participant thinks friends and the family are equally important: “You know, friends help me a lot because without friends and my family behind me, I’d just crumble up. Like I wouldn’t know where I was. My parents, my friends, they push me along, they tell me: ‘Go, Go’ and it makes me go, yup, yeah” (NM#7-16yrs., grade 11). The fourth non-immigrant youth indicates that group participation provides a lot of exposure and experience and implores all youth to “learn to participate in a lot of stuff, groups. They can’t just sit there and do nothing if they really want to expand their knowledge” (NM#8-17yrs., grade 11).

Of the six immigrant youth, the three females responded to this question by noting two main concerns. The first is for immigrants who are not fluent in English to learn it as a second language and as a coping strategy; a way to get by in the host society. One of them notes the difficulty and challenges of communicating with other students. She advises other immigrant youth to “learn to overcome obstacles in your way. Like myself. I used to be shy when I first came here but now I’m kinda used to it. People think you have a bad accent. That can be a reason why I wouldn’t participate in group activities” (IF#9-16yrs., grade 10). The other two participants share the view that there is the need to delegate authority to youth and seek their interest by “asking people what kind of thing they wanna do. Not to force people to do stuff ‘cos it is required” (IF#10-16yrs., grade
10) and to "put more people in charge of stuff that way they will feel important" (IF#15-17yrs., grade 11).

**Discussion of Findings from Critical Perspectives**

In this section, the emerging patterns and findings of the follow-up study taken up from a critical perspective incorporate not only the objective views of the individual but also the value-laden interpretation of meanings and of inter-subjectivity. Critical theory also uses contradictions in social systems to explain why things happen the way they do. Some of these contradictions may be linked to power relations. The analysis I make in this discussion are based on the main themes of participation in sports, extracurricular activities, volunteering, group cohesion and codes of conduct, social networks, decision-making, space and part-time jobs and how these impact youth participation from youth's point of reference.

*Sports Participation:* The rate of participation in school sporting activities on the whole is particularly high for male participants, immigrants as well as non-immigrants. This means that males are very interested in sports activities. Even those who claimed that they did not participate actively at the moment claimed that they will "try to". Others said they used to but they did not have the time anymore because they were planning some
other "stuff"\textsuperscript{5}, i.e., in some other activities, making it almost impossible for them to be involved in or commit to school sporting activities. Yet others claimed they did not play any active sports but at least they always cheered their school teams at all sporting events. The responses of the interview participants indicate further that participation and commitment to such social activities could take different forms and does not necessarily have to be limited to participation in specific sporting activities.

Importantly, youth's participation in sports goes beyond direct involvement in the game itself. Taking a much broader insight, youth's participation in sports is seen more in terms of a general involvement and interest expressed at all levels of organization of the activity. It is also clear from the qualitative data that youth's participation in social activities is dependent upon interest and the perceived availability of time. These findings appear to be different from those of the survey questionnaire where participation in sporting activities was generally passive with a more than 60% non-participation rate.

*Participation in Extracurricular Activities:* Extracurricular activities seemed less extensive for most of the fifteen participants interviewed. For immigrant youth, participation coincides with maleness (3/3) and, for non-immigrant youth, with femaleness (2/3F vs 1/3M). By comparison, among questionnaire respondents who participated in extracurricular activities, participation is sensitive to immigration status.

\textsuperscript{5} "Stuff" is used variably by youth to mean activities. These include social or group activities as well as school and work related activities.
with non-immigrants, presumably more familiar and thus more powerful, engaged in higher rates of participation (40.6% non-immigrant males, 44.3% non-immigrant females) than immigrant youth (7.5% immigrant males and 12.5% immigrant females).

While the data may suggest that these youth were not enthusiastic about participating in extracurricular/other activities, it may also be suggesting that commitment to school, sports and familial responsibilities are heavily laden with value and meaning for these youth.

*Criteria for Youth's Social Networks:* The fundamental pattern seems to be a preference for participation with known persons, especially friends of their own age, who meet three criteria: mutual compatibility, signs of interest in and commitment to their activities, and trustworthiness. From the perspective of critical theory, this suggests that youth may be sensitive to any power relations with adults, especially in terms of a generation gap. In this way, choice of friends illuminates youth's sensitivity to inter-subjective realities.

*Youth and their Codes of Conduct:* From these responses, it is possible to ascertain that, contrary to general opinion, youth are aware of the importance of social norms and common values in society. These findings further emphasize to what extent youth value social cohesion and group dynamism and would act to achieve these goals, thus acting to overcome contradictions in social relations and social systems.

*Location and Time of Secondary Activities:* While youth acknowledge the importance of school, they seem to agree that the school climate is not conducive to social and group
participation in all cases. For some, school comes across as a symbol of incarceration from the real world outside its confines, heavily imbued with negative symbols of adult domination. Anything beyond the school may be more appealing because of a change of environment. Moreover, the participating youth share a common view that they do not attend the same school as their best friends with whom they would like to socialize, which reduces their interest in school activities. Critically examining youth responses in the interviews, some youth consider school and other societal institutions as places where adults dominate youth. Thus, locations other than school and adult-led institutions, where youth are freer to engage in more egalitarian relations, are more appealing.

*Inclusion in Decision-Making:* Generally, the participating youth are highly sensitive to the absence of power in their lives. They indicate that their voices are not being heard simply because they have no power or authority to do anything “Yup, if I were part of the planning [...] it will give me power to do what I want, freedom” (NM#5-16yrs., grade 11). Derived power or authority was seen as likely to provide them with social roles and responsibilities of intrinsic value, as they put it, to “get to be part, have a part like in the show, really” (NF#3-17yrs., grade 11). Moreover, youth perceive that such social functions would be recognized by both adults and youth alike. The development of decision-making skills would enhance youth’s capacity to show leadership, to hold power, and to engage in civil society. In so doing, youth would enable themselves to “get a life, one life interesting and fun” (NF#6-17yrs., grade, 11).
Thus, from critical perspectives, relations of power can determine, to a large extent, how individuals relate to one another. Youth think that they have no say in matters that affect them and thus have no power to affect society. They want to be heard and be part of the decision making process so that they can feel connected to the rest of society and act like subjects, rather than being objects of adult activity (Wulff, 1995). If there are indications of non-participation of youth at certain levels of social activity, then these are mirroring an imbalance in society. This creates steering problems which manifest themselves in the breakdown of shared values or “normative structures” (Habermas, 1975)

*Volunteerism:* Giving back to the community is of great symbolic importance to these youth, especially in the face of pervasive negative images of youth as inexperienced, rebellious and prone to problems (Pearson, 1983; Marsland, 1987; Coles, 1995; Papalia and Olds, 1995; Santrock, 1997). Voluntary activities therefore appear to be popular among youth as they have the choice to either participate or not, for they not constrained by any authority or power to do so. Generally, the interviews provided a vivid portrait of the potential of youth to contribute to the welfare of urban community. When people are committed to a cause, as a matter of choice, they are more likely to participate in such activities. This suggests that when youth perceive and can take up a valued place in society, a social function and authority (Nisbet, 1994), they will contribute more
effectively to the overall development of society as their individual psychological experiences of the world are enhanced.

*Part-time Work and Social Life:* Work can also interfere youth from participating in social activities, particularly among youth from poor homes. While most of the participants of the questionnaire indicate that they do not work part-time because their parents are financially stable, the interview data indicate that youth have their own reasons why they do not work part-time. These personal and academic reasons are deemed to be more important generally than participation in sporting, communal and group activities, beyond school and family responsibilities. Thus, the youth in this study are in constant struggle with themselves and adults while questioning social values, so as to make meaningful interpretations of ambient realities.
CHAPTER SIX:

A COMPLEX PORTRAIT OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

In this concluding chapter, I draw a complex portrait of youth participation and involvement in community. This study explored what constituted participation to youth, immigrants as well as non-immigrants and against the background of a previous survey research in which the data suggested a significant passivity in regards to youth and their participation in most social and community activities. Analysis of the survey data pointed to the fact that follow-up research needed to be done in order to understand youth’s pattern of participation from their own point of reference.

Complex images of youth’s participation in social and community activities emanate from the present dual-track study. Both quantitative and qualitative images of Calgary youth are interpreted in this concluding chapter, as these relate to contemporary urban society. The implications of this study are made explicit and followed upon with some suggestions for further research.

What do the Findings Mean?

The findings of the two components of the present study are both complementary and different. Although the overall quantitative picture is one of passivity on the part of most participating youth where passivity is defined as less than 50% participation, there is nonetheless a large group of youth who participate in society, ranging from 28 to 40 %
depending on the particular activity, be it community volunteer involvement or sports participation. The majority of youth who accepted my invitation to participate in follow-up interviews are part of this latter group.

Overall, the participation and contributions of the 'coalition of the willing' -and I refer to those few youth (N=15) from among the many passive ones in the survey research who offered to participate in the follow-up research- is significant. In selected activities such as intramural or school-based sporting activities, participation is generally high for males \( (7/9 = 78\%) \), with a greater percentage of immigrant females involved in sports \( (3/3 = 100\%) \) than non-immigrant girls \( (0/3) \). Similarly, participation in extracurricular, community and voluntary activities is higher for immigrant youth than for non-immigrant youth generally.

These observations may be interpreted differently from a critical perspective which proposes that people's behaviour may be impacted by the society in which they live (Wallace, 1991), which is of great importance to the integration of immigrant youth. Two levels of interpretation offer insight into these participation patterns. One is that immigrant youth are most likely to use school as the main vehicle and venue for their integration process. As they spend time in school and outside school, they are keen on making new friends, developing different coping skills and eventually easing their way into the mainstream culture. The other is that immigrant youth's strong attachment to
their immediate families may limit the scope of involvement in non-school values, emphasizing in some cases the desire for religious and ethno-cultural participation.

Most participants claim to have more freedom once they are outside the confines of the school. It is from the perspective of desired egalitarian relations that some students do not like school or anything within the school building as school has come to symbolize a place where youth can be manipulated or “administered” (Wallace, 1991). Additionally, youth are aware of contradictions around schools as social systems. To some youth, freedom appears to be outside school. Contrary to these views, however, some other participants think that school is a safe haven and keeps them out of trouble.

Belonging is value-laden for youth who create meaning out of acceptance, involvement and self-worth. Some youth indicate that they consider involvement in the decision-making process as key to participating in school social activities. To them, it is what makes them feel they belong to the school-based community. This is consistent with the views of the urban theorist, Simmel (1955) who noted that, when individuals are involved in the planning of an activity, they are more likely to commit to it because they feel connected to it. Immigrant and non-immigrant youth, males and females alike echo the same feelings. Being part of the decision-making process guarantees ownership and responsibility; ensures leadership and empowerment; affords them a valuable learning experience through knowledge acquisition, sharing of ideas, freedom, and self-discipline.
Above all, youth emphasize that participation in decision-making boosts their self-confidence.

The social networks of young people are equally central to their involvement in group and community activities, as the give-and-take of network exchanges, in subject-subject relationships, is a critical form of inter-subjectivity. Generally, youth come together to socialize, spend time together, and feel that they are a part of a group. It guarantees their solidarity as members of a group against the more powerful adults. Responses obtained from the interviews indicate that most participants participate in groups beyond their close friends and family, with persons who are interested in and committed to the activity. Some female participants differ somewhat from the main pattern in their reluctance to accept unknown persons, an understandable hesitation, given their greater attention to solidarity and mutuality. Thus, those who wish for acceptance need to demonstrate their commitment, interest and willingness to take up the group’s norms and expectations.

Although youth have often times been characterized as law-breakers, rebellious and inexperienced (Pearson, 1983; Marsland, 1987; Coles, 1995; Papalia and Olds, 1995; Santrock, 1997), this may not be a true portrayal. From their own critical perspective, participating youth find this view, imposed by adult-others, to be unacceptable to themselves and their peers for they eschew behaviour that violates group norms and group cohesion. So as to assure more egalitarian relations among themselves, a code of
conduct is a key ingredient for group cohesion, with social rules guiding activity. The interview participants take pride in team work and express the desire to help all to achieve group integration, particularly for those with negative attitudes.

One of the most important indicators of youth’s participation centers on volunteerism. As discussed earlier, such activities are freely chosen, without external obligation or constraint. Generally, most youth interviewed participate in a range of voluntary activities, from coaching other youngsters in soccer and basketball, babysitting at church, helping the homeless at the Mustard Seed, fundraising activities through car washing, to helping the sick in hospitals. The spirit of volunteerism is based on the premise that people would commit to an activity or idea, provided they are interested and provided there is the feeling of self-actualization and recognition. As observed in the survey data, most youth participate in voluntary activities because these offer excellent opportunities to learn on the job and to gain experience.

Youth’s participation in group and community activities may be conditioned by their economic status. Participants in the questionnaire research indicate that since their parents are financially comfortable and responsible for them, there is no need to work part-time for extra income whereas the interviews provide additional reasoning that they are too busy to engage in part-time work. Again from their own critical perspective, youth are sensitive to social restrictions whose meanings are of no immediate consequence to them. Almost all agree that working part-time would affect their social
lives to a large extent and would consequently affect their participation in social and community activities.

Hence, youth have so much going on in their lives that they cannot or do not make the time to do ‘stuff’, as stated in their own words. In recognition the changing realities of post modern societies and from critical perspectives, it would be wise to journey with you by involving them in a process of determining priorities for themselves and in a larger conversation about priorities of the greater society.

Participation among immigrant and non-immigrant youth must therefore be understood, not only in terms of their participation in recognized societal structures such as the church, school and community or in observable group activities, but also in terms of other forms of participation since modern and post modern societies encourage individuality, the latter incrementally than the former. Moreover, configurations of multiple commitments do not necessarily occur with equal frequency, and this appears to be the case with today’s youth.

**Implications of Study**

Understanding participation among youth is crucial to the full development of their potential as the youth’s psychological experiences of the world are motivated by factors such as self-interest or choice in their relationships with others particularly adults. These tend to conflict with power-laden adult and institutional demands, creating a
misunderstanding or misconception about youth generally. In their study of Canadian youth, Bibby and Poterski (1992) observe that adults expect youth to experience good interpersonal ties, to be ethical and law-abiding citizens, to participate and be involved in community and national life. Yet, simultaneously, they are preparing them to be highly autonomous, self-sufficient, and self-oriented individuals. These contradictions appear to be lodged in deeper social values which juxtapose individuality and community.

For educators, such an understanding is critical to the successful formation of youth as educators spend more time with youth than with any other group, with the possible exception of parents. Educators have the important responsibility of ensuring that youth become full-fledged members of society through their participation in activities that promote social cohesion. These are, however, not easy challenges especially when viewed within the context of our rapidly changing urban society where relationships are at the same time transient as they are discrete and transactional.

Studies in youth and participation in community have focused primarily on schools, churches and neighbourhoods as geographical boundaries. Yet today, the term ‘participation’ has assumed multiple meanings, particularly among the youth, hereto not captured in recent literature. Thus, contemporary understandings must take into consideration the multiple facets of participation and make the case, on behalf of youth, that participation in community is fluid and thus reflects somewhat the post modern tendency to avoid fixation.
Again, as educators, there is need to recognize the tremendous potential that youth have in all areas of social lives and to engage in the necessary curriculum reform that takes into account, youth and participation in a more pluralistic context. As a form of educational policy, heavily influencing classroom practices and lived experiences, curriculum presents images, restrains action, shapes self and other, fosters thought, and opens windows of possibility.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Two recommendations are of primary importance. One stems from the limitations of the present study which is exploratory in nature and thus limited in scope, whereas the second stems from understanding the different forms of participation by youth in a pluralistic context. Since there is very little research on the participation of youth within a highly pluralistic urban setting such as Calgary, more comprehensive long-term study is needed. It is also recommended that subsequent studies in this area compare the social and civic participation as well as community involvement of youth and adults.

The present study demonstrates that most youth either do not seem to have enough time to participate in many leisure activities or make time for such activities or that the timing of such activities may not be convenient. By implication, youth may appear to be preoccupied with school work and other commitments that are weighed as more demanding, so much so that there is a concomitant lack of participation in social
and community activities. Thus, it would be necessary to have a critical look at the kind of activities that youth are engaged in and why these particular preferences so as to strike a reasonable match between school, community, and participation.
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Appendix A

Letter to Interview Participants
Dear Student,

You are invited to participate in a research project on youth and community. The research is an attempt to understand how you develop a sense of belonging, i.e., how you participate with other people in social, voluntary and other activities in this society. If you accept this invitation, you will be helping others like you who live in Canada as well as those who have just arrived or will be arriving in the near future. Your participation will also help youth agencies to plan better social activities for people of your age group in other parts of Canada. You will also be helping by speaking on behalf of other youth like yourself.

You have been chosen because of your background and because of your experience in Canada and more specifically in Calgary. If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed in your school and at a time that is convenient to you. This interview will last no longer than 20-30 minutes. The questions you will be asked are all based on what you do in group with other people. The interview will be recorded on an audiotape and will be transcribed later for analysis. In case there is an answer that is not clear, I will contact you again on this.

Your participation is voluntary and will not require any financial costs o you. Nor will you be paid for your participation. Your name and the name of your school will be confidential because the data will be accessible to no other person other than the researcher. Also, anonymity will be guaranteed by the use of descriptors and letters instead in any written or any oral reports of this project. The tapes will be kept for not more than three years and later destroyed by erasing everything on it. The transcribed document will also be burned. A summary of the research findings will be available to you at the end of the project.

Your signature and that of your parents or guardians on the attached consent form is an indication that you have understood and agreed to participate in this research. However, you may withdraw from the interview at any time without any penalty being imposed on you. You may contact me at the department of Educational Research, (403) 220-1954; E-mail: cka@ucalgary.ca; or contact my supervisor at ___________________. You may also contact the Office of the vice-President (Research) and ask for Karen McDermid, (403) 220-3381 if you have any question concerning your participation in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Komlavi Afatsawo
Appendix B

Participant Consent Forms
Participant Consent Form

This form confirms the consent of ___________________________ to participate in the research project titled, 'Youth and Community' conducted by Christopher Komlavi Afatsawo under the supervision of Yvonne M. Hebert (PhD) in the Department of Educational Research. The purpose of the research is to explore the non-participation of youth in social, voluntary and community activities.

I have been informed, to an appropriate level of understanding, about the purpose and methodology of this research project, the nature of my involvement, and any possible risks to which I may be exposed by virtue of my participation.

I agree to participate in this project by doing the following:
- accepting to be interviewed in my school and at a time arranged between the school administration, the teachers and myself.
- accepting to be interviewed for a period not exceeding 30 minutes.
- accepting to be contacted again should there be the need for further clarification.

I understand and agree that:
- My participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from this research at anytime without penalty.
- The researcher has a corresponding right to terminate my participation in this research at any time.
- Participation or non-participation will have no effect on my position within my agency.
- All data will be kept in a secure place inaccessible to others.
- Disposition of data will be carried out in the following manner:
  - burned in three years or when project has been completed;
  - audiotapes will be erased when research is completed.
- Confidentiality will be assured in the following manner:
  - interview data will be accessible to no other person other than the researcher
- Anonymity will be assured in the following manner:
  - descriptors and letters will be used instead of real names.
- Data will be:
  - coded in such a way that I will not be identified.
- Data will be presented in the following form:
  - aggregates.
- I will be able to read or obtain the research report in the following manner:
  - review transcript of interview.
  - summary of the complete research.
- The benefits to me include: